



Children's **Dyslexia Centers**

2021 **IMPACT REPORT**

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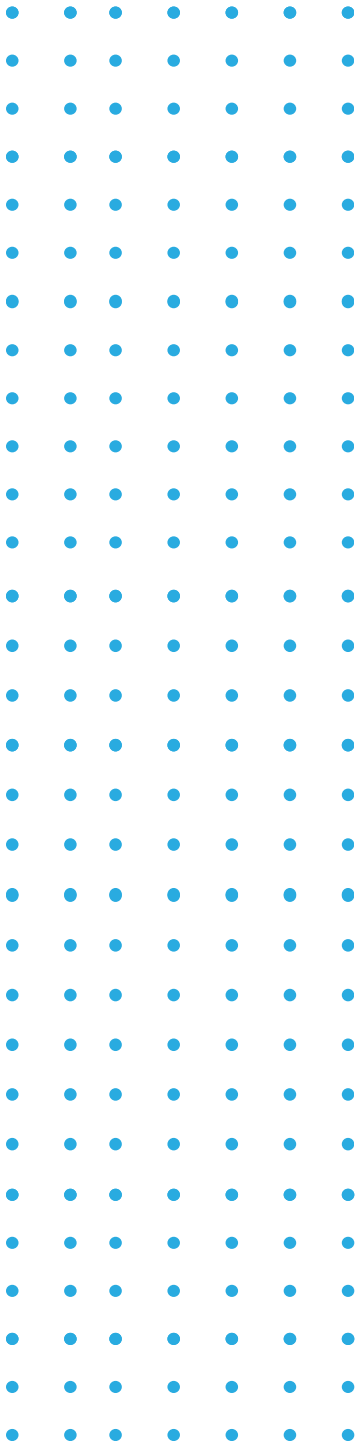


ABOUT THE COVER

A winner of the *New York Times*' 7th Annual Student Essay Contest, Children's Dyslexia Center graduate Hayden Miskinis shares her experience growing up as a dyslexic learner in her essay "Switching Letters, Skipping Lines: Troubled and Dyslexic Minds."

PAGE 12

Our Leadership



HEADQUARTERS STAFF

David L. Sharkis
Director of Operations

Tricia Marchese
Administrative Assistant

Daniel Quattrocchi
Assistant Director of Operations

Donna Broderick
Administrative Assistant

Carin Illig
Clinical Director

Charlotte Neugebauer
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Purchasing Manager

Cindy Allen-Fuss
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Executive Message

2021 was an incredible year for our Children's Dyslexia Centers. More than 1,300 boys and girls entered our doors, many for the first time since the beginning of the pandemic and our transition to online instruction. We achieved exciting new milestones, including more than 60,000 lessons taught in a single year – each one representing a student's progress toward reading comprehension. More than 200 educators participated in our training certification program, ensuring that children beyond our Centers have access to the highest standard of reading instruction.

Even in the face of new challenges, our Centers are more energetic and engaged than ever before. In these pages, you will find some of our proudest achievements from the last year and experience the life-changing impact our program has had on young learners.

Children's Dyslexia Centers, Inc. was founded in 1994 with a single location serving just a handful of children. Today, our more than 40 Centers serve thousands of children and educators across 13 states.

As our program transitions back to in-person instruction, we are exploring new ways to further our mission by expanding services to areas outside of those currently served.

Everything that we do, everything that we have accomplished serves to provide more opportunities for children with dyslexia to reach their full potential.

Thank you to those who have shown support for our mission. We look forward to many more years of learning, transformation, and growth.

Sincerely,



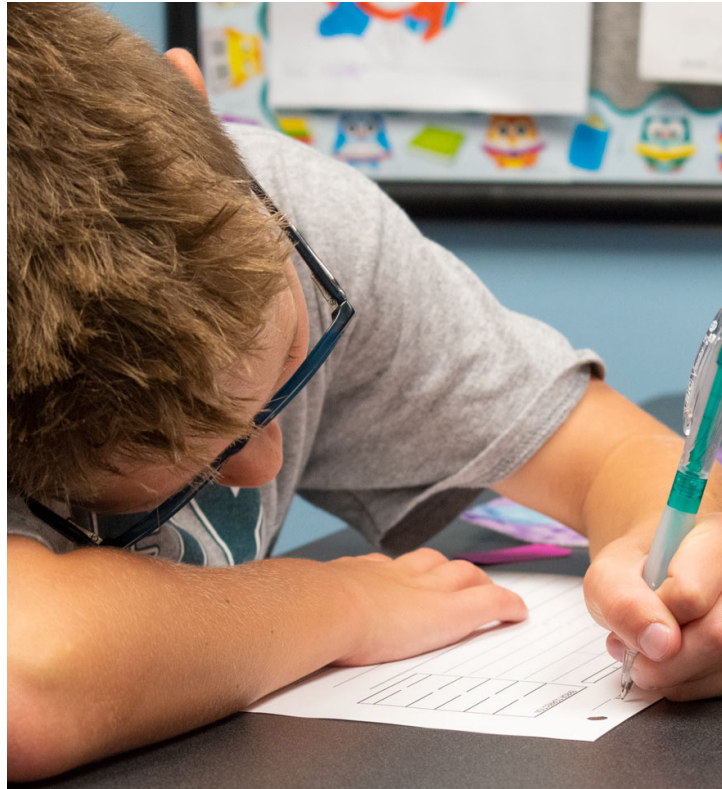
David L. Sharkis
Director of Operations



Understanding Dyslexia

As many as one in five children have dyslexia, a learning difference that makes it difficult for them to read, write, and spell. Students with dyslexia are bright and often eager to learn, but are more likely to make mistakes. Dyslexia can affect more than just reading and writing, it can limit a student's ability to learn in all subjects, including math, social studies, and science. Children with dyslexia often have to work much harder to keep up with their classmates. This can be devastating to young learners who may begin to experience anxiety, frustration, and self-doubt in reading and in school; these feelings can persist throughout their life.

While the signs of dyslexia appear as early as kindergarten, many teachers are not trained in recognizing them. This leaves millions of children undiagnosed and at risk of falling behind, something that can be nearly impossible to overcome without support. It is for these children that the Children's Dyslexia Centers exist.



Who We Are

The Children's Dyslexia Centers were founded in 1994 through a partnership between the Scottish Rite Freemasons of the Northern Masonic Jurisdiction and the Language Disorders Unit of Massachusetts General Hospital. The program helps students with dyslexia learn to read, write, and spell through a network of community-based afterschool tutoring and teacher training programs. Through one-on-one tutoring, each lesson is catered to the unique needs of every child. By tackling the underlying challenges dyslexic youth are facing, the Children's Dyslexia Centers create lifelong learners equipped with the skills they need to excel in the classroom and beyond. Together, our 45 Dyslexia Center locations have served over 15,000 students and 4,000 educators.

Our **Mission**

Our dedicated educators make a difference in the lives of children with dyslexia every day. The mission of each Dyslexia Center has three components:

STUDENT EDUCATION & SUPPORT

Provide the highest quality, state-of-the-art, multisensory tutorial reading and written language instruction to children with dyslexia;

EDUCATOR CERTIFICATION

Train tutors in the art, science and practice of tutoring children using the Orton-Gillingham approach to multisensory teaching of reading, spelling and writing;

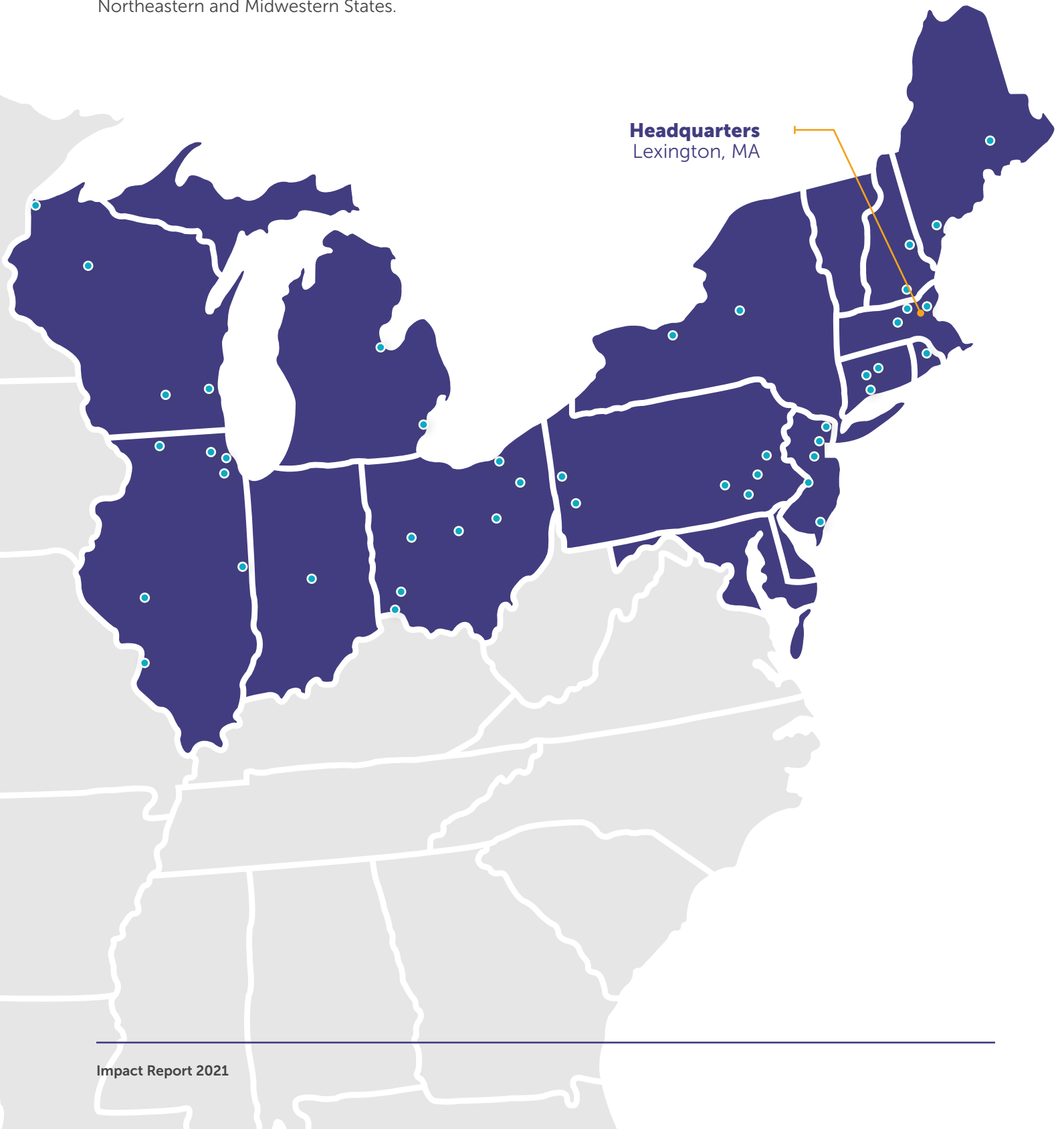
SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

Advance the body of scientific knowledge of dyslexia through support of clinical research to improve today's standards and tomorrow's care.



GROWING OUR IMPACT

The first Children’s Dyslexia Centers opened in 1993 in Newtonville, Massachusetts, serving just 12 students. Since then, we have grown to more than 40 locations, and expanded our reach across 13 Northeastern and Midwestern States.



Our Centers

Bridgeport Tutoring*
Bridgeport, CT

Connecticut
Waterbury, CT

Hartford Area*
Farmington, CT

East Central Illinois
Danville, IL

Lakeview*
Chicago, IL

Metropolitan Chicago
LaGrange, IL

Northwest Illinois
Freeport, IL

Palatine*
Palatine, IL

Southern Illinois
Collinsville, IL

Springfield
Springfield, IL

Indianapolis
Indianapolis, IN

Bangor
Bangor, ME

Portland
Portland, ME

Boston North
Lowell, MA

Central Massachusetts
Worcester, MA

Greater Boston
Newtonville, MA

Great Lakes Bay Region
Bay City, MI

Southeastern Michigan
Dearborn, MI

Nashua
Nashua, NH

Seacoast
Rochester, NH

Burlington
Burlington, NJ

Hasbrouck Heights
Hasbrouck Heights, NJ

Northfield
Northfield, NJ

Scotch Plains
Scotch Plains, NJ

Tenafly
Tenafly, NJ

Central New York
Oriskany, NY

Rochester
Webster, NY

Canton
Canton, OH

Cincinnati
Cincinnati, OH

Cleveland
Rocky River, OH

Columbus
Dublin, OH

Dayton
Dayton, OH

Norwood
Cincinnati, OH

Southeastern Ohio
Cambridge, OH

Central Pennsylvania
Harrisburg, PA

Lancaster
Lancaster, PA

Lehigh Valley
Allentown, PA

Pittsburgh
Pittsburgh, PA

Reading
West Reading, PA

Western Pennsylvania
New Castle, PA

Rhode Island
Cranston, RI

Madison Area
Madison, WI

Milwaukee
Milwaukee, WI

Upper Wisconsin
Eau Claire, WI

Upper Wisconsin Superior*
Superior, WI

*Denotes Satellite
Tutoring Locations

Helping Struggling Readers

The Children's Dyslexia Centers provide life-changing dyslexia remediation tutoring to children with dyslexia regardless of their ability to pay, helping them to overcome the challenges of learning to read, write, and spell. Students are able to make significant progress through the Center's after-school tutoring sessions while working one-on-one with a designated dyslexia practitioner or therapist. Thus, every child benefits from a continuity and focus that cannot be duplicated in a public school environment.

The program seeks to remove economic barriers by offering the program for free or at a significantly reduced cost, helping families receive quality services they may otherwise be unable to afford.

Our Centers follow a literacy approach that focuses on breaking reading and writing down into smaller skills that students build on over time. Each lesson is supported through multisensory learning, with instructors using sight, sound, touch, and movement to help teach children the structure and rules of the English language so they can improve their skills. This method of instruction is helpful for all learners, but especially for children with dyslexia who need to be explicitly taught the "how" and "why" of reading in order to learn.

Most students complete this program in two to three years having closed or greatly narrowed the gap separating them from their non-dyslexic peers.

2021 PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS



1,321

Total Children Served



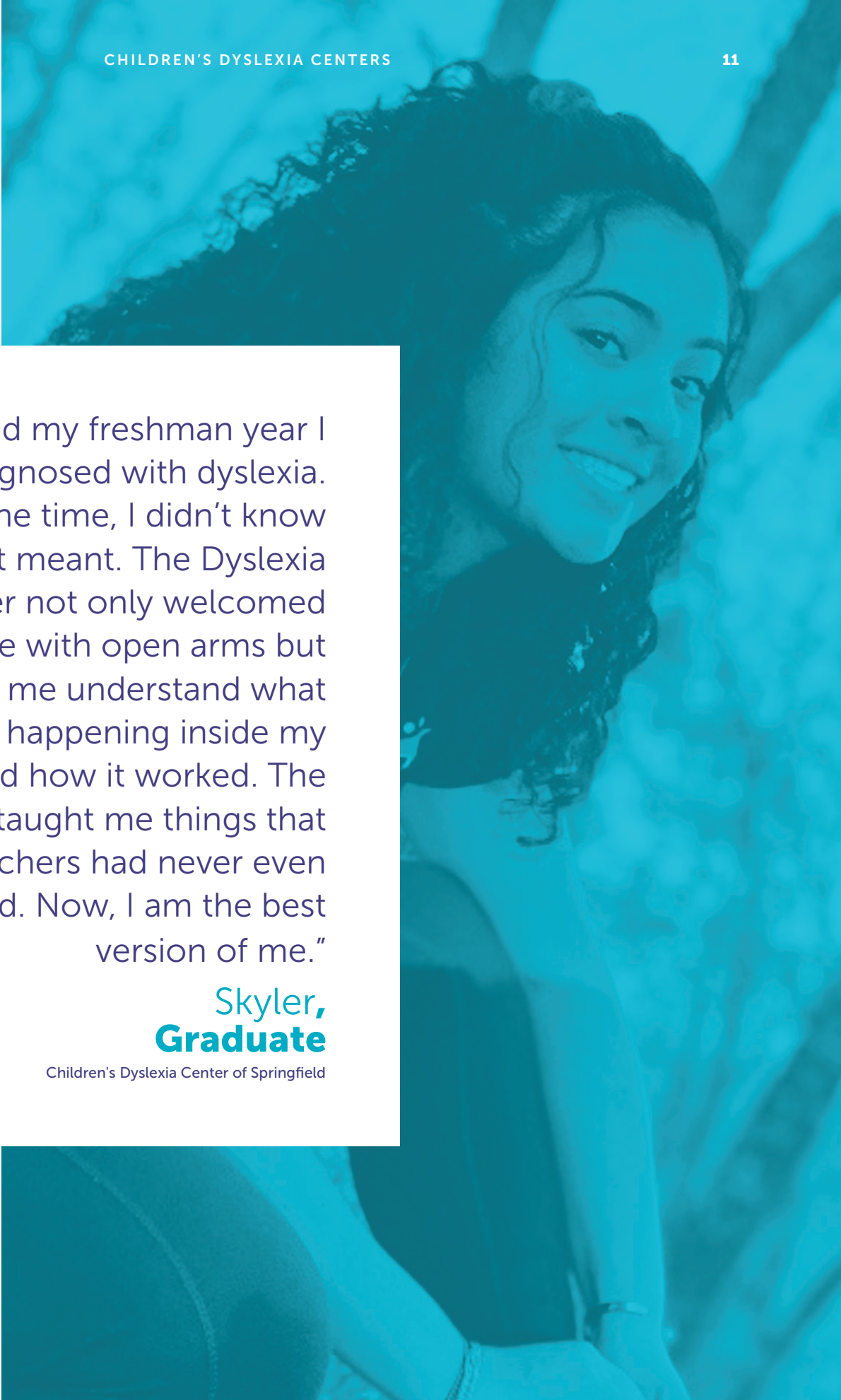
284

Number of Graduates



60,000+

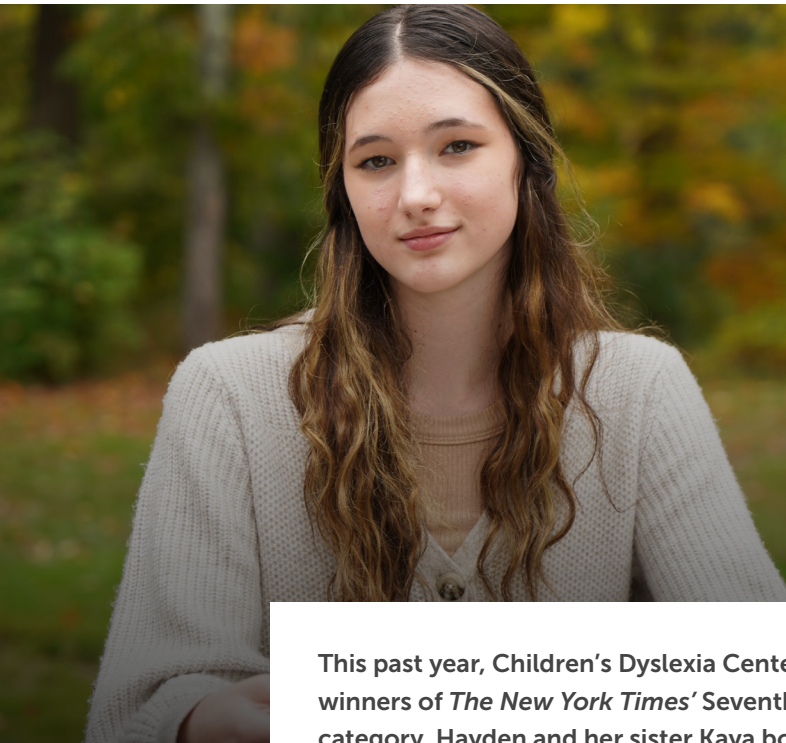
Lessons Provided



“Around my freshman year I was diagnosed with dyslexia. At the time, I didn’t know what that meant. The Dyslexia Center not only welcomed me with open arms but helped me understand what was happening inside my brain and how it worked. The Center taught me things that my teachers had never even mentioned. Now, I am the best version of me.”

Skyler,
Graduate

Children's Dyslexia Center of Springfield




Student Spotlight

This past year, Children’s Dyslexia Center graduate Hayden Miskinis was named one of the winners of *The New York Times’* Seventh Annual Student Essay Contest in the middle school category. Hayden and her sister Kaya both attended the Seacoast Children’s Dyslexia Center in New Hampshire for two years. Read on for an account from their mother Elaine on the difference the Center made in their lives.

Hayden was in third grade when we really began to worry about the fact that she couldn’t read. Her younger sister, Kaya, was only in first grade, but it was evident that she was on a similar path. We didn’t have the resources to hire private specialists, and it was clear that the services being provided by the school weren’t going to be adequate to help our girls.

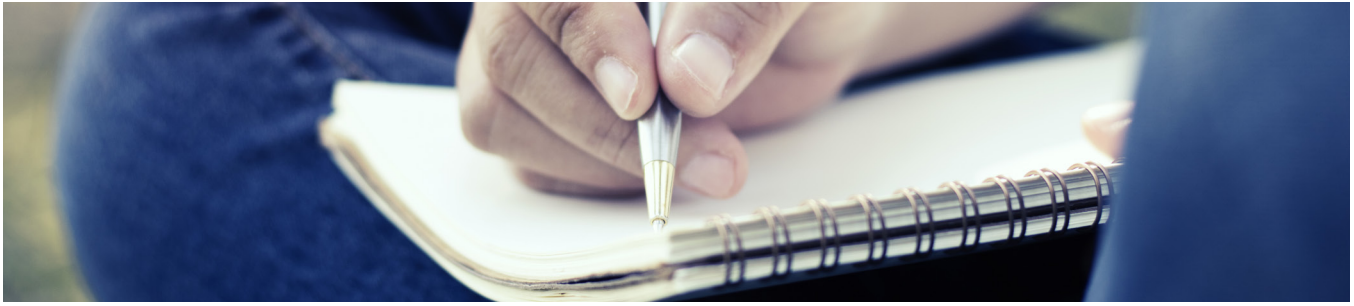
After discovering the Seacoast Dyslexia Center, I immediately called Center Director Brenda Peters to find out more about the program. When I got off the phone after my first conversation with Brenda, I cried. I was so relieved that there was hope on the horizon but also worried that there was a year long waiting list.

After two years in the program, Kaya was reading at grade level, and Hayden had gone from being unable to read to finishing only a year “behind” as a reader.

Words can’t begin to describe the impact that the Seacoast Center has had on our family. Not only are Hayden and Kaya readers now, but they are both excelling in school, and Hayden

is now using her voice to raise awareness about the challenges facing dyslexic learners. In addition, both girls credit the Center with helping them to pursue their goals outside of the classroom. Kaya, a budding actor, auditions for roles with confidence because she can now tackle “cold reads” of scripts; Hayden was accepted into a pre-professional ballet program where she trains between 15 and 40 hours a week in the Vaganova Russian ballet technique.

Hayden has said many times that the dedication and commitment that she gained from her time at the Seacoast Center showed her that hard work really does pay off. There is no way that the girls would be where they are today if it weren’t for the dedicated, impeccably trained professionals at the Seacoast Center. I can honestly say that the Seacoast Center changed our lives.



Hayden's essay, written when she was just 12 years old, was chosen among 1,200 entries and featured in *The New York Times*.

Switching Letters, Skipping Lines, Troubled & Dyslexic Minds

By Hayden Miskinis, age 14, New Hampshire

I look down at my book. I slowly read the first line of jumpy letters that won't stay still. It takes me a minute to find the next line, as my eyes jump around. This is a repeating process until I'm at the end of the page. This doesn't just happen to me; it happens to 70-80 percent of dyslexic students in schools, and yet schools aren't providing resources, teachers aren't getting trained and people don't even really understand dyslexia.

What is dyslexia? I didn't know until 2015 when I was faced with the truth as to why I wasn't progressing in school. I had been given interventions through a program called Title I which helps kids who don't have access to books or reading in their homes, but it wasn't working for me. I had plenty of books; I just couldn't read them. What I needed were interventions that would work for me.

Many people think that dyslexia is just switching letters. In my case, and that of many other dyslexic people, switching letters is only a small part of the bigger issue. A recent study suggests that "The brains of dyslexics do form accurate neurological representations of language sounds" (Paul). This would explain why a dyslexic learner's comprehension is so much higher than their reading ability. In other words, a dyslexic student could understand Harry Potter but not be able to read a simple word like "the." In order for a dyslexic student to succeed, correct interventions should be applied early in school.

While it might be true that some schools acknowledge dyslexia, most schools don't. In my case, it wasn't until third grade that I started to get the right interventions. The delay made becoming a strong reader especially challenging. I don't blame my teachers for this. Teachers don't recognize dyslexia or use interventions because they aren't prepared to. "One-on-one, individualized intervention is almost never an option in the public school system, but it is necessary for a dyslexic student" (Lunney). Students need to "attain functional reading and spelling as fast as possible. The longer that is delayed the farther behind they fall academically" (Lunney). I was fortunate that my school hired an Orton-Gillingham specialist who was trained in dyslexia. But, I'm one of the lucky ones. Most schools don't have the funding to provide these necessary resources.

After years of intensive interventions including tutors and outside programs, I can finally pick up a book and read it like it's nothing. This could be the future for many kids but not until teachers are trained properly and appropriate interventions are provided. In the meantime, we all need to remember, "Great minds don't think alike."

Works Cited

- Emanuel, Gabrielle. "[Dyslexia: The Learning Disability That Must Not Be Named](#)." NPR, 3 Dec. 2016.
Lunney, Marie. "[Why Schools Don't Do Dyslexia Intervention](#)." Lexercise, 25 Oct. 2016.
Paul, Annie. "[Reading Experience May Change The Brains of Dyslexic Students](#)." The New York Times, 15 May 2014.
Source: The New York Times by The Learning Network, June 17, 2020

Teacher Training & Certification

Training local educators in dyslexia intervention is critical to ensuring that all children, in and outside of our Centers, have access to a quality education.

At the Centers, teachers and other graduate-level educators receive training in Orton-Gillingham based reading instruction. In order to receive their certification, trainees must complete 90 hours of classroom instruction and 100 hours of practicum work at the Center, tutoring two children twice a week under the supervision of training staff.

Trainees learn about the history and structure of the English language, as well as how to implement effective teaching methods based on the science of reading to individualize and customize student lessons. Furthermore, lessons are reviewed and regularly observed by training supervisors so direct and constant feedback can be provided throughout the training. The ongoing support provided by supervisors helps to ensure the highest quality of standards are met and that practitioners are prepared to work with any child who struggles with language-based learning difficulties.

2021 Program Highlights



161

**Practitioner-1
Certifications**



104

**Practitioner-2
Certifications**



6

**Therapy Level
Certifications**



5

**Instructor of
Practitioner
Certifications**



1

**Instructor of
Therapy
Certification**



Accredited Training Courses

Our training course is accredited for its Teaching, Instructor of Teaching, Therapy, and Instructor of Therapy levels by the International Multisensory Structured Language Education Council (IMSLEC).



HELPING

CHILDREN

REACH THEIR

FULL POTENTIAL

“My training at the Center has proven invaluable to my success in teaching these bright children with reading differences. These young people are no less deserving than students without learning differences. They need to learn ‘differently,’ and the Children’s Dyslexia Centers have been able to offer that in an outstanding, scientifically-based program.”

DONNA, TUTOR

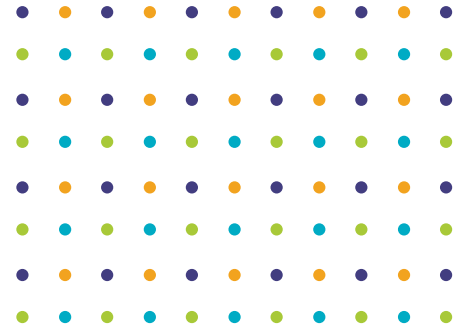
CHILDREN’S DYSLEXIA CENTER OF CINCINNATI



Rising to the Challenge



Our COVID Response



When COVID-19 forced the Children's Dyslexia Centers to halt in-person tutoring, the organization was determined to continue safely serving children. "We made a conscious decision to be proactive, take control of the situation, and put together a plan that would allow us to sustain the organization regardless of where COVID-19 took us," Director of Operations David Sharkis said.

A major hurdle was maintaining the Centers' high-quality dyslexia remediation services when stay-at-home orders prevented face-to-face tutoring sessions.

Through an astounding team effort, staff worked tirelessly to adapt the program to virtual tutoring sessions via Zoom. Then, leadership had to train Center Directors and tutors how to use the platform to deliver virtual lessons.

"I actually ran through practice lessons with my daughter to try to figure out the best way to teach different components of the program. Then I made videos and shared them with the Directors. It was a lot of brainstorming," Associate Clinical Director Cindy Allen-Fuss said.

Originally, the hope was that students would simply maintain their current progress and not regress. Instead, Center Directors have seen continued growth with many of their students, and some unexpectedly enjoyed the online format. Just as encouraging, the response from parents has been overwhelmingly positive.

As one mother shared, "I appreciate all the effort you put into making the transition to online

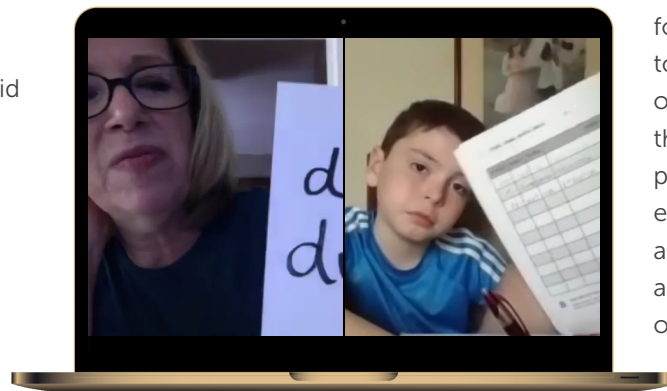
tutoring so easy! We feel absolutely blessed to have the opportunity to be a part of this program, and to be able to continue the program under these unprecedented circumstances is truly amazing!"

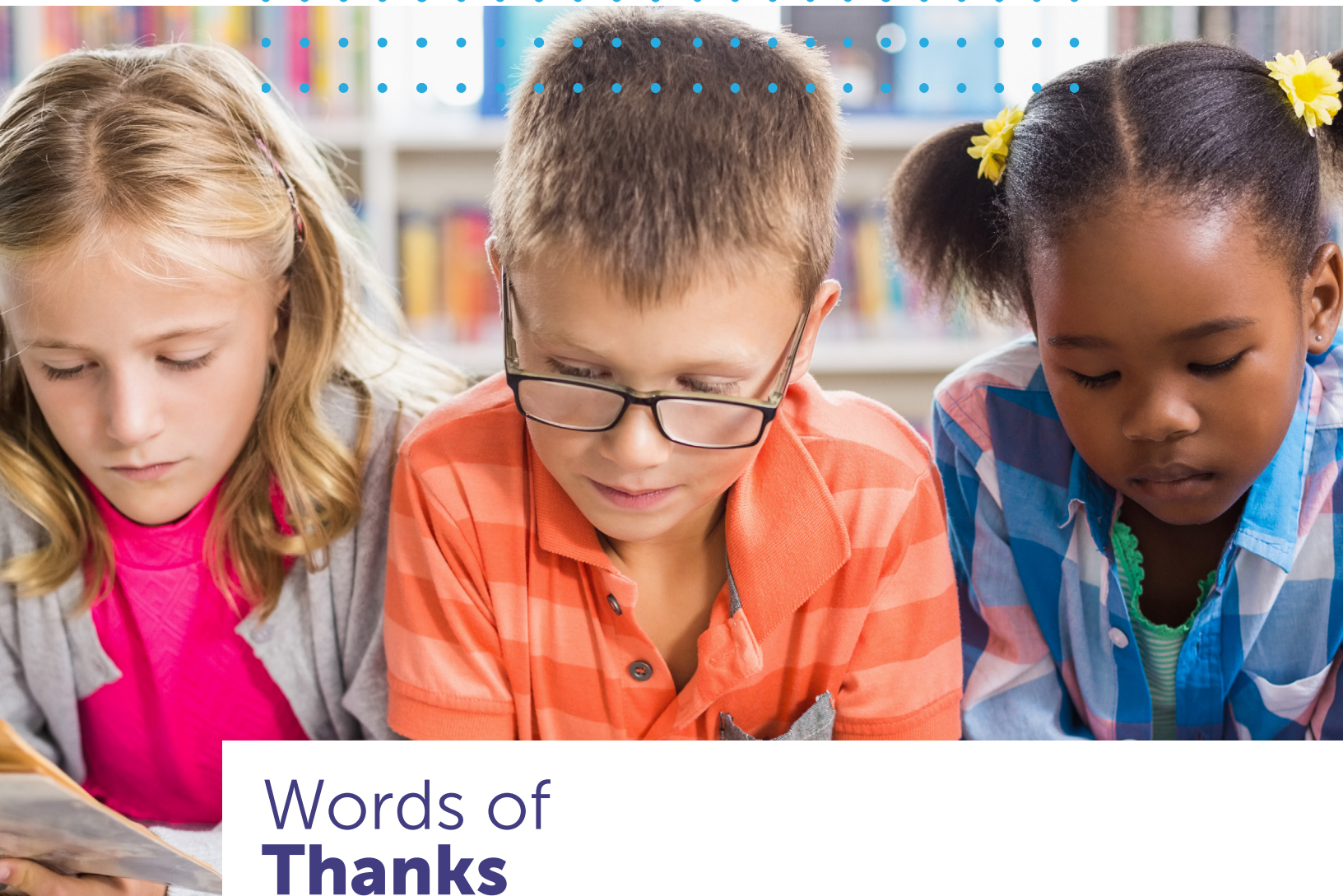
Today, almost every Center has made the transition back to in-person services, following strict COVID protocols to ensure the health and safety of staff and students. But the quality online instruction provided to children and educators over the last year and a half remains an incredible accomplishment. Staff delivered over 60,000 lessons to more than 1,000 children and worked to certify over 200 new tutors. "They have

shown extraordinary leadership in these challenging times," Clinical Director Carin Illig said.

Despite its challenges, the pandemic has helped individual Centers come together as a more cohesive team. Moving to online meetings and training has allowed for greater collaboration and consistency among the Centers, and online content and continuing education options are being developed for staff and recorded to allow for more convenient viewing. Leadership is even exploring ways to further the program's mission by expanding services to areas outside those served by the Centers.

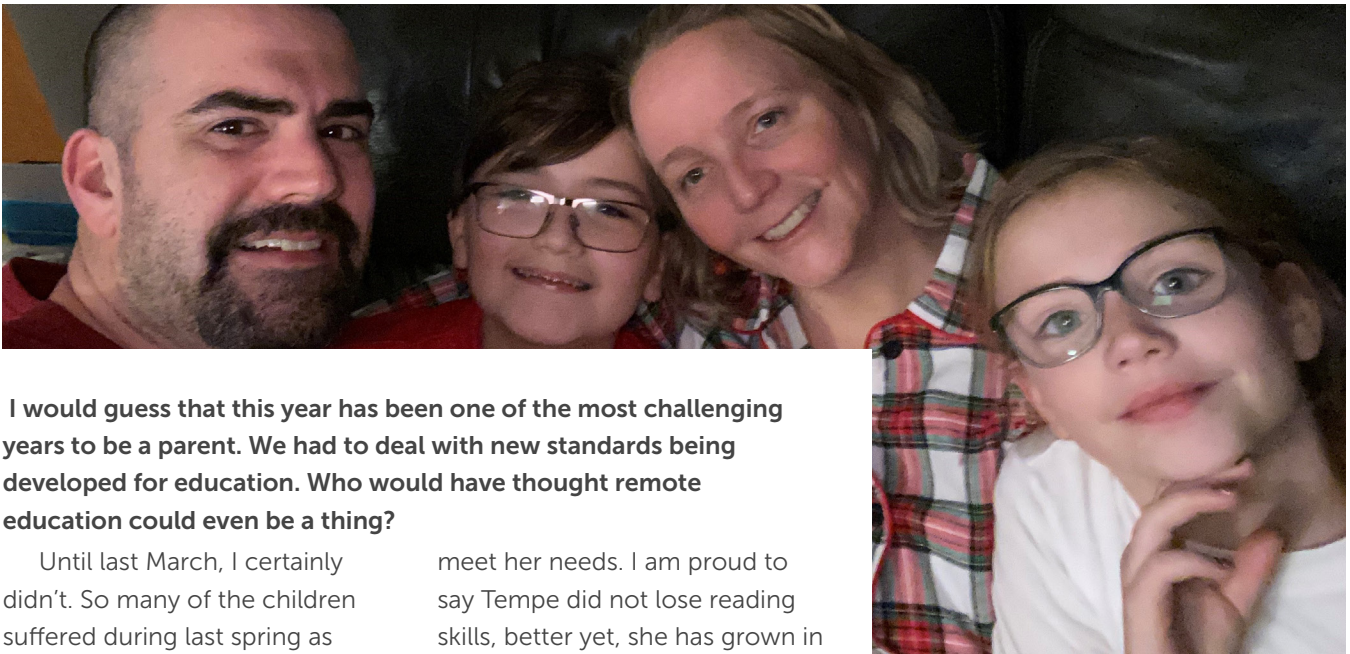
Director Sharkis remains optimistic about the future: "I am confident that the Children's Dyslexia Centers, Inc. is going to come out of this a much stronger, technically-adept organization. From the bottom of my heart, I thank all of our donors whose efforts and generosity have made this all possible. You are making a difference in the lives of these kids. Thank you."





Words of **Thanks**

For the past two years, the COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted learning for millions of struggling readers. Thanks to donor support, our students have not only maintained their skills, they have continued to grow as readers. Read on as parents Tina and Kevin Brigham share their appreciation for all those who helped their daughter Temperance through their support of the Children's Dyslexia Centers.



I would guess that this year has been one of the most challenging years to be a parent. We had to deal with new standards being developed for education. Who would have thought remote education could even be a thing?

Until last March, I certainly didn't. So many of the children suffered during last spring as the education system was trying to figure out how do we educate children while they are at home. Thank goodness for the Children's Dyslexia Centers and all your generous donations because children who are were already at risk of failing were not left out in the cold. The reading services provided through your kind donations continued to progress these individuals forward when other families were just praying that their child maintained.

For our daughter Tempe, it was certainly challenging at times. Trying to ask someone to teach a child they have not had the opportunity to meet in person takes a special educator. Miss Amy, Tempe's tutor has worked hard with Tempe to

meet her needs. I am proud to say Tempe did not lose reading skills, better yet, she has grown in her reading skills. We are certain that her time with the Children's Dyslexia Center is why.

Last, we can't express enough the gift that has been extended for Tempe because of the unconventional year we have had. We tear up every time we think about the impact that your generosity is providing for our daughter. Thank you so much for providing her a gift that will last her a lifetime. These lessons, although they are "reading" lessons, they are really life lessons.

"THANK YOU SO MUCH

FOR PROVIDING HER

A GIFT THAT WILL

HER A LIFETIME."

In appreciation & utter gratitude,

Tina & Kevin Brigham

Hudson, NH



Donor Programs

All of our Centers are 100% locally funded and committed to providing these essential services to children with dyslexia regardless of their families' ability to pay. This would not be possible without the generosity and support of donors. We offer several giving programs that allow supporters to become an important part of our mission.

SPONSOR A CHILD

For a one-time gift of \$5,000, supporters of the Children's Dyslexia Centers can Sponsor A Child and cover the expense of providing free tutoring services for one child for a year.



117

Total Children Sponsored in FY2021



\$586,431

FY2021 Sponsor a Child Donations



\$9.5 Million+

Historical Sponsor a Child Donations

Recent Graduates



Graduates from the Children's Dyslexia Center of Lancaster, PA's Celebration of Achievement



BUILDERS COUNCIL

The Builders Council is a society of donors who have made significant financial commitments of \$10,000 or more to the work of the Children's Dyslexia Centers.

Gregory M. Kita



BUILDERS COUNCIL DONOR PROFILE

As a high school principal, Greg Kita has experienced firsthand the transformative nature of the Children's Dyslexia Center program and the difference it can make in the lives of students learning to read and write. An early supporter of his local Center, Mr. Kita officially became a member of the Cleveland Center's Board of Governors in 2016 and has gone on to become one of the greatest advocates for the Builders Council.

In celebration of the Center's 20th anniversary this past year, he decided to not only join the Builders Council himself but made it his goal to bring on 20 new members of the Builders Council within the year. By meeting with friends and other members of his community, Mr.

Kita was able to recruit 13 new members, each committing a pledge of \$10,000 or more to the Cleveland Center. While short of his original goal, he is extremely excited about the potential these pledges hold for the Center and its ability to grow in the future.

*When asked what inspired him to support the Children's Dyslexia Centers and take on this incredible challenge, he said: **"I don't know that there is anything more powerful that you can give someone than the ability to read. This is something that we take for granted but is something that our students struggle with every day."***

Builders Council

23
New Members

646
Total Members

NEW BUILDERS COUNCIL MEMBERS

The following donors joined the Builders Council in Fiscal Year 2021. For the full list of members, please visit ChildrensDyslexiaCenters.org/Builders-Council

John A. Amarilios

Gregory & Laura Kita

James & Aubrey Cain

James A.& Earlene McMahon

Alan J. Carlson

Donald & Janice Moll

Michael J. Columbro

John D. Padley

Keith W. Cravens

Dennis Jay Patterson

Thomas Ewald & Family

Ralph & Rita Slider

Benjamin F. Griscom IV

Willie Stamper

Daniel Hall & Lauren DeMarco

Steel City DeMolay - Coraopolis, PA

Dick & Susan Heldman


Jeff & Nicole Strah

James & Christa Hieb

Illinois Knights Templar Home

Tony Jones

Franck T. Kakou & Family



**"THE BIG THING
I HAVE LEARNED AT THE
CHILDREN'S DYSLEXIA CENTERS
IS THAT I AM NOT DUMB.
IT MAY TAKE ME LONGER
TO READ, TO STUDY, TO
WRITE, BUT I CAN DO IT."**

JOSH, GRADUATE
CHILDREN'S DYSLEXIA CENTER OF NASHUA

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