

## TESSERACT SCHOOL INTRODUCES JOLLY PHONICS

PARADISE VALLEY, ARIZONA -July 29, 2008-Tesseract School, a non-profit, independent private school-preschool through eighth grade, with its inaugural ninth-grade class scheduled for fall 2008-announced its plan to introduce Jolly Phonics, a well-respected grammar and phonics program, into its kindergarten curriculum.

Tesseract's commitment to academic excellence includes encouraging and enabling faculty members to regularly participate in professional development opportunities. As such, a team of faculty members was interested in researching methods to enrich the school's simultaneous, multi-sensory integration of language arts (SMILA) program for lower school students. After a thorough investigation, it was clear that the Jolly Phonics program was just what was needed.

To prepare for the introduction of this new program into the school's curriculum, Tesseract sent Kate Wilkes, kindergarten educator, for training in Long Eaton, Nottingham, United Kingdom. Wilkes studied under Elizabeth Nonweiler, who has more than 30 years of experience in phonics education. The Jolly phonics training included 24 educators from around the United Kingdom and Canada.

"After participating in this training, it was clear to see that our current phonics program was right on the mark," commented Wilkes. "When we add Jolly Phonics to our curriculum, it will provide us with added techniques for a child-friendly and memorable way to teach."

Tesseract has been using its phonics program for the last 12 years. Originally designed for use with children with dyslexia, the multisensory program has proven to be successful in the mainstream classroom. Research has shown that children need a strong foundation in phonics in order to perform well in spelling and reading. A good foundation is comprised of multiple components: letter-sound correspondence, blending sounds and segmenting words. After a child has learned those skills, then language comprehension processes make reading more fluent.

"SMILA has worked well for us in the past, but it lacked the interactive component that Jolly Phonics offers. Now we can engage the children through actions and songs that will make the learning more relevant and age-appropriate," added Wilkes.

Tesseract recently purchased an interactive Prometheus Board and software for full integration of the Jolly Phonics program in fall 2008. This new technology will further enable students to engage in hands-on, tactile learning experiences utilizing Jolly Phonics techniques. Tesseract hopes to begin implementing Jolly Grammar, the Jolly Phonics spelling and grammar program, into the lower school's program for the 2009-2010 school year.

Jolly Phonics is utilized in the majority of schools in Great Britain, and is used in Canada, Australia and other regions of the world. While there are some areas of the United

States that have also been utilizing Jolly Phonics, it appears there are very few schools in Arizona that are doing so. Tesseract hopes to be the first independent school in Arizona to promote this program in the Valley. After training in the United Kingdom this summer, Wilkes was contacted by Jolly Phonics to discuss the training and to potentially make arrangements for making Tesseract a training center so that other educators will be able to benefit from direct exposure to this program.

"We are always looking for ways to enrich the curriculum and our students' experiences," said Nigel Taplin, head of Tesseract School. "We are excited to be able to offer this excellent program."

**About Jolly Phonics:**

Jolly Phonics has been developed with Sue Lloyd and Sara Wernham, primary/elementary school teachers at Woods Loke Primary School in Lowestoft, England. Sue Lloyd has used phonic methods for many years, developing and improving them from research, advice and the practical experience she and her colleagues have gained. Now, children at the school are consistently well above average on reading tests. Jolly Grammar is the next stage, after a first year with Jolly Phonics. It helps children to greater express themselves in writing and improves their spelling in a structured way by teaching the key rules. For more information visit [www.jollylearning.co.uk](http://www.jollylearning.co.uk).

**About Tesseract:**

Tesseract School is a non-profit, independent private school, preschool through eighth grade, in Paradise Valley, Arizona. The school's inaugural ninth-grade class is scheduled for fall 2008, along with the scheduled opening of its new middle and upper school campus; renovations are planned for the school's Doubletree campus. Tesseract School has high academic standards, thematic learning and a 19-year history of academic excellence. Tesseract fosters each student's intellect, love of learning and strength of character in an innovative and collaborative environment. It prepares students to excel in college and beyond, lead lives of purpose, and become ethical and compassionate citizens with a global perspective. Tesseract School is located at 4800 East Doubletree Ranch Road, Paradise Valley, Arizona 85253. For more information visit [www.tesseractschool.org](http://www.tesseractschool.org).

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