

For many affected children, dyslexia has extinguished the joys of childhood.

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March, 2009



As a single mother, I've watched my own children really suffer as a result of their "hidden disability". Several years ago, my daughter was struggling painfully in school and dreaded going every single day. Nothing I or her overworked teachers did seemed to make any difference. I knew that, unless she learned to read, her future options were limited.

When I contacted HIDA, the world of possibilities opened up. I learned about dyslexia and gained very practical information, including how to advocate for my daughter in school. My daughter was accepted into HIDA's *Odyssey Project* for low-income families, which provided one-to-one academic language therapy lasting several years. She is now a confident high school senior, expects to graduate *cum laude*, and is investigating mainland and local colleges. These dramatic changes can be directly attributed to HIDA and I will be forever grateful.

And that is only Chapter One of our story. My son's dyslexia is more severe and he has also been part of HIDA's *Odyssey Project*. In two years he changed from a boy who had to be physically pulled out of the car to go into tutoring to one who has offered to get a job to help pay for his academic language therapy should that become necessary. Without the *Odyssey Project*, our family could never have afforded the hundreds of dollars every month that tutoring requires. With the help of HIDA, his own hard work, and his sister as a role model, I have high hopes for his academic progress.

My kids are the lucky ones. I know there are many, many children in Hawai'i who are either undiagnosed, or diagnosed without financial resources. HIDA is completely committed to early identification of dyslexia, and trains hundreds of classroom teachers each year who work with struggling readers.

I believe that *HIDA and its Odyssey Project* can make the difference between a child who succeeds and a child who struggles.

From the bottom of my heart I ask you to support HIDA financially in 2009 so that it can continue to rescue the futures of children with dyslexia. You can donate now on-line at: www.dyslexia-hawaii.org or by contacting HIDA at the address below.

With warm aloha,

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