



## **The Siena School Hosts 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Celebration**

*Siena honors Learning Ally along with local key supporters*

**Silver Spring, Maryland, November 1, 2017** - The Siena School held its annual Siena Celebration on October 26<sup>th</sup>, 2017, at the Silver Spring Civic Center in Maryland. Each year, The Siena community comes together to celebrate school achievements and to recognize important contributions to both Siena and the wider field of dyslexia education.

Annually, one individual or organization is awarded The Siena Cypress Leadership Award for significant and lasting contributions to the education of children and young adults with learning disabilities. Siena awarded this year's Cypress Leadership Award to Learning Ally, a nonprofit providing dyslexia support through audiobooks & parent support services. In addition to Learning Ally's dedication to making books accessible to all readers, they recently partnered with The Siena School to produce *Here to Be Heard*, a collection of stories written and recorded by Siena students (available in [hard copy](#), e-book, and audiobook on Learning Ally).

Jilly Darefsky, Head of School at The Siena School, presented Learning Ally with the Cypress Leadership Award. She spoke of Learning Ally's important contributions to the field of dyslexia education: "Learning Ally provides the opportunity for books to no longer be inaccessible, frustrating and intimidating because they are truly creating an opportunity for equal opportunities to learn."



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Mary Lou McGee, a Learning Ally Board Member, accepted the Cypress Leadership Award on behalf of the organization. Key supporters Rickie Hartman, Amy Blodgett, and the R. Cowley Shock Trauma Center were also honored for their contributions to The Siena School.

### **About The Siena School**

The Siena School in Silver Spring, Maryland serves bright, college-bound students with language-based learning differences, such as dyslexia. Siena's staff and board of advisors include distinguished national, state and local education leaders and professionals. The school was established in 2006 and serves students in grades 4 – 12. Siena's program is designed for students with mild to moderate learning needs who are experiencing a discrepancy between their academic achievement and intellectual abilities in one or more areas such as reading, writing, oral expression or math. Siena delivers an individualized educational program featuring small class sizes, research-based instructional methodologies, a highly trained staff and an educational environment specifically designed to meet the unique needs of our students, with a specific emphasis on the arts. For further information, The Siena School can be contacted at (301) 244-3600 or on the web at [www.thesienaschool.org](http://www.thesienaschool.org).

### **About Learning Ally**

Founded in 1948, Learning Ally supports K-12, college and graduate students, veterans and lifelong learners – all of whom read and learn differently due to dyslexia, blindness or visual impairment, and other disabilities. Through its extensive community events and support programs, Learning Ally enables parents, teachers and specialists to help students thrive and succeed. The organization hosts live and virtual events for families and teachers; provides instructive webinars led by experts as well as peer-to-peer sessions led by students; personal consultations for parents; and professional development workshops for educators.

Learning Ally's collection of 80,000 human-narrated audio textbooks and literature titles can be downloaded by students using their smartphones and tablets, and is the largest of its kind in the world. As a 501(c)3 nonprofit, Learning Ally is partially funded by grants from state and local education programs, and the generous contributions of individuals, foundations and corporations. For more information, visit <http://LearningAlly.org>.