

Dyslexia indicates unusual visual-spatial talent; Blake is a great example

There are many stories of ordinary kids who can do extraordinary things because of their dyslexia.

This story comes from Albany and was written by **Shannon Smith of the Albany Advertiser**.

It also shows how dyslexics CAN learn all school subjects given the right learning experiences which suit their learning style.

A Mt Barker boy who was told he could not take part in the mainstream education system has become an entrepreneur.

At 14 years old, severely dyslexic Blake McFarlane has turned his love for his feathered friends into Blake's Chooks and Eggs.

With the help of his mother Joanne, father Shane and sisters Jacinta and Cara, he is running a free-range egg-producing farm in Forest Hill and supplying eggs to several local stores.

Mrs McFarlane said Blake was learning so much.

"It is helping us with Blake as he is learning maths, science, English and even geography, as not all breeds are started in Australia," she said. "He does public speaking, talking about all things chooks, he is involved in every aspect of



Blake McFarlane runs Blake's Chooks and Eggs. Credit: Laurie Benson/Picture: Laurie Benson, Laurie Benson Albany Advertiser

the business and tells us what he wants and we figure out if we can afford it."

His mother clearly remembers the day the family was told even with tutoring, their boy would not be able to learn in mainstream education.

"Lucky for us, a teacher within our school totally understood," Mrs McFarlane said. "She was dyslexic herself. With this teacher and a group of amazing parents, Dyslexia Assist within the school was started.

"This helped for a while, but we were unfortunately met with some misunderstanding

from some teachers who don't understand dyslexia. He acted out because he didn't understand.

"If he is told to read what he is supposed to do, the words jumble up and all mash into each other.

"When your child comes home from school in tears saying he is dumb, you just know you have to step in and do something.

"I don't care that he is getting a D or an E for the other subjects — he's happy and he's learning in other ways."

Blake got into pure-bred breeding at the age of 10.

Mrs McFarlane said he started researching various breeds, going to chook shows and auctions.

The family began trading on July 1 and are now selling about 175 dozen eggs a week.

Motel Le Grande, The Grocery Store in Mt Barker, Solomon Merchants, and Teede and Co. all use the eggs in their cooking.

You can find Blake's Chooks and Eggs on social media.



Jamie Oliver considers his dyslexia to be his secret to success in business. He was identified as a 'special needs' student at school, but he overcame that label and went on to be a celebrity chef and restaurateur. He is the second best-selling British author, despite the fact that he did not read a novel until he was 38 years of age.



Patrick Dempsey, better known as Dr Derek Shepherd on the hit television show, *Grey's Anatomy*, was diagnosed with dyslexia at the age of 12. Prior to that time he was placed in a special class for slow and retarded children. As an activist, actor and philanthropist, he frequently speaks of his troubles with dyslexia. Although he still struggles to read scripts he relies on his

memorisation to master his character's lines. Dempsey has starred in many films and television shows outside *Grey's Anatomy* including *Sweet Home Alabama*, *Transformers: Dark of the Moon* and *Valentine's Day*.

Tommy Hilfiger was motivated to start his own fashion designing business at the age of seventeen, because he was afraid that his inability to read well would prevent him from succeeding in academia. Today his company's products, including premium clothing, apparel, footwear, accessories, fragrances and home furnishings are sold in department stores in ninety countries.



Mollie King spent her childhood feeling stupid before being diagnosed with dyslexia at the age of 10. Reading aloud in class was so uncomfortable for her that she would make up an excuse to leave the room when it was her turn to speak. Even as a successful radio personality for the BBC she still has to focus really hard to make sure she reads the words correctly from left to right. As part of the girl group, *The Saturdays*, she has written 13 top-ten and 8 top-five singles, including the UK's number 1 hit, *What About Us*.

