



A Message from the Chair

Most of the country endured record-breaking winter conditions; but the deep freeze and winter storms did not stop the steady progress of our dedicated team of staff and volunteers at LDA-Canada. We welcome Scott Patterson, who is our new Fund Development Director. We are looking forward to stepping up our fundraising to resource our many new and existing project initiatives. In addition, with a new government in place for our cousins to the south – raising anxieties and concerns about our own LD community, we are re-affirming our commitment to advocate for Canadians affected by learning disabilities. With Spring comes renewal and new initiatives. Onwards and upwards!

Thealzel Lee
Chair, Learning Disabilities Association of Canada

A Message from the Executive Director

Welcome Scott!

I am pleased to announce that LDAC has hired a Fund Development Director. Scott Patterson started work on January 23rd and will be involved in developing LDAC's fundraising and marketing strategies. Scott has worked in government, crown corporations, associations and international development sectors. Scott has extensive expertise in the areas of marketing promotions, advertising, fund development, business development and creative production in the not for profit and public sector enterprises. You can reach Scott at scott@ldac-acta.ca

New Donor Page on LDAC website

After many months of hard work, LDAC is proud to announce its new online donor page on the LDAC website. We have been working diligently with the team at CIBLE Inc., a Sherbrooke, Quebec content management company. Their online donation and fundraising management software platform, called 'Donna Interactive Suite', is an easy to use tool for effectively managing our fundraising campaigns. It can create e-campaigns, generate encrypted income tax receipts, connect to ACCEO Solutions' e-ACCEPT payment gateway for secure online transactions and includes many more features. Come and visit our page and send us your feedback. [Click here](#)

What happens in the US does always affect Canadians!

Concerns and anxieties are mounting across the United States by families of students with disabilities, including those with learning disabilities, over Betsy DeVos's nomination as U.S. Secretary of Education last month. During her confirmation hearings in January, concerns were raised about her lack of understanding regarding education, children with disabilities and policies. She admittedly was unfamiliar with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).



LDAC NEWSLETTER – SPRING 2017

We, here at LDAC, will keep an eye on our southern neighbour while we continue to work to fulfill our mission – to collaborate with our federal and provincial counterparts, to advocate on behalf of students with learning disabilities, to build awareness in the broader community and promote equitable opportunities so that ALL individuals with learning disabilities can achieve their educational, employment, health and personal goals.

Claudette Larocque
Executive Director, Learning Disabilities Association of Canada
Email: claudette@ldac-acta.ca

Committee Reports

Research Committee

The Research Committee continues to focus on a couple of key initiatives. Work on the development of a database highlighting significant Canadian research in the area of LD is progressing. Data collection from several provinces is now complete. We are still looking for additional team members who can assist us with this project and who have expertise in the area of accessing research articles. If this is of interest to you, please contact Lorrie at lgoegan@shaw.ca to talk further.

The Committee has also recently completed a review and subsequent update of our goals, which were first developed in 2013 shortly after this committee was formed. This exercise provided an opportunity to reflect on work that has been done to date and will now enable us to refocus on new priorities in the area of researcher relations. A lot is happening in Canadian research and we look forward to sharing more in upcoming newsletters.

Committee members: Acting Chair: Thealzel Lee (BC), Claudette Larocque (LDAC ED), Gabriela Grabic (BC), Judy Craig (AB), Lauren Goegan (AB), Lynne Wawryk-Epp (SK) and Lorrie Goegan (AB).

Communications Committee

Along with its ongoing work on items like the newsletter, the Committee has been working on developing a Strategic Communications Plan for LDAC, the now completed transition of our Facebook presence to a single Facebook Page instead of a Page and a Group, and the development of a survey for provincial/territorial Executive Directors about how we can play a more helpful role with respect to LD Awareness Month next October.

Since the Board was going to be considering a six-month Strategic Fundraising Action Plan (SAP) at the last board meeting, the Committee decided not to



LDAC NEWSLETTER – SPRING 2017

present its Strategic Communications Plan (SCP) just yet, especially since the SAP incorporated important elements of the SCP. We still plan to press forward with the latter, while supporting the more urgent items in the Fundraising Plan.

We are also excited to have added LDAC's new Fund Development Director, Scott Patterson, to our committee thanks to Scott's broad experience in marketing and communications generally, including fundraising.

Bob Cram – Chair

Members: Lorrie Goegan, Brendan O'Neill, Claudette Larocque, Doug Symington, Brent MacPherson, Scott Patterson.

Legal Committee

The 2017 *Equality in 'Education Symposium: Explore the Rights, Obligations and Challenges Impacting the Education and Legal Systems in Pursuit of Equitable Access to Education'* was held on February 24th and 25th, 2017 and hosted by the University of New Brunswick Law School, in partnership with the LDAC Legal Committee and the New Brunswick Human Rights Commission. Millie Leblanc, LDAC Board member and representative of Atlantic Canada, attended on behalf of LDAC.

Organized and spearheaded by LDAC's Legal Committee member, Kelly VanBuskirk, Q.C., the free symposium aimed to explore the rights, obligations, opportunities and challenges that inform and impact learners, parents of learners, educators, school administrators, educational services providers, lawyers and other advocates in the pursuit of equitable access to education.

The areas discussed included the diverse circumstances affecting school participation and acceptance. Speakers addressed a range of topics from mental illness, gender equality and the issue of bullying for the LGBTQIA community in education. The unique challenges and obligations of accommodating diverse learners within the Aboriginal peoples was ably addressed by two students from the law school and the implications of the Moore case were delineated by Kelly Lamrock Q. C. and Jody Carr, both former Ministers of Education in previous New Brunswick cabinets.

Whether the response can be found in better recognition of the real situation, more understanding of ways to cope, more resources to better meet the needs or explicitly directed funding, the discussion ensured that those present had to think in a more positive way about our realities.

There were approximately 70 to 80 people attending at any given moment Friday evening or Saturday. Those attending were professionals, parents and law students.



Legal Committee Members:

Millie Leblanc, Chair; Kelly VanBuskirk (NB); Matt Letson (NB); Mike Gilchrist (AB); Pina Melchionna (SK); Preston Durbin (BC); Jody Carr (NB); Chris Isnor (NB); and Claudette Larocque

Provincial/Territorial Updates

Quebec

The *Institut des troubles d'apprentissage*/Learning Disabilities Institute will host its 42nd Annual Conference on Learning Disabilities in Montreal, March 22-24, 2017, www.institutta.com. Here are some of the planned sessions:

Wednesday

M2.6 Solutions to the Problems of Learning Disabilities

Linda Siegel, *Professor Emeritus, University of British Columbia*

M3.8 Identifying and Supporting Struggling Students in the Inclusive Classroom

Julia Ferrari, *Ph. D. Developmental Psychology and Education, Lecturer, University of Toronto*

Todd Cunningham, *Ph. D., School and Child Clinical Psychology, Professor Assistant, University of Toronto*

Thursday

SJ3.1 Symposium: French immersion programs

8:30 to 11:30 am (part 1)

Dealing with learning disabilities in French immersion programs

General description of the symposium

Becky Xi Chen, *University of Toronto*

Bilingual language profiles among young children acquiring English and French

Andrea MacLeod, *University of Montreal*

Pascal Lefebvre, *Laurentian University*

Phyllis Schneider, *University of Alberta*

Ann Sutton, *University of Ottawa*

Natacha Trudeau, *University of Montreal*

Factors contributing to success in early and late French Immersion programs

Stefka Marinova-Todd, *University of British Columbia*



The impact of a remedial small-group intervention on French word reading skills of bilingual students enrolled in French immersion programs

Marie-France Côté, *McGill University*

SJ3.2 Symposium: *French Immersion programs*

3:30 to 5:00 p.m. (part 2)

Risk Factors in French Immersion

Becky Chen, *OISE/University of Toronto*

Evidence-based identification and intervention for all elementary-school students in French immersion who struggle with literacy

Caroline Erdos, *Montreal Children's Hospital*

Corinne Haigh, *Bishop's University*

To register

Hotel Reservation: <http://institutta.com/congres/congres-2017/hebergement/>

Saskatchewan

In 2013 our Board of Directors and some staff members participated in a Strategic Planning Session in order to put some of our goals in writing and solidify our strategic direction. Our goals are reviewed and modified yearly. Our main goal was to become known as the “LDAS Centre of Excellence,” which was supported by four Key Objectives:

1. Expand services for professionals who serve people with LD's & ADHD
2. Grow and develop programs and services for people with LD's & ADHD
3. Achieve financial stability and sustainability to ensure that LDAS can continue to serve those with LD's & ADHD.
4. Improve understanding and awareness of LD's & ADHD within Saskatchewan

We continue to work towards those objectives as well as the ongoing goals that we have also identified.

LDAS started out in 1971 as a parent support group, which continued for many years as mainly an advocacy group with a lending library. Since 1991 services have expanded to the point where we now 50 staff members located in three Branch Offices in our province. For a complete listing of the services and supports offered by LDAS please refer to our website at www.ldas.org.

In support of our long time goal and in response to ongoing requests from clients and their families, we have proudly changed the name on our building to read “**LDAS Centre of Excellence**”. We will, of course, still be known as the Learning Disabilities Association of Saskatchewan and prominently display the National Logo and Brand “**LDAS – The right to learn. The power to achieve**”.



Yukon

AURORA Workshops

As part of our mandate to support all learners, LDAY has branched into the workplace with AURORA Workshops. These workshops are experiential, hands-on programs that can help organizations empower and engage their employees. The programs aim to create organizational and workgroup cultures of communication, collaboration, and creativity. Topics include: Brain Aerobics for Creative Problem Solving, Communication Styles for Collaboration and Harnessing Your Productivity. <http://www.auroraworkshops.com/>

Mindfulness for Parents and Children

This series of five evening sessions is for families who want to learn more about what Mindfulness is and how the practice of Mindfulness Meditation can help both adults and children reduce anxiety and increase enjoyment and relaxation in our everyday lives. Parents work with one facilitator, children work separately with another facilitator on similar, but age appropriate, topics.

Snowshoe Fest

We will host our 6th Annual Snowshoe Fest this March. This event has been great for creating community and raising funds for our summer and winter camp programs.

<https://www.facebook.com/events/1221626651266527/>

Community fall and winter travel

The LDAY Team travelled far and wide these past few months, all across the Territory. We have met with clients, led workshops and supported educators in Dawson City, Beaver Creek, Watson Lake, Old Crow and many places in between.

For more information on any of the above please contact LDA Yukon at office@ldayukon.com

Other Items of Interest

Neuroplasticity Conference: Changing the Brain

The Learning Disabilities Association of Saskatchewan will be holding a conference on neuroplasticity on October 2-3, 2017, at the Sheraton Cavalier in Saskatoon featuring Dr. Norman Doidge and others. Norman Doidge, M.D. is a psychiatrist and author on faculty at the University of Toronto's Department of



LDAC NEWSLETTER – SPRING 2017

Psychiatry, and Research Faculty at Columbia University Center for Psychoanalytic Training and Research in New York. He is the author of two New York Times bestsellers, *The Brain That Changes Itself* and *The Brain's Way of Healing*.

Further information about the conference can be found here, <http://www.ldas.org/conference-2017/>

Book Release

Not Stupid, Not Lazy: Understanding Dyslexia and Other Learning Disabilities

Linda Siegel, Professor Emeritus at the University of British Columbia and a past member of the LDAC Professional Advisory Council, has recently published an update to her 2013 book *Understanding Dyslexia and Other Learning Disabilities* entitled *Not Stupid, Not Lazy: Understanding Dyslexia and Other Learning Disabilities*. In it, Dr. Siegel challenges the use of complex, time-consuming testing and recommends simple, pragmatic techniques instead. The book includes a number of personal stories of individuals with LD as well as profiles of several people who became very successful despite having a learning disability. It also includes strategies and tools for success. The book will be of interest to parents, persons with LD, educators and other professionals. It is available through the International Dyslexia Association at <https://dyslexiaida.org/>

Other Conferences

Learning Disabilities Association of American - Annual Conference, February 21-24, 2018, Atlanta, Georgia, <https://ldaamerica.org/events/annual-conference/>. Note that if you wish to submit a proposal to present at the conference, the deadline is May 1, 2017.

Council for Learning Disabilities - Annual Conference, October 19-20, 2017, Baltimore MD, <http://www.council-for-learning-disabilities.org/2017-annual-conference>.