

SEABROOK MCKENZIE CENTRE For Specific Learning Disabilities

NEWSLETTER WINTER 2024

OUR VISION

A world where those **He ao e angitu ai te** with learning difficulties **hunga e uaua ana te** experience success. **ako.**

OUR MISSION

To support the education, employment, social development, legal rights and quality of lives of people with Specific Learning Disabilities.

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF THE CENTRE...

Some of you may be very familiar with the nuts and bolts of the work that we do at the Centre, but as many of you may not, this time around we thought it might be interesting and helpful to describe 'a day in the life'.

The portrait of Dr Jean Seabrook in our Whānau room is a good place to start. The Centre exists because Dr Seabrook and Sir Roy McKenzie took action to establish a service to provide the support they saw missing in mainstream education for students with Specific Learning Disabilities. Her portrait watches over the children and families we continue to welcome each day.

The office, as in most places, opens up the earliest! Our assessment coordinator Shirley, a welcoming 'auntie' gets ready to meet the day's appointments. She will spend the day arranging future appointments and fielding all sorts of queries.

Students arrive for their learning assessments and meet one of our specially trained team, headed up by psychologists Samantha and Rebecca. Some students are happy and smiley while others need a bit more patience and encouragement (right: assessor Ashleigh with a happy client). An assessment uses specialist materials and can take up to four hours, and the reports are then used by parents, schools and teacher-tutors to support the student. The Centre provides reports for around 800 students each year.

Once the assessment is complete the next step is intervention. Throughout Canterbury and further afield, schools and parents are applying the information and recommendations in students' reports to help them succeed in their learning.

For students who need more help than school can provide, specialist teaching is available through the Centre. We are so grateful for our expert and experienced teacher-tutor pool—reports are of amazing value, but they are only truly beneficial if intervention is put in place.



"The whole process has been awesome! I am very grateful that I was given the option to stay while my son had his assessment, as we are from out of town and I used the WIFI to sit and do some work while I waited. [The report] was great as we are using it to get him more support while at school."



"We were very impressed with Sam and how she spoke to us and our son, she explained everything clearly and in terms our son could understand. She was amazing."

The Seabrook McKenzie Centre is a charitable trust (Charities Commission Registration CC25330).

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Centre-trained teacher-tutors work with individual students in rooms at the Centre, within some schools, and out in the community (right: Teacher-Tutor Ozzie and student at work). Children often attend for several years and can become familiar faces at the Centre. One current student started out not being able to write at all. He now knows 19 letters and has 7 to go.

Four days a week our small group teacher Mary also welcomes groups of three pupils in her classroom for two and half hour morning sessions tailored to their needs (below right: a glimpse at the teaching).

The one on one specialist Three Week Intensive course is another teaching intervention happening daily at the Centre. This course taught by Sharon is for children who need a boost or are from out of town. (See next page for more.)

The staff of Creative Arts Therapy, Canterbury Speech Language Therapy, and Socially Speaking work in the downstairs therapy wing. These independent businesses rent rooms from the Centre, and we are glad to help them provide their services.

Behind the scenes, Centre Director Hester is hard at work. It is impossible to sum up this role, but it stretches from guiding policy and the overall direction of the Centre to giving advice to individual parents and teachers. Centre Manager Helen is also busy ensuring everyone is equipped to do their job well, paying the bills, and responding to a myriad of requests from clients, teachers, and staff.

The Seabrook McKenzie Trust board meets every two months, going over everything that has been happening at our Centre and making high level decisions to ensure the quality of our service. We are very thankful for them taking on the responsibility of these volunteer roles. See page 5 for more on our Trustees!

There is always fundraising to be done and Elizabeth creates this newsletter, submits grant applications, and writes thank you letters. We are incredibly grateful to all the organisations that support the Centre, who are thanked on page 7.

We cannot forget our past clients and their families. Regularly they contact us with great stories about how they are succeeding in higher education or their chosen field of employment, and often they will choose to support the next generation by donating to the Centre.

We hope this day in the life along with the quotes and messages gives an idea of what it is like at our Centre. There is a network of many roles, educators, and volunteers that makes our work possible! Thank you to everyone!



"The report was very clear and comprehensive. I had to read over it a few times to grasp the challenges C is facing. We have passed the report onto C's tutor and teacher who have more experience and in-depth knowledge to assist C with her learning. It is useful for us as a family to understand C's style of learning and her strengths as well, so we can support her to build confidence and a love of learning, so it is not always just hard.

The recommendations were clear, concise, comprehensive and aligned with some of the ideas and steps that we have already taken. It feels as if we are now moving in the right direction. My mum commented how comprehensive the report was and how long the list of recommendations, she thought it was very useful."



A few weeks ago, one of the pupils left a message on the blackboard of the small group classroom—"Thank you for making me smart!"

Three Week Intensive Highlights

Jacob and his family were kind enough to allow us a glimpse into Sharon's classroom—thank you!



"Hi Elizabeth,

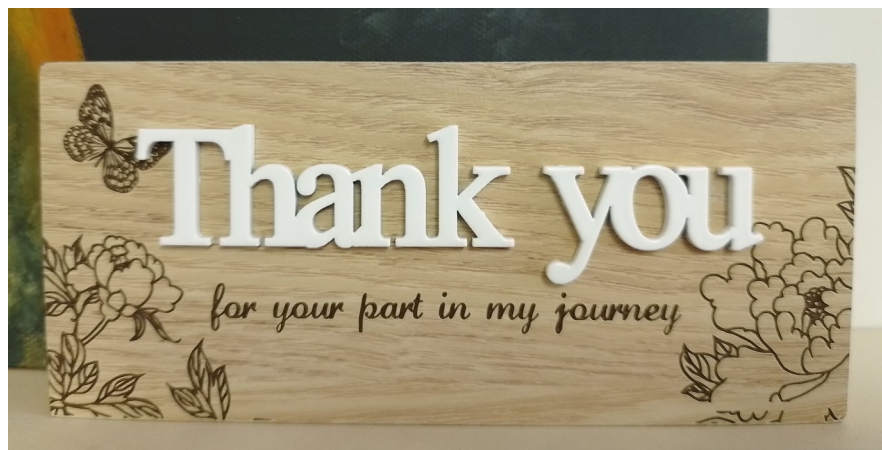
I want to thank you for sending us photos. They are amazing and something we will treasure forever. This 3 week course was a wonderful and joyful experience and it definitely boosted Jacob's confidence. We noticed that he gained confidence not just in Literacy but in all other areas. Today he found the courage to play the piano during the assembly, leading the entire school as they sang. Something that he said before he would never do. We are very proud of him.



I would like to thank Sharon for teaching him and helping him with his confidence. She was amazing with Jacob and Jacob expressed his desire to return to Sharon for further instructions. Jacob saw your Facebook post and he felt so proud that he is on your Facebook page. Thank you so much for adding him to your profile picture. He was very happy and very proud of himself.

Kind regards

Maja"



The Centre staff love seeing the progress three week intensive students make not only in academic achievement but in confidence and enthusiasm for learning. Another family we saw this year gave us this thoughtful gift—the sentiment is perfect as our goal is to help each child on a positive path in their learning and future life. Thank you!



Would you like to see more photos and stories? Find us on facebook www.facebook.com/seabrookmckenziecentre

“I’m calling because I’ve got a good news story for you”

Earlier in the year we received a phone call from a mother calling with 'a good news story', which demonstrated both the challenges children with SLD and their parents can face and also the benefits of professional assessment and positive teaching intervention.

Kylie's daughter Bella* was assessed at the Centre as a six-year-old, and initially Bella's school chose not to apply the suggestions in the report due to her age. However, after Bella was reassessed at age eight and ultimately diagnosed with severe Dyslexia, Dyscalculia, and Dysgraphia, the reports were taken on board and made a huge difference not only to Bella but her entire school.*

Kylie has nothing but praise for Bella's primary school. After a firm but kind explanation, the need for different teaching for Bella was taken on board. The school then recognised similar traits in a large percentage of the rest of the students and decided to send some of their senior teachers with an interest in the area to train, who then trained the rest of the teachers in turn. Ultimately they decided to change the way they taught literacy to the whole school, which then resulted in a big improvement not just for students like Bella, but across the board! Kylie says, 'not many schools would go that far'.

Bella's journey continued and through some funding she was also able to work with a private tutor once a week along with other learning support. She was bright but needed a school that suited her individual needs, so she went to high school in a different area. At eight, Bella was in the bottom 10% of her year group in the National Standards. In Year 9, at the parent interview, they discussed Bella's Seabrook McKenzie report and recognised her as an above average high achiever as well as socially active. In Year 10, she was average and above for all subjects.

Kylie told us “your intervention and report has led to a successful and bright student” but that she has also had to push very hard for Bella. Her advice to other: “Be an advocate for your child as the child can’t advocate for themselves. Be positive even if you are angry, be prepared and be articulate.” We thought Kylie's honest words were worth sharing.

Our staff often hear from parents who have to take on the burden of advocating for the children in an education system and wider world that may not understand them. The Centre originated from Dr Jean Seabrook's desire to provide help for students with Specific Learning Disabilities who weren't receiving the support they need, and we continue to work towards our goal of a world where those with learning difficulties experience success. This story shows how a report for one child, with support of her parents and a school willing to listen, changed the situation for the better for all the students at the school.

**names changed to protect their privacy*

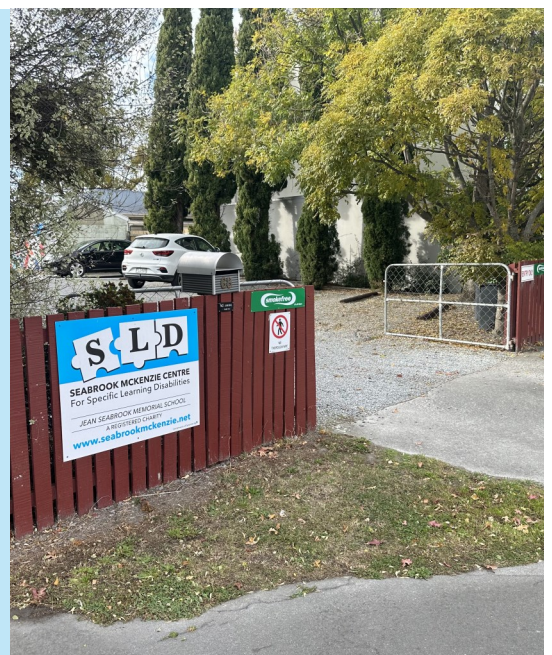
Mānawatia a Matariki

The rising of the Matariki stars is a time for reflection, celebration, and preparation.

Reflection: We remember those we have known – Dr Jean Seabrook, Sir Roy McKenzie, and others amongst our previous colleagues and friends who are no longer here.

Preparation: As well as planning for the best way forward so we can continue supporting those with Specific Learning Disabilities well, at the moment we have some very practical goals for our Centre ‘garden’ - we have booked contractors to fix a leaky roof!

Celebration: Collating the stories for this newsletter has been a wonderful celebration of the work we have done over the previous year. It is a joy to hear good news of students experiencing success and how they have benefited from our incredible hardworking staff and tutor-teachers.



NEW TRUST BOARD MEMBERS

The Centre is in the process of welcoming four new Trustees, all of whom have experience with specific learning disabilities, personally or through family or work.

Kelly Barber has a background in international sales and marketing and is currently a Christchurch City Councillor.

Alan Chapman is currently Managing Director at Innovative Electrical Solutions and Director of Special Projects at an energy startup.

Bramley Maclean runs Bounding Box Creative, specialising in marketing and advertising locally (Huge thanks to Bram for his help with photography and newsletter design).

Gillian Smith is team leader at Te Ratonga Whaikaha | Student Accessibility Service at the University of Canterbury.

There will be a transition period after which we say goodbye to some of the current Trust Board members: **Prue Fanselow-Brown**, **Letitia Parry**, **Judy Parry**. Thank you so much for your institutional knowledge and practical support over the years, especially over this transition period. The Centre is fortunate to have **Lynn Shearing** continuing as chairperson.



ROOM VACANCY

The Centre receives regular requests from parents for assessments for **ADHD and autism**. We welcome inquiries from a suitably qualified and registered professional to work from our building providing these.

The person may be self-employed or be part of a bigger organisation which wishes to rent, at a very reasonable rate, an office here. All our facilities would be available to your clients. Please email info@seabrookmckenzie.net to express interest and ask questions.



Thank you for remembering us

We really appreciated this response to our previous newsletter, which was accompanied by a donation to put towards helping other students.

Hi Elizabeth,

Thank you for this. It's always great to hear what Seabrook McKenzie is up to. Our son (dyslexic) did an intensive 3 weeks at Seabrook and had weekly sessions for a few years at a formative time in his school career.

He is now in the final stages of a history degree at the University of Canterbury and getting amazing grades (amazing to us, his parents!)

We always knew he was smart (verbally) but he had trouble showing it in written work and had a lot of trouble writing. He is also struggled, comparing himself to his siblings (a lawyer and med student) despite us telling him he was very intelligent and had the added advantage of a fantastic personality! He's now slowly starting to see that.

So I just wanted to say thank you so much, you people change lives.

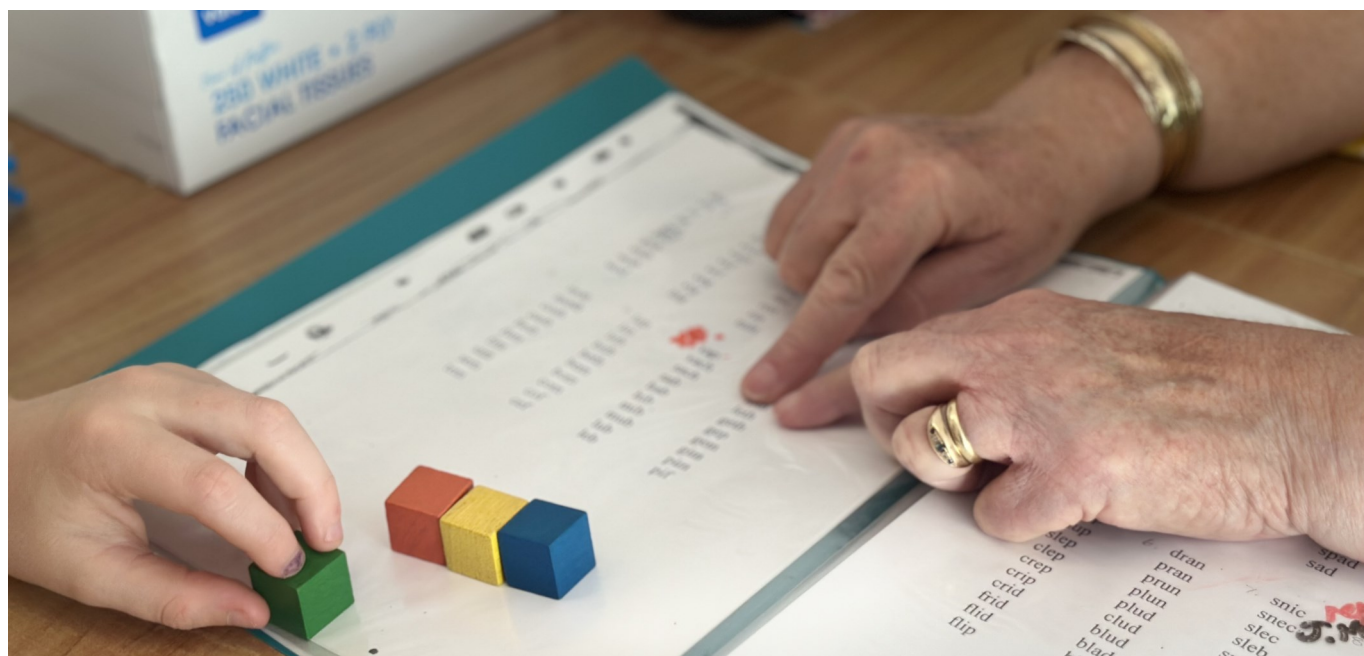


Have you considered supporting the Seabrook McKenzie Centre in your will?

I was very encouraged by a conversation with a woman who wished to remember us in her will. She rang the Centre to confirm her decision, and after discussing the help and support we provide for those with Specific Learning Disabilities, she was even more convinced that this was something she wished to do. She particularly valued children and wanted to provide for them.

If you feel the same, perhaps you too could plan a gift in your will? A charitable bequest to the Seabrook McKenzie Centre will leave a lasting difference through richer lives and brighter futures for those with Specific Learning Disabilities.

Elizabeth Dubin – Fundraising Coordinator



THANK YOU FOR YOUR CARE FOR THOSE WITH SLD

A C E Shacklock Charitable Trust	The David And Genevieve Becroft Foundation	The Kingston Sedgfield Charitable Trust <i>(administered by Trustees Executors)</i>	P & R Whitehead Charitable Trust
Advance Ashburton Community Foundation	David Ellison Charitable Trust <i>(administered by Public Trust)</i>	The Kirby Trust	PF Charitable Foundation
Air Rescue & Community Services Limited	E B Millton Charitable Trust	Kiwi Gaming Foundation	Philip Brown Fund
Akaal Foundation	The Elizabeth Ball Charitable Trust	Lamar Charitable Trust	The Philip Verry Charitable Foundation
Aotearoa Gaming Trust	Estate of Daniel Albert Hally <i>(administered by Public Trust)</i>	Lion Foundation	Pub Charity Ltd
Blogg Charitable Trust	Glenice & John Gallagher Foundation	Mainland Foundation	The R D Butland Charitable Trust
The Burrows Bros Charitable Trust	Harcourts Grenadier Avonhead	Margaret Hutchings Charitable Trust	Rano Community Trust
The Canaan Foundation	John Ilott Charitable Trust	Mauger Charitable Foundation	The Sage Trust
The Charles Duncan Charitable Trust	Jones Foundation	Maurice Carter Charitable Trust	Sir John Hall Charitable Trust
Chenery Memorial Trust	Keith Laugesen Charitable Trust	National Assistance Fund	South Canterbury Trusts <i>(managed by Perpetual Guardian)</i>
Christchurch Casinos Charitable Community Trust		NZCT	The Toassist Charitable Trust
Christchurch City Council		New Zealand-South Pacific Kiwanis Foundation Trust	Wendy Sisson Charitable Trust
		One Foundation	Withiel Fund

How your money can help

\$2200 Funds a three week intensive

\$700 Pays for a term of tuition

\$250 Helps cover monthly overheads

\$100 Subsidises an assessment

Even \$5 makes a difference

Seabrook McKenzie, ANZ 06 0257 0253986 00

Please contact us once your donation is on the way
so we can thank you and send through a receipt.