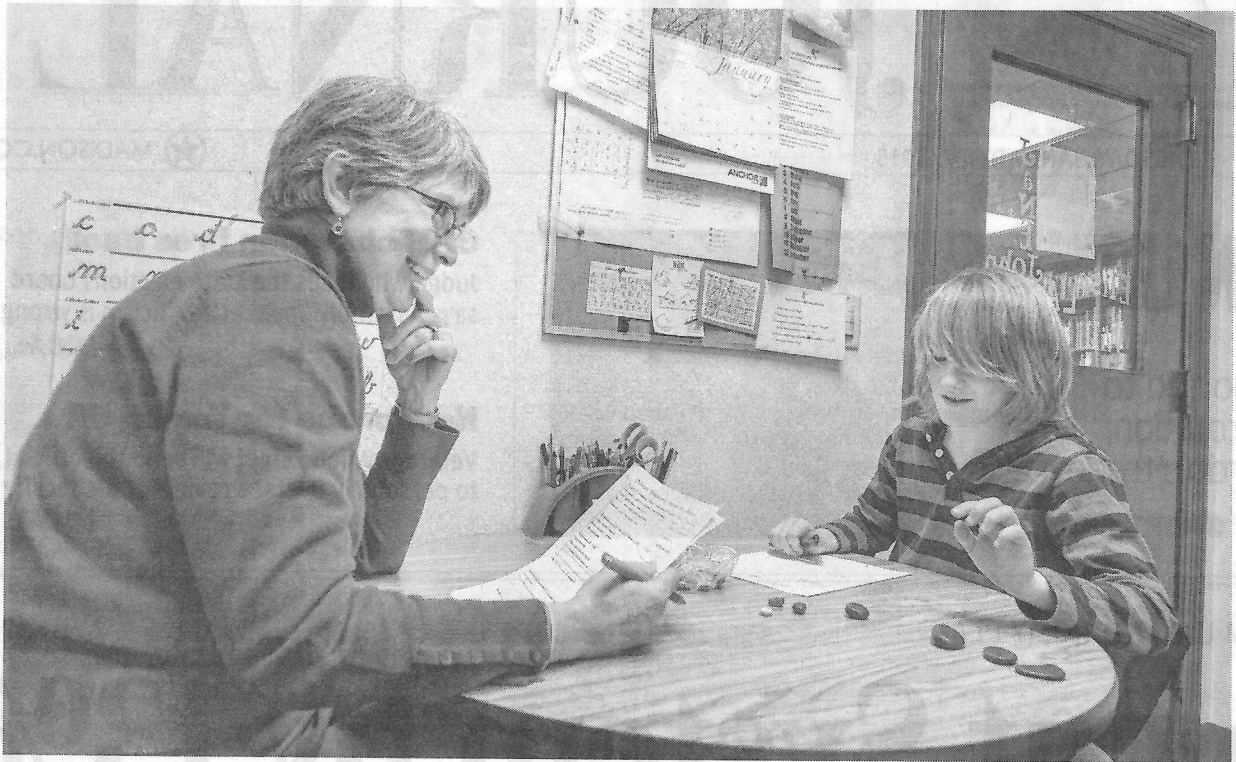


SCHOOL SPOTLIGHT



ANDY MANIS — For the State Journal

Mary Brod works with Will Moyle, 11, at the Children's Dyslexia Center in Madison. The center provides free one-on-one tutoring.

Dyslexic students find help at center

PAMELA COTANT
For the State Journal

Drivers passing the Masonic Temple at Wisconsin Avenue and Johnson Street might wonder why a sign indicates that a Children's Dyslexia Center is located there.

It's not a case of the Masons renting out space in the massive, stately building. Instead, it is part of the major initiative of the Scottish Rite Masons. Children's Dyslexia Center-Madison provides free one-on-one tutoring twice a week to children ages 7 to 17 with dyslexia, which affects 15 to 20 percent of children in the country.

Michelle Crabs said she doesn't know how her family would be coping without the help her sons, Christian, 12 and Logan, 9, have received. Both have profound dyslexia and above-average IQs.

"Before, I could barely even read," said Christian, a sixth-grader at Spring Harbor Middle School and a graduate of the program. "I'm able

to read a lot thicker books. I'm not struggling that much."

The program is currently serving 44 children and has about a two-year waiting list. Plans call for expanding the number of tutoring rooms from eight to 12 by carving out space in a Mason meeting room.

"When they graduate (from the center), they are at grade level or higher," said Roger Nitzsche, chairman of the center's board.

Colby Knox, 12, a sixth-grader at Northside Intermediate School in Milton, said reading went from "hard" to "easy."

But the program goes beyond helping the students with reading, spelling and handwriting.

"We're helping them sort of rebuild their self esteem and teach them they can do it, they just have to do it in a different way," said center director Kelly Kuenzie.

The Madison center, which was established in 2000, is one of 48 centers in all 15 states of the Scottish Rite

Northern Jurisdiction.

Most students are tutored for two years under an Orton Gillingham-based program, which is accredited by the International Dyslexia Association and the International Multi-sensory Structured Language Education Council.

A pilot program started in August is training four Madison School District teachers and one from Wingra School so more children can be reached. Headed up by associate director Ann Malone, the center hopes to expand the effort.

The center is primarily funded by the Masons, donations, grants and three annual fundraisers.

A.D. Anderson, center board member and founding board chairman, who has family members with dyslexia, has seen firsthand what the tutoring can do.

"Not only does it change their lives, it changes their family's lives," Anderson said of children with dyslexia.