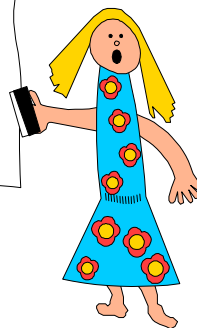


KIDS' NEWSLETTER

for, by, and about
kids with learning
disabilities



Issue 4
Spring 2001
Inland Empire Branch,
International
Dyslexia Assoc.



In our own words . . .

Conquering the Black Mountains

by Brad, age 17

At the age of seventeen I find myself writing an essay exposing my dyslexia to the world. I vividly remember the first time I heard the news that I had dyslexia. This shook and rattled my bones for this was just one more thing I did not want to hear. Now that I knew I had a learning problem with a name, I was terrified to let anyone else find out about it.

I was already wearing glasses and, plus that, I had a heart defect. This made me different from all the other kids I knew or didn't know. Some kids made fun of me just for wearing glasses, so why would I let them know I had a learning disability? For some time I kept this tightly locked secret within my heart.

Knowing the truth about something is far better than wearing a mask to cover up. It did take a long time for my family and me to discover that I had a learning disability. My mother had a suspicion about the problem from the beginning. It must be that a parent's heart can always hear the cry of a struggling child, even if they don't now know what is wrong.

Since my mother was my first educator, she naturally had some feelings that not all was well. Clues to the mystery were forgetting

something that I had just learned the day before, poor test scores, and not understanding what I read. When she went to my elementary school seeking help, they tested me and put me in RSP. This did little for me in the following year. They were only chipping away at the tip of the iceberg. Still, my dyslexia was deeply buried beneath the surface.

It wasn't until the sixth grade that the problem really started to affect my grades. It was during this year that I got the worst report card of my entire school career. All I saw was C's, D's, and F's. I felt that I was constantly in the shadow of a huge black mountain. To my mother this was an ugly sight, and so she started digging around for help.

As I was getting my hair cut one day, the stylist talked about her son who also had dyslexia was getting help. She recommended this place called Richards Educational Therapy Center that was run by Regina Richards. It was the best place in the Inland Empire that specialized in learning disabilities, especially dyslexia.

Continued on page 2

By Becky, age 12

*Rose are red
Violets are blue
I have the flu
But I love you*

Editor's note: The dyslexic student can write with great creativity when he or she is not hindered by concern for correct spelling. We hope you enjoy these inventive samplings of dyslexic writings.

Inside my head

by Blake

Inside of my head is a big office with lots of workers and a big file cabinet. This big file cabinet has a file for every subject. The problem is that all of my workers are lazy and take too many coffee breaks. It takes forever for them to file stuff. Sometimes they even put things in the wrong file. That's why everything gets lost inside of my head. I know everything is in there some place, I can just never find what I need at the right time. It takes me forever to get all of my stuff into the right file. Emily, Travis, and Steven have very good office workers inside of their heads. Their stuff gets filed real fast into the correct file. They can find the things inside of their file cabinets whenever they need it. That's why school is easy and fun for them. If only I could get my office workers to do a better job.

Thank You!

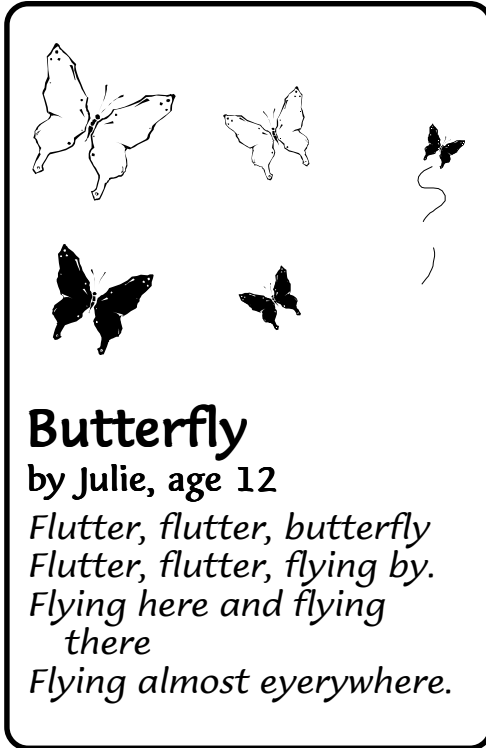
The Inland Empire Branch of the International Dyslexia Association thanks The San Bernardino Employees Charity Organization (ECHO) Committee of TRW for their generous donation toward the printing costs of this Kids' Newsletter.

Conquering, Cont'd from page 1

Right away my mother arranged for me to be tested, so a new adventure was about to begin. As I walked up to the front door, I had no idea what to expect. The Center is run out of a converted house in a residential neighborhood. The noonday sun kissed its cream-colored stucco walls, and in the afternoon the house was protected by the shadows of the sunset. In my mind the black mountain I had was not quite so black or quite so big that day. Right away I felt comfortable in this setting, but my mind was racing with thoughts about what the tests would be like. How were they going to be able to help me? Through all the testing, my best friend, my mother, was there beside me saying that everything would be fine.

It turned out that I was dyslexic. I was teamed up with a therapist by the name of Pam Meeker who has helped me mold my mind in a way that enables me to learn and be successful. She takes time with me every Saturday, and at times, other days of the week to help me out. My grades have improved tremendously and my self-esteem has skyrocketed. My future looks bright and my plans for college are in the making. I now know that any goal I set for myself is attainable.

No longer is that black mountain looming over me. I have learned that no matter what black mountain you have in your life, you can conquer it and reach the top. Whether the mountain is physical, mental, or emotional, we, as humans, all have been blessed with the ability to rise above any situation that crosses our paths.



Butterfly

by Julie, age 12

*Flutter, flutter, butterfly
Flutter, flutter, flying by.
Flying here and flying
there
Flying almost everywhere.*

Dyslexia

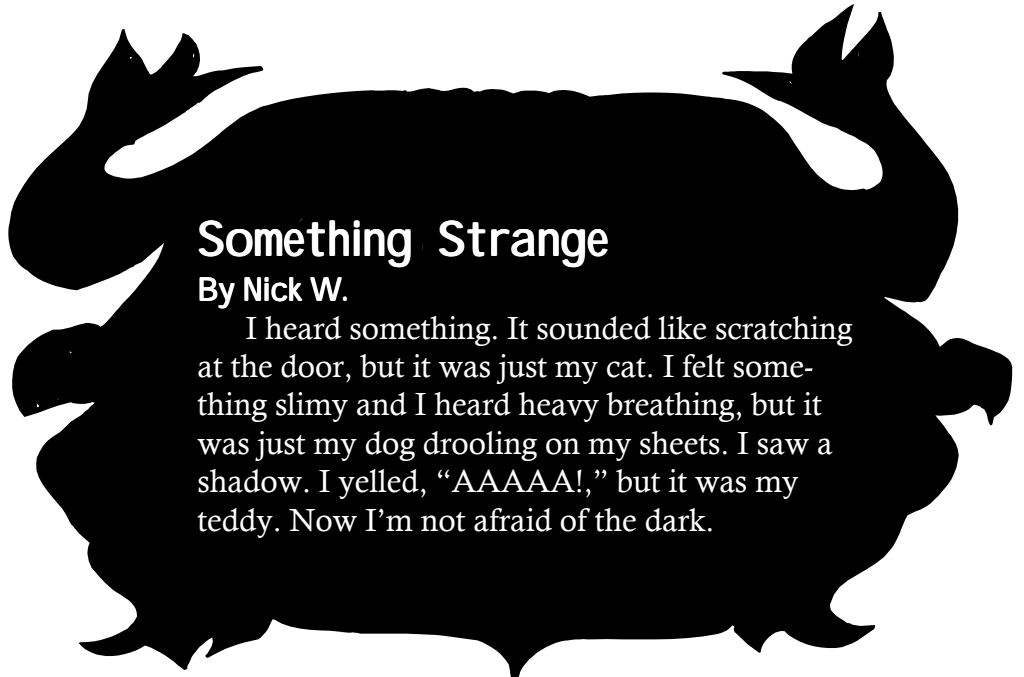
by Blake, age 10

*I have dyslexia; it is not fun.
Things in my bran like to run.
If they would slow down,
school would be fun.
My work would get done.*

Math Anxiety

by Donny, age 14

*2 + 2 is . . .
Don't ask me anymore
2 + 2 is . . .
I just want to run out the door
2 + 2 is . . .
You say its 4
OK! OK! I belive it
Don't ask me anymore.*



Something Strange

By Nick W.

I heard something. It sounded like scratching at the door, but it was just my cat. I felt something slimy and I heard heavy breathing, but it was just my dog drooling on my sheets. I saw a shadow. I yelled, "AAAAA!" but it was my teddy. Now I'm not afraid of the dark.

1 I always forget to bring my homework back to school. When I tell my teacher my mother forgot to put it in my backpack, she says it is my responsibility, not my mom's. How can I remember to bring my homework?

Keep your backpack at the same place you do your homework, then put your homework right in your backpack when you finish.

2 I'm not very organized and my mother and I fight every morning about getting ready for school. I always feel bad afterward. I need help!

Put everything you plan to wear for school the next day out the night before. Put your toothbrush and toothpaste together on the counter as well as your comb, brush, hairspray and makeup (if you use it). Have your mom help you figure out how long it takes you to do each step in getting ready, and on a 3x5 card write the time you need to start and how many minutes you need to complete each task. Tape the card on the bedroom wall and on the bathroom mirror. Put a clock in both the bedroom and bathroom to monitor your time. It will be hard to do this at first, but once you have your routine down, you won't fight with your mother and you'll be happy and feel in control.



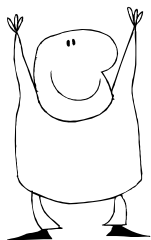
3 I am 16 and my best friend is mad at me because I misunderstood something she was saying. I have an auditory processing problem and it's hard for me to listen well and follow spoken directions. What can I do?

Ask your friend to come over to your house and have your mother help you explain how difficult it is for you to learn by listening and why your reactions to what you heard are not always correct. I bet your friend will be willing to help you by explaining things more slowly. Good luck!

4 I have dysgraphia, which means it's very hard for me to form letters and use good spacing on a page. I have great ideas but by the time I start to write a story, I can't remember what I wanted to say. It takes me a long time to write anything and it's always slopping-looking. My teacher thinks I'm lazy and don't care what my papers look like. What can I do?

Not all teachers understand dysgraphia and how it affects writing. Both you and your parents need to explain what dysgraphia is and its effects. If you have an article about dysgraphia, ask your teacher to read it. Ask her if you can type some of your reports—this can really help!

They say that I have something called dyslexia. I don't know what it is.



Dyslexia means a problem with words. *Dys* = poor or difficult; *lexia* = reading or words. Therefore, dyslexia means a problem learning how to read.

Cheer up and put a smile on your face!

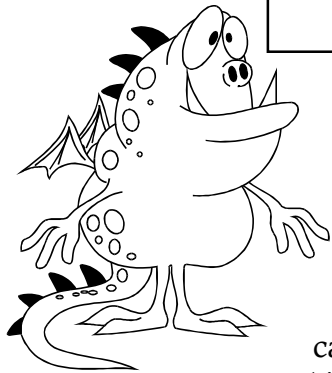
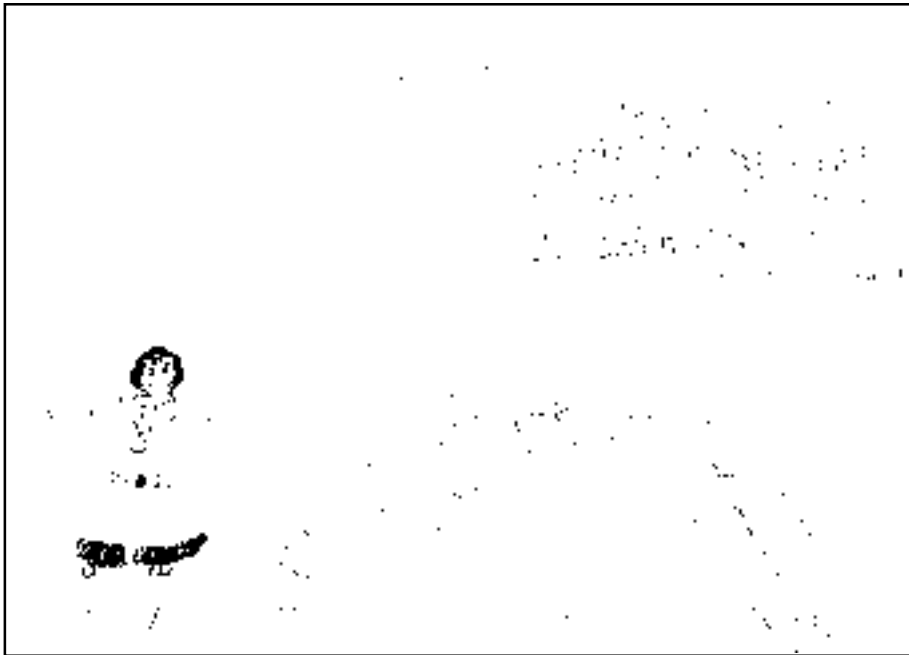
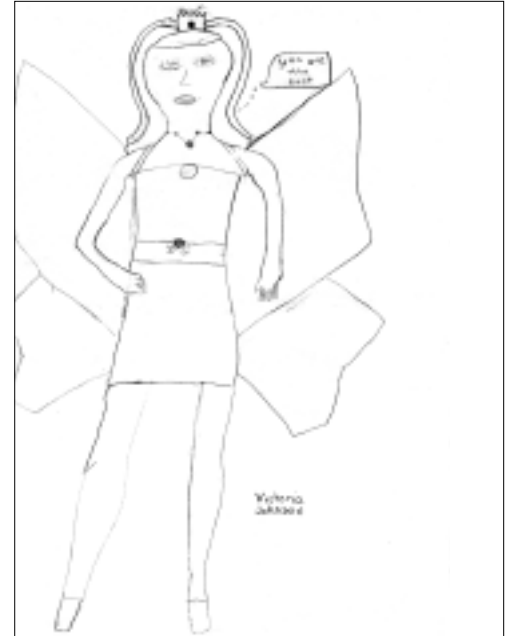
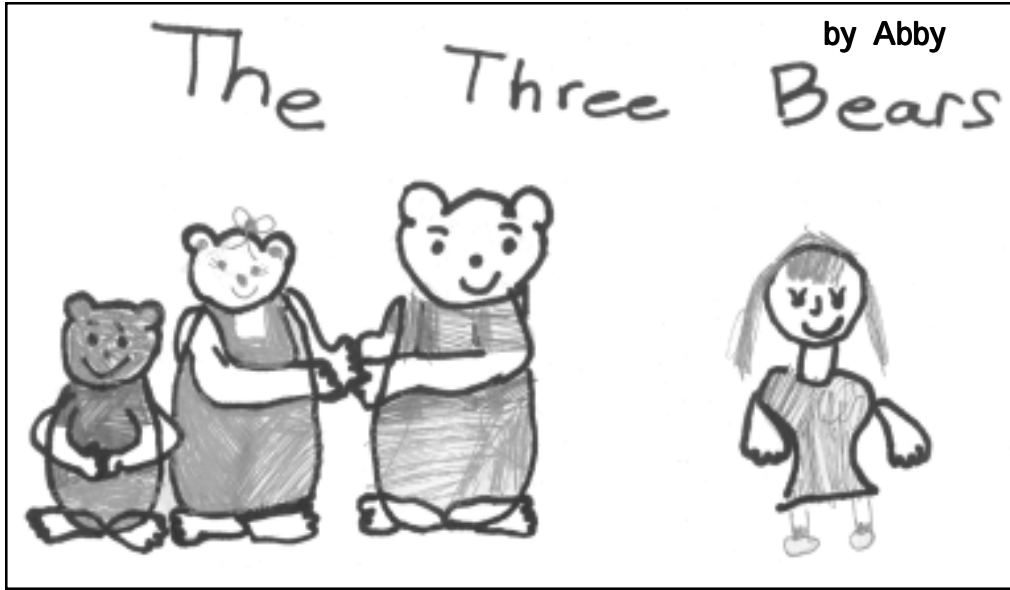
You are not dumb because of your dyslexia.

Sure, there are some people who know things that you do not know; however, you know some things other people do not know. So, there!

(From *What's This Thing Called Dyslexia* by Ray Hamm, M.Ed.)

Some of the **greatest contributors to our society have "great minds" like you!** Here's a partial list:

Hans Christian Andersen, Lewis Carroll, Cher, Agatha Christie, Sir Winston Churchill, Tom Cruise, Leonardo DaVinci, Charles Darwin, Walt Disney, Thomas A. Edison, Albert Einstein, Whoopi Goldberg, Bruce Jenner, Greg Louganis, Michaelangelo, Napoleon, General George S. Patton, Pablo Picasso, Nelson Rockefeller, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Tom Smothers, Mark Twain, Vincent VanGogh, Lindsay Wagner, Henry Winkler



Creatures from the Swamp

by Bryan

One day I went to the swamp when a creatures came up to me. They needed help far away from the swamp. I went with them wen I got there their were 100 hundred creatures. They were ugly the leader came up to me and he was afraid of me. So they locked me up in a dunging. You don't want to know what was in there. So the leader came to me and let me out. All the creatures thought I was a god. So I pretended to be a god it was great I got food I got gold I got everything. I got a castle and my people came and started to kill the creatures. The creatures stated to kill the people. I told everybody to stop. They stopped and I gave a speech to leave well enough alone so I went home it was a long day.

Spotlight on ...

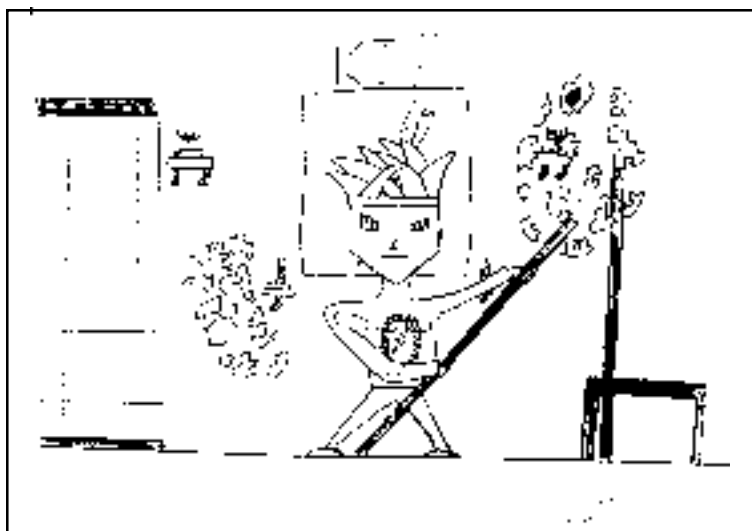


Paul Marzullo, age 14



I am a dyslexic and I have Attention Deficit Disorder. I love to draw and would like to become a clothing designer. I am also interested in costume and home interior design. I have no formal training in clothing design, but I feel I have some great ideas.

I feel that having a learning disability has made me a better person. I am more compassionate, and have a better understanding of the challenges people face in life. I also feel I probably would not have been good in art if I didn't have the disabilities I have.



Books Written for Children to Help Explain Learning Differences

All Kinds of Minds, by Melvin D. Levine

Keeping A Head in School, by Melvin D. Levine

Thank You, Mr. Falker, by Patricia Polacco

Josh, A Boy With Dyslexia, by Caroline Janover

Rose Blue, Me and Einstein: Breaking Through the Reading Barrier

Eli, The Boy Who Hated to Write: Understanding Dysgraphia, by Regina and Eli Richards



Calling All Kids! (& teachers)

Our *newsletter is for and about students who learn differently*. Join us!



Teachers, get **50% off the registration fee** for the next IDA Inland Empire Branch conference by submitting five articles or artwork from your students with learning differences!

We are seeking original contributions:

- artwork (no larger than 8½x11", black and white)
- photographs of sculptures or models
- poems
- essays about your feelings about having a learning difference **or** about how you cope with your learning struggles— what works, what is frustrating, what or who has helped you
- anything else about learning differently

Want to be involved?

Send your entry to:
Inland Empire Branch, IDA
P.O. Box 6701
San Bernardino, CA 92412.

Let us hear from you! We welcome your comments and suggestions.



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