

# Neuhaus News

FEBRUARY 2020

## Leading and Learning at Unlocking Literacy Conference

Last October, 300 educators from throughout Texas gathered at the 4th annual Unlocking Literacy Conference to learn from handpicked literacy experts.

The event began with an inspiring message from Dr. Art Cavazos, superintendent of Harlingen Consolidated Independent School District (CISD). He spoke about his district's dramatic literacy success through a partnership with Neuhaus.

Dean Bragonier, founder and executive dyslexic of Noticeability, gave a moving testimony about how he eventually came to view his dyslexia as his superpower and how his organization supports and encourages students with dyslexia to do the same.

Dr. Erin Baumgartner, a researcher at the Houston Education Research Consortium, presented data on the state of education in Houston and the importance of early education and intervention.

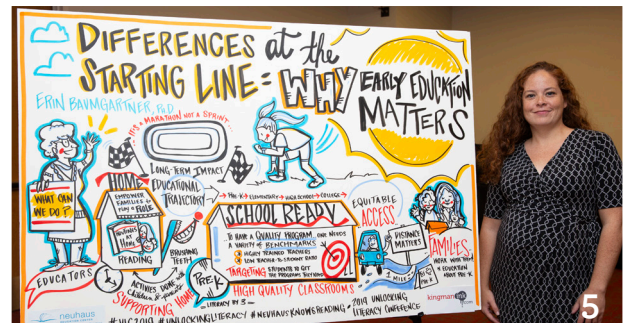
Cheval Bryant, head of The Parish School, spoke about the deeply interwoven nature of speech and language pathology and reading differences.

Finally, Dr. Elsa Cardenas-Hagan wrapped up the day with a presentation on making structured literacy connections for English-language learners.

Attendees were wowed by the graphic recorder on site, an artist from Kingman Ink, who beautifully captured each keynote in a visual note-taking style.

Dr. Cavazos accepted the Lighthouse Literacy Legacy Award on behalf of Harlingen CISD in recognition of the dedication and success the district has demonstrated in their commitment to literacy success for all students.

The Butterfly Effect Award was awarded to Suzanne Harter, Neuhaus board trustee, to recognize her as a champion for literacy through her years-long support of Neuhaus and her passion for volunteering with early literacy and English-language learners.



1: Cheval Bryant, head of The Parish School; 2: Dr. Tracy Weeden, president and CEO of Neuhaus, with Dr. Art Cavazos, superintendent of Harlingen CISD; 3: Dr. Tracy Weeden with Suzanne Harter, Neuhaus board trustee and Butterfly Effect Award recipient; 4: Dr. Elsa Cardenas-Hagan, director of Valley Speech Language and Learning Center; 5: Dr. Erin Baumgartner, associate director for Houston ISD Research and Relations at Houston Education Research Consortium, standing next to the graphic representation of her keynote; 6: Dean Bragonier, founder and executive dyslexic at Noticeability; 7: Kingman Ink graphic recorder at work capturing the keynote of Dr. Cardenas-Hagan

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## Teacher Discovers Her Own Dyslexia— and a Renewed Passion for Teaching

Cassandra Prince has been an educator for 32 years, specializing in math. “I like to work with kids who struggle and have behavior problems. That’s my forte. Give me those that are struggling so that I can help them through. That’s my heart.”

In 2018, her dedication and ability to help students caught the eye of a colleague who worked with dyslexic students in Houston Independent School District (ISD). She encouraged Prince to apply to the district’s professional development program with Neuhaus Education Center to become a dyslexia therapist.

“I didn’t even know what dyslexia was,” Prince admitted. The transition from teaching math to teaching reading began with in-depth Neuhaus coursework where she learned about the indicators of dyslexia. During this process, she realized the life-long struggles she had with spelling, writing, and reading comprehension were because she had dyslexia herself.

Reflecting on her career as a math teacher, Prince said, “When I would help my students in math, they would think I was re-reading the word problems to help them. But I was really reading the word problems two and three times to understand them myself. I still have

that comprehension problem.”

“Teaching the Neuhaus way has given me strategies to better myself and my students. Now I have this theory and understanding of how it all comes together. It’s been beautiful!”

Now, Prince is in the second year of Neuhaus’ Dyslexia Therapist Preparation Program. During her workday, she visits Houston ISD elementary and middle schools to teach children who struggle with reading. Prince does not hide her reading challenges from her students. She tells them, “There are doctors and lawyers out there that have the same thing we have. We go a little bit slower, but we’re just as smart as they are.” She adds, “It took me fifty plus years to figure that out. I’m going to help you, so you don’t have the struggle I had.”

Although she is four years past retirement, Cassandra says this experience ignited a fresh passion for education which will keep her in the profession a while longer.



## Upcoming Family Support Events

Neuhaus offers a variety of parent programming that addresses the unique needs of your children, ranging from elementary school-age to college. Our programs include free information sessions for parents, educators, and professionals; topical seminars with expert guest speakers, designed to give parents and professionals in-depth information and strategies; and panels and dialogues for college-bound students with learning differences.

To read more about our upcoming seminars and to register, please visit [Neuhaus.org/parents](https://Neuhaus.org/parents).

February 21	The Synergy of Technology and Dyslexia
March 6	Dyslexia Simulation
March 25	Parent Information Session
March 28	Parent Information Session
April 15	Parent Information Session
April 17	Dysgraphia is More than Messy Handwriting
April 18	Parent Information Session
May 5	Parent Information Session
May 9	Parent Information Session





## Riding the Wave of Change

As we celebrate our 40<sup>th</sup> year of reading success, there is a seismic wave of change rolling within the State of Texas and across our country. Finally, there is recognition of a matter near and dear to my heart: teachers and leaders deserve to be apprenticed in the science of reading. Educated teachers are the most important factor to develop children who can read, speak, and express their ideas in the language of power so they can take hold of their dreams.

Texas House Bill 3 has positioned early literacy as a priority for our state. It has been my honor to be selected to serve on the Texas Education Agency's Reading Advisory Committee, which has convened to advise the agency on current plans that support reading. The challenge, in a state that is larger than many countries, is a responsible roll-out of the right literacy initiative. The stakes are high! Educators and leaders need a clear and compelling vision of how early literacy instruction will have a generational impact. Teachers need the knowledge and skills that are necessary to make early reading success a reality for all children, regardless of zip code.

Neuhaus continues to expand its reach and impact. Our amazing team tackles reading intervention as well as reading failure prevention with our partners. The growth in student performance in our partner schools and districts is stunning! Children are learning to read properly the first time through the actions of highly-trained and well-coached teachers. Principals are participating in professional learning alongside their teachers so they can support them in laying a firm literacy foundation for all the scholars on their campus. Teachers are operating diagnostically and prescriptively with synchronized and seamless focus. More teachers can now recognize the red flags of reading differences after deep training and coaching through Neuhaus. Children with dyslexia are being identified early, before the shame of being illiterate begins to overwhelm them socially and emotionally.

I am excited as we look ahead and prepare to ride the wave of dynamic transformational change rising across our nation. There is so much good work to be done. I am grateful for those reading this message who have helped us to rise higher and help more deserving children, families, and educators achieve reading success.

Surfs up!

*Tracy Weeden*



## Meet Our Experts: Allison Peck, M.Ed., CALT-QI, LDT, SLDS

Allison Peck was recently promoted to Vice President of Professional Learning and has worked full-time at Neuhaus for three and a half years. We asked her a few questions about her role at Neuhaus:

### What drew you to Neuhaus?

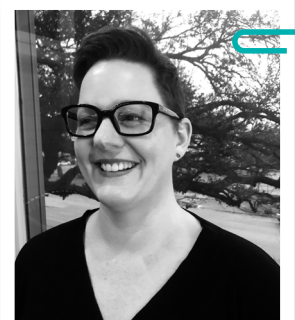
I came to Neuhaus 17 years ago to take courses to help my own struggling 5-year-old who had been diagnosed with dyslexia. My undergraduate and first graduate degrees were in History. I wanted to pursue academia and research, but it all changed when my oldest was struggling to learn the alphabet. My goal was to provide intervention for him, but soon I found that I enjoyed teaching him. I was so impressed with his progress that I started working with other students privately and worked toward becoming a Certified Academic Language Therapist. Once I reached that goal, I spent the next eight years working in public and private schools as a special education coordinator and reading specialist. Later, I worked a summer as a guide to teachers taking Neuhaus' most intensive class, *Basic Language Skills*. It was fate! I have come full circle with my relationship with Neuhaus in that I can now share the same passion for learning to read that infused me when I sat in the participant chair some 17 years ago.

### What is your favorite part of your job?

My favorite part of the job is empowering teachers with the knowledge of the science of reading. I am excited every morning when my feet hit the floor knowing that I can help teachers change the trajectory of students' lives.

### Favorite book?

Can I say my dissertation? I am in my second year of pursuing my PhD in Literacy, so I am knee-deep in research and writing. But outside of academia, my favorite genre is historical fiction.





CELEBRATING

40  
YEARS

## NEUHAUS EDUCATION CENTER ANNUAL BENEFIT LUNCHEON

APRIL 22, 2020  
Marriott Marquis Houston

### LUNCHEON CHAIRS

Holly Anderson & Melissa Rabalais



### KEYNOTE SPEAKER

#### Wes Moore

Wes Moore is a decorated Army combat veteran, Rhodes Scholar, New York Times bestselling author of *The Other Wes Moore*, and CEO of the Robin Hood Foundation, the largest poverty-fighting organization in New York.

### HONOREES

#### Elizabeth and Peter Wareing

The Wareing's generosity and love of literacy is an inspiration to our staff and community, reminding us to strive toward reading success for all.



**Educator Ticket** \$75  
**Non-Educator Ticket** \$150  
**Sponsorship opportunities available.**

Sponsorship commitments made by **April 8, 2020** will be recognized in the printed program.

For more information and to register, visit

**[Neuhaus.org/luncheon](http://Neuhaus.org/luncheon)**

## LENOX M. REED SEMINAR

APRIL 21, 2020



### KEYNOTE SPEAKER

#### Timothy Shanahan

Distinguished Professor Emeritus  
University of Illinois at Chicago

### THE JUNIOR LEAGUE OF HOUSTON

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Registration & Continental Breakfast 7:30 a.m.  
Keynote & Dialogue 8:00 a.m. to 9:30 a.m.

1.5 CEUs

Tickets \$30. Free for educators.

**Learn more & register at**  
**[Neuhaus.org/seminar](http://Neuhaus.org/seminar)**

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**\$5,000 PROVIDES 3 DAYS**

of expert Neuhaus coaching support to a campus

**\$2,500 PREPARES 9 EDUCATORS**

to help 180 students learn to read

**\$1,000 ENROLLS 5 ADULTS**

in adult literacy classes to learn to read

**\$750 HELPS 1 STUDENT**

receive one-on-one dyslexia therapy for one month

**\$500 UNDERWRITES 1 INFO SESSION**

for families of struggling readers

**\$250 EQUIPS 1 EDUCATOR**

with supplies for early literacy activities and vocabulary development

**\$100 PROVIDES 4 BOOKS**

for the Neuhaus Education Center Collie Resource Library

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[neuhaus.org/donate](https://neuhaus.org/donate)**





#### OUR MISSION



Neuhaus Education Center, dedicated to promoting reading success, provides evidence-based professional development to educators, information and resources to families, and direct services to adult learners.



#### DONATIONS

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#### OFFICE HOURS

Monday - Friday - 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.



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Neuhaus Education Center is a nonprofit educational foundation dedicated to promoting reading success for all. Neuhaus provides evidence-based training and support to teachers, supplies information and resources to families, and offers direct literacy services to adult learners. Visit the website at [www.neuhaus.org](http://www.neuhaus.org).