

LAMBTON COUNTY CHAPTER

Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario
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SPRING 2008

From the desk of the Executive Director

When beginning to write this article, I had just found out that Jeff Healy, the well-known Canadian jazz and blues musician, had died at the age of 41. I felt so sad when I heard this news. Imagine—he had been dealing with cancer his whole life — the same cancer that took away his eyesight. Years ago I was fortunate enough to see Jeff Healy play in Toronto, and for some reason, the news of his passing caught me on a bad day— I just felt so low. I also felt guilty. I felt guilty that I sometimes feel sorry for myself or feel guilty for advocating for my child's needs. Sometimes our problems pale in comparison to the problems of others.

And yet, although cancer cannot be compared to having or living with someone with a learning disability, we still have serious issues to deal with that impact upon our ability to enjoy day to day life. The frustrations our families go through can add up to serious illnesses over time. When a child is miserable, the entire family suffers. Many children with learning disabilities are super sensitive. Small problems are magnified out of proportion—or ignored until they become big problems.

It must be frustrating for educators to deal with parents who don't seem to be concerned about their child's struggles at school. I can empathize. Doing nothing surely doesn't work.

However, I have sat in on IEP meetings with families at various schools, and I hear things that trouble me. IEPs are not suggestions to be followed if and when the staffing is there and at the discretion of the school staff. Educators have a **duty to accommodate**. It is very clearly set out in the Ontario Human Rights Code.

Parents have an expectation that psycho-educational assessments and the recommendations found in these and other professionally prepared documents should be carried through. Yet I hear at IEP meetings principals asking staff —"Are you okay with doing that?" Hello? It isn't a question of convenience or willingness. We have a **duty to accommodate**—a legal and moral obligation.

The needs of the child must govern—and we are completely turned around—the ability or willingness of a particular school team to follow through on a plan is usually what

governs—let's face it.

What is the point of putting assistive technology (AT) in schools, but hardly anyone knows how to use it or trouble-shoot it? Schools are telling parents to download programs at home and try it there. That reminds me of that TV commercial where the doctor is talking to his patient on the phone. The patient is sitting at the kitchen table and the doctor is telling him how to operate on himself.

Why are we offloading services to families—(AT being one and the horror of homework another)? In my family we do private tutoring of one kind or another three times a week, which is veering on the ridiculous, not to mention expensive. I want qualified, caring educators to help my child—and I know many.

We have a lot to deal with every night—my son on bad days will say to me "Why did you even have me?" — there comes that guilt again.

Parenting special needs children is hugely exhausting—as is teaching them. Even if progress is slow, it is still worthy of mention and attention. Don't give up or give in. It is too important.

Annie

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Current Issues in Special Education...A Workshop with Lindsay Moir

Wednesday, March 19, 2008 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
Pathways Health Centre for Children,
1240 Murphy Road, Sarnia. FREE Workshop.

As the Special Education legislation is updated through the "Special Education Transformation" process, many changes are happening, or are in the process of changing. This workshop is designed to bring parents, community professionals and support staff up to date. Issues to be addressed include:

- the Special Education Transformation document—an update;
- Changes in suspension/expulsion policies and procedures (Bill 212) effective February 1, 2008;
- Upcoming changes to the IEP/IPRC process;
- Dispute resolution changes, resources for parents;
- Dedicated PD days in Special Education;
- Effective Educational Practices for Students with ASD—Ministry Document;
- Future trends (including FASD);
- Collaborative service interministerial initiatives AND MUCH MORE!

Handouts will be provided.

This educational event is a collaborative effort between Autism Ontario Sarnia-Lambton, the Learning Disabilities Association of Lambton County and Pathways Health Centre for Children. For more information, please contact Autism Ontario Sarnia-Lambton at 519-332-0333 or email cdart@sarniaautism.com, the Learning Disabilities Association at 519-344-4919/email ldalc@xcelco.on.ca or Pathways Health Centre for Children, 519-542-3471, ext. 257 or email jmccarthy@pathwayscentre.org. Registration not mandatory but would be appreciated for planning purposes.

PACE Parenting Program

My very favourite job-related experience of 2007 was co-facilitating our first PACE Parenting Program with Dr. Andrea Dinardo, a Windsor-based psychologist. PACE stands for Parents Advocating, Children Excelling. We have a spring session of PACE—a 6-week, 9 hour interactive parent advocacy course that will assist parents to understand and help their children.

Week 1:	Welcome and Introduction
Week 2:	What is a learning disability?
Week 3:	Types of learning disabilities and other learning problems
Week 4:	The educational system: understanding the process
Week 5:	Tools for developing effective advocacy skills
Week 6:	Booster Session

PACE is made possible thanks to the generosity of the Learning Disabilities Association of Windsor and Greenshield Canada. The spring sessions begins Tuesday, April 1 from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. Registration is limited — there is no cost for this exceptional program. I have no knowledge of any other parenting program in our area that offers the expertise of a qualified psychologist to co-facilitate. The spring session of PACE will be co-facilitated by Dr. Andrea Dinardo and Joanne Culley, President of the Learning Disabilities Association of Lambton County. Call to register 519-344-4919 or email ldalc@xcelco.on.ca

Spring Programming

Kids Positive Social Skills and Self-Esteem Building Program.

Next 10-week program begins Wednesday, April 4, 2007 from 4:30 to 6:00 pm.

Please note that although the program is designed for children with learning disabilities and/or ADHD, children do not have to be diagnosed in order to attend. The cost for the 10-week program is \$48.00 for members and \$110.00 for non-members. One-year membership is \$50. As always, financial help is available if required. Kids Positive is designed for children 6-13 who need help with social skills and self-esteem building. **Call 519-344-4919 for registration details.**

Study Smart: Learning Strategies for Becoming a Successful Student.

Next 10-week program begins Thursday, April 5, 2007 from 4:30 to 6:00 p.m.

Study Smart teaches students in Grades 6-9 organizational and time management skills necessary in order to become a good student. The cost for the 10-week program is \$48.00 for members and \$110.00 for non-members. One-year membership is \$50. As always, financial help is available if required. Participants will receive a binder full of excellent resource material to keep and hopefully refer back to as needed. **Call 519-344-4919 for registration details.**

JUMP ("Junior Undiscovered Math Prodigies") Math Program

Next 11-week program begins Monday, March 17, 2008 from 5:30 to 6:30 pm.

The JUMP program is based on the belief that all children in the regular school system can excel at math. Mathematics, rather than being the most difficult subject, is the subject in which children can most easily succeed. Over the last eighteen years, John Mighton, the creator of the JUMP program, has gathered a great deal of evidence to support this belief. The JUMP program believes that there are two main reasons why the majority of children struggle with math.

1. The psychological dimension of teaching mathematics is entirely neglected in our schools. In a typical classroom, at least half of the students believe they are not good at math. Children who don't believe they can succeed will never do so.
2. The gap between the weakest and the strongest students makes the teaching of mathematics in a classroom of twenty-five to thirty students close to impossible. No amount of effort spent training teachers and developing sophisticated activities and manipulatives will ever help the majority of students if the unequal distribution of knowledge among children is not taken into account.

The JUMP program was designed to address both of these problems. Children are guided in extremely mechanical steps and at the end of the 11 week program, the students will have successfully completed the fractions unit, including a test to evaluate their progress. JUMP utilizes praise, verification and simple steps and repetition. The cost for the 11-week program is \$40.00 for members and \$110.00 for non-members. One-year membership is \$50. As always, financial help is available if required. JUMP is for students in Grades 3-8. **Call 519-344-4919 for registration details.**

For more information on JUMP, please visit the website: <http://jumpmath.org/>

An excellent article on JUMP Math can be found in Professionally Speaking, the magazine of the Ontario College of Teachers at http://www.oct.ca/publications/professionally_speaking/march_2007/math.asp

New to Resource Library

Classroom Instruction that Works by Robert J. Marzano, Debra J. Pickering and Jane E. Pollock

The Homework Myth: Why Our Kids Get Too Much of a Bad Thing by Alfie Kohn

The Complete Guide to Asperger's Syndrome by Tony Attwood

New Horizons for David, the True Story of David Kuepfer by Mrs. Cleon Martin

Parenting Your Out-of-Control Child...An Effective, Easy-to-Use Program for Teaching Self-Control by George M. Kapala, Ph.D., ABPP

The New Strong-Willed Child Birth Through Adolescence by Dr. James Dobson

Playing at Being Bad: The Hidden Resilience of Troubled Teens by Michael Ungar, Ph.D.

Helping a Child with Nonverbal Learning Disorder or Asperger's Disorder by Kathryn Stewart, Ph.D.

Hear Me, Hug Me, Trust Me: Parenting Today's Teenagers Effectively by Dr. Scott Wooding

Bullies & Victims: Helping Your Child Through the Schoolyard Battlefield by Suellen Fried, A.D.T.R. and Paula Fried, Ph.D., Clinical Psychology

The Case Against Homework: How Homework is Hurting Children and What Parents Can Do About It by Sara Bennett and Nancy Kalish

10 Days to a Bully-Proof Child by Sherryl Kraizer, Ph.D.

Raise Your Voice Lend a Hand Change the World by Susan Hughes

The Everything Parent's Guide to Children with Asperger's Syndrome by William Stillman

Asperger's Syndrome: A Guide for Parents and Professionals by Tony Attwood

Helping Your Anxious Child: A Step-by-Step Guide for Parents by Ronald M. Rapee, Ph.D., Susan H. Spence., Ph.D., Vanessa Cobham, Ph.D and Ann Wignall, M. Psych.

The Oasis Guide to Asperger Syndrome by Patricia Romanowski Bashe and Barbara L. Kirby

The Motivation Breakthrough: 6 Secrets to Turning On the Tuned-Out Child by Richard Lavoie

Educational Psychology, Second Canadian Edition by Santrock Wo. Ioshyn Gallagher DiPetta and Marini



GEARED TO TEENS

Learning Disabilities & Life Stories by Panos Rodis, Andrew Garrod and Mary Lynn Boscardin

What You Must Think of Me ... A Firsthand Account of One Teenager's Experience with Social Anxiety Disorder by Emily Ford with Michael R. Liebowitz, M.D., and Linda Wasmer Andrews

The Beckoners by Carrie Mac. This novel won the Arthur Ellis Award in 2005 and is an excellent novel for young adults about going from the "out crowd" to the "in crowd" and the price/actions involved with each choice.

FOR CHILDREN

Howard B. Wigglebottom Learns to Listen by Howard Binkow

NEXT ISSUE

* Summer programming (we're working on a reading program)

* IEPs—tools for writing effective IEPs including a member-prepared template for use at school meetings

Different Stuff

Communication None-0-1 by Lori Miller Fox (excerpt)

When I was in school, I don't remember parents and teachers talking very much at all, maybe because it took close to five minutes to dial a seven-digit number on a rotary phone. So communication was pretty minimal: a nod at Open House, a note on the bottom of a report card, an awkward handshake at a Parent-Teacher conference.

Visit <http://specialedlaw.blogs.com/> to read the rest of this funny article on home-school communication. This website (although American) is actually an excellent resource.



Research Project—Call for Participants

Dr. Cheryl Duquette, a professor at the University of Ottawa, is doing a research project on parents of adolescents or young adults with learning disabilities. If you are interested in taking part in this research project, please contact the Resource Centre for more information at 519-344-4919.

Spring Garage Sale



Our spring garage sale is scheduled for Saturday, May 10, 2008. Our Annual Garage Sale will take place at the home of our President, Joanne Culley. If you have anything you would like to donate to the cause, we would love to take it (other than clothes).

Please call the Resource Centre for drop-off or pick-up information at 519-344-4919.

Penny Drive

We don't have a lot of money—and perhaps our readers don't either — but collectively maybe we could raise lots of money with a penny drive. We are asking our members and their friends and extended family network to save their pennies for us.

We are going to see how much we can collect over the balance of 2008 and 2009. Every little bit adds up. Challenge your school or workplace to save pennies for us. We would be happy to provide signage if you require it. Charitable donation receipts available. We want to continue to offer the quality programming and develop new programming to meet the needs of our community — but we need your help to do it.



Educational Events

Friday, May 30, 2008 9:00 am--4:00 pm

The Explosive Child

Best Western Lamplighter Inn & Conference Centre, Wellington Street, London

Speaker: Dr. Ross Greene, author of the book *The Explosive Child* and co-author of *Treating Explosive Kids: The Collaborative Problem Solving Approach*

Cost: \$185.00. For more information, go to www.jackhirose.com

Thank You!

We would like to thank the families of Sue Young and Thomas Perfrement for remembering us with in memorium donations during times of loss and sadness.

Thank you to Ontario Trillium Foundation for a grant in the amount of \$23,000 to further support Homework Hub and other other programs during 2008.

Thank you to Maureen Sheehan for applying for and obtaining a Bell Canada volunteer grant in the amount of \$500.

Thank you to Suncor Energy Foundation for a donation in the amount of \$5,000. Suncor also generously donated filing cabinets, chairs and bookshelves to our Resource Centre, for which we are extremely grateful.

Many of our members and friends have donated valuable educational resources to us in the past six months for use in Homework Hub. Thank you to Elise, Sherry, Barb for answering our call for help in our earlier newsletter.

Central Auditory Processing Disorder Workshop

Join us on Thursday, April 17, 2008 from 6:00 to 8:00 pm for a workshop on central auditory processing.

The speaker will be Peter Stelmacovich from Phonak Canada who will show us and demonstrate a new product called EduLink.

Some children are described by the parents and teachers as children who are uncertain about what they hear, have difficulty listening in the presence of background noise, struggle to follow oral instructions and find understanding rapid or degraded speech difficult. EduLink is already in use with students in Lambton County. It has proven beneficial for students with central auditory processing disorder and/or ADHD.

All are welcome to attend this interesting workshop. For more information contact the Resource Centre at 519-344-4919 or ldalc@xcelco.on.ca.

Premier Assistive Technology Workshop

Thursday, May 8, 2008 from 6:00 to 8:00 pm we welcome George Melendy from Microcomputer Science Centre Inc. George will do a demo and overview of the Premier Suites Assistive Technology products. All are welcome to attend. For more information contact the Resource Centre at 519-344-4919 or ldalc@xcelco.on.ca.

