



2017 Brock International  
Prize in Education Nominee

**Pam Allyn**

*Nominated by Jennifer Trujillo*



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## Statement of Support for the Nominee

Pam Allyn is a literacy expert, author, and activist. She believes passionately in the transformative power of literacy for all. Her work is centered around teaching children to recognize and put into action the powerful tool we all hold within ourselves: our story.

Pam is the Founder and Executive Director of LitWorld, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that strengthens kids and communities through the power of their own stories, authoring a bold new world of equity and opportunity. She also founded LitLife, a national educational organization specializing in professional development for preK-12 literacy teachers. She has authored 26 acclaimed books for educators and families, including her most recent book with Dr. Ernest Morrell, *Every Child a Super Reader: 7 Strengths to Open a World of Possible*.

Known for her work with our nation's most at-risk children, Pam leads teachers, families, and communities to adopt the best practices for literacy instruction in schools and homes across the United States and internationally. In addition to the United States, Pam's work now reaches over 25 countries through year-round literacy-based empowerment programs. Over 100 countries celebrate World Read Aloud Day, a special day created and led by Pam and her colleagues, which honors the power and value of the read aloud. Millions of participants rally to take action and advocate for literacy as a human right. As a Kellogg Foundation Fellow in Racial Equity and Healing, Pam's work eradicates the structural and racial inequities that limit the opportunity of children to lead the most meaningful lives possible by using the tool of transformational literacy to open up the world of knowledge and self-expression to every child, no matter his or her zip code.

## Welcome to LitCity: Changing the Conversation on Literacy

Children are inquisitive; children are playful; children are seekers, always hungry for new ways to satisfy the curiosity we celebrate as one of humanity's greatest gifts. And though every child is born with the natural inclination to breathe in experience, a process as vital as breathing air, not every child is fortunate enough to have access to an education that will help her thrive. And so the experiences every child breathes in on a daily basis may not find their way back into the world as a unique expression of one's truth, otherwise known as a story.

Pam understands the gravity of this loss and has devoted a lifetime of study and activism to changing the conversation on literacy, the key to unlocking all of the stories ripe for expression in every child. For Pam and the hundreds of thousands of children, parents, and educators she's connected with over the years, literacy is a wellspring replenished by individual experience and brought to life through the joy of storytelling; it is a child grasping the tools of reading and writing and becoming the author of her own destiny.

By accessing the sustainable power of storytelling that lies within, children, parents, and teachers come together to form what Pam calls a LitCity, a place where everyone can find joy and dignity on the journey towards literacy. This innovation, a radical reframing of the very definition of literacy, is Pam's great purpose, one that has taken her around the world and back in the name of storytelling.



This purpose is bolstered by groundbreaking research, including her own, that supports the importance of stories anchored in literacy as a social practice (Gee 2000, 2008; Lankshear & Knobel, 2011), the power of narrative to shape learning (Newkirk, 2015; Allyn & Morrell, 2016), as well as research from fields such as neuroscience, medicine, and business that indicate the power of narrative to drive and enact change. What a child understands and craves intuitively—"Tell me a story"—has been supported by one such cross-disciplinary study demonstrating how areas of the brain beyond those associated with language processing engage when content is delivered as narrative rather than as information

(Caracciolo & Van Duuren, 2015). Reading is to decoding as literacy is to deep understanding in the new paradigm envisioned by Pam and her peers, and she is committed to continuing her research and community engagement to advance this line of inquiry as far as possible.

Pam's story of transformational literacy advocacy begins with an initiative she launched in 1990 to address the literacy needs of our country's most at-risk young men: "Books for Boys." What started as a simple sharing of stories and books turned out to be a vital, sustainable, and groundbreaking idea. Children and teens could "recover" a lost childhood through books and their personal responses to those texts by starting at the beginning, hearing books read to them and gaining access to the diverse titles that would change their lives, empowering them to feel their own stories matter too. This innovative introduction to literacy for the boys opened the floodgates to what is the most life-affirming and empowering gift any human can possess: the power to know story matters, to tell one's own story and to be heard and understood in the world. Pam often says the boys were her greatest teachers, leading her to understand that access to children's literature and to the power of one's own stories is so much more than what one learns in a classroom: it is life-saving.

Pam tells the story of a boy, Luis, to whom she read *Harry Potter*. Luis experienced a troubled childhood and his journey had been long and hard. He did not perceive himself as a reader. Yet when Pam read him the story, he said to her, "I love this story so much because Harry has a scar on his head and I have a scar in my heart. I really understand Harry." Pam conveys to all of us through her powerful mission that reading is much more than the words on a page or screen. In her work, as it scales and replicates, spreads around the United States and all across the world, the essence is clear: literacy is the way we fully engage with the world, the way we say, "I am here."

Pam has been building capacity in teachers nationwide and worldwide since 1988. She trains educators from across the country in implementing innovative and useful structures for teaching reading and writing. Using the latest research and technological advances, Pam and her team work directly with teachers and administrators to create school environments that embrace the powerful breadth of literacy to change educational outcomes for children.

Pam is a leader in the field of teacher education, quality, and development. She leads literacy institutes and workshops for district leaders, school administrators, preK-12 teachers, parents, caregivers, and other stakeholders. Focused on advances in literacy instruction methods that teachers can implement, and working collaboratively with district and school leaders, Pam has reached hundreds of thousands of people across the country through her motivational speaking engagements, social media outreach, and side-by-side strategic work with educators. She extends this reach through her work as Scholastic's *Open a World of Possible* Ambassador, a partnership founded on a shared vision to empower all children through literacy.

Pam's success stems from her desire to bring joy into the teaching of reading and writing. The road to literacy is not an arduous, brutal trek that abruptly ends in the sunlight of delightful reading and writing. The joy can happen in the process of learning to read and write. Data measuring student growth in the schools where Pam's materials and teaching practices are employed prove that joy, dignity, and respect are a profoundly important foundation of excellent literacy learning. Her teacher training methodologies

value the inherent dignity of teachers and caregivers themselves, by discovering where they are in their professional and personal journey alongside the children with whom they work, and supporting these adults in taking steps to learn, grow, and become empowered and knowledgeable as literacy practitioners and mentors.



Always in search of new avenues for literacy advocacy, Pam took the opportunity to visit Kibera, an area of extreme poverty in Nairobi, Kenya. There, she experienced the urgent desire children had to read, write, and share their stories. Inspired after her first visit to Kibera, Pam returned to New York and mobilized a group of friends and leaders to join her in building a new movement founded on the belief that literacy is a universal human right. They set out to create a movement designed not only to further basic literacy, but to further productive, transformational literacy defined by dreams that can come true.

Today, LitWorld uses mobile, portable, and nimble strategies to impact the gap in literacy access and to create success for our children living in the most extreme conditions. LitWorld programs are research-based, best practice models for social-emotional learning and have an immediate and lasting impact on children's resilience and literacy levels simultaneously. By placing children's voices at the center of all LitWorld endeavors, Pam is helping children to use their stories to reframe their place in society, and to self-identify as lifelong, world-changing readers and writers. In these ways Pam is showing the world how to combine the functional literacy skills integral to economic independence with the emotional independence that comes from storytelling and self-awareness.

For nearly a decade, Pam has launched LitWorld programs in communities around the world where access to empowering learning spaces, quality resources, and literacy engagement are urgently needed. In the United States she and her dedicated team work in many cities deeply challenged by educational and economic inequity, including Detroit, Michigan, where only 9% of students in the eighth grade read at level, and Jackson, Mississippi, where the state faces a \$256 million dollar education deficit and has only fully funded its education system twice in the past 20 years.

Through powerful innovations with technology, literature, and the arts, Pam is reinventing the role storytelling plays in the journey toward literacy. From a text messaging curriculum for families to lessons

for children and their parents featuring storytelling apps and devices, Pam is saying, “Literacy matters in all of its forms and across all platforms: **reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing.**”



*Pam is with her partners in the field, learning and leading alongside students, teachers, and families. Here, in Detroit, she hosts a “LitFest”: bringing together students from across the city for a joyful, community literacy celebration.*

Internationally, Pam’s work lifts spirits in the Za’atari refugee camp in Jordan, where LitWorld acts as a “literacy first responder” for Syrian refugees, and in the urban slum community of Kibera, Kenya, where hundreds of thousands of children live in extreme poverty, with endemic rates of HIV and other chronic, life-threatening challenges. In Kathmandu, Nepal, Pam and her team have also served as literacy first responders, employing storytelling workshops and relevant children’s literature to aid in capacity-building post-earthquake. In this way, the immediacy of support is about rebuilding, not just houses and structures, but people’s spirits and sense of hope. This approach gives root to many forms of support, including literacy groups called Moms LitClubs where the mothers of LitWorld children pursue their own educational growth despite overwhelming hardship. In the Philippines, Pam works with mothers in the Manila slums of Helping Land where women toil in inhumane conditions as charcoal packers, and in remote Bulacan where they patch together the means to make a living and, in spite of profound loneliness and long hard days, find kinship through the lens of literacy and sharing their stories. During a visit by the Philippines’s Vice President, Leni Robredo, to LitWorld’s local Learning Center, Moms LitClub members shared their powerful stories through visual and written storytelling, impacting policy-makers from a grassroots level.



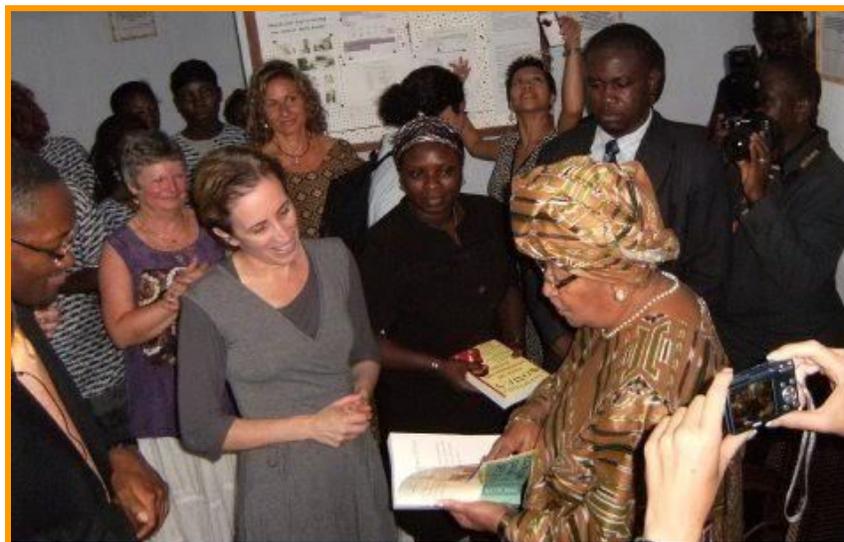
*LitWorld and Pam provide a new definition of literacy to people across the world who never had the chance to go to school. Through visual storytelling, these Moms LitClub members are able to tell the stories of their lives, stories of resilience and hope in spite of great odds.*

Pam champions children’s learning lives in and out of school. Her work makes home, school, and community central in the development of literacy so that every child can experience 365 days of wrap-around literacy. Pam’s commitment to end the catastrophic summer slide and literacy achievement gap has led to a game-changing partnership with Scholastic, the world’s largest publisher of children’s books (see more about this partnership in the LitCamp section). Nationally, with her team, and strategic partnerships with a number of organizations ranging from locally based community organizations to school districts to mayor’s offices, Pam is building the vision of the “LitCity” with cohorts of collaborative partners, including key leaders in Detroit, Jackson, Mississippi and New York City.





*In LitClubs, visual storytelling is a complement to the written word and brings it alive. Here in LitClub, the children created an "illuminated words" project to reveal what is on their minds and what they hope and wish for.*



*Pam works at all levels to create social change. She is seen here sharing her book "What to Read When" with President Ellen Sirleaf Johnson of Liberia. Pam understands the grassroots effort combined with policy changes at the top levels is the key to moving the literacy needle.*

## Creating Replicable Models

***"The secret to literacy is having kids tell, write, and value their own stories. Personal narrative is a vital part of seeding literacy." - Pam Allyn***



Pam champions the philosophy that literacy is a transformational tool to help all people aspire, hope, and plan for the future through the act of reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing. Closing the literacy gender gap is Pam's vision, focusing two thirds of LitWorld's programming on girls because women and girls make up two thirds of the world's illiterate population. Closing the summer literacy gap is her second vision, one supported by education researchers Dick Allington and Anne McGill-Franzen. In their landmark 2013 study, Allington and McGill-Franzen showed that 80 percent of the achievement gap between students of lower- and upper-socioeconomic backgrounds is credited to summer reading loss. By the time a child living in poverty reaches fifth grade, she may have lost the equivalent of **three years of education**. Creating and providing urgently needed access to literacy programs during out-of-school time can counteract these missing months in a child's learning life and restore learning loss.

Through all of Pam's work there is a common thread: the idea that together, side by side, we can build towards a vision of the "LitCity": a place where every child is a literacy learner, every adult is a literacy learner, and they are co-journeymen in using literacy to transform their lives, tell their stories, and change their worlds.

Pam and LitWorld, with a highly motivated, dedicated, and collaborative team in place across the country and around the world, create lasting social change by working alongside community-based partners who know, understand, and love their communities, ranging from grassroots organizations to school districts. With two signature programs, LitClubs and LitCamps, the work is scaleable and replicable. Pam and her team have built curriculum using LitWorld's signature "7 Strengths"--Belonging, Friendship, Kindness, Curiosity, Confidence, Courage, and Hope. This radically compassionate curriculum interweaves a

social-emotional framework with literacy: a one-of-a-kind idea. LitWorld works across the United States and in 25 countries with over 50 on-the-ground partners. Key locations in the United States include Harlem, New York; Detroit, Michigan; Jackson, Mississippi; Atlanta, Georgia; Newark, New Jersey; and Oakland, California. Internationally, LitWorld works in urban and rural contexts including Colombia, Peru, Honduras, Nicaragua, Dominican Republic, Haiti, Pakistan, Nepal, India, Jordan, Afghanistan, Kenya, Ghana, Rwanda, Uganda, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Liberia, Thailand, Cambodia, the Philippines and Kosovo.



*A teen mentor reads with a student at LitCamp Harlem.*

## Closing the Out-of-School Time Literacy Gap: LitClubs

***“We tell every child entering a LitClub, “You are an asset.’ Everyone belongs in the global literacy club.”***



LitClubs are LitWorld’s signature out-of-school time program. Geared at children between the ages of 10 and 14, LitClubs provide a haven for literacy development and social emotional exploration. LitClubs are single-gender clubs that meet once a week for one to two hours per session with 10-15 members and one to two facilitators who are local community leaders. LitWorld runs LitClubs in partnership with locally-based organizations that have access to community members who can become LitClub Facilitators, groups of children who can become LitClub members, safe spaces for the clubs to meet, and places where they can connect with other LitClubs virtually. Guided by LitWorld’s “7 Strengths” – Belonging, Curiosity, Friendship, Kindness, Confidence, Courage, and Hope – trained mentors create safe and supportive communities where children learn to value their own and others’ stories, become powerful readers, and use literature as a guide to navigate their lives and tell their own stories. The LitClub model is also flexible so that mentors can contextualize the curriculum to each community. This flexibility is a key component of the program, supported by a recent study of 6,000 16-year-olds by Sullivan and Brown (2013), which found that reading for pleasure was a greater influence on a child’s vocabulary, math, and spelling scores than whether their parents had degrees. (Super Reader, pg. 18).

In order to best support the LitClub members, Pam and LitWorld are dedicated to training and giving continuing support to the mentors who lead programs. LitWorld not only trains mentors on the LitClub model, but also provides professional development that helps deepen the mentor relationship with the LitClub members. The LitWorld team delivers trainings using technology that allows them to reach any

LitWorld partner around the world. LitWorld offers additional trainings around Mentorship, Leadership, Communication, Story-Telling, Pedagogy, Growth-Mindset, Goal Setting, and Classroom Management.



*Pam and LitWorld work to increase opportunity for children living in the most extreme conditions. Here, in the Za'atari refugee camp, children learn literacy skills through storytelling and the joy of reading.*

LitWorld is fiercely committed to filling learning gaps and providing a first literacy response for communities recovering from crisis, conflict, and disaster. LitWorld's work in the Za'atari camp for Syrian refugees includes training young women mentors to run weekly LitClubs to provide urgently needed literacy education and comfort for the children of the camp. In response to the Ebola crisis in Sierra Leone, Pam and her team created a radio version of LitClubs that ran across the country to support survivors. After an earthquake struck partner communities in Nepal, Pam and her team launched additional LitClubs and a community library to provide a safe space for recovery.

Through focus on the 7 Strengths model, and by amplifying the stories and voices of community members, LitWorld helps devicitimize communities by bearing witness to their self-advocacy and compassion as well. In fact, reading fiction develops empathy, an idea supported by scientific research showing that frequent fiction readers had higher scores on a measure of empathy (Djikic, Oatley & Moldovenau, 2013). After learning about the water crisis affecting Flint, MI, and working on their reading and writing skills in LitClub sessions, LitClub members in Detroit organized water bottle drives to support their neighbors in need. In doing so, they received and then sent a powerful message about their own capacity to be responders and agents of positive change in their own community. They showed how literacy is their great companion in social awakening: using it to write their neighbors, tell the new story of the positive spirit of Detroit and claim their leadership role as citizens through reading, writing, speaking, listening and storytelling.



*Pam confers with a LitClub member in a Detroit Public School.*



*LitClub members in Ahmedabad, India sharing ideas and stories with one another during a weekly meeting.*

## Closing the Summer Literacy Gap: LitCamps

*"Summer is a time for renewal and recommitment to the value of children's learning twelve months a year."*



In 2014, Pam proposed the concept of LitCamp to her longtime publisher Scholastic—a standards-aligned summer learning program that would engage pre-kindergarten through sixth grade students with high-quality texts and a rich curriculum, allowing children and educators alike to embrace the potential of literacy.

This year, LitCamp reached over **55,000 children** in classrooms across the United States, including all second through fifth grade students in New York City. Pam's reputation created a cascade effect: administrators and educational leaders recognized the power of her innovation and embraced it immediately, launching a nationwide implementation and a renewed focus on combating the summer literacy slide to help children build and sustain a reading and writing life all year long.

LitCamp is designed to meet the needs of students by grade level. A carefully curated selection of authentic children's books (books that are written directly for children and that speak to the depth and diversity of their experiences) are paired with dynamic reading and writing lessons. The curriculum is inspired by the work of educators like Rudine Sims Bishop to contemporary writers like Junot Diaz who continues to call for stories that act as a "mirror" for their readers. The program has been lauded by educators across the country for its dual focus on academic progress and social emotional development and celebration. In the spirit of Pam and LitWorld's commitment to embracing community and engaging

participants from all facets, several LitCamps utilized a junior counselor model this summer, tapping into high school students. For example, in Oakland, California, boys from the Office of African American Male Youth Achievement in the Oakland Public Schools served as reading leaders for younger LitCampers, and in New York City, teen mentors helped shape the LitCamp experience into one that was dynamic and unforgettable with the teens acting as role models for the young LitCampers.

LitCamp increases children's reading and writing capacities in decoding, comprehension, stamina and engagement, overall civic engagement, future outlook, and sense of personal value, as well as a positive change in reading and writing habits and routines. Even the assessment tool for LitCamp is innovative. Pam asks the students questions such as: "Do you think about what you have been reading even when you are not reading?" seeking to explore the underlying factors that motivate children to read and also to remove the barriers that get in their way.



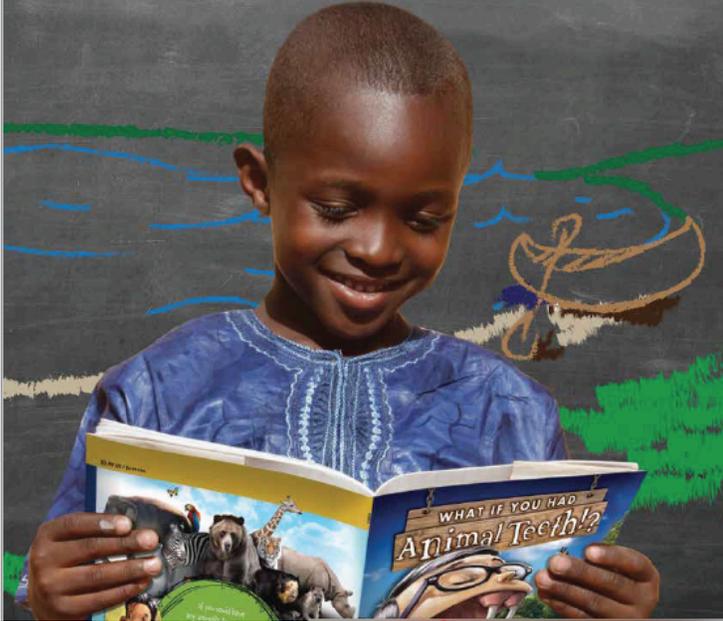
*Pam's LitCamp model is replicable and scaleable, providing a safe space for to learn, think, read, and write.*

SCHOLASTIC  
presents



# LitCamp

Summer Has a Whole New Story



## The End of the Summer Slide

Every summer, children from every walk of life fall behind in crucial reading and writing skills. This phenomenon is known as the "summer slide."

LitCamp reverses the summer slide by providing a joyous, fun, and interactive framework for literacy support. LitCamp enables children to use their skills while discovering their natural motivation, curiosity, and confidence.

The research is clear—children need authentic, engaging, and personally meaningful experiences with reading and writing to become lifelong literacy learners. LitCamp's impeccably designed lessons and best-selling books give students the skills and opportunity to reach their fullest potential.

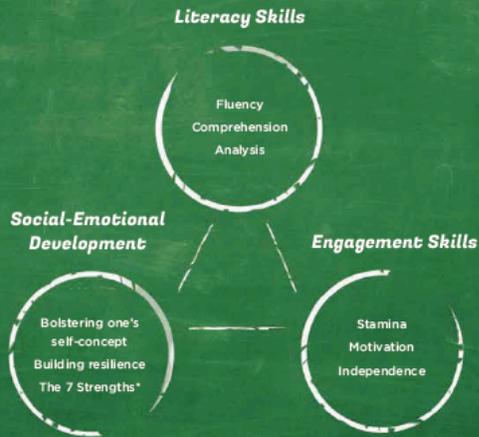


To learn more about LitCamp, call 1-800-387-1437 x6747 or email AskEd@scholastic.com.

3

## The LitCamp Model

LitCamp integrates all the key ways children learn to read, write, speak, and listen by employing a signature set of lessons that inspire engagement and motivation.



\*The 7 Strengths: Children learn best in supportive and positive learning environments. LitCamp lessons are framed around seven key strengths that help children grow resilient and powerful as readers, writers, and learners. The 7 Strengths are *Belonging, Friendship, Kindness, Curiosity, Confidence, Courage, and Hope*.

To learn more about LitCamp, call 1-800-387-1437 x6747 or email AskEd@scholastic.com.

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## LitCamp Reading List

**LitCamp Red Bunk**  
Item no. 804676  
20 titles, including:

- *I Got the Rhythm*
- *One World, One Day*
- *Giraffes Can't Dance*
- *The Hello, Goodbye Window*
- *Big Al*
- *My Friend Rabbit*
- *Pierre the Penguin*
- *Z Is for Moose*
- *Violet's Music*
- ...and more



**LitCamp Green Bunk**  
Item no. 804691  
20 titles, including:

- *No Dogs Allowed*
- *If the World Were a Village*
- *Exclamation Mark*
- *Crow Call*
- *Two Bobbies*
- *My Brother Charlie*
- *Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters*
- *Chicken Sunday*
- *Road Runner's Dance*
- *Tito Puente: Mambo King*
- ...and more



**LitCamp Orange Bunk**  
Item no. 804681  
20 titles, including:

- *Blackout*
- *What If You Had Animal Teeth?*
- *Library Lion*
- *Big Mama's*
- *Yo! Yes?*
- *Suki's Kimono*
- *Chrysanthemum*
- *Frog and Toad All Year*
- *Stone Soup*
- ...and more



**LitCamp Blue Bunk**  
Item no. 804695  
10 titles, including:

- *Pablo Neruda: Poet of the People*
- *Testing the Ice*
- *Because of Winn-Dixie*
- *Butterfly Boy*
- *Abe Lincoln's Dream*
- *Bobby the Brave (Sometimes)*
- *Planting the Trees of Kenya*
- *The Matchbox Diary*
- ...and more



**LitCamp Turquoise Bunk**  
Item no. 804685  
20 titles, including:

- *A Beam of Light*
- *A Chair for My Mother*
- *My Name Is Yoon*
- *For You Are a Kenyan Child*
- *Big Red Lollipop*
- *Those Shoes*
- *Zen Ties*
- *Mice and Beans*
- ...and more



**LitCamp Purple Bunk**  
Item no. 804698  
10 titles, including:

- *Long Shot: A Comeback Kids Novel*
- *Weslandia*
- *Your Fantastic Elastic Brain*
- *Tsunami!*
- *How Strong Is It?*
- *Crossing Bok Chitto*
- *Nelson Mandela*
- *Little Red Writing*
- ...and more



## Closing the Gender Literacy Gap: The HerStory Campaign

*“All girls deserve a seat at every table and a voice in every policy process.”*



*Diana, a graduate of the very first LitClub in Kibera, Kenya, addresses the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women at the Global HerStory Summit in March of 2016. Diana spoke of wanting to make illiteracy a “once-upon-a-time story,” a story her grandchildren would never believe.*

Pam has witnessed in her work and through active listening the profound inequities faced by girls both here in the United States and around the world: the staggering and catastrophic numbers reveal that at least two thirds of all illiterate young people are girls. And here in the United States, girls report more frequently feeling silenced in class or disempowered from content area literacies, including the sciences and technology. With the creation of the HerStory Campaign, Pam has mobilized other organizations to help her and her team to grow the global network of LitClubs nationwide and worldwide. Together, they provide girls and young women with opportunities to lead as mentors in their communities, listen to the stories of girls, and share their own. In the past year, Pam’s HerStory Campaign has launched new LitClubs in ten countries including Afghanistan, Liberia, Nepal, and Sierra Leone, where communities have experienced the effects of conflict, natural disasters, and health epidemics. **With this effort, LitClubs are reaching 4,000 girls each week in 50 communities in 25 countries.**

## The Global HerStory Summit

***“Literacy is not just about learning the alphabet or words, it is about authoring one’s life, about reading to see the world, and to understand one’s self. Literacy is about dignity and empowerment. Let the 21<sup>st</sup> century be the era girls got to write their stories, and share them, changing the world with their voices.”***



*Pam speaks at the podium addressing the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women at the Global HerStory Summit in March of 2016.*

In March 2016, Pam spearheaded the first Global HerStory Summit in New York City, in collaboration with the UN Women’s 60th Commission on the Status of Women, to elevate girls’ powerful stories and aspirations in the global conversation on the status of women and girls. The Summit brought together 100 HerStory Youth Ambassadors--young women and girls from LitClubs in ten countries--to participate in powerful workshops, built on LitWorld’s strength-based model of storytelling for personal empowerment and community advocacy. Women and girls from all over the world participated in roundtable discussions with HerStory Ambassadors and professional women about their career paths and personal successes, centered around the themes: Where I Am From, Who I Am Now, and Where I Am Going.

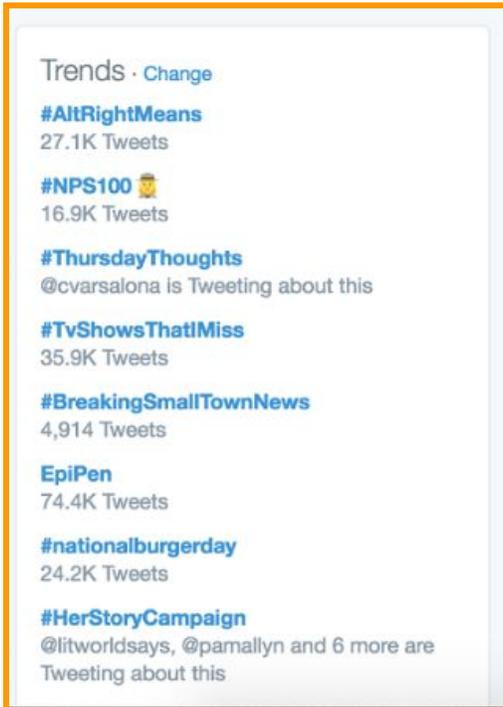
Over the course of five days, the HerStory Ambassadors from across the globe became a single community through shared experiences and understanding, culminating in a presentation by the HerStory Youth Ambassadors at the UN Women’s 60th Commission on the Status of Women. The HerStory Youth Ambassadors brought their experiences and learning home with them, and continue to share their stories in Mini-Summits in their communities and with HerStory Ambassadors all over the world.

In March 2017, Pam will lead a team of organizations to co-host the Global HerStory Summit with UN Women at the United Nations Headquarters. HerStory Youth Ambassadors will be invited from LitWorld communities around the world and from the United States to share their stories and explore the unique challenges faced by women and girls in their own communities. During the Summit, with support and guidance through Pam’s strengths-based storytelling workshops, HerStory Ambassadors will create a

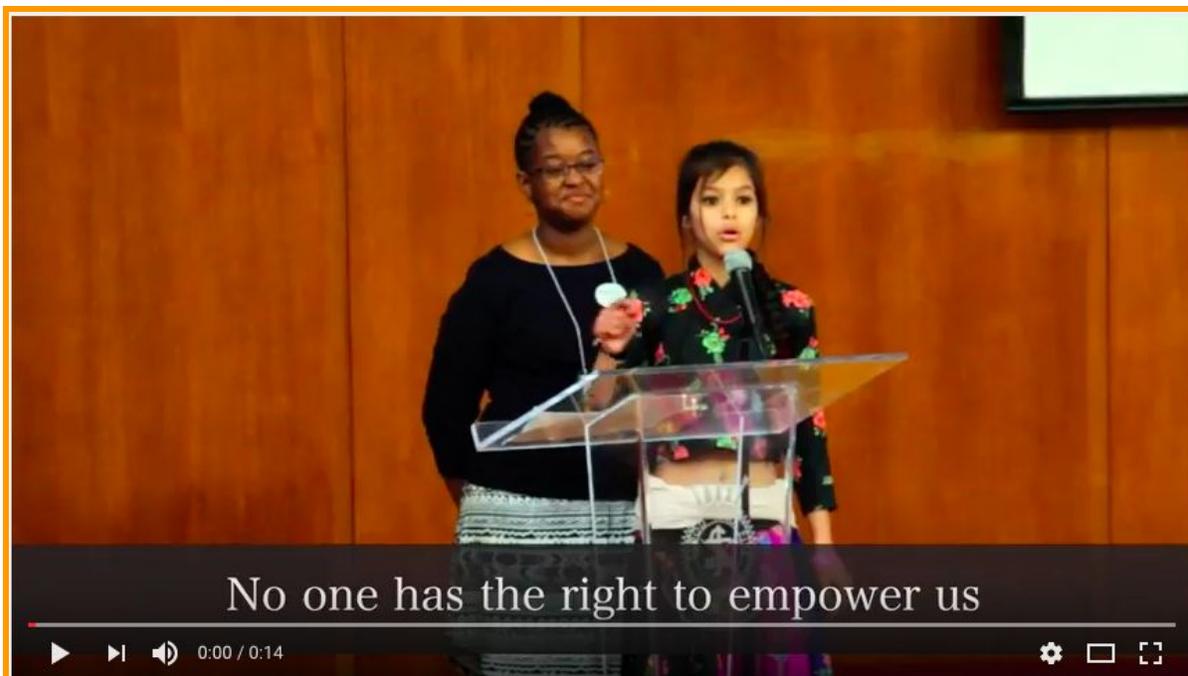
‘Community Change Project’ to address the challenges they see in their communities with solutions inspired by young women and girls. At the 61st Commission on the Status of Women in March 2017, HerStory Youth Ambassadors from the second Global HerStory Summit will share their ‘Community Change Projects’ with UN officials and leaders from their own countries.

In August of 2016, LitWorld co-hosted a Twitter Chat with UN Women on the relationship between storytelling and achieving gender equity. There were over 700 tweets using the hashtag #HerStoryCampaign in the one-hour timeframe of the discussion, and it was a trending topic on Twitter in the U.S.

*The image to the left shows hashtag #HerStoryCampaign on the “Trends” page on Twitter.*



*Pam inspired LitClub members from around the world attending the HerStory Summit to take the innovative LitWorld strategies for storytelling and literacy back with them to their home communities.*



*Jasmine, a LitClub member from Kathmandu, Nepal shares with the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women what LitClub and the Global HerStory Summit experience with the power of story has taught her. Jasmine shared her own powerful message that women and girls must snatch their rights from those who would try to keep them oppressed. [Click to hear Jasmine speak.](#)*



*American LitWorld leaders, such as Partnership Director Aisha Nyandoro from Jackson, Mississippi,, connected with new friends and colleagues from across the United States and across the world, sharing the story of Jackson and the young people with many others..*

## Stand Up for Girls

***“I read E.B. White’s Charlotte’s Web aloud to a LitClub in Kibera, Kenya, a slum community where women and girls bear a disproportionate burden of hardships. After the reading, Diana, age twelve, said: ‘Pam, the part that really changed me was when Fern grabbed her father’s arm as he went to the barn to kill little Wilbur. It has changed me because I had never known a girl could do that. I have never seen a girl stand up to a man.’”***



*LitClub members in Nepal celebrate Stand Up for Girls by sharing their stories of strength on kites, featuring women and girls they know who inspire them in their everyday lives.*

**Stand Up for Girls** is a LitWorld-created advocacy day held annually on October 11th. The first year Pam launched Stand Up for Girls to mobilize efforts for the rights of girls to gain quality educational opportunities, the day was not officially sanctioned. In great part due to her efforts and efforts of other organizations she convened, the day became sanctioned by the United Nations in 2014 as the official International Day of the Girl. On this day, with a small staff and a mighty following, LitWorld mobilizes people of all genders, from all corners of the world, to advocate for a girl’s right to share her story and change the world.



*Pam and her team, pictured at a Stand up for Girls event, create opportunity for young people to lead events for transformational literacy advocacy, marshaling youth to become the literacy leaders of today and tomorrow.*

## Spreading the Work: Mentor/Teacher Leadership Training

*“The best way to mentor children is to become an active listener.”*



*Pam speaks at the Future of Education Conference in Manila, the Philippines about the power of story as a way to teach literacy, with over 2,000 teachers in attendance.*

To empower and cultivate literacy leaders and create a sustainable mentorship cycle within communities, Pam and her collaborative partners have created an extensive mentor and teacher training program to support the professional and personal development of local leaders, teachers, parents, grandparents and local community members. This work builds mentors’ and teachers’ storytelling and literacy skills as tools for personal and community advocacy. Through social media, videoskype trainings and international messaging applications, mentors and teachers in the LitWorld community are connected to a global network working to support children and families in building strong voices and sharing their stories in powerful ways to make positive changes in their communities. In this way, the vision of the “LitCity” continues to spread. Pam demonstrates that good ideas for teaching and learning can spread with the use of social media and online trainings and the capacity building that comes when communities are truly engaged with each other.



*Pam is a master teacher trainer. Her renown as a teacher leader in the United States has led country leaders to call upon her to share her techniques and strategies for transformational literacy.*



*Pam pioneers the use of social media and online technology to mentor and train young people to be transformational literacy leaders, conveying the power of storytelling and story sharing across languages and cultures.*

## Amplifying the Message through Advocacy: World Read Aloud Day

***"When I say that reading aloud will change the world, I know it sounds simple. But one of the many great things about giving kids access to the power of stories and sharing them together is that it is simple. It is also cheap and easily done. And the impact is huge."***



**World Read Aloud Day** was created by Pam after she was reading to a class of second graders and a child said, "Mrs. Allyn, our teacher never has time to read aloud to us but it feels so good." When Pam said she longed for this for all children, that same child said, "I think if we could have a birthday party for the read aloud, people would pay attention, the way they do when it's someone's birthday." And on that day, Pam likes to say, the idea for a holiday for the read aloud was born in her mind. "WRAD" has become an annual advocacy event that enrolls a worldwide network of literacy champions in at least 100 countries to share the immediacy, power, and benefits of reading aloud to children of all ages.

Millions of people participate by reading aloud and hosting events at school or in their communities. This number is absolutely staggering given the fact that Pam launched WRAD in the first year, 2010, with a tiny staff of three! Pam and her colleagues experimented with the dawning of social media tools, as they were free and seemed to move ideas along rapidly, and this led quickly to the viral nature of WRAD, which continues to thrive in huge numbers today.



*Pam leads local New York City World Read Aloud Day events, motivating all ages to value and cherish the role literature can play in their lives.*

World Read Aloud Day sparks a big-picture conversation in schools, homes, and community-based organizations about the importance of literacy and enrolls communities in adopting year-round routines that have a profound and lasting impact on their children’s academic, health, and social success. Powerful new research Pam shares widely shows that children who are read aloud to do better in every academic area. This research was spread and amplified by the social media impact of WRAD, celebrated by millions of people in all 50 states and over 100 countries.

**World Read Aloud Day created 18 million impressions this year via social media.** Pam convenes a global network of WRADvocates, made up of over 150 influential individuals, organizations, and corporations, to rally their communities and online friends and followers to join the World Read Aloud Day movement and to spread LitWorld’s key messages year-round. WRAD is a phenomenon because it is spread by people through social media and actions are taken at the grassroots level. Mayors, congressmen and women, business leaders and celebrities have all participated. It is a great example of how a grassroots effort can impact policy-level conversations about the importance of reading to and with children. Most importantly to Pam, the children delight in it and count down the days until it is time for WRAD.



Screenshot of one classroom's participation in WRAD, as documented on Twitter using #WRAD16.



Pam joins in the World Read Aloud Day 2014 celebrations in New York City.



# Pam Allyn

WORDS CHANGE WORLDS

914.262.2488  
pamallyn@litworld.org  
litworld.org  
@pamallyn

29 Joralemon Street  
Brooklyn, NY 11201

## AWARDS

Scholastic Open a World of Possible Ambassador, 2015  
W.K. Kellogg Foundation for Racial Equity and Healing Fellowship, 2014–2017  
BIC "Fight for Your Write" Ambassador, 2014–2016  
Bush Institute Women's Initiative Fellowship, Mentor for Women and Girls in Egypt, 2013  
Scholastic Literacy Champion Award, 2013  
Mom's Choice Award, 2012  
Huffington Post's Greatest Person of the Day, 2010  
National Parenting Magazine Award, 2008  
James Patterson Page Turner Award, 2007

**Pam Allyn is a literacy expert and champion of children and educators worldwide. Author, activist, and renowned education entrepreneur, she believes passionately in the transformative power of literacy for all. Her work is centered around teaching children to recognize and put in action the powerful tool we all hold within ourselves: our story.**

## Education

Master of Arts, Deaf/Elementary Education  
Teachers College, Columbia University  
1986–1988  
*Winner of the Empire State Teaching Fellowship Prize*

Bachelor of Arts, English  
Amherst College  
1980–1984

## Experience

### Literacy Ambassador

**LitWorld, Executive Director and Founder** **2007–Present**

- Spearheads educational innovations implemented domestically and internationally.
- Leads workshops and innovates humanitarian literacy solutions for vulnerable children that dramatically improve quality of learning and outcomes for every child. National hub sites include Detroit, MI; Harlem, NY; and Jackson, MS. International hub sites include Kenya, Ghana, the Philippines, and Haiti.
- Founded and leads World Read Aloud Day, reaching hundreds of thousands of children each year through a social media campaign and advocacy events promoting family-wide and community-wide reading.
- Presents keynotes at national and global conferences on reading and writing pedagogy and practice, technology and literacy, resilience-building through writing, and strategies for English Learners.

**Books for Boys, Founder** **1999–Present**

- Created an award-winning program to encourage and support a love of literacy in at-risk young men, reaching hundreds of boys each year.
- Pioneers and promotes an inclusive and replicable reading environment for the nation's most vulnerable children and young adults.
- Speaks and writes extensively on the specific challenges and successes of motivating and sustaining the learning lives of boys.

## Teacher Leader

LitLife, Executive Director and Founder

2002–Present

- Creates solutions for schools and districts to meet and exceed standards.
- Trains teachers, literacy coaches, and administrators in best practice literacy instruction and educational leadership.
- Presents keynotes and speeches at national conferences on educational equity, family engagement, early childhood literacy education, at-risk students, reading solutions, English Learner students, special needs learners, writing across disciplines, writing skills and strategies, and technology/literacy integration.

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### Select Speaking Engagements

International Literacy Association (ILA) 2016 Conference  
Boston, MA, July 10, 2016

60<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission on the Status of Women  
United Nations  
New York, NY, March 22, 2016

Scholastic Education's 2016 Reading Summit  
Marina del Rey, CA, February 15, 2016

32<sup>nd</sup> Annual Parent and Family Engagement Conference,  
National Head Start Association  
San Diego, CA, December 1, 2015

Pearson Summer Literacy Symposium  
Elmhurst, IL, July 23, 2015

### Topics of Expertise

**Family/School Connections**

**Best Practice Literacy Instruction**

**Content Area Connections to Literacy**

**English Language Learners**

**Special Needs Students**

**Boys and Reading**

**The Power of Writing Instruction in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Classroom**

**Technology and the Teaching of Reading and Writing**

**Reading, Writing, and the Global Community of Learners**

## Authorship

*Pam is the author of 26 acclaimed and award-winning for educators and families on reading, writing and transformational literacy.*

***Taming the Wild Text: Reading in the 21st Century*** (Teacher Created Materials; 2017, forthcoming), with Monica Burns

***Every Child A Super Reader: 7 Strengths to Open A World of Possible*** (Scholastic; 2016), with Dr. Ernest Morrell

***Core Ready Lesson Sets: A Staircase to Standards Success for English Language Arts***, Curriculum Series, Grades K to 8 (Pearson; 2013-2016)

***Be Core Ready: Powerful, Effective Steps to Implementing and Achieving the Common Core State Standards*** (Pearson, 2012)

***Homework Pages for Independent Reading*** (Scholastic, 2013), with Georgie Marley

***Your Child's Writing Life: How to Inspire Confidence, Creativity, and Skill at Every Age*** (Penguin/Avery, 2011) Winner: Mom's Choice Award

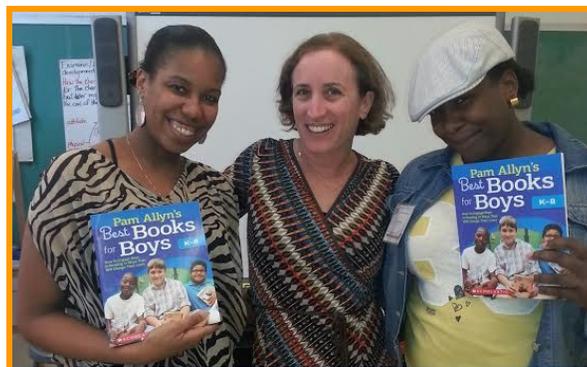
***Pam Allyn's Best Books for Boys*** (Scholastic, 2011)

***The Great Eight: Management Strategies for the Reading and Writing Classroom*** (Scholastic, 2010) with Jaime Margolies and Karen McNally

***What to Read When: The Books and Stories to Read with Your Child—And All the Best Times to Read Them*** (Penguin/Avery, 2009)

Winner: The National Magazine Parenting Award

***The Complete Year in Reading and Writing***, Curriculum Series, Grades K to 5 (Scholastic, 2008) with Patty Vitale-Reilly, Jaime Margolies, Karen McNally, Abi Gotthelf, and Laurie Pastore



*Pam's books are used by teachers, parents and community leaders nationally and around the world.*

## Select Excerpts by Pam Allyn

### **New York Times: Letter to the Editor Re: "The Right Way to Bribe Kids to Read"**

August 1, 2016

To the Editor:

I agree with KJ Dell’Antonia’s final point that creating a family culture for reading is more effective than monetary bribes. Reading is like anything: The more you genuinely love it, the more you will do it, and the better you get at it. But I want to add that first and foremost is to be a model yourself for your child.

Do your children see you reading? Do they see you genuinely connecting to the reading experiences in your own life? Parents should know that reading “easy” texts like comics and other lighter fare in the summer is as helpful to reading skill-building as the grade-level texts schools require.

The enjoyable text at any level builds stamina, engagement and motivation in your child, all critical strengths the child can take back to school for the start of the school year.

PAM ALLYN

### **Scholastic Teachers Blog: 7 Strengths of Super Readers**

June 2, 2016

Summer is a time of promise, when the light is golden and the sound of children’s voices echo in the air, even after darkness begins to come across the sky. For us as teachers, and for the families we serve, summer can be a period of great joy, but it can also stretch in front of us in a way that worries us: Will our children thrive as readers in these months?

It is during this time that children are at risk for the “summer slide,” a phenomenon that occurs when they are not reading or connecting with books in a rich and robust way. These “lost” months are not only a time when students may remain static in their reading progress—they can also “fall back” and lose ground.

### **Education Week with Larry Ferlazzo: Five Super Reader Commitments to Make the School Year Unforgettable**

August 7, 2016

The time is now to make a commitment to turn every child into a "super reader," to give them a sure way to become truly ready for the 21st century world and to experience the joy, pleasure and exaltation of an empowered reading life.

We can do this, first, by depathologizing the reading experience. We have "medicalized" reading instruction so that we are in a constant state of diagnosing children: leveling them, intervening with them, "pushing in" or "pulling out." The language we use to describe how we teach reading can be negative for children, and our methods for instruction can feel more like treating a disease than raising readers. At LitWord, I work with children across the United States and the world, and see children yearning for a positive reading experience, longing to join the literacy "club," and striving to become better at something they know will change their lives. The negative language of low expectations and intervention is inhibitive. It has prevented them from seeing themselves as super readers, from becoming aspirational in their reading goals, and from being bold and fearless in taking risks as readers. It has denied them a place at the reading table.

I'm recommending five commitments we can all make, as teachers, families and administrators to create a Super Reader Community Zone—a place where all children have the opportunity of a lifetime: to see reading as a fundamental, joyful part of their everyday lives.

### **1. Use a strength-based approach to reading instruction.**

My most recent work, which culminated in *Every Child a Super Reader*, a book I co-authored with Dr. Ernest Morrell, focuses on creating a positive foundation to build capacity in every reader through what we call the 7 Strengths. From belonging to courage, from confidence to hope, the 7 Strengths provide an escalating framework that helps bolster a child's authentic learning muscles. The strengths are designed to build resilience in our readers, for them to flourish in a community where their natural strengths are valued, and where they can practice taking risks as readers in a safe way. Use the 7 Strengths to build a supportive reading culture, to help children become "Reading Friends," and to foster a community of goal-setting, where children get in the habit of saying, "I am the kind of reader who..." or, "I am becoming the kind of reader who..." Starting off the year, the 7 Strengths can build capacity in your students for the "soft" skills that will make them stronger readers each week.

### **2. Affirm small steps of progress.**

Don't wait until later in the year to reward and affirm reading progress. Take time each day to honor those small steps. "Today I loved how Pedro read for nine minutes; yesterday he read for seven!" Or, "I appreciate how Sarah took time today to help Janelle select a new book in the library." Help your children discover strength-based language too, so that they can also praise each other's small steps as readers. Post on- and off-line the strength steps your students take each day as readers, from how they build stamina to how they stretch to try new genres.

### **3. Every day, hold 20 minutes of Structured Independent Reading.**

I can't stress this one enough! Twenty minutes a day of Structured Independent Reading will change your kids' lives. While we know from the *Scholastic Kids & Family Reading Report* that one-third of children ages 6-17 (33%) say their class has a designated time during the school day to read a book of choice

independently, only 17% do this every or almost every school day. Giving students opportunity to make choices about what they read and to provide them with book boxes (or a personalized file online) for their curated reading experiences helps them to see themselves as dynamic and ever-growing readers. No one should feel stuck in any one level at any time, though plenty of our students do. While I think leveling has a place for instruction, it is not a natural way to read. Every day I read above, below and at my level; and even as an adult, I am always learning how to be a stronger reader. Structured Independent Reading time helps our kids explore options across a wide variety of texts and build engagement and motivation. [End excerpt].

**Literacy Daily Blog, International Literacy Association**

July 16, 2015

I wrote my first “novel” in third grade for my hero, my teacher Mrs. Kovacs. (May her memory be forever a blessing!) She had read aloud to us from *Black Beauty*, and I was stoked. There was no turning back. The sound of the text had addled my brain, kept me up at night, and made me swoon. My title was “Thunder: The Story of a Horse” and the colon was my centerpiece, the cornerstone of my masterpiece, the first time I had ever used one.

Rather than dismiss my tome as a mere imitation, Mrs. Kovacs read my opus voraciously in one sitting. She turned to me and said in a voice rich with delight and awe: “You sure were inspired by Anna Sewell!” Without a hint of accusation, Mrs. Kovacs knew the truth: I had fallen in love with language.

The profound power of children’s literature is that it teaches us how to live, not just how to read. Children breathe in the big ideas, people, places, and facts and breathe out their own ideas, theories, and opinions in response. Beyond that, reading great children’s books can become a touchstone for how our children communicate themselves to the world through how they master language itself.

The reading/writing connection is beyond language. The integration of both enriches and enlivens the world of a child’s mind and thinking.

## Select Articles by Pam Allyn

***“Reading is like breathing in and writing is like breathing out.”***

***For a full list of articles, visit [pamallyn.com](http://pamallyn.com).***

### **Psychology Today**

August 26, 2016: [\*‘7 Strengths’ Supports Emotional and Social Learning\*](#)

### **Pearson Education**

August 10, 2016: [\*The Standards Matter\*](#)

### **Education Week**

August 7, 2016: Classroom Q&A with Larry Ferlazzo, [\*“Response: Ways ‘to Launch a Successful Year With Students’”\*](#)

### **Scholastic Teacher Magazine**

June 2, 2016: With Dr. Ernest Morrell, [\*7 Strengths of Super Readers\*](#)

### **Huffington Post**

November 25, 2015: [\*The International Day to End Violence Against Women\*](#)

### **ET Magazine**

September 13, 2015: [\*The Power of a Girl's Story\*](#)

### **International Literacy Association**

July 16, 2015: [\*Reading is Like Breathing In; Writing is Like Breathing Out\*](#)

### **edu@scholastic**

February 19, 2015: [\*Diversity is the Heartbeat of our Humanity\*](#)

### **Educational Leadership Magazine**

May 9, 2013: [\*Raising Learning Warriors\*](#)

### **Huffington Post**

April 4, 2013: [\*Humankind's Greatest Innovation is the Power of Story\*](#)

## Websites and Social Media

[www.pamallyn.com](http://www.pamallyn.com)

[www.litworld.org](http://www.litworld.org)

[www.litlifeinfo.com](http://www.litlifeinfo.com)

Twitter: @pamallyn; @litworldsays; @LitLifePD

Facebook: Pam Allyn; LitWorld; LitLife: Linking Literacy Leaders

## Pam Allyn in the Press

*For a full list of press coverage, visit [www.litworld.org/press](http://www.litworld.org/press).*

### **New York Times: Letter to the Editor**

August 1, 2016: [On Getting the Children to Read](#)

### **Yahoo! Finance**

June 15, 2016: [LitWorld and Scholastic Reinvent Summer School as LitCamp to Help Kids Avoid the Summer Slide](#)

### **Scholastic Reads Podcast**

May 16, 2016: Suzanne McCabe Interviews Pam Allyn, [Making the Summer Leap](#)

### **NPR: Here and Now**

October 13, 2015: Jeremy Hobson talks with Pam Allyn, [BIC is on a Mission to Save Handwriting. Does it Need Saving?](#)

### **Forbes Magazine**

October 6, 2014: Alicia Adamczyk, [International Day of the Girl: Nonprofit Aims to Educate 10,000 Girls Across The Globe](#)

### **Forbes Magazine**

August 5, 2013: Denise Restauri, [From Detroit To Manila, Literacy Is A Life Raft To Independence](#)

### **New York Daily News**

March 4, 2013: Douglas Feiden, [World Read Aloud Day Lets Children Around the World Tell Stories, Share Books, Gather in LitClubs, Revel in Beauty of Hearing the Written Word](#)

### **Westchester Magazine**

April, 2012: Ronnie Levine, [A Profile of LitWorld Founder and Hastings-on-Hudson Resident Pam Allyn](#)

### **Select TV Appearances:**

[Pam Allyn on Al Jazeera Live](#)

[Pam Allyn on CNN Quest Means Business](#)

[Pam Allyn on Bloomberg TV](#)

[Pam Allyn on NBC News 4 New York](#)

## Select Videos of Pam Allyn in Action

[Pam Allyn's Work is Changing the Lives of Girls](#)

[Children Tell the LitWorld Story](#)

[LitWorld: A Global Force for Change](#)

[LitWorld Presents: Heart Maps in Nepal](#)

[The HerStory Campaign](#)

[Let's Talk Live, Pam Allyn on \*Books for Boys\*](#)

[Ten Tips with Pam Allyn](#), Scholastic Education

## Select Pam Allyn Keynote Presentations

Scholastic Teacher Week Keynote Address: [Harnessing the Power of Students' Stories](#)

TEDx Global Learning School: [Everyone Deserves the Chance to Read](#)

[Pearson's National Summit on School Improvement](#)



## Testimonials of Support

“During my 25 years of service to the United Nations, I have had the privilege of working with and meeting many inspiring leaders from across the globe. Pam stands out as exceptional. She is driven by deep core values, which she incorporates into her organization and daily life, as reflected in the way she treats others, always with love, respect, humility and dignity. Pam is loved and respected by many, from the highest dignitaries to the most marginalized. Her leadership and scholarship are matched with her passion for peace, human rights and justice.”

Ann Erb-Leoncavallo, Speechwriter, UNFPA

“Pam Allyn partnered with the Detroit Public Schools Community District to help us embrace a love for literacy but she has impacted us in so many ways. Her efforts to create safe zones for LitClub children has influenced other district educators to duplicate her strategies within their classrooms. This has resulted in more safe zones for our students which improves self esteem and the school climate. LitClub members and their peers have discovered that they have a voice and can positively impact their communities. Through her influence, students have organized tutorial programs and fundraisers to support their schools and neighboring communities such as Flint, Michigan. Our children have developed a passion for literature and discovered that they are writers. Pam Allyn is a phenomenal human being who has such a love and respect for others. We Detroiters are so fortunate to know her.”

Cynthia Coble, HerStory Regional Coordinator, Detroit, MI

“Pam's vision is big and bold. She sees a world where children and communities rise up in strength, as a result of having been empowered by access to literacy-building programs. Through living and breathing this vision, wherever she goes, Pam emboldens those around her to expand their view of what is possible. Through her tireless efforts, her vision has been transferred to the schools, camps, libraries, and homes of New York City, impacting not only kids and families, but literacy advocates and community leaders as well. Never deterred or intimidated by the scope of her goals, she works diligently and with great resilience, tackling issues of inequity and social injustice in order to effect large scale change. She truly is the spark behind LitWorld's work, spurring the team on to think bigger and creatively, yet remain rooted in humility and love.”

Allie Bryan, New York City Regional Manager, LitWorld

“I have had the great pleasure and honor to work with Pam Allyn with LiWorld for the past 5 years. Mrs. Allyn has demonstrated a love for literature and children through her actions. She has shown young ladies how to find their voice through song, dance, reading, and writing activities. She has touch young women globally. She is a true role model of leadership and the empowerment of women. Mrs. Allen's love for literature is aspiring and contagious. She is a true visionary.”

Carmen Perry, Litworld Advisor, Detroit International Academy for Young Women

“Not often you meet someone who is not only your best friend but also a good writer.’ I first heard this quote from Pam Allyn as she read aloud to my class seven years ago. Little did I know that she would become this quote? Pam was never a stranger to me and my girls from the day we set eyes on her. She would passionately hug and kiss both the young and the old. Her every year week long literacy program was a beehive of activities and at the end of every session she made sure that she shared a Kenyan meal with all of us; typical of an African mother with her children. One thing stands out about Pam, she listens with her heart. You don’t find such a person these days. Any suggestion you have that is geared towards changing a life of a child especially a girl, she would say, “Yes! Let’s do it!” No matter how impossible it looks. She amazes me. The journey that Pam began in Kenya many years ago hasn’t been without hurdles. She has been robbed and threatened, but she never gave up. I have seen her face turn pale from exhaustion and fatigue after so much work which involved walking on the scorching sun in Kibera, a Kenyan slum, but she completely refused to take a rest even with the intervention of her husband Jim. She sat down and took a pain killer then she stood up and braved on. From that day I called her an iron lady. She is not the type that reads about the plight of women and children on the internet, she wears the shoe and walks the journey. She made many trips through the slums of Kibera but I vividly and fondly remember this one time when she brought her late father Bill on one of her expeditions. Everybody watched in awe as they jumped over raw sewages as if it was a normal thing to them and slid into shanties just to hear stories and offer humanitarian help. I could only think of a mother Teresa reincarnated. We always looked forward to her coming back; and who wouldn’t?

Through Pam’s effort many children have had a lifetime experience. An experience of owning their first book, boarding a vehicle for the first time to go on an educational trip or being the first in their family to join high school and of course boarding a plane to New York! It goes without saying but I’ll say it anyway. Pam has transformed lives! She has a very unique way of getting teachers support her work. Through Teachers As Literacy Leaders program, Pam brought a completely new leaf to teaching. Instead of preaching about the pros and cons of crude punishment to children, she simply demonstrated model lessons. We sang, danced and played games during the lesson; that’s a teacher I am today. One that every child looks up to, thanks to Pam Allyn. After this I saw the need to enroll in a university and study and with Pam’s help it happened. I am a better literacy leader!

In her quest to fight illiteracy, Pam has funded LitClubs far and wide. She has made the world a small village through sharing of stories from different LitClubs. Girls have learnt that no matter their color they all share the same experiences. Experiences of having to snatch their rights from their oppressors, being looked down upon and being seen as emotional beings. I see an array of hope; a light at the end of the tunnel. I see a world where illiteracy will be a thing of the past. I see many women take up leadership positions from men. With Pam Allyn, all this is possible. No award can compare to the work she began in Africa and spread all over the world. I would give her a Nobel peace prize for her outstanding work then I would sit back and smile. It is high time someone recognized her work.”

Rose Mureka, LitWorld's first international LitClub mentor in Kenya

## Letters of Reference



Office of Literacy  
3011 W. Grand Blvd. 9th Floor  
Detroit, MI 48201

August 15, 2016

Dear Sir or Madam:

I am extremely happy to recommend Ms. Pam Allyn, founder of LitWorld, a non-profit, international organization that promotes world-wide literacy for the 2017 Brock International Prize.

During the 2012/2013 school year, Pam Allyn and the Detroit Public Schools began an extraordinary partnership to help bring about change in the district's efforts to improve our literacy landscape. Ms. Allyn's organization, LitWorld, has strengthened the literacy rates and life perspectives of girls in more than twenty-five of our district's schools.

These single-gender LitClubs allow our students to form a "sisterhood" where the girls share their life-stories, engage in team-building activities, express their ideas orally and through writing at each session, and develop strengths such as: belonging, curiosity, friendship, kindness, confidence, courage, and hope.

In fact, while at a meeting today, a LitClub mentor stated that the environment at the meetings have become so comforting that girls are sharing such personal stories that they've had to teach the girls that all things shared within the sessions must remain in the session. The mentor also stated that her biggest challenge for next school year will be her school's ability to accommodate the growing number of girls wanting to belong to a LitClub. Quite honestly, this is a positive challenge as our girls' membership in the clubs, through the use of the LitClub's curriculum, is helping to develop girls that were once shy into becoming self-assured individuals.

LitWorld's mission to address the complex challenge of illiteracy is helping in Detroit, Michigan which has an adult illiteracy rate of over 50%. Our girls often become victims of the cycle of poverty due to living in communities that don't often support literacy growth. Their

involvement in the various LitClub activities extends beyond the school day and into their communities. Our girls are now able to help one another as well as other children and family members by sharing the joys of literacy.

Since my first conversation with Ms. Allyn in 2012, the Detroit Public Schools' LitClubs have grown to more than twenty-five clubs with additional schools expressing interest almost daily. LitWorld has provided books, arranged for teachers' professional development delivered by their consultants, supported literacy initiatives such as our summer Everything Literacy Campaign, established a literacy text-messaging system that sends literacy text messages to DPS parents and invited girls from our district to attend its first LitWorld summit in New York, all without cost to the district. Detroit Public Schools has been on the receiving end of this outstanding organization that not only has a global passion for children, but puts its passion into action. Their team of people, most of whom I have met personally, displays an unrivaled passion centered on helping others by eradicating global illiteracy, especially among females.

LitWorld sponsors several programs that Detroit Public Schools students have been a part of:

- Stand Up for Girls campaign: A day dedicated to advocating every girl's right to share their story and help them understand that their written and spoken words have the power to create change in the world.
- World Read Aloud Day: A day when global attention is focused on the importance of reading aloud and sharing stories.
- LitClub: Small, gender specific groups of children ranging in age from 10 years to 14 years old. This program focuses on building character through reading, writing, speaking, and listening. LitWorld has created a curriculum that builds resilience through the cultivation of seven core strengths: Belonging, Curiosity, Kindness, Friendship, Confidence, Courage, and Hope.
- The Detroit International Academy for Young Women LitClub created the "DIA Read Aloud" Song which was translated and taught to members of LitClubs in India and Haiti.
- LitCamp: A gender specific summer camp that combines the LitClub philosophy with the American Summer Camp Model. LitWorld has a curriculum for 1 week and 4-5 week LitCamp programs.

Additionally, Pam Allyn and LitWorld hosted a global LitWorld Summit in New York during March 2016. Girls and their mentors from: Kenya, Colombia, Haiti, India, Jordan, Nepal, Nicaragua, the Philippines, Michigan, New Jersey, New York, Mississippi, and California gathered to share experiences that served to bridge boundaries through storytelling, writing,

art, and singing as the girls are living examples of individuals who have a sense of independence, joy, and hope through their LitWorld experiences.

Through Pam's advocacy and determination, the girls were able to speak to the United Nations about the challenges faced by girls worldwide whose futures were bleak, but through their involvement in LitClubs their life's trajectories have changed.

Pam's passion, research, and determination to eradicate illiteracy, as evidenced by having LitClubs in twenty-six countries, speaks to her unparalleled commitment to providing quality literacy learning to the world's children.

Pam deeply believes in the transformational power of literacy and has the vision and ability to translate her beliefs into impactful programs and partnerships. She is passionate about sharing the joy of literacy and self-expression with every child. She is a collaborative and thoughtful partner who has created a literacy revolution in the Detroit Public School system. Pam's dynamic and visionary leadership has led to an incredibly robust partnership impacting children and families in 97 public schools in Detroit.

For all of these reasons and others not mentioned due to space limitations, I whole-heartedly recommend Pam Allyn for the Brock International Prize in Education. If you have any questions, I invite you to contact me at (313) 873-4992 or (313) 401-4071 or by email at [deborah.winston02@detroitk12.org](mailto:deborah.winston02@detroitk12.org).

Best regards,  
Deborah L. Winston, Ph.D.  
Executive Director of the DPS Office of Literacy

**TEACHERS COLLEGE**  
**COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY**  
**DEPARTMENT OF ARTS AND HUMANITIES**  
**ENGLISH EDUCATION PROGRAM**

August 31, 2016

To Whom it May Concern,

It is with the greatest pleasure that I recommend Pam Allyn for the Brock International Prize in Education. I have known and worked closely with several of your past winners such as Gloria Ladson-Billings and Linda Darling-Hammond and I believe that Pam has made contributions of a similar and substantive nature to the field of education. I have had the pleasure of working with Pam on a number of initiatives over the past decade. I serve on the Board of Directors of LitWorld, an international nonprofit devoted to literacy in developing countries and inner cities in the U.S. started by Pam in 2007. I have also worked with Pam in urban schools in the Northeast through LitLife, an organization dedicated to high quality professional development for our nation's literacy teachers. Pam and I have also collaborated on a book entitled "Every Child a Super Reader: 7 Strengths to Open a World of Possible, which was published by Scholastic in 2016. Upon our publication, Pam and I have traveled the country speaking at schools, community centers, and professional conferences, inviting parents, teachers, and administrators into our Super Reader Movement, which draws upon social and emotional learning, culturally relevant teaching, and the latest literacy research to argue for a strengths-based approach to empowering our most vulnerable students as super readers. From all of these collaborations I have come to know Pam quite well and I feel comfortable speaking to her merits for this award.

Pam is one of the most dynamic and innovative educators that I know. She is fully committed to kids and to literacy education and she has a rare combination of pedagogical knowledge, political wisdom, and organizational genius that have allowed her to build several organizations that have had a major global impact. LitWorld is an international organization operating in 25 countries across five continents that is dedicated to empowering girls and other historically marginalized groups through literacy. Through its LitClubs and LitCamps, its Stand Up for Girls and World Read Aloud Day, the organization creates spaces for young people to share their stories, to feel powerful as readers and writers, and to foster a love of literacy and learning. This past February, more than 1 million students from over 100 countries participated in World Read Aloud Day and nearly 50,000 students experienced LitCamps this summer! Lit World is one of those amazing organizations that continues to experience success as it changes daily, the lives of girls and boys in places such as the Philippines, Haiti, Kenya, Detroit, and Harlem, where these victories are so desperately

needed. We are constantly hearing about alums of LitClubs being accepted into top colleges and universities and we hear the powerful testimonies from current students and parents alike about how the program has created new possibilities for them.

Pam is a tireless advocate for LitWorld. She travels the country to cultivate a donor base for the multimillion dollar organization. She works with school districts, housing projects, libraries, and community centers to host LitClubs, and she coordinates a full-time staff, a Board of Directors, an Advisory Council, and a Young Professionals Group. LitWorld is alive and well because of Pam's bold vision, her boundless energy, her pedagogical clarity, her mentorship, and her social entrepreneurship. These are rare talents in combination. I see in Pam a builder, a connector, and a pedagogical force.

Pam is also an author and intellectual. She has written 26 books and she has a command of the relevant scholarship yet she also has a firm grounding in the everyday life of literacy classrooms. In our last book we drew upon reading research, attachment theory, critical multiculturalism, and sociocultural learning to offer a vision for literacy instruction in homes, in classrooms, and in out of school learning environments. In this and in her other books, Pam synthesizes research and speaks to its relevance for practice. She speaks to teachers, librarians, principals, and superintendents. She speaks to mothers, fathers, and grandparents. She pushes book publishers and curriculum developers. She dialogues with the press. She sits with policymakers. She presents at professional conferences and she is at the forefront of shaping our national agenda. Because of her commitment to scholarship for equity and justice Pam was selected as an inaugural W.K. Kellogg Foundation Fellow for Racial Equity and Healing.

Pam is a literacy teacher educator. Through LitLife, where Pam is the co-Founder and Inspiration Director, Pam works with teachers and schools across the country to connect big ideas with everyday practices that benefit students socially, emotionally, and culturally while also boosting their academic achievement. Pam provides dynamic, interactive, and humanizing interactions with teachers that are personalized, professional, sustained, and effective. Her ideas about teacher learning have endeared her to educators and school systems throughout the country. I have had the opportunity to work with teachers alongside Pam and her passion, her pedagogical content knowledge, and her love for students and literacy come through. What I have also learned is that she is meticulous in her organization of professional learning communities and she has an amazing ability to nurture organizations that develop autonomous leaders and shared commitments. Thus she has been able to grow LitLife without losing its focus or its impact. Pam is able to draw out the best in people and she has mentored a generation of literacy leaders.

Pam is so deserving of this award for her intellectual contributions to literacy education, for her global advocacy, for her work with parents, community based organizations, classroom educators and administrators, and for her willingness to build robust and sustainable nonprofits that provide direct services for children, communities, and schools. I cannot say enough about her and the impact that she is having on literacy worldwide. For these reasons and many more I offer her my most enthusiastic recommendation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ernest Morrell', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Ernest Morrell, Ph.D.  
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August 31, 2016

To Whom It May Concern:

Pam Allyn, a gifted and innovative educator, embodies the core values of the Brock Family Community Foundation. Pam has dedicated her adult life to transforming the nature of literacy instruction and altering our understanding of what it means to be literate. Promoting transformational literacy and her seven strengths model, a new way to ensure every child's success, Pam is changing the lives of educators, children and families around the world. Through a deep belief that every child can become a super reader, one who's then empowered to change the world, Pam is making the power and promise of literacy available to every child.

More than thirty years ago, the renowned early literacy researcher Don Holdaway wrote, "Learning to read and write ought to be one of the most joyful and successful of human undertakings." Sadly, that's not always the experience of young children setting out on their journey into literacy. Too often, well-meaning, but misinformed teachers rely on commercial reading programs, which emphasize skill and drill and mastery of isolated sounds and letters, which have little to do with real reading. In so doing, teachers may overlook the simple yet powerful engagement of a child, a book, and a joyfully literate adult, who reads the book aloud, discusses the book, and helps the child understand what's most essential—that reading should always be deeply meaningful and personally enriching. Every day, smart, well-meaning teachers unwittingly erect instructional roadblocks between their students and the life-affirming pleasure and power of reading.

Pam Allyn has dedicated her life to changing this. Through her visionary work with the nonprofits she founded, Books for Boys, LitLife, and LitWorld, her more than two dozen illuminating professional books and resources, many of which Scholastic is honored to have published, and her tireless efforts to provide professional information about joyful literacy to a global community of educators, Pam Allyn is creating a transformational literacy movement that builds on what students *can* do. She is altering our understanding of the most effective ways to help children develop as capable, creative readers, who are both proficient and joyfully engaged and embrace the life-transforming potential of literacy.

Rather than promoting a traditional, linear, cognitive-based approach to literacy, Pam recognizes the social nature of literacy and places literacy instruction inside a community of learners. She is helping educators understand that literacy, like all human endeavors, is at its heart, social. She is also introducing educators to the social-emotional nature of language and literacy learning; indeed, she maintains that curiosity and confidence, for example, are, ultimately, as important for the developing reader as knowledge about the alphabet and familiarity with story structure.

Finally, in the schools and organizations throughout the world where Pam carries her message of transformational literacy, educators and students alike discover reading and writing as potent tools for self-discovery; as a way to tell their own stories and discover the stories of others. In this way, literacy is enlargement of life. Children learn to outgrow themselves through their own stories and the stories they acquire through oral storytelling and access to books. They learn to believe in themselves and in their power to make the world a better place for others.

Pam helps educators understand that reading makes readers, not skill work. Frequent, voluminous happy experiences with books—preferably in a room that is filled with beautiful books and in the company of a teacher who knows how to invite and sustain a love of stories is the way to teach and learn reading.

It is a great pleasure and privilege to recommend Pam Allyn for the Brock International Prize in Education. Her message of joyful literacy and a belief in the unlimited potential of all children is transforming literacy instruction across the states and around the world—and, in the process, giving children the gift of reading for a lifetime.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lois Bridges". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "L" and "B".

Lois Bridges, Ph.D.  
VP/Publisher  
Scholastic Professional

September 1, 2016

**RE: RECOMMENDATION OF PAM ALLYN FOR THE BROCK INTERNATIONAL PRIZE IN EDUCATION**

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

Pam Allyn is the founder of LitWorld, a non-profit that brings the power of reading, writing, and story telling to girls, boys, and women in some the most fragile and needy communities around the world, from the slums of Nairobi, to neglected districts in Detroit, to post-earthquake Haiti, and even the Jordanian refugee camps for Syrians and Iraqis. Serving the literacy needs of poor women and people in more than two dozen countries in South America, North America, Africa, the Middle East, the Balkans, and South East Asia, LitWorld is truly a global organization reflecting Pam's skills and commitment as a leader over the last ten years that I have known and worked in partnership with her. Together, we established the first LitWorld international program in 2006 with the teachers, children, and parents at the Red Rose School in Kibera, one of the largest slums in Africa and an epicentre of the 2007/2008 post-election violence in Kenya. It gives me great joy to recommend Pam for the esteemed Brock International Prize in Education and to emphasize three particular reasons why I am convinced she should win this Prize.

First, Pam's vision matches with a key aspect of the policy recommendations of U.N. resolution 1325 on the education needs of women and children in peace-making and post-conflict situations. As an effective activist, Pam has found a practical solution and turned her vision from an idea into a real set of programs deployed in many countries. The journey has not been easy, but Pam has endured with her idea; coupling passion and resilience to deliver results that are measurable in the number of young people and women empowered through different LitWorld programs. Since the U.N. resolution 1325 was adopted, many agencies and organisations have grappled with how to engage and empower women and children as agents of positive change and peace in conflict and post-conflict situations through education among other interventions. Pam's brainchild, LitWorld, focuses on a niche yet practical aspect of empowerment through literacy programs. Numerous studies have shown that inclusive education and literacy, in particular for marginalized women and children, is a key area that must be addressed as one of the recommendations of resolution 1325. Women who can read and write can participate in a more effective way in economic, social, and political lives of their communities and positively influence the courses of peace and development in the short term and the long term. Although the theory that indicates why literacy is important has always been there; Pam through LitWorld moves from the "academic why" to the "practical how" of accomplishing innovative scalable and rapidly deployable yet sustainable literacy programs in diverse cultural, religious, political, and language settings. Across countries speaking languages such as Spanish, Creole, French, Tagalog, Swahili, English, Arabic and more, the LitWorld program models of girls and boys clubs, mothers clubs, community libraries has shown itself as an idea that works. The passion, resilience, and willingness to learn and adapt for success over the last decade as the visionary behind LitWorld puts Pam in a unique position as the winner of this prize to demonstrate what has worked, what challenges were overcome, and different lessons gained from failures and successes in different settings. Pam has a compelling theory of change based on the power of literacy, and through LitWorld she has proven that this theory of change can work in promoting lasting peace by giving marginalised women and children the tools to read, write, and tell their own stories, stories of dignity, independence, hope, peace, and joy.

Second, as a Prize winner, Pam will be able to share the nuts and bolts of creating and growing a start-up non-profit from scratch into an effective global movement. Through her experience in building up and leading LitWorld, Pam will be a role model and treasure trove of ideas for people in the United States and across the world on a great number of important topics that she has mastered as an effective activist. These include budgeting and financial management, organisational structure and innovation, digital tools in program delivery, social media and emerging communication tools, recruiting and motivation of staff and volunteers, legal and compliance requirements for non-profits in

the USA, lobbying the US Congress and the U.N. for policies and budgets, security, safety and risk management guidelines for NGOs at home and abroad.

Third, Pam is an advocate and activist who understands deeply that change-making is a team-sport. In order for LitWorld to leverage its limited resources, scale up its impact, and provide sustainable outcomes, Pam has steered her team constantly towards engagement through her partnership with local organisations that have a shared mission and value system. In identifying these partner organisations, setting up formal and informal working arrangements, tailoring new programs and adapting existing ones to the unique circumstances of each country or community, Pam and her team have been very effective in their intercultural skills and succeeded in realising the LitWorld mission of promoting sustainable literacy in different cultures, places, and spaces. In order to work effectively in countries as diverse as Cameroon, Cambodia, and Colombia, Nicaragua, Nigeria, and Nepal, or Peru, Philippines, and Pakistan, and across the United States from city to city, Pam and the LitWorld team have had to show empathy, flexibility, humility, and determination to work hand in and with the partnerships that result in culturally appropriate programs and positive literacy and related outcomes for each environment.

Over the past decade that I have worked with Pam Allyn, I have seen her as the kind of leader who puts her head, her heart, and her hands into the mission of empowering vulnerable youth and women through effective and well-adapted literacy programs. She's a dynamic speaker and genuinely engaging person both as a colleague and a teacher in many different settings. Pam's skills, knowledge, and wisdom as a champion of the transformative power of literacy and story telling for individuals and communities will be invaluable in representing the honor of the Brock International Prize.

Yours sincerely,  
Hon Kenneth O. Okoth, MP  
National Assembly, Parliament of Kenya  
Kibra Constituency, Nairobi  
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