



## History

As Mrs. And Mrs. Robert Stites, Sr, sat in a PTA meeting at St. Peter and Paul School during the spring of 1969 hope began to ferment within them. The speaker, by describing her own child, was also describing their child, Robert Jr., called Bobby. The speaker, Mrs. E. P. Goodwin, was explaining that her child, who had been unable to learn to read in his classroom, had done well when given a particular kind of help in Louisville. The term dyslexia began to have meaning to the States.

For seven years, the Stites had gone from specialist to specialist seeking someone who could tell them what was wrong with Bobby, and, more important, how to help him learn to read.

In seventh grade, Bobby had his sixth psychological evaluation. Bobby was described as having a perceptual-motor problem; and for the sixth time, they were told that their son was bright. George Peabody College was again recommended as a source of help. Upon contacting the College, the Stites learned that they would have to bring Bobby to Nashville three times a week for an hour at a time and were given no assurance that these visits would help Bobby with his still nameless problem. With six other children in the family, the Stites found commuting to Nashville three times a week impossible. In eighth grade, Bobby was reading on second grade level.

As Mrs. Goodwin spoke to the St. Peter and Paul PTA in the spring of 1969, she called upon other parents to help children such as her own and Bobby. The PTA voted funds to bring a nationally known expert on dyslexia to Hopkinsville. This expert was Dr. Charles L. Shedd, who had originated the method of instruction, which had been so successful with the Goodwin child. Robert Stites, Sr. was made chairman of a committee to prepare the community for Dr. Shedd's visit. After hearing Dr. Shedd speak in January 1979, Mr. Stites says, "He was our first hope. What he said didn't prove he could help Bobby, but he gave us hope.

Dr. Shedd had described a low cost type of help that could be available in this community. Robert Stites Sr. then took on the task of working with other parents and teachers to organize such a program. One teacher with whom Mr. Stites worked was Ruth Fuller Lature, who had recently completed a Masters Degree at George Peabody College. During the summer of 1979, Mrs. Lature trained under Dr. Shedd in his program at Berea College. The Christian County Association for Specific Perceptual Motor disability was organized to oversee the reading program and Mr. Stites became the Association's first president. Saturday classes for dyslexic children opened here in the fall of 1970 with Ruth Fuller Lature as director. Bobby attended the program on Saturdays for two years. He also attended Dr. Shedd's summer program at Berea for one summer. Today Bobby is a grown man, a high school graduate and reading on the seventh grade level.

While Bobby never achieved that which he is intellectually capable in reading, how do the Stites feel about the classes which they helped start? Their only regret was that they could not find this kind of remediation when Bobby was younger before he had suffered so much defeat and frustration. Mrs. Stites said, "He still would have had trouble learning to read but not as much." Research has shown that the sooner dyslexia is discovered and proper help started the more easily and completely the problem can be overcome.

The wheels began turning back in April, 1970 when the president of the Kentucky Association for S.P.M.D. held a telephone conversation to advise local people how to become an affiliate chapter. We would have our charter and elect our own officers. She also suggested that local dues be set with a percentage sent back to the Louisville Association and by-laws would be the same as the Louisville Chapter. Officers would be President, Vice-President, Corresponding Secretary and Treasurer. Officers are elected for one year or until successors are elected. Officers are elected. President appoints committee chairmen. President is ex-official member of all committees and meets with them whenever they meet. Duties of officers would be specified by the by-laws. She said a Board of Directors would be needed later on. The idea is to get as many people involved as possible.

The first Dyslexia Clinic began its operations November 14, 1970 meeting at 10:00 a.m. in the Koffman Junior High Annex.

From the beginning, the program operated with Ruth Lature as School Director as well as a School Supervisor. In the early years Ruth Lature had all mail sent to her home address until an office was established. Ms. Lature, the School Supervisor and the paid tutors are paid a small salary for their duties. In later years an Administrative Assistant was hired and was paid a small salary.

When the program began officers were elected and a board comprised of community volunteers was organized. Bob Stites was the first President.

On July 15, 2002, the Christian County Association of SPMD dissolved its affiliate membership with the Kentucky Association for Specific Perceptual Motor Disability, Inc. (whose name was changed to Charles L. Shedd Kentucky Association, Inc.). Then on November 2, 2009, the corporation of Christian County Association of SPMD was dissolved completely, and Dyslexia Association was organized exclusively as a 501 (c) (3).