



Idawc • Learning Disabilities Association of Wellington County

The right to learn, the power to achieve

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In our September 2019 Issue:

LDAWC News – 1

6 Parent Tips for a Smooth Back-to-School
Transition – 2-3

Guelph Storm Tickets - 4

What's Your Superpower? - 5

IEP Workshop Event - 6

Psychologist provides brain boosting tips for
back to school – 7

Books About Going Back to School - 8

Peer Support Network Event - 9

Annual Family Conference – 10

A Parent's Guide to the IPRC and IEP – 11 -13

Self-Advocacy in High School 14-15

LDAO Membership Application – 16

LDAWC News

It is hard to believe that the summer is coming to an end! The arrival of the return to school brings back regular routines, homework and workshops. This edition of the newsletter includes a number of articles about transitioning back to school, tips for brain boosting, books about going back to school, a parent's guide to the IPRC and IEP process and advocacy.

The fall will bring about a workshop on IEPs, October Peer Support Network event and our Annual Family Conference. Lots of opportunities to learn, share and network. We hope to see you there!

LDAWC staff and board of directors wish everyone a successful return to the classroom.

Note: We are still looking for the 50/50 draw winner at the March 1/19 Guelph Storm game: ticket #U-342901.

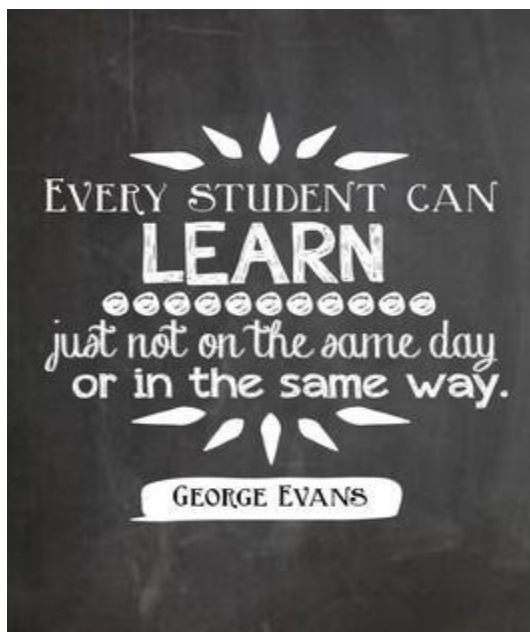
If you're not already following us on social media, it's a great place to get updates, interesting articles and ideas:



facebook.com/LDAWellingtonCounty



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6 Parent Tips for a Smooth Back-to-School Transition

By Melissa A. Kay

The start of school brings a lot of changes—new teachers, new schedules and new school demands. Planning is key to a successful transition. Here are six parent-tested tips for back-to-school.



1. **Adjust bedtime gradually**

Make bedtime earlier each day until school begins. A subtle change each night won't be obvious to your child.

"I got my 6-year-old ready for a new bedtime before school. A longer night's sleep would help him concentrate. We got new stuffed bears that only 'played in bed' and it was his job to get them to fall asleep. Soon, he was asleep too, and well rested for school."

—Heather A., Huntington, New York

2. **Make shopping for school supplies a team effort**

Getting kids involved in the planning stages can make the actual transition to school easier.

"Focusing on the big picture helps me handle back-to-school prep with a purpose—staying positive. When buying school supplies, I created a scavenger hunt with my 6-year-old son to help gather the items. If we miss some crayons, we don't sweat it."

—Andrew L., Maplewood, New Jersey

3. **Make reading fun and fundamental**

Summer may have been a mini-vacation from reading. But finding fun ways to read before school starts can help ease the transition.

"Read your kid's favorite books as part of family fun night. Some evenings, let him read. Encourage different voices for the characters. This helped with our seventh-grader's attention issues and got him to look forward to new books."

—Susan B., Cleveland

4. **Focus on appearances**

Being happy with how they look can give kids confidence and let them focus on their work instead of on their wardrobe. Giving your child a say in back-to-school shopping can go a long way.

"My 14-year-old daughter couldn't concentrate if she was focused on her appearance. We got that under wraps by shopping together for school clothes. With that off her mind, she could focus in class with confidence."

—Patti M., Oceanside, New York

5. Get colourful with everyday supplies

If you have more than one child, [assign a color to each](#). From backpacks to lunch boxes to folders, let each child have a personal color scheme. This can make it easier to pack for school.

“We have two kids with special needs and learning issues. When we decided to let each child pick a color for all their school items, it made the [morning ritual](#) so much simpler.”

—Harold D., Aurora, Ohio

6. Get colourful with everyday supplies

Talking about school as summer winds down can build excitement. It can also bring out some of the concerns kids have. Knowing what they are is the first step toward finding solutions.

“My 8-year-old worried she wouldn’t remember her classmates’ names. We spoke to her teacher before school and she agreed my daughter could make name tags for her classmates. It eased her worries and the class loved it!”

—Jennifer B., Staten Island, New York



Source: <https://www.understood.org/en/school-learning/choosing-starting-school/back-to-school/6-parents-tips-smooth-back-to-school-transition>

SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

We invite you to support our 5th Annual Family Conference on October 19, 2019. Your gift would enrich the lives of more than 140 families in the Guelph and Wellington County area.

If interested in sponsoring this event please contact us at info@ldawc.ca for more information.

Guelph Storm - Help Us Fundraise!

***Tickets are \$17.50 each
(adult regular price \$26)***

Help support LDAWC and The United Way! Get your Guelph Storm tickets from us!



\$1 from each ticket sale will be donated to the United Way.

Game dates are:

Saturday November 9, 2019 7:00 PM – vs. Kingston Frontenacs

Friday, December 6, 2019 7:30 PM – vs. Barrie Colts

Friday January 3, 2020 7:30 PM – vs. Peterborough Petes

Wednesday February 5, 2020 – vs. Erie Otters

Sunday, February 23, 2020 2:00 PM – vs. Niagara Ice Dogs

To order tickets, contact us at info@ldawc.ca or (519) 837-2050.

What's Your Superpower?



All kids have superpowers. This doesn't mean every child excels in some area or does something better than everyone else. It means all kids have strengths or passions that can help them thrive. It's what revs them up and keeps them going.

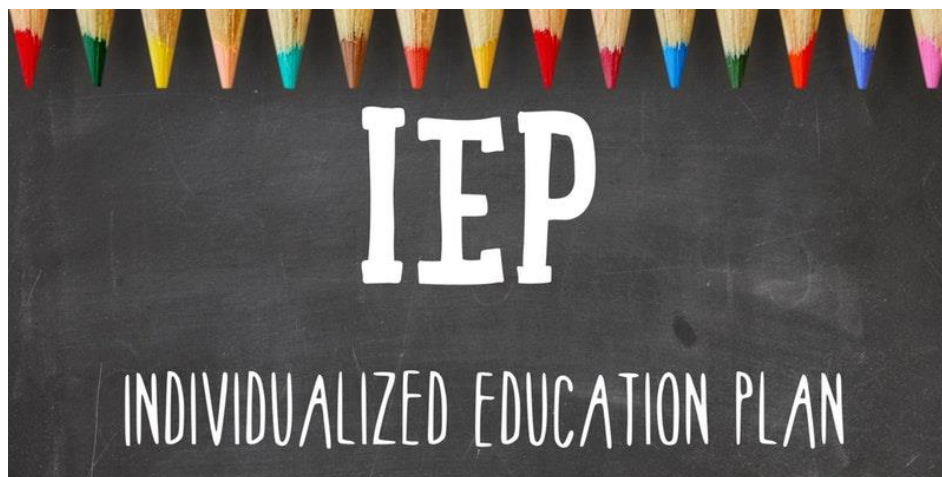
A superpower can be a special talent. It can also be a personality trait or a frame of mind. Many people who learn and think differently have grown to see their challenges as superpowers.

Dav Pilkey is a great example. The creator of *Captain Underpants* and *Dog Man* told *Understood*: "My ADHD helped me to write stories that were not boring, and my dyslexia helped me too. It helped me to choose my words very, very carefully."

"These challenges that I had ended up being my superpowers," he says.

"I encourage all of you to find your superpowers," Pilkey says. "I think one of the reasons why *Captain Underpants* has resonated with so many children is because of the two boys that star in the books, George and Harold," Pilkey said in a recent interview with Reading Rockets, one of *Understood*'s founding partners. "They're always using their imagination.... That's kind of an attainable superpower that we can all have."

Source: <https://www.understood.org/en/friends-feelings/empowering-your-child/building-on-strengths/whats-your-superpower>

**About the Workshop:**

IEPs are complicated, whether you are new to the special education world or not. There are many tips and strategies that can help. Parents are invited to bring their child's IEP along to the workshop!

About our Speaker:

Our speaker, Sue Shaw, is a parent advocate and teaching innovator who has been working to provide education and training opportunities for over 10 years. Learn what information should be in an IEP, and some ideas to be able to create an effective document to support your child's education goals.

When: Wednesday, September 18, 7-9 PM

Where: Guelph Public Library, Main Branch, 100 Norfolk St., Guelph, ON

Cost: FREE

Register: through the Guelph Public Library site:

<http://guelphpl.libnet.info/event/3095752>

Psychologist provides brain boosting tips for back to school

By Celine Moreau

Back to school and back to learning can be made easier according to psychologist Dr. Scott Leith by just simply exercising. “About an hour a day I would say, and for a kid, that’s running, skipping, jumping and playing and letting your kid be a kid.”

Leith says when people exercise it helps positively stimulate neurons in the brain.

“Exercise promotes something called neurogenesis, which sounds very fancy but that’s the growth of new neurones specifically in the area dedicated to learning,” Leith says.

This in turn promotes cognitive behaviours in the brain called executive function.

“Executive function, for example through self-control, increases time on task. So if you have to sit and read a book, right, it’s a classic example and it makes you better at that. And if you have to keep many things in your head to juggle a project or tasks like that it helps with that as well.”

Leith says you don’t have to be a pro athlete to reap the benefits. Any exercise is better than none and there are specific workouts that are brain boosting.

“Such as the bear crawl which has numerous physical benefits, but also some neurological benefits because it’s a novel way to move your brain is getting feedback from our hands and feet so that will help strengthen the brain,” says personal trainer Chris Symons at GoodLife Fitness.

Symons says different workouts can also help improve sleep and mental health issues.

“When we start to do a lot of cardio we see increase blood flow to the brain that keeps everything healthy and it helps with mood and anxiety so even when test time comes it helps with that a lot.”

For younger kids, Leith says it’s important for parents to get their kids moving.

“Get your kids active even if it’s difficult and even if they have screens and don’t want to move away from them. Even if it’s harder now as a parent to get kids outside that’s an avenue by which you need to show your kids what self-control is and you’ll set them up for a successful life.”



Books about Going Back to School

www.ncld.org

For children pre-k through kindergarten

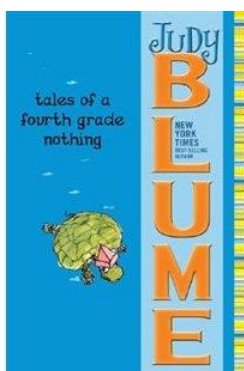
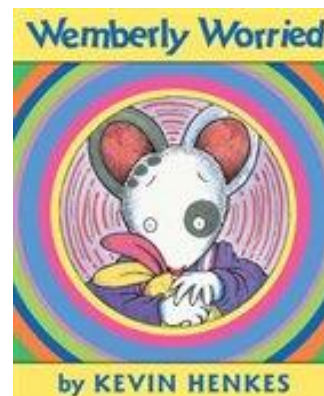
Wemberly Worried by Kevin Henkes

The Kissing Hand by Audrey Penn

Chrysanthemum by Kevin Henkes

Will I Have a Friend? by Miriam Cohen

Look Out Kindergarten, Here I Come by Nancy Carlson



For children in elementary school

Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing by Judy Blume

Judy Moody: Was In a Mood. Not a Good Mood. A Bad Mood by Megan McDonald

How to Be Cool in the Third Grade by Betsy Duffey

The Teacher from the Black Lagoon by Mike Thaler

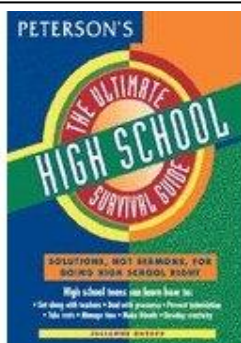
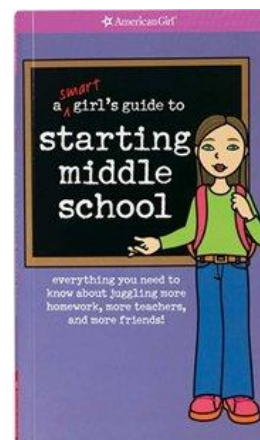
For those entering or continuing through middle school

Middle School: The Real Deal: From Cafeteria Food to Combination Locks by Juliana Farrell and Beth Mayall

A Smart Girl's Guide to Starting Middle School: Everything You Need to Know About Juggling More Homework, More Teachers, and More Friends by Julie Williams

Help! I'm in Middle School... How Will I Survive? by Merry L. Gumm

Middle School: How to Deal by Nuts and Bolts Girls and Yuki Hatori



For those transitioning to high school

Ultimate High School Survival Guide (Peterson's Ultimate Guides) by Peterson's

101 Ways to Adjust to High School by Randy Howe

High School Bound: The Ultimate Guide for High School Success and Survival by Martin J. Spethman and Chuck Klein

October 2019 Peer Support Network



Come join our Peer Support Network and meet other parents on a similar journey. LDAWC Peer Support Network's goal is to provide an informal setting to share experiences, challenges, successes and resources. Living, learning and/or working with a LD, or supporting a family member with LD, has its ups and downs. Come learn from others. Benefits are:

- Learning about relevant resources, supports and strategies
- Insights into what has and hasn't worked for parents and families
- Learning you and your student aren't alone through shared ideas and experiences
- Reduced stigma and stress

When: October 3 @ 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm

Where: Eramosa Engineering, 650 Woodlawn Road W, Block C Unit 4, Guelph, ON N1K 1B8 Canada

Cost: FREE

Register: <https://ldawc.ca/event/october-2019-peer-support-network>

twitter.com/lda_wellington

A Parent's Guide to the IPRC and IEP

Understanding the IPRC

The Education Act in Ontario requires that school boards provide, or purchase from another school board, special education programs and services for “exceptional” students. Exceptional students are defined as those whose “behavioural, communicational, intellectual, physical, or multiple exceptionalities are such that they are considered to need placement in a special education program.”

The role of the IPRC is to:

- 1) decide whether or not your child should be identified as exceptional;
- 2) identify the areas of your child's exceptionality;
- 3) decide an appropriate placement; and
- 4) review the identification and placement at least once each school year.

To start an IPRC, you must contact your child's principal, in writing, and request that your child be referred to an IPRC. Your child's principal may also make the referral on his or her own initiative. Within 15 school days of making the referral, the principal must send you written notification, including an approximate date of the IPRC meeting and a parent's guide containing information about the IPRC. The principal may also ask you for permission to obtain a psychological or health assessment of your child. While an educational assessment will also be performed, parental permission is not required for this.

At least 10 school days before the IPRC is to meet, you (and your child, if 16 or over) will receive written notice of the meeting and an invitation to attend. This letter will list the date, time, and place of the meeting, and will ask you to indicate if you can attend. Before the IPRC meets, you will also receive a copy of all information that the chair of the IPRC has received.

If you can't attend this meeting, contact the school principal immediately to arrange an alternative date or to let the principal know that you will not be attending. If, however, you cannot attend, the IPRC's written decision will be sent to you.

Either you or your child's principal may make a request for others to attend the IPRC meeting. As well, you are entitled to have a representative or advocate who may speak on your behalf.

What Happens at the Meeting?

After introductions are made, the IPRC reviews all available information about your child. They consider the educational assessments and the health or psychological assessments, if these were obtained. If they feel it will be useful, they may also interview your child (with your permission, if your child is under 16 years of age). They will also consider any information that you submit about your child or that the child, if 16 or over, submits on his



or her own behalf. You are encouraged to ask questions during this meeting and to participate in any discussion.

Once all of the information has been presented and discussed, the committee will make its decision. This decision will include:

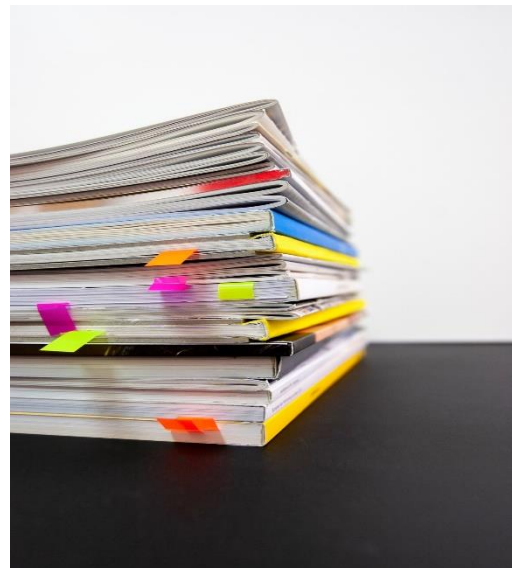
- whether or not the child is exceptional;
- if exceptional, the category and definition of the exceptionality;
- the strengths and needs of the student;
- the placement of the student. The IPRC will recommend placement in a regular class with special education services if, in the Committee's opinion, such a placement meets the student's needs and is consistent with the parent's preferences. Note that while the IPRC will consider the parent's preferences, these preferences are not binding, and the final decision about placement belongs to the IPRC.
- the IPRC's recommendations regarding a special education program and services; and
- where appropriate, the reasons for placing your child in a special education class.

What Happens Next?

You will receive a written statement of the IPRC's decision. If you did not attend the meeting, this will be mailed to you. You will be asked to sign this document to indicate that you agree with the IPRC's decisions and recommendations. If you attended the meeting, you may be asked to sign at that time. Note, however, you have 30 days to return the signed document to the IPRC. Once the document is signed and returned, the board will promptly notify the principal of the school at which the special education program is to be provided. That principal will then begin the process of developing your child's Individual Education Plan (IEP).

What If I Disagree with the Decision?

If you disagree with the IPRC's decision, you have 15 school days to request a second meeting of the IPRC. If after your second meeting you are still dissatisfied, you have 15 school days from the second decision to file an appeal. Your request for an appeal must be made in writing to the secretary of the school board. (The name and address of this person can be obtained from your child's principal). You must indicate the decision(s) with which you disagree and your reasons for disagreeing. If you disagree with the original decision but do not request a second meeting or file an appeal, the decision of the IPRC will automatically be implemented after 30 school days.



The Annual Review – Or Sooner

A review IPRC meeting will be held each year, during which your child's progress may be reviewed and the education plan revised. This review may be waived only with your written permission, and it is recommended that you do not waive this review. The annual IPRC is your chance to help ensure that your child begins each new school year in the most appropriate environment and with the most effective accommodations available.

You may also request a review IPRC any time after your child has been in a special education program for 3 months.

The Individual Education Plan (IEP)

The Individual Education Plan, commonly known as the IEP, is the school's written plan of action for the special education student. According to the Ministry of Education, the IEP "is a working document which describes the strengths and needs of an individual exceptional pupil, the special education program and services established to meet that pupil's needs, and how the program and services will be delivered. It also describes the student's progress."



An IEP must be prepared for all students who have been identified through the IPRC process, and a copy of this document must be provided to the parents (and the student, if 16 or over). IEPs may be prepared without the prerequisite of an IPRC, and schools are suggesting that parents of special needs students take this route. While there is a clear benefit in avoiding the delay of waiting for an IPRC meeting, it is important to note that the IEP is not binding without the IPRC. Despite the best efforts and intentions of your child's school, the written decision of the IPRC is the only guarantee that your child will receive the services he or she requires.

Within 30 school days of the student's placement in the special education program by an IPRC decision, the principal must ensure that the IEP is completed and a copy sent to the parent (and student, if 16 or over). The IEP team should ensure that everyone involved with the student is aware of the contents and requirements of the IEP.

A formal review and update of the IEP should take place at least once every reporting period; and team members should continuously monitor and adjust the plan as necessary.

Source: <http://www.ldao.ca/introduction-to-ldsahd/articles/about-education/a-parents-guide-to-the-iprc-and-iep/>

Self-Advocacy in High School

According to the American Heritage Dictionary, advocacy is “the act of pleading or arguing in favor of something, such as a cause, idea or policy.’ For people with ADHD or learning disabilities, advocacy becomes an important issue. Parents stand up for their children, attending parent teacher and IEP (Individualized Educational Plan) meetings in school. They talk with psychologists, educators and medical professionals to make sure their child receives the best care and the best education possible. College students advocate for themselves, talking to professors and school administrators to receive accommodations to help them succeed.



In order to best advocate for yourself, or for your children, you must first understand ADHD and/or learning disabilities and how it impacts your life. You must acknowledge your own needs and determine ways in which those needs can be met. Advocacy helps you to become self-sufficient and allows you to depend on yourself rather than those around you. Advocacy helps you to find ways to improve your life. Advocacy helps you to control your own destiny and continue to move toward your goals.

Self-Advocacy in High School

High school students are new at self-advocacy. In elementary and middle school, it was probably their parents that attended all of the meetings a school and talked with medical professionals. But as teenagers, they are not very far from having to take over the job themselves. The high school years are a good place for parents to begin teaching self-advocacy skills. These skills will help them throughout their lives, at college, in the workplace and in relationships.

The following tips can provide a starting place for teaching your teen how to stand up for themselves:

1. **Have your children attend any IEP, Section 504 or other meetings you may have with school personnel.** In the beginning ask them to watch what happens in the meetings and take notes that you can discuss later. It may be several meetings before your teen feels comfortable enough to speak up. That’s okay, you want them to start to understand the process.
2. **Talk to your teen about their diagnosis.** Discuss how each diagnosis impacts their education and their lives. Have them think about how they best learn: do they need visual cues, do they learn best by writing everything down, and would they benefit from taping a class and listening to the tape again later? Understanding this can help them both in college as well as in work. Some children benefit from keeping a journal of what learning strategies they used and what results they achieved. Looking back at this may help them to discover how they best process information.

3. **Talk to your teen about their goals in life.** Ask them to be as specific as possible and to write them down. Goals should not include things such as “I want to do better in math class” but should include specifics such as “I want to pass every test in math” or “I want to get an 80 this quarter in math.” Your teen can break down goals if they tend to lose interest quickly. They can create weekly or even daily goals to begin with. In addition to writing down the goals, your teen should write down what steps they are going to take to achieve the goal and what parents, teachers or doctors can do to assist them. Have your teen discuss these goals with you and if necessary, request a meeting with teachers to discuss how they can help.
4. **Just as important as short-term goals are long-term goals.** Teenagers need to have a sense of what they want to accomplish in life. Are they looking to go to college? Do they intend to begin working right out of school? Do they know what career they would like to enter? Writing down long-term goals helps your teen put their life in perspective and helps them tailor their education and teen years around accomplishing these goals.
5. **Talk to your teen about their strengths and weaknesses.** They will benefit from understanding what they are good at. This might help them to shape their long-term goals if they are not sure what they want to do in life. Discussing their weaknesses is not to point out what they do wrong but to help them understand how learning disabilities and other conditions might impact their lives. Ask which of their weaknesses they would like to work on to develop it into a strength.
6. **Help your teen write down their suggestions on what will help them to achieve both short-term and long-term goals.** Listen to their ideas and try to incorporate some of them into your daily lives.
7. **Set up periodic meetings with your child’s teacher to discuss their progress and to modify plans if needed to help keep them on track.** Encourage children to attend these meetings on their own.
8. **Discuss with your teen the importance of self-advocacy** and how they can use these skills in college and work.



Source: <https://www.healthcentral.com/article/self-advocacy-in-high-school-and-college>



Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario Membership Application

Membership:

- Member fee rates to LDAO programs and services, including some online workshops/courses
- Member fee rates to all chapter programs and services, where available
- Two issues of the LDAO digital magazine LD@Ontario, sent biannually through email
- Chapter newsletters (frequency varies from chapter to chapter)

We're going **paperless**! Please provide us with your email address to receive your copy of LD@Ontario!

Required Information:

Name: _____ Email: _____

Address: _____ City: _____

Postal Code: _____ Chapter Affiliation: _____

Membership Type:

Family/Individual ☐ \$50.00

Professional ☐ \$75.00

Institutional ☐ \$125.00

Student ☐ \$20.00

ID # Required _____

Type of Payment:

☐ Cash (only if paying in person) ☐ Cheque ☐ Visa ☐ Master Card

Card # _____

Expiry Date: _____

Name of Cardholder: _____

CVV #: _____

Please make all cheques payable to **LDAO** and forward to **365 Evans Avenue**
Suite 202 Toronto ON M8Z 1K2

