

**September 2011**

**Mailing Address:**

233 17A—218 Silvercreek  
Parkway N.,  
Guelph, Ont. N1H 8E8

**Phone:**

519-837-2050

E-mail: [info@ldawc.ca](mailto:info@ldawc.ca)

**We're on the Web!**

See us at:

**[www.ldawc.ca](http://www.ldawc.ca)**

The Learning Disabilities Association of Wellington County does not endorse, recommend, or make representations with respect to the research, services, programs, medications, products, or treatments referenced in this newsletter. The material provided in this newsletter is designed for educational and informational purposes only.

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# **LD *Connections***

***learning disabilities  
different paths.....same destination***

## **Welcome**

Welcome to a new school year. While some children successfully manage the stresses associated with school, others are burdened by anxiety and frustration that can be exacerbated by a learning disability. Homework can often be at the root of this frustration. The Learning Disabilities Association of Wellington County is hosting a Homework Help workshop for families to support their children's homework dilemmas. For registration information please see page one of our newsletter.

This edition of LDAWC's newsletter is devoted to resources about learning differences and strategies to aid in school success. Misunderstood Minds, the 2002 PBS Documentary has developed a website designed to educate parents, teachers and students about learning challenges. Please see page three for more information.

ADHD is a disorder associated with weaknesses vital to self-regulation, organization and academic success.

Back to the Basics provides parents with some information to describe the

condition and reviews some of the interventions that may help to increase success, including home interventions.

For teens with learning challenges, SOAR HS has been developed by LDAO for young people to support their understanding of LDs, including how the education system is changing to support diverse learning styles. Information about how to access the book and the Facilitator's Guide can be found in this newsletter.

In order to find answers about programs, services and resources related to childhood disability, Warmline has been established to help navigate the health care system. Warmline is a non-crisis telephone support line for clients and family members. See inside for more details. For those interested in making a donation or becoming a member of the Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario, please complete the form provided in our newsletter.

Sharon Dills,  
Chair

## **Homework Help Workshop**

Sean Cameron, Ph.D., University of Guelph

Tuesday, September 20, 2011

7:00 pm

Location: Community Living Boardroom

8 Royal Road, Guelph

\$10.00 - members \$15.00 - non-members

pre-register: 519-837-2050 or email [info@ldawc.ca](mailto:info@ldawc.ca)

## Back to the Basics

### ADHD and LD's

Source: [www.ldao.ca](http://www.ldao.ca)

#### Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder

Attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is a common neurobiological disorder that becomes apparent in the preschool or early grades of school. ADHD affects between 5-12% of the population or about 1 or 2 students in every classroom. It is more commonly diagnosed in boys than in girls (3:1), although that does not necessarily mean more boys have ADHD.

The main symptoms of ADHD include:

- **Hyperactivity:** difficulty regulating one's activity level – for example, constant movement in chair, getting up and down from chair, climbing, or running around when others are seated; also may manifest as talking so much that others cannot get a turn in.
- **Impulsivity:** difficulty inhibiting behaviour – for example, acting quickly without thinking.
- **Inattention:** difficulty attending to the task at hand – for example, frequent daydreaming, being “lost in another world” or easily sidetracked and distractible. Students displaying this symptom tend to be less quickly identified, as inattention is less disruptive.

ADHD is a life-long condition that changes and evolves as a person ages. Adults frequently experience a decrease in the hyperactivity and impulsivity elements, but the inattention persists.

#### Academic Issues Related to ADHD

For most of its history, ADHD has been seen primarily as a behavioural disorder with secondary impact on learning. However, current neuroscientific evidence suggests that learning problems are an integral feature of ADHD. Specifically, ADHD is associated with weaknesses in executive functioning, working memory, and processing speed – all cognitive abilities important to self-regulation, organization and academic success. These findings suggest that a re-evaluation of ADHD as a possible learning disability is necessary.

#### What Helps?

As with all LDs, early identification helps to determine appropriate and useful interventions, which are most helpful if started early. While these interventions can include pharmaceutical treatments (medications), they must also include the teaching of academic and social skills, with an eye to the inattention symptoms and their impact on learning.

Understanding on the part of teachers and parents also plays a major role in helping: students with ADHD can attract a lot of negative attention from authority figures, and this can spiral into negative attitudes towards school in the long run (students with ADHD drop out of school three times more often than students without ADHD).

#### Interventions that work:

Active Engagement is Crucial. Silent seatwork does not work well for individuals with ADHD. Increase opportunities for active responses to learning or work situations, and the allowance for more frequent feedback and interaction will provide more opportunity for success.

**Be Explicit. People with ADHD** can have trouble with the amount of information they can deal with at one time, and with organizing that information. It is important for instructions and

## LD CONNECTIONS

explanations to be provided in a clear, orderly manner, in manageable chunks.

**Meta-Cognitive Strategies** Strategies that help individuals to be aware of and to self-regulate their thinking processes are very important. Strategies can include the use of mnemonic devices, self-questioning, goal-setting and planning.

**Keep Inconsistency In Mind.** Variability and inconsistency in performance are typical of people with ADHD, and this inconsistency is not laziness or defiance.

## Helping At Home

Source: [www.ldao.ca](http://www.ldao.ca)

Learning disabilities can have a large impact on a person's home-life. Social difficulties, hyperactivity, disorganization and communication-issues can all affect a family, as can the stress that people bring home when their days at work or school are difficult. Additionally, having one member of a family who requires more help can leave other siblings feeling ignored; and having a child who struggles is a stressor on any marriage.

In order for families to weather these issues, the first step is ensuring that all members understand and recognize the effects of LDs/ADHD. Speaking openly (and courteously) about the issues, rather than pretending they are not there, can go a long way to decreasing a family's stress.

Family counselling is an option worth exploring. When all members are equally stressed, having an outsider guide discussions may be the best option. It is important to remember that all members of a family are affected by the struggles of a single member, and so the stress of all members must be considered. When a family can work through

hard times in a healthy, productive way, they can forge an even deeper bond.

Families can also do much to help with developing solid and effective compensatory strategies, since they know the person with LDs best. Group problem-solving around compensation can help a family member feel supported and confident, giving him or her more confidence to try the compensations at school. It also allows the person with the LDs the chance to practice their skills and strategies in a safe environment.

## Misunderstood Minds

Source: [www.pbs.org/wgbh/misunderstoodminds](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/misunderstoodminds)

Parents, teachers, and students looking for the scientific explanations behind learning differences and strategies to aid success in school can find both on the companion web site for the 2002 PBS documentary, *Misunderstood Minds*. The site includes profiles of the students in the documentary, as well as sections on Attention, Reading, Writing, and Mathematics. Interactive activities, called Experience Firsthand, are designed to give site visitors a sense of what it may be like for a student struggling with a basic skill.

The web site is accessible, designed for use with screen reader devices that render text into speech for blind and low vision web users. To learn more about providing access to web content for users with disabilities, visit the CPS/WGBH National Centre of Accessible Media on the web at [www.ncam.wgbh.org](http://www.ncam.wgbh.org).

**October is  
Learning Disabilities  
Awareness month**

Generously funded by



Visit us at: [www.ldawc.ca](http://www.ldawc.ca)

## Warmline helps parents and clients find answers to childhood disability questions

Canada's largest children's rehabilitation hospital, Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital in partnership with Cisco Canada, has launched a warmline to help parents and clients navigate the health-care system to find answers to questions about programs, services and resources related to childhood disability.

A family support specialist will answer your call from 10 am to 12 pm Monday through Friday. If you call outside the hours of operation, please leave the spelling of your name, your area code, telephone number and any questions you may have and we will return your call by the next business day. To access the service, call 416-424-3888 or 1-877-463-0365.

The warmline is a non-crisis telephone support line for clients and family members. Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital is Canada's largest children's rehabilitation hospital, fully affiliated with the University of Toronto. We pioneer treatments, technologies, therapies and real-world programs that give children with disabilities the tools to participate fully in life. Every 7,000 children are seen with about 600 inpatient admissions and 58,000 outpatient visits. For more information, visit [www.hollandbloorview.ca](http://www.hollandbloorview.ca).

### 9 tips for advocating for your child at school

1. **Know your child's rights** – Get to know the policies and rules of your school board, most can be found on the school board's website.
2. **Keep written notes** – write down all important meetings with the school, with dates, in the order that they happened.
3. **Remind the school of your right to "informed consent"** – the right to make important health decisions, most importantly regarding medication, as your child's legal guardian.
4. Make sure school staff know that you know the rules.
5. Before any meeting ask who will be there to represent the school.
6. In important meetings take notes, make no commitments, and sign nothing. Consider bringing a friend or advocate as a witness to the meeting.
7. Take time to discuss anything proposed with your child's health care team, therapists and professionals, & supporters. A balanced discussion of your child's needs will lead to better results.
8. Stay calm and professional.
9. When you think you need legal help because of a school issue call the Child Advocacy Project at 416-977-4448 or [www.childadvocacy.ca](http://www.childadvocacy.ca)

### Guelph Storm Hockey Tickets on Sale

Sat Nov 26/11 7:30 pm vs Plymouth Whalers

Fri Dec 2/11 7:30 pm vs Owen Sound Attack

Sun Dec 11/11 2:00 pm vs London Knights

Sat Dec 17/11 2:00 pm vs SS Marie Greyhounds

Fri Feb 3/12 7:30 pm vs Saginaw Spirit

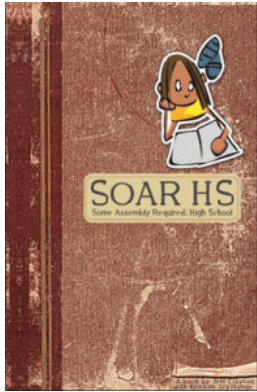
Please support us at the February 3, 2012 game as we sell 50/50 tickets as a fundraiser.

Call (519)837-2050 or email [info@ldawc.ca](mailto:info@ldawc.ca) to order tickets

Generously funded by



Visit us at: [www.ldawc.ca](http://www.ldawc.ca)



## SOAR HS - Some Assembly Required: High School

*Some Assembly Required: High School* is a groundbreaking new book about learning and learning disabilities, written for young people.

SOAR High School, developed by the LDAO, explores the state of education for teens in 2006. Some of the concepts explored are:

- how non-standard learners have been underestimated in the past
- how that misjudgement has caused unnecessary pain for many students
- what's happening right now in the education system to make things better
- the huge diversity of learning styles and abilities, and the value of each
- what learning disabilities are· how they impact on a person's life
- what helps

By the same team that brought you *Some Assembly Required*, SOAR HS is a straight-up, down-to-earth guide for the student in your life.

A supplementary Facilitator's Guide is now available for download. The Guide contains ideas for facilitating your child's positive and useful engagement with SOAR HS and other related information for your consideration. Select the link at the top right of this page to

view or download the Facilitator's Guide. You may also order the guide along with SOAR HS at our online store.

To order a copy visit LDAO's website at [www.ldao.ca](http://www.ldao.ca) or call 416 929 4311 ext. 29.

\$14.00 + GST/HST + shipping

### Websites to check out

[www.ricklavoie.com](http://www.ricklavoie.com) Information and inspiration for parents and teachers of children with learning disabilities.

[www.aboutld.org](http://www.aboutld.org) Coordinated Campaign for Learning Disabilities

[www.totallyadd.com](http://www.totallyadd.com) Liberates people from the fear, shame, and stigma.

[www.readingmadeeasy.ca](http://www.readingmadeeasy.ca) - Assistive Technology

## Upcoming Events and Resources

### Upcoming Workshop

Individual Education Plans

Sean Cameron, Ph.D, University of Guelph

Tuesday, October 18, 2011

7:00 pm

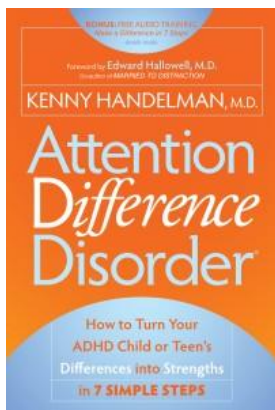
Location: Community Living Boardroom

8 Royal Road, Guelph

\$10.00 - members \$15.00 - non-members

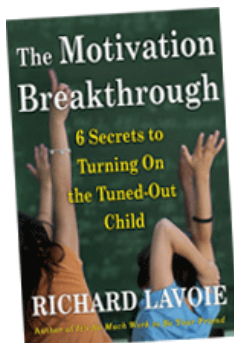
pre-register: 519-837-2050 or email [info@ldawc.ca](mailto:info@ldawc.ca)

Hosted by The Learning Disabilities Association of Wellington County



*Just released in June 2011*

Parents of kids and teens with ADD or ADHD often struggle with the myths and stigma surrounding their child's condition. This can often lead to parental guilt and shame. In *Attention Difference Disorder*, Dr. Handelman combines his clinical and scientific background with a positive, strength based approach to bring you 7 simple steps to succeed with ADD.



*The Motivation Breakthrough*

Lavoie's practical, innovative approach begins with a quiz that helps a parent or teacher identify -- using six different possible models -- a child's motivational style.

Available through [amazon.com](http://amazon.com)

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## Donation/Membership Form

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ Province: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Tel: (H) \_\_\_\_\_ (W) \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**Annual Dues:** Family/individual \$50; Student \$20; Professional \$75

I am interested in making a donation: \_\_\_\_\_ and/or volunteering: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Membership Advantages:**

Awareness and advocacy efforts on behalf of those with learning disabilities or ADHD at the local, provincial and national level, subscription to local and provincial newsletters, information on learning disabilities and ADHD, use of local resources and support services. Please mail this form and cheque to: Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario  
365 Bloor Street East, Suite 1004, Toronto, ON M4W 3L4