

Learning Disabilities Association of York Region



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Our Mission

To provide leadership in learning disabilities advocacy, research, education and services and to advance the full participation of children, youth and adults with learning disabilities in today's society.

Inside.

- *LD and Mental Health: is there a higher risk?*
- *Adaptive Technology Workshop*
- *Yoga for Kids*
- *Social Skills—Winter Session*
- *New in the Resource Centre*
- *Raffle to Adventure*

LDAYR Celebrates 30 Years!

2006 marks the 30th anniversary of the Learning Disabilities Association of York Region and the year long celebration received its kick off at the Association's Annual General Meeting and Open House held on Monday, September 25th.

Invitations were extended to all members, the general public, past and present staff, board members and supporters. The turnout for the meeting and open house was fantastic. People had the chance to reconnect with each other, meet others for the first time and share in the stories and successes of the past three decades.

A tradition of recent years sees the presentation of Certificates of Achievement for the children and youth involved in our many programs. This year was no different and those in attendance were recognized for their successes and, in addition to receiving their certificate, were presented with a gift.

Board Chair Lorna Duggan shared the recent successes of the Association and discussed the goals that have been set for the future. In addition, Executive Director Lynn Ziraldo was presented with a bouquet of roses and thanked for her 27 years of involvement with LDAYR.

Continued on page 5

Kid Business

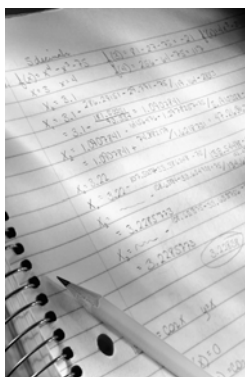
Understanding Mathematics

Many individuals with learning disabilities find it challenging to understand mathematics. When it comes to math, it is important that you don't just memorize basic facts or answers but rather to learn to understand the fundamental concepts associated with each problem.

Here are five strategies that you can use with your child to teach them to grasp math.

✓ **Use different modes to represent concepts**

Use multiple ways to represent concepts that will bring meaning to your child. This strategy encourages them to become involved and dramatize the concepts. The use of 3D objects is another helpful tool to illustrate the concepts.



✓ **Develop appropriate structures**

It is important that there is a structured lesson plan in teaching different mathematical

concepts. Suggested lesson plans are: compare and contrast concepts, provide an example of what "is" and "isn't" represented within a concept, and step-by-step instructions.

✓ **Understand the language of mathematics**

When working on or teaching math, plan activities related to understanding the mathematical vocabulary before teaching the concepts.

✓ **Apply the concept into real-world settings**

The objective of this strategy is to help your child see the important linkage between the mathematical concept and daily activities. In doing so, it will promote generalization, as well as increase motivation and attention.

✓ **Provide clear instructions**

Clear and concise instructions are needed to promote an understanding of difficult concepts. The following four steps will enhance independent working.

1. Advance organization—the purpose and objective of the

activity must be stated

2. Demonstration—first provide a demonstration of the activity
3. Guided Practice—the child

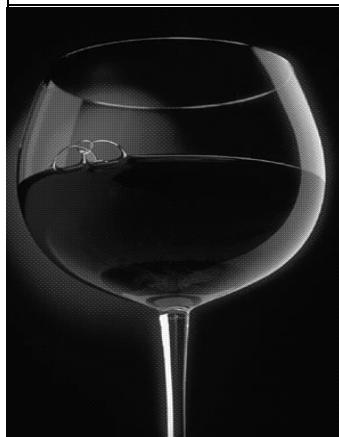


completes the activity with another individual and can request help when needed

4. Independent Practice—the child works individually by using the skills and tools acquired from the demonstration and guided practice steps.

[Adapted from *Helping Students with Disabilities Understand what Mathematics Means* by Hudson Miller, Teaching Exceptional Children, Vol. 39, No. 1, pages ????? by Ivan Caleb, Field Placement Student from York University.]

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Learning Disabilities Association of York Region

CONTACTING LDAYR

By Telephone: 905-884-7933

- Lynn Ziraldo ext 22
Executive Director
- Programs & Services ext 21
- Resource Facilitators
- General Information ext 23
- Volunteering ext 26

By E-mail: info@ldayr.org

On the Web: www.ldayr.org

Me, MySelf aND I: FiNDiNg FReiNDS

While many don't seem to think twice about the process of friendship building, such a task is a difficult process for children with ADD. According to the article *Finding Friends* half of all children with ADD have trouble making and keeping friends.

Missing Cues, Lacking Skills

While all parents worry about their children's social wellbeing, parents of children with ADD find it even harder to come to grips with their children's social reality. "They miss social cues that other kids learn by osmosis," says Carol Brady, Ph.D., a clinical psychologist. "Having ADD is like trying to watch six TVs at once. While you're deciding which one to pay attention to, some subtle information passes you by." ADD behaviours usually responsible for friendship troubles include,

- being too impulsive, blurting out unkind comments
- Inattentiveness, not being able to listen or to show interest through body language and follow up questions

Many children with ADD will have a specific interest and will

Having positive social relationships during childhood is a better predictor of adult happiness than is I.Q. or academic achievement.—Gay Edelman

talk constantly about that interest, being oblivious to the social cues that the other children might not share that same interest. Children with ADD often are unaware of how they are perceived by their peers. They may commit social blunders without realizing it.



For example, a child may not realize the reason why a friendly game at recess was abruptly stopped because they weren't able to follow the rules of the game.

Friendship Groups

Friendship groups are a great way to help children with ADD learn social skills.

Experts recommend that children should participate in a group before middle school, when social pressures really start to intensify. Friendship groups are typically facilitated by social workers, psychologists and child and youth workers. Facilitators of such groups will engage their participants in interactive games, role playing and other techniques that are centered around teaching children empathy, listening skills, positive self-talk, empowerment and communication skills.

Patience and Perspective

While the journey may seem exhausting and never-ending, most socially isolated children do

Friendships are not a luxury, they're a necessity—Rick Lavoie

eventually end up fitting in. Experts do encourage parents to help their child by getting them involved in groups, but at the same time also urge parents not to focus on the quantity of friends or how many birthday parties their child gets invited to in a year, but mainly to help their child establish a single meaningful friendship whether it be with a peer, a neighbour, or a cousin. "Once that connection is made, it can become the vehicle for kids to listen and make some changes in their lives."

[Adapted from *Finding Friends* by Gay Edelman, *ADDitude*. Vol. 6, No. 3, pages 36-38 by Anisha Jamal, Field Placement Student from York University.]

BUILD A LESS STRESSFUL HOME

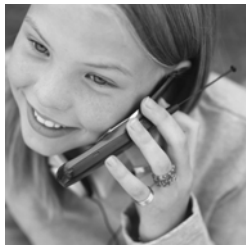
- ✓ Make sure your child gets exercise and time to play
- ✓ Health food can help the body cope with stress more easily
- ✓ Spend time with your children and ask them how they feel
- ✓ Hugs and kisses show kids you love them and make them feel good
- ✓ Bedtime routines help kids relax at the end of the day
- ✓ Sleep is important; a tired child gets stressed more easily
- ✓ Morning routines get the day off to a good start
- ✓ Have fun together; a good laugh helps fight off stress
- ✓ Learn to manage your stress

Adolescents

How Technology can help Youth with LD

Adolescents, and children, with learning disabilities (LDs) often have a hard time in their academic, social and home environments. Problems such as difficulty concentrating/focusing, retaining information, and so on, are highly common. Today's technology, ranging from simple and low-cost to complex and expensive, is often successful in enhancing skills, such as focusing, as well as in simplifying many daily tasks.

A **cell phone** is an affordable and highly useful tool, especially for individuals who have difficulties with memory and organization. In addition to allowing



parents and their children remain in contact, features such as the calendar, alarm clock, notes and a voice recorder can help one stay organized, remember key events, take medications on time, and so on. Finally, features such as the camera and phonebooks can help keep track of important names and faces, especially when difficulties with memory are present.

The Internet, in addition to being used for research and entertainment, can be used by adolescents and their parents to find appropriate employment based on one's strengths and needs. Adolescents with LD may have problems finding appropriate employment and accurately interpreting information about the jobs available. An internet based program called YES allows adolescents to look for employment based on individual job preferences in specific environments, for example, indoor/outdoor, working with animals or children, and so on. Once the program users inputs his or her preferences into the computer, 20 videos appear of the jobs that best matched the specified preferences. Information about wages, qualifications, training, benefits and related occupations is also provided. Once a job is selected, the program user can contact a facilitator to sign up for vocational training and/or job placements.

Traditional education styles between the teacher and students are often ineffective for a child or adolescent with LD due to a mismatch of pace, knowledge assumptions, learning style, teaching approach, presentation of materials, and so on. **Computer-based learning** has the potential to address the above "mismatches" and to modify teaching approach based on individual needs. Presenting the material in a digital/computerized format can be more effective due to features such as variable presentation style, i.e., flexible fonts, sizes, colours, etc., and the inclusion of

easily understandable captions and/or audio descriptions. An example of such a program is TransformAble, in which a learner can select his or her specific learning preferences and this is 'remembered' by the computer. Each time a learner requests a lesson, TransformAble initiates a program that will match the specified needs, which can be modified at any time by the learner. This is especially useful for individuals with visual disabilities since all visual features can be altered, such as contrast, size, font, colours, and so on. More information on TransformAble is available at www.culturall.atrc.utoronto.ca.

A great benefit of the **text-to-speech technology** is that the computer will read the text out loud while simultaneously highlighting what is read. This relieves the burden of decoding for individuals with LD so that greater attention can be paid on comprehension and retention. Research shows that this will also help students identify more errors in their work. Voice recognition programs are also useful. As the student speaks, the computer types it and the user can immediately see the ideas on screen and proofread them. Graphic organizers can be incorporated to facilitate brainstorming and concept mapping to improve special and visual abilities.



[Adapted from *What Are Cell Phone For?* by Michael Sandler, ADDitude, Vol. 7, No. 1, page 24; *I Can Search for Jobs on the Internet* by Robert Morgan, Teaching Exceptional Children, Vol. 38, No. 6, pages 6—10; *As You Like It: Learning in a Digital Age* by Jutta Reviranus, Abilities, Fall 2006, Issue 68, pages 46 & 47; and *Technology to Help Struggling Students* by Steve Fleischman and Heidi Silver-Pacuilla, Educational Leadership, Vol. 63, No. 5, pages 84 & 85 by Vicki Burle, Field Placement Student from York University.]

The Signs

A child or teen you know might have a mental health problem if they have

- Started getting poorer marks in school
- Been avoiding friends and family
- Frequent outbursts of anger and rage
- Lost their appetite
- Difficulty sleeping
- Begun rebelling against authority
- Started drinking a lot and/or using drugs
- Stopped doing the things they used to enjoy
- Begun damaging other people's property
- A habit of worrying constantly
- Stopped caring about their appearance
- Become obsessed about their weight
- Lost their energy and motivation
- A habit of hitting or bullying other children
- Tried to injure themselves

(Continued from page 1)

In her remarks, Lynn spoke of the many changes she has seen over the years—from its days in a church basement to its current location in Richmond Hill’s Loyal True Blue and Orange building on Yonge Street. It was also noted that although there had been changes and new faces, one



VIP Award Presentation (left to right): Lorna Duggan, Carol Cunningham, Rick Cunningham, D.J. Cunningham, Todd, Cunningham, Lynn Ziraldo.

thing has remained constant, the dedication and commitment of staff, board, volunteers and members working towards the Association’s mission: *to provide leadership in learning disabilities advocacy, research, education and services and to advance the full participation of children, youth and adults with learning disabilities in today’s society.*

Each year, LDAYR presents the VIP Award to an individual or group in York Region who has, through mutual respect, trust, diligence and support, encouraged a person or persons with learning disabilities. This year’s recipients are the Cunningham family—Carol, Rick, D.J. and Todd—recognized for their contribution through Learn Differently, an assistive technology camp. Todd working together with his brother D.J. introduce and teach participants from Grade 4 to High School in the use of Assistive Technology. Completing the camp experience, Rich and Carol (Todd and D.J.’s parents) lead sessions with the parents of the Camp

participants. Lynn Ziraldo, Executive Director of LDAYR says, “I am pleased to present the Cunninghams this award during our 30th Anniversary year. Together and individually, they have made numerous contributions to those with learning disabilities and their families.” LDAYR has also nominated the Cunninghams for provincial recognition of their contribution to assisting those with learning disabilities and their families.

The Board of Directors for 2006/2007 was confirmed by the membership at the September meeting. Lorna Duggan returns as our Board Chair and Vice-Chair Reggie Tan will also be holding the position of Treasurer. Entering the second year of their two year term are Donna DeFilippis, Marie Barber, Sheila MacRae and Terri-Lyn Zaremsky. Lynne Cohen, Laura Leibgott, Harry

Poon, and Stanley Singer were confirmed for a two year term. To learn more about LDAYR’s Board of Directors, visit our website at www.ldayr.org.



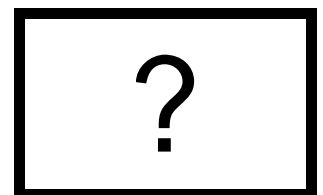
Past Presidents (left to right): Barbra Glendinning, Lynn Ziraldo, Lorna Duggan and Charlotte Owen.



Executive Director Lynn Ziraldo and LDAYR Board of Directors (from left to right): Lorna Duggan, Lynne Cohen, Marie Barber, Terri-Lyn Zaremsky, Donna De Filippis, Reggie Tan, Stan Singer, Harry Poon, Laura Lieb Gott. Missing: Sheila MacRae.

Can you guess the celebrity with LD??

- **Stand up comedian**
- **Four time Emmy Award winner**
- **Host of the Tonight Show**



Answer on p. 7

Adult Matters

Depression and ADHD

A disproportionate number of individuals battling depression also have ADHD. Major depression is estimated to be 2.7 times more prevalent among adults with ADHD than among the general adult population.

Depression comes in two forms. In primary depression the person becomes depressed for no obvious reason. In secondary depression, depression arises as a direct consequence of the chronic frustration and disappointment of living with untreated or poorly controlled ADHD.

To complicate matters, doctors sometimes mistake ADHD for depression. Both bring mood problems, forgetfulness an inability to focus, and a lack of motivation but there are, subtle distinctions.

ADHD can cause dark moods, but these are usually linked to a specific setback and lasts for an hour or two. Mood problems associated with depression are generally pervasive, and chronic, often lasting weeks or months.

With ADHD, the problem usually occurs while falling asleep. Your mind refuses to “turn off,” and keeps adding things to the next day’s to-do list. In contrast, people who are depressed tend to fall asleep easily, but wake up with negative or anxious thoughts.

Doctors recognize that a variety of lifestyle changes are likely help. Aerobic exercise, for example, can return your mood to normal if you are finding it hard to motivate yourself. It can also calm a revved-up mind.

Another reason to get outside is sunlight. People need at least two hours of natural light each day. If you have attention problems, you need even more.

Other find their mood alters if they have nothing to do. To help combat this, set aside books or craft projects for when you’re looking for something to do.

Some people find that mediation works when they are depressed. A simple form of mediation known as “relaxation response” works by sitting quietly, with your eyes closed, and focusing on your breathing. When you exhale, silently repeat a one-syllable word such as “one”, “peace” or “om”. You can also use “relaxation response” when you are having trouble transitioning from one activity to another.

A form of psychotherapy known as cognitive behavioral (CBT) has proven to be highly effective against depression and is also effective against symptoms of ADHD. The first goal is to help the individual to identify and reduce frequent, intense negative thoughts that lead to depression. The next step is to replace them with more realistic and constructive thoughts. The ultimate goal is to reduce the frequency and intensity of symptoms.

No matter what the cause of your depression, there’s always a solution.

[Adapted from *Why so Sad?* by Carl Sherman, *ADDitude*. Vol. 7, No. 2, pages 38—40.]

RECOGNIZING DEPRESSION

- Loss of interest in activities that were once enjoyable
- Change in appetite—usually a decline, but sometimes an increase
- Difficulty sleeping, or sleeping more than usual
- Fatigue or lack of energy
- Agitation
- Feelings of worthlessness, guilt, or inadequacy
- Difficulty concentrating, indecisiveness
- Recurrent thoughts of death or suicide
- Unexplained aches and pains

Newsletter contributions are welcome.

If you would like to contribute to *Learning York Region*, please provide your copy on a disk using Microsoft Word for IBM.

Handwritten submissions are also welcome, as are those sent via e-mail to info@ldayr.org.

Issue

Spring 2007

Summer 2007

Fall 2007

Winter 2007/2008

Submission Deadline

February 1st, 2007

May 1st, 2007

August 1st, 2007

November 1st, 2007

In the GTA

Understanding ADHD

Led by Dr. Umesh Jain
Centre for Addiction and
Mental Health
December 2, 2006
Visit www.adrn.org

The Emotional Impact of Learning Disabilities

Led by Dena Tenenhouse
LDA Toronto
February 21, 2007
Visit www.ldatd.on.ca

On the Web

www.cmha.ca This is the website for the Canadian Mental Health Association.

www.mindyourmind.ca Website for youth by youth, where you can find information, resources and tools to manage stress, crisis and mental health problems.

www.kidsmentalhealth.ca Children's Mental Health Ontario website works to improve mental health and well-being of children, youth and their families.

www.canadian-health-network.ca Website of the Public Health Agency of Canada, visitors find information on healthy living and health promotion. There is also a free monthly e-letter available.

WINTER PROGRAM INFORMATION

SOCIAL SKILLS PROGRAM—On-site Registration: Monday, January 8, 2007

Designed for children with learning disabilities and/or ADHD, the winter session of the 8-week Social Skills program begins the week of January 15th. Richmond Hill classes are held at 11181 Yonge Street; Newmarket classes are held at Trinity United Church. The program is designed for children ages 5 to 16 years. Children will be placed in appropriate age groups. For more information or, if you are unable to attend the on-site registration, call 905-844-7933, extension 23.

Our **Parent Support Group** meets monthly, September to June. To find out more about this group, call 905-884-7933, extension 23.

The **Adults with Learning Disabilities Support Group** meets monthly, September to June. To find out more about this group, call 905-884-7933, extension 23.

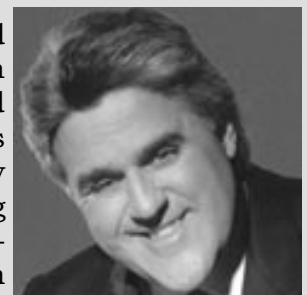
Newsletter Advertising

Advertising helps offset the cost of production. Please consider an ad for the next issue of Learning York Region. You get web exposure as well as print!

Call us at 905-884-7933, ext. 23 for more information.

Celebrity LD Answer!!!

Jay Leno, diagnosed with dyslexia, through persistence and hard work, he has accomplished many success including completing an undergraduate degree in speech therapy at Emerson College in Boston.



Vintages & Jazz

Please set aside
Sunday, May 8th 2007

and join us for our
8th annual Vintages & Jazz

This is an afternoon of great music,
wonderful food, excellent wines
and fun surprises.

All proceeds go towards
our ongoing programs
and services.

If you would like to volunteer, donate an item
for the Silent Auction or reserve your ticket
please call 905-884-7933.



Please Donate

Contributions are personal decisions made to honour someone special, to make a difference. Please consider a gift to LDAYR today. There are so many ways to help:

- A Philanthropic Gift
- A Tribute Gift
- Volunteer time

To make a contribution, please phone 905-884-7933 or e-mail info@ldayr.org

The Learning Disabilities Association of York Region does not support, endorse or recommend any method, treatment, product, remedial centre, program or person for children, youth or adults with learning disabilities. We do, however, endeavour to inform in the belief that you have the right to know.

Member Benefits:

- Access to all our programmes and support groups;
- Use of Resource Centre and lending library;
- Resource Counseling
- Advocacy services
- And much more!



Learning Disabilities Association of York Region



YES! Sign me up as a member of LDAYR!

\$50.00 per year (Family/Individual) \$20.00 Students \$75.00 Professionals \$125.00 Institutional

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- I am:
- Parent/Guardian/Family of child with LD or ADHD
 - Adult Consumer
 - Professional
 - New Member
 - Student (provide ID #)
 - Institutional
 - Renewing Member

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