

**MEDIA RELEASE**  
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## **CREATING POSITIVE CHANGE WITH CHRISTMAS COOKIES!**

The annual Cookie Time Christmas Cookies campaign is now underway and every bite counts towards fundraising to help dyslexic children unlock the creative potential of this widespread learning preference.

For the second year running, Cookie Time received a record number of applicants for the hotly contested Cookies Seller positions, with 650 people applying for the 69 positions available nationwide, 100 more than last year.

Money from every bucket sold this year will again go to the Cookie Time Charitable Trust, which is dedicated to helping NZ kids discover their gifts. As principal sponsor of Dyslexia Foundation of New Zealand, this includes supporting initiatives designed to nurture and celebrate the creative power dyslexia can deliver in innovative thinking, artistic ability, creative problem solving and entrepreneurship.

Guy Pope-Mayell, DFNZ Chair of Trustees, says dyslexia that is understood and addressed has great benefits to offer in a wide range of disciplines, from arts and design to engineering, technology and science.

“Just this month, new research from Middlesex University in the UK has shown a link between dyslexia and improved ability to judge space and process 3D visual information – a link the researchers suggested could explain the artistic ability of famous artists Leonardo da Vinci, Pablo Picasso and Auguste Rodin,” Pope-Mayell.

“This visuo-spatial ability is not only key to success in artistic fields however, it has a wide range of applications in our increasingly IT-led world and can spark exactly the kind of innovative thinking and creative problem solving that is needed to drive success.

“This research also comes on top of a wealth of other findings which support the link between dyslexia and creativity, as well as brain research and MRI imaging that shows dyslexic individuals process information in the opposite side of the brain than neuro-typical word-based thinkers. For this reason, dyslexia is now regarded as a learning preference rather than disability,” he says.

Dyslexia affects an estimated one in ten New Zealanders, and it is something for which no government funding is available. While it can bring learning challenges which so often leads to low self-esteem, the flipside is creative potential. One of the myths of dyslexia is that it is just a problem with reading and writing. In fact it can affect a whole spectrum of skills from literacy and numeracy through to auditory and visual perception, planning and organising, motor skills, short-term memory and concentration.

A big focus for the Dyslexia Foundation is its 4D schools programme, which provides guidance on effective action to benefit children with dyslexia, as well as all those with learning differences or diversity. The programme is based on a ‘notice and adjust’ approach – encouraging teachers to notice where issues are occurring and adjust the classroom environment or teaching style to help children reach their full potential.

“Small changes make a big difference in helping dyslexic children thrive, some as simple as using a dyslexic friendly font, or giving verbal instructions rather than written. In this way, simple adjustments to everyday activities can make life much easier for dyslexics,” Pope-Mayell says.

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Many of our most talented and gifted New Zealanders are dyslexic – including Weta Workshop's Richard Taylor, NZ Idol life coach Sian Jacquet, motivational speaker Billy Graham, the Mad Butcher Peter Leitch, and the late maverick motorcycle designer John Britten as well as his wife, former international model Kirsteen Britten. Stories of these and other inspiring New Zealanders can be found on the Dyslexia Foundation website at [www.dfnz.org.nz](http://www.dfnz.org.nz)

Christmas Cookies, which is celebrating its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary year, has raised more than \$1 million to date for Cookie Time Charitable Trust, and is now targeting \$1.5 million. This is the third year that dyslexia has been the featured cause of the campaign. Each Christmas Cookie seller runs their selling territory (69 territories nationwide) as an independent business, giving them valuable skills and experience in areas like sales and marketing, distribution, managing inventory and maintaining accounts.

**ends**

**For further information: Guy Pope-Mayell, DFNZ Chair of Trustees. 0275 449 496.**

***MORE ABOUT THE MIDDLESEX RESEARCH***

<http://www.mdx.ac.uk/aboutus/news-events/news/dyslexia.aspx>

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-1328965/Dyslexia-DaVinci-code-genius--Did-Leonardos-word-blindness-help-master-painter.html>

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/science/science-news/8128233/Dyslexia-the-secret-of-Da-Vinci-and-Picassos-success.html>

***ABOUT COOKIE TIME AND ITS CHARITABLE TRUST***

*Cookie Time turns 27 years old this year. It was started in 1983 by 21-year-old Michael Mayell, and is one of New Zealand's best loved brands. In 2003, Cookie Time co-owner brothers Michael Mayell and Guy Pope-Mayell decided they wanted to expand their focus beyond the business of making cookies and help make a difference to the lives of young New Zealanders. They launched the Cookie Time Charitable Trust ([www.ctct.org.nz](http://www.ctct.org.nz)) whose mission statement was 'to help NZ kids discover their gifts'. The Trust raises money from the community and businesses (including Cookie Time) to devote to this mission.*