

PARENTS CENTRE



April 26 2007

Davis Dyslexia Exhibit Launch

Dyslexia Awareness Week is from 23 to 29 April. It aims to raise awareness of the one in 10 New Zealanders who are dyslexic and help the 70,000 Kiwi children who are not receiving the help they need from an education system that until recently hasn't recognize their dyslexia. A world-first Dyslexia Discovery Exhibit opens in Christchurch New Zealand on Sunday April 29, featuring sculptures by renowned artist Mackenzie Thorpe and Weta Workshop designer Richard Taylor, who are both dyslexic.

"It is our pleasure to have Viv Gurrey, Chief Executive Office, Parent Centres NZ Inc, officially open the Dyslexia Discovery Exhibit on Sunday 29th April" says Guy Pope- Mayell, Founder of the Cookie Muncher Trust and the Dyslexia Foundation.

Pope - Mayell says also "The Cookie Munchers Trust recognises that parents are a critical - arguably the most important - group within the education system whose voice and influence needs to be heard and felt. Viv's personal connection through her children to the dyslexia cause completes the perfect picture."

Viv Gurrey - Speech to Davis Dyslexia Exhibit Launch Christchurch April 29 2007

Quote:

The word dyslexia has been part of my family's life for the last 7 years - the impact and the symptoms of Dyslexia were in our lives for some years before but we just didn't know it!

They presented as confusion; doubt; sorrow and yes, sometimes anger and frustration.
What a difference a word makes!

The change that the recognition and acceptance of that seven letter word makes is immense. In our acknowledgement of Dyslexia we can rephrase these words as: talent determination; a gift; inspiration; perseverance. A positive difference!

Yes, sometimes still frustration, but now, tempered by that depth of understanding.

Good Afternoon

My name is Viv Gurrey, Chief Executive Officer of Parents Centres NZ Inc.

It is an honor to be part of the launch here today and to continue to play a key part in bringing the gift of Dyslexia to the fore.

I stand here as both the leader of one of the largest parenting based networks in NZ and also as a parent.

As a parent who experiences the challenge and the joy of walking alongside our children on their journey.

And on behalf of an organization where early intervention, knowledge and education is seen as paramount.

To understand how a child with Dyslexia functions is to view their world through very different eyes. To understand how a parent with a child who learns and experiences differently, manages these challenges and opportunities daily, is an inspiration to us all.

For a significant percentage of families in NZ Dyslexia is real; it is omnipresent in their lives and has a tangible impact on their aspirations; dreams and for many their journey through life.

Today is a day of celebration! **As we are at last able to say truly that this hidden issue is finally being honored and respected.**

This has been a passion of mine and many others for some while now. Today is an accumulation of this effort and the **initiatives of the Dyslexia Foundation.**

This is about passion, inspiration and joy as we celebrate. So it is not for me to dwell on NZ's representation in OECD statistics. Our unenviable reputation on the world stage sees NZ children represented disproportionately in all of the wrong statistics. Whilst of course not all of these can be put at the doorstep of education there are many that can, both directly and indirectly.

Now we can truly make a difference; acknowledgment and recognition will reframe how parents, children and society see Dyslexia.

Now we can recognize the untapped potential of at least 10% of our population.

Now we can honor our experience.

And **NOW** we can start to facilitate the resources; the help; the very necessary support that is crucial to healthy, contributing members of society.

Dyslexia is real and exists for thousands of NZ'ers.

Dyslexia is a gift; a form of dimensional thinking and visioning only fully understood by those who experience it.

The fruits of Dyslexia can be tasted positively or otherwise. As a nation we can **chose** to leave this fruit on the tree to rot or **chose** to harvest the untapped potential.

We applaud the Minister for Education in **choosing** to harvest our fruit!

And to work with us to offer the recognition and respect this deserves, while committing to support the opportunities it presents.

This step is a milestone in identifying early intervention strategies that will impact across a range of social areas.

Now we can get down to the business of making sure **all** children who experience this gift are able to truly achieve. Practical training for our teachers and resources available in the classroom are a very necessary next step. We also understand that this acknowledgment will lead to the development of learning initiatives that support the needs of dyslexic students.

I stand here today as a Mother – and honor two very special people in my life who share the struggles brought about by dyslexia and also share the talents and the gifts. I remain awe inspired by their tenacity, their insight and what individually they are able to achieve.

I also stand as representative of thousands of parents in NZ, who, with their children may also share in this journey; to offer hope to those who are struggling and to offer respect and acknowledgement to those who are reaping a fruitful harvest.

In a few moments I will invite Ron Davis; Richard Taylor; Kirsteen Britten, Mackenzie Thorpe, Paul Dibble, and Sammie Morgan to officially unveil the exhibit:

- Free Flight
- Inner struggle
- Ron's Shoes

- Falling in Love

When the music has finished – the exhibit will be officially open and we invite you to explore until we see you again at the “House that John built” – the home of Kirsteen Britten and family. **Now I invite you to join *with me*, in celebrating the potency of this occasion; as we feel the inspiration for the future; as we attempt to *stand* in the shoes of those who *do truly see things in a different light*.**

Today we share that light..... and as we hold this in our thoughts, it is my greatest honor to declare this exhibit open.

I invite Ron, Richard, Kirsteen, Mackenzie, Paul, and Sammie to officially unveil.
Unquote.

To make a donation to the Dyslexia Foundation of New Zealand, phone 0900 DYSLEXIA. Or for more information, visit www.dyslexiafoundation.org.nz.

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