What is the word gap and why does it matter?

By age five, children of poverty have heard 30 million fewer words than their wealthier peers. Lacking vocabulary, these low-income children are too often not ready for kindergarten. Failing at the start, they struggle to succeed in school and are more likely to drop out.

The word gap can be bridged—if it is addressed early. Talking, singing, reading to very young children is crucial to their early development. Which is why low-income children benefit most from the support they receive in early childcare. And that is just one way that you make a difference.

For twenty years, Oasis childcare has been a loving haven for babies and toddlers whose mothers are taking GED, ESL, or job training courses. This year, we will work even harder to bridge the word gap. With the help of Jumpstart, an organization that provides trained literacy volunteers to childcare centers in poor areas, our tots will spend more time learning the pre-literacy skills that are crucial to school success.

Trained Jumpstart volunteers will help our teachers and our Oasis volunteers work one-on-one with children to develop their early literacy skills. The program is proven to produce gains in children’s language and literacy skills. The babies and toddlers in our childcare rooms will hear, sing, and speak the words they so need to learn.

One in three children in this city lives in poverty. They need the food and clothing you provide. They also need vocabulary: They need millions of words. Donors like you are helping to ensure our children get the early literacy skills they need to succeed in school—and in life. The Church of Christ the King has provided a generous grant to support these efforts.

The word gap matters. Thank you for helping our children close it.
No hot, dull afternoons spent indoors for Oasis campers! Your gifts helped 170 inner-city children escape the heat and enjoy summer like every kid should. Ten Paterson teens worked their first job as counselors at Oasis Carl’s Kids camp. Campers took swim lessons and spent their days outdoors at the Wyckoff Family YMCA. Campers were treated to a BBQ hosted by the YMCA board. On a field trip to America’s Grow-a-Row Farm, they picked late summer apples and learned about farming. They brought fresh fruits and veggies home for mom and dad!
Message from Executive Director Jennifer Brady

Millions of words. That is what we hope to deliver to our youngest friends this year…. millions of words to help our children gain the early literacy skills that, because of their circumstances, they are at risk of not developing.

When a child is deprived of food, we are outraged. This is because child hunger is identified as a moral and economic issue that moves us to action. At Oasis, we believe that the poverty of vocabulary should be discussed with the same passion as child hunger. We have an obligation to help the children who come here every day. And with your help, we can!

This fall, we are grateful for your support that will help our kids bridge the word gap early. Together we can help set the stage for successful learning experiences for all children, regardless of their zip code.

Many thanks to all those who donated a “Lunches with Love” from June through the first half of September

- Claire McLellan—In honor of Lya Pfeifer
- Benjamin Moore
- Health and Wellness Partners (4 lunches)
- Irmgard Delsignore—In honor of Lya Pfeifer
- Satie Budham—In honor of her 10 year anniversary
- Marybeth Gallagher (2 lunches)
- Kate Snee—in honor of FAMS graduates
- Tina Surico—In honor of Christy Bisgrove
- Anthony Allgood (3 lunches)
- Debbie & Jeffrey Fecteau—In honor of Sandy Kelman’s birthday
- John Feeney—In memory of Maureen Morrison
- Rosemary Feeney—In memory of Maureen Morrison
- Flora Kelly
- Jane & Pat Donohue—In memory of Paula Rothenberg
- Lorraine Schroers—In honor of Tom & Debbie Duffy
- Debbie Duffy—In honor of Sr. Eleanor Pierre
- WPU Residency Life
- Caroline Gundeck—(2 lunches) In honor of Katie Gundeck & in memory of Maria Raquel Castro
- Richard Z. Krempecki—In honor of Keri Fleming’s birthday

Women Learn to Read and Write in Oasis Summer Literacy Class

In the July heat, Thelma practiced reading in the Oasis Summer Basic Literacy class. Nine women attended basic literacy classes for six weeks this summer. They entered at a third-grade reading level, determined to gain fundamental skills. Most returned in September to continue their quest to earn their GED. A high school diploma, and the ability to read and write, are essential in today’s economy. Thank you donors for helping these women get the skills they need to succeed in the workforce.
Wendy came to the United States in 2012. She has one son, a five-year-old boy with autism. She is determined to learn English, so she can more easily communicate well with his teachers and therapists.

She hopes to become an American citizen soon. The Oasis citizenship course, she says, "...is perfect. When I have a question, the teacher answers it. Sometimes, I feel I might have too many questions. Maybe that’s because history was my favorite high school subject."

Wendy is fascinated by American history—something she learned little about in the Dominican Republic. With Oasis, she has the chance to learn about the history of the United States, on the way to becoming a naturalized American citizen.

Thank you, donors, for helping Wendy—and so many other women like her—become Americans.

Oasis ESL and Citizenship student, Wendy

Oasis after-school students “shopped” for school supplies at the August Oasis School “Store.” We received many generous donations of school supplies and opened our own back-to-school boutique where children could choose the items they needed. Our kids arrived with lists provided by their classroom teachers, and Oasis volunteers helped them “shop”—free of charge. A year of school supplies for one elementary-age child costs $636.96 on average—a price too steep for many Paterson families. With your help, Oasis families started their children on the right foot this school year.