

October 2012

learning disabilities

different paths....same destination

Mailing Address:

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

Phone:

519-837-2050

E-mail: info@ldawc.ca

We're on the Web!

See us at:

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.

Inside:

"Hot items" from LDAO	2
LDAC Article	3
Eric Gillis Proudly Represents Canada	5
Homework 101	5
Frequently asked questions	7
Tech Talk	8
Events	9

Welcome

October marks "Learning Disabilities Awareness Month".

Having an awareness month provides an opportunity to stop and reflect on what learning disabilities are, who they impact and how they can be addressed. To recognize this month we have gone back to some of the basics about learning disabilities including an article from LDAO about "Myths and Facts" about learning disabilities. We have also included an article from LDAC about learning disability basics.

The benefit of a month dedicated to building awareness is that it can help people who don't know about learning disabilities gain exposure and may provide guidance to someone who is struggling with a learning disability to gain information and support.

We have included some great tips in "Homework 101". As school is in full swing some of these practical suggestions may make homework a little easier for both parents and students.

Our event section has filled up given the fall has arrived. Check out some suggested events as well as our upcoming event on October 17th featuring Sean Cameron. He is going to be discussing "The Path of a Student with Learning Disabilities from Primary Grades to Post-Secondary and Tips to Make it Through". Hope to see everyone there.

LDAWC is busy raising money for the United Way with sales of Guelph Storm tickets. Check out the dates below and thanks in advance for your support.

United Way Fundraiser & Guelph Storm

Tickets are \$14.00 each.

Help support two great organizations at once! By purchasing tickets to these Storm games we are able to run our 50/50 draw and the United Way will benefit from these ticket sales. \$1 from each ticket sold will go to our local United Way!

To order tickets call (519)837-2050 or email info@ldawc.ca

Sun Nov 4/12 2:00 pm vs London Knights
Sat Nov 24/12 7:00 pm vs Ottawa 67's
Fri Nov 30/12 7:30 pm vs Brampton Battalion
Fri Dec 7/12 7:30 pm vs Owen Sound Attack
Sat Dec 15/12 2:00 pm vs London Knights
Fri Dec 28/12 7:30 pm vs Belleville Bulls
Fri Jan 11/13 7:30 pm vs Barrie Colts



Generously funded by



This section of the newsletter is a highlight of what LDAO includes in their “hot items” category on the LDAO website. Check out www.ldao.ca for more interesting articles and tools.

October is LD Month: The Right to Learn, the Power to Achieve

The goal for this awareness month was to increase national awareness of learning disabilities and stress every individual’s “**right to learn, power to achieve**” as well as to encourage people to respect and embrace learning differences and the creative possibilities they offer.

This grassroots campaign engages Learning Disabilities Associations at the national, provincial/territory and chapter levels, and invites individuals with learning disabilities and their families to speak openly and share their success stories using YouTube, Facebook and Twitter.

When we support people with learning disabilities, everyone wins! Please join our team and support the right to learn and the power to achieve.



Myths & Facts about Learning Disabilities



LDs are a life-long condition that affects people differently depending on the situation. In order to find good, effective strategies for compensating and success we need to understand how a person’s learning profile interacts with their environment.

1. Myth: People with LDs cannot learn.

Fact:

- People with LDs are smart and can learn.
- LDs mean learning in different ways.

2. Myth: People with LDs are just lazy.

Fact:

- People with LDs often have to work harder, but the results may not show their efforts.
- Some people with LDs may become discouraged because they have struggled so hard, and they may appear unmotivated or lazy.

3. Myth: Accommodations give an unfair advantage.

Fact:

- Fair is not always equal.
- Accommodations allow people with LDs to work to their level of their ability and not their disability.

4. Myth: All LDs are outgrown by adulthood.

Fact:

- LDs tend to be noticed most often in school, but can affect all areas of life.
- Often by adulthood, people have found ways to use their strengths to compensate for their LDs. Many adults seek work environments that are a good fit.



5. Myth: LDs are all the same.

Fact:

- LDs are complicated and vary from person to person.
- LDs come in many forms and affect everyone differently.
- The impact of LDs may change in different settings depending on the demands of the situation.

OCTOBER IS LEARNING DISABILITIES MONTH



This section of the newsletter is a highlight of what LDAC is including on their website. Check out www.ldac-acta.ca for more interesting articles and tools.

Learning Disabilities at a Glance

A person can be of average or above-average intelligence, not have any major sensory problems (like a hearing impairment), and yet struggle to keep up with people of the same age in learning and regular functioning.

How can one tell if a person has learning disabilities?

Learning disabilities can affect a person's ability in the areas of:

- Listening
- Speaking
- Reading
- Writing
- Mathematics

Other features of a learning disability are:

- A distinct gap between the level of achievement that is expected and what is actually being achieved.
- Difficulties that can become apparent in different ways with different people.
- Difficulties that manifest themselves differently throughout development.
- Difficulties with socio-emotional skills and behaviour.

Identification

Learning disabilities affect every person differently, and the disorder can range from mild to severe. Sometimes people have more

Eric Gillis Proudly Represented Canada

In follow up to the article from the August newsletter we wanted to update everyone on



Eric Gillis' trip to the 2012 Summer Olympics. The Learning Disabilities Association of Wellington County held an information session with Eric Gillis last fall. Eric is an Olympic runner and also has a learning disability. Eric ran an exciting race and placed 22nd. The race was held

on a hot day in August but despite the weather Eric moved forward in the group during the race. Congratulations Eric – you represented Canada well!



Homework 101

By Jenny Ann Frank, CSW
National Centre for Learning Disabilities
www.ncld.org

*"It's time to do your homework."
"But Mom, Dad..."*

Sound familiar? For many parents, these words are heard from the month of September and last well into June. What can be done to maximize stronger work habits and minimize frustration for you and your child? Quite a lot.

School-to-Home Organization:

- Eliminate the risk of forgotten books/notebooks at school by asking teachers to check in with your child at the end of the day. For those children using lockers, hang a typed list on color paper

Generously funded by



reminding your child what to ask him/herself each day when packing up homework (see box, below, for example). In addition, a small index card could be taped on the cover of your child's planner.

- Advocate for a well-established communication system between home and school.

End of the Day Reminder

Before coming home, remind or ask yourself:

1. To check your planner to see what homework and tests you have
2. To pack everything you need to complete homework (textbooks, composition books, study guides, library books, folders) and study for upcoming tests
3. What is inside the locker that should be somewhere else? (ie: old lunches, library books, tests needed to be signed by parents)
4. Take home the knapsack, jacket and any other clothing/sports gear

Homework Organization:

- Select a specified area for homework and necessary supplies. When completed, request that your child return all materials/supplies to their appropriate places.



- Help your child avoid avoiding homework. Work with your child on establishing rules on when and how homework will be accomplished.



For example, should your child start with his favorite subject? Take a break after each assignment? How will your child know when it is time to return to work? (Verbal reminders, such as "Johanna, just a reminder that there are only two more minutes left in your break" and timers are very effective in reminding your child to return to work.) What stimuli is acceptable or unacceptable when studying? How homework is completed is equally important as completing it.

- For weekend homework, encourage your child to begin on Friday evenings. This is invaluable. Not only is information fresh in their minds but it allows enough time to make contingency plans for forgotten books or purchasing materials for projects.
- Ask yourself: "Are the teachers giving homework and instructions that suit my child best?" If not, don't hesitate to share concerns and ideas with the teacher.
- If your child misses school, help your child be responsible for finding out the next day's homework. While there may be times your child cannot complete the homework without the classroom instruction, it is still good to have your child follow through by calling a classmate or emailing the teacher (if this option is available) during the day. This learned skill becomes very important by mid-elementary years and, certainly, by middle school. It further minimizes some anxiety when your child returns to school.
- For children taking medication, ask yourself and your child if he or she is

finding that the medication is working as optimally as possible. Work with your professional to determine if a change may be required.

Reinforce Learning

- Become intimate with your child's areas of need (for example, organization, inattentiveness, comprehension, decoding) and help find appropriate techniques to enhance and reinforce learning. Locate professionals early in the school year at your child's school and/or in the private sector who can provide helpful strategies.
- In general, study cards or index cards are easier than a study guide or worksheet. Have your child write words, thoughts or questions on one side and answers on the other. The act of writing out a card is one more opportunity to enhance learning by reinforcing memory.



- Use the Internet to supplement and complement classroom materials.
- For children having difficulty extracting ideas, build lists of words for your child from which to choose. Similarly, ask them to compare and contrast ideas. For those with writing challenges, there are several approaches: Have your child verbalize his or her ideas first. Use a word-web format or an old-fashioned outline using bullets before writing an essay. Encourage your child to refer to the list/chart/web/rubric and use a minimum of details (2-3 details for younger children; 4-10 details for older children).

Generously funded by



- Consider making board games, such as a bingo or lotto board, as another way to reinforce learning. An opened manila folder works great as a board, index cards can be used for questions and coins can be a player's pawn. It is inexpensive, simple and a great addition to family time!
- Offer to give practice tests. After a few weeks of school, you will have a sense of a teacher's testing style. Practice tests that mirror the teacher's style offers your child the opportunity to "experience" what could be asked.
- Consider a study group. For slightly older children, a study group of two or three can be very beneficial and make learning more enjoyable.



The ultimate goal is to provide your special learner with good work habits, to prepare and anticipate, to avoid unnecessary tardiness and to stay on task. Par for the course with teaching organization, homework and learning strategies is making a long-term commitment. The foremost rule is to find the best system for your child; frequently this will mean many trials before finding the best one. Parental assistance can go a long way in making your child feel a sense of accomplishment and progress while minimizing stress for all of you.

Frequently Asked Questions

Our mission statement - The Learning Disabilities Association of Wellington County is a charitable, nonprofit organization dedicated to improving the lives of children, youth and adults with learning disabilities so that they can reach their full potential. Through outreach, education, advising and advocacy, the Learning Disabilities Association of Wellington County's mandate is to advance the education, employment, social development legal rights and general wellbeing of individuals with learning disabilities.

Part of the process of fulfilling our mandate is to answer questions the public may have about learning disabilities. We decided it might be helpful to include some of these questions in our newsletters as others may be interested in the responses.

My son is in kindergarten and he is printing most of his letters backwards. I am worried that he might be dyslexic.

It is very common for young children to get confused about which way to make letters. With other objects in their world, it doesn't matter which way they face – they are still the same object. It is only letters and numbers that have to face a particular way, and it takes some time to learn this. If your son is still consistently reversing most of his letters beyond age six, you should talk to his teacher.

Reversing letters is not the most common sign of dyslexia. Research has shown that most dyslexics have trouble distinguishing the sound portions of words. Young children need practice

with rhyming words and picking out parts of words that they hear.



Generously funded by



Visit us at: www.ldawc.ca

Assistive Technology

What is Assistive Technology?

Assistive (or Adaptive) Technology (AT) is the term used to describe all of the tools, products, and devices – from the simplest to the most complex – that can make a particular function easier or possible to perform. Some assistive technologies include screen readers, alternative keyboards, head pointing devices, voice recognition software, and screen magnification software.

Who Uses AT?

Often AT devices and products are designed in order to assist a particular group of individuals with specific disabilities. People who are blind or have low vision will often use screen reader software to help them read written text. People with physical disabilities, which render them unable to use a traditional keyboard, might instead use a foot pedal or mouth tube and switch in order to carry out functions on a computer.

What Type of AT Do People With Learning Disabilities Use?

Because learning disabilities affect the way we take in and process information, the most common types of AT used by people with learning disabilities are focused around reading, language, organizational skills, and processing information. Some examples are:

- **Screen Reading Software**
Screen reading software will read the text that appears on a computer screen to the user. Screen reading software is particularly useful for individuals with dyslexia, but is also used for people who are auditory learners.
- **Speech/Voice Recognition Software**
Speech/Voice recognition software

also sometimes referred to as speech-to-text software will convert the spoken word into text on a page, or into computer commands (i.e. opening files, or navigating software applications) via a microphone. Speech recognition software is particularly useful for individuals who have written expressive difficulties and difficulty using keyboards to navigate software applications.

Note: Voice recognition technology is improving all the time, but there is a bit of a learning curve involved with this technology. Voice recognition software trains itself to recognize the individual speech patterns of its users. The more the software is used the better it becomes at recognizing the user's voice. Because of this required time investment, patience is needed when you initially begin using such a program.

- **Word prediction Software**
Word prediction software will present possible words that a user is looking for while typing text, which the user can select with a mouse click. The software will also predict the next possible word based on frequency of usage and context. This technology is particularly useful for individuals with difficulty spelling, and for people who have difficulty typing.
- **Optical Character Recognition (OCR)**
Optical Character Recognition (OCR) software will convert paper based text into electronic text for use with screen readers. A scanner is needed to scan materials from book or other paper-based text. The OCR will then recognize the letter shapes through imaging analysis and convert them to electronic text. This technology is particularly useful for individuals who cannot access printed materials due to low vision or processing deficits.

- **Visual Organizers**

Visual Organizers are used to present ideas, concepts, information, and related concepts in the form of charts, tables, graphs, flowcharts, and diagrams. This technology is particularly useful for individuals who have difficulty processing, analyzing, and comprehending text-based information but is also used for people who are visual learners.

- **Electronic Organizers**

Electronic or digital organizers are hardware devices or software used for time management and resource organization. This technology is particularly useful for individuals who have difficulty with time management and organization, and is also used by people who are tactile learners and prefer opportunities where they can actually do something physically with the information they are to learn.

We are pleased to have Sean Cameron return as he leads this discussion. Having a long term goal is key, as is knowing the steps to get there. In addition, Sean will discuss the myths of IQ and the IQ/Achievement discrepancy. Sean is a Developmental Psychologist and teaches at the University of Guelph. He is also a certified teacher, and works in special education at the elementary level. This event will be of interest to parents, teachers and professionals.

Wed, Oct 17/12, 7 to 9 pm
Community Living Board Room
8 Royal Rd, Guelph ON

\$10 Members, \$15 Nonmembers, subsidy available. Please Preregister by email info@ldawc.ca or phone (519)837-2050

**Speaker Series: Bully
Lutherwood**

Wed Oct 24/12, 2-4:30 or 6:30-9
Princess Twin Cinema
46 King St. N, Waterloo

Tues Nov 6/12, 6:30-9
Theatre, UW School of Architecture
7 Melville St. S., Cambridge

Follow link for more info and to register
<http://www.lutherwood.ca/mentalhealth/event/s/speaker-series-bully>

**Partnering with Schools for Student
Success: Effective Parent Advocacy**

The LDAO, in partnership with Integra Children's Mental Health Centre, is presenting an online workshop for parents and those who are helping parents navigate the school system.

For questions contact Diane Wagner:
dianew@LDAO.ca or 416-929-4311 Ex. 22

Cost: \$350 (\$300 LDAO member rate),

Parent version without certificate: \$250 (\$200 LDAO member rate)

Events



**Learning Disabilities
Association of Wellington
County: Assistive
Technology – What's new
and Who's Using What**

A Panel Discussion on Assistive Technology used by the schools and useful to Students with a Learning Disability, and including low cost options.

Wed, Nov 27/12, 7 to 9 pm
Community Living Board Room
8 Royal Rd, Guelph ON

\$10 Members, \$15 Nonmembers, subsidy available. Please Preregister by email info@ldawc.ca or phone (519)837-2050

**Learning Disabilities Association of
Wellington County: The Path of a Student
with Learning Disabilities from Primary
Grades to Post-Secondary and Tips to Make
it Through**

Generously funded by



Visit us at: www.ldawc.ca

IEP 101 Online Workshop for Parents and Students

Location: Online

Cost: Free

Organization: www.LDAO.ca

Contact Email: moderator@ldao.ca

Website: www.ldaolearning.ca

Welcome to IEP 101, the Individual Education Plan (IEP) Online Workshop for Parents and Students. We have created this workshop to help you as a parent or student to understand your part in the IEP process, with the belief that the most effective IEP is where the parent, the student, and the school staff collaborate to write an individual plan to help the student succeed in school.

You can sign in as a guest for this free workshop by selecting <http://www.ldaolearning.ca>

Zehr's Tapes Outreach Project

Zehr's on Eramosa Road has kindly agreed to allow us to collect Zehrs grocery receipt tapes at their store on Sunday October 21st. If you are shopping at this store on that day please consider leaving your receipt with us. We are able to turn these grocery tapes into funds that can be used to help us achieve our mission.

Thank you Zehrs

CNIB Library Services for Learning Disabilities

Access to reading in a variety of formats is important for people who have difficulty reading print due to a disability.

That's why it's good news that CNIB Library is now open to people with any type of disability that make reading difficult, including learning disabilities. CNIB Library offers 80,000 books in formats like downloadable audio and accessible e-text. People with learning disabilities can sign up for CNIB Library service free-of-charge using their public library card.

To promote this CNIB is holding webinars for Learning Disabilities Association volunteers and staff. We will be completing this webinar and will share more information about how to access this service in a future newsletter. Stay tuned!

Generously funded by



Visit us at: www.ldawc.ca

Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario

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 Evans Avenue, Suite 202, Toronto, ON M8Z 1K2
Tel: (416) 929-4311 Toll free in Ontario only: 1-877-238-5322
Fax: (416) 929-3905

Everybody is a genius. But, if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will spend its whole life believing that it is stupid. ~Albert Einstein.

Generously funded by



Visit us at: www.ldawc.ca