

Dyslexia Network Plus

NEWSLETTER SPRING TERM 2010

A word from the new chairperson

Following the last AGM in October last year I find myself being chair of Dyslexia Network Plus..... Firstly I would like to give my thanks and appreciation to the retiring chair Yvonne Jackson for all her hard work.



I have been involved with the dyslexia group in Thirsk for some time, discovering it through Jill Swinhoe - who was my Dyslexia Teacher. Although I was identified as being dyslexic at about 7 years of age, it was not until I was in my early 40s that I actually found out that I was dyslexic.

I always struggled with school work, but I had good vocabulary skills and lots of strategies (different ways of coping/hiding my dyslexia - like making my handwriting was so bad no one could read my bad spelling - but then I could not read it either!)

School was a struggle for me and most of my working life I have been involved with administrative type roles - which have also been difficult

from time to time. But more than anything, I think my self confidence and self esteem has been the biggest challenge to me. Believing that I am capable of producing good written work. And I think the thing that has helped me the most in improving my self confidence - believing that I can do it. For anyone - having confidence and believing in yourself is key to making achievements in your life.

And finally I'd like to say that I am very grateful for being Dyslexic - it is a gift - it makes me the person I am and there are lots of positive things about being dyslexic.

I will shortly be producing a leaflet covering the Strengths of Dyslexics - watch out as I firmly believe that we need to promote the strengths of dyslexia as well as acknowledging the difficulties. If any child would like to write to me or have an article published about what they find good or difficult about being dyslexic then I would love to hear from you.....

Sara Perkins
Dyslexia Network Plus Chair

The inspirational artist **Mackenzie Thorpe** attended the AGM.

The artist of international repute whose inspirational work shows how a person with Dyslexic problems can overcome them. The artist talked of feeling like an 'odd ball' at school, but told how he managed to escape the negative influences at school and in his community, and found his artistic strengths and built on them, and took opportunities as they came his way. Mackenzie told how he has been driven from the depths of suicidal despair to feel self belief fuelled by the success of his artistic works, and gradually being recognised in the UK and world wide.

He told the audience that through his work around the world he has seen how Dyslexia is getting recognition internationally in New Zealand, Tokyo and USA, he told how they are building schools for Dyslexic children in California and actively recruiting Dyslexics. Mackenzie is keen to promote the recognition of Dyslexia internationally and draw the attention of politicians to the issue.

Prior to McKenzie's talk he interacted with the children who were attending, while the business of the AGM took place. It was inspirational for the children with dyslexia to see and hear from a successful person who was willing to speak openly and honestly about the difficulties faced when you're dyslexic and you do not know it.



Wii Fit is wonderful!

Encouraging your children to use the Nintendo Wii Fit and Brain Academy programs could be very popular therapy for those with dyslexia / dyspraxia / ADHD! These programs are popular with all children, so using them has street cred with their peers and the opportunity to work with them on remedial activities that are seen as fun. The Wii Fit Plus has an excellent range of activities that develop co-ordination and thinking skills, that also provide feedback as to how accurately the child is performing in balancing etc. They are set in different environments, such as skiing, skateboarding, boxing (with no blood or bruising) juggling, cycling, yoga and many more. It would probably be a good idea to discuss a suitable range of activities with your physio or occupational therapist, especially if your child is dyspraxic, so that the most effective therapy can be put in place. The Brain Academy activities analyse the child's relative strengths and weaker areas and provide activities and encouragement to improve performance. Results are recorded in graphs, so progress can be seen

Judith Stansfield
SEN ICT Consultant

In the news: "Advertising Standards Agency (ASA) not happy as Dore opens its doors again" Published: 17.12.09
Available on line at: <http://www.thesun.co.uk/sol/homepage/woman/health/health/2775144/ASA-not-happy-as-Dore-opens-its-doors-again.html#ixzz0dqvCOKP1>

Article summary:

- Dore is back after going into administration in May 09, "owing parents tens of thousands of pounds is back in business."
- Not much seems to have changed says the article: "Desperate parents are still being offered a miracle cure. Once again it comes with a hefty £2,000 price tag."
- Dore consists of "co-ordination exercises using wobble boards and bean bags which allegedly boosts part of the brain called the cerebellum... offering "help for dyslexia, ADHD, dyspraxia, and Asperger's"
- Dore claims a 95 per cent success rate and that 2 scientific studies back their claims
- ASA have ordered the company to remove paid Google links because they found that: both scientific studies "were so flawed the results could not be trusted."
- Professor Maggie Snowling, a literacy expert based at York University, ... said: "There were no significant improvements on the key tasks of reading and writing. The improvements were in things like threading beads."

"Shirley Cramer of the charity Dyslexia Action said... that parents found paid-for internet links particularly confusing as many did not realise they were in effect advertisements."

"A lot of parents use the internet to research these problems, but one of the worrying things with this sort of commercial stuff is that parents often find it difficult to tell what is legitimate and what's not."

Dnplus comment: *As the article states similar exercises to help those with dyspraxia are available free on the NHS. Whilst we know of no scientific evidence, flawed or otherwise, readers might also like to experiment with the Wii (see Judith Stansfield's article). As always, we advocate thorough background checks before committing large sums of money to any remediation for dyslexia.*
Summary collated by Jill Swinhoe

Website: We have now purchased a domain name for our website which is www.dyslexianetworkplus.org.uk As well as info on our services and copies of this newsletter, there is now a membership application form that you can encourage potential members to download and complete. There is also news of events that we are organising and others that you could find useful, so do keep looking in! The site comes up in Google now and there are several calls a week to the helpline



E V E N T S



Join the HERD

DROP-IN SESSION

for families with children of all ages



Join the HERD

Members may:

- * borrow games and resources
- * find support and information
- * just drop-in for a coffee and a chat

Wednesdays (weekly) at Northallerton's Children's Centre
 Fridays (fortnightly[†]) at Bedale CofE Primary School
 both anytime between 3.30 and 5 pm, during term time

[†]Bedale dates: Friday 5.2.10—Friday 5.3.10—Friday 19.3.10

HERD — Helpful Education Resources for Dyslexia

Spring 2010 Events

Dyslexia Awareness Session for Parents

Wed 3rd March, 7.30—9.30 pm, at Northallerton Children's Centre
An introduction to the main issues.

STILE Dyslexia

Fri 19th March, 4.30 - 5.30 pm, at Bedale CoE Primary School
Targeting spelling, grammar and sequencing, this simple but effective resource was developed by an experienced Dyslexia Action Teacher. Suitable for children to attend.

**All sessions are free of charge
 but space may be limited so please phone to book**

BDA International Conference

The British Dyslexia Association's 8th International Conference is being held on **27th - 30th April 2011** at Harrogate International Conference Centre with the theme Beyond Boundaries.

The conference will be chaired by Joel Talcott PhD, an internationally recognised researcher and Reader in Developmental Cognitive Neuroscience from Aston University.

Dyslexia Network Plus is a local Not-for-Profit organisation, run by parents to support families with dyslexic type difficulties
Information Line: 0845 22 60 240