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From the left; Queen Anne’s County Director of Social Services, Mid-Shore YMCA Executive Director Robbie Gill, QA Commissioner Jack Wilson, Maryland Comptroller Brooke Lierman, QA Commissioner Chris Corchiarino, and QA County Administrator Todd Mohn, were pictured inside the newly opened YMCA in Centreville, Wednesday afternoon, Dec. 20. The comptroller visited four different successful establishments that day.

Lierman highlights changes in comptroller’s office

Dec. 20 meetings include four sites in Queen Anne’s County

DOUG BISHOP
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CENTREVILLE — Maryland Comptroller Brooke Lierman visited four establishments in Queen Anne’s County on Dec. 20: the newly opened YMCA in Centreville, Everside Health Center also in Centreville, and

two local businesses on Kent Island, both located in the Chesapeake Bay Business Park — Italberco, a growing sweet-tooth business working with the food industry providing dessert ingredients, and Queen Anne’s County’s largest employer, Paul Reed Smith Guitars.

Her visit began at the YMCA where she met with YMCA Mid-Shore Region Executive Director Robbie Gill; two Queen Anne’s County commissioners, Chris Corchiarino and Jack Wilson; Queen Anne’s County Administrator Todd Mohn; county

Economic Development and Tourism Director Heather Tinelli; and Queen Anne’s Community Services Director Cathy Willis. The meeting was “a working lunch” served at the Y.

During the lunch, Lierman spoke about the changes made within the comptroller’s office in the past year. Several new positions have been created including a chief information officer. She said that the Comptroller’s Office is striving for “more transparency.” Beginning in February, for the

More **LIERMAN** | 2

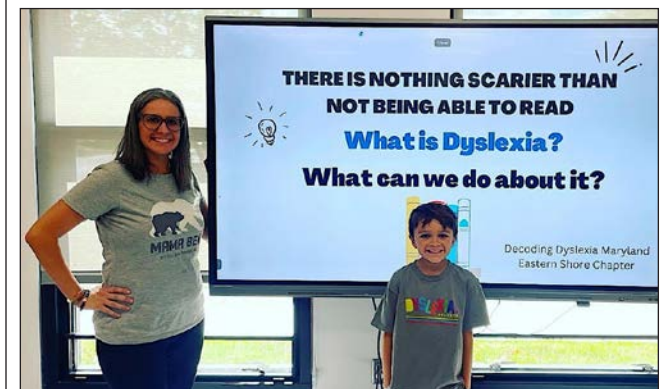
‘Diving Deep’ with dyslexia

TAMARA FORTE
Special to the Bay Times Record Observer

STEVENSVILLE — What do Robin Williams, Jay Leno, Albert Einstein, Alexander Graham Bell, Magic Johnson, Jennifer Aniston, Gwen Stefani, Abraham Lincoln, and Arnold Schwarzenegger all have in common? They all have dyslexia.

Lindsey Parte, a mother of two boys and Special Education teacher, has reignited the Decoding Dyslexia

More **EDUCATION** | 18



COURTESY OF LINDSEY PARTE

Lindsey Parte describes how her son inspires her, “This kid who gave me the title mom inspires me every single day. Overcomer. Persistence. Perseverance.” Lincoln gets excited to set up for Dyslexia Workshops as well as tell his peers and teachers about the best techniques for him as a dyslexic learner that are also good strategies for all learners.

INDEX:

A&E.....9	Calendar4	Classifieds21	Obituaries12
Bay views7	Church12	Editorial 6	Tides.....20

Vol. 73 No. 181

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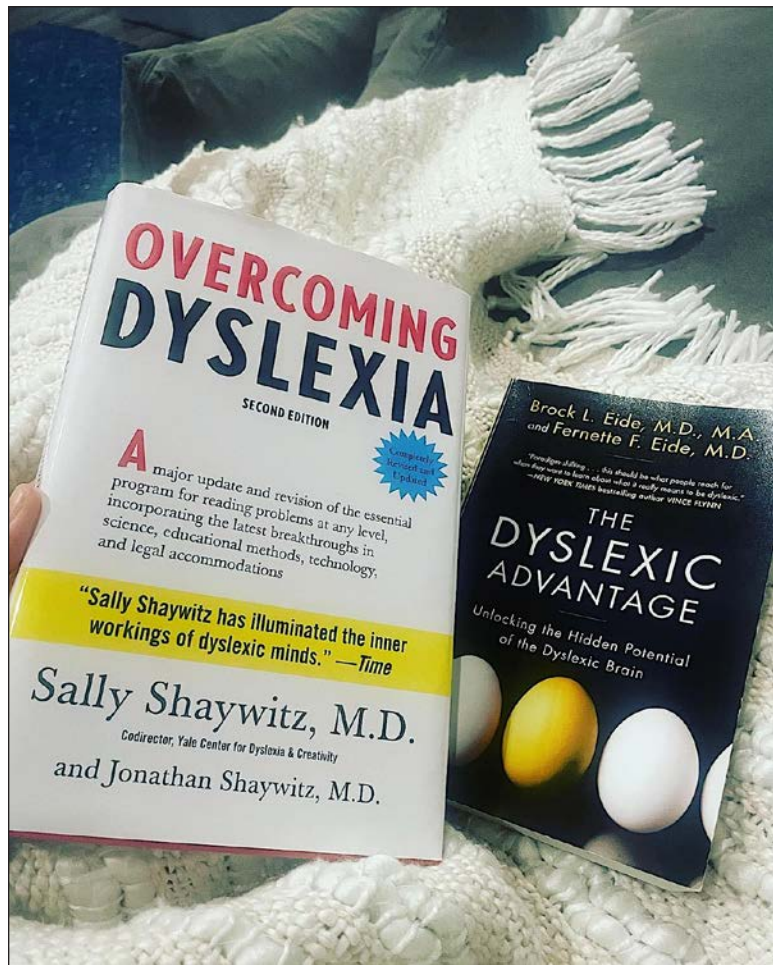


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COURTESY OF LINDSEY PARTE

These titles helped Lindsey Parte in the beginning of her journey into “diving deeper” with dyslexia.

EDUCATION/ from 1

Maryland Eastern Shore Chapter that fizzled out during the Covid pandemic. Parte shares that she has been “diving deep into advocating and teaching herself [about dyslexia]” for the last three years.

When Parte’s older son, Lincoln, was six-years-old, he struggled with both speech and reading. Parte said a red flag to her son’s learning struggle was “knowing how smart he was but not understanding why reading was so hard.” Parte explains that her two-year younger son was making gains on her older son. In contrast, reading was coming with ease to her younger son. On the first day of second grade, Lincoln (her older son) came home and said, “I can’t do this. I can’t read. I hate school.” Lincoln was frustrated with learning and wanted to quit. It was heartbreaking for Parte as a mother and as a special education teacher herself as no one wants to see their child struggle, especially with learning. Parte explained, reading is the gateway to learning and lifelong success, and as such, learning to read successfully is vital to all.


Two years after Parte first suspected Lincoln was dyslexic, Lincoln got his formal diagnosis. Parte explained that getting the diagnosis meant freedom for her and her son. She recounts, “I will never forget the utter sigh of relief when we told him he has dyslexia.

It all made sense to him from that moment on. Within a week, he was already talking about it in class and advocating for himself. And most importantly, we got our boy back. His light turned back on.”

According to the Mayo Clinic, dyslexia is “a learning disorder that involves difficulty reading due to problems identifying speech sounds and learning how they relate to letters and words (decoding). Also called a reading disability, dyslexia is a result of individual differences in areas of the brain that process language.” An MRI shows the physical differences in the brain composition of a dyslexic thinker versus a non-dyslexic thinker. Dyslexia is so common that one in five people (or 20%) are a dyslexic learner, and the other four are friends and/or family of the dyslexic learner.

What is it like to have dyslexia? How can I help and support a dyslexic learner? What are the early indicators of dyslexia? Is your child smart, but has trouble learning to read? Have you ever wondered what your child may be dealing with? These questions and many others will be answered at 6:30 p.m., Feb. 20, at the “Experience Dyslexia: A Dyslexia Simulation” workshop at the Queen Anne’s County Library Kent Island Branch location.

The free event hosted by Decoding Dyslexia Maryland, Eastern Shore Chapter, aims to raise dyslexia awareness, empower families



Teach Them
To Thrive

EARLY INDICATORS OF DYSLEXIA

@teachthemtothrive

PRESCHOOL/PRE-K

- Family history of dyslexia or struggling to read
- Speech Delay or Mispronouncing Words
- Difficulty Sequencing Events
- Difficulty learning letters, colors, days of week etc.
- Difficulty rhyming words and/or singing nursery rhymes
- Difficulty remembering multi-step directions

KINDER/FIRST GRADE

- Difficulty learning letter names and sounds
- Struggles with blending and segmenting sounds
- Difficulty spelling
- Substituting words while reading (not reading through the whole word)
- Lacks knowledge that words come apart into sounds
- Difficulty remembering left/right

STRENGTHS

- Extraordinary Imagination
- Thinks outside the box
- Great memory for stories read to them
- Expansive vocabulary
- Good at puzzles
- Inventive
- Great problem solvers
- Empathetic
- Big picture thinkers

WHAT TO DO IF YOU SUSPECT DYSLEXIA

- Act fast-The sooner you know, the better the outcomes!
- Get your child screened. This is different from evaluating and diagnosing dyslexia. Some schools screen for dyslexia, but not all of them. Find a dyslexia specialist or someone trained in Orton-Gillingham. They can tell you if your child is at-risk for dyslexia.
- Get your child evaluated. You can request an evaluation from your local public school (even if your child doesn't attend) or you can find a private educational psychologist or neuropsychologist.

COURTESY OF LINDSEY PARTE

Although symptoms appear as soon as children start to read, most dyslexic children are not diagnosed until they’re in the third grade, Lindsey Parte says. “There is absolutely no question that the earlier a child is identified, the more difference you can make,” she said, adding that early placement in preventive and remedial programs can help children with dyslexia. “If you start at the beginning you can have a good chance of helping that child in an efficient way.”

to support their children, encourage educational interventions, and ultimately influence policy makers to support Maryland students with dyslexia.

All are welcome: public school students, private school students, homeschool students, family, and friends too. The event will offer six stations to help understand the dyslexic learner: Learn to Read, Listen to Me, Write with Mirrors, Name the Letter, Write or Left, and Unfair Hearing Test. Seeing how dyslexic learners learn every day has brought many adult workshop participants to tears. It is never too late to learn and grow, even as adults.

Parte says, “The two biggest takeaways I have learned over the last year of my deep dive into my son’s brain and the way he learns are early identification is crucial

(as young as five-years-old); and the dyslexic brain requires instruction to be explicit, systematic, cumulative, and multisensory.

It should integrate the teaching of listening, speaking, reading, spelling, vocabulary, fluency, handwriting, and written expression. There should be an emphasis on the structure of language: phonology, orthography, morphology, syntax, and semantics. Training teachers and educating parents is also of the utmost importance,” she continued.

Since then, Lincoln has helped his mom set up and lead workshops. In October, to celebrate Dyslexia Awareness Month, this mother and son duo led the Halloween-themed workshop entitled “There is nothing scarier than not being able to read.”

Parte believes in dyslexia awareness and education with her whole being, which is why she fundraised, on her own, to purchase the upcoming workshop materials. After more than three years of advocating, Parte promotes all adults to learn as much as they can by listening to podcasts, attending free trainings, reading books and fact sheets, and much more. Parte explained that if your child is having trouble reading, they can get frustrated and behaviors can come out when they become aware that they are not “keeping up” with their peers. She explains that it would be similar to an adult having to play in a pro basketball game. We would be frustrated and not able to keep up. That would be exhausting for a day, and now

Dementia caregiving in the African American community

Free seminar in January

CHESTERTOWN — “Dementia Caregiving in the African American Community: What You Need To Know” is the subject of a free seminar presentation set for 9 to 11:30 a.m., Saturday, Jan. 20, at the Kent County YMCA in Chestertown.

Created as a collaborative effort by the African American Women’s Health Advisory Committee (AAWHAC), Shore Community Outreach Team (SCOT) and the Greater Maryland Chapter of the



COURTESY OF UMSRH

David Ajibade, MD, Community Health Educator and executive director of the Brain and Body Foundation.

Alzheimer’s Association, the program is designed for those living or working



COURTESY OF UMSRH

Marlyn Taylor, Diversity and Inclusion Program Manager for the Alzheimer’s Association.

with individuals and families affected by Alzheimer’s disease and other

forms of dementia.

Feature speakers at the event will Marlyn Taylor, Diversity and Inclusion Program Manager for the Alzheimer’s Association, and David Ajibade, MD, Community Health Educator and executive director of the Brain and Body Foundation, an international nonprofit organization.

Taylor will discuss dementia as a disease of the brain that causes problems with memory, thinking, and behavior, as well as current research and treatments for various kinds of dementia and resources

provided by the Alzheimer’s Association.

Ajibade will provide an overview of the primary ways people living with dementia communicate their needs and feelings as their ability to use language declines. He also will provide strategies for how caregivers can decode behavioral messages, identify common triggers, and learn strategies to help manage some of the most common behavioral challenges of Alzheimer’s disease.

“We are really excited to work with the AAWHAC and the Alzheimer’s Association to offer this

informative program here in our community, where there are so many elderly individuals and their families dealing with Alzheimer’s and other types of dementia,” said Emily Welsh, MSN, RN, SCOT Nurse Coordinator. “It will be a great opportunity for family members and other caregivers to learn strategies that will help them in their interactions with their loved ones who are suffering from cognitive decline.”

To register for this program, call 800-272-3900. If you need transportation, please call 410-778-7668, ext. 5679 by Jan. 17.

EDUCATION/ from 18

imagine that every day.

Moving forward, what steps can we take?

“Release the stigma. Embrace the label,” Parte said. “The label means freedom. It gives a child the right to read. The right to appropriate instruction which in turns means success in reading and regaining self confidence. We got our child back the moment we told him he had dyslexia. The label opens a world of resources for your child to feel good about themselves. Priority is a child’s mental and social wellbeing.”

Dyslexic Learners have many strengths and show a lot of leadership skills. Some other positive skills of dyslexic learners include: problem-solving, big picture thinking, creativity, empathetic, and entrepreneurial skills.

Parte shared things parents can do to help their struggling reader if they suspect their child has dyslexia:

Testing is everything. You will be surprised how relieved your child is with a “diagnosis”.

Finding the right intervention specialist (tutors in reading are not the same as someone trained and certified in structured reading interventions like Orton Gillingham). Tutoring at least three times a week is most effective. The key to remediation is “go as fast as

you can and as slow as you need to.” Early intervention is crucial especially to maintain your child’s confidence in school.

Deep dive in your own research. It will help with advocacy, ensuring the right assessments are being used, and knowing the right questions to vet organizations and other folks who claim to want to help your student.

Read to your child not so they learn to read but so that they develop their reading comprehension and vocabulary while they

are learning to read with appropriate interventions.

If your child receives the diagnosis of dyslexia, tell them, she encourages. Share all the amazing qualities a dyslexic thinker has and famous people who have dyslexia. Show them a photograph of a dyslexic brain vs typical brain.

Knowledge and support in this process are so important. You don’t have to go through this emotional journey alone. Connect with your local Decoding Dyslexia chapter.

Parte explains, “Most

children with dyslexia can succeed in school with tutoring or a specialized education program. Emotional support also plays an important role.

Though there’s no cure for dyslexia, early assessment and intervention result in the best outcome. Sometimes dyslexia goes undiagnosed for years and isn’t recognized until adulthood, but it’s never too late to seek help.”

Community support, awareness, education, and training will help all

our learners learn in the best ways to be successful, happy learners. Together, we can impact our future and the future of our children. If you cannot attend the workshop at the library but are interested in gaining more, you can email decodingdyslexiaES@gmail.com for more information and for a Welcome Newsletter with a list of more resources.

Currently, Decoding Dyslexia Maryland Eastern Shore Chapter is a

grassroots movement (not a nonprofit), which means it has no funding and is paid for all out-of-pocket. It is run by parents who are also working professionals.

“The fight continues,” Parte said, “Until every single child (and their families) don’t have to go through this hell and back to learn how to read.”

To support and make a donation to Decoding Dyslexia Maryland Eastern Shore Chapter, you can also email Parte at the email above.



COURTESY OF LINDSEY PARTE

Author Dav Pilkey is a dyslexic learner. Pilkey’s “DogMan” books are popular children’s books and one of the books Lindsey Parte’s son was able to complete on his own. Here Lincoln Parte meets one of Pilkey’s famed characters.

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