

## Harnessing the Strengths

**As a young child with dyslexia, Alisha Moser hated school. But SPELD tuition helped to harness and hone her strengths and strategies as a strong visual learner. Alisha now has a master's degree in architecture and is a published author.**



Every Sunday afternoon, Alisha recalls feeling miserable at the thought of another school week ahead.

"At primary school, I felt out of sync in the classroom. Verbal teaching methods never worked for me and I couldn't answer basic questions," she says. "I was always in the bottom group for everything, even though I worked just as hard as everyone else."

While Alisha remembers feeling a strong sense of inadequacy both in the classroom and the playground, she excelled naturally at anything that required creativity.

"My favourite subject was technology and I used to look forward to those two periods a week," she recalls. But maths was a different story, and while she continues to find it difficult, Alisha has learned to accept what she calls her "academic weakness".

It was when Alisha's mum, Jill Moser, began working for SPELD Auckland that she realised her daughter might be dyslexic. An assessment confirmed this, but it was more of a disappointment than a relief to Alisha.

"I remember coming home to Mum and crying because, despite the diagnosis, I still believed I was dumb. No test could change how I felt at that time. It was like a sentence not a diagnosis."

### Unlocking the potential

Alisha began tutoring with SPELD Teacher Ngaere Thorogood who helped her to understand her learning style and develop strategies she could take with her to high school.

Alisha saw rapid improvements during her first year of tutoring. She discovered that she was a visual learner, so Ngaere taught her to seek out and create diagrams, reading notes and information on the content, to take advantage of her visual memory.

"Ngaere was a brilliant tutor and I can't praise or thank her enough," says Alisha, who could read above her age level, but didn't read for pleasure. "Ngaere went out of her way to find books she thought I would genuinely enjoy and was successful at 'tricking' me into reading. Eventually I fell in love with all literature and would borrow Mum's library card to get adult novels out to read."

Alisha had tutoring for around three years. By the time she was at high school, Alisha had reached the expected level for her age in English and switched to SPELD tuition in maths.

*Continued on Page 4: How Alisha focussed on her strengths to pursue her passion and train to be an architect.*



# Our People

## Word from the Chair



Kia ora tātou,

Many of you will be aware of the Government's plans to overhaul support for struggling learners, as outlined in the draft Disability and Learning Support Action Plan. SPELD NZ has been a strong advocate for change for many years, so we are pleased that this is a step in the right direction.

There are still many details to be finalised and we hope SPELD NZ

will play a key advisory role. We have a track record of 50 years at the forefront of support for those with specific learning disabilities (SLD) and a wealth of expertise to offer.

Our Executive Officer, Jeremy Drummond, and I have attended meetings with Ministry of Education officials, Minister Tracey Martin and her advisors, and the Social Investment Agency. We have also got together with Sarah Sharpe and Mike Styles – high-profile advocates for the neuro-diverse in their respective fields of secondary and tertiary education.

SPELD NZ has also made a formal submission in response to the Government's action plan (available to view on our website News page). We commented on its four focus areas and recommended:

- Support for early screening to identify children at risk of learning, social and language delays through neuro-diversity
- On-going screening and checkpoints in the schooling system
- Ways to strengthen support for neuro-diversity and all learners
- The need for adequate government resourcing to ensure support is available for families who need it, regardless of ability to pay
- The need to up-skill: In 2018 there are still some educators who do not recognise specific learning disabilities. This MUST change.

Thank you to those that attended SPELD NZ's AGM in Wellington in September. It was great to welcome new board member Vicky Beckwith and new Professional Standards Committee member Terry Gentle. The AGM was a good opportunity to outline what the Board has been working on over the past year, and get feedback from members. (You can view a copy of our Annual Report on the Events page of our website.) There was also much positive feedback on Cathryn Bjarnesen's workshop on executive function.

I would like to pay special tribute to our outgoing Board members, Adrienne Dawson and Susan Moyle. Susan was a key member of the Finance and Risk Committee. We remain grateful to all board members who generously give their time to the cause of SPELD NZ and to benefit those with specific learning disabilities.

On behalf of SPELD NZ, I wish all our members a happy festive season and a well-earned relaxing summer break.

**Peter Scanlan - SPELD NZ Chairperson**

## The 'Judith effect'

SPELD NZ is now considered this country's top organisation for assessor training, according to the New Zealand Council for Education Research (NZCER). One of the key reasons is the work of Judith Alexander, the Assessor Rep on our Professional Standards Committee (PSC).

On top of her role on PSC and overseeing the Assessor Course, Judith has been instrumental in redesigning SPELD NZ's Assessor training, and implementing (and redesigning) a peer review programme. Judith was also a major contributor to The Guide – the essential 'manual' for SPELD NZ Teachers, and the keystone of our teacher training. Judith created the new report templates for Woodcock-Johnson III and IV to ensure we have consistency in reporting and that the reports are tailored to the needs of all stakeholders, including SPELD NZ Teachers. She also developed a software programme to reduce time in report writing and to ensure accuracy in transferring data.

As a result of our improved assessor quality management, NZCER now only sells a Woodcock Johnson kit to those who have completed our assessor training and are registered with SPELD NZ (unless they are a qualified educational psychologist). In addition, SPELD NZ assessment reports continue to be recognised by NZQA for special assessment conditions (SAC).

***In recognition of her outstanding contributions, SPELD NZ's Board made Judith Alexander a Life Member at its AGM this year. Her tireless work continues to keep SPELD NZ at the forefront of quality support for those with dyslexia and other SLD.***



# Courses

## SPELD NZ Introduction to Specific Learning Disabilities

These two-day courses are a great way to learn insights into why specific learning disabilities (SLD) occur and what it is like to have dyslexia or other SLD. They also offer constructive, practical strategies to help these learners in the classroom and home.

*"Really appreciate the wealth of practical ideas and resources so eagerly shared."*

*"Helped me get my head around my son's recent diagnosis and where to start helping him."*

The Level 3 NZQA-approved courses are suitable for anyone with little or no prior knowledge about specific learning disabilities. Parents, grandparents, teacher aides and teachers are all welcome. If you would like to have a course arranged in your area, please contact SPELD NZ and we'll do our best to organise this.

Introductory courses will be run throughout the country in 2019. Here's what's confirmed so far:

**Dunedin:** 21 & 22 March

**Auckland:** 6 & 7 June

**Christchurch:** 23 & 24 March; 5 & 6 September

Other introductory courses will be organised according to demand.

For more details, see the Training page of our website [www.speld.org.nz](http://www.speld.org.nz) or call 0800 773 536.



## SPELD NZ Assessor Course 2019

*"Judith's knowledge is impressive and her passion engages the learner."*

This training is in two parts. Part A provides training in the administration and interpretation of the Woodcock-Johnson IV test batteries and the assessment of those with specific learning disabilities. Applicants must meet NZCER Level C grading. Those wishing to become a SPELD NZ Assessor may be invited into the Part B mentored programme. For more information, see the Training page on the SPELD NZ website [www.speld.org.nz/speld-training](http://www.speld.org.nz/speld-training), email [eo@speld.org.nz](mailto:eo@speld.org.nz) or call 0800 773 536 Ext 5.

Scholarships may be available to subsidise the cost of training. (This training is not an NZQA-approved course.)

## SPELD NZ Certificate Course in Specific Learning Disabilities



*"The children that I teach are some of the cleverest kids I know. They just learn in a different way. Thank you for the scholarship. Through your kindness I will be able to support the children I teach in the best way possible and many in the future."*

This Level 5 NZQA-approved course is the pathway for those interested in becoming a SPELD NZ Teacher. It is also open to others who wish to extend their knowledge and expertise in teaching, or learning about, people with specific learning disabilities (SLD). The course requires 400 hours participation/study activity. It is delivered online but there will be a face-to-face workshop component during the school holidays.

Enrolments are accepted from those with teaching qualifications recognised in New Zealand (secondary, primary, or Early Childhood), or those with a tertiary qualification and experience in working with learning. Following successful course completion, those who hold a teaching qualification and have a minimum of one year's classroom teaching experience can apply to become a SPELD NZ Teacher working one-to-one with students with SLD, referred by SPELD NZ. SPELD NZ scholarships may be available for teachers in some parts of New Zealand.

For further information, see the Training page at [www.speld.org.nz](http://www.speld.org.nz), call 0800 773 536 Ext 5 or email [southern@speld.org.nz](mailto:southern@speld.org.nz)

## SPELD NZ Conference Auckland - 28 & 29 September 2019 LIFTING LITERACY Empowering neuro-diverse learners

We are proud to be able to offer an outstanding line-up of experts on specific learning disabilities. Keep an eye on SPELD NZ's website Events page for more details as they are finalised. We'll keep SPELD NZ professionals updated. Non SPELD NZ professionals are also warmly welcome to attend.

To register your interest as a participant or exhibitor, email [nationaloffice@speld.org.nz](mailto:nationaloffice@speld.org.nz) or call 0800 773 536.



**Alisha Moser learned to use her innate abilities as a visual learner under the expert guidance of her SPELD teacher. This gave her the courage to follow her passion and train as an architect, and more recently, become an author.**

At high school, Alisha chose subjects she liked and was good at: hard materials tech, design, graphics, history, classics and biology. The latter three required significant reading and recall of facts, which Alisha managed by studying diagrams and picturing dates and timelines in her mind. But it was design, with its visual focus and creativity that Alisha enjoyed the most. In Year 9 she chose architecture as her future career.

"I knew I wanted to be in the creative industries. I grew up with three older brothers who are all tradesmen, so is my father. I loved playing with Lego and could easily picture three-dimensional space. The construction of buildings fascinated me, and a teacher said they could see me being an architect. It was an easy decision, really."

### **A moment of self doubt**

After leaving school, Alisha worked for a year as a baker (her part-time student job morphed into a full-time one). It was then that the doubts began to creep in and she became convinced she had no chance of being accepted into architecture school.

"I remember finding out I'd been accepted into architecture and crying at the letterbox because I had convinced myself I wasn't good enough," she says. "My work ethic in school had been extremely high, and all I'd ever received was average results. All through high school I promised myself I'd do whatever it took to get into architecture school, and finally it was enough."

***"I struggle to see logic when the answer is right in front of me; instead I think right out of the box and come up with quite novel ideas. This can be both positive and frustrating."***

Architecture studies involve a lot of reading and writing, and self-belief helped Alisha cope with the challenges of tertiary study. In the beginning, her writing was enough to get her passing grades. Reading and submerging herself in the world of architectural writing helped her own writing improve. In 2016 Alisha gained her bachelor's degree in architecture, and went straight on to do a Master of Architecture.

"That year I began to receive 'A' grades, and for the first time ever I felt confident in my writing abilities," she says. "This was something I could never have imagined as a 12-year-old crying to Mum that I was 'dumb'."

Thanks to her excellent grades, Alisha entered her fifth and final year of study with a \$3000 Unitec scholarship – something



she'd also never dreamed possible. Completing her thesis with an 'A', she graduated with a Master of Architecture with honours. She now works in Regulatory Building Control and is training as a building surveyor.

"I would potentially love to write local building policies or Government building legislations or be a technical writer for a construction giant in the future."

Now, one of Alisha's biggest passions in adult life is literature and writing. In 2017, she entered the NZIA Warren Trust Awards for Architectural Writing. Much to her surprise, her piece was one of just 10 selected for publication in the book *10 Stories: writing about architecture/3*.

"I absolutely have further writing ambitions – you could say they are my salvation. I would love to see myself in the future as a novelist who makes a living from writing."

### **Gift or curse?**

So, given the option, would Alisha choose to not be dyslexic? While she wouldn't miss the challenges and struggles of dyslexia, she knows that without it, she wouldn't be the same.

"Through tutoring and discovering what my strengths are, I was able to become an average student, like everyone else. As an adult it doesn't make much difference, although I often excel at bizarre things. For example, I struggle to see logic when the answer is right in front of me; instead I think right out of the box and come up with quite novel ideas. This can be both positive and frustrating.

"Life isn't fair, and people suffer far worse afflictions than learning disorders. Dyslexia makes me the person I am. If I wasn't dyslexic, I wouldn't be me anymore."

**Pizza sales, fundraising for charities, comparing Auckland house prices and decoding Roman numerals. SPELD NZ teacher Liz Skinner and student Brook Bradley give us a glimpse of what it's like learning to grapple with numbers when they don't come naturally.**



***"I used to feel like I was at a roundabout with 100 paths. I had to go down all the paths before I got to the right path that I'm on now with maths."***

### **Brook:**

I used to think when I was little that I couldn't do maths. It was tricky and I used to think it would be like that for the rest of my life. I was bored at maths time. I literally just sat there because my teachers didn't understand how to teach me. I said to myself, 'I should get this by now' but I didn't.

Now I feel like it's not as tricky; I can do it. In Year 5 when I met Liz, she helped me a lot with my maths. Seeing pictures of things like tens frames and using a calculator to check my answers have helped me. Now I know where I'm heading with maths. I think if I keep practising I can do it, if I keep trying.

I used to feel like I was at a roundabout with 100 paths. I had to go down all the paths before I got to the right path that I'm on now with maths. The last obstacle for me is like a bunch of trees and bushes on the centre of the roundabout. That's where I'm leading to. I'm going to cut down the bushes and trees in my way by practising my basic facts. Then I'll be on the right path and there'll be no barriers to maths left. I feel like I've nearly mastered everything instead of feeling stuck all the time. Now I'm more confident at maths. I don't feel stressed out or nervous. I'll be fine.

### **Liz:**

Since Brook started with me two years ago, we've worked on building strong foundations in areas such as place value, number sequencing, maths word problems, addition and subtraction, fractions and decimals.

He enjoys applying his place value knowledge to real-life situations of interest, such as reading very big numbers like the prices of houses for sale in Auckland. He's also been able to apply his maths knowledge to decode the Roman numeral system, which really interests him.

More recently, Brook used his knowledge of place value and money to fundraise for charities such as Canteen and the Maui Dolphin Trust as part of a Young Leaders' Initiative at school. Brook sold slices of pizza at school to a crowd of over 100 people and fundraised over \$100 for each of these charities. He applied his maths knowledge (basic addition and subtraction facts, decimals, place value) to give change to customers, then to calculate profits (after deducting the costs of the pizzas) and to divide the proceeds equally between the two charities.

Brook has made significant progress in his learning. He has a new-found enjoyment of maths and has gained confidence in his ability to learn new maths concepts. As his SPELD Teacher, it's been inspiring for me to see Brook keep trying and making headway in an area of learning that's difficult for him. I hope his story of success will inspire other learners and their families to keep trying in the face of adversity.





# Book Reviews

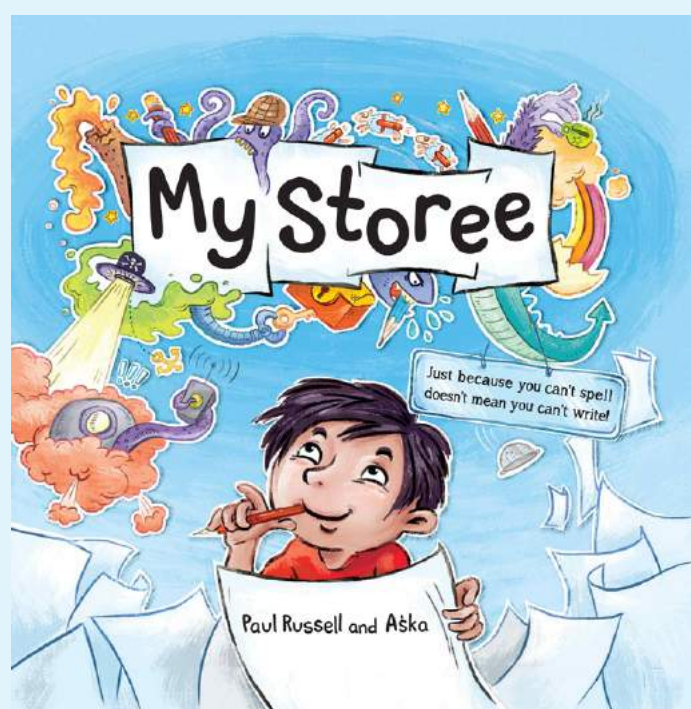
## *My Storee*

*Just because you can't spell it doesn't mean you can't write!*

By Paul Russell and Aska

A classroom teacher in Auckland recently reflected on how cruel it was to stifle imagination with a red pen by marking every spelling mistake. The catalyst was a child who told her, "You're making my essay bleed". In this book, a little boy with wonderful ideas loves writing but his passion is stifled by the teacher's red pen. A new teacher enables him to feel safe, and the stories flow.

The book is based on the life of author Paul Russell. In spite of his dyslexia, he was inspired to become the writer and teacher he is today thanks to one teacher who believed in him. Now Paul wants to encourage other children with dyslexia to explore their creativity without being held hostage by the difficulties of spelling.



In *My Storee* a young boy has a mind full of wonderful stories but when he writes them down, day after day, they come back covered in red pen after his teachers have corrected his spelling. It seems his dyslexia will always hold him back from sharing his creativity the way he longs to. Then a new teacher arrives at the school. Mr Watson tells magical stories and draws wonderful pictures. He makes his students feel safe. He inspires them to be themselves. He doesn't cover the boy's stories in red pen – and with this newfound acceptance the boy finally feels comfortable to just write!

*My Storee* is a tale of hope and acceptance into a world of literature that can too often seem impossible or difficult for dyslexic children to enter, because of the rules that surround it. It highlights the magic and importance of 'story', the ideas and the creativity behind literature that are often taught out of children through an over-emphasis on the rules, structure and spelling.

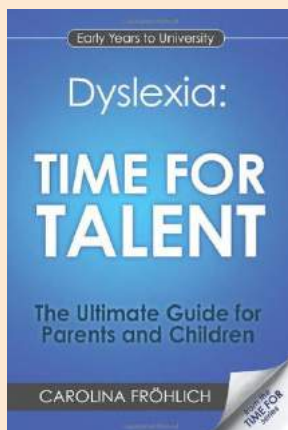
*My Storee* provides inspiration for reluctant writers and dyslexic children, and shows the power of good teachers.

**Recommended for ages 4-8. Teacher notes are available.**



## ***Dyslexia: Time for Talent - The Ultimate Guide for Parents and Children*** by Carolina Fröhlich

**Practical strategies and tools that work at home and school, to ensure children and parents find the right path of lifelong positive learning.**



Carolina Fröhlich, her son and her daughter all have dyslexia. Because there were few books about dyslexia, she researched and retrained to help children with patience, love and understanding. This book was written to share her knowledge, provide case studies and give encouragement.

Chapters include:

- Understanding dyslexia and learning difficulties
- Your child's holistic needs (including self-esteem to build upon their talents)
- Our children's education (including learning styles)
- Your young adult (with career advice and learning how to drive).

Some of the strategies and techniques involve repetition, rote learning, bite-size chunks, mind mapping, mnemonics, poems, dramatising, visualising, and games with detailed description and examples.

This book is an excellent resource for parents and teachers. It's presented in an easy-to-read style with clearly defined sections. Here's what's helpful to remember to increase self-confidence:

- Ask children to list all of their strengths – you may need to remind them
- Encourage them to have a positive mental attitude
- Model a positive attitude when you are faced with challenges
- Teach them to walk tall and smile
- Help them define the area that is causing the lack of self-confidence
- Help them develop the missing skills
- Take plenty of time to practise the missing skills
- Get them to acknowledge their progress and achievement in the problem area
- Give tons of positive reinforcement
- Reassure them that it's OK to make mistakes – that's how we all learn
- Remind them that you don't need to be perfect to be confident
- Remind them to compliment others: What goes around, comes around
- Remind them to be themselves: They are unique.

**Reviewed by SPELD NZ Teacher Kathy Tanner**

## ***The New Zealand Dyslexia Handbook*** By Tom Nicholson and Susan Dymock

**The New Zealand Dyslexia Handbook is a useful resource full of practical wisdom and tools that help to unlock the world of dyslexia.**

The book begins by looking at what dyslexia is and examines the genetic explanation of dyslexia as well as the limitations of neuroscience research. It tackles the debate of should we even use the term dyslexia and the many misconceptions about this disability. It then explores many of the issues around dyslexia related to family and school, as well as dyslexia's impact on self-esteem and behaviour, and what is needed to effectively diagnose the presence of dyslexia in students.

The book is jam-packed with useful knowledge and strategies for teaching literacy in a way that helps students with dyslexia, and advice on how to make the classroom a dyslexia-friendly place.

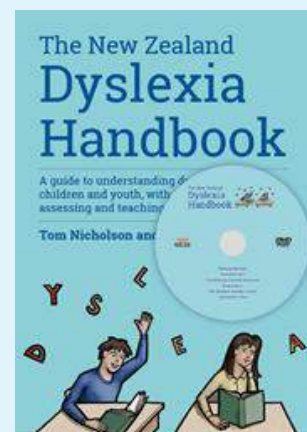
For me, as a SPELD NZ Teacher, this book's greatest pearls of wisdom were the knowledge, insight and understanding

Nicholson and Dymock shared in effectively teaching students with dyslexia how to read and write. They also incorporated useful teacher resources, such as suggested spelling strategies.

The authors say "...tutors must have the necessary knowledge to assess, plan and implement a suitable intervention that meets the needs of the student with dyslexia."

This book builds on the solid foundation of knowledge we receive through our SPELD NZ training. But it reminds us that we are only one cog in the education of these students. As teachers we can continue to do our part by sharing our knowledge and expertise, making a positive difference for the students we work with, and inviting schools to participate in SPELD NZ conferences and training courses. Together we can make a difference.

**Reviewed by SPELD NZ Teacher Philippa Winch**



We always welcome contributions to *The Record*. Please keep sending us your reviews, stories and student work for future issues: [nationaloffice@speld.org.nz](mailto:nationaloffice@speld.org.nz) or post to Editor, *The Record*, SPELD NZ, PO Box 24-617, Royal Oak, Auckland 1345 (NB: If it's a long story, please ensure you email it to us in Word format.)



# Dyslexia Awareness Week

*With SPELD NZ Teachers working from a strengths-based approach, International Dyslexia Awareness Week (1-7 October) was an opportunity for celebration.*

One such event was a display on the achievements of those with dyslexia in Nelson's Elma Turner Library. All the artwork and writing came from students at St. Joseph's School in Nelson and St. Peter Chanel School in Motueka. The students all belong to the youth division of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. Famous people featured included Whoopi Goldberg, Bill Gates, Cher, Eleanor Roosevelt, Thomas Edison, Steve Jobs, Sir Winston Churchill and Sir Richard Branson. Alongside the children's portraits were photos and quotes from these celebrities.

Over the last two years, 'Vinnies' youth have also been involved in raising money to help dyslexic children whose families could otherwise not afford assessment and tuition. As well as making a positive difference in their communities, the students have been given greater insight into dyslexia. Perhaps most importantly, in the words of Leonardo da Vinci, "The noblest pleasure is the joy of understanding."

**By SPELD NZ Teacher Philippa Winch**





# Student Contributions

## My Little Fluff Ball



I cry with astonishment. There in my dad's arms is a little black and white puppy named Jess. Did you know it is a four hour drive just to get her? But it was worth it. We got her because our other dog died – how sad! Dav, my dad and my uncle J went to get her. That was pretty cool.

Jess is a black and white dog which is a Border Collie – how cute! Her ears are as fluffy as a cloud. Jess's paws are as pink as cotton candy – sweet! Her tongue is as hard as sandpaper – Ow! Her fur is super fluffy. It's like dominoes falling but when you get on her bad side her teeth are as sharp as razor blades. You know how pigs have curly behinds – well Jess does but hers is fluffy.

When it is pouring down with rain Jess's nose is very wet. She can yelp for joy or so I thought until at night when everyone is in bed Jess can make a heck of a noise! Whenever Mitchell hurts her she can cry like a dolphin and when you are not around she can bark like a werewolf. In the end Jess is the most loving, energetic little fluff ball ever.

**By McKenzie Holbrook (12)**

## City Chaos

The lights of the city shine from the cliff-side. Down below, cars fly by like the shooting stars that fall from the deep blue abyss we call space. Space...where planets and stars can be seen as just small dots from the earth's atmosphere. They shimmer down on us like night lights in a child's bedroom. While the lights from below are lights of greed, pulling us forward with their bright colours screaming money.

Then there's the car lights of people going home to their families after a long day of work. The noise from the growling cars only just makes its way up the hill to the cliff, just being able to overtake the wind that howls as the night progresses. Both sounds hit my ears, fighting like a wolf and a bear.

The stars and the lights of the city reflect on the water, making it shimmer. The lights dance as the water moves, never stilling. The lights dance together making a collage of colours. The city may be greedy, but it's just as beautiful as the stars.

**By Jamie Whitney (16)**



## A Juicy Reward!!!



The scruffy little rat plodded off to find a meal for one. His delicate tiny paws were getting tired but then something grabbed his little nose and yanked it off. The smell, the smell, it was delightful. In fact, it was extraordinary. He sniffed some more then he spotted it. His black marble eyes spotted a bright red bucket in the distance. He was determined, his goal was set to achieve and the achievement starts now!

The obstacle course was long lasting but that did not stop the rat because he had a goal to achieve. He scattered across the roof and slid under the haystack...

Ouch! that looked painful but one little scratch won't hurt him. He has a goal to reach and that is what he must do. He dived over the haystack and rolled across the floor until the apples were just a centimetre away - one step two step three step...

Yes he made it and oh how happy he was! He sunk his munted old teeth into a bright juicy red apple. As he was enjoying his juicy reward there was a ferocious knock at the barn door. The door was smashed open and the innocent little rat was caught...

**By Abigail Savage (11)**

# Student Contributions

## Grandad's Old Tractor



About 15 years ago there was a grandad called Arthur. Arthur had a very old tractor. It was a John Deere of some sort. The foam was coming out the seat and it was rusty where the green paint had been chipped off. It might have been old and rusty but it never didn't start. Arthur's tractor didn't have much horse power, but it got the job done. Arthur did not know his life was about to change.

One month later Arthur's grandson Callum came over for dinner. Callum loved tractors. Callum had lots of little toy tractors and he loved making displays with them. When it was dinner time Callum ran up to the table like he had been shot out of a gun. He was starving. While they were

eating Callum said "Grandad have you ever thought about getting a bigger tractor. You know 150 or 200 horse power". "OK, but it won't be as good as my old one" said Arthur. Callum laughed, he liked the newer tractors.

A week later Arthur was demoing a John Deere 7530 Premium. Callum had come over to have a ride in it. Arthur always liked John Deere, but he thought the newer models were awesome. It had a big spacious cab, a big dash board with all sorts of buttons and warning lights, there was no rust in sight and it was clean as ever. Arthur turned the key and it roared into action. He drove down the race to the paddock then smash, it had broken the strainer post and the fence came crashing down. The tractor was so massive it didn't even fit through the gateway. Later that day Arthur and Callum were outside fixing the fence. "Right I think we're done here," said Arthur. That night at dinner Arthur decided that he wouldn't buy the new one. By the time the next day had come around, the new tractor had gone back to the shop.

Arthur walked over to the rusty tin shed and got on his old tractor. He backed it out of the shed. He got it warmed up and went to go feed some silage to the cows. Arthur loved having his old tractor back. Not so much in the cold winter rain, but when it was hay making time in the summertime and it was nice and dry, Arthur wouldn't trade it for anything.

*Dictated by Callum Moffat (11)*

## Cliff Hanger

On a sunny day Niamh woke up with a big yawn. She is extremely excited today because Niamh is going on a camping trip. Niamh gets into a beautiful dress. Her dress has a lovely belt on it. She puts her black shell necklace on and grabs her tent bag then she goes to her truck. Niamh's truck is called number seven because number seven is her lucky number. Niamh started to drive.

When she got to the woods she heard a tweet. Niamh went to the top of the car and saw a nest. She looked at it for a minute, then she picked it up and put it in a tree. Niamh set up her tent and roasted the marshmallows in a fire. She was all ready for the night.

Niamh sat on a cliff and watched the sunset. "SLIP!" ..... Niamh fell and is holding on by her belt! What will she do..... MEOW! MEOW! MEOW!

*By Keely Stewart (9)*



*Keely's mum Sharon writes: "Thank you to the Freemasons Lodge of Lower Hutt for their continued financial support that allows our daughter to attend her SPELD lessons. Keely's reading, writing and spelling is improving all the time. She now actually enjoys sitting down and writing something creative. This is something she has always hated doing."*



# Student Contributions

## Bee Simulator

Bee Simulator is my third favourite game in Roblox. In it you can get legendary bees, epic bees, rare bees and also common bees. There are over a thousand species of bees, like Shy Bees, Bumble Bees and Cool Bees. I actually have two Cool Bees now.

One of the aims of the game is to get more pollen so that you can get more bees. When your hive is full you get lots of honey to sell to honey bears for more equipment.

You get all sorts of equipment to get pollen: a vacuum cleaner, a bubble wand, a ginormous stick with honey on the end. It collects all the pollen and puts it in your backpack. You can also get all sorts of backpacks like a hive and a rum bottle.

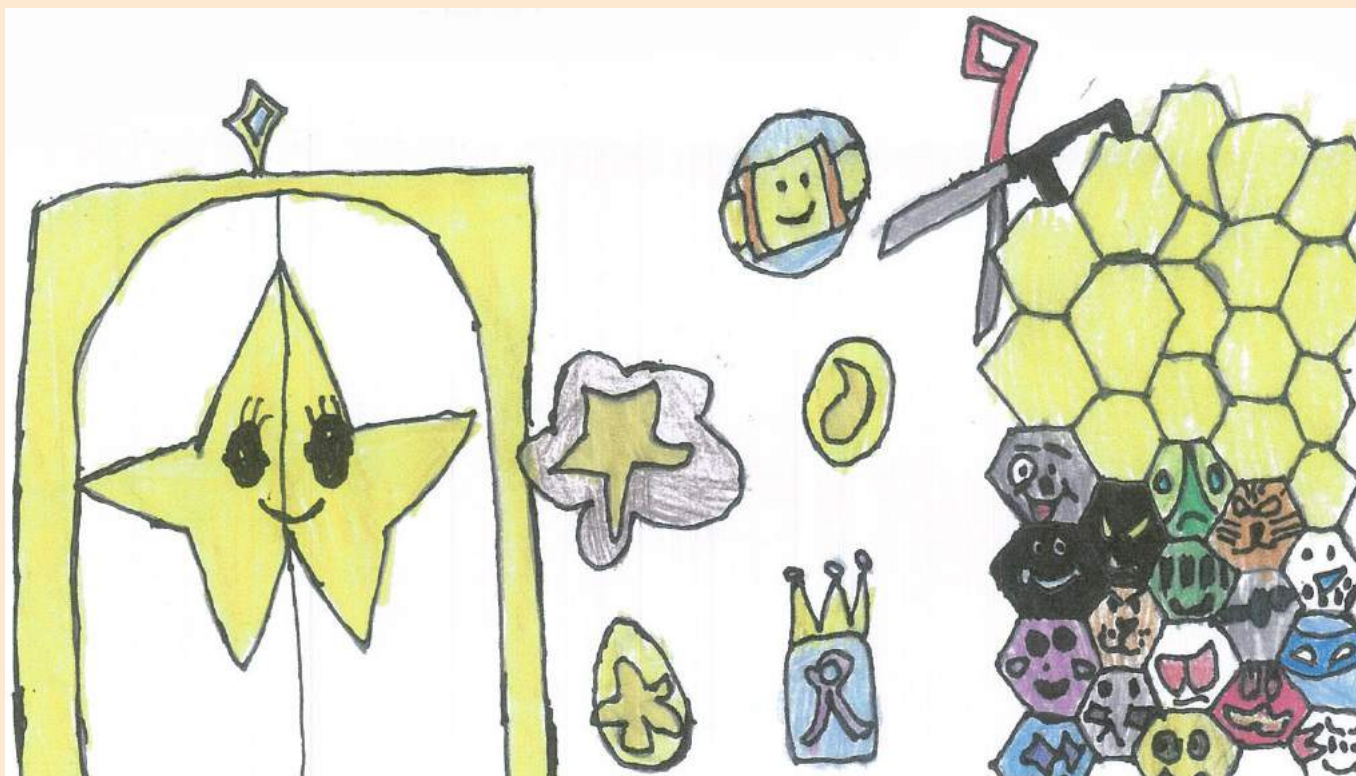
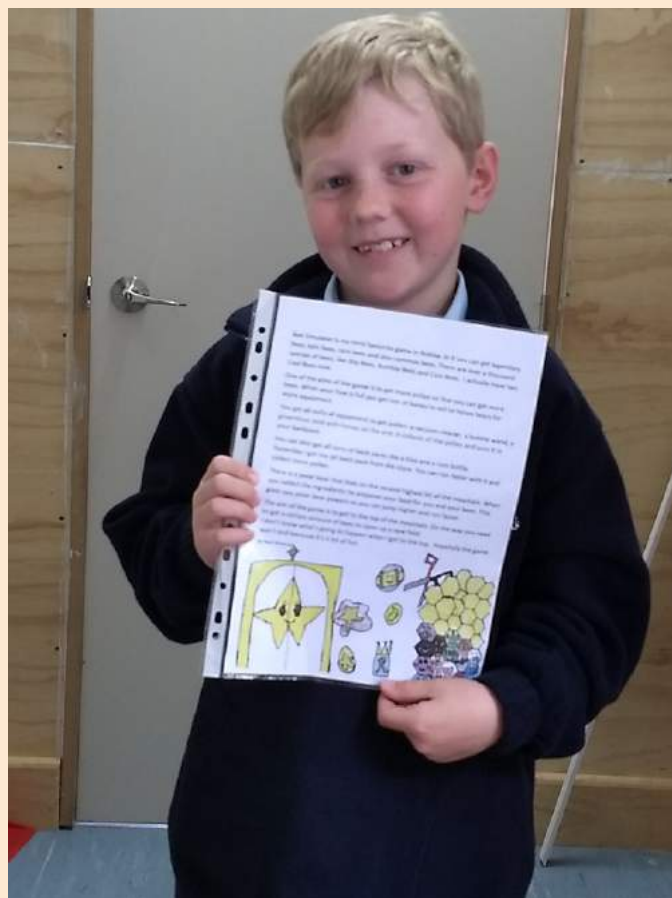
Yesterday I got the jet backpack from the store. You can run faster with it and collect more pollen.

There is a polar bear that lives on the second highest bit of the mountain. When you collect the ingredients he prepares your food for you and your bees. This gives you polar bear powers so you can jump higher and run faster.

The aim of the game is to get to the top of the mountain. On the way you need to get a certain amount of bees to open up a new field.

I don't know what's going to happen when I get to the top. Hopefully the game won't end because it's a lot of fun.

**By Ryan Attwood (9)**



# Thanks!

Give the gift of reading to a child in need



SPELD NZ believes that all children deserve the chance to succeed at school, and we are continually fundraising to help subsidise our services for low-income families. Please consider a donation to assist a child who would otherwise not have an opportunity to receive the support that could transform their lives.

Here's what two mums told us:

*"I'm so happy she is able to continue her SPELD lessons this term. C has been just amazing and has made such a huge difference to her writing, spelling and attitude toward literacy! To hear her say now that writing is her favourite subject... is such a turnaround from crying daily and not wanting to go to school because it was too hard! Thanks so much!!! You guys really are amazing!"*

*"What an experience! He thoroughly enjoyed meeting the amazing assessor who identified that in light of his apparent intelligence and competencies there were discrepancies in his reading and writing. From this assessor we were supplied with a comprehensive report with information and suggestions for helping him at home. It also outlined how his teachers at school could adapt his learning, and also by the SPELD tutor, who is using this report to base her lesson plans. Since he started with the SPELD tutor we have watched him develop a positive attitude to his literacy learning. He is finally progressing and this is wonderful to see."*

**(Thanks to Freemasons of Remuera Lodge for this student's support)**

## Thank you to our sponsors for 2018

**From everyone involved with SPELD NZ, we'd like to express our thanks and appreciation for the grants, donations or other assistance we have received over the past 12 months.**

As a not-for-profit, SPELD NZ tries to keep all fees for families as low as possible to make our services accessible. We receive no government funding, so grant money is essential to help cover our operating expenses and ensure the continuation of SPELD NZ's work. Our heartfelt thanks to:

*Acorn Foundation, Betty Campbell Trust, COGs, Community Trust of Southland, DV Bryant Trust, Eastern and Central Community Trust, Foundation North, General Charitable Trust South Canterbury, George Sevicke Charitable Trust, Gwen Rodgers Charitable Trust, Hawkes Bay Foundation, Hutt Mana Charitable Trust, Invercargill Licensing Trust Foundation, Ilot Charitable Trust, JBS Dudding Trust, Julie Goodyer, Kings College Trust, Len Reynolds Trust, Lion Foundation, Lottery Grants Board, L W Nelson Trust, Mary Lloyd SPELD Auckland Trust, Mr & Mrs George Denton Trust, Network Tasman Trust, Nikau Foundation, Norah Howell Trust, Otago Community Trust, Philip Dallow Trust, Rata Foundation Canterbury, Redwood Trust, Freemasons of Hutt Valley Lodge, Freemasons of Remuera Lodge, Riccarton Youth Trust, SkyCity Auckland, SkyCity Hamilton, Taranaki Savings Bank, TG McCarthy Trust, The W Duncan Bickley Trust Fund, Vernon Hall Trust Fund, Wellington Community Trust, Winton and Margaret Bear Charitable Trust, J N Williams Memorial Trust/HB Williams Turanga Trust, WelEnergy Trust, West Coast Community Trust, and the many others who have given donations or volunteered their time.*

## Out and about



SPELD NZ Executive Officer Jeremy Drummond at a 'Hear from the Experts' SENCO seminar with KidsLink founder Michele Yock.

KidsLink is an organisation that aims to connect schools and families with quality local experts on children's learning and development. It recently expanded into a national resource and launched a new website [www.kidslink.co.nz](http://www.kidslink.co.nz)



Jeremy raising SPELD NZ's profile at Brain Day, hosted by the University of Auckland.

*This was a stimulating and fun day of neuroscience for all ages. Events included displays, panel discussions, research labs, games and activities – all for free.*