Reading Assist Institute, in affiliation with AmeriCorps Delaware, nominates the Reading Assist Intervention Program as the 2018 Most Significant Innovation to an existing program. This nomination is respectfully submitted by Vickie Innes, Executive Director of Reading Assist Institute, [VInnes@readingassist.org](mailto:VInnes@readingassist.org), 100 West 10thStreet, Suite 910, Wilmington, DE, (302) 425-4080 extension 106.

For years, Reading Assist matched volunteer tutors with struggling readers in Delaware to combat the risk of reading failure. In 2015, we committed to the creation of the Reading Assist Intervention (RAI) Corps, an AmeriCorps program in partnership with a local school district that brought corps members to Delaware to deliver reading intervention to students inside their schools, five days a week, 45 minutes a day.

The results were impressive – across the board. But corps members were working with a program designed for less intensive team-teaching that did not play to the specific strengths of the school-based AmeriCorps team.

Our staff set out to create a new iteration of our program, specifically designed to provide intensive, daily intervention to students with severe reading challenges and disabilities – students who had been through other reading interventions without success, including Special Education students and English Language Learners. No other reading corps program in the country works one-to-one with children at this level of need.

As RAI Corps members provided feedback and tested new ideas, Reading Assist staff reworked the program. This newly revised Reading Assist Intervention Program teaches corps members to be diagnostic and prescriptive in their intervention, identifying the unique challenges of each student and giving them the tools to determine and deliver necessary intervention.

By the end of the 2016-17 school year, the new program had been fully accredited by the International Multisensory Structured Language Education Council (IMSLEC).

The 2017-18 RAI Corps members were the first to undertake the 50-hour training course in the new program. They will finish their year as Certified Reading Assist Interventionists in the IMSLEC-accredited program.

Students are thriving across all measurements our RAI Corps members track, including indicators like phonemic segmentation, nonsense word fluency and whole words read. At the beginning of the year, only two of the 17 new 2nd grade students in the program hit benchmarks for phonemic segmentation; by mid-year, 100% of those students had reached the mark. Likewise, by midyear, 100% of all third graders had hit benchmarks for whole words read, increasing words correct per minute by 69.57%.

Other districts in Delaware have taken notice of these results. Growing beyond its initial pilot program, the RAI Corps will expand to nine schools next year.

But the most important story is told one student at a time. Take Ronaldo. Ronaldo began second grade confusing letters and numbers when asked to write the alphabet. He finished third grade this year reading at grade level. The speed of Ronaldo’s turnaround might not have been possible without the direct, one-to-one intervention that the revised Reading Assist Intervention Program was specifically designed to facilitate.