Report on the 2009 Conference and AGM

The 2009 Annual Conference and AGM of the Dyslexia Association took place in the Glenroyal Hotel in Maynooth on Saturday 25th April.

The AGM was the first event of the day. The Minutes of the 2008 AGM were read and approved. This was followed by the reports of the National President, Director of Education and Branch Liaison Officer. The Financial Report and Accounts which had been approved by our auditors were presented by Noel Muldowney our accountant. These reports are all reproduced in our 2008 Annual Report, which accompanies this newsletter.

The new National Executive Committee was also elected, as follows:
Jo Gannon (National President), Mary Byrne (Vice-President), Eadaoin Briody (Hon. Secretary), Caroline Dooley Martyn (Hon. Treasurer), Mary Cosgrave, Olive Connolly, Madge Daly, Kathleen Deeney, Laurie Healy, Anne Hughes, Paddy Lockhart, Jill Maher, Wyn McCormack, Pauline Moran, Derry Ann Morgan, Noel Muldowney, Treasa Seoighe and Edel Williams.

Official Conference Opening
The Annual Conference was officially opened at 11.30am by Áine Brady TD, Minister of State with responsibility for Older People and Health Promotion. We are very grateful to Junior Minister Brady who stepped in at the last minute when Mr. John Moloney, Junior Minister for Equality, Disability and Mental Health had to cancel due to a family bereavement. Áine Brady TD is a former teacher and she was familiar with the local DAI workshop which took place in the school where she taught before entering political life. We are very grateful for her attendance and for her kind words of support.

As well as opening the conference, Junior Minister Brady also launched two new DAI information resources for adults.

Pictured: Aine Brady, TD, & Philomena Ott.
The conference consisted of two separate programmes, one for parents and teachers and one for adults with dyslexia.

**Talks for Parents and Teachers**
The keynote speaker was Philomena O’Connor, internationally recognised expert on dyslexia, who is also author of many books including “How to Detect and Manage Dyslexia” and “How to Manage Spelling Successfully”. Philomena’s first talk entitled “What works when teaching spelling and writing skills to those living with dyslexia” was very comprehensive and included much advice and many practical tips which parents and teachers found useful. The second talk given by Ms. O’Connor covered “Hints and Suggestions for Managing Dyslexia in Adolescent Years”, which included advice on dealing with dyslexia in the second level environment and during the sometimes difficult teenage years.

Máirín Barry from UCD covered “Supporting Students with Maths Difficulties”. She shared her knowledge of maths and offered very useful advice and strategies for dealing with the maths difficulties which students with dyslexia sometimes encounter.

Anne Jackson from the CRC gave a very practical and common sense overview of “Assistive Technology”. She discussed and displayed a range of items from very low cost DIY/homemade tools to advanced software and technological tools.

Time was the enemy on the day, as it always is at conferences – there was only so much that could be covered in each session. The speakers’ notes/handouts are available to download from the DAI website (www.dyslexia.ie), and they contain a wealth of useful information and also direct people to sources of further information, e.g. relevant books, website and resources.

An Open Forum was held at the end of the conference where people had the opportunity to ask questions to the panel of speakers.

**Talks for Adults**
The first talk in this strand was from Anne Hughes, ex-Director of the association, on the “Options after Diagnosis, Available to Adults with Dyslexia”. Stressing the need for a comprehensive psycho-educational assessment and detailed report for adults, Anne outlined possible courses of action. These included the full-time course for adults ‘Career Paths for People with Dyslexia’; individual teaching with a specialist tutor; the use of assistive technology; further study and a range of self-help strategies. Most important among the latter was the development of self-esteem, which enables the individual to put dyslexia into perspective and take control of learning.

The afternoon session for adults was presented by Margaret Doyle and Sheila Kavanagh, and covered “Self-help Strategies for Adults for Developing Literacy and Learning Skills, Including the Use of Technology”. In an information-packed two-hours Margaret and Sheila condensed the fruits of years of teaching on the Career Paths for People with Dyslexia course.

Techniques for improving recall of information using colour and diagrams, mind maps, visualisation and linkage were explained. The vast range of software available to assist people with literacy difficulties was discussed. Some useful programmes for developing literacy and making access to printed material easier were demonstrated. It was particularly helpful to see the programmes in use, helping participants to judge for themselves which ones might suit their specific needs.

An explanation of the different learning styles and some examples of how to make one’s own learning style work to maximum advantage was given. Sheila and Margaret illustrated their talk with examples of the techniques discussed. The presentation was very practical.
Advice for Students Entering Third Level and Further Education

Congratulations to all those students who have recently completed their Leaving Certificate and are now heading into third level and further education.

The hard work you have put in over the years, as well as the help and support of your parents, teachers and tutors, has hopefully paid off.

Entering into third level and further education offers new challenges and opportunities. There are many supports available in third level and further education, but you do need to be proactive about seeking these supports. Even if you ticked the box on the CAO, you yourself must make contact with the Disability Support Officer/Access Office in your college so that they can assess how much support you may need. Contact should be made as soon as possible, as the colleges have a deadline to make an application to the National Access Office for the funding for these supports. So, before you start your course, or on day one, make an appointment to see the Disability Support Officer as soon as possible.

Each college has its own Disability Support service, and the services available in each college differ somewhat. The supports provided by colleges may include:

- A waiver of minimum entry requirements
- The supplementary admissions route.
- Access to photocopying.
- Access to assessment if the student is undiagnosed.
- Copies of lecturers’ notes.
- Study skills tutorials.
- One-to-one tutorial support.
- Assistance with reading lists to help identify key texts.
- Exam accommodations, such as: a reader, using a computer, extra time.
- Lecturers and examiners being informed of student’s difficulties.
- Access to assistive technology, such as: dedicated computers, voice recognition software, scanners and software to read text.

Unfortunately, each year we hear of students who don’t register on time with the disability support services in their college, and only seek help when they start having major problems, by which time funding deadlines have passed. It is much better, even if you think you may not need major support, to at least register with the support service. Also, if you encounter any difficulties, seek help straight away – don’t put it off. The sooner you get help the better. If you wait until a week before exams at the end of First Year, there is very little the Disability Support staff can do in a week. However, if you get a little help as and when you need it during the year, you will succeed and reach your goals. Most students with dyslexia, particularly if they have chosen the right course which suits their aptitude and learning style, will blossom at third level. We wish you all great success!

EDA CONFERENCE 2010

The European Dyslexia Association (EDA) and the Catholic University College Bruges-Ostend (KHBO), Department of Speech and Language Therapy and Audiology, are pleased to announce that they will host the 3rd All-European Dyslexia Conference in Bruges (Belgium) from April 22nd to 24th 2010. The conference will feature keynote speakers representing the best practice and knowledge regarding dyslexia from across Europe, a series of workshops for practitioners as well as opportunities for people to meet and network. The languages of the conference will be English, Dutch, German and French. The key-notes will be delivered in English. You will find more information about the conference in the near future at the conference website: www.khbo.be/eda-khbo-dyslexiaconference
New Publications

Special Stories Publishing, in conjunction with the Dyslexia Association of Ireland, has just launched a new children’s book about dyslexia. The book titled Tom’s Special Talent is beautifully illustrated by Irish artist, Eva Byrne, and is designed to introduce younger children to dyslexia (most suitable for children aged 5-9 years old). The story, written by Kate Gaynor, is told through the eyes of Tom, a young boy with dyslexia. When Tom sees how good his friends are at reading and writing, it leaves him wondering if he has any talents at all. However, a school competition not only helps Tom to find his own talent but also to see that everyone has a special talent of their own.

This new book will be a great resource for parents and teachers alike. It will be a useful way to introduce younger children to dyslexia – and not only children who have dyslexia, but also their siblings, friends and classmates. Maria McAnaney read the book to a group of 7-9 year olds in the Early Intervention Summer Course in Sandymount. Maria found that the children “really enjoyed the book. They felt it was very good at explaining how they felt about reading out loud. It made school feel like a positive place. Overall, they were very impressed and loved it.”

The book is now available through all good bookstores nationwide. It is also available from the DAI national office, and can be purchased online via the Special Stories website (www.specialstories.ie). Price is €8.99 per copy.

Special Stories are currently running a special offer – parents can donate a copy of the book to their child’s school at a 20% discount. Just send the name and address of the school to Special Stories and they will send the book to the school, with a note to say that it was donated by you!

New Information Resources for Adults

Two new DAI information resources for adults were launched at the 2009 Annual Conference. They are:

(1) a free basic information leaflet on dyslexia, and
(2) a more comprehensive book “Living with Dyslexia: Information for Adults with Dyslexia”.

Sincere thanks are due to Anne Hughes, for all her voluntary work as the main author of these resources. Both information resources are available to download for free from the DAI website (www.dyslexia.ie). Hard copies are available from the national office. The basic leaflet is free, the book costs €5.00 per copy plus €2.00 for postage.

To ensure wide availability, DAI has engaged in an extensive distribution of these resources to libraries, citizens information centres, adult education centres, FÁS offices and other community organisations nationwide. We hope that they will help to increase awareness and knowledge of the issue of dyslexia and how it impacts on adults. These resources are useful not only to adults with dyslexia, but also to their families, friends, colleagues and employers.
The DAI Workshop
by Mary Ball, DAI.

The DAI Workshop is a very special ‘animal’. It is a co-operative entity. There are many people necessary for the success and responsible for the destiny of a DAI Workshop: the Branch Committees, the Workshop Co-ordinators and Assistant Co-ordinators, the Workshop Tutors, the parents and the children. Each of these groups has an indispensable role in keeping the service going. Many parents continue to be involved long after their children have left the workshop, because they have recognised its value and wish to see it maintained as a resource for their community.

Building a child’s confidence so that he can be a good learner, showing him how to tackle the particular difficulties that result from dyslexia, giving him the tools to ‘manage’ reading and writing tasks are the direct aims of the teaching within a workshop. The structure of small group learning coincides with research findings that this is the most effective way of intervention for children with dyslexia. The DAI model has traditionally been to work in short sessions in small groups, with the opportunity for some individual work where the need arises. It is heartening to read articles in research journals which advocate just that as best practice. Workshop tutors have an expertise in teaching children with dyslexia.

My experience is that the DAI workshop is a happy learning environment with a level of competence and creativity that I admire.

The role of the workshop does not end with the tutoring: an important function is to provide a support group for parents where wisdom, advice and understanding are shared, as well as the anxieties, difficulties and fears, of course. The more parents participate, the more fully the Branches and their Workshops fulfil their role and justify their existence.

There are currently thirty two Branches with Workshops around the country; our most recent addition is the new Waterford Branch whose workshop is due to begin this September. Families can participate at all levels, as pupils, as parents, on the Branch Committees, helping with events, organising talks, fundraising. All are welcome. For further information and contact details about a Branch and Workshop near you, see our website www.dyslexia.ie

Below, Marita Murtagh, the Co-ordinator of the DAI Workshop in Castlebar, reflects on the very best of what a workshop is and what it aims to accomplish.

The most frequently made comments about the workshop by parents are that "they meet other parents with dyslexic children and do not feel so isolated as they get support and ideas from other parents which helps them to help their child get through the education system and through life"

Occasionally some parents say that "the only support available to their child is through the Dyslexia Association Workshop, especially when the child has achieved the criteria laid down by the Department of Education, as the school is sometimes unable to continue supporting the child on a one to one basis or in a group situation due to the demand on resources in the school"

Both parents and pupils feel that the greatest advantage of the Dyslexia Association Workshop is "that every child’s self esteem has been boosted because they meet other children experiencing the same difficulties as themselves and they no longer feel isolated". Some of these children may have come from small rural schools where they may be the only child assessed with a specific
The DAI Workshop

learning difficulty in the school or from large classes where they may be the only child assessed as having dyslexia.

Parents feel that when their children see other children experiencing the same difficulties as themselves and when each child is valued as an individual who learns differently, this boosts the child’s self esteem and the child begins to flourish both from a better sense of worth and this in turn encourages the child to make better progress academically.

Teachers often comment on "how children have flourished since entering the workshop, how the children seem to be much happier in themselves and have become more confident and participate in discussions within their groups more confidently".

Parents also say that their children have made friendships which they maintain outside the workshop and meet with these friends socially and keep in contact with each other by phone or by sending each other text messages.

Personally, as the workshop coordinator for the past eight years "I feel it gives me the momentum to keep going whenever I feel like giving up, having to be committed to the workshop every Monday night during school term, when I see how confident the children become in themselves. I can see that their reading, spelling and writing ability has improved so much from the time they enter the workshop. I feel this gives them the opportunity to achieve more in the education system and thus achieve their true potential". One former pupil asked me at one stage to see if I could organise a group of students to prepare for the Leaving Cert. He said "he felt the workshop had helped him to get on very well with all his subjects in his Junior Certificate as his reading had improved, he had learned how to approach an exam paper and how to organise his time during the exam to enable him to answer all the questions". He felt the workshop would prepare him adequately for his Leaving Cert.

As coordinator, I feel the workshop system gives great moral support to parents. When parents approach me initially, they are very upset, some actually crying, when their child has been assessed as being dyslexic. They do not fully understand dyslexia and feel inadequate in that they do not know how to help their child. They also feel isolated. Others may be dyslexic themselves and fear that their child will be treated in the same way as they were in the education system, where no one understood their difficulties and where teachers did not know how to help them. They are afraid that their child will have the same bad experiences they had. By coming into the workshop system, they see that there are teachers who understand their children and know how to help them. They learn more about dyslexia and how to help their child, and, more importantly, they no longer feel isolated. The knowledge they gain in the workshop is shared with other parents they know who do not have children in the workshop, thus relieving the burden on other parents, a problem shared is a problem halved!!

I hope there will be something of use to you in all of these thoughts and experiences.

Marita Murtagh,
DAI Castlebar Workshop
Hi, my name is Jack. I am 12 years of age and just finished primary school this year. I want to tell you about my struggle and hope it might help other children like me.

When I finished Junior Infants, I still did not know the letters of the alphabet. When I looked at letters they were all jumbled up and nothing made sense to me. I could not make out what the teacher was writing but at the time I thought this was normal and everyone saw things this way. I didn’t know any different. My mother took me to a private teacher that summer and she helped me catch up with the rest of the class.

I felt the same as everyone for the next two years until I went into 2nd Class. It was here that I noticed I could not do things as fast as the rest of my class. I found reading and spelling very hard and started to feel stupid. It was worse at home when I was doing my homework and my younger brother could work it out. What was really catching me were words like dog, bog, god ... saw and was ... does and goes. I also used to make up my own words. It was a joke with my mother that I had my very own dictionary!

When I went into 3rd Class I just gave up. I really felt stupid and different, the rest of the class were well able to work on their own and I had no idea what I was to do. I spent most of the time daydreaming, waiting for the bell to go so I could go home.

By 4th Class I was very far behind and promised myself that I will try really hard this year but when I did try and made an effort it was never good enough. My grammar and spelling were very bad. My essays never made any sense. I knew what I wanted to say but I could never get it down on paper. I started acting the clown in class to cover up for my stupidity and kept getting into trouble but felt popular with the rest of the lads. At last I felt good at something – making others laugh. But deep down I just wanted someone to notice.

My mother took me for an assessment last summer. I was really happy when she told me that I was dyslexic. Now I knew that I was not stupid, there was a reason for me not being able to learn. There are a lot of people out there like me, even famous people like Mohammed Ali, Jamie Oliver and Robbie Williams. It was a great feeling and I never felt so happy.

Jack has this to say about the effect of receiving learning support, following identification of his dyslexia:

My resource teacher was the best. She took her time to explain everything and had patience with me if I could not get it. If I had a problem in class she explained where I was going wrong. She taught me ways to remember my reading by concentrating on one line at a time and how to get an answer on what I had read. My class teacher also explained things by breaking it down. I finally felt happy going to school.

Jack has this advice for teachers:

• If you notice a pupil daydreaming when they are supposed to work on their own, take them to one side after class and ask if they are finding the work hard.

• If essays don’t make sense, take the time to explain where they are going wrong and help them to put it together.

• Give easy step by step instructions when explaining things especially in Maths and English. The hardest part for me was to understand what I was meant to do.
As a parent of three dyslexic children, I speak from experience when I say it is easy to get tunnel vision when your child is affected by a difficulty or disability. For me, for a long time after my first child was diagnosed with dyslexia, it was his difficulty that now defined who he was and who he would become as a result. But this was not a positive outlook in the beginning! That wonderful boy I had known ceased to exist with his diagnosis and in his place was this ‘child who had dyslexia’. To a degree, we can all be guilty of the ‘glass half empty’ syndrome especially where our children’s health or happiness is concerned and this healthy scepticism has its place, but when our child’s difficulty is all we see, then it ceases to be healthy; for them or for us as parents.

Once the initial shock of my son’s diagnosis was absorbed, it was replaced with a steely determination to ‘fix’ him and if I couldn’t do that, make sure I did everything in my power to get him enough help to negate his difficulties. This meant first and foremost getting as much information about dyslexia as I could. I visited as many websites as I could find, absorbed information like a sponge, read for hours on end about the pitfalls and the positives of dyslexia and ended up being more confused than when I was started. The internet is a fantastic tool to have most certainly, but it was the human contact and someone else’s experiences that put my son’s difficulties and his future into perspective. I attended an information meeting organised by the Kilcock branch of the DAI and it was there, talking to other parents, the ‘ones who had gone before’ that everything began to make sense.

By the time my second child was diagnosed, a year later, I knew how to deal with her difficulties in a much more measured and calm way and when my third was diagnosed a year after that, we had everything down to a fine art. Dealing with tantrums, dealing with new experiences, dealing with failure, dealing with their crippled confidences, dealing with teachers, bullying etc, everything that their life now threw at them was easier to cope with, but all because I put their difficulties into perspective and allowed them become that ‘whole individual’ again. If I didn’t know how to deal with a new issue, I sought help from a network of women who had dealt with these problems before and could help me; the staff and volunteers at the DAI and the branch networks which operate throughout the country. My children attended the Kilcock workshop for extra tuition, but it was here I found my lifeline too, my gateway to experiences and knowledge so valuable it cannot be quantified.

When my eldest son Gary was diagnosed with dyslexia in 2004, it was my perspective of him and his capabilities that changed. I ‘grieved’ for him and his future, a common experience I have since learned. Perspective and proper information was the key to my helping my children deal with their difficulties. It was also the key to my realising that their difficulties do affect them no matter how hard I tried to ‘negate’ its affects, because that’s never truly possible. It most certainly defines them, but it now defines them positively as they realise that dyslexia can bring its own strengths. This we have learned over many years; I don’t worry about my children any more, they will handle anything life brings to them. As a parent, my advice to any of you feeling lost or scared for your child’s future is talk to the ‘ones who have gone before’. Get in touch with your local DAI branch and begin to deal with your child as a whole individual again. There is more to them than dyslexia and the glass can also be half full.

Edel Williams
Chairperson of the Kilcock Branch and Member of DAI’s National Executive Committee.
Paired Reading and Peer Reading: What is it all about?
by Caitriona McDonagh, Teacher and Lecturer on the DAI Teachers’ Course.

Niamh was two years old. She sat beside me and pointed to the animals and words in her favourite Farm Story Book. She said, “Horse” as she put her finger on the picture of a horse, “Pig” pointing to a pig and “wow, wow,” pointing to a dog. I pointed to the dog and said, “dog”. She smiled up at me, pointed to the dog and asked, “Dog. Not wow wow?”

Niamh was copying what I said and making sense out of print. Together we were beginning her journey towards becoming a reader - a journey that children with dyslexia find difficult. I was helping her by filling in gaps between what she could accomplish on her own and the extra that she could achieve with the help of another more able person. Educationalists (Vygotsky in particular) describe this type of personal support for learners as the zone of proximal development when the learner is constructing new knowledge for themselves. As a parent, friend or teacher, of a student with dyslexia you may have used this very approach under different names – perhaps Paired Reading, Peer Reading, Peer Tutoring or CAPER (Children And Parents Enjoying Reading).

Why do paired reading or peer reading?
It is important to read to pupils with dyslexia of all ages because relevant research has shown that children with the biggest vocabularies tend to be the strongest readers. Research has also shown that listeners can learn word meanings at the same rate as readers. Parents, friends and teachers can help students with dyslexia to move through the stages of learning to read more easily by reading to them and with them.

Tips for parents and friends of children aged between 3 and 5 years:
Read to your child and discuss what you have read. Use questions that begin with What? When? Who? How? Where? and Why? Re-read stories. Take turns pointing to and naming words and pictures. Let the child turn the pages and guess what is coming next. This may prevent some difficulties with vocabulary, communication and visual skills.

Tips for parents, friends and teachers of children aged between 5 and 7 years when learning difficulties arising from dyslexia have been noticed:
Children with dyslexia may get frustrated during these years when they fail to grasp reading easily. You can help by finding ways for them to enjoy books and reading. Try reading to them from books of their own choice (not school texts) for a minimum of five minutes daily. Children often prefer non-fiction books. In school try cross-age pair reading with children from different ages or class levels. In this form of paired reading older and more able students (or any available adults) read to younger children for about 10 minutes daily. As you read, encourage your child to read along with you, by saying any small words that they recognise from their school work. Often re-read pieces that the child enjoys and chat about them. Encourage the child to make up questions about the story for you to answer. This will help develop a basic sight vocabulary (the most common words that appear in reading texts), word recognition skills and extending vocabulary.

Tips for parents, friends and teachers of students between 7 and 12+ years with a formal identification of dyslexia and/or analysis of learning needs in reading:
At this age children usually become more independent readers, but many students with dyslexia don’t because they are still reading sound by sound and word by word. Try to find ways to help them develop fluency. By developing fluency students can understand what they are reading more easily. Relevant research on this indicates that low levels of word attack and decoding skills can result in low levels of processing and this, in turn, leads to over concentration on decoding which means students have a low level of reading comprehension.
• Continue daily reading sessions with a focus on speeding up the reading. You and the child could read alternative sentences, paragraphs or pages depending on the level of difficulty of the text.
• As the child reads you supply words that they cannot read. Don’t teach these words. If the child hasn’t managed them after about ten seconds you just say them.
• Always remember to pause, prompt and praise frequently.
• Books chosen should be intellectually challenging but if there are more than ten words per page (or per paragraph in more difficult texts) that the child cannot read, reading will not be enjoyable.
• Books on tape or CD/DVD can help children’s speed and fluency when they read along with them or just listen to them.

At this stage the concept of reading to learn is important. Sometimes consider reading for your child but remember that as a listener your child needs to be responsible for his or her listening. Show this by some appropriate oral activity such as:
• discussion,
• supplying alternative endings,
• highlighting particular words or phrases for discussion, and
• storing them in a vocabulary bank.

When you read to a student:
1. Stop at a word.
2. Ask the student to fill in an alternative word orally, or
3. You can cover a word and ask the student to write a suitable word.

Cross-age pair reading and peer tutoring of reading
Cross-age pair reading and peer tutoring of reading (King 2007) are two inclusive and compensatory strategies that could be introduced in school. In cross-age pair reading a senior pupil with dyslexia can gain in confidence and competence from reading to a younger pupil in the primary school. Paired reading promotes a positive attitude to reading and can encourage leadership skills in older students with dyslexia.
In peer tutoring pupils with different reading abilities within the same class can be paired together to work on reading, comprehension and working with words during peer tutoring sessions as follows:
1. Pupil ‘buddies’ take turns to read the same passage for five minutes with the more able reader reading first.
2. Next they monitor their understanding of the text by taking turns to ask questions such as (a) What was the story about? (b) What do you think (or feel) about what you have read? (c) What was the most important thing in what you read? (d)What might happen next?
3. Working with words could involve practicing strategies such as word decoding or vocabulary building depending on the skills the class teacher sees as appropriate to each pair of peers. These strategies could be demonstrated by the class and/or support teacher and pupils given prompt cards to help them remember. Many reading activities can be taught during peer tutoring sessions such as repeated reading, sight words, phonics, comprehension, vocabulary, language of maths and Irish.

Finally
Paired Reading and Peer Reading are really about having a helping buddy for reading. A reading buddy can be a friend, a classmate, an older pupil, a younger pupil, a parent, a helpful adult or even a teacher. Any reading ‘buddy’ can make reading much less of a chore and more manageable for a student with dyslexia.
The Importance of Fundraising

DAI has been informed of cuts to two of our grants so far this year. The funding we received from the Further Education section of the Department of Education and Science has been cut by 4% this year. This funding is for our adult services including the Career Paths course for adults.

The grant we receive from the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs has been reduced by 8% for the second half of 2009 and 2010. This grant enables us to support our network of branches and workshops nationwide, as well as other activities.

These funding cuts, combined with an increased demand for reduced rate services, all due to the current economic climate, mean that it is more important than ever for the Dyslexia Association of Ireland to engage in fundraising activities to enable us to continue to provide services to those affected by dyslexia. Our hard-working Fundraising Sub-Committee is busier than ever this year, as you will see from all of the upcoming events detailed later in this newsletter.

We are very grateful to all those individuals and companies each year who help the association in this regard: the women who run, jog and walk the mini-marathon each year; the people who collect in shopping centres and volunteer their time for bag-packing; the golfers who participate in the golf classic; the walkers who enjoy the D-Day Fun Walk each September. We are so grateful for the all support and help we receive, without which, we simply could not continue to support as many people as we do.

How to get involved and help DAI to fundraise:

- Organise a team for our annual Golf Classic.
- Take part in our annual D-Day Fun Walk in Glendalough, with your family and friends.
- Organise a group of women to complete the mini-marathon.
- Get you book club/group to participate in the new Novel Idea ... Read for Dyslexia fundraising campaign.
- Buy a ticket for the Novel Idea ... Authors Read for Dyslexia fundraiser this November.
- If you’re feeling brave, organise a sponsored parachute jump in aid of DAI, just like Leo and Aisling Oman (pictured).
- Volunteer for a few hours to collect in a shopping centre for a D-Day collection, or at a bag-packing event.
- Organise your own event in aid of the Dyslexia Association. Have a BBQ for your friends and family and ask them for donations.
- Run a table quiz, race night or other event.
- Buy some DAI Christmas cards.
- Organise a donation of goods or services, e.g. bottled water or fruit juice, or healthy snacks, for participants of our annual Golf Classic and D-Day Fun Walk. Stationery or a new filing cabinet for the office, a photocopier or printer for your local branch or workshop. Useful donations save money which can then be targeted to other essential services. Prizes for a raffle, no matter how big or small, from a €10 voucher to a car, will all help to raise much funds. All contributions really do help!

Please do get involved in whatever way you can, as an individual, as a family, as a company. €40 will give a person with dyslexia one hour of specialist tuition. €400 will pay for a child or an adult to have a psycho-educational assessment. €900 will pay for a child to have one year’s specialist tuition in a once a week after-school DAI workshop.
Financial Support Available from DAI

In these difficult economic times, we want to remind everyone that DAI has always operated reduced rates for our services to people on social welfare or low income. Through the hard work done on our many fundraising ventures, each year we have some funds available to enable us to offer reduced rates to those in genuine need. For example, reduced rates are available for psycho-educational assessments done in national office. Parents of children attending DAI workshops can apply for funding/reduced workshop fees – ask your local workshop co-ordinator for information. There is also some limited funding available for adult tuition. Reduced rates are available for our many courses, seminars and conferences.

Please don’t hesitate to ask – we try to help those in need whenever possible.

Staff Changes
Two of our psychologists have moved on to pastures new. Ian O’Grady has left to take up a position as a Counselling Psychologist in the South East. Eimear McMahon has left to begin postgraduate training in Clinical Psychology. We thank them both for their contribution over the last year and wish them well in their future careers.

DAI will be recruiting for a new full-time psychologist. The position will be advertised on our website and in the national press in the coming weeks.

Volunteers Needed for Shopping Centre D-Day Collections
Volunteers are required for some upcoming shopping centre collections. It is honestly, good fun, and the more volunteers we have the more money we can collect. These collections also help to raise awareness about dyslexia, as people often stop and ask for information or advice.

October 1st – Blanchardstown Shopping Centre, Blanchardstown, Dublin 15.
October 23rd & 24th - Manor Mills Shopping Centre, Maynooth, Co. Kildare.

If you can help even for an hour or two, then please contact Niav at 01 6790276 or email info@dyslexia.ie.

Information Seminars run by Cork Branch of DAI

The Cork Branch of DAI will hold two information seminars on 10th October in the Rochestown Park Hotel, Rochestown, Cork.

The morning seminar (9.30am to 1.30pm) is for parents and teachers and will feature a number of speakers on topics such as exam accommodations, the supplementary admissions route to third level, assistive technology and understanding assessment reports.

The afternoon seminar (2.00pm to 4.00pm) is an information plus question and answer session relating to students with dyslexia at primary level. Parents and teachers are welcome.

For further information and to book a place contact the Cork branch at 087 9831837 or email dyslexiacork@gmail.com.
A Novel Idea ... Read for Dyslexia

To mark Dyslexia Awareness Month this October, the Dyslexia Association of Ireland is inviting all book clubs and reading groups to join our Novel Idea ... Read for Dyslexia Campaign. With your support the Dyslexia Association will be able to provide specialist tutorial assistance to help people to overcome their dyslexia and discover the joy of reading. How? Every €40 raised will provide one hour of specialist tuition for a group of people with dyslexia.

Book club members understand more than most the joy that can come from reading. However, for people with dyslexia, reading can be a chore. Many do not experience the joy of reading for pleasure.

Book clubs can raise funds in any way they choose, e.g. collecting donations at the next book club meeting, selling second-hand books, a reading marathon, a coffee morning, or a book-themed quiz night. The book club which comes up with the most novel idea for a fundraising event will win a visit to their book club by an Irish author (TBC) and book vouchers to the value of €300. A Book Club Registration Form is printed on page 14.

This campaign will culminate in a special event in aid of the Dyslexia Association, a Novel Idea ... Authors Read for Dyslexia. This event will be held on 26th November in the O’Reilly Theatre, Belvedere College, Dublin 1. Hosted by Senator David Norris, leading Irish authors will read excerpts from their work and discuss their writing. Don’t miss this fabulous opportunity to meet these authors, hear them read from and discuss their work, perhaps even get a favourite book signed by the author.

Tickets for this event are just €15 per person, and all are welcome. Tickets are available from the Dyslexia Association of Ireland. Tel. 01 6790276 or email info@dyslexia.ie. The winners of the novel idea fundraiser will be announced at this event.

According to Jo Gannon DAI’s National President “unaddressed dyslexia can have huge lifelong consequences. The Dyslexia Association is committed to improving awareness of dyslexia and also to support people with dyslexia to achieve their potential. The Novel Idea ... Read for Dyslexia campaign will enable people to pass on and share the joy of reading”.

For further information contact DAI @ 01 6790276 or email info@dyslexia.ie.
A Novel Idea ... Read for Dyslexia

Book Club Registration Form

Name of Book Club: _______________________________ (please print)
Contact Person: ____________________________________
Postal Address: _____________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
Telephone: ___________________________
E-mail Address: ___________________________

Yes, our book club would like to take part in a Novel Idea ... Read for Dyslexia this October to help
fund specialist tuition for people with dyslexia and to help share the joy of reading.

Our novel fundraising idea is: ___________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

Date on which our fundraiser will be held: ______________________________________

Please complete this form and return to the below address by 30th October.

A Novel Idea ... Read for Dyslexia,
c/o Dyslexia Association of Ireland,
Suffolk Chambers,
1 Suffolk Street,
Dublin 2.

* On receipt, we will send you confirmation of your registration number along with a bank giro
which can be used to lodge the funds raised. The registration number should be quoted on all
correspondence, enquiries or lodgements. Once we have received confirmation of your
lodgement a thank you letter and receipt will be issued.

* The winning novel idea will be announced at the Novel Idea ... Authors Read for Dyslexia event
on November 26th.

New DVD on Asperger Syndrome Available

‘Asperger Syndrome: A Practical Guide for Parents, Teachers, Young People and Other Professionals’ is a
two-hour educational DVD, which provides an excellent introduction to Asperger Syndrome (AS) or High
Functioning Autism. The DVD features interviews with parents, young people with the syndrome,
teachers, and other professionals such as the centre manager and advocacy officer of a Training Centre
for young adults with AS, a job coach talking about supported employment schemes, a primary school
teacher and a head teacher of a secondary school, both working in schools with special units for pupils
with AS on site, a third level disability officer and a lecturer in Occupational Therapy offering practical
advice to young people attending (and considering attending) higher education. Discussion of such topics
as supporting siblings, bullying in school, building social networks, career opportunities, disclosure issues
to employers, on-site filming of drama classes and much more is also covered.

The DVD is available from Aspire (The Asperger Syndrome Association of Ireland), Coleraine House,
Carmichael Centre, Coleraine Street, Dublin 7. The introductory cost of each DVD within Ireland is €10.
Help us to help you.
Take this opportunity to do something worth doing. Walk with us in Glendalough and help us to raise awareness about dyslexia. Come along and enjoy the fresh air and chat. Bring a friend, the family, your workshop, a group or your teacher. There is something for everybody on this informative and enjoyable walk. All are welcome.

If you think your school might be interested please contact us and we will send them the Schools Information Pack. Transition Year students do the long walk and get a certificate and T-shirt for taking part. A pro-active approach is vital if we are to help our students, particularly in today’s climate to get better recognition and get the supports they deserve.

Our experience shows that the walkers learn through participation in the walk.
• Students learn that they are not alone and that it is ok to be dyslexic.
• Students with dyslexia get to see that their peers support them.
• Non dyslexic students, teachers and families learn and understand better.
• People feel freer to ask questions in the relaxed environment.
• People lose some of their hang-ups about dyslexia.
• Many misconceptions are cleared up.

• Often people go back with a more open mind.
• Frequently people find the courage to speak about their dyslexia following the walk.
• Families often grow closer as the space between them is now open for conversation.
• Walkers see that dyslexia exists in all aspects of society and the walk is testament to this.

There are three walks of varying difficulty to choose from. All the walks have short information stops along the way. You can pay the set fee Adult €10, Family €25 or request a sponsorship form and get your friends or work colleagues to sponsor you.

A: Short Walk
Start: 11.30am – 12.30am
Distance: 3 km      Time: 50mins.
Gentle ramble suitable for all ages
Walk description:
This is an easy walk skirting one side of the Lower Lake through Glendalough oak woodland to reach the picturesque shore of the Upper Lake where the views up the valley are spectacular.
2 Stops: Dyslexia, Check-in + Information

B: Medium Walk
Start: 11.00am – 12.00am
Distance: 8 km      Time: 2 hours 30 mins.
Persons with an average level of fitness i.e. families and casual walkers
Walk description:
A ramble along a path to the upper reaches of the Derrybawn Mountain. This route has magnificent views over the whole Glendalough and Glendasan Valley. The woodland trail leads to Poulanass Waterfall. Descend the steps to check-in by the picturesque shore of the Upper Lake.
3 Stops: Dyslexia, History+ Flora & Fauna, Check in + Information
C: Long Walk

Start: 10.00am – 11.30am  
Distance: 12 km  
Time: 4 hours.

Suitable for: Persons with a moderate to good level of fitness i.e. Hillwalkers, ramblers, schools/ Transition year students. Bring a packed lunch and wear shoes or boots with good ankle support.

Walk description:  
This trail starts with a steep climb via Poulanass Waterfall. Wooden steps lead us to a spectacular viewing point overlooking the Upper Lake. After a short break, the boardwalk takes us over the top of the cliffs before descending through blanket bog and heath into picturesque Glenealo Valley. The terrain changes on the descent into the Miners Village and along the Miners Road. Check-in by the picturesque shore of the Upper Lake.

5 Stops: Dyslexia, Map reading, First Aid, Pacing, Check-in + Information.

After check-in all walkers proceed via the boardwalk along the wetland edge of the Lower Lake and exit to finish at Glendalough International Youth Hostel, where there will be refreshments and a short information video on dyslexia.

Please register by 20th September 2009.
Mary McKenna Golf Classic 2009
A report by Mary Byrne, DAI Vice-President.

It was a great success. The sun shone. The course at Clontarf Golf Club looked beautiful and in prime condition. The teams all turned up on time and were in great form. The golf was good. The prizes were great. The ambiance was excellent. It all looked so easy!!!

Don’t kid yourself ... by the time we arrived at Clontarf Golf Club on the 8th May most of us on the Fundraising Sub-Committee had annoyed and tormented our friends, colleagues and families, looking for teams, prizes and all the other things that go into making a successful Golf Classic. We had begged, we had borrowed, we had browbeaten, but all in a good cause.

Now I have to let you know that the amount of actual knowledge about golf within the Fundraising Sub-Committee is, to say the least, rather sparse. To counteract this lack of expertise the intrepid Jo Gannon somehow convinced the great golfer Mary McKenna (one of Ireland’s leading lady golfers) to lend her name and experience to the venture. You should have seen Mary in action on the day. She was magic. Every team was greeted, chatted to and made feel very welcome and each team had their photograph taken with Mary. She made it all look so easy.

We had two other experts without whom the day could not have succeeded – Brendan Redmond and Jack Mahon. They ensured that all the teams signed in, collected cards, collected goody bags and returned their score cards. They checked the score cards, calculated handicaps etc. I still don’t understand any of this but they were great.

No Golf Classic could be a success without good prizes and this Golf Classic had excellent prizes. EnoWine sponsored all the golf prizes. Edel Williams must have the gift of conviction to have brought EnoWine on board and we thank her and them for all their support.

Last but not least, the Raffle. This was a great success. I think everybody in the whole association was involved in this aspect of the day. Tickets were sold in great numbers and beautiful and extraordinary prizes were donated for this purpose. Thank you once again to everyone involved.

The good news is that Mary McKenna enjoyed herself so much this year that she has agreed to lend her name once again to a Golf Classic on behalf of the Dyslexia Association of Ireland. Not only has she allowed us to use her name she has arranged for us to hold the 2010 Mary McKenna Golf Classic in the magnificent Killeen Castle Golf Club on Sunday May 9th. This is going to be an extraordinary outing so get your clubs polished and start gathering your teams together for this great event.

On behalf of the Dyslexia Association of Ireland I wish to thank everybody who helped make the Mary McKenna Golf Classic 2009 such an enjoyable experience and such an excellent fundraiser.

Pictured (left to right): Jack Mahon, Clontarf Golf Club, Mary McKenna, Jo Gannon (DAI National President), Mary Byrne (DAI Vice-President) and Mary Cosgrave (DAI Fundraising Sub-Committee)
Mary McKenna Golf Classic 2010

Date: Sunday 9th May 2010
Venue: Killeen Castle, Co. Meath. (Venue for the 2011 Solheim Cup)
Fee: €500 per team of 4 (meal included)

Longest Drive, Nearest the Pin, Putting Competition

Time Sheet: 11.00am - 4.00pm.

For further information please contact:
Dyslexia Association of Ireland @ 01 6790276
info@dyslexia.ie
or Mary McKenna @ 087 2321852
mamck@eircom.net

EARLY BOOKING ENTRY FORM for DAI’s 2010 Mary McKenna Golf Classic.

Name of Team Sponsor/Captain:_____________________________________________________
Address:________________________________________________________________________
Email:______________________________________         Tel:_____________________________

Tee Reserved 11am – 4pm:    Preferred Time______________________________________

Player 1:_______________________________ Club: ___________________ H’cap_______
Player 2:_______________________________ Club: ___________________ H’cap_______
Player 3:_______________________________ Club: ___________________ H’cap_______
Player 4:_______________________________ Club: ___________________ H’cap_______

Entry Fee €500 & Team names to be forwarded by 1st April 2010.
(Fee covers competition entry, green fees and dinner on completion of your round)
Send to: The Mary McKenna Golf Classic, DAI, Suffolk Chambers, 1 Suffolk Street, Dublin 2.

Participants Needed for a Brief Online Test

Gerrard Perrett, an MSc. student in the Dublin Institute of Technology, is looking for some people with dyslexia to complete a brief online test to help with his research. For his dissertation he is investigating if it is possible to make it easier for people with dyslexia to learn information using a new form of information visualisation known as a "word cloud" and see how it performs when compared to a traditional piece of text.

In order to evaluate these mediums he has created an online test at http://www.clrcloud.com/ and he requires people with dyslexia to take this test. He would really appreciate the help and input of as many people with dyslexia as possible.

The test should take no more than 10 minutes to complete and can be completely anonymously if you wish. If you do leave your name and email address on the site, he will be able to contact you in relation to his findings. If you would like to learn more about his research, the test or about word clouds just visit http://www.clrcloud.com/.
DAI Course Schedule for Autumn 2009

Detailed programmes and booking forms for all courses are available to download from the DAI website, and/or are available from the national office at 01 6790276 or email info@dyslexia.ie. Reduced rates are available to people on social welfare.

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<tr>
<th>Exam Preparation Course for Junior and Leaving Cert. Students</th>
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<tr>
<td>These Exam Preparation classes consist of a weekly after-school session of two hours duration. The course covers the English syllabus, as well as on-going development of efficient reading, revision, and writing skills. The courses which will start in September 2009 are for students who will sit their exams in June 2010.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Teachers’ Courses</th>
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<td>7th, 14th, 21st and 28th November, &amp; 5th Dec. – Moran’s Red Cow Hotel, Dublin 22.</td>
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<tr>
<td>These five-day courses are open to qualified primary and secondary teachers and cover identification and understanding of dyslexia, as well as an overview of effective interventions for addressing the learning difficulties caused by dyslexia.</td>
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<th>Senior Cycle Students’ Course</th>
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<td>26th September – Central Hotel, Exchequer Street, Dublin 2.</td>
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<tr>
<td>A one day course for students in the Leaving Certificate Cycle will be held in Dublin. This course will be most relevant to students in 5th and 6th year at second level, but transition year students are also welcome. Topics will include learning styles, advice on organisation and study techniques, and key information on exam accommodations and the transition to third level education.</td>
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<th>Second Level Teachers’ Course</th>
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<td>3rd October – Tara Towers Hotel, Dublin 4.</td>
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<tr>
<td>A one day course for second level teachers will be held on 3rd October. This course aims to give second level teachers an overview of dyslexia and how it can best be managed within the second level classroom.</td>
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<th>Parents’ Courses &amp; Junior Cycle Students’ Courses</th>
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<td>10th October - Tara Towers Hotel, Dublin 4.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7th November – Carlton Millrace Hotel, Buncloy, Co. Wexford.</td>
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<tr>
<td>One day courses for parents on dyslexia will be held in conjunction with one-day courses for Junior Cycle students (i.e. students in 1st, 2nd and 3rd year of second level).</td>
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<td>The Parents’ Course will cover essential items for parents on how to understand dyslexia, practical advice on how to help your child, and what you need to know to negotiate the education system.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Junior Cycle Students’ Course will cover practical learning and study skills, as well as helping students to develop a better understanding of their own dyslexia and learning style, and encourage greater self esteem.</td>
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<th>Training on Request</th>
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<td>DAI also offers information seminars and dyslexia awareness sessions on request to organisations, schools, parent associations and businesses. Please contact the national office if your organisation, group or school would like to arrange a session.</td>
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