

DYSLEXIA SCOTLAND PRESS RELEASE

High profile Scots become champions of dyslexia

A diverse group of high profile Scots have become Ambassadors for Dyslexia Scotland and will be championing the cause of dyslexia. They include well known business people, sportsmen and representatives of the arts. Starting the line up is Ben Thomson, recently known in connection with the political think tank Reform Scotland. He has had a successful career in finance, including chairman of the Noble group and is presently chairman of the National Galleries of Scotland and of Barrington Stoke, a publishing house which specialises in books for reluctant readers. Ben Thomson commented. "As a dyslexic, I am delighted to be helping Dyslexia Scotland to promote both the potential and difficulties of being dyslexic."

Also in the world of business, Chris Tiso is a well known and award winning business man and chief executive of the Tiso Group, the leading outdoor clothes and equipment supplier. He took over the family business in 1992 at the age of 21 following the death of his father. In twenty years Chris Tiso has increased the company's turnover from £5 million to £30 million. With dyslexia in his family, he has seen the unhappiness it can cause first hand.

Among the sportsmen, footballer Steven Naismith has become an Ambassador for Dyslexia Scotland as he is dyslexic. He was born in Irvine and first played for Kilmarnock, winning several awards as a young player. He transferred to Rangers and remained there until this Summer when he transferred again to Everton. He recently said that the battle for him to read a book is far harder than any football match.

Another sportsman in the line up of Dyslexia Scotland's ambassadors is Keith Cook, a fencing champion and dyslexic himself. He is the British and Scottish Foil champion and has been unbeaten in Scotland for 7 years in addition to winning Commonwealth and world medals. Keith Cook started "Fencing Fun" an organisation which teaches young children to fence and he has been teaching fencing to children at the meetings of Dyslexia Scotland South-East in Edinburgh.

Paul McNeill was identified as being dyslexic at the age of 13 and was given very little support to overcome the difficulties. However he has been the Regional Manager (west) for the SFA since 2006. He is responsible for the delivery of the youth action plan to increase participation among volunteers and players, and to develop their game. Paul McNeill commented, "When Dyslexia Scotland asked me to be an ambassador I was very proud and excited and jumped at the opportunity. I hope that via this role I will be able to help provide support to Dyslexia Scotland and show young and old people with dyslexia that they can achieve whatever they want in life."

From the arts, award-winning children's author Nicola Morgan, a former English teacher specialising in dyslexia, is another Ambassador for Dyslexia Scotland. Nicola Morgan has written over 90 books, mostly fiction and non-fiction for teenage and younger children, including her latest novel "Wasted", which won the Scottish Children's Book Award. Her first novel was the unusual "Mondays are Red". She also writes about the workings of the teenage brain. Her fan base follows her avidly on social media and she is a former chair of the Society of Authors in Scotland. She is a professional speaker and has already been speaking about dyslexia in her talks about the brain and the importance of fiction.

Also representing the arts, Mark Stoddart completes the list of Dyslexia Scotland's Ambassadors. Severely dyslexic himself, at the age of 13 he was introverted and withdrawn with very little confidence, yet Mark is now a highly acclaimed international designer and artist, particularly known for his coffee tables with bronze hippos forming the bases. His unique sculptures have become highly collectable items sought after by clients the world over. Amongst his achievements, he has designed a table modelled on the Apollo Lunar Landing which was bought by former US astronaut Buzz Aldrin.

Both Paul McNeill and Mark Stoddart have written about their dyslexia in the book "Dyslexia and Us" recently published by Dyslexia Scotland. The book has over 100 personal stories describing the effect dyslexia has had on the lives of the contributors. It includes some celebrities, for instance Sir Steve Redgrave and HRH Princess Beatrice, but also anonymous people who have struggled with their dyslexia. "Dyslexia and Us" is available from Dyslexia Scotland. Sir Jackie Stewart, President of Dyslexia Scotland, wrote the foreword to the book.

NOTES TO THE EDITOR

Dyslexia is a combination of abilities and difficulties that affect the learning processes in reading, spelling, writing, mathematics, memory or organisation. One in ten people are thought to be dyslexic, with up to one in four of these thought to be severely dyslexic.

Dyslexia Scotland aims to enable people with dyslexia, regardless of age and abilities, to reach their potential in education, employment and life.

Dyslexia Scotland's Helpline: 0844 800 8484

Dyslexia Scotland's website: www.dyslexiascotland.org.uk

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