Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is characterized by four core features: difficulty sustaining attention or mental effort, distractibility, hyperactivity, and impulsivity. While such symptoms have been mentioned in texts since ancient times, the recognition of this cluster of symptoms as a clinical entity was first described by British pediatrician, George Still, in 1902, although his interpretation of the symptoms was a deficit in “moral control”. Definitions and diagnostic criteria have evolved over the ensuing 100+ years, leading to a much better understanding of its biological and neuropsychological basis, its natural history, associated conditions, and outcomes.

Most clinical evaluators use the guidelines in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM), published by the American Psychiatric Association, as a basis for making this, and other neurodevelopmental and mental health diagnoses. The DSM is a compendium of all of the categories of these types of diagnoses, the diagnoses within each category, and the specific diagnostic criteria, along with additional information about each diagnosis. It is updated approximately every 5 to 10 years, as research allows for further refinement of diagnostic criteria and associated information. These symptoms first appeared in the DSM in 1968, with the focus on hyperactivity. The current version, DSM-5, was published in 2013. The DSM overlaps with, but does not directly match, diagnoses used in the educational system.

The current DSM diagnostic criteria for ADHD include symptoms (Tables 1 and 2) and additional qualifications (Table 3), page 8. Symptoms are operationalized descriptions of the four core features. There are nine symptoms of inattention and/or distractibility (Table 1) and nine of hyperactivity and/or impulsivity (Table 2). Psychometric studies consistently show that the four core characteristics sort into these two clusters. Clinical studies indicate that about 30% of children who meet criteria have the inattentive presentation of ADHD (at least 6 of the 8 inattention/distractibility symptoms without 6 of the 8 hyperactivity/impulsivity symptoms). About 10% of children have the hyperactive-impulsive presentation (at least 6 of 8 hyperactivity/impulsivity symptoms without 6 of the inattention/distractibility symptoms). The majority have the combined presentation, with at least 6 symptoms of inattention/ distractibility and at least 6 of the hyperactivity /impulsivity

(Continued on page 5)
In the last Focus, I wrote about the importance of the IDA’s Standards of Knowledge and Practice for Teachers of Reading. These Standards, when fully realized, will ensure that all teachers who work with elementary-aged children will be experienced in using evidence-based, multi-sensory methods for teaching reading.

Last week I joined a conference call from IDA that continued the conversation about the Standards. IDA sets up such calls on a regular basis so Branches can get updates on what is going on at the national level, as well as to be able to voice any concerns we have about issues at the Branch level.

During this latest conference call, Hal Malchow, IDA President-Elect, and Liz Liptak, who is IDA’s Director for Professional Development, presented the goals of IDA for the implementation of the Standards of Knowledge and Practice initiative and beyond.

First, Hal Malchow commented on the necessity to develop a “brand name” for the reading instruction methodology that we promote. This process has already begun with a request asking for suggestions for a name. The second step in the naming process will be to do a ranking survey among the IDA membership to determine which are the “best” choices for the name. The third step will be a Google survey to get broad input from the general public to ascertain which names bring the best response. The goals are for all membership to feel invested in the process of developing a “brand name” for the methodology we espouse, and to engage IDA members and the general public in awareness of the process as well as the final choice of a name for the instructional methodology.

Liz Liptak outlined IDA goals for promoting increased adoption of the Standards. First, beyond reviewing and approving the reading instruction curricula at institutions of higher education, IDA is working toward accrediting programs that meet the requirements of the Standards during the review process. As you already know, St. Joseph’s University’s Master’s of Special Education, Teacher Scholar Program, in Philadelphia has successfully completed the IDA review process. Several other Pennsylvania institutions are preparing for review.

Second, IDA is looking at reviewing and accrediting independent teacher training organizations such as IMSLEC and NILD, both of which have already been accredited.

IDA proposes developing an accreditation program for independent schools that teach children with dyslexia and other special learning needs. The accreditation would mean that the school meets the criteria for employing appropriate methodology for the teaching of reading. As this initiative gets underway, IDA will be looking for suggestions for schools to be reviewed.

Fourth, IDA wants to develop a certification process for individuals — “dyslexia specialists” as well as regular classroom teachers — that could be similar to programs such as ASHA’s Certificate of Clinical Competence. IDA has identified a company that develops exams for this kind of professional certification. In this effort, IDA will be looking for individuals who are willing to take the exam as part of its development.

Finally, as an organization that seeks to offer this kind of accreditation/certification for institutions and individuals, IDA will seek to become registered as a “standards developer.” This will require support from groups or individuals who understand and make use of the standards, as well as a period when the standards are presented to the general public.

Clearly, this is a monumental undertaking, but when complete, will make a huge and positive difference in how all children are taught to read.

Julia Sadtler, President, Pennsylvania Branch of the International Dyslexia Association
This issue of Focus will reach you in the spring of 2014, a spring which we await with more eagerness than usual. While parents have no doubt enjoyed the occasional sledding, hot chocolate and joy of not rushing in the mornings, we all acknowledge that multiple days of missed school create havoc for children, their parents and their teachers. Missing school no doubt has even more impact on children with learning disabilities, as they benefit from repetition and practice in instruction, strategies which are challenged.

So parents deserve a special round of applause this spring. And the current issue of Focus includes several articles which will help parents. Becky Scott (Coaches’ Corner) writes about the power and importance of perseverance; we all know, no matter what our cognitive profiles, that perseverance (or its lack) has been a major factor in our lives. Scott offers explicit, practical and non-burdensome suggestions which parents can use to build perseverance in their children. Second, Alison Enslein (Parents’ Corner), reviews Ben Foss’s book, The Dyslexia Empowerment Plan; A Blueprint for Renewing Your Child’s Confidence and Love of Learning. This book empowers parents to teach their children to advocate for themselves, to help their children understand their strengths, and to create a community of support. The book is both practical and encouraging. Finally, Carolyn Cowen and Gordon Sherman carefully consider the question of a possible relationship between dyslexia and ‘talents’; they review the scant research in this area and discuss the importance of cerebrodiversity.

We are very proud to include a comprehensive summary of the science and understanding of ADHD and Executive Function by Marianne Glanzman, M.D. Both professionals and parents will benefit from this clear explanation of the ‘state of the art’ in our understanding and use of these diagnoses.

In the last issue Focus featured The Hillside School in Macungie, Pennsylvania. Two brief articles about Hillside in this issue describe the school’s approach to technology and their new middle school.

In this issue, we introduce a column on Orton Oaks, individuals who have been continuous members of PBIDA for 25 years. The considerable accomplishments and contributions of two individuals are described; we will profile PBIDA’s other generous ‘Orton Oaks’ in subsequent issues.

We encourage you to send us your suggestions for future articles and your comments on the present articles. The purpose of Focus is to provide PBIDA members with useful and exciting information; please help us to do so by letting us know what you think.
News from PBIDA’s Pittsburgh Region

The Pittsburgh Regional Committee took time out from preparation for their April 5 conference, Dyslexia Today 2014: A Conference for Professionals and Parents, to present Experience Dyslexia: A Simulation on March 13. The simulation was sponsored by the Allegheny Intermediate Unit Non-Public Schools Program, and the 60 participants were teachers and parents from non-public schools. Those of us who presented the simulation were reminded again of how powerful it is for people to experience difficulty doing something that usually seems easy. Many participants realized for the first time how hard children with dyslexia are working as they struggle to learn to read.

The Pittsburgh Region was proud to present the third biennial PBIDA conference in Pittsburgh. This year our keynote speaker was Dr. Eric Tridas, National IDA President. He presented on “The Developmental Web: Diagnosis and Management of Learning Disorders.” Although Dr. Tridas spoke on a similar topic in Philadelphia in 2012, this was a chance for many other people in the western end of our state to get this information. Other topics of interest to teachers, parents, psychologists, and administrators included sessions on Inattention, Dyslexia, and Anxiety; Teaching Writing to Dyslexic Students; Diagnosis – What Now?; Appropriate SDIs and Accommodations; Surviving your Child’s Homework; Multisensory Reading; Assistive Technology: iPad Apps and More; and a preview of the Dyslexia Simulation.

In addition to the workshops, participants at the conference got to see up-to-date materials and information from 14 organizations and schools. Being able to access this information without traveling to Philadelphia was an excellent opportunity for people in the Pittsburgh Region.

The April conference occurred too close to our publication deadline to report on it in detail in this issue of Focus. Check the fall issue for a detailed account of the conference.

AIM Institute for Learning and Research on the AIM Academy campus provides access to the latest research-based training such as Wilson, Fundations, LETRS, RAVE-O, Making Math Real, and the groundbreaking Access to the Experts speaker series. Join the more than 3000 professionals who have already been trained through the AIM Institute.

View our full curriculum at www.aimpa.org

AIM Acedemy

Innovative teaching, fearless learning.

1200 River Road, Conshohocken, PA • 215-483-2461
is used when full criteria were previously met, and some symptoms remain, causing functional impairment. Other diagnoses include Other Specified ADHD (when characteristic symptoms causing functional impairment are present, but specified criteria are not met) and Unspecified ADHD (when characteristic symptoms causing functional impairment are present, but insufficient information is available to make a clear diagnosis). In all cases, the symptoms must have been present to a degree that is inconsistent with developmental level for at least 6 months, and must not be due to oppositional behavior, defiance, hostility, or failure to understand the task or instruction. Additional requirements (Table 3) relate to age of onset, presence of symptoms across settings, presence of functional impairment, and exclusion of other disorders that may be the primary cause of the symptoms.

While there is no doubt about the validity of ADHD as a disorder as distinct from the control condition, there are several potential sources of controversy about the diagnosis in a single individual. ADHD is a purely descriptive diagnosis; there is no specific biological marker or psychological test that “proves” this diagnosis. The component symptoms occur in continuously varying degrees rather than simply “present” or “absent,” therefore judgments must be made about their frequency, severity, and resultant impairment. These judgments typically come from parent and teacher reports and therefore reflect the “rate-er” as well as the “rate-ee.” Symptoms may vary in different environments and contexts, sometimes leading to significant differences in symptom endorsement between observers. In addition, children are continuously developing, their environments are changing from year to year, and demands are increasing. The use of standardized rating scales can assist with identifying those children who fall well outside of the norms, but these are far from perfect.

The diagnosis is made when the characteristics are present, but there is nothing inherent in the symptoms or diagnosis that relates to why the symptoms are present. Perhaps most critical of all, symptoms of ADHD are typically only one facet of a child’s characteristics that impact clinical picture, treatment response, and prognosis. The majority of children with ADHD who present for evaluation have at least one co-existing disorder. Furthermore, characteristics such as cognitive ability and its variability across domains, cognitive flexibility, processing speed and other processing characteristics, anxiety and mood characteristics often play a major role in a child’s clinical picture, even when they don’t rise to the level of a diagnostic “label”.

Several changes resulted from re-evaluation of the diagnosis between the previous (DSM-IV-TR) and current (DSM-5) editions. Although the 18 descriptive symptoms remain the same, additional descriptions (in parentheses) have been added to facilitate diagnosis in older teens and adults, since the original symptom descriptions were developed for children. Five rather than six symptoms are required in those 17 and older. Onset of some symptoms causing impairment was changed from before seven years of age to before 12 years of age, recognizing the difficulty in accurate recall of symptom onset and severity. In previous versions of the DSM, ADHD was not diagnosed in the presence of an autism spectrum disorder (ASD) because ASD includes symptoms of attention and behavior dysregulation. However, according to the DSM-5, both diagnoses can be made, if criteria for both are met.

The DSM-5 criteria are the cornerstone of the diagnostic process. Standardized rating scales are often used to obtain information from parents and teachers. ADHD-focused ratings provide severity and impairment comparisons with age- and gender-matched peers. Broader rating scales may reveal symptoms suggestive of other disorders that exist instead of, or in addition to, ADHD. A general history and physical and neurological exams are used primarily to rule out additional signs and symptoms that may indicate the need for testing for other conditions. Likewise, a psycho-educational evaluation is important for identifying the presence of intellectual and learning disabilities and learning weaknesses and processing characteristics that must be understood in order to develop a comprehensive treatment plan, even when they do not constitute a specific medical or educational diagnosis. Some diagnosticians use continuous performance “tests” as one way of measuring errors of omission, presumably reflecting inattention, errors of commission, presumably reflecting impulsivity, and reaction time (reaction time variability is a common finding in individuals with ADHD on this type of test).
test). This is another type of information that can contribute to confirming a diagnosis, though it should never stand alone as a diagnostic tool.

In spite of the “external” nature of the ADHD diagnosis, a rich body of knowledge has accumulated over the past 25 years supporting the clinical validity and neurobiological basis of ADHD. A variety of neuroimaging approaches have shown small but consistent differences in brain volume, metabolic activity, and connectivity between the brains of individuals with ADHD and controls in group studies. The inferior frontal, cingulated, striatal, parietotemporal, and cerebellar areas that mediate inhibitory, attentional, and executive functions are most prominently involved.

Initial molecular genetic studies targeted genes known to be involved in the monoamine, and particularly dopamine, neurotransmitter systems (candidate genes) since effective medications impact these transmitters. Specific genetic forms of several monoamine receptors and transporters were implicated in the susceptibility to ADHD, but none of these explained a significant proportion of the variance in symptoms. Subsequent developments in technology allowed screening of the entire genome for genes that differed in sequence or copy number between those with ADHD and controls. With this “hypothesis-free” approach, additional genes now appear to be associated with ADHD, including genes related to cell adhesion, synaptic function, neurite outgrowth, and the glutamate neurotransmitter system. In spite of enormous effort and the identification of several susceptibility genes, the genetic basis of the extraordinarily high heritability of ADHD remains largely unexplained. One of the most important recent developments is the recognition that genes don’t map well onto “categorical” mental health diagnoses. Molecular genetic studies in ADHD and other disorders indicate that there are shared genetic factors in ADHD, reading disability, conduct disorder, autism, depression, bipolar disorder, and schizophrenia. Future research will increasingly involve the genetic study of specific characteristics called endophenotypes (e.g. propensity for risk-taking, working memory deficits, etc) that are present in several conditions. It is hypothesized that genetic differences will map more reproducibly onto these specific traits than they do onto diagnoses.

Over the past 10 years, the concept of executive function (EF), and its relationship to ADHD, has received an enormous amount of academic and clinical attention. Executive functions are those uniquely human abilities that allow humans to accomplish goal-directed behavior. Though conceptualized slightly differently by different authors, they typically include:

1. The regulation of attention (not just sustaining when necessary, but also shifting when necessary, and deploying it accurately)
2. Working memory (the ability to hold necessary information in mind when completing a task, such as multi-step directions, written output, remembering what was read or said)
3. Behavioral inhibition (the ability to refrain from responding to a thought, action or idea that distracts from the goal/task in progress)
4. Planning, organizing, initiating (the development of an internal framework for approaching complex tasks)
5. Self-monitoring (the ability to recognize when what one is doing is or is not effective, and the ability to modify ineffective behavior “in the moment”)

Most parents of children and teens with ADHD will respond with recognition to a discussion of these characteristics and agree that the functional impairments they see are broader and better explained by underdevelopment of EF abilities than they are by the four core features of ADHD alone. For many years, researchers and clinicians have explored the overlap in these two constructs. Prefrontal cortex lesions cause both sets of symptoms. This suggests that EF deficits may be the neuropsychological underpinnings of the “external” symptoms that characterize ADHD. The problem is that not all children with ADHD have executive function deficits and the reverse is also true, but it is not clear if this is a problem of measurement, or whether these are “partially

(Continued on page 7)
overlapping” constructs. Like attention dysfunction, EF dysfunction is not specific to ADHD. Of the various executive functions, subjects with ADHD most consistently show deficits in response inhibition, vigilance, spatial working memory, and planning. EF deficits appear to be primarily associated with the inattentive rather than hyperactive-impulsive symptoms, and seem to differ based on co-existing conditions.

There will never be 100% correlation between ADHD and EF dysfunction because of 1) the continued need for imperfect humans to “rate” both sets of symptoms in order to quantify them, 2) differences in the diagnostic processes, 3) differences between what ADHD rating scales and continuous performance tests, and EF rating scales and neuropsychological tests actually measure, and 4) variability between individuals in the degree of different specific symptoms they manifest. One thing is certain– we can increasingly expect to see specific EF symptoms used as endophenotypes in genetic studies of ADHD and other neurodevelopmental disorders.

References

Table 1. Symptoms of Inattention and Distractibility

- Often fails to give close attention to details or makes careless mistakes in schoolwork, at work, or during other activities (e.g. overlooks or misses details, work is inaccurate)
- Often has difficulty sustaining attention in tasks or play activities (e.g. has difficulty remaining focused during lectures, conversations, or lengthy reading).
- Often does not seem to listen when spoken to directly (e.g. mind seems elsewhere, even in the absence of any obvious distraction).
- Often does not follow through on instructions and fails to finish schoolwork, chores, or duties in the workplace (e.g. starts tasks but quickly loses focus and is easily sidetracked).
- Often has difficulty organizing tasks and activities (e.g. difficulty managing sequential tasks; difficulty keeping materials and belongings in order; messy, disorganized work; has poor time management; fails to meet deadlines).
- Often avoids, dislikes, or is reluctant to engage in tasks that require sustained mental effort (e.g. schoolwork or homework; for older adolescents and adults, preparing reports, completing forms, reviewing lengthy papers).
- Often loses things necessary for tasks or activities (e.g. school materials, pencils, books, tools, wallets, keys, paperwork, eyeglasses, mobile telephones).
- Is often easily distracted by extraneous stimuli (or for older adolescents and adults, may include unrelated thoughts).
- Is often forgetful in daily activities (e.g. doing chores, running errands; for older adolescents and adults, returning calls, paying bills, keeping appointments).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2. Symptoms of Hyperactivity and Impulsivity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Often fidgets with or taps hands or feet or squirms in seat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often leaves seat in situations in which remaining seated is expected (e.g. leaves his or her place in the classroom, in the office or workplace, or in other situations that require remaining in place).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often runs about or climbs in situations where it is inappropriate. (Note: In adolescents or adults, may be limited to feeling restless).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often unable to play or engage in leisure activities quietly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is often “on the go,” acting as if “driven by a motor” (e.g. is unable to be or uncomfortable being still for extended time, as in restaurants, meetings; may be experienced by others as being restless or difficult to keep up with).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often talks excessively.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often blurts out an answer before a question has been completed (e.g. completes people’s sentences; cannot wait for turn in conversation).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often has difficulty waiting his or her turn (e.g. while waiting in line).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often interrupts or intrudes on others (e.g. butts into conversations, games or activities; may start using other people’s things without asking or receiving permission; for adolescents and adults, may intrude into or take over what others are doing).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. Additional Requirements

- Several inattentive or hyperactive-impulsive symptoms were present prior to age 12.
- Several inattentive or hyperactive-impulsive symptoms are present in two or more settings (at home, school, work, with friends, in other activities).
- The symptoms clearly interfere with or reduce the quality of social, academic, or occupational functioning.
- The symptoms are not present exclusively during the course of schizophrenia or another psychotic disorder, and are not better explained by another disorder (e.g. mood disorder, anxiety disorder, dissociative disorder, personality disorder, substance intoxication or withdrawal).

In children, other disorders that might lead to similar symptoms include hearing, language, learning, intellectual disorders, or autism spectrum disorders, although ADHD can be diagnosed in the presence of any of these disorders when the symptoms are in excess of what would be expected for the original disorder.
Parents had continued to ask the question, “When will Hillside expand to include middle school students?” The Hillside School offered admission to students in 7th and 8th grade for the first time in 2012-13. Extensive study and preparation led to a pilot program involving 6 students in a combined 7/8 classroom. In only one year the program grew to 10 students in two classrooms. In January 2014, The Hillside School board of trustees officially approved a permanent change in the school configuration to include middle school grades 6 - 8.

The mission of The Hillside School, to maximize the potential of the child with learning disabilities through excellence in education, continues as a focal point for middle school students. This additional “runway” allows a student to continue to benefit from small class sizes (8:1), differentiated instruction, and a strategic learning environment.

The Middle School program is an extension of the elementary program but with a stronger emphasis on the following:

- Deeper understanding of individual learning profiles, including executive function skills
- Application of strategies for successful independent learning
- Preparation for high school including study and test-taking skills
- Heightened ability to self-advocate
- Specialized use of assistive technology
- Letter grades on report cards

**CURRICULUM**

**Language Arts**

The language arts program is designed to improve proficiency in reading, writing, speaking and listening, and language with a direct emphasis on both reading and writing strategies. Students read non-fiction selections, novels, and short stories that encompass a variety of genres; selected poetry; and practical writings. Students write arguments, informative/explanatory texts, and narratives. The curriculum includes vocabulary instruction, grammar instruction, and research skills development. All students work on similar skills, with modifications made to ensure that individual needs and goals are met. Small group and whole class language instruction by a speech and language pathologist complements language arts curriculum.

**Mathematics**

Math instruction at the middle school level is individualized as determined by standardized assessments. Building on the K-5 Saxon Math Program, Saxon Courses 1, 2, and 3 continue to emphasize the structured, cumulative study of mathematical thinking. Adapted Saxon Math programs, as well as alternate math programs, are available in order to meet students’ needs.

**Content Areas**

The content area curriculum is designed to assist students in developing learning skills that will help them be successful in high school, college, and beyond. These skills are cultivated through analyzing primary and secondary sources, as well as applying reading strategies to non-fiction text. Skills in note taking, researching, and test-taking are taught and practiced in all content areas. The development of content area vocabulary prepares students for further study in the areas of science and social studies. The use of assistive technology is integrated into content area study

(Continued on page 14)
Children’s Dyslexia Centers, Inc.
A Scottish Rite Charity

Making a Difference in the Lives of Children

- Educational intervention for children with dyslexia
- IMSLEC accredited and IDA recognized teacher training in the Children’s Dyslexia Centers Orton-Gillingham approach leading to Certification
- 180 Act 48 hours on completion of training
- Opportunities for school partnerships

Locations Throughout Pennsylvania
Allentown 610 435-0997 • Bloomsburg 570 389-1400 • Harrisburg 717 238-4947
Lancaster 717 481-5680 • New Castle 724 654-5408 • Philadelphia 215 673-1972
Pittsburgh 412 931-3181 • Reading 610 208-0228 • State College 814 234-2105

www.ChildrensDyslexiaCenters.org
Well-designed technology is one of the components in an educational plan at The Hillside School. Research has proven that students learn more when they are actively engaged in the learning process. For students with learning disabilities, becoming actively engaged may be an insurmountable block that they cannot overcome without the proper tools. For many the boost they need frequently includes popular technology and/or assistive technology. If students are able to fully participate in classroom activities and learning explorations they achieve greater understanding, greater success, and they are motivated to continue their learning successes. There are computer programs that provide assistance in reading, writing, and math. There are devices that allow the user to take written and verbal notes. Many of these tools are useful for the student and will continue to be useful to him/her when he/she is grown up. In fact, many adults use assistive tools, such as those for scheduling and organizing, in their everyday life.

Children with learning disabilities will often think of themselves as failures because they cannot complete the same activities in the same way as their non-learning disabled peers. Failure builds upon failure until the child believes that he/she cannot succeed. At The Hillside School the teachers and staff work with, observe, and analyze every student to determine their strengths as well as their weaknesses. This allows us to determine what technological tools will assist the student on their learning journey, whether they need assistance in understanding written or verbal material, or in showing their comprehension.

What does this look like for students with learning disabilities? For example, as a means of demonstrating their understanding, students are constantly called upon to write their responses to writing prompts (book reports, tests, etc.). A student with Dysgraphia is burdened by an intolerable inability to write with any degree of ease or clarity so the writing prompts can become a form of mental torture and public embarrassment.

Imagine that you are in third grade and supposed to write about yourself for the first Back To School night. Your response will be displayed in the hall outside your classroom. The knowledge that you cannot do this must be a nightmare. Yet you can clearly explain what you want to say. Using the correct technologies/assistive technologies you can produce well thought out coherent responses. How would you feel when your paper is displayed with all the others and it is work you are proud of? Students with learning disabilities may not create their responses using the same methods as their peers but they do use their strengths and the technologies to work around their disability.

All of this does not eliminate the need for instruction in all areas, including the student’s weakness. It does, however, take the pressure off the child and alleviate the stress that so many learning-disabled students experience. They can learn, show their understanding of what they have learned, and be positioned to succeed in their future endeavors.

- Definition of Technology: “Application of knowledge to the practical aims of human life or to changing and manipulating the human environment. Technology includes the use of materials, tools, techniques, and sources of power to make life easier or more pleasant and work more productive. Whereas science is concerned with how and why things happen, technology focuses on making things happen.”

- Definition of Assistive Technology: “Assistive technology (often abbreviated as AT) is any item, piece of equipment, software or product system that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities.”

- Definition of Dysgraphia: “Dysgraphia is a learning disability that affects writing, which requires a complex set of motor and information processing skills. Dysgraphia makes the act of writing difficult. It can lead to problems with spelling, poor handwriting and putting thoughts on paper.”

In 1949, the Orton Dyslexia Society was founded in honor of Samuel T. Orton (1879 – 1948), an American physician who was a pioneer in the identification of dyslexia and appropriate multisensory treatments. The Society changed its name to the International Dyslexia Association (IDA) in 1997. IDA now has 42 branches in the United States and 21 global partners in 19 countries. It is mostly staffed by volunteers.

This successful volunteer organization has longtime members who provide their institutional memory as well as expertise. In 1994, then IDA President Marcia Henry Ph.D. (author of Unlocking Literacy: Effective Decoding and Spelling Instruction) and Treasurer John Hinton created “The Orton Oaks” for the 45th Annual Conference in Los Angeles. The Orton Oaks is a group of longstanding IDA members who have been important supporters of the organization and have made significant contributions to the mission of the IDA for a minimum of 25 years. This level of extraordinary commitment is recognized through this special membership status.

The Pennsylvania and Delaware Branch of IDA is honored to have 28 Orton Oaks amongst its membership. They are:

Charna Axelrod Ed.D.  Katherine M. Gordon-Clark Ph.D.  Carol H. Roberts Ph.D.
Robin S. Barack Ph.D.  Patricia Henchy  Deborah R. Rodes
Edith W. Barnes  Maryanne W. Hershey  Julia G. Sadtler
Jean S. Bay  Susan K. Hutchison Ph.D.  Hollis S. Scarborough Ph.D.
Sarah D. Brodie  Margaret J. Kay Ed.D.  Cynthia B. Solot
Maxine M. Field Ph.D.  Sue J. Muzzi  Karen E. Staub
Rev. James & Dr. Elissa Fisher  Dr. and Mrs. William A. O’Flanagan  Linda G. Tessler Ph.D.
Jill B. Gill  Cheryl A. Oeschger  Virginia Toliver
Phyllis R. Goldberg  Leslie A. Rescorla Ph.D.

Charna Axelrod, Jean Bay, James and Elissa Fisher, and Katherine Gordon-Clark are also recipients of PBIDA’s annual Janet L. Hoopes Award, which recognizes individuals who have contributed to the lives of those living with language-based learning disabilities in Pennsylvania or Delaware.

In this issue of Focus, we are extending our gratitude to two of our local Orton Oaks: Margaret (Peg) J. Kay Ed.D. and Cynthia B. Solot MA, CCC/SLP.

Peg Kay did her studies in Canada and returned to Pennsylvania to work in Harrisburg after the landmark P-ARC decision resulted in Public Law 94-142. Her job then was to bring children into the community and public schools from the institutions where many of them had been placed at birth. Kay became a PA Certified School Psychologist in 1978 and a PA Licensed Psychologist in 1980.

Kay, who is now the President and CEO of Independent Educational Evaluators of America, LLC and a consultant to Bennett School Placement Worldwide, started doing psychoeducational evaluations for students in a part-time private practice. “When I used the word ‘dyslexia’ at an IEP meeting, I was called ‘satanic’ by the director of special education,” reflects Kay. “Not to take the charge lying down, I promptly ventured into private practice full-time, joined the Orton Dyslexia Society and became a gung-ho advocate for children and adults with language-based learning disabilities.”

Cindy Solot is a Senior Speech and Language Pathologist at The Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia and a former President of SENTAC, the Society for Ear Nose and Throat Advances in Children. She was introduced to the Greater Philadelphia Branch of the Orton Society by a colleague who was a founding branch member.

“I initially attended local conferences and then began attending the New York branch and national conferences,” said Solot. “The roster of world class speakers and ground breaking research was astonishing. I remember being in New York and hearing Albert Galaburda speak about his Orton-funded work on the anatomy of the dyslexic brain after brain dissection. In those years, there were multiple opportunities to hear Norman Geschwind, Martha Denckla, (Continued on page 14)
Best. Summer. Ever.

June 30 to August 1
5-week session for ages 6 to 12

Build your child’s reading and writing skills, confidence and self-esteem.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE PROGRAM
READING & WRITING SKILLS
CHALLENGE COURSE | ZIP WIRE
SPORTS & GAMES | SWIMMING
ARTS ADVENTURE | SCIENCE DISCOVERY
MATH TUTORING

CHOOSE FROM 3 PROGRAMS

FULL DAY LANGUAGE ARTS/RECREATION
8:15am to 4:00pm

HALF DAY LANGUAGE ARTS/RECREATION
8:15am to 12:15pm

LANGUAGE ARTS ONLY
8:15am to 10:00am
10:30am to 12:15pm

after camp care is available until 5:45pm

JOIN US FOR AN OPEN HOUSE
May 8  June 5  July 10  9-11AM

To learn more about our programs and tour our campus, contact Linda Lattif
610.565.3741 ext. 144  LindaLattif@BenchmarkSchool.org

“Benchmark was a truly life-changing experience for both of our children. We can’t wait for this summer”!
~Lori R., Newtown Square

“You promised. You delivered. What a fabulous summer”!
~Robert J., Bryn Mawr

BENCHMARK SUMMER CAMP
2107 North Providence Road, Media, PA 19063
1/2 mile from Exit 5 of I-476  610.565.3741  BenchmarkSchool.org
Janette Jansky, Anthony Bashir, to name just a few extraordinary people.”

“I devoured the *Annals of Dyslexia*, and developed a deep understanding of language and reading,” Solot continues. “This knowledge translated into improving my speech-language pathology practice, enabling me to pass on this knowledge to my patients and colleagues.”

To give back to an organization that she felt gave so much to her, Solot decided to volunteer with PBIDA, initially on the Program Committee in 1986, and then on to the Board of Directors and the Executive Committee as an officer. She has actively served PBIDA for 28 years.

“The IDA continues their extraordinary service with ongoing research and advocacy,” said Solot. “The work of the Pennsylvania Branch is to spread knowledge through conferences and trainings.”

Solot said PBIDA’s continual search “for new ways to advance care for children and adults with dyslexia is inspiring.”

Both Peg Kay and Cindy Solot emphasize that The International Dyslexia Association has provided them with much more than just professional development.

“I am proud to be an Orton Oak and value the professional connections and wonderful friendships I have made through the IDA,” said Kay.

“I have made dear friends over the years and am always so impressed with the level of commitment and passion in the volunteers of this organization,” said Solot. “There is still much to be done as the organization must expand its scope and grow to find new ways to meet the many challenges and barriers that continue to exist for individuals with dyslexia.”

Solot concludes, “I am grateful to be a part of such an organization and hope to continue my efforts as long as I can.”

Peg and Cindy, PBIDA is grateful for your commitment and your work on behalf of those living with dyslexia. We are proud to salute you.

Are you an Orton Oak, or do you know one? Please contact dyslexia@pbida.org so we may recognize our local Orton Oaks in a continuing Focus series.

*Mary Ellen Trent has been a PBIDA member for 12 years. She sits on the PBIDA Board of Directors and the 2014 Annual Fall Conference Chair. She is the Director of Admissions at Delaware Valley Friends School in Paoli PA.*

(Hillside Middle School, continued from page 9)

at all levels.

Curriculum study includes world map skills, ancient civilizations, civics/government, and current events. Life science (grade 7) and physical science (grade 8) are an integral part of the middle school curriculum, enriched by investigation in a state of the art science laboratory two times per week.

The Middle School program is delivered by a dedicated middle school team of teachers including various specialists. In addition to the regular academic curriculum, students attend classes in physical education, library science, arts, guidance, and technology.

Please visit us at www.hillsideschool.org.
My husband is dyslexic. For forty years, I’ve witnessed his struggle with reading and language and the negative impact his dyslexia had on him emotionally. As a young educator, he inspired me to learn how to teach children with dyslexia to read. I’ve read everything I can get my hands on that has to do with dyslexia. Still, nothing I’ve read has impacted my understanding of dyslexia quite like Ben Foss’s new book.

From the introduction, Mr. Foss was able to capture my attention. “If you make your primary goal teaching your child how to read or spell just like every other child, you’re going to decrease your child’s chances of achieving success.”

“What?” I asked myself. Did he say what I thought he said? I went on to do what good readers do when they don’t quite understand what they’ve just read. I read his statement again.

The second reading supported my original understanding of his statement. The notion that you will decrease your child’s chances of achieving success by focusing on teaching them to read and spell is a unique idea. It is totally opposite what most of us have always thought. “What is he saying?” I asked myself and kept on reading.

Mr. Foss explained himself in the following paragraph. “There is an underlying bias in schools- that eye reading is the only form of reading.” Mr. Foss is a huge advocate of using technology to level the playing fields, so to speak, for children with dyslexia. He proposes that ear reading, listening to books on the computer, is a form of literacy for dyslexics just as finger reading, or braille, is for people who are blind, and eye reading is for the rest of us.

He goes on to say, however, that all dyslexic children should be given the opportunity to try to learn to eye read. They need to be taught by highly qualified teachers who are explicitly trained to use an Orton-Gillingham based reading method such as the Wilson, Lindamood-Bell, Barton, or Slingerland programs, while at the same time providing the child with assistive technology that will do the reading for them when they can’t.

In his book, Mr. Foss challenges parents and educators to question the “normal” way to do things” and instead to “integrate multiple ways for our children to access information”. He says that, “Focusing on eye reading overlooks the real goals of education, which are learning, independent thinking, and mastering the ability to make new connections in the world of ideas

Mr. Foss cites one goal for writing this book: to save dyslexic children from having to feel embarrassed and ashamed because they struggle with reading and writing. To accomplish this, he divides the book into three sections. In the first section, Mr. Foss shows parents how to get their child tested and identified for dyslexia, how to recognize their child’s strengths, and how to use their strengths to support weaker areas. Mr. Foss developed an exercise that parents and teachers can use to identify a child’s strengths that he calls “The Strengths Star.” The activity produces a visual representation of a child’s strengths in the shape of a “star.” The goal is to pinpoint three out of eight categories of strengths; verbal, social, narrative, spatial, kinesthetic, visual, mathematical/scientific, and musical. Once identified, the strengths are meant to be used to determine the areas in which each child can thrive.

The second section focuses on teaching children how to advocate for themselves and how to explain their dyslexia to others. The reader is also provided with a wonderful list of “tools for leveling the playing field,” what educators refer to as accommodations, including software and hardware such as ‘text-to-speech’ software, scanners, document cameras, iPods, and mobile phones.

The third section is dedicated to showing parents how to change the educational system they are working with, especially if their child isn’t getting the help she needs. It involves finding a community of dyslexics for your child, either in person or online, in which she can share her fears, concerns, and ideas. Mr. Foss identifies Eye to Eye (www.eyetoeyenational.org), as one of the best national organizations for creating community. Started by students from Brown University, the organization links college students who have dyslexia or other specific learning disabilities with similar students in elementary and middle-school.

Throughout the book, Mr. Foss references www.headstrongnation.org, the website for the nonprofit he created with the same name. This inspiring site is loaded with information and provides the reader with references, links, and interactive features to enhance their understanding of dyslexia and the many ideas mentioned in the book.

The Dyslexia Empowerment Plan is a book that every parent and teacher of a dyslexic should read. It is forward thinking, eye opening, hopeful, and helpful. The author’s intent was to provide his readers with a plan to empower children with dyslexia. In my opinion, he accomplished his goal.
Kenneth R. Pugh, Ph.D., is President and Director of Research, Haskins Laboratories, a Yale University and University of Connecticut affiliated inter-disciplinary institute, dedicated to the investigation of the biological bases of language. He also holds academic appointments as a Professor of Psychology, University of Connecticut, Associate Professor of Linguistics, Yale University, Associate Professor of Diagnostic Radiology at Yale University School of Medicine, and Director of the Yale Reading Center. His research program falls primarily in two broad domains: cognitive neuroscience and psycholinguistics. A fundamental interest continues to be research into the neurobiology of typical and atypical language and reading development in children.

Reading disability (RD) has been characterized as a brain-based difficulty in acquiring fluent decoding skill, associated (in alphabetic languages at least) with problems in operating on the phonological structures of language. We present findings from ongoing studies in our lab which indicate that RD children and adolescents fail to develop a coherent left hemisphere reading circuitry, consisting of distributed cortical and subcortical networks, that in typically developing (TD) readers comes online to support fluent word reading. With regard to neuroplasticity and remediation, treatment studies from our group and others have examined the influence of intensive reading remediation in at-risk children and adolescents, revealing substantial gains in both reading scores and corresponding development of key LH reading networks for readers afforded this treatment. Moreover, recent extensions of learning studies with older RD readers continue to suggest a high degree of plasticity in this age-range. Finally, we present new findings from an ongoing longitudinal study that reveal important gene-brain-behavior relations in young children at risk for RD. We will also discuss new methodological developments for gene-brain-behavior research, and new directions in research on reading including recent studies of learning and consolidation, and second language literacy acquisition.

My research examines the brain basis of reading disability (RD). Ongoing longitudinal studies reveal key differences in the brain systems that develop for reading in RD children, and treatment studies, conducted to date, indicate that effective interventions can significantly impact on these brain differences.

Objectives: To develop a working familiarity with cognitive neuroscience and how new tools can inform understanding of diagnosis and remediation of reading disabilities.
The gift of fearless learning.

Now, bright children with language-based learning disabilities can learn to read, write and master even difficult material fearlessly.

AIM Academy offers a rigorous, challenging college-prep curriculum taught in an empowering environment of experience, expertise and understanding.

And beyond academics, our students enjoy a rich range of extra-curricular arts, music, clubs and travel. Plus an impressive range of sports from soccer to rowing to horseback riding.

OPEN HOUSES MONTHLY
Register at www.aimpa.org or 215-483-2461
Dyslexia is in the news. Topics range from landmark legislation and intriguing neuroimaging research to the unique challenges and possible advantages of dyslexia. These news stories triggered dozens of follow-up articles and blogs, all of which are reverberating around the Internet.

Most of this media attention is welcome and helpful. For families touched by dyslexia and for those working on their behalf, seeing these promising legislative and research developments get headlines is exciting. It also is gratifying to see awareness of dyslexia heightened and important related information gain attention—such as the International Dyslexia Association’s Knowledge and Practice Standards for Teachers of Reading.

Sure, it is disappointing to watch oversimplifications and misconceptions weave through the coverage and bounce around the web. Dyslexia and its concomitant myths ebb and flow in the news with the quasi-periodic regularity of El Nino. Misconceptions pop up relentlessly, despite ongoing efforts by the International Dyslexia Association (IDA) and allied organizations to dispel dyslexia’s myths.

These misconceptions should not surprise us. Dyslexia is a complex, nuanced, and challenging topic. Our knowledge about dyslexia as well as its definitions continue to evolve. In an *Annals of Dyslexia* article introducing dyslexia’s current definition, Lyon, Shaywitz, and Shaywitz (2003) made the same point: “Our understanding of dyslexia is a work in progress and will continue to be just that” (p.10).

**Dyslexia & Talent: Media Coverage**

With that context, we turn to one of the topics making recent headlines, the possibility that dyslexia has advantages. The science supporting this hypothesis is intriguing but scant. Nevertheless, the topic tends to capture media attention—most recently in a *New York Times Sunday Review* article, “The Upside of Dyslexia,” and on National Public Radio (NPR) *The Diane Rehm Show* about “The Dyslexic Brain” and its special challenges and possible advantages.

IDA was well represented on the NPR show. Immediate past president, Guinevere Eden (Director of the Center for the Study of Learning and Professor of Pediatrics at Georgetown University Medical Center in Washington, DC) and former IDA Board member, Jeffrey Gilger (Professor, School of Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts, University of California, Merced) joined Laura Kaloi (Director of Public Policy at the National Center for Learning Disabilities) and Brock Eide (co-author of *The Dyslexic Advantage*).

Asked about possible advantages of dyslexia, Eden said, “At IDA, we have highly successful people with dyslexia who speak about strengths they believe are due to their dyslexia. What we need to do in research is to find a better way to understand those strengths so that we can take better advantage of them. At the same time, we must ensure that teachers have the tools they need to become the best teachers they can and we must provide the research knowledge we do have with regards to teaching these students so they have better reading skills.”

The need to ensure the teacher knowledge, skills, and support necessary for skillful reading instruction is a vital point not to be lost in any exploration of a talent-dyslexia link. The need for empirical research to understand dyslexia’s possible associated strengths is another important point, which Gilger reiterated.

“As far as research on whether dyslexics have a tendency to be more talented in areas like spatial skills, the empirical evidence for that is pretty weak. It’s weak because enough good solid research hasn’t been done,” said Gilger. “We have anecdotal reports. Those hit the press a lot. We hear commentaries about people being seen in clinics and so forth, that they have special gifts. But we don’t have really good research.”

Is a dyslexia advantage just another myth? Wishful thinking? A bromide? Is it a red herring distracting us from the important task at hand—learning to read? Are talents in dyslexia a “neural compensation effect,” a work-around to compensate for weaknesses in a developing brain? Or are “dyslexic brains different almost from the start? (See study, Raschle, Zuk & Gaab, 2012.) Are these abilities nothing more than an “I’ll-show-em” response to early failure? Does the premise actually hurt kids with dyslexia by setting unrealistic expectations?

These questions are not new. Nor are stories in the popular press linking dyslexia to special abilities and remarkable achievement. A 2002 *Fortune Magazine* cover story on “The Dyslexic CEO” featured “four dead-end kids” (Richard Branson, Charles Schwab, John Chambers, and David Boise) who, despite difficulty learning to read, went on to become

(Continued on page 24)
Woodlynde School
College Prep for Diverse Learning Styles
Grades K-12 • Established 1976

Where Great Minds. . .

Woodlynde students:
• Gain access to our caring experts in education
• Thrive in our nurturing environment
• Benefit from our specialized teaching methods and strategies
• Rise to the challenge of our college-prep curriculum
• Emerge with the tools and self-confidence to be successful and happy in college, career, and life

Join us for an Open House!
July 8 • October 14 • November 11 at 8:45 a.m.

www.woodlynde.org/admissions
445 Upper Gulph Road • Strafford/Wayne, PA • 610.293.6624
In a 20-year longitudinal research study conducted by Marshall H. Raskind, PhD., Roberta J. Goldberg PhD., Eleanor L Higgins, PhD., and Kenneth L. Herman, PhD. of the Frostig Center in Pasadena, Calif., pioneers in the diagnosis and treatment of learning differences, traced the lives of individuals with learning disabilities from childhood into adulthood to identify factors that lead to successful life outcomes. During the study, six key success factors, or attributes, emerged: Self-Awareness, Proactivity, Perseverance, Goal Setting, Presence and Use of Effective Support Systems, and Emotional Coping Strategies. (For an overview of the study, see http://pbida.org/FocusFall12.pdf) In this series of articles, each key success factor will be discussed along with ways for parents to help their children develop them.

Perseverance is a trait that most of us identify when thinking about what it takes to be successful. While we intuitively know how to recognize perseverance, do we really know what its outstanding qualities are and how to cultivate it? Do we know how to parent to build perseverance in a teenager that sleeps all day or a young child who can creatively play but doesn’t want to do homework? Building perseverance is critical. It is one of the steps, whether learning issues are present or not, that helps to create a successful life.

Perseverance is defined as a steadfastness of purpose when partaking in something despite a difficulty or delay in achieving the desired result. Steady effort is a hallmark of perseverance, especially when the task is difficult. Winston Churchill summed it up by saying, “Never, never, never give in!”

Angela Duckworth, a research psychologist at the University of Pennsylvania who studies perseverance, what she calls “Grit”, has found more than IQ or talent, the number one predictor of success is an unwavering commitment to a long term goal.

What does Perseverance look like?

We know perseverance isn’t an intellectual quality and it isn’t a talent or ability either. Rather, it is a quality that can be developed by knowing our personal strengths, weaknesses and talents and using all of these parts to our greatest advantage.

An often-overlooked quality of perseverance is the ability to know when to stop, review a situation and pursue alternative strategies for achieving a goal. Continuing with tactics that aren’t going to produce results is not a way to be successful. In these cases, the goal itself may need modifying or the method forward may warrant changing. Often times several strategies need to be tried, especially when learning issues are present. This is not failure, but rather perseverance in action!

When perseverance is lacking there is a sense of being overwhelmed and not willing to risk failure. Unsuccessful individuals typically are not flexible and fail to realize when it is time to reconsider the tact or even the goal itself. For kids with learning issues, a lack of perseverance is characterized by a backing away from challenges and giving up more easily or quickly than peers that “stick with it” and experience success.

Living the motto “Never give in” is important. It is also important to know that perseverance is characterized by more than dogged determination. Perseverance is as much about knowing when to alter course while on the way to a goal as it is sticking to the process.

Adopt a Growth Mindset to cultivate perseverance.

The way one “shows up” or they are “Being” with a situation can also affect how perseverant one can be with a goal. Carol Dweck, in her book Mindset, talks about cultivating a growth mindset, or way of “Being”. A growth mindset speaks to a belief that one’s basic abilities can be developed through dedication and hard work. This breakthrough research holds that intellect and talent are just starting points. A growth mindset becomes, with practice, a viewpoint that creates a love of learning and a resilience that is essential for great accomplishment. Virtually all successful people have these qualities.

(Continued on page 27)
5-Week Summer Enrichment Program (ESY)
Monday-Friday, 8:30 am-3:00 pm
(partial days available)

Academic mornings and afternoon enrichment offer reinforcement, remediation and growth through 1:1 and small class settings. Afternoons are fun-filled with swimming, field trips and elective classes like gym, technology and art.

For more information, contact:
Jenn Gallagher, Summer Program Director
jgallagher@quakerschool.org
215.674.2875 ext. 17

www.quakerschool.org  250 Meetinghouse Road  Horsham, PA 19044  (215) 674-2875
PBIDA presented Experience Dyslexia, A Simulation® at the Heritage School in January. The 30 preschool teachers reported a greater understanding of dyslexia and its impact in a follow-up survey.

“I thought the experience was very worthwhile. It is easier to have empathy for those with Dyslexia when you’ve experienced a taste of their difficulties. It helped me to put into perspective how difficult their learning days can be.” “I am much more aware of the multi-faceted aspects of dyslexia and its effects on the person’s life and self-esteem.” “The initial presentations just whet my appetite so I want to read more of the hand-outs. The simulations were eye-opening, and the panel was clarifying.”

“(The simulation) broadened my understanding of how many suffer with this and the help available to them. It gave me compassion for them and made me realize how teachers unknowingly could contribute to their pain. It prepared me better to spot ‘red flags’ for early intervention.” “(The simulation) actually made me think of how important it is for the teachers and staff to be able to persuade parents that their child may need some evaluation or intervention because ‘something’s not quite right’ whether it’s motor skills, listening or comprehension skills, etc.”

Modifications also resulted from the simulation program: “I assumed Dyslexia really only impacted reading. I was unaware of all the areas that are affected by Dyslexia. I know several students in my class will benefit greatly by changes made in how I give multiple directions and how I sort/organize groups.” “I seldom feel helpless in a learning environment but I was stopped in my tracks by several of the simulations. I have gone from sympathy to the first steps of empathy for people who have learning disabilities. This increases my patience and determination to assist them.”

For information on scheduling the simulation for a school or organization, contact Betsy Boston at 610/527-1548 or dyslexia@pbida.org.
What’s Happening in the Eastern Region?

On February 28, PBIDA joined The Yale Center for Dyslexia & Creativity Multicultural Dyslexia Awareness Initiative, Vessels of Hope and The Reading Clinic, Inc. for an important event at the Philadelphia African American Museum: *Dyslexia, A Civil Rights Issue of Our Time*. Following a tour of the Museum, over 200 people attended a comprehensive and informative program, including an Overview of Dyslexia by Rahmanda Campbell (Founder/CEO, The Reading Clinic, Inc.), a panel on Resources for Dyslexia, presentations on their personal journeys with dyslexia by Ambassador Carol Moseley-Braun (Ambassador and former US Congresswoman) and journalist Jeff Johnson, and a Q & A Panel Discussion with Keith McGee (Director, MDAI), Tracy Johnson (President/CEO, Vessels of Hope), and Khalil Munir (award-winning actor, dancer & Instructor, Temple University). Sponsors for this exciting event included the Yale Center’s Multicultural Dyslexia Awareness Initiative (MDAI), the African American Museum, Learning Ally, the Philadelphia Chapter of the NAACP, AIM Academy, and several PA State and City Council Representatives (Stephen Kinsey, Cherelle Parker, Ed Neilsen, Marian B. Tasco).

Julia Sadtler, PBIDA President, and several PBIDA members (Carolyn Berenato, Diane Reott, Mary Ellen Trent, Rosette Roth, and Daphne Ulliana) participated in the program and in the event planning. Our thanks go out to all of them, and especially to Tracy Johnson (President/CEO, Vessels of Hope) and to Rahmanda Campbell for their tireless energy, enthusiasm and effort in spearheading and organizing this important event.
hugely successful. Another New York Times article, “Tracing Business Acumen to Dyslexia” (2007), reported on a survey of entrepreneurs: One third identified themselves as having dyslexia. NPR did a show on that, too—Does Dyslexia Translate to Business Success? survey of entrepreneurs: One third identified themselves as having dyslexia. NPR did a show on that, too—Does Dyslexia Translate to Business Success?

And yet, “For every millionaire with dyslexia there are thousands of kids who in longitudinal research will self-report that they use drugs, are unemployed, drop out of high school, and can’t gain work that allows them to support a family,” said Kaloi on NPR’s The Diane Rehm Show last month.

Good point. A parade of celebrities and notables march through most stories in the popular press about dyslexia. Their ranks include heroic types no longer living, but presumed—because of struggles in school—to have had dyslexia. These inspiring examples of remarkable achievement offer vital lifelines of hope to those struggling with dyslexia. The importance of those lifelines cannot be overstated. Media coverage offering hope and inspiration along with accurate practical information definitely is helpful.

That said; there is much heavy lifting to be done on behalf of those “thousands of kids” cited by Kaloi and miles to go to document with empirical research a possible dyslexia-talent link.

Dyslexia & Talent: Digging Deeper

With those important caveats and qualifiers underscored, what support can we muster in favor of a dyslexia-talent link? A number of authors have explored this topic, including: Margaret Rawson, The Many Faces of Dyslexia (1988); Thomas G. West, In the Mind’s Eye (1991); Sally Shaywitz, Overcoming Dyslexia (2003); Maryanne Wolf, Proust and the Squid (2007); and Brock L. Eide and Fernette F. Eide, The Dyslexic Advantage (2011).

One of the earliest and most esteemed writers on the subject is Norman Geschwind, father of modern behavioral neurology, friend to IDA, and cited in all the above works. Geschwind spoke and wrote often about what he called, “the pathology of superiority.”

A few standout Geschwind quotes:

• (M)any dyslexics have superior talents in certain areas of non-verbal skill, such as art, architecture, engineering, and athletics. The immediate naïve presumption is that success in these fields is simply the result of compensatory achievement in non-verbal fields on the part of those who do not succeed in readily acquiring reading. I believe that this explanation must convey at best a very small fraction of the truth. (Geschwind, 1982b, p. 22)

• (T)he over- whelming majority of humans who ever have lived have been illiterate. . . . Most of us come from families that four generations ago did not possess the ability to read. If certain changes on the left side of the brain lead to superiority of other regions, particularly on the right side of the brain, then there would be little disadvantage to the carrier of such changes in an illiterate society; their talents would make them highly successful citizens. It is not surprising that this type of brain organization should occur with such high frequency. (Geschwind, 1982b, pp. 22-23)

• (T)he knowledge of every aspect of dyslexia will be enriched by seeing it in its broadest biological and sociological settings. We must understand its relationships to high talent and the societal setting in which it becomes a disability. (Geschwind, 1984, p. 327)

Geschwind would be fascinated by the multidisciplinary fusion of breakthrough research in neuroscience, cognitive psychology, genetics, and cognitive neuroscience that has emerged since his death in 1984 and by our expanded knowledge about dyslexia. On the other hand, Geschwind probably would be stunned by the meager amount of empirical research on, in his words, “the advantages of the predisposition to dyslexia."

The research we do have, however, is intriguing. Here are some highlights:


This study suggests that many dyslexics favor the peripheral visual field over the center, which results in not only search deficits but also (more surprisingly) in talents for visual comparison.


(Continued on page 25)
This study found that students with dyslexia were faster than control students and equally accurate in determining whether figures were possible or impossible.


This study suggests that individuals with dyslexia are better able to recognize letters in the periphery than typical readers, but less able to do so near the center field of vision. (Subsequent studies by these authors also suggest wide auditory perceptual strengths—the “cocktail-party effect”—in dyslexics, indicating “wider multi-dimensional neural tuning of sensory processing interacting with wider spatial attention.”)

The Yale Center for Dyslexia & Creativity is conducting ongoing research. Also, the Harvard Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics is investigating whether differences in neuroanatomy help people with dyslexia perform certain types of visual processing that are important in science. Finally, a new fMRI study (not yet published) conducted at Haskins Laboratories found a pattern of functioning suggesting that figures are more automatic in individuals with reading disability (RD) and print is more automatic in typically developing peers. “This study provides evidence for a tradeoff and of the potential for efficient brain organization for the domain of visuo-spatial processing in RD” (Diehl, et al., 2012).

Do these studies and ongoing investigations constitute sufficient empirical evidence to establish a higher representation of certain talents among those with dyslexia than those without? Not yet. But the findings are intriguing, are they not? Certainly, they provide a basis for further investigation and are consistent with long-standing clinical observation.

For generations, parents and educators have provided anecdotal evidence suggesting that a noteworthy percentage of children with dyslexia have strong abilities, often in visual-spatial domains. As Brock Eide pointed out on NPR’s *The Diane Rehm Show* last month, “there is an overwhelming amount of suggestive evidence that cries out for deeper investigation.”

The science supporting the hypothesis that dyslexia and talent might be linked remains a work in progress, like much of our understanding of dyslexia. Granted, research in recent decades on dyslexia and the reading brain has catapulted this understanding forward and generated important breakthroughs in the science of teaching and learning reading. If we manage to crack the tough nut of scaled and sustainable implementation, those breakthroughs will benefit most children, especially those with dyslexia. Still, mysteries remain, including the persistent observation that many individuals with dyslexic characteristics seem to be endowed with extraordinary abilities.

**Dyslexia & Talent: Call for Action**

What conclusions can we draw from all this? We suggest two.

**The first is obvious.** Research investigating the hypothesized dyslexia-talent link is called for, not only because it deepens knowledge of dyslexia and related learning differences, but also because it heightens understanding of the human condition and may open important pathways for enhancing human potential. Such knowledge and understanding, surely, will have practical applications, especially as rapidly emerging and shifting digital forces begin redefining “literacy” and schooling.

**The second conclusion is less obvious.** We propose placing dyslexia and related learning differences within a cerebrosdiversity framework. Why? Seeing dyslexia as a byproduct of cerebrosdiversity—humanity’s collective neural heterogeneity—offers perspective that helps explain dyslexia and its paradoxical talents and deficits and that allows us to transcend today’s disability paradigm. A cerebrosdiversity perspective helps us recognize learning differences as byproducts of a complex mechanism—a dynamic gene-brain-environment interplay that enabled our species to adapt and succeed for over 200,000 years. This dynamic interplay yields tiny neural differences (anatomical, cellular, and connectional) that, depending on environmental demand, can translate into socially defined talents and disabilities. (For more about cerebrosdiversity, see Sherman and Cowen, 2010, “Norman Geschwind: Man out of Time” pp. 16-17.)

What kinds of talents are needed to solve tomorrow’s challenges and discover future opportunities? Cerebrosdiversity, the ultimate natural resource, guarantees that all kinds of thinkers will be on hand. **How can we ensure that diverse learners, such as those with dyslexia, acquire the vital skills they need to thrive in contemporary society while we invest in their strengths and talents?**

Given the exponential pace of technological, social, and planetary change, the imperative to answer this question is more urgent than ever. If you agree, we hope you will share a link to this article and engage in discussion, planning, and problem-solving around that question.

Twenty-first century schooling must leverage the gift of cerebrosdiversity.

This article has been reprinted from the website of the International Dyslexia Association ([www.interdys.org](http://www.interdys.org))
Dyslexic Simulation

The Pennsylvania Branch of the International Dyslexia Association (PBIDA) has reached over twelve hundred people in the community since 2010 through Experience Dyslexia, A Simulation. This lively and thought-provoking activity has been presented to teachers in both public and private schools, to students in an education course at a liberal arts college, to preschool staff, to multiple community groups, and to the professional staff of Intermediate Units.

What is the Simulation?
The Simulation often begins with a brief discussion of dyslexia, including the neurological basis, the demographics, the warning signs, and the interventions which have been shown, through solid research, to have positive impact.

Participants then take part in six simulated activities which mimic the experiences and processing of those with dyslexia.

- **Learn to Read** simulates a beginning reading problem
- **Listen to Me** simulates an auditory figure-ground problem
- **Write with Mirrors** simulates a visual-motor and writing problem
- **Name That Letter** simulates a letter-word identification problem
- **Write or Left** simulates a copying and writing problem
- **Hear and Spell** simulates an auditory discrimination problem

Finally, participants ask questions of an experienced panel. The program is approximately 2 1/2 hours in length.

PBIDA is able to tailor the simulation to the size and background of your audience and to the physical facilities of your meeting location.

Our Simulation volunteers have included psychologists, physicians, educators, school administrators, reading specialists, multisensory tutors, individuals (teenagers and adults) with dyslexia, and parents of children with learning disabilities.

Experience Dyslexia® is available through PBIDA in Pennsylvania and Delaware. **The Eastern Region is accepting reservations for 2015.**

COMMUNITY GROUPS
$15 per person for a minimum of 20 people

IN-SERVICE PROGRAMS
$400 for 40 people
$500 for up to 90 people

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION contact Betsy Boston at (610) 527-1548 or dyslexia@pbida.org.
Conversely, in a fixed mindset, students believe the ability of brains and talent are fixed traits. Children with a fixed mindset have to continually prove that they are good enough. Inherent to this way of thinking, if you’re born with a certain set of qualities and those are unchanging, you better show up with them all the time to prove you indeed have them. In the fixed mindset children opt for only trying things when they are comfortable knowing that they can prove their ability. This view is detrimental for anyone to hold, and especially for those with learning issues. Additionally, the fixed mindset is wrong from a scientific viewpoint.

**What do parents need to have in place to nurture perseverance?**

There are several valuable components to have in place as parents work to develop perseverance.

- **Know strengths, weaknesses and special talents.** This base level of personal understanding has been addressed in other articles in this series. Pursuing a goal with dogged determination is difficult if an unknown learning issue repeatedly derails achievement. It would be difficult for anyone in these circumstances to be perseverant.

  Obtain a solid diagnosis when learning issues are suspected and discuss the results with all family members, especially the child with learning issues. Become familiar with the strengths, weaknesses and unique talents that are highlighted through testing. If need be, reach out for help on how to do this in a positive way.

- **Mistakes are learning on ramps.** Behind every mistake there are valuable lessons. Our culture, however, favors the “right answer” more than learning from mistakes. Many children will not raise their hands in class to ask a question for fear of looking dumb. Many are reticent to try something new, such as a sport or other activity, unless they think they will be “good at it”.

  A key component of learning from mistakes is the ability to review and brainstorm other ways to get to the desired result. Guilt or shame can thwart this process and should be avoided. Parents who understand and promote the notion that mistakes can indeed provide progress toward a goal are helping to build perseverance.

- **Plan for a desired end result.** When we know the reason we are doing something it is much easier to do it and stick with it until it is done. This may seem obvious to adults but it isn’t always obvious for children – learning issues or not! Help them understand why math problems or English essays tie to skills that will be needed when they are grown.

  Try a conversation tying math problems to building things and essays to being a lawyer or other interesting career options. Let your children know that what they are doing now is preparing them for something tangible in the future. These conversations can include all their strengths, weaknesses, talents and passions, too! With a focus on the big picture, parents are creating a long-term view, which promotes perseverance.

**What can parents do daily to promote perseverance?**

There are several things you can do in your home that will raise the learning curve on perseverance. First and foremost, it is learned through children watching a parent role-model perseverance. Not giving up or talking negatively about a challenge you are having is important behavior to exhibit.

In addition, set an expectation that it is normal to encounter obstacles. Taking several tries to complete a task or goal is normal for most of us. If children know this up front they are more likely to persevere. We all are more likely to strive for something difficult if we know we won’t be a considered a failure for trying.

Here are a few suggestions for building perseverance in your children:

- **Share inspirational stories** that you have read, seen in movies or have been involved in. Knowing what perseverance looks like is a huge motivator and helps children sustain their own effort on tasks.

- **Watch for when your child is being perseverant.** Create a special time, perhaps at dinner, to share any personal stories of perseverance. Value the effort more than the end result and you will see perseverance happening more easily and effortlessly in your family.

- **Talk about when you gave up too quickly.** Speak openly about when you or your child gave in and didn’t com-
Calendar of Events

JUNE

AIM Academy Summer Enrichment Program, June 30-July 31, Half and full day offerings, AIM Academy 1200 River Rd, Conshohocken, PA. Contact: kkeesey@aimpa.org

Benchmark School Admissions Open House, June 5, 9-11 AM. Contact LindaLatif@BenchmarkSchool.org; 610.565.3741 ext. 144

Benchmark Summer Camp: Language Arts and Recreation, June 30-August 1, ages 6 to 12. Contact LindaLatif@BenchmarkSchool.org; 610.565.3741 ext. 144

Delaware Valley Friends School Summer Academic Program, June 30–August 1, 8:30AM - 12:15PM: featuring one-on-one tutorials in reading and writing with faculty trained in our Orton-Gillingham approach, small group math focused on reinforcing foundational skills, introduction to assistive technologies tailored to students' individual needs, and a group art class. Cost for the 5 week session is $2,900. For more information, visit www.dvfs.org/summer or contact Kathy Barry at 610-640-4150 x 2160.

Delaware Valley Friends School Teacher Training, June 18-27. Eight day training for teachers of adolescents with language-based learning disabilities-based on Delaware Valley Friends School's IMSLEC accredited, Orton-Gillingham Adolescent Literacy Program. Space is limited, application required. For information, contact Sara Rivers, Director of Teacher Training at sara.rivers@dvfs.org.

Woodlynde School Summer Program: Islands in the Sun, June 30-July 25, students entering grades K-8. Four-week Summer Program is open to both current Woodlynde students and students from area public and private schools entering grades K-8. A morning academic program and afternoon camp program is available for all age groups. Students may participate in both the academic and camp programs or just the academic programs. All programs feature small group instruction from our highly trained and experienced teachers. This year's theme is "Islands in the Sun." Visit www.woodlynde.org/summerprogram for more information.

JULY

Orton-Gillingham Teacher Training Course, July 8, 10, 15, 4:00-8:30 PM, Children's Dyslexia Center of Allentown. This course is the first 12 hours of a 45 hour “IDA recognized” and “IMSLEC Accredited” training program (remaining hours of training are offered Sept. 2014 through April 2015), Certification and Act 48 awarded. Contact: Marilyn Mathis, at 610 435-0997.

Woodlynde School Admissions Open House, July 8, 8:45 AM. Register at www.woodlynde.org/openhouse

Delaware Valley Friends School Admissions Open House, July 9th, 9-11 AM. Admissions presentation, student panel, faculty representatives, tour of the school. RSVP to Kathy Barry at kathy.barry@dvfs.org or 610-640-4150 x 2160.

Benchmark School Admissions Open House, July 10, 9-11 AM. Contact LindaLatif@BenchmarkSchool.org; 610.565.3741 ext. 144

Wilson Fundations Level 1, July 2, 8:30 AM – 3:00 PM, AIM Academy, 1200 River Rd, Conshohocken, PA. Contact: kkeesey@aimpa.org

Wilson 3-day Introductory Workshop, July 15, 16, 17, 8:30 AM – 3:00 PM, AIM Academy, 1200 River Rd, Conshohocken, PA. Contact: kkeesey@aimpa.org

Wilson Just Words Introduction, July 21, 22, 8:30 AM – 3:00 PM, AIM Academy, 1200 River Rd, Conshohocken, PA. Contact: kkeesey@aimpa.org

Delaware Valley Friends School Admissions Walk-In Wednesday, July 23, 10:00 AM, meet with Admissions officers and tour the school. No RSVP required.

(Continued on page 29)
AUGUST

Wilson 3-day Introductory Workshop, August 13, 14, 15, 8:30 AM – 3:00 PM, AIM Academy, 1200 River Rd, Conshohocken, PA. Contact: kkeesey@aimpa.org

Wilson Fundations Level 1, August 18, 8:30 AM – 3:00 PM, AIM Academy, 1200 River Rd, Conshohocken, PA. Contact: kkeesey@aimpa.org

Wilson Fundations Level 2, August 19, 8:30 AM – 3:00 PM, AIM Academy, 1200 River Rd, Conshohocken, PA. Contact: kkeesey@aimpa.org

Wilson 3-day Advanced Strategies (WRS Group Mastery) Workshop, Monday, August 25, 26, 27, 8:30 AM–3:00 PM, AIM Academy, 1200 River Rd, Conshohocken, PA. Contact: kkeesey@aimpa.org

Save the Dates!
PBIDA and Wilson Language Training® to co-sponsor Summer Workshops!

Pittsburgh, PA

- Fundations® Level K Workshop—June 23
- Fundations® Level 1 Workshop—June 24
- Wilson Reading System® (WRS) Introductory Workshop—June 25-June 27. All workshops will be held at Sheraton Station Square Hotel, Pittsburgh, PA.

To register and for more information: www.wilsonlanguage.com.

King of Prussia, PA

- Wilson Just Words® Introductory Workshop—August 4 – 5
- WRS Introductory Workshop—August 11, 12, 13
- Fundations® Level K Workshop—August 14
- Fundations® Level 1 Workshop—August 15
- All workshops will be held at Crowne Plaza Philadelphia - Valley Forge in King of Prussia, PA.

To register and for more information: www.wilsonlanguage.com.
plete something when additional effort would have resulted in a completed task. How did you feel after you gave up? What did you give up by not sticking with it? What would you do differently next time? This is a great way to treat a mistake as a learning opportunity.

- **Heap on the praise when perseverance is present.** When your child or young adult is being perseverant playing a game, learning something new or doing a chore they don’t like, reinforce the perseverant behavior!

Perseverance ideally needs to be developed in areas outside of academics also. Perseverance in the cognitive, physical, employment, social, leisure and spiritual arenas of life have their own benefits. Developing perseverance in all areas of life takes on special importance for those with learning disabilities, as struggle is often a normal part of their experience. Maya Angelou says,

“You may encounter many defeats, but you must not be defeated. In fact, it may be necessary to encounter the defeats, so you can know who you are, what you can rise from, how you can still come out of it.”

We all know that our children with learning issues will have to work hard to complete tasks and learn new material. The development of perseverance, taught with love, understanding and a healthy dose of picking yourself up while never giving up, is actually a benefit of learning issues. Learning to be perseverant will pay many dividends for the rest of their lives.

Reach out for help in developing perseverance or any of the other topics covered through this ongoing series. Families experiencing learning issues will benefit from strong, collaborative relationships and a clear sense of purpose by engaging in the creative and thought provoking process of coaching. Coaching is a growing communication style and profession that is being adopted by organizational leaders, teachers, counselors and parents. Reach out to an ICF Certified Coach for more information.

Becky Scott, Family Coach, CPCC, ACC, Principal at The Navigators Way and President Elect of the Philadelphia Chapter of the International Coaching Federation, www.thenavigatorsway.com, 610-783-5676. BScott@TheNavigatorsWay.com

---

**Cooper Health**

1/2, Horizontal

Comprehensive Orton-Gillingham Training

**July 7- 11, 2014**

8:00am - 4:00pm

30 Continuing Education Hours Provided

This comprehensive, hands-on training provides a complete understanding of IMSE’s enhanced Orton-Gillingham method and the tools necessary to implement this program into their current curriculum. After participating in this training, teachers will be able to assess, evaluate and teach children how to read, write, and spell proficiently. Participants will learn:

- Phonemic awareness
- Multi-sensory strategies for decoding and encoding
- Syllabication patterns for decoding/encoding
- Reciprocal Teaching for reading comprehension
- Multi-sensory techniques for sight words
- Student assessment techniques
- Guidelines for weekly lesson plans

**Cost:** $975.00 for Week Training including materials cost

For more information contact us at (856) 673-4990
Nominations Sought for the 2014 Janet L. Hoopes Award

We encourage readers to submit nominations for the 2014 Hoopes Award. Individual or groups of individuals in Pennsylvania or Delaware who have made a significant contribution to the education of youngsters with learning differences may be nominated. This prestigious award, instituted in 1993, is given annually in memory of Dr. Janet L. Hoopes, a founder of PBIDA and a tireless and generous supporter of individuals with learning differences. The Award will be presented at the 2014 PBIDA Annual Conference at Delaware Valley Friends School in Paoli, PA, on October 10, 2014.

The Awards Committee encourages the submission of nominations from a broad spectrum of disciplines. Below is the brief nomination form; we appreciate receiving nominations by May 15, 2014. You may complete the form below and return it by email, snail mail or telephone call to Dr. Charna Axelrod, Chairman of the Awards Committee (610-642-4873 Ext. 14; charnaaxelrod@gmail.com; Center for Psychological Services; 125 Coulter Avenue, Ardmore, PA 19003) or to the PBIDA office (610-527-1548, dyslexia@pbida.org)

Your Name and Contact Information:

Name of Nominee:

Nominee’s current position:

Brief statement as to why you believe the nominee is deserving of the reward:

Additional Information (e.g., pertinent, personal, social)

THANK YOU SO MUCH!
When bright students struggle...
The right school can make all the difference.

Still accepting applications this summer for school year 2014-15 in grades 6-11.

FIND OUT MORE:
DVFS.ORG/INQUIRE
Financial Aid available.

WE’RE ONLY 3 MINUTES FROM THE PAOLI TRAIN STATION