

# Dyslexia Didn't Stop Me

Jessica Oyer

**BEFORE YOU READ:** Share what you know about dyslexia.

When I was a little girl, I had a lot of trouble with math. Even today when I think of math, I know that physically I'm young and strong and healthy, but mentally I am hurting.

When I would take a test in school, I would cry because I wanted to do well, but I just didn't understand math at all. We would sit in a big group on the floor, and the teacher would call on kids to come up and do a math question. I would try to hide behind the other kids because I was so scared to be called on.

When I was in third grade, they told my parents that I was behind in school so they put

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me in a special class, but it didn't help. It got worse. The teacher would bully us just as much as the other kids. She would say things like, "You're disgusting!" and make me feel stupid. I was always

scared to go in there with her. I would watch kids walk out of her classroom crying and would hope that she already took her anger out on someone else that day.

Today I use math a lot in my job hanging sheetrock and building desks. You must know math to get the right measurements and decide how much lumber you need to buy and how to bid a job.



**Math Strategy:**  
Connect to real-life situations.

I am excited about taking math in the adult education program. I know it's going to be really hard, but I'm ready to show everyone I can do this. When I was little, I felt that people gave up on me because of my dyslexia,

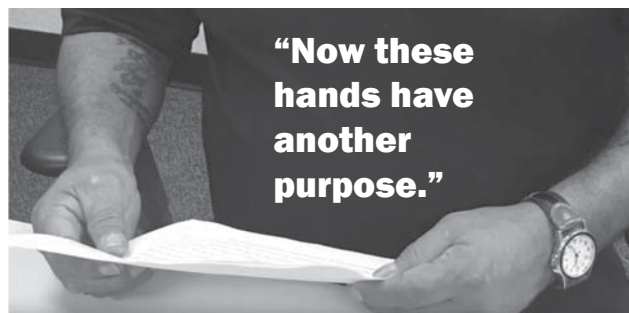


and I want to show them that you can overcome anything you put your mind to.

**AFTER YOU READ:** Write a letter to Jessica and offer her encouragement. Refer to details in her article. Use the letter template on p. 19.

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*Jessica Oyer is a student at North Kansas City Adult Education and Literacy. She enjoys learning and getting better every weekend at Roller Derby. She hopes to own her own sheetrock business one day.*



*Carlos Contreras, former concrete worker, talks about going back to school after a long career in the construction trades. Read his story on p. 24 of the Career Pathways issue of The Change Agent. And watch a video about how he tackled math as an adult: <[tinyurl.com/carlos-story](http://tinyurl.com/carlos-story)>.*