



# NYSEC NEWS

## 2015 65th Annual NYSEC Conference Featured Author, Pam Allyn

Pam Allyn, reading expert, prolific writer, child advocate, founder and executive director of “LitLife and LitWorld,” will be a featured speaker at the NYSEC conference in October this year.

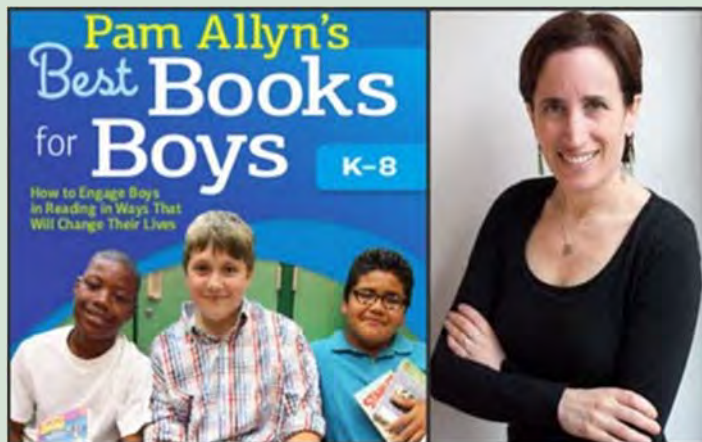
Pam Allyn is a powerful, inspirational speaker. Her motto, “words change worlds” is at the heart of all she says. “Literacy brings dignity to children,” she wrote in a recent *New England Reading Association Journal* essay, “empowering them to read and write passionately in ways that can change their communities and the world.”

She has been a featured speaker in many eminent forums, such as NPR, NBC News, CNN and Al Jazeera, and she is the author of several books, among them *Your Child’s Writing Life* (2011), *What to Read When: The Books and Stories to Read With Your Child— And All the Best times To Read Them* (2009), *Best Books for Boys: How To Engage Boys in Reading in Ways That Will Change Their Lives* (2011), as well as the *Core Ready Series* (2013).

With regard to the essential nature of literacy, Allyn points out that “reading is like breathing in, and writing is like breathing out.” She offers several strategies toward literacy, among them reading aloud, AIR (accountable independent reading) and poetry. In her essay, “Why Poetry Matters,” she says, “poetry can be a game-changer for struggling writers and language learners.”

She not only believes in the power of literacy, but that it is a universal right. She has called the Common Core standards a “clearly articulated vision for every student’s educational journey . . . in fact a Bill of Rights for Children.” Her passionate promotion of World Read Aloud Day, a day which draws attention to global literacy issues (March 4<sup>th</sup>), is driven by her hope that all children everywhere will have access to the “life-changing power of reading.”

A voice of optimism and hope. Who wouldn’t want to hear that?



**“Diversity is  
the heartbeat  
of our  
humanity”**

~Pam Allyn

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## President's Message

### *We Gather Together*

This summer, my husband and I, along with our 7-year old son, traveled to Indiana to visit my husband's family.

During our stay, my son had some firsts: he rode in a tractor and plowed some soybean fields, went four-wheeling in a Jeep on some dirt roads with his 14-year old cousin, visited a working dairy and pig farm where he learned all about where milk comes from and even witnessed some births of calves and piglets (the Miracle of Life was certainly *not* the highlight of his week), and he bravely conquered a ropes course about 40 feet in the air. While my son has seen pictures of Indiana and his extended family, talked on the phone and FaceTimed with Grandma and heard countless stories of my husband's childhood, it isn't the same as being physically present at the place or with the family. There's something about smelling the farm, playing Legos with Grandma at the kitchen table, hearing the squealing piglets, or taking a ride in Grandpa's big rig that makes the experience come to life.

As our annual NYSEC Conference draws nearer, it occurred to me that the act of gathering together is so much more enriching than what many of us do in isolation to improve our practice. Of course, we read books and articles, listen to webinars, even connect via social media, but it is not until we actually gather together that we really get the best professional development. Instead of reading about a new idea, the conference allows us to attend workshops with creative colleagues, ask questions and discuss it later with a friend. That excitement over envisioning how new methods can benefit our students is one of the biggest advantages of our conference. And it's not just best practices that we get from the conference, there's also the connectedness that we all feel when we're together. English educators from all over New York State all face similar challenges, and we are the ones who truly understand the rewards of doing what we do.

I know you will soon gather together with your school colleagues and a new crop of students, and I wish everyone a happy end to the summer and a smooth start to your year. Please come gather with us and get inspired on October 14-16 in Albany too. The experience cannot be matched.

**Christine Zandstra, President**

## 2015 NYSEC AWARD WINNERS



### Mini Grants

**Dara Rhodes**, Milford Central School, “Career Learning, Enrichment and Academic Readiness Summer Program (CLEAR)”

**Julene Waffle**, Morris Central School, “The Uncommon Community Read (TUCR)”

### Programs of Excellence

“College Essay Workshop Night,” Massapequa High School, Massapequa CSD

“Senior Experience,” Calhoun High School & Mepham High School, Bellmore-Merrick CSD

### Ruth Everett Award

**Lori Lebel**, Schenectady High School

### Educators of Excellence

#### *Administration:*

**David Bernsley**, Monroe-Woodbury High School

**Melinda Murdock**, Riverside Elementary School



*Educators of Excellence, Administration, 2014*

#### *Elementary:*

**Stephanie Brown**, Silas Wood 6th Grade Center

**Jillian Coster**, Miller Avenue School

**Suzanne Johnson**, Riverside Elementary School

**Debra Iannelli**, Morris Central School

**Glenna Raskin**, Fairfield Elementary School

**Lisa Levenson**, Park Avenue School





## ***Middle School:***

**Jamie De Leon**, The Laboratory School for Finance and Technology

**Kea Grabinski**, Westbury Middle School

**Grace Hazenbush**, Linden Avenue Middle School

**Meredith Levine**, Grand Avenue Middle School

**Amanda Steele**, Island Trees Middle School

**Kayla Witman**, Waverly Middle School

## ***Secondary:***

**Stephanie Buckhout**, Putnam/ Northern Westchester BOCES

**Linda Ciaffone**, Floral Park Memorial High School

**Rachel Cook**, Norwood-Norfolk Central School

**Christopher DiLeo**, Marlboro Central High School

**Kevin Dineen**, Commack High School

**Carol Durkin**, Monroe-Woodbury High School

**Maria Favre**, Ward Melville High School

**Corinna Heggen**, Schenectady High School

**Thomas Kenney**, Briarcliff High School

**Marissa Lattanzio**, The Laboratory School for Finance and Technology

**John Mitchell**, Shoreham-Wading River High School

**Alison Paley**, Ballston Spa Central School District

**Tracy Pontin**, Schalmont High School

**Claudia Rudnet**, Mineola High School

**Amy Salamone**, Guilderland High School

**Daniel Sheffield**, John F. Kennedy High School

**Marjorie Vigliotti**, Oyster Bay High School



***Program of Excellence winners, 2014***



***Educators of Excellence, Secondary Level, 2014***





## *News From our VP Elementary*



I remember going off to college and looking for posters to hang in my dorm room when I came across *All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten* and it instantly became my credo. There are so many truths in this poem by Robert Fulghum, and they are important to remember in the ever changing tide of the current educational climate. The wisdom we need to get through this time is “**not at the top of the graduate mountain, but there is the sandbox at Sunday school.**” Here are some things that we should remember:

**Share everything.** Education is a communal experience. We expect our students to learn from one another, and we should remember that the same is true for ourselves. When we share best practices with our colleagues, it improves our own skills. So use that prep time to team up with colleagues, share an idea at a faculty meeting, or show off your talents by presenting a workshop at the NYSEC conference. Each year I am truly amazed by the innovative things happening in our classrooms across New York State.

**Play Fair.** I’m sure we’re all thinking this when it comes to testing and evaluation. I don’t think that any educator is afraid of this, as long as the tools are fair and appropriate. Enough said.

**Be aware of wonder.** Even on the most stressful of days, I never cease to be amazed by what can happen in schools. This year my building suffered the loss of one of our teachers. She was so young, energetic, and kind. Even though the staff continues to mourn her loss and figure out how to move on, they are still learning from her strength and perseverance. This teacher’s favorite song was “Here Comes the Sun” and we continue to learn every day “it’s alright.” Personally, I was touched by the way the building came together to support this teacher and her family, which brought our school community closer together.

Fulghum is right in saying that, “**Everything you need to know is in there somewhere.**” Showing kindness, playing fair, holding hands, and sticking together are all things that we learned as children and are necessary to help us become responsible, productive adults. When the conversations turn to scores and data points, then we have to remember that growth is not only about what we see on an exam but also who we are as people. We have to remember to “**live a balanced life**” where we “**learn some and think some and draw and paint and sing and dance and play and work every day some.**” To me that not only means working hard to do the best for your students, but also remembering to take some “me” time. Read that professional book, learn from that workshop, but also take the time for yourself. Pull that book from the stack of ones you’ve always meant read and open it. Have dinner with friends. Spend time with your family. Take time to laugh. Unplug from work for a little while. Remember to **LOOK** and explore the world around you. (Continued on pg. 6)



### VP Elementary, Continued...

As we begin a new school year, I hope that you have taken time over the summer to recharge, breathe, and reboot. I hope that you begin this new adventure by remembering what's important to both you and your students. **"Remember the little seeds in the plastic cup. The seeds go down and the plant goes up and nobody really knows why, but we are all like that."** Remember that NYSEC is here to support you on your educational journey. So check out our website, comment on our Facebook page, or follow us on Twitter. Join us for our annual conference October 14-16, 2015 at the Albany Marriott and network with educators from across New York State.

Finally, remember the final words of Fulghum's poem: **Take any one of those items and extrapolate it into sophisticated adult terms and apply it to your family life or your work or your government or your world and it holds true and clear and firm. Think what a better world it would be if we all – the whole world – had cookies and milk about three o'clock every afternoon and then laid down with our blankies for a nap. Or if all our governments had a basic policy to always put things back where they found them and clean up their own messes. And it is still true, no matter how old you are – when you go out into the world, it is best to hold hands and stick together."**

**Michelle Peterson, VP Elementary**





## ***The English Record***

### ***Call for Articles***

#### **Aims**

*The English Record* publishes original peer reviewed contributions that focus on the field of English education. *The English Record* features articles on pedagogy, essays, commentaries, program descriptions, reflective narratives, book reviews and occasional student work. Please check the website, the newsletter and the journal calls page for more information regarding upcoming calls for manuscripts.

#### **Submissions**

Manuscripts and inquires should be submitted electronically to Dr. Kjersti VanSlyke-Briggs via e-mail at:

[Kjersti.VanSlyke-Briggs@oneonta.edu](mailto:Kjersti.VanSlyke-Briggs@oneonta.edu)

Manuscripts should be prepared using MS Word. All parts of the manuscript should be double spaced. Please number all pages consecutively. Each manuscript should include a cover sheet with the author's name, affiliation, position, a brief two or three line author bio, preferred mailing address, telephone and e-mail address.

Identifying information should not appear elsewhere in the manuscript. Please include an abstract on the cover page of no more than 100 words. Manuscripts must conform to APA standards. Manuscripts that do not utilize APA will be returned.

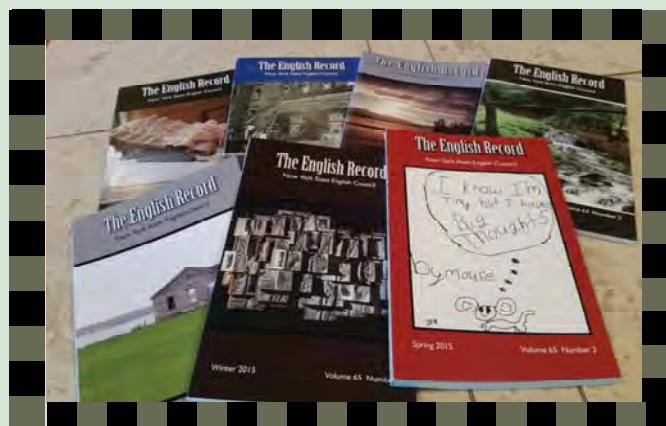
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A proof will be sent for accepted manuscripts to the author for review. Each corresponding author will receive a copy of the issue after publication.





October 14-16, 2015

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## NYSEC NEWS

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WAIT!**

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NOW!**



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# Editor's Notes



Hashtag...emoji.....selfie are just a few of the 6500 words to be added to the collins Official Scrabble Wordlist this month. While some people welcome the new words that have emerged from social media, ABC News says that others share concern for the slang that seems to have made the cut, such as ridic, frenemy, bromance and even lotsa. How do we as English teachers feel about this movement? Should we preserve words worthy of being in a collegiate-level dictionary, or is Scrabble a dynamic game that should change with the times?

*Michelle Kaprinski*



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