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VOLUME 34 NUMBER 1 SPRING 2005

THE PUBLICATION OF THE LEARNING DISABILITIES ASSOCIATION OF ONTARIO

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

In Memory of Carol Yaworski	2
New Logo	2
Chair's Message.....	3
P.A. Month 2005.....	4
Legislation.....	5
Demonstration Method.....	7
SOAR for High Schools	9
New Online Resources	9
Choosing a Camp	10
Youth Perspective	12
Advice for Youth.....	12
Resilience	13
Postsecondary Review.....	14
Featuring LDAO Chapters.....	16
Teacher Feature	18
An Integrated Studies Program	20
Thank You to Donors/Funders.....	22
Transition Programs	23
Conference Calendar	23
Community Contacts.....	24

March is Learning Disabilities Month

In Memory of Carol Yaworski 1953-2005

The sudden passing away of Carol Yaworski, Executive Director of the Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario (LDAO) on Sunday, January 9th has saddened family, co-workers, colleagues and friends. While all of us associated with LDAO mourn Carol's death, we also celebrate her rich life – one that touched people and changed lives.

A former Children's Service Worker with the Toronto Children's Aid Society and Executive Director of AIDS Toronto, Carol was a passionate fighter for children and adults from every walk of life. During her tenure at these organizations, Carol brought a vitality and passion that was both inspiring and contagious.

Her legacy as Executive Director of LDAO will be one of great achievements and tremendous vision. The organization has grown both in capability and in stature during her leadership and is positioned to continue to strive toward excellence, a goal Carol demanded and inspired.

Upon her arrival at LDAO, Carol set about transforming the organization into an effective association whose hallmark was meeting the changing needs of

LDAO members and individuals who rely on the organization's assistance, services and resources. Carol also worked diligently to make the association a leading voice in the field of special education here in Ontario and across Canada.

During the past several years, Carol led a restructuring process designed to better meet the diverse and changing needs and expectations of our members and develop the needed resources, services and tools to achieve this goal. Under her leadership, the LDAO achieved a greater and more effective profile among key decision makers in the public and private sectors, as a respected and sought-out voice within Ontario's special education sector. Her impact was especially evident in the areas of government relations and the building of relationships with the corporate and broader education communities.

Carol also understood that the emergence of Internet-based technologies opened new opportunities for LDAO to assist education and other professionals involved with learning disabilities as well as parents, youth and adults with learning disabilities. The LDAO's extensive redesigning of its website to better serve LDAO members and the public and the



Late Executive Director, Carol Yaworski

Web-Based Teaching Tool are enduring legacies for which Carol will be remembered.

She will also be remembered for her work as an advocate on behalf of the organizations she served. Well-known at Queen's Park among both elected officials and civil servants for her thoughtful approach to public policy issues, she was noted for engaging decision-makers on solutions rather than focusing on the problems at hand. Carol was passionate about education and social issues, a result of her well-known love of politics and the political process.

Carol Yaworski touched many lives on a professional and personal level. ☺

What does the new LDAO logo mean?

ldao

Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario

This letterform based logo is a clean, contemporary typographic expression of LDAO's forward-thinking approach to learning and teaching. A contrast is created between the stylized lowercase L and dao by using both italic and roman figures and with colour, further focusing on the "learning" in learning disabilities.

You will immediately begin to see this logo on all LDAO materials. The LDA chapters have just had their first opportunity in the past several weeks to see the final choice of LDAO for the logo. Over the next few months we will work on the provincial rollout of the logo to reflect the needs of our chapters.

Message from the Chair

January 9, 2005 will be remembered by all of us connected to LDAO as a day of deep sadness. On this day, we lost a creative leader, a dedicated community member, and a dear friend. All who knew Carol Yaworski were shocked and saddened by her sudden death.

One of the challenges faced by LDAO as an organization is the incredible void left by Carol; nevertheless, we continue to be inspired by her energy and her undaunted spirit. Although things will never be quite the same, we know that the vision Carol had for LDAO will guide us into the future. It helps that the community has rallied to offer not only condolences, but also unflagging support for our endeavours.

The immediate and pressing activities, as well as the longer-term strategies and initiatives, are very much a part of our commitment to LDAO and to the legacy left by Carol. We have not lost sight of our priorities and we will live up to the challenge.

Our Stay in School campaign marks the beginning of Public Awareness Month for Learning Disabilities across Canada. We are taking this opportunity to launch our new logo, a project driven by Carol and part of her living legacy to this association. Our implementation of the



LDAO Chair Ruth Taber

Web-Based Teaching Tool (WBTT) and development of new products is proceeding in a timely and productive way. We are continuing to strengthen our capacity to provide access to resources and services through our partners in the chapters across the province, the LDAO website, and our corporate and private donors.

We also recognize that this is a time for reflection and renewal. The LDAO leadership and staff will continue to work with all of you to continue to build a positive and powerful voice for children, youth, and adults with learning disabilities in Ontario.

This, too, will be part of Carol's contribution. ☺

communiqué

The newsletter of LDAO, is published three times yearly. For information on current publication dates, or to submit an article for possible publication, please e-mail the editor at: joans@ldao.ca. Advertising rates are available upon request. Subscription rate for mailing to non-members is \$25.00 yearly. **Communiqué** can be downloaded from LDAO's website: www.ldao.ca.

Communiqué provides a forum for information, news and opinions relevant to the field of learning disabilities. The Association does not, in any sense, endorse opinions expressed or methods or programs mentioned. Articles may be reprinted unless otherwise stated. Please mention **Communiqué** as the source if and when articles are reprinted.

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Please Visit
Our Web Site
www.ldao.ca

Stay in School Because It's Your Life

As the foundation for our 2005 Youth Campaign, *Stay in School Because It's Your Life*, LDAO has developed the *Access* website and other materials. Through *Access*, youth and professionals can:

- Find the latest news, articles and tips pertaining to LDs at www.access.resources.ldao.ca
- Participate in our online courses and workshops at www.access.learning.ldao.ca
- Join in on our community message boards at www.access.community.ldao.ca

Work on the evolution of the site will continue over the next year, with input from teachers and students.

Curriculum Support materials for youth and their teachers

Currently available to teachers of grades 6, 7 and 8 and their students are the *Some Assembly Required (SOAR)* materials. *SOAR* is designed to give students and their teachers an opportunity to learn and talk about:

- Learning and learning disabilities
- Study skills and strategies for success
- Making choices and choosing paths

Over the next several months LDAO will be developing *SOAR* materials for high school students. Utilizing a series of focus groups and feedback sessions, materials will be drafted that speak to such topics as:

Learning and LDs

- How do we learn?
- What are LDs?
- How can LDs be dealt with effectively?

Life during High School

- What to expect from high school
- The successful high school student
- Talking about LDs

Life after High School

- Job search skills
- Social life



- Self-advocacy and accommodations
- Post-secondary options and choices
- Disclosure, jobs and the law

A major aspect of our Youth Campaign is developing partnerships with the community of which we are a part. LDAO believes that in order to develop resources and support that are relevant and responsive to the needs of youth, the opinions of the youth and educators must be solicited. Youth must be directly involved in developing their supports.

As such, youth will be directly involved in the development of online workshops, the youth section of *Access* and the development of the *SOAR for High School* materials.

LDAO is developing materials for teachers to assist them in supporting their

students with learning disabilities within the context of the regular classroom.

Online courses and workshops

Our current course offerings for youth include:

- *Introduction to Learning Styles*
- *Self-Advocacy for Youth*

Through a set of feedback sessions, youth will vet the current courses, offering suggestions on relevancy, content and ease of use.

Current course offerings for educators include:

- *Introduction to Learning Disabilities*
- *Special Education Issues and Concerns for Administrators*

For further information, contact Kate Lloyd at katel@ldao.ca.

Accessible Education

Looking at the Human Rights Commission's new guidelines

As a society, we generally take the right of access to a free and appropriate education very much for granted. Since the days of Egerton Ryerson, education has been an integral and important component of the lives of Ontario's residents. But for those who have disabilities, this right was often eliminated, reduced or modified, through certain discriminatory institutional practices.

The Ontario Human Rights Code has been in existence since 1981 and the complementary guidelines on the duty to accommodate individuals with disabilities to the limits of undue hardship have been in existence since 1989. However, many individuals with disabilities still faced significant barriers in educational settings when they asked for the requisite services, supports and accommodations. The Commission's disability policy has applied to the educational system in the past, but in many cases, students and their families were told that the Code did not supersede the Education Act and the regulations, when it came to the work of school boards. Similarly, in spite of the special education amendments to the Education Act known as Bill 82, which in 1980 changed the way we were to meet the needs of students with disabilities, many students continued to "fall through the cracks".

In October 2003, the Ontario Human Rights Commission released a consultation report on human rights issues affecting students with disabilities. This report, entitled *The Opportunity to Succeed: achieving barrier-free education for students with disabilities*, was the result of the Commission's research and preliminary consultation with a wide range of stakeholders and concerned groups and individuals. LDAO was one of the groups that participated in

the consultation and submitted a detailed response to the issues raised. Based on the reaction and responses to *The Opportunity to Succeed*, the Commission released its new Guidelines on Accessible Education in November, 2004.

These Guidelines contain the Human Rights Commission's interpretation of the provisions of the Ontario Human Rights Code relating to discrimination against students because of disability. They apply to all parts of the educational system, elementary, secondary and post-secondary and to all types of disabilities, including learning disabilities. While guidelines do not have the same legal status as legislation and regulations, and are not binding on the human rights tribunals or the courts, they should be and are often given "great deference" when the facts of a case are considered in these circumstances.

But perhaps more importantly, in light of these guidelines, the education service providers of the province, private as well as publicly funded, are expected to and hopefully will review and amend their current practices. The goal of these guidelines is to promote the following steps:

1. Promote inclusive or universal design

What this means is that students with disabilities must be guaranteed an equal access to education to that available to their non-disabled peers. That does not mean that the facilities, programs, services and supports that are provided to students with disabilities are the same as those for non-disabled students, but rather that they are structured and designed to promote inclusiveness and universal access. Curriculum, teaching methodology and evaluation practices should all be designed inclusively and accessibly.

2. Remove existing barriers

In spite of existing legislation such as the Human Rights Code, the Education Act, the IPRC Regulation, etc., many students with disabilities still face obstacles in the educational system. There are some evident physical and systemic barriers as well as attitudinal and communication barriers. The goal is to eliminate all of these. In the meantime, where barriers already exist, the duty to accommodate to the point of undue hardship is expected, in order to promote equal access.

3. Accommodating needs

Even where the principles of universal design are fully implemented in both a physical and instructional sense, some barriers may continue to exist for some students with disabilities. Under these circumstances, differential treatment may be required such that students with disabilities have an equal opportunity in the educational setting to achieve maximum benefit. The provision of appropriate accommodations is a key component in this regard, provided that it respects the dignity and privacy of the student in question.

These guidelines address in some detail the challenges faced by students with so-called non-evident disabilities. Learning disabilities are included in this category. They also address issues such as bullying, the safe schools and zero tolerance policies of school boards and the implications of these for students with disabilities.

I want to highlight a couple of issues that are particularly important to those of us who advocate on behalf of students with specific learning disabilities.

There is some discussion of the matter of educational placement within the elementary and secondary system. The guidelines acknowledge that there are

(continued on page 6)

Accessible Education cont. from page 5

circumstances where a self-contained special education classroom or a specialized school placement is the best way to meet, with dignity, the individualized needs of students with disabilities. Therefore, the suggestion that some families hear that placement in a self-contained classroom is always unacceptable for their child, is, in itself, discriminatory.

The guidelines also state that, short of undue hardship, the highest point in the continuum of accommodation must be achieved. Therefore, before an education provider can opt for a less expensive or apparently less disruptive accommodation option, it must be demonstrated that this alternative form of accommodation is equally responsive to the student's needs and educational goals

and equally respectful of the student's dignity.

Another important issue is the discussion relating to the essential requirements of an educational program and to what extent a student can meet these, having received an accommodation. It is important to note that when it comes to post-secondary education, where there is no statutory right of access for all, the essential requirements are more narrowly and more academically defined. What that means for the many students with learning disabilities who attend Ontario's colleges and universities is that an appropriate accommodation will enable the student to successfully meet the essential academic requirements of the program, with no alteration in standards or outcomes. Modifying the requirements of an academic program at this level is not an acceptable form of

accommodation, although how the student demonstrates that he or she has met the essential requirements may be altered.

In conclusion, these guidelines have the potential to make the educational system of Ontario much more responsive to meeting the needs of students with disabilities, provided that the education providers accept their responsibilities and take the necessary corrective steps. LDAO and you, the members of the association, must work together to promote access to an enabling educational system, one that indeed provides an opportunity to succeed for all students with learning disabilities. ☺

*Eva Nichols,
Legislation Consultant*



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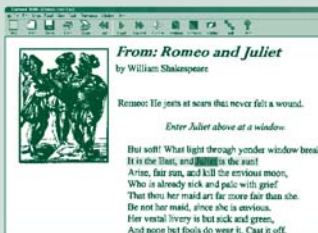


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The Demonstration Teaching Model

The Demonstration Teaching Model at Sagonaska Provincial Demonstration School has been developed to help students with learning disabilities succeed in the regular school curriculum. It is fashioned after an instructional coaching approach developed at the Center for Research on Learning (CRL) at the University of Kansas, whereby a highly trained professional developer provides on-site teaching using research-based instructional methods and strategies (Knight, 2004). This approach has proven to be very effective. Researchers have determined that instructional coaching has generated implementation rates of 85%, as compared to traditional in-service, without follow-up, which is likely to achieve approximately a 10% implementation rate (Knight, 2004).

In the Sagonaska model, staff, students and parents are taught (within their home schools) specific methodologies and strategies in reading comprehension, understanding and remembering content, and test preparation, by a Resource Teacher from Sagonaska. The delivery of this on-site support allows for the classroom context and the particular needs of each student and teacher to be taken into consideration. For example, if a student is experiencing difficulty reading primary and secondary sounds, teachers and support staff are taught a methodology that focuses on the encoding and decoding skills necessary to read and spell monosyllabic and multisyllabic words.

Once the student masters the English sounds, Resource Teachers can demonstrate a range of routines and strategies (developed by the CRL) to help students succeed in school. Often the first ones are the *Word Identification* and *Paraphrasing Strategies* which teach the student how to comprehend the material they are reading. The *Word Identification*



Strategy teaches students a problem-solving procedure for quickly attacking and decoding multi-syllabic words allowing them to quickly move towards comprehension of the passage. The *Paraphrasing Strategy* directs students to read a limited section of material, discover the main idea and the details of the section and then put that information in their own words. This strategy has the student actively focus on the important information in a text.

The Resource Teachers also demonstrate routines and strategies for remembering content and for test preparation, including the *Unit Organizer*, the *First Letter Mnemonic Strategy* and the *Test Taking Strategy*. The *Unit Organizer* provides students with a framework for their learning. This routine makes students aware of the relationships between the last unit, the current unit and the upcoming unit. Students are provided with a graphic depiction of the current unit as well as the strategies and relationships necessary to understand and remember the content they have been taught.

The *First Letter Mnemonic Strategy* teaches students how to get information

from a textbook by making headings and lists, memorizing the headings and lists (using mnemonic devices), transferring the information to a card and then self testing prior to the test. The *Test Taking Strategy* teaches a student how to effectively take a test. In this strategy students are taught how to read instructions carefully, allocate their time, answer known questions first, apply the most reasonable guess to the difficult questions, and finally survey the entire test for unanswered questions.

The Demonstration Teaching Model has several components. First, the staff supporting the student attend a workshop offered through Teacher Education at Sagonaska. If the teacher and support staff have not had this opportunity, the information can still be provided in the home school upon the Resource Teacher's arrival and then later in the day it is followed by demonstration teaching. Next, the Resource Teacher reviews the instructional methods covered in the workshop or on-site staff presentation. Interaction is encouraged to ensure understanding. In this way learning is built on dialogue not lecture (Knight,

(continued on page 8)

**The Demonstration Teaching Method
cont. from page 7**

2003). Then the Resource Teacher demonstrates or models the teaching of the strategy. It is at this point that the student is actively involved, along with the staff supporting that student. Finally, the staff has the opportunity to teach the method to the student themselves, at which time coaching and feedback are provided by the Resource Teacher.

If necessary, this Demonstration Teaching Model will be repeated during the visit to ensure that the staff is comfortable using this methodology to teach the student in his or her own school. As Dr. Don Deshler of the University of Kansas states, "the instructional time available to us is so limited and the gap between a student's actual and expected performance level is so great that our instruction must be well designed and

effectively delivered so that students make accelerated gains"(Deshler, 2003). The Demonstration Teaching offered through Resource Services at Sagonaska Demonstration School supports school staff to do just that.

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Demonstration teaching is available to all Ontario teachers. Please call the Demonstration School closest to your school district: Amethyst School in London-contact Al Foster or Laura Smith at 519-453-4400; Sagonaska School in Belleville-contact Ann Colaiezzi or Tim Hanrahan at 613-967-2830; Trillium School in Milton-contact Nancy Papiez at 905-878-8428.



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SOAR for High School Students



A follow up to LDAO's successful book series *Some Assembly Required (SOAR)* is in the works. *Some Assembly Required*, available through Curriculum Services

Canada (go to www.pdstore.com and search for the title), is a guide to all things LD for students in early adolescence. It has been well-received by

students and teachers, and is in its third printing.

Now the same team is working on a follow-up to the series, this time for students in high school. The series will again attempt to explain learning disabilities and provoke discussion of how the difficulties related to the learning disability can be circumvented and/or confronted. Time will also be spent on preparing for life after high school. Post-secondary issues and options will be examined, including apprenticeship programs, workforce and formal education, as well as issues relating to life-management and self-advocacy.

Input from focus groups of students in Toronto's *Pathways To Success* program has been valuable and appreciated. As the materials are developed, feedback from high school students will be solicited and utilized in the refinement of the drafts. Plans are also developing to tie the text material into the LDAO's *Access Youth* website: www.access.ldaao.ca. ☺

New Online Resources

Me Read? No Way!

This new publication of the Ministry of Education is subtitled **A practical guide to improving boys' literacy skills**. The guide offers education professionals a number of practices and strategies used around the world in successful literacy programs for boys.

Evidence continues to grow that gender is a significant factor in choice of reading material and in reading achievement. Boys typically score lower than girls on standardized language arts tests and are more likely to be in special education programs. Dropout rates are higher for boys than for girls.

The guide offers a number of strategies for success, such as examples of the kinds of books that boys prefer. Parents

will also find the suggestions useful in encouraging reluctant readers. The guide also describes an innovative website: <http://www.guysread.com> that lists appropriate reading materials and puts young male readers in touch with a group of like-minded readers.

To download a copy of this guide from the Ministry's website go to: www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/literacynumeracy/index.html.

It can also be ordered from the government bookstore under ISBN 0-7794-7014-1.

Call: 1-800-668-9938 (Toronto) or 1-800-268-8758 (Ottawa).

25 Top Tips for Handling Homework

The Schwab Learning website is an excellent source for information relating

to all aspects of learning disabilities and ADHD. This particular publication is written for parents and provides practical ideas for helping your child with homework. Tips are divided into four subsections:

- Set the stage (organize and optimize the homework environment)
- Get it done (get started and stay on task)
- Build good habits (be a role model for your child)
- Create an adventure (add inspiration and motivation to the mix)

The booklet can be downloaded from: www.SchwabLearning.org/articles.asp?r=858.

Schwab Learning also offers a site for children ages 8 to 12 at: www.SparkTop.org.

Tips for choosing a Summer Camp

When choosing a summer camp program for a child with disabilities, the most important question is: *Will they understand and take good care of my child?* This can be answered by lengthy conversations with camp personnel or the director well in advance of the camping season. If a camp is too busy to return your phone calls, or take the time to talk at length with you, will they be too busy for your child as well? Regardless of all that a camp may have to offer, if the director or the staff are too busy for you now, it should be a red flag. Find a camp that will give you and your child the time and attention that you both deserve. Consider these factors when determining what camp program will be best for the needs of your child.

Type of Program

Decide early in the process what type of program you want for your child. Camps are offered as day programs (campers go home at night) and residential programs (campers board at the camp facility for the length of their stay). Length of programs varies from as long as a few days to several weeks. Be certain that your child is ready to cope with the length of the program you select. Camp programs are available in both single sex format and co-ed. Consider your child's social skills level and ability to cope with the demands of mixed social situations when deciding which of these environments would be best. Program philosophy should be clearly stated in the camp literature. Your family should be comfortable with this philosophy and confident that it will deliver an enjoyable experience for your child. Of particular importance is the camp's policy regarding family communication with the child. Will the child be expected, in fact encouraged, to write to his/her family during the camp stay? Will phone calls to/from home be allowed? Children with disabilities often have differing needs for

family contact and you should be certain that the camp policy will not conflict with those needs.

Type of Camp

There are many choices. Your child can be mainstreamed into a regular camp setting, or be at a camp that focuses on their particular needs. There are also camps that mix up the needs, such as learning disabilities, emotional disabilities and physical disabilities. And then there are camps that truly specialize. You'll need to decide what type of environment will best address your child's needs.

Size

What are you ideally looking for? Camps range in size from 500 or more children per session to as small as 30-35 per session. It is purely a personal decision for each family. Make a point of asking the camp director for information about the number of campers in the program.

Educational vs. Recreational

Many camps are purely recreational, while other programs combine both recreational and educational activities. Some programs, while calling themselves *camp*, have a strong instructional focus. Inquire about the percentage of camp time devoted to varying activities and decide what mix will best serve your child's specific needs.

Location and Facilities

Choose the type of setting that you think your child will enjoy. There are camps with lakefront, mountain and forest locations, and schools that convert to summer camps. Some camps are luxurious and others are true camping experiences. Ask about eating, sleeping and bathing facilities and be sure that your child will feel comfortable in the particular setting offered by the camp.

Staff

Camps accredited by the Ontario Camping Association are required to provide one counsellor for every eight children for six to seven year olds and one to ten for eight years plus. When dealing with children with disabilities a higher staff ratio is preferred. For residential programs, be sure to determine the level of staff supervision in the evening hours. You want your child to receive the attention needed in the camp environment. In addition, it is important to determine if the teachers and/or counsellors are educated, certified, and trained to work with children with disabilities. In addition, determine the level of medical training the staff has received. If your child takes regular medication, who will administer the medication each day?

Summer camp should focus on enhancing your child's self-esteem and independence. The successful camp experience should improve social skills and provide quality peer relationships. Hopefully your camper will return with better self-esteem than when the summer began. ☺

By Ann Cathcart, LDA Newsbriefs, July/August 2001. Used with permission. The article was originally published in the Source: Cope Communicator, Salem, OR.

The Ontario Camping Association publishes a useful free guide to choosing a camp. It is called The Ontario Camping Guide 2005. Contact: Ontario Camping Association, 250 Merton St., Suite 403, Toronto M4S 1B1, Tel: 416-485-0425; e-mail: info@ontcamp.on.ca.

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Youth Perspective

Adam's Story

Hi, I'm Adam and I have a different way of learning. I have a Pentium 3 computer. I like Kurzweil for doing my work at school. I also have a Dana keyboard for school work and my agenda. It helps me keep organized and has an address book too.

I have had good teachers. My new grade seven teacher is Miss Stobo and she is great. My best teacher is Mrs. Dodge at MacLeod School. She has helped me to learn for three years. I also have Dan, a retired principal, who tutors me at home on Tuesdays and Thursdays. I am taking the SOAR program after school every Wednesday. It is fun and I am learning about disabilities and how we learn.

My favourite sport to watch is Sudbury Wolves hockey and my favourite sport to play is basketball. I also like playing with my friends and it's usually skateboarding or PS2. My favourite subject, other than gym and recess, is math and I am good at it.

I like my life because it's a lot of fun and there are a lot of things to do. My life is great because I have a lot of friends and I have a super mom and dad. I think my future will be bright too.

Reprinted from the newsletter of LDA Sudbury, Fall 2004.

Advice for Youth

LDAO staff are in the process of writing a short series of books for high school students with learning disabilities, called (for now) *Some Assembly Required HS*. The series will attempt to shed some light on the process of learning, the challenges posed by a learning disability, and to share advice and strategies for overcoming challenges and becoming the masterful author of one's own fate.

We would like to include interviews with successful adults of all backgrounds in our books. By doing so, we hope to accomplish several things:

- ✓ to introduce young people to the diversity of experiences and life paths available;
- ✓ to give young people examples of a variety of definitions of success;
- ✓ to share the lessons, experiences and wisdom of the older generation with high school students;

We do not expect you to write your life story, or to provide wisdom in every area! We intend to take excerpts from the entries we receive and scatter those throughout the books in sidebars; so whether you have one solid piece of advice or pages of experience to share, we want it all!

As you'll see on the questionnaire, you are welcome to choose to remain anonymous, although sharing your name

may make the example you're setting seem more real to students.

Please look through the attached questionnaire and answer any parts of it that seem relevant or interesting, and then send it in to us.

We greatly appreciate your input. More than that, you will be making a contribution to the generation currently in school that may have an impact on the future of our country and society. How often do you get to do that without opening your wallet?

Jeff Clayton, LDAO

Questionnaire

The purposes of this questionnaire are described above. You are encouraged to answer as much of it as you feel comfortable answering, in as much detail as you like.

Please ensure that you indicate whether or not you would like your answers to be anonymous.

Any questions regarding this project can be addressed to Jeff Clayton at jeffc@ldao.ca. Please complete the questionnaire (or as much as you feel comfortable with completing) and mail it to: Jeff Clayton, c/o LDAO, 365 Bloor St. East, Box 39, Toronto, ON M4W 3L4 or fax to: Jeff Clayton at 416-929-3905. Thank you.

Your Name:

Your Profession:

Your email (or other) address:

(If you wish to remain anonymous please do not fill in the above section.)

1. Describe your career/job(s).
2. How did you discover your particular career/job? Did you always know what it would be?
3. Do you have a learning disability? Diagnosed or non-diagnosed?
4. If you have a learning disability:
 - (a) How did it affect you in school?
 - (b) How did it affect in other areas of life? (friendship, love employment)
 - (c) What helped? What didn't help?
5. Which aspects of education did you enjoy the most? Why?
6. Who did you admire growing up? Did that person affect how you live your life, or choices you made?
7. How would you define success in life?
8. If you were able to give one piece of advice to high school students, what would it be?

Developing Resilience in Youth with Disabilities

Children and adults with learning disabilities experience numerous challenges in their day-to-day lives including academic, social and behavioural struggles. Resilience, the ability to cope with and overcome adversity is essential for all children, particularly those with learning disabilities. Resilience is a powerful force in helping children overcome not only significant adversity but also everyday stresses. Resilience is a major protective factor for at-risk youth. It is also essential for the healthy development of all young people.

How is resilience developed?

Resilience is developed through successfully navigating challenging situations. This entails trial and error, bouncing back from disappointments, setting realistic goals, solving problems successfully, relating comfortably with others and treating oneself and others with respect.

Parents play a key role in the development of resilience in their children. Parents need to recognize that simply fixing the problems of their children is not sufficient. Having parents fix their problems will not assist children to identify and use their strengths in order to meet the challenges they face on a day-to-day basis.

How can parents help the adolescent with learning disabilities to develop resilience?

The following is not a comprehensive list. It is meant to be a starting point, with strategies that are readily available to most parents.

- Help your child to feel special and appreciated.
 - Recognize, praise and reinforce effort, not just results.
- Help your child find areas of ability and competence.

- Find an activity that your child is able to do and enjoys doing.
- Provide your child an opportunity to contribute.
 - Taking care of a pet, assisting a senior citizen, volunteering in the community all build confidence.
- Help your child learn to solve problems and make decisions.
 - Offer them several options and help them think about how to make a decision.



- Help your child to set realistic expectations and goals.
 - Make sure you fully understand your child's strengths and needs.
 - Research shows that others' perceptions, particularly parents' expectations, are strongly related to children's self-perceptions. Adolescents are swayed by the reactions of others. So how you feel about the child will be transmitted verbally and/or non-verbally.
 - Don't measure your child's success by how you think he/she should do.

- Help children recognize mistakes as opportunities to learn.
- Use positive discipline methods (not shaming methods).
 - All young people thrive with structure, consistency, appropriate expectations, support and reassurance.
- Provide an atmosphere at home that tolerates/accepts differences.
- If there is a parent or significant adult who has similar difficulties, that individual may be able to offer support and empathy, which can feel validating.
- Adults who are significant in the lives of individuals with learning disabilities can take on the role of benefactors, offering support, encouragement and guidance.
- Intervene directly when needed, for example:
 - if an adolescent is being bullied;
 - if the school program is not meeting the adolescent's needs;
 - if the adolescent needs help with homework;
 - if the adolescent needs assistive devices;
 - if the adolescent needs mental health support (depression, anxiety, risk of self-harm).
- Intervention often requires involving the young person, key adults and institutions in his/her environment in order to build a comprehensive framework of support. ☺

By Barbara Muskat, Integra Foundation. Used with permission.

LDAO's Response to the Postsecondary Review

This past December, the Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario (LDAO) prepared a response to the Ontario Postsecondary Review task force chaired by Bob Rae. Mandate of the Review was to develop a fiscally sustainable long-term plan for Ontario's postsecondary educational system.

Our first concern was that the discussion paper for the Review did not adequately address the key issues that create barriers to the postsecondary educational system for students with disabilities. We then dealt individually with these barriers.

The issue of accessibility

The Learning Opportunities Task Force has shown in its work that students with specific learning disabilities can succeed in the postsecondary education system if they receive appropriate services and supports.

Unfortunately, many secondary students with learning disabilities and their parents are not well informed about postsecondary education options and opportunities. Many of them lack adequate Transition Plans (mandatory for ages fourteen plus) that not only outline their strengths, needs and accommodation requirements but also their future goals, such as postsecondary education, and how these goals are to be achieved. In addition, many of these students leave secondary school without adequate or updated psycho-educational assessments. This means that they cannot access needed postsecondary services because they have no documentation of their learning disabilities. Access to diagnostic assessments continues to be an issue for all persons with learning disabilities because such assessments are not covered under provincial health insurance.

The issue of quality

The fundamental requirement for enhancing student success is to improve the quality of postsecondary teaching. University faculty success is dependent on research and publishing of research papers. College teachers are often part-



time employees with technical expertise only. Therefore, faculty in both kinds of institutions often do not understand student learning in general and the learning challenges arising from having a learning disability in particular.

LDAO recommends that there be a department in each postsecondary institution where faculty can receive help and guidance to become effective teachers; that each such institution implement the principles of universal instructional design; and that students with disabilities should be able to expect full compliance with the institution's legislated mandate under the Human Rights Code.

The issue of system design

Ontario has no specific higher education plan in place to ensure that its publicly funded postsecondary system will meet the growing expectations of students and employers and operate as a coherent system.

Greater communication among institutions, such as the sharing of best practices, would lead to a more effective system with consistent approaches to valuing educational excellence. LDAO sees merit in the suggestion that there be greater specialization among the institutions, as well as a potential danger if this were to lead to the setting up of specialized institutions for students with disabilities.

The issue of funding

From our viewpoint, the greatest funding issue relates to the funding supports that individual students with learning disabilities face. For example, the Bursary for Students with Disabilities (BSWD) has been of assistance to students with learning disabilities. Unfortunately, to be eligible to receive the grant, the student must also be eligible to receive the Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP). Many students with learning disabilities are not eligible to receive OSAP, often because their families are able to pay for their tuition and living expenses. However, many of these families do not have access to the additional funds required to pay for the disability-related supports. This represents a significant disadvantage for many students with disabilities and often they end up dropping out of school.

The Bursary for Students with a Disability should be accessible to all students with a confirmed permanent disability, regardless of their financial status.

The issue of accountability

There is no consistent understanding of what accountability means and how it can be measured in the context of the educational system, but an accountability mechanism needs to be developed here. LDAO believes that accountability should be defined as determination of whether a system delivers the outcomes that it is expected to do in a responsive, student-focussed and cost-effective manner. Accountability measures should include program evaluation components, student and faculty surveys as well as arms' length reviews of the system's effectiveness.

Report and Recommendations of the Rae Commission

In February 2005, Bob Rae released his report and recommendations based on the postsecondary consultation. The full report can be found on the website:

www.raereview.on.ca. A section on students with disabilities addressed a few of the issues raised by LDAO. The issue of transitions from high school and transition out of postsecondary to work were mentioned, as well as the need for improved teacher training to create better understanding of the unique needs of students with disabilities. The report did not clarify if "teacher training" included postsecondary faculty, or outline how this should be achieved.

There was a welcome recommendation that funding to offices for students with disabilities be based on the number of students with disabilities enrolled and the costs associated with providing the needed support services to those students. The report also recommended the development of centres of excellence and research at leading institutions, such as the Glen Crombie Centre at Cambrian College. It is hoped that this idea does not lead to directing students with

disabilities to attend only those institutions with such centres of excellence.

There are some good recommendations on improving apprenticeship training, including making community colleges responsible for job-matching services to bring together employers and apprentices. Such reforms could be beneficial to many adults with learning disabilities.

Bob Rae made many recommendations on funding, primarily to make postsecondary education more affordable for low income students. It is very unfortunate that the report did not address the issue of making the Bursary for Students with Disabilities available to students who do not qualify for OSAP. This issue was raised not only by LDAO, but also by other disability groups attending a special consultation meeting. ☺

Celebrating 20 Years

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Focus on Our Chapters

Learning Disabilities Association of Kitchener-Waterloo

Learning Disabilities Association of Kitchener-Waterloo was founded in 1966. The owner of a local bookstore is credited with connecting parents whom he observed purchasing materials to assist their children. Out of these connections came the local chapter with Elizabeth Breithaupt as the first president.

The chapter has grown to become a strong organization serving all of Waterloo Region, including the cities of Kitchener, Waterloo and Cambridge. Funded by United Way, a generous donation from UPI, other donations and fund-raising activities, the staff of two dedicated individuals, the Board of Directors and dedicated volunteers work hard to raise awareness of LD in the community. We work closely with parents, families and individuals to help them reach their full potential.

Our chapter provides resource facilitation for people dealing with learning disabilities, with referrals to different sectors in the community. The resource library has a variety of current information on all aspects of learning disabilities for all ages. Many students use the library to do research projects. We also provide workshops on a variety of topics dealing with learning disabilities.

Every spring we offer the *Deryk J. Farrell Scholarship* to a deserving student with learning disabilities who is going on to post secondary education. Our chapter continues to offer educators, parents and professionals high caliber speakers each spring during a one-day conference. This past spring we offered two conferences within six weeks which was both challenging and rewarding.

We offer two well respected and research-based tutoring programs for children in grades two to eight. *Learn Now!* is our after school tutoring program

with a two to one ratio with a qualified teacher. The focus is on the language arts area, which includes reading, writing and verbal skills.

In July we offer two, two-week sessions of *Summer Start*. The children work in a three to one ratio with a qualified teacher. The focus is on reading, writing, verbal and math skills. In both programs each student has an individualized lesson plan geared specifically to his/her needs.

In June of this past year we were very excited to offer the *Greta Cramer Keys to Success Award*. The award was named after Greta Cramer who has been a very dedicated volunteer to our organization

for the past twenty-three years and who is a great champion for all students. This award will be presented annually in June to a dedicated educator who has helped students with learning disabilities reach their full potential.

Over the years we have developed a good working relationship with the Waterloo Region District School Board, the Waterloo Catholic District School Board, local literacy groups and various other community groups. We are fortunate to have knowledgeable and skilled representatives on the Special Education Advisory Committees for both school boards. The chapter has a small, dedicated group of volunteers and staff who continue to carry out the mission statement of our chapter. ☺

Ray Morin: an Outstanding Educator

LDAO's Outstanding Educator Award for 2004 was awarded posthumously to Ray Morin of Sudbury. Ray died on August 21, 2004 at the age of 57. He worked for more than thirty years as a teacher, guidance counsellor and program leader for student services at Confederation Secondary School in Val Caron.

Two years ago, he began a second career as a learning strategist and assistive technologist helping students with learning disabilities in the Special Needs Office at Laurentian University in Sudbury. In his two years there Ray made innovative and lasting

contributions that will help students for years to come. He was instrumental in the creation of the Learning Commons, an assistive technology lab set up within Laurentian's library and the Adopt-a-School program. The latter program will use technology-trained university students with learning disabilities to train elementary and secondary students with learning disabilities and their resource teachers in the latest computer technologies.

Ray was truly an outstanding educator in many aspects of education.



LDAO Director, Vincent Greco (left) presents the Outstanding Educator's Award to the family of the late Ray Morin.

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ESL and Multicultural Issues | Dr. Esther Geva*, Department of Human Development and Applied Psychology, OISE/University of Toronto

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Teacher Feature

Helping Teens with LD Paving the Road to Success

For the few short years, from the time a child becomes a teenager at age 13 to the day high school graduation occurs, teachers have an opportunity to dramatically impact the direction that child's life will take.

Teachers of this age group are one of the last lines of defence in the battle to prepare a student academically and socially for life beyond high school, and the strategies they employ can determine the likelihood of success.

Because few teens are more vulnerable during this time than those with learning disabilities, LD News spoke with a number of education professionals about how teachers can help teens with LD succeed both academically and socially.

While most underscored the importance of first gaining student trust through a genuine display of caring, all offered concrete, specific strategies to helping teens succeed.

Here are some of their recommendations:

Tips for Strengthening Academic Skills

- Take the time to understand how the teen's learning disability affects his or her learning style and tailor classroom lessons to ensure the greatest potential success. For example, a teen who learns primarily from auditory cues may benefit greatly from in-class instruction, but struggle needlessly when faced with lengthy reading assignments.
- Be sensitive to the emotional vulnerability that often accompanies teens with learning disabilities and avoid situations that would embarrass or lower a teen's self-confidence or self-esteem. Criticize carefully and think twice before pointing out potential faults as the entire class looks on. A private discussion with a

teen is often more effective, and the teen will appreciate the discretion.

- Design creative and discrete ways to bring teens back on-task. Some teachers use pre-established signals—such as a pass to the drinking fountain laid on a teen's desk—to communicate that it's time to take a two-minute breather (to the drinking fountain in this case) and return ready to regroup and refocus.
- Help erase the fear that a teen may have about performing by allowing extra preparation time. A teen with dyslexia, for example, may find reading in front of a class embarrassing when unprepared, but may be comfortable doing so when given the text to practice the day before.
- Don't be afraid to “jump-start” a teen by initiating an assignment or project. Some teens have trouble taking the first step, but take control quickly thereafter.
- Discuss the teen's past learning experiences with other teachers who

have taught the teen. Doing so will provide valuable insight into the teen's unique strengths and weaknesses and the learning style most likely to be effective.



Criticize carefully and think twice before pointing out potential faults as the entire class looks on.



- Establish structure for teens who lack it. Some teens underachieve simply because they have trouble organizing their homework assignments and projects. Helping them create a workable structure can make the difference between success and failure.
- Involve and empower a teen through honest discussions of his or her strengths and weaknesses and the steps needed to increase academic success. By doing so, the teen is more likely to



be accepting, rather than resistant, of remediation attempts.

- Create an escape valve that a teen can access to temporarily suspend a frustrating or overwhelming situation. In one school, a teen who calls out “ripcord” can take a 5-minute break from the situation at hand. To help regain control, the teen fills out a form by describing the problem, the accompanying feelings, and why those feelings exist, and formulating a plan of action.
- Show concern for the teen, thus creating a greater sense of trust and making the teen more receptive to recommendations of academic and social success.
- Consider teaming a teen with a learning disability with a younger student struggling in the same area. This allows the teen to strengthen skills and build self-esteem by stepping into a mentoring role, and it benefits the younger student through one-on-one instruction.



**Don't be afraid to “jump-start”
a teen by initiating an
assignment or project.**



- Acknowledge the teen's learning disability and use the information that comes with that knowledge to help the teen succeed. Acknowledging the existence of a learning disability allows a teacher to formulate strategies for success. Teachers who refuse to admit that learning disabilities exist can hamper a teen's ability to gain appropriate instruction and move forward.
- Take full advantage of the teen's Individual Education Plan (IEP). It



contains detailed information on the teen's learning disability and the strategies devised by educational professionals, the teen's parents, and the teen to ensure the greatest likelihood of success.

Tips for Strengthening Social Skills

- Review real-life social situations with teens to help them examine their actions and explore other options. For example, if a teen makes an inappropriate comment during class, discuss the comment—why it was made, the problems associated with it, and what comments would have been more appropriate. Doing so will help the teen better understand appropriate social conduct.
- Encourage participation in school sports and clubs. Involvement in these areas can help teens practice social skills in new environments and settings.
- Be alert to situations that negatively impact a teen's self-confidence and self-esteem and discuss these issues with the teen and offer encouragement and support. Letting a teen know that everyone makes mistakes and experiences difficulties can bolster a

teen's mood and prevent a slide into self-doubt and even depression.

- Teach teens strategies to strengthen social skills. For example, a teen who needs extra time to process information and formulate a comment during a discussion can learn to immediately say, “Let me think about that for a moment.” This bridges the gap between the question and what could become an uncomfortable length of time before an answer is given.
- Identify at least one thing for which a teen displays a love or talent and use that knowledge to lift a teen's spirits when needed. For example, a musically gifted teen discouraged over an inability to read as well as his peers, may experience renewed hope and drive when engaged in a conversation about his musical accomplishments. 🎵

By Gerald Deskin, Ph.D., founder and director, The Learning Center, Encino, CA. From the National Center for Learning Disabilities website: www.ncl.org. Used with permission.

An Integrated Studies Program for At-Risk Secondary Students

When asked to write one line to explain the program he is part of, Jared (age 18) wrote: “Revolutionary: a heart and a home in a world that fails so many.” He is one of nearly one hundred students who have become secondary school graduates instead of high school dropouts through the Integrated Studies Program (ISP) in Abbotsford, British Columbia.

Creating this program over the past five years has been a roller coaster of emotion, a learning cliff of new ideas and both the most rewarding and the most challenging experience in my years of teaching. In 1997, the principal of the largest senior secondary school in my district approached me, an elementary teacher, to develop a program for “at-risk” students.

The staff at his school were dismayed by the number of academically capable students who were being unsuccessful and dropping out of school. They had discovered a common thread when looking at the permanent record files of these students. It was noted that their academic achievement in the elementary system was above average in most cases. It seemed that the attachment to one classroom and primarily one teacher in the elementary model worked for these students. When sent off to the more impersonal, fragmented system of the secondary school, they lost grip and began to fail. While the secondary model worked for stable, well-adjusted young people, the more fragmented learners fell away from the system. They began to skip classes, to get caught up in the network of “at-risk” peers out of class and to fall into a downward spiral of despair. Each term would start anew and a new resolve would be made, only to be broken at the first sign of stress or failure.

After much soul searching, I decided to take on the challenge of working with these fragmented young people. I envisioned creating an elementary classroom in a high school building. I took all of the learning outcomes for the grade eleven core subjects and required electives and planned a thematic integrated way of learning (the Integrated Studies Program-ISP). In the fall of 1997

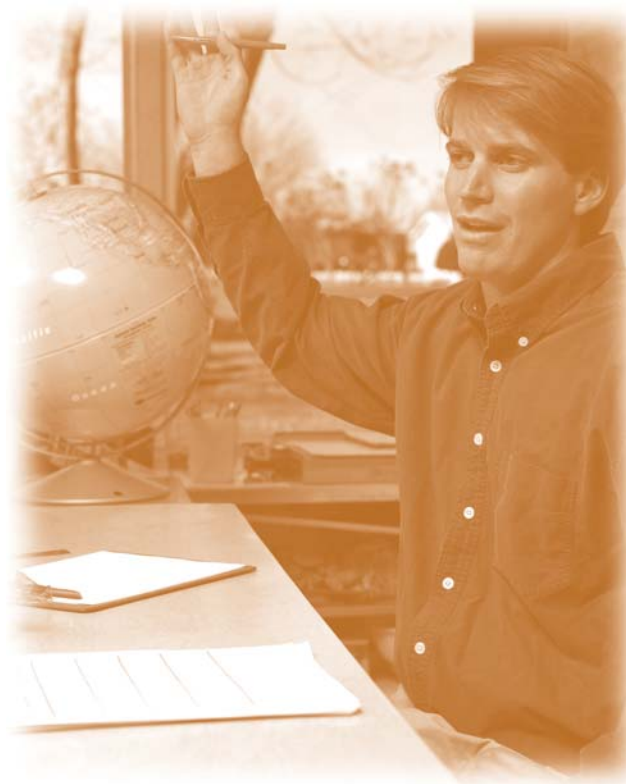
I have no special education training. I am not a counsellor. I had never taught in a high school. I think, perhaps, nearing my fiftieth birthday and facing my own empty nest left me in a somewhat altered state of mind in which I thought this job was do-able. In any case, on September Second, 1997, I greeted a class of twelve grade eleven “at risk” students.

These were students who had been thrown out of most other educational institutions in our district and who thought they had hit yet another “alternate” place. I will never forget Jay who came through the door last, slammed down his binder on the table and yelled out, “Great, another ‘f-ing’ class for losers.”

There was silence as the others waited my response. Perhaps it was my years of elementary expectations, or maybe it came from my twenty plus years of parenting, but I reacted quickly and firmly. I said, “Jay, I can only assume two things by the behaviour I have just observed. Either you do not know what is appropriate and correct classroom behaviour, or you do not respect me and this place. If it is the first, you are welcome to

stay because I am here to teach you appropriateness. If it is the latter, please leave. There is the door. Do not return.” Jay stayed and there was no more coarse language in our classroom.

Our classroom is one of decorum and respect. Students feel treasured and cared for. As well as tables for learning groups of four or five, our classroom contains a couch, a fridge and microwave, and most often a bouquet of flowers. Early on I established, with the administration of the school, that I would work with any students who had the academic potential to pass high school as long as they wanted to be in the program. I have been



I left the safety and security of a grade-six classroom where I loved my work, to move on to a whole new world.

The first impression of any elementary teacher to the high school system is that the students are very big! They don't take off their outdoor shoes to come inside, and they don't walk down the same side of the hall in an orderly manner. The students' height prevents the stern look down on the naughty grade-four child who is being inappropriate in the hallway. Discipline is a far different issue. It is absolutely imperative to gain the students' respect and to respect them in return.

given the leeway to dismiss any student who is not able to meet the criteria developed by the ISP staff and students: **Be here at least 90% of the time. Show a good attitude. Get all of your work done on time and to the best of your ability.**

Having just completed a Masters degree the summer before taking on this challenge, I came armed with research-based theory that stated, among many things, that student success is enhanced by the advocacy of a significant adult in their lives, that learning that is relevant and current is more easily accepted and learned, and that working hand in hand with the community puts students in line with their futures. In addition, my years of teaching and parenting had shown me that setting the bar ever higher when expecting results causes the student or child to strive for more and to enjoy success. I also came to the job with a wonderfully supportive family, a natural love of people and a sense of humour. Some days, if I could not have made a joke in the middle of a tense situation, I don't think I could have carried on.

It is important to note that although the class began with only twelve students, within a few weeks I realized that the class did not have the synergy needed for a successful learning community. I asked the students to identify others who would benefit from the program. In the fall of the next year I took twenty students to grade twelve, and a colleague started with a new class of grade eleven's. In September, 2001, three teachers, three part-time teachers' assistants and I, as coordinator/teacher, have taken on more than seventy-five students in grades ten, eleven and twelve. These students deal with a mix of behavioural, emotional and academic challenges because of the issues in their lives. However, all come to us with a common goal: to learn, to graduate from high school and to leave with a plan for their future.

It is an understatement to say that it was a huge academic challenge to teach the entire curriculum at a secondary level. Because I was so intent that the teachers in the regular stream respect this program, I elicited the help of department heads and used testing materials from their classes. Using all sorts of elementary strategies I made the material as interesting and relevant as I could. For example, to address the theme of "conflict" I used the conflict in their own lives (Family Studies), the conflicts in the world at present and in the past (Social Studies and History), conflicting characters in Shakespeare's Macbeth (English), and conflicting opinions in "Government" as fuel for what we learned. Learning is powerful. When students fall in love with learning and become hooked on success, their own problems become less debilitating.

I have been saddened and humbled by the stories my students have told me. Whenever I think I have heard the most awful story of human unkindness and neglect, there is a fresh story to take its place. While I do not dwell on their problems, it is important that they tell me when they are unfit to work to their potential. The building of social capital is intricately woven into all that we do. Manners, respect, compassion, trustworthiness, tolerance are ideals that we aspire to daily. As students learn to trust each other-and me-they become more able to blossom in the classroom and to share bits of themselves. The students share their lives in an incidental way with each other.

Perhaps the story that moved me most profoundly happened during a grade twelve literature lesson. I suggested that the character in the play was "vulnerable". Seeing a rather blank look on several faces, I asked if the students knew what vulnerable meant. One girl answered this way:

"Well, I can't give you a definition, but I think I can give you an example,

if that's OK. Once when I was six years old, I was fast asleep. My mother was drunk and swung a baseball bat at me and hit my head. I woke up to blood and pain. I was very afraid and after that, whenever I went to sleep, I would feel vulnerable."

Powerful stuff. Not only will the students never forget the concept, they learned why Nadia had days when she did not want to interact with anyone.

In many cases, my students have been beaten physically and mentally and emotionally by the adults in their lives. It is not an easy thing to help them to trust again and to want to strive for a better life in a world that has turned its back on them so many times. But, with patience, with kindness and a genuine love for them as worthy human beings, the possibilities for success are endless.

This June, we will have had just under one hundred graduates from the Integrated Studies Program. Our graduates are in colleges and universities and out in the work force as productive human beings. As I used to say to my students almost daily, "You cannot change what has happened to you until this moment-but together we can create a wonderful tomorrow." –and they have. ☺

Judy Chapman is a B.C. teacher who has received several awards in recognition of her work with at-risk secondary students. Copyright © Canadian Education Association 2005. ISSN 0013-1253 Education Canada, Vol. 42 (2) Reprinted with permission. If you wish to make additional copies of this article, please contact the publishers or ACCESS Copyright (1-800-893-5777).

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Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities
The Ontario Trillium Foundation

The President's Council

The President's Council was initiated to recognize an outstanding level of commitment through annual contributions to LDAO and the learning disabilities network.

Carol & Randy Jones
Glenn Jones
Peter & Mary Elizabeth Kinch
Robert M. McDerment
Mr. & Mrs. Robert Quinn
Robert & Penny Richards
Isabel & Stephen Shessel

The welcome and invitation is still open! You will help us and our chapters maintain our position as the only organization in Ontario providing services to the learning disabled population. Please contact Denise Harding, Fund Development Consultant @ (416) 929-4311 ext. 40 or e-mail deniseharding@rogers.com for further information.

Job-Fit (formerly LEAP)

Human Resources and Skill Development Canada

LDAO Library Project

Eli Lilly Canada Inc.
TransCanada Pipelines

Online Golf Challenge Sponsors

Microcomputer Science Centre Inc.
ParentBooks

SOAR (Some Assembly Required) Partners

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Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation

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Sceptre
Toronto District School Board

LDAO Partnerships \$3,000+

The GOW School
Harcourt Assessment
IBM Employees' Charities
Microcomputer Science Centre Inc.

LDAO Benefactors \$1,000+

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A&A King Family Foundation
Jackman Foundation

Contributors \$100+

Mr. & Mrs. Stuart Eagles
Dr. Lynn Wells
United Way of Greater Toronto

Friends \$50+

OPG Employees' & Pensioners' Charity Trust

Commemorative Gifts

LDAO appreciates gifts made in honour of anyone of your choosing. Please consider a commemorative gift to support the work of LDAO and mark birthdays, anniversaries, memorials, graduations or any other milestone. Please contact Denise Harding, Fund Development Consultant @ (416) 929-4311 ext. 40 or e-mail deniseharding@rogers.com for further information about **Commemorative Gifts** or the **Lifetime of Learning Monthly Donor Program**. Gifts of \$50+ will be listed in the subsequent newsletter. ☺



Conference Calendar

April 8-9, 2005

Ideas and Inspiration Conference

Ontario School Councils
Delta Meadowvale, Mississauga
To register online go to:
www.schooladvocate.ca.

April 28-29, 2005

A day with Rick Lavoie

LDA of Ottawa-Carleton
Travelodge Hotel, Ottawa
For information: <http://ldaoc-ncf.ca>
Or 613-591-8435
Online registration:
www.mindware.ca

April 29, 2005

Practical Strategies for Identifying & Teaching Children with Reading/Writing Disabilities-

Dr. Dale Willows

LDA Kitchener-Waterloo Conference
For information: 519-743-9091 or
ldakw@golden.net

May 18, 2005

"What do we know about early learning and what are we doing about it?"

Canadian Education Association
Symposium
Delta Meadowvale, Mississauga
For information:
416-591-6300, ext. 22
www.cea-ace.ca/dia.cfm?subsection=oth.

November 3-4, 2005

From Research into Practice

Conference on learning disabilities for
educators, practitioners, parents and
researchers
Metro Convention Centre, Toronto
For information: 416-226-9756 or
mggoebel@interlog.com
www.frip2005.ca.

Transition programs for students entering post-secondary education in September

One of the recommendations in the final report of the Learning Opportunities Task Force was the following: *"Proven transition programming should be available to all students with learning disabilities who are going on to postsecondary education and are interested in participating in such opportunities."*

The rationale for this recommendation arose from the proven success of Project ADVANCE at York University, which has been providing intensive summer programming to students with LD since 1999. In the summer of 2003 there were seven summer programs piloted at Ontario colleges and universities. Due to the success of these programs and of the success of the participants in their postsecondary education studies, in 2004 seventeen institutions offered summer programs to students with LD. All of these were funded through the Learning Opportunities Task Force. A total of 277 students participated in these programs in 2004, which ranged from a one day session at one location to the six week intensive Project ADVANCE.

The seventeen institutions participating were as follows:

Universities: York, Carleton, Laurentian, Guelph, Queen's, Trent and Waterloo.

Colleges: Algonquin, Cambrian, Boreal, Conestoga, Loyalist, Georgian, St. Lawrence, George Brown, Durham and Mohawk.

Although the Learning Opportunities Task Force has been folded, the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities is continuing to fund summer projects for students with LD. This is because the feedback received from the students and the institutions indicates that such



programming, especially if the students access assessment updates and/or participate in obtaining a college credit during the summer program, is highly beneficial and aids student retention and success.

The details of the summer programs will be posted on both the LDAO and LOTF website, as soon as they are available. But in the meantime, if you - as a student - or your son or daughter are planning to go to college or university this fall, I would encourage you to enquire about the availability of such transition programming.

Students have consistently told us that they feel much more ready for postsecondary education after they have participated in a summer transition program. Let us ensure that all students with LD are aware of these opportunities as they embark on their postsecondary studies. ☺

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A different way of learning can lead to success.

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