

Media release

6 May 2013

**DFNZ GRASSROOTS SCREENING INITIATIVE MAKES
REDFORD BIG PICTURE DOCUMENTARY AVAILABLE NATIONWIDE**

Dyslexia Foundation of New Zealand (DFNZ) will next week launch a nationwide grassroots film screening initiative to provide free DVDs for local showings of acclaimed dyslexia documentary, *The Big Picture: Rethinking Dyslexia*.

Directed by film-maker Jamie Redford, son of actor and director Robert Redford, the *Big Picture* was inspired by Redford's family experience with dyslexia and features interviews with high profile, high achieving dyslexics including Sir Richard Branson and financier Charles Schwab. Based around the experiences of Jamie Redford's son Dylan as he seeks admission to a prestigious United States university, the movie also highlights latest scientific and psychological research from the Yale Center of Dyslexia and Creativity.

Following a New Zealand red carpet premiere in Queenstown in January, the film will have its first public screening at Queenstown's Wakatipu High next Friday (10 May), hosted by Queenstown's Kip McGrath Education Centre. This is the first in a nationwide DFNZ initiative to make the movie available for school, parent and community audiences.

The grassroots film screening initiative will provide DVDs for local audiences, with the DVD costs covered by DFNZ's principal sponsor Cookie Time Charitable Trust. It follows a similar US initiative which has promoted well over a thousand local screenings across the US since launched. The movie, currently showing on HDBO in the United States, has also been selected to feature at more than eight US film festivals and is one of just 24 documentaries chosen to be part of the 2013 American Film Showcase, an international programme which takes films worldwide.

Guy Pope-Mayell, DFNZ chair of trustees, says the DFNZ is delighted to be able to bring the movie to New Zealand community audiences.

"This is a powerful and engaging documentary which challenges many of the preconceptions about dyslexia and at the same time highlights the creativity and entrepreneurship that comes with the 'big picture' thinking that dyslexia brings.

"Our aim in rolling out this initiative is to provide simple, easy access to a movie that is one of the most compelling explorations of dyslexia ever made. Every week we have people asking us what they can do to help others understand dyslexia. These screenings will inform, engage and empower people to support those with this learning difference to reach their full potential," Pope-Mayell says.

The Queenstown showing will also be attended by international dyslexia expert Neil Mackay, who will host a public question and answer session the following day (Saturday 11 May) for anyone interested in finding out more about dyslexia. Mackay, who is based in the UK, previously worked with DFNZ on a sell-out series of New Zealand teacher and parent workshops in 2009.

Queenstown's Kip McGrath Education Centre is planning to host further screenings in the region to enable as many people as possible to see the film. Centre owners Joanna Helby and Martin Wightman believe the film will be an invaluable tool in helping to explain the complexities of dyslexia to teachers, parents and children.

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Helby and Wightman, both teachers at Wakatipu High School, say the film answers many of the common questions about dyslexia and shows how understanding and perspective can become a bridge to learning.

Director Jamie Redford said his mission in making *The Big Picture* was "to make the movie I wish my family could have seen when Dylan was functionally illiterate in 4th grade."

"There are many things that I wish I had known about dyslexia at that time. Things that would have helped me understand that Dylan's struggle in lower and middle school was not the final verdict on his academic or intellectual ability or ambition."

"The film reveals that dyslexia is a neurological issue, not a character flaw. It explains that the struggle with the written word is not a measure of one's ability to think, to create or to solve problems," Redford said.

Wakatipu High School Big Picture Screening:

Friday 10 May, 7pm drinks for 7.30pm showing, New Music Room

Entry is gold coin donation; book a place online at <http://www.kipqueenstown.com>

A conversation with Neil Mackay:

Saturday 11 May, 10am, Music Room

Free entry, email queenstown@kipmcgrath.co.nz for bookings.

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For further information, please contact DFNZ Chair of Trustees Guy Pope-Mayell, 0275 449 496, guy@dfnz.org.nz OR

Joanna Helby, Queenstown Kip McGrath Education Centre, 021 137 3343, queenstown@kipmcgrath.co.nz

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, VISIT:

Dyslexia Foundation New Zealand Big Picture screening initiative –

<http://www.dyslexiafoundation.org.nz/dyslexiaadvocacy/movie/>

Big Picture – www.thebigpicturemovie.com

Neil MacKay – www.actiondyslexia.co.uk

Cookie Time Charitable Trust – www.ctct.org.nz

Kip McGrath Queenstown – www.kipqueenstown.com

ABOUT DYSLEXIA FOUNDATION NEW ZEALAND

Since inception in November 2006, the Dyslexia Foundation of New Zealand has changed the landscape of dyslexia in New Zealand. From lobbying the Government for dyslexia to be officially recognised, achieved in 2007, through to mainstreaming dyslexia and changing the paradigm from one of disability to one of difference.

The DFNZ philosophy and approach is based on three principles:

- Recognition: identifying and naming the issue
- Understanding: noticing what this means for everyday life - at school, home, and work
- Action: adjusting the approach to improve outcomes - at school, home and work

These principles were brought to life in successful awareness and action weeks in 2007, 2008 and 2009 [http://www.dyslexiafoundation.org.nz/daw_07_09.html], as well as creation of the 4D programme [www.4d.org.nz] for schools and providing professional development opportunities for teachers.

In 2014, Dyslexia Action Week runs from **17-23 March** and focuses on advocacy.