



ALABAMA BRANCH OF THE INTERNATIONAL DYSLEXIA ASSOCIATION

This newsletter is formatted as a PDF document so that the reader may have it read aloud by clicking on that option.

ALIDA Newsletter November 30, 2011, No. 2

Table of Contents

State of ALIDA	Page 1
The Dyslexia Struggle for Parents; Advice from a Parent Who Has Been There	Page 3
Things That Work	Page 5
The Basics of Dyslexia Conference	Page 6
October was Dyslexia Awareness Month	Page 9
Teaching Morphology: Enhancing Vocabulary Development and Reading Comprehension	Page 11
Save the Dates!	Page 12

The State of *ALIDA*

2011 has been an exciting year for ALIDA!

ALIDA began its eighth (8th) year as a 501c3 corporation, chartered through the International Dyslexia Association, the oldest non-profit, scientific, and educational organization dedicated to the study and treatment of dyslexia.

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**The Dyslexia Struggle for Parents;
Advice from a Parent Who Has Been There**
By Angie Hood (Mother of Two Children with Dyslexia)

There is nothing fun about watching your bright child struggle with school. A dyslexia diagnosis hits parents hard, but we have to keep our perspective. It is a lifelong challenge, but it is not a life threatening illness. We have to remember that school, although very important, is not the only part of our child's life. We have to do all we can to help our child, because no one knows them better than we do and certainly no one loves them as we do.

At a recent Alabama Branch of the International Dyslexia Association (ALIDA) meeting, I spoke to parents who have children in school, from elementary through high school, and I could see the pain in their eyes, and hear the sorrow and frustration in their voices. All parents want what is best for their child, and no one would wish a learning difference on anyone. Struggles, pain, isolation, feeling dumb and defeated- these are things no parent wants their child to endure. So, what do we do? We do everything we can to help them learn to adapt, to cope, to get through the rote parts of school, like weekly spelling tests, and we love them unconditionally.

Our dyslexia support group in North Alabama has been a haven for distressed parents since 2000. Meet with other parents and share your feelings. We might not have all the solutions, but sharing makes it a little easier. At our meetings we can get out our frustrations and learn something new. I know that the support group made a difference for me when my two dyslexic kids were in school.

At least by recognizing the problem you are not like some parents who are “floating down De-NIAL and blaming everyone and everything for the problems without dealing with reality. I still talk to parents and I am disappointed to see that one parent thinks there is no problem, or that their spouse, usually the mom, is exaggerating or babying their child. Parents have to be on the same page, facing the challenges of helping their child together, or they send mixed messages and cause unnecessary grief. Both parents need to be educated on dyslexia and how to cope. Facing the challenge head on, openly and honestly is the best way to help your child and you have to talk to them with honesty too. They know how they are feeling, and being falsely positive and perky and denying the problem won't change a thing.

Do what you can but don't become consumed with “fighting the system”. Your child is your number one priority. Send your energy and focus to your child. In reality, you will not be able to change the system single handedly. You might be able to win some accommodations for your child in the classroom, but you will not reform your school, school system or state system by yourself. That is why ALIDA, International Dyslexia Association (IDA) and other groups are fighting the system for you or are working with the system to improve instruction and understandings for your child and others with the same challenges. It doesn't seem like it to you now because you are living it, but we have seen progress in Alabama in the past decade, granted not where we would like things to stand, but progress still. ALIDA is just eight years old, giving Alabama a consistent voice for change.

Homework, the dreaded homework, can take over the evening. Try to find balance for your child's day. They have to have some time to play, some time for physical exercise. Turn the play or exercise into a self-esteem booster. You know they need time away from school. Find something they enjoy and do it with them, such as karate, swimming, basketball, kickball, baseball, softball, tennis, hiking, or riding bikes. Exercise is a great stress reliever and I regret that we didn't do more of that when the kids were growing up. Tunnel vision focused on homework is not going to help your child be well rounded with varied interests.

Public school, private school, both mean challenges and home school has been the ultimate accommodation for parents to help their children. We tried each of these three options, and different options worked at different ages. My good friend, a mother of nine, all adopted, most with some learning difference always says she evaluates the school option per child, each year. No course, no decision is written in stone. If it doesn't work, change it.

Use the tools that are out there to help your child. Spelling games online, spell checkers, voice to text programs, math games online. Make it FUN. Books on tape made a huge difference for my most dyslexic child, and I enjoyed the books too, as we listened together. You may have to re-teach what they are learning in school, sitting next to them while they work each night, but in the long run, you can make a difference.

Take time for family fun, to build memories, and then also make sure that you and your spouse have couple time too. Laughter is a great stress reliever. Find funny movies or videos to watch and laugh until your cry. You will feel better! Make a weekly lunch date somewhere you can talk, even if it is just a fast food restaurant, and limit your conversation to each other. You are a team and have to stay that

way. If you home school, make time once a week when you can get away together, even if it is just to go shopping or walk the mall. One day your child will be out on their own and you don't want to turn to a stranger and realize you lost each other while so dedicated to helping your child.

Innovation, dedication, lots of prayer, some tears, commitment, side by side learning: it all comes together and there is nothing more thrilling than watching your child walk across the stage and receive that hard earned diploma. At graduation you will feel you won a prize, and it will all be worth it in that moment.

Hang in there! Do the best you can do and work together as a team. You can do it!

THINGS THAT WORK: Tips from Parents for Parents with Elementary Students

By Angie Hood

Elementary: Spelling

“Use dry erase markers to write spelling words REALLY BIG on sliding glass doors, or large windows or bathroom mirrors. Use stairs; moving up and down. Up or down a step for each letter of the word they are spelling. Use sign language to spell words. When memorizing, have them move. Use a clipboard and clip the words to it and walk around, sit in a tree, go up and down stairs, bouncing a basketball for each letter, swing in a swing Make up songs - the sillier the better; singing the letters of spelling words or things to memorize. Let the child make up a silly sentence using the letters of the spelling words. For example the word is LEAF; he may make up a sentence: Let's Eat a Frog to help him remember the order of the letters.

Flash Cards

Make spelling flash cards from your weekly list, printing the words at 72 point Arial font. Tell your child to look at the word, focusing on the center letter, say S-T-O-R-E, for a few seconds then take the card away, and ask them to spell the word. Show them the card again, again focusing on the center letter of the word, and then ask them to spell it backward! This worked for several students!

Check out free, online spelling games:

http://www.freedownloadcenter.com/Games/Educational_Games/Spelling_Buddy.html<http://www.funbrain.com/spell/>

<http://www.spellingcity.com/spelling-games-vocabulary-games.html>

<http://www.kidspell.com/>

<http://eduplace.com/kids/hmsv/smg/>

Math

Turbo Twist by Quantum Leap (Leapfrog).

Times Tables the Fun Way <http://www.citycreek.com/>

Check out free online math games

http://multiplication.com/interactive_games.htm
<http://www.coolmath4kids.com/>
<http://www.mathplayground.com/games.html>

For Older Students:

Audio books such as books on tape, digital downloads, e-books, etc.


Voice to Text, such as Dragon NaturallySpeaking

www.freerice.com has vocabulary and grammar games

The Basics of Dyslexia Conference

On October 22, 2011, in Madison, Alabama, ALIDA held its third scheduled conference for the year. Trudy Odle, Marcia Ramsey, and Hettie Johnson presented information for parents and educators of students with dyslexia to assist in their understanding of dyslexia and instructional strategies that will strengthen learning. The handouts from the conference will be available on the website shortly as well

as accompanying video segments of the presentations. Eileen Oliver was asked to provide additional information during the workshops regarding a multisensory instructional technique that she had adapted to assist her students in New Orleans with retelling of reading passages. The technique is referred to as a retelling strip:



*The Alabama Branch of the
International Dyslexia Association
Announces*

The Fall Conference on the Basics of Dyslexia

October 22, 2011

At the
Madison City School Board Offices
211 Celtic Drive
Madison, AL 35758

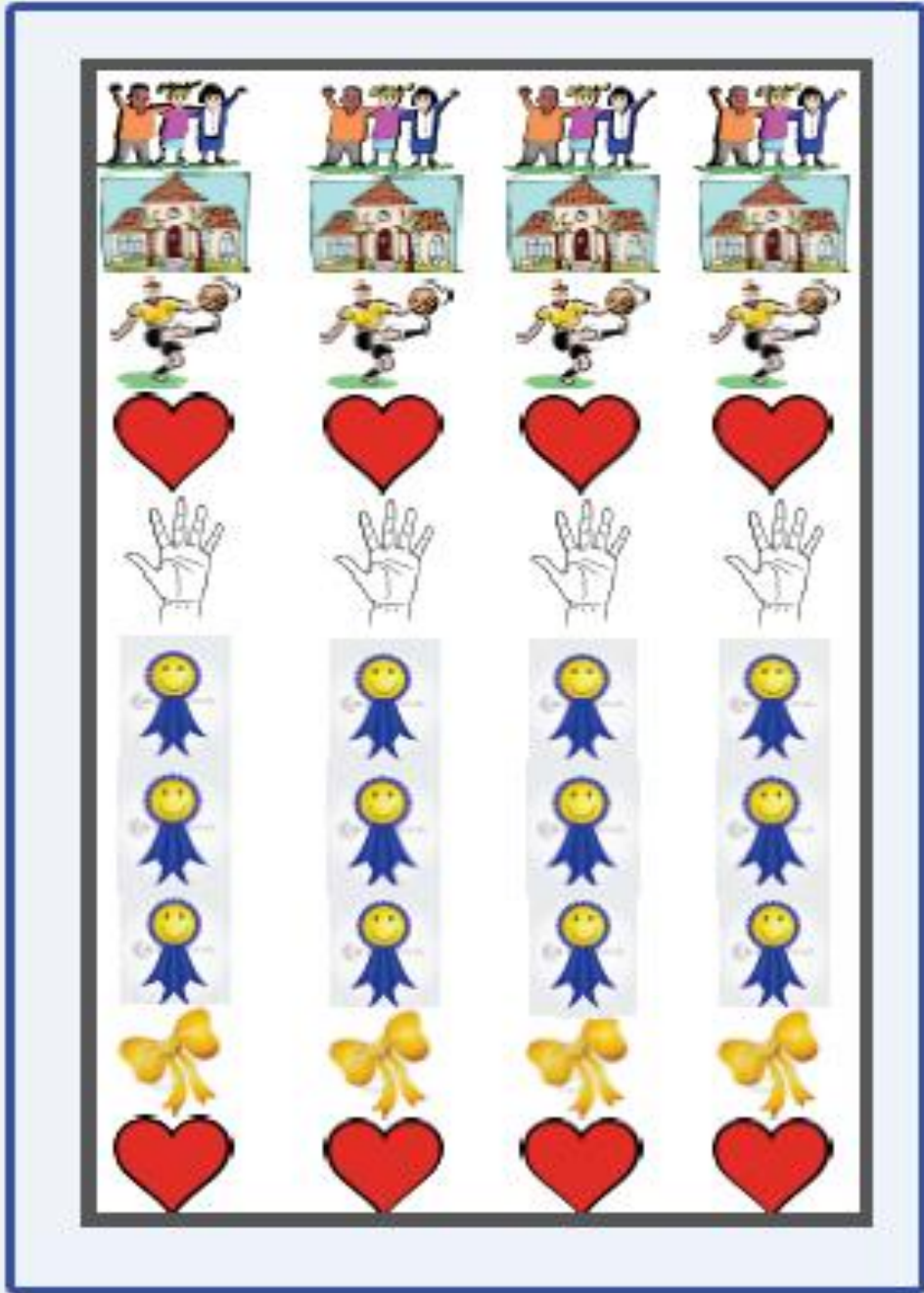
<i>8:30 to 9:00am</i>	<i>Registration</i>
<i>9:00 to 11:30am</i>	<i>Dyslexia 101: Recent Research and Practical Answers</i>
<i>11:30am to 12:15pm</i>	<i>Lunch</i>
<i>12:15 to 2:30pm</i>	<i>Your Brain and the Magic Key: Put Multisensory Strategies to Work For You!</i>
<i>2:45 to 5:15pm</i>	<i>Annual Membership Meeting</i>
<i>5:15 to 5:00pm</i>	<i>ALIDA Board Meeting</i>

*Conference Fee: \$25.00 for members and
\$50.00 for non-members
Boxed Lunch included*

Register at: <http://idaalabama.org/>



See the explanation of each picture below with additional strips for printing.



Oliver 2011 (Adapted from Moreau/Fidrych 1994)

Significance of Each Picture on the Retelling Strip (to assist with retelling and comprehension)



people = characters



house = setting



boy kicking ball = the kick-off of the chapter or story ... the "problem" that gets the story going



heart = how ____ feels/emotions (help student tell more complicated words for emotions than simply "happy" or "sad" – good for vocabulary-building)



hand = the plan to help with the problem in the story



3 blue ribbons = things that happened in the chapter or story (can go back over these ribbons to tell more than 3 events)



yellow bow = how they "tied up" the chapter or book in the end



heart again = emotions again

October was Dyslexia Awareness Month!

Thanks to **Hettie Johnson**, the Dyslexia Awareness Month Activity Coordinator!!

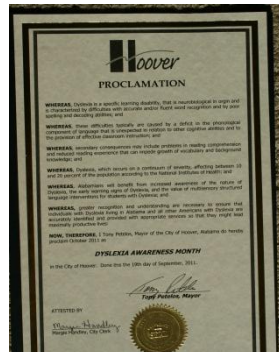
These beautiful bookmarks were designed by Mary Hickman and her sons. These designs have become the hallmark of our Dyslexia Awareness Month activities. 4,000 bookmarks were distributed by members throughout the state, to individuals, schools, libraries, pediatricians' offices, Parent-Teacher stores and other venues.



Proclamations across the state were signed to note that October is Dyslexia Awareness Month. Proclamations have been signed by Governor Bentley as well as in several cities: Madison, Huntsville, Sheffield, Tuscumbia, Florence, Pell City, Hoover, Alabaster, Birmingham, Tuscaloosa, Auburn, Mobile. Electronic copies of the proclamations will be sent to the School Superintendents of the cities or counties where they were signed as well.



For Alabama signed by Governor Bentley

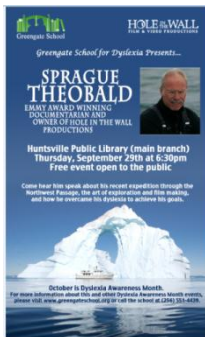


For Hoover signed by Mayor Petelos

ALIDA members as well as private school directors and heads of schools appeared before their City Councils for the signing of the proclamations.

Radio/TV PSAs: PSAs were aired on television stations.

Local newspapers presented articles concerning the regional educational groups or individuals who relayed their stories.

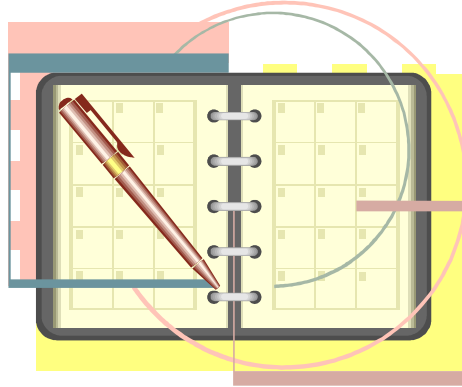


As a kick-off to the month, Sprague Theobald, the explorer, came to Huntsville to speak to a group of parents, students and educators about his experiences.

Another kick-off to the month of activities was the wonderful story of Kylan Robertson, a 4th grade student in Alabama. Follow this link to read of her story:

http://www.trussvilletribune.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=820&Itemid=64

Save the Dates!!



January 28, 2012 – Hoover Library in Hoover, Alabama:

- Technology with Laura Parks, <http://www.startraining.org/>
- Screening of Dislecksia, The Movie (Tentative). The movie is in post production. http://www.capturedtimeproductions.com/films/dislecksia_stories.html

April 28, 2012 – St. Paul's Episcopal School in Mobile, Alabama:

- Susan Hall on Using Manipulatives to Teach Comprehension; <http://www.95percentgroup.com/index.aspx>.
- With multiple breakout sessions on multisensory instructional strategies, Math multisensory instructional, basics of dyslexia

September 15, 2012 – St. Francis Xavier in Birmingham, Alabama:

- Power Tools for Adolescent Literacy with Jan Rozzelle and Carol Scearce; <http://www.solution-tree.com/products/power-tools-for-adolescent-literacy.html>.

And a possible **RAVE-O** training!

