The Age of DYSLEXIC THINKING

JOSH CLARK, HEAD OF SCHOOL

It was one big, fat, stinking lie.
She promised I was wrong. She swore she was telling the truth. The wooden schoolhouses circling her neck and cat sweater made her deception all the more convincing. As she peered through the lenses balancing on her nose, I knew. I saw her chalkboard scribbles of cosigns and quadratic functions for what they were: propaganda. Despite Mrs. Kurlee’s insistence otherwise, I knew I would never use pre-calculus in “real life.”
Twenty years later, I am not backing down. I have yet to find a use for my knowledge of rational exponents. Looking back at my primary and high school education, I am faced with a sea of useless knowledge.
• The Romans would host great feasts and vomit in-between courses, so they could continue eating. Why thank you, eighth grade world history.
• The poet Christopher Marlowe was stabbed in the head during a bar brawl. Lovely, twelfth grade English.
• Hippo milk is pink. How special, second grade science.

I am not suggesting that my education was pointless or subpar. To the contrary, I am very grateful for my first twelve years of schooling. However, it is not the content I absorbed that has had a lasting impact. It is the process I took to understand it.

Traditional schools often value abilities and skills not necessarily reflected in the real world. Memorization, speed, and retrieval tend not to be the strengths of dyslexic learners. Thankfully, their importance stops at the classroom door.

Despite schools’ reluctance to change, I believe the future will put a premium on dyslexic thinking. In his book A Whole New Mind: Why Right Brain Thinking

Will Rule the Future, Daniel Pink outlines six essential skills for the future: meaning, design, empathy, symphony, story and play.
Interestingly, but not surprisingly, these characteristics are disproportionately high in people with dyslexia. One third of all American entrepreneurs are dyslexic. I am confident dyslexic thinkers like Steve Jobs and Charles Schwab would not attribute their success to knowing that Cheyenne is the capital of Wyoming (I had to Google it). Their genius derived from the novelities and connections they saw within the information.
As the 21st century unfolds, memorization, speed, and retrieval will be the work of machines. Thinking will be the new engine of our economy. It will be the age of dyslexic thinking.
What if... What if every pediatrician, during a four-year-old, well-child visit, asked parents about their experience learning to read? According to current research:

• If one parent struggled with reading, there is a 50% chance the child will also.
• If both parents struggled, the likelihood increases to 75%.

If that same pediatrician was trained to perform a quick screening for dyslexia, the child could potentially be guided to the best reading instruction for dyslexics from the onset, avoiding the frustration of the “wait-to-fail” model. According to the research presented at the Dyslexia Foundation conference in San Francisco in February, “what-if” can become the rule.

The Dyslexia Foundation supports brain-based research that it provides to educators and therapists who work with dyslexics of all ages. One important way The Dyslexia Foundation makes this connection is by sponsoring conferences three times a year. Several members of the Schenck School faculty heard about the latest brain research first-hand at the conference entitled From Neurons to the Classroom, held at the University of California San Francisco Dyslexia Center.

So much now is known about the atypical neuronal network of the dyslexic brain. According to the latest research, the white matter, the highways connecting the grey matter, is where the structural differences can be seen. Are these highways too bumpy? Too narrow? Too crisscrossed? Every dyslexic brain is different. However, the big take-away is that because dyslexia is neurological, early intervention is imperative. We can no longer support the “wait-to-fail” model when we have proof of the genetic link and early screening tools to use before children even begin to read.

This year, The Schenck School became a member of The Dyslexia Foundation. We are excited to benefit from the foundation’s research.
Maryanne Wolf, a leader in the field of reading research, understands the impact of Orton-Gillingham instruction on the brain. She uses her POSSuM model to explain the importance of teaching all aspects of reading:

- **P** – Phonology (letters make sounds…sounds make words)
- **O** – Orthography (spelling)
- **S** – Semantics (word meaning)
- **S** – Syntax (arranging words into well-formed sentences)
- **M** – Morphology (prefixes, roots, suffixes)

In attending conferences over the years, we noticed that many sessions addressed phonology, orthography, and morphology but were lacking in the areas of syntax and semantics. In short, these professional development opportunities did not provide the complete picture of the essential elements of teaching students to become proficient readers and writers.

At The Schenck School, we use diagramming as a multisensory approach to teaching syntax and grammar. We can help students improve their writing by showing them visually that a prepositional phrase, for example, in the wrong part of the sentence, makes the sentence sound awkward. We loved teaching diagramming to our students so much that we decided to share it with other teachers, first at the Academy of Orton-Gillingham Practitioners and Educators (AOGPE) conference in 2016, again this past March at the Southeast Regional International Dyslexia Association (IDA) conference in Greenville, S.C., and in April at the AOGPE conference in Boston.

We added a talk on vocabulary instruction, since it is the other missing piece of Dr. Wolf’s model. Students who begin school with a vocabulary deficit often struggle to catch up to their peers, and their reading comprehension suffers. We shared Isabel Beck’s research on choosing words from literature to teach. Beck emphasizes choosing high-frequency words that are used in writing but not always heard in discussion. For example, students are likely to read the word occurrence in many types of writing but might not hear it in conversation, making it an excellent word to teach. In addition, we provided examples of games reinforcing good vocabulary instruction and critical thinking skills.

So what’s next? In July, we are teaching Grammar & Diagramming and Vocabulary courses offered through the Dyslexia Resource Trust in partnership with The Schenck School.


*Bringing Words to Life*, Isabel Beck, 2002

For more information about the educational courses offered through the Dyslexia Resource Trust at The Schenck School, visit [www.dyslexiaresource.org](http://www.dyslexiaresource.org) for educators and parents.
On March 1, the sixth grade team took students to the Georgia State Capitol for Dyslexia Day. While waiting in the Capitol Gallery for the start of the House of Representatives session, the students were in awe of the intricacies of the State Legislature and anxiously awaited their introduction on the House floor. My father, Representative Ron Stephens, introduced them as intelligent, self-advocating students who are also dyslexic learners. The students stood and waved, proud to be acknowledged. They put a face on the mystifying term of dyslexia, which was enlightening to some lawmakers who thought of dyslexia as merely letter/number reversals or reading words backwards.

Each House member received a copy of a student’s written work describing his or her journey with dyslexia. Once we returned to School, the students reflected on what being an advocate meant. I invite you to read some excerpts from their work.

Why is it important to be a self-advocate?

I’ve struggled with reading my whole life, constantly rejected by my fellow students and friends for not being able to read. At the end of fourth grade, I found out I was dyslexic. I had to move to a new school for dyslexic kids like me…Throughout the year I learned that being dyslexic doesn’t make someone dumb. It’s just a thing that makes it hard to read and write because our brains work differently than others…Being at the Capitol made me a self-advocate which made me less afraid to admit I am dyslexic…

Drake Fisher

Dyslexia is a powerful thing that can change your world, but if you stand up for yourself, it will help people understand how hard it is. Some say it’s a gift others think it is the opposite….When we went to the Capitol, I self-advocated by telling my experience about being at The Schenck School because of my dyslexia.

Kate Hidell

…You are born with dyslexia, and you will never be able to cure it. You have it your whole life, which is why advocating for yourself is so important…

Preston Martin

Dyslexia is neither a friend nor a foe. Dyslexia cannot be taken away from you. I have known I have dyslexia for six years now and it has changed my life forever. When I went to the Capitol, it showed people that dyslexia is a real thing and needs to be acknowledged. Dyslexia can’t be conquered; it can only be remediated and that is very important.

Jack Morrow
Why Volunteer at The Schenck School?

Karen Altman, 2017 Auction & Gala Co-Chair

In our family’s three years at The Schenck School, I have volunteered in different capacities, truly enjoying each one. Serving as Auction & Gala Co-Chair this year really opened my eyes to the number of wonderful volunteers it takes to pull off that event and each one of the other events throughout the year. Parents, grandparents, faculty, and staff so generously give their time and talents to the School in various volunteer roles, and each one is equally necessary and appreciated. Volunteering for the Gala, to me, meant working alongside other parents and pooling our individual talents for the benefit of this School that has become so important to our children’s lives. Each one of the parents I worked with, whether they were raising money, finding donations, designing the venue, creating signage, or any of the other many roles, was excited to be a part of it. And perhaps the best part of working on the Gala is the reward...an incredible event for the School!

Callie Fuller, 2016-2017 Parent Association President

When we walked through the doors during student orientation, Ryley saw the letters written by students who had come before him, attesting to the impact Schenck had on their lives. He asked me to read them. He heard their struggles with decoding words, reading fluency, comprehension, and spelling. In complete amazement he said, “Wow, they are just like me.” And with that, he smiled and said, “I think I am going to be happy here.” And indeed, the past three years have truly been a blessing.

The special nature of The Schenck School inspired me to get involved the moment Ryley was accepted to its program. Giving back to The Schenck School was the least I could do to show my support to the School in a way that changed my life and now my son’s in so many positive ways. This year I have volunteered as a room parent and an art committee member. In each of these roles, I feel more connected to the School and to the many wonderful staff members and teachers! Given that Schenck is often a short chapter in most students’ academic lives, being able to volunteer and be involved with the School has helped me maximize our family’s Schenck experience.

Danielle Galante, First Year Parent

There are many reasons why I decided to volunteer as a “new parent” during my daughter’s first year at The Schenck School. First and foremost, I feel so blessed to have our child attending The Schenck School and am so thankful for the teachers and staff who make this school the incredible place it is. I work outside the home as a realtor and artist, so I have limited time. I split volunteer time between two schools. I find it extremely important to give back to a school that has given us so much. I have especially enjoyed being on the Teacher Appreciation Committee helping to organize and provide treats and goodies for the teachers and staff throughout the year.

Another reason I decided to volunteer was to meet new parents. When I agreed to help with “Same Boat” events, I really had no idea what I was getting into but was intrigued. I loved the thought of meeting parents who have children who are dyslexic (i.e. same boat!). These social events are a safe place to share concerns, insight, support, and friendship.

Megan McSwain Mann, Alumna and parent

Volunteering at Schenck has been a great way for me to reconnect and give back to a school that changed my life and now my son’s in so many positive ways. This year I have volunteered as a room parent and an art committee member.

Marci and Jim Rehg, Grandparents

When our grandson Ethan, the youngest of four siblings and the last of our six grandchildren, entered Schenck as a fourth-grader, my husband Jim and I decided to volunteer. Ethan is the only family member who inherited his grandfather’s dyslexia. Both know the frustration and misery of not being able to read like the other grade school kids. We wanted to let Ethan know we were supportive of him.

After our first hour of volunteering, we were hooked. What a great way to understand our grandson’s new path! We were grateful to know that Ethan finally had a school that could help him succeed.

How did we find volunteer openings at Schenck? Our daughter-in-law and son shared their Schenck online password. The School website is so easy to use for volunteer sign-ups. Although we still work part-time, we found volunteer opportunities that suited our schedule. We also requested that our e-mails be added to distribution lists for Ethan’s homeroom and for the Schenck newsletter. Both are excellent ways to keep up with Schenck and with our grandson.

Ethan’s experience, in turn, has unexpectedly given us two of our most enjoyable years as Schenck grandparent volunteers. It was a small gesture that we were happy to make.
Alumni Join Together To Support the School

We thank our alumni who attended and supported the Auction! Special thanks go to the youngest alums in attendance, Cooper and Charlie Higgins. The brothers took the stage to share their experiences and highlight the positive impact a Schenck School education has on their lives.

Cooper Higgins ('10)

My journey started when I was in first grade at The Lovett School, and my teacher would ask our class to pick out our favorite books. My peers would pick out books like “The Magic Tree House,” while I would wander off to the picture book section and find one to look at because I couldn’t read. The following year, I attended The Schenck School, and it changed my life. Over the course of the next two years, I learned to read and write. The School taught me to love to read. I remember the encouraging environment Schenck provided and the amazing teachers who helped me along my journey. By the time I left The Schenck School, I was reading and writing as well as, if not better than, my classmates. The Schenck School gave me the confidence and skills I needed to succeed in school.

Charlie Higgins ('11)

I attended The Schenck School from second to fourth grade – one more year than Cooper. I always knew I was different. I remember pretending to read the menu at dinner and ordering chicken fingers even when it wasn’t listed. When I started at The Schenck School, I wasn’t quite sure why I was there, but I loved it. After a year at the School, I could read and write better than before, and in third grade, I actually ended up winning a scholastic writing contest. The Schenck School has changed my life both academically and as a person. I met some of the most memorable teachers and students while I was at Schenck. Without The Schenck School, I wouldn’t be as successful as I am in the classroom at The Lovett School or on the lacrosse field. The Schenck School truly is a special place. I know The Schenck School will continue to change the lives of students like it changed mine.

Cooper and Charlie Higgins are in tenth grade at The Lovett School, where they play on the varsity lacrosse team. Both boys were named to the Under Armour South Underclassmen All-American Lacrosse Team 2016. They participate in the Outdoors Club, Young Investors Club, and in Lax-Action, a community service group. The boys have committed to play lacrosse at Fairfield University after they graduate.
Mary and Kris Swansons take home a new addition to their family.

We had a blast at the Auction & Gala!

Over 60 parent and grandparent volunteers worked to make this the most successful Auction for the School!

Our students and faculty will love the new outdoor classroom furniture made possible through the appeal for donations during the Live Auction.

A record 47 families and businesses sponsored the evening!

We hope you’ll be there next year - save the date for Saturday, February 24, 2018.
Over 70 alumni and alumni parents returned to campus in January to reconnect, enjoy each other’s company, and hear new Head of School Josh Clark discuss the importance of embracing dyslexia. This year’s topic was developed as a direct result of alumni input and feedback. If you have a topic idea for next year’s Social & Share event, please contact Alumni Coordinator Sandy McCauley at alumni@schenck.org. We love to hear your ideas!
I’m a big fan of war movies, Saving Private Ryan, Enemies at the Gate, A Bridge Too Far, Band of Brothers. There’s a scene common to many of these films where a soldier is being sent into fire, facing near certain annihilation. You can sense their emotions as they struggle against fear and terror.

I don’t want to minimize the courage of such brave soldiers, but I have known terror, the panic, the trembling, the pounding heart, the aching gut. I wasn’t facing a machine gun nest or a sniper; I was in a spelling bee or was called on by my third grade teacher to read out loud to my class.

I was making fine grades in school, but something was very wrong. Things were harder for me. I knew I was a pretty smart kid, but I felt like everybody thought I was stupid. Reading out loud was a source of humiliation. I came home almost every day in despair. My teachers did not understand my frustration. I hated school. The world of learning, which should have been stimulating, encouraging, full of discovery, happiness, and sunshine, was to me like the Siege of Stalingrad or the Bataan Death March.

And I was a lucky dyslexic. My mom knew exactly what was going on. Her experience with dyslexia went back to 1986, when she first went to work for The Schenck School. I had testing and tutors, but it was not enough. Every day, going to school was an exercise in degradation and anxiety, and my unhappiness began to extend well beyond school grounds.

For me, third grade was a miserable crisis, but then I came to The Schenck School. My whole attitude about school shifted. Reading was still hard, but in time I actually began to enjoy it once I was able to relax and not worry about being slow. Rather than a source of anxiety, books became a source of excitement and joy. It was at Schenck that I read Under a War Torn Sky and Soldier X. I developed a deep interest in military history and became an expert on the Second World War. I even interviewed Mr. Schenck on his war experience.

At Schenck, I learned to read better, but, more importantly, I learned to be confident in my abilities, to advocate for myself, and to accept change. From Schenck, I outplaced to The Galloway School. Galloway has high expectations and rigorous courses. Sometimes I struggled, but I did not fall into the trap of despair. I talked to my teachers to find solutions. I was confident enough to get involved in many activities and take leadership positions.

Through my years at Galloway, I held on to a goal, a dream I have had since my time at Schenck, tied to that interest sparked by books I read on the military. Since about fifth grade, I have wanted to go to West Point.

The Academy’s requirements are stringent and the admission process arduous, but with confidence, pre-planning, advocacy, and executive functioning skills developed at The Schenck School, I pursued that goal. A few weeks ago, I received an appointment. I report to West Point on July 1 for Beast Barracks, a six-week basic training program before classes start.

Without my experience at The Schenck School, I don’t know if I would have developed the desire to go to West Point, and I doubt I would have been prepared with the skills and confidence to gain admittance.

The Schenck School made dyslexia ultimately irrelevant to my goal, perhaps an obstacle, but not a barrier. In fact, having had obstacles and developing the skills to overcome challenges are, I believe, advantages I have over my peers who sailed through school with no troubles.

As I head off to Beast, with drills, jumping off cliffs, crawling under barbed wire with live fire overhead, and a year of being yelled at as a plebe, I am comforted by one thought: West Point doesn’t have spelling bees.
1970’s

Anne Ledbetter (’70) studied at Flagler College in St. Augustine, Florida, and at The American College for the Applied Arts in London, England. She graduated summa cum laude with a bachelor of fine arts degree in visual arts and graphic design. After years working as a graphic designer, Anne followed her passion and became a full-time photographer, earning many industry awards for her work. Anne says, “Schenck was such an important part of my growing up!”

1980’s

Caroline (Hall) Wildman (’84) is a graduate of both Pace Academy and Rhodes College, where she graduated with honors. After college, her work as a consultant in the software industry took her to Nashville, Tennessee. In 2000, she married Andy Wildman, and they moved to New York to pursue new jobs and new adventure. Caroline worked for Morgan Stanley in Private Wealth Management, first as a Global Training Manager and then as a Software Specialist. Caroline and Andy returned to Atlanta in late 2004 to be near family and to raise their three children, Ellie, Hall, and Tate. Caroline currently is a full-time mother, part-time sales consultant, and an enthusiastic painter and reader. She writes, “The Schenck School remains near and dear to my heart, as this is the place that shaped my views on education, self-esteem, and the power of effort.”

1990’s

Ali Eustis (’99) is currently the social media manager for the divorce support service DIVORCE911. She also is a part-time nanny for two elementary school-aged children. All received her associate’s degree in early childhood education in December 2015 from Georgia Perimeter College.

Mary Catherine (Groome) Gober (’94)Former Faculty (’07-’16) celebrated her marriage to Zack Gober on September 17, 2016, at Burge Plantation. Mary Catherine writes, “Family and friends stayed the weekend in cabins on the property. The festivities began with a family skeet shoot and continued on into the weekend with farm-to-table meals, bonfires and s’mores.” Following the weekend festivities, Mary Catherine and Zack flew to South Africa for their honeymoon, where they enjoyed close encounters with lions, cheetahs, elephants, and hippo to name a few. Mary Catherine said “it was a trip of a lifetime and the most incredible start to our marriage!” An interesting footnote to this story is that Mary Catherine was introduced to Zack through current Schenck School second grade teacher Erin Hogg. Regardless of that introduction, the marriage may have been written in the stars. Soon after they began dating, Mary Catherine and Zack learned their grandparents had met at church at age 13 and were reunited at Duke University at age 18. The grandparents were together again at the wedding. It was the first time the childhood friends had seen each other since 1943! Mary Catherine said “both grandparents were amazed their grandchildren were getting married to each other!”

Anna Hurwitz (’99) is an Information Technology Project Manager in Atlanta, as well as the President of the Red Shoe Society of Ronald McDonald House Charities (the young professionals group). Anna is engaged to her college sweetheart and will be married in October 2017. Anna’s mother, Sara Barron, writes, “We feel so much of Anna’s success can be attributed to the positive educational experiences that she had at The Schenck School and The Lovett School. We are forever grateful to you.”

Evan Joslin (’98) graduated summa cum laude from Greater Atlanta Christian School, where she played varsity basketball and ran varsity track and cross country. After high school, she attended Agnes Scott College, where she graduated summa cum laude in 2008 with a bachelor of arts in chemistry and an American Chemical Society Certification. She was also inducted into the Mortar Board Honor Society. Outside of college academics, Evan played four years on the varsity basketball team and ran four years for the varsity cross country team, where she was team captain for three years. Evan went on to earn her Ph.D. in chemistry specializing in organometallic catalytic chemistry. In 2013, Evan completed a one-year visiting professorship at Haverford College and then attended Johns Hopkins University for a Research Postdoctoral Program in bio-inorganic chemistry. While Evan was at Johns Hopkins, she taught two classes per academic year to upperclassman and graduate students. Currently, Evan is an Assistant Professor in chemistry at The University of South: Sewanee. Evan is engaged to be married in August, 2018. She says, “My two favorite memories are when I was in fifth grade, and the whole grade would go outside into nature and rock-climb as our Physical Education activity, and all of the art and music classes that we got to do as a grade! I definitely don’t think I would be where I am without my experience at The Schenck School.”
Sometimes the biggest changes in life are the best ones. For me that change was dyslexia. Don’t get me wrong, when I first heard that I was dyslexic, I wasn’t even sure how to spell it, or what in the world the word meant. Once I learned about it, honestly, I was really not so excited to be dyslexic. It made me feel a little different, maybe even stupid. But today, and forever on, I think it might be the best thing that ever happened to me, because it led me to Schenck.

Being dyslexic can be challenging at times, but I still love that it is a part of me. While in fifth grade at Schenck, I wrote a poem about dyslexia. I described how I saw it as a little purple creature who was with me everywhere I went. I now realize dyslexia is still with me every day, everywhere, and that can be difficult.

And if learning English while being dyslexic wasn’t hard enough, I had to learn a whole new language called Hebrew in becoming a Bat Mitzvah! Let me tell you, learning Hebrew is tough work for anyone! But with lots of time, hard work, and focus, I learned to recite the prayers and my Torah portion, and I wrote a four-page speech about what it meant to me.

The Torah portion I was given reminded me of what it felt like when I first knew I had dyslexia and the self-doubt I experienced. In the story, Moses doubted he would be able to help God with the requests God had made to him. It wasn’t easy, but Moses didn’t give up, and with help from the people around him, he worked through it.

This reminds me of my experience at The Schenck School and also some of what kids with cancer go through. When they first hear they have cancer, they don’t know what is going to happen to them or how hard the process will be, but they keep fighting. The doctors and their family and friends fight with them. These kids go through a real-life nightmare, and my family and I want to help them find a way through. So, as I prepared to become a Bat Mitzvah, I became determined to make a difference for kids with cancer.

My family has been fortunate to support and work closely with an amazing group of people called the Rally Foundation. They are devoted to finding and funding the best research for childhood cancer. As a family, we decided we would create a fundraiser concert to support Rally, and we wanted to make it a big one! We brought together a terrific cast of six Rally Kids, all affected by cancer, to sing live on stage at the Buckhead Theatre and to share their stories and their courage in fighting cancer. I wrote letters to previous American Idol contestants Haley Reinhart, Anthony Fedorov, Casey Abrams, and Clark Beckham, asking them to join us as celebrity judges. They all said “yes,” and they were amazing supporters to my Rally Kid friends. We called the concert “Rally Idol,” and we were so happy to have over 900 people come to the show! In the end, we raised $140,000 for childhood cancer research! It was truly an amazing experience and journey! I could not have done these things without the amazing support I got from The Schenck School and its community.
Woodrow Robinson ('97) is proud to announce the birth of his son, Woodrow (Woods) Douglas Robinson, on February 13, 2017. Woods weighed 6 pounds, 11 ounces. Big sister Hayden is thrilled to have a little brother. Drew Lacy ('01) is the proud uncle.

Trey Oates ('05) is currently a student at University of Mississippi, where he is studying geologic engineering and is a member of Sigma Nu fraternity. This summer, Trey will intern with Public Gas Partners in Tuscaloosa, Alabama.

While on campus this year, Trey Oates kindly reenacted the pose for his photo on the cover of Time Magazine’s July 28, 2003 issue.

Robert Pope ('08) graduated from Saint Frances Schools in May 2016. While at Saint Francis, he earned his Eagle Scout rank with the Boy Scouts of America, two silver medals on the National Latin Exam, and was a three-time Georgia State water polo championship winner. He is currently a freshman majoring in mechanical engineering at Georgia Southern University.

Chip Ratcliff ('09) is a currently at Pace Academy in 11th grade. He recently was inducted into the National Honor Society and Cum Laude Society. In addition, he has earned the rank of Eagle Scout. His Eagle Scout project was to build a planter around a tree on the Pace Lower Campus.

Megan Roddenbery ('08) is a senior at Holy Innocents’ Episcopal School and will graduate in May 2017. Megan will attend Wake Forest University in the fall.

Avery White ('08) is a junior at Clemson University majoring in electrical engineering, and she is a member of the Delta Zeta sorority. Avery currently is interning for Cianbro, a construction and construction services company that operates in 40 states. This summer Avery’s internship will provide her hands-on experience working on-site in either Orlando, Florida, or Fort Wayne, Texas. She says, “[my] uniform this summer will be blue jeans and steel-toed boots.” Avery’s mother writes, “Avery works extremely hard to succeed in her classes. The Schenck School taught her to be her own advocate, and she frequents her professor’s offices to ask for more help, a better explanation, or whatever it takes to understand the subject. She manages her college life the same as she has always done since she left The Schenck School—indeed. I am so proud of Avery and thankful for The Schenck School.”

2000’s

Nick Brigham ('03) graduated from Georgia Institute of Technology in December 2016 with a degree in business finance and two subject area certificates: international affairs and history. While at Georgia Tech, Nick decided he wanted to teach high school and coach football and lacrosse, both sports he played extensively. With that objective in mind, Nick enrolled at Mercer University’s Graduate School of Education in March 2017, where he is working toward earning his master of arts in teaching. Nick plans to specialize in social studies and business and wants to work toward becoming an assistant coach for football and/or lacrosse at the high school level. Nick expects to graduate from Mercer University in December 2018 and is hoping to start his teaching career in August 2018.

Elizabeth Heyse ('07) attends the University of Virginia.

Jason Malik ('08) is a junior at Georgia State University (GSU) where he is majoring in geosciences with a concentration in environmental studies. Jason competes in rock climbing for the GSU Rock Climbing Team.

Annie Oates ('09) is a sophomore at Marist School, where she is a football cheerleader and participates on the varsity diving and varsity track teams. In addition, Annie is a peer leader for a new student and also leads school retreats throughout the year.

Avery White ('08) standing on the right photographed with her sister, current faculty member Katie Oates, and brother Trey Oates ('05)
Alumni Parent Rochelle Garfield (’07–’11) Pioneers Protocol to Help Screen Students in Texas for Dyslexia

Rochelle is a speech-language pathologist with the Houston Independent School District (HISD) in Texas. HISD is the seventh-largest school district in the country. When Rochelle started work with HISD, she quickly learned HISD had been flagged by The Texas Education Agency (the agency that oversees all public schools in Texas) as a district that significantly under-diagnoses dyslexia. At that time, only 0.4% of the HISD student population was diagnosed with dyslexia. That is grossly lower than national research that indicates at least 5% of the general population has dyslexia.

With her experience as a speech-language pathologist and as a parent of three dyslexic children, Rochelle created a screening protocol that HISD speech-language therapists can use to help flag students who need a full dyslexia evaluation. In just three years, HISD has experienced a 268% increase in the diagnosis of dyslexia in its students. Rochelle’s screening protocol is one of several tools and processes the district credits for its success in identifying students with dyslexia.

As a result of this success, Rochelle and members of the HISD were invited in February 2017 to present the dyslexia screening protocol at the Texas Speech-Language Hearing Association Annual Conference, attended by speech-language therapists representing school districts from all around the state of Texas. Rochelle writes, “I am not sure where this journey will take me next, but as of now, it is so rewarding to create something that helps those students who are so dear to my heart—the students struggling with dyslexia.”

Rochelle is mother to six children, three of whom are dyslexic. Her sons Yaakov and Ari are alumni of The Schenck School. She writes, “Yaakov (’10) is in eleventh grade in an academically rigorous high school, doing extremely well, and last summer completed an internship with the Democratic Whip, Steny Hoyer. Ari (’11) is currently in sixth grade. He is earning straight As and his teachers don’t believe me when I say he is dyslexic.”

Be sure to check out Rochelle’s essay, “The Journey from Diagnosis to Capitol Hill – One Family’s Personal Story” in The Schenck School’s 2017 Annual Report scheduled to be published this summer.
I am from song birds waking me
From hiking to waterfalls
And
Sleeping under the stars
I am from fond memories that
Are like your favorite book
(you are always losing)
I am from my heart
That has more in it than I
Will ever
Know
I am from ice cream and REVLOC
From Willie Mae and Great Grandma Alice
I am from sound it out and
Use the kite
I’m from how was school? And
Let’s try again
I am from self portraits
And I am water
From Read, Rise, and Fly
I am from rainy day forts to
The splash pad
At the botanical gardens
International Chocolate Day
And warm enveloping hugs
From Smart Art and The Random Prophet
And from Thanksgiving Greenberg Turkey
I am from an old Subaru Outback
That hauled me
10,000 miles
Across the country
From lonesome prairies to
Crowded tourist sites
Black bears
To prairie dogs
I am from adventure
I am from… something deep inside my soul
A bright young girl
Who’s blessed
To be her
I am from home.

“Where I Am From”
LILY MAE BARCIK (’15)

Lily Mae Barcik is in sixth grade at Renfroe Middle School. She shares, “A week after graduating from The Schenck School, my family and I took a life-changing, nine-week trip out west where we visited over 25 national and state parks and more than 25 states. Since then I started middle school in Decatur, Georgia, where I am a member of the Craft Club and Fit Wit Club and participated in Cross Country running. I recently volunteered at the MLK Work Project in Decatur and have been involved in a 4-H type group. I enjoy being with my dog, Harley, reading, being outdoors, and making crafts.”
2010’s

Sydney Carroll (’13) is currently in seventh grade at Mount Vernon Presbyterian School, where she has achieved straight A’s and has enjoyed being on the Head of School list five times. In addition, Sydney sings in the school’s chorus group and plays volleyball for the school team. Outside of school, Sydney enjoys reading, painting, and playing volleyball for The Skills Factory. Her mother writes, “Sydney has embraced the leadership skills she learned at The Schenck School and has been one of two captains for her volleyball team for three seasons. Sydney would like to thank The Schenck School and her teachers who always encouraged and believed in her.”

Cole Diamond (’15) is in eighth grade at McCleskey Middle School in Cobb County. Cole is in the school’s concert band where he plays the baritone horn. For the last three years, Cole has been employed by Occupational Therapist Clay White, and he spends most of his Saturdays, and several weeks throughout the summer, working with children ages five-13 who have been diagnosed with Asperger’s, Autism, ADHD, and other sensory difficulties. His mother writes, “I cannot tell you how much The Schenck School influenced my son. Because he was an older student when he attended, he has a genuine, sincere feeling of gratitude and appreciation for the opportunity he was given. The compassion, the understanding, the acceptance and kindness of the teachers (along with staff and students) turned this once sad and angry child into a confident and self-reliant young man.”

Madison Gant (’15) was on hand at the Georgia State Capitol on March 1, 2017, for Dyslexia Day to raise awareness about dyslexia with Georgia lawmakers. Madison had the honor of reading a poem by dyslexic author Sally Gardner called “The Box” to lawmakers.

Reed Garzon (’13) won The Maverick Award at Mount Vernon Presbyterian School, where he is in seventh grade. The prestigious award is presented annually by the Head of School to two students in each grade who exemplify “Stepping Up, Standing Out, Facing Your Giants, Challenging Assumptions, Varying Routes and Living Fully.” In addition, Reed was awarded Honor Roll and selected for the Duke Talent Identification Program. His mother writes, “Reed was at The Schenck School for second and third grades and received the instruction, tools, and empowerment that today make him such an incredible person and successful student.”

Joanna Graham (’15) is in seventh grade at St. Martin’s Episcopal School, where she has made straight A’s this term. Joanna is involved in drama, debate club and played volleyball, and is on the tennis team for St. Martin’s. Joanna’s Mom writes, “This photo is of our daughter and her good friend Catie Rooks (’15). Both girls were in the same class at The Schenck School for second, fourth, and fifth grades. As you can see, the girls have remained close.” Lisa added, “Joanna never reads a book without having another book ‘waiting in the wings.’ Her love of reading, and just her ability to read, result from her time at The Schenck School. Our family will always be grateful for the avenues The Schenck School opened for Joanna.”

Francesca Herrera (’12) is a sophomore at Marist School. She is a founding member of the Marist Dance Company and was selected to join the Marist Singers and Trio. In fall 2016, Francesca served as a ninth grade retreat leader and this spring was the retreat leader for eighth grade. In addition, Francesca was as selected to be a Peer Leader for next school year. Academically, Francesca has been on either the Dean’s List or Honor Roll every term.

Davis Hill (’13) and Jackson Orr (’15) play trombone for the Ridgeview Middle School Band.

Daisy Hires (’16) couldn’t help but think of the Schenck School Phoenix when she saw this Phoenix on a house in Pensacola Beach, Florida.

Sadie Howard (’13) was recognized at the Georgia State Capitol as the Fulton County winner in the Metropolitan North Georgia Water District’s 2016 Water Conservation Essay Contest. Sadie joined essay winners from 15 additional metro counties for a reception at the Capitol in December, where she was awarded a $100 prize for her winning essay. Sadie is currently in seventh grade at Holy Innocents’ Episcopal School.

Joanna Graham and Catie Rooks

Davis Hill and Jackson Orr

Madison Gant holding Resolution 175 Recognizing March 1, 2017, as Dyslexia Day at Georgia State Capitol

Continued on page 17
College is hard enough without having dyslexia, but dyslexia does not make it impossible! Here are a few ideas to keep in mind as you begin your college experience:

• **Use Learning Services.** When you get to college, find the learning resource office to ask for accommodations. Don’t be discouraged that other students don’t have to do this. Think about it as leveling the playing field.

• **Tell Your Professors.** The next step is telling your professors about your dyslexia. This way there are no surprises, and they will be much more willing to help, even if it is as simple as skipping you when choosing someone to read aloud in class.

• **Don’t Compare Yourself to Others.** One of the most important things in college is to not compare yourself to other students, because you are not always like them. I consistently took one fewer class than my friends every semester, and I made up the extra classes I needed over the summer. There is something to be said for pushing yourself in the classes you are taking; it is another thing entirely to push yourself to take more classes than you can handle at one time.

• **Ask For Help.** Remember to ask for help when you need it. Sometimes teachers are willing to work with you one-on-one. Tutors also are helpful, but don’t forget to ask your friends! The most common way I helped myself was to ask my friends. These were friends who had already passed a class I was currently taking or friends who were doing better than I was in the same class.

• **Take Breaks To Beat Frustration.** I freely will admit there were times in college I thought I wouldn’t make it and that things were too hard. Whether it was a paper that I could not find a way to start or a math problem I just could not figure out, the best thing to do in these situations is to step away. The work isn’t going anywhere, and, unless you clear you mind for a bit and forget about the problem, you will continuously run into the same dead end. This is the time to go out to dinner with some friends, go for ice cream, maybe go bowling for an hour, or see the movie that just came out. This will give you the time and space to come back to the problem with fresh eyes and hopefully a new idea.

• **Stay Positive.** College is hard for everyone even if they don’t show it. College is a time to learn who you are and try new things. Don’t count yourself out of something because you think you cannot do it. I found my passion was religious studies, in which I majored. The only problem with religion classes was that every class required five-to-15 page papers for the midterm and final, and I was never great at writing. The upside to that challenge is that I rarely had to sit down to an actual timed test. Writing is not my strong suit, but I persevered to graduate with what I wanted to study, which made it worth it in the end.

College is an amazing experience for everyone; don’t let dyslexia bring you down when the help you need is waiting for you. All you need to do is ask for it.

Jacqueline Morris graduated from Washington University in 2016. She majored in religious studies with a focus on Jewish studies and minored in history and education. During college, Jacqueline spent three years on the board of Chabad as the religious and cultural coordinator and as an event coordinator. She also studied abroad in Israel taking classes at Hebrew University in Jerusalem. After graduation, Jacqueline worked for the American Jewish Committee in Atlanta, where she had the opportunity to meet many political dignitaries, including foreign ministers, members of Parliament, U.S. ambassador, foreign ambassadors, and the past president of Latvia. Jacqueline’s current position is with The Temple in Atlanta, where she is the Education and Engagement Associate.
Melissa McCoy (’16) is on the Wesleyan fifth and sixth grade softball team and played basketball for the sixth grade team. She also achieved the Merit List for students who have an overall academic average of 87-89.

Eugene McLemore (’14) completed a three-day Appalachian Trail (AT) backpacking trip over spring break in honor of Mr. David T. Schenck, who, for 30 years, led fifth grade Schenck School students on a multi-day, backpacking hike along the Standing Indian loop section of the AT. Eugene completed the same 20.3 trail hike. In addition to honoring Mr. Schenck, Eugene also hiked in honor of his grandfather.

Alex Mitchell (’16) is in third grade at The Lovett School, where she participates in the Student Service Council, a club that meets weekly and performs community service projects. She is also active in the Girl Scout Brownies. Alexa shares, “When I first got to Lovett, I was surprised by how big it was. My brother had to help me find my way around school. Now I have made so many new friends, and I am so happy to be at Lovett….my teachers are so awesome and nice.” Outside of school, Alexa enjoys tumbling, dance, basketball, soccer, and tennis.

Harrison Mitchell (’13) wrote: “Most people don’t realize how much of an impact The Schenck School has had on their life until they have left the School. Not long ago, I was asked to write about something that had an impact on my life for a class assignment. I chose to write about The Schenck School. Before I went to The Schenck School, I was the worst reader in my class, but Schenck forever changed that, and now I have the highest reading level in my class.” Outside of school, Harrison is a boy scout, plays squash and tennis, bikes, scuba dives, builds with LEGO’s, and loves to play outside. Harrison attends The Lovett School.

Dolph Orthwein (’15) is enjoying seventh grade at The Galloway School. His favorite academic class is math, in which he recently worked on solving for variables. In addition, Dolph enjoys his two electives, “Improvisational Theatre” and “What The Romans Left Behind.” After school, Dolph enjoys playing golf.

A Case for Christ
Underneath the Surface.

Dylan Paul (’11) is a junior at Mount Vernon Presbyterian School and is a standout rower for the Atlanta Junior Rowers Association, where he has been on the varsity team since he was in ninth grade. Dylan holds two team ERGrowing machine records and has medaled in several regattas held throughout the southern region. His boat finished third at nationals and fourth at the Head of the Charles. In addition, Dylan earned a position on the U.S. Rowing High Performance Team. As a result of Dylan’s rowing performance, several colleges show interest in recruiting him.

Alden Pridgen (’13) is in eighth grade at Wesleyan School, where she has been on the school’s honor roll since second semester fifth grade. Alden has been recommended for honors English and honors French for ninth grade. She is also on the school’s volleyball and swim teams, and she played lacrosse for the high school’s junior varsity team, where she started every game. Alden’s mother writes, “A day does not go by that I am not consciously grateful for the remarkable institution that Schenck is. You work miracles and give hope that then ignites a young life. The seeds you planted have taken root and you have opened doors for our daughter that we never could have imagined, just a few short years ago!”

Michael Provost (’10) is a professional actor who recently booked his first pilot for the CW’s drama Insatiable. According to a Deadline-Hollywood news article by Denise Petski, “Michael will play Brick, a seemingly typical High School jock who is a little more complicated underneath the surface.” You can also see Michael in the film A Case for Christ in theatres April 2017. In addition, he plays Shannon in a Netflix original called Reality High which comes out July 17, 2017.

Emma Grace Roe (’15) is in fifth grade at Trinity School, where she sings in the choir. Over her recent spring break, she sang with the choir at Carnegie Hall in New York City as a part of The National Children’s Choir Festival. Emma Grace also enjoys dance and had the role of an Arabian dancer for the school’s performance of The Nutcracker. Additionally, Emma Grace is a swimmer for the Brookwood Hills Swim Team, and a runner. She completed her second Peachtree Road Race. Her travels have taken her to Italy, Germany, France, Hawaii, Washington, and Vermont. Emma Grace says she misses her Schenck School friends and attributes The Schenck School as the place “that helps me get all As now.”
During my elementary years, when it came to academics my self-esteem was pretty much non-existent. It was very evident at a young age that I was severely behind my peers in reading and writing. My parents made the decision to send me to The Schenck School, and I vehemently protested the idea. It took a lot of pushing and prying to get me in the doors those first weeks of school.

This decision was one of the very BEST things that ever happened to me. I learned how to utilize my strengths, and the teachers began to shine a light on what I was really good at. My confidence after my two years at The Schenck School completely transformed me.

I left Schenck and attended Woodward Academy’s transition academic program. Thanks to The Schenck School, I finally had the skills to soar in a mainstream school environment. I graduated from Woodward, attended The University of San Diego, and later received a master’s degree from The Citadel.

Although my academics were a great success, what was more magical was that I had the confidence to go for my dream to travel the world and build my own business. I truly believe The Schenck School played a major role in laying the foundation for this great success. I can confidently say I do not think I would be in this amazing position had I not had the Schenck School teachers and community show me how unique, talented, and smart I am.

I now live bi-coastally with my husband and two-year-old baby while running my business, Bamboo Juices, at Serenbe Farms and delivering to households all over Atlanta. Never in my wildest childhood dreams did I think I would build a million dollar business!

It takes some insane organizational skills to manage it all, but The Schenck School taught me how to keep everything in certain places and compartmentalize each task, so I am in one place at one time. One task, one challenge, one moment, and one day at a time.

I am forever grateful for the skills and confidence Schenck instilled in me and am excited to hear and see more success stories from future Schenck School alumni.

Kelley (Sibley) Henry is the founder and CEO of Bamboo Juices. The idea for Bamboo Juices was the culmination of 15 years of experience studying the diets and cultures of people across six continents.
Pierce Rudderman ('14) and Robert Shults ('14) stopped by campus for a visit and reunited with two of their favorite Schenck School teachers, Hart Stuck and Caryn Silverman.

Leaad Silverstone ('11) attended Greenfield Hebrew Academy of Atlanta for fourth through eighth grades, where he enjoyed academics, especially science and English, captained both the soccer and basketball teams, and played football. Leead is currently in ninth grade at The Weber School, where he enjoys math and English and plays soccer. This summer, Leead plans to attend Camp Barney Medintz with friends he's known since preschool. His mother shares, “Leead is enjoying life, focusing on high school and learning to drive. He demonstrates responsibility, kindness, patience, and caring attributes, all of which The Schenck School nurtured.”

Finn Shaw ('12) is in eighth grade at St. Martin’s Episcopal School (SMES) where he ran cross country for the first time last fall and finished in the Top 10 in the Metro Atlanta Athletic Conference championship (MAAC) meet. He also earned the team’s Most Improved award. Finn wrestled for the St. Pius Middle School team and won the MAAC championship match for his weight class, also earning the team’s Most Improved award. Finn is currently playing baseball for three teams: St. Martin’s Episcopal School, St. Pius Middle School, and the Dunwoody Senior Baseball travel team, the Diablos. He plays several positions in the field and is also a pitcher. He recently pitched a complete game for SMES against the undefeated team from Woodward. St. Martin’s won that game, earning the team a spot in the MAAC championship game. Outside of athletics, Finn maintains all As and Bs in his academics and is a class representative and an acolyte at St. Martin’s Episcopal Church. Finn will attend St. Pius X Catholic High School next year.

Dalia Shaw ('15) is a student at The Epstein School. This year, as a part of Dahlia’s Bat Mitzvah charity project, she chose to raise funds for The Schenck School’s SHINE Tutoring Program. (SHINE is an acronym for Schenck Helping Individuals In Need Excel.) The mission is to provide one-on-one tutoring at no charge to metro Atlanta children ages five to 15 with documented reading difficulties and demonstrated financial need. Dahlia says, “I love to read, and I’m very grateful that my parents sent me to The Schenck School. However, many children cannot afford to attend The Schenck School. That’s why I decided to make bookmarks to sell to raise money to donate to SHINE.” Through her bookmark sale, Dahlia was able to donate $1,300 to the SHINE Program.

Tommie Swink ('11) and Alex Vickery ('12) attended the Homecoming Dance at Holy Spirit Preparatory School.

Finn and Liam Whalen ('16) are in sixth and fourth grades respectively at Mount Vernon Presbyterian School. Finn plays the trumpet in the school’s concert band and had a great season playing for the school’s fifth and sixth grade football team. This spring, Finn is on the school’s baseball team. His mother shares, “Finn has excelled academically. It was a challenge at first trying to get used to all the different classes and teachers. However, because of The Schenck School, he made the Honor Roll in his first semester. He just missed the Head of School list by one point. He was recognized in front of the whole school. He continues to excel in the spring semester as well and set a goal of making the Head of School List.” Like his big brother, Liam also had a smooth transition back to Mount Vernon Presbyterian School, where his mother reports, “Liam has excelled both academically and socially. Liam also enjoys playing football and baseball and plans to play for the school next year.” She adds, “Both Finn and Liam are thankful for their time they attended The Schenck School. The Schenck School provided them with the tools they needed to excel at Mount Vernon both academically and socially, and they will always enjoy coming back to The Schenck School to visit and share their accomplishments.”

Bella Zack ('16) and Sydney Stevens ('16) although they attend different schools, Bella Zack and Sydney Stevens remain close friends. Bella attends Saint Francis Schools, where she was awarded The Headmaster’s Honor Roll and Honor Roll. The school also honored Bella with several academic awards, including the Social Studies Award, Language Arts Award, Math Award, and Literature Award. Aside from academics, Bella runs cross country for her school and acts at ACT3 Playhouse, where she performed in the play Elf. Sydney is in seventh grade at Woodward Academy, where she enjoys running on the school’s cross country team and playing lacrosse for the middle school team. Sydney says, “I miss the relationship I had with my [Schenck School] teachers, especially in sixth grade. I keep in contact with my closest friends from Schenck, but I miss the time when I could hang out with them every day.”
The Schenck School is honored to be recognized by The Atlanta Journal-Constitution as a **Top Workplace in Atlanta** for the fifth time and to be named the **Most Meaningful Workplace** for the third time.

**What our employees say about the School:**

“Working at The Schenck School changes lives, not just the lives of our students and families, but also the lives of those of us who have the opportunity to work with them.”

**Jennie Curtis, Kindergarten Teacher**

“The School is incredibility meaningful, not only because we are teaching students to read and to love reading, but also because I can come to a place I love, put a smile on each child’s face, and teach them to believe in themselves.”

**Jana Thomas, Third Grade Teacher**

“The work we do here is transformational. Everyone who comes through our doors is both humbled and fortified by the experience. My colleagues are just as grateful to be here as our students.”

**Felice Catalano, Sixth Grade Teacher**