



The LDAA

Provincial News

Providing support to people with learning disabilities so that they can develop to their full potential

September 2006

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Upcoming Events for the LDAA

The LDAA is preparing for several events this year.

LD Month in October

LD month is in October this year and the LDAA has several activities planned to celebrate and educate the public on learning disabilities. The LD Month's "Writer's Block: Overcoming Adversity" writing contest will be held again this year. The contest provides an opportunity for children and adults with learning disabilities and/or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) to share their stories about a success that was achieved and/or a skill or talent that was recognized. The contest runs from September 1 until close of business October 31, 2006. Contest winners will be invited to receive their prizes at the 2006 LDAA Conference on Learning Disabilities November 16-18, 2006.

In addition to the contest the LDAA will be submitting articles to all of the major and "weekly" newspapers across the province in an effort to increase the public's awareness of LD. The articles will focus on what is LD; why dealing with it matters, what parents should do when they first find out their child has LD; and what programs and services are available to children and adults with learning disabilities in the province of Alberta.

A letter from our President, Elayne Harris-Lorenz, will be sent to various government officials to discuss the impact that learning disabilities has on individuals with learning disabilities, in the hopes that these government officials will make policy changes toward helping individuals with learning disabilities to develop to their full potential.

2006 Conference on Learning Disabilities "Extending our Visions"

The LDAA 2006 Conference planning is well underway and going well. The speakers are now confirmed and registration is currently available. You can find all of the conference information on www.ldaa.ca/conference.htm.

Provincial News

🍏 The provincial newsletter is published three times a year as an Alberta supplement to the National newsletter of the Learning Disabilities Association of Canada. It is distributed to all members of the LDAA and its chapters.

🍏 Contributions are welcome. Deadline for the next issue is November 30, 2005. For writer's guidelines, visit www.ldaa.ca/newsletters.

Brenda Robinson will deliver the keynote address Thursday night on "Learning, Laughter, and Learning Disabilities". Friday will open with a keynote address from Linda Siegel on "Early Identification and Intervention to Prevent Reading Difficulties", followed by sessions throughout the rest of the day.

Other events of interest on Friday will be the President's luncheon and the TGFI (Thank Goodness for Information) and LD Artist's Gallery. The President's Luncheon is a prestigious event where a few people are recognized for their work in the field of learning disabilities. The reception and Artist's Gallery is an evening of information and creativity where art from adults and children with LD and ADHD are showcased.

Dr. Edward Hallowell, a recognized expert on ADHD, will give the keynote address on Saturday morning.

Exhibitors will be displaying their products and services during the conference as well.

Casino Volunteers Needed

The LDAA will be having its first casino on Wednesday, November 29 & Thursday, November 30, 2006 at Casino Edmonton and are looking for volunteers to fill all positions.

This is a significant fund raising opportunity for the LDAA. The funds will support the provision of programs and services to people with LD and ADHD throughout the province.

If you are interested in assisting with the casino, please contact the LDAA at 448-0360 for more information.

2nd Annual Chocolate Festival, Wine Tasting, & Silent Auction

Planning for the 2nd Annual Chocolate Festival is well underway. It will be held at the Sutton Place Hotel (10235-101 Street) on February 10, 2007 from 6:30 p.m. –10:00 p.m. There will be a silent auction and door prizes during the evening. Tickets are \$50.00 per person and will go on sale later this year. Proceeds from the event will go toward expanding the programs and services offered through the Edmonton Chapter and to support the work of the LDAA.

Welcome New LDAA Board Member!

The Learning Disabilities Association of Alberta welcomes Brent Smith to the Board of Directors. He was appointed to the Board in June 2006.

Brent is a Mortgage Development Manager for Scotiabank and has been involved with financing since 1993. He completed a Business Administration Diploma at the Grande Prairie Regional College in 1993. Brent is a proud Maritimer and was very fortunate to have a family that saw the opportunities in the west when he was a young man.

Brent has worked with non profit organizations since his graduation from High School in the 80's. He believes that they must be visible in order to provide information and assistance. Brent has a son with a learning disability, and knows first hand **the struggles** parents face.

He is pleased to be member of the LDAA, and is looking forward to making a difference in the community.

Siobhan Isabella Reid Memorial Scholarship Winners

Two students were awarded the Siobhan Isabella Reid Memorial Scholarship for 2006. The Scholarship is to assist students in their studies toward a career in helping children and adults with learning disabilities. Sharlene Lim and Kristie Seright will be attending the University of Alberta. We wish them all our best for a bright future.

We are also pleased to announce that the scholarship fund has been increased to \$800.00 per year per recipient.

There are 2 award winners each year. This is another way that the LDAA is able to assist in the future learning of students to help them succeed in the field of working with people with learning disabilities and/or ADHD.

What's Happening Nationally with the Learning Disabilities Association of Canada (LDAC)

Barbara McElgunn, member of the LDAC Professional Advisory Committee prepared an excellent and thorough review of the Canadian Environmental Protection Act. Her document was submitted to the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development on June 16, 2006. Her review examines various aspects for the Act and highlights important areas such as the costs of illness in children attributable to environmental exposures, timelines for action, need for toxicity data, etc.

Last year, Annie Baert from Learning Disabilities Association of Nova Scotia connected LDAC with the Liberated Learning initiative at St. Mary's University. That connection led to many positive discussions over several months and to a May 26, 2006, Liberated Learning technology presentation at the national office. This "next generation" speech recognition technology holds a great deal of promise for Canadians with LD and potential business opportunities for LDAC. Because of its potential, plans are currently underway to include a Liberated Learning presentation in the September 2006 LDAC AGM weekend program.

Learning Disabilities Association of Alberta & Chapter s' Calendar

Contact your local chapter for these and other available programs and services:

September	October	November
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>LDAA Provincial Office</u></p> <p>1 LD Month Writing Contest is launched</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>LDAA Edmonton Chapter</u></p> <p>6 Parent Support Group</p> <p>20 Adult Support Group</p> <p>27 Parent Workshop "Getting Started in School with a Learning Disability"</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>LDAA Red Deer Chapter</u></p> <p>TBA Youth Employment Program & Reading Program</p> <p>25 Fall Reading Program Begins</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>LDAA Calgary Chapter</u></p> <p>Wed. Social Skills Recreational Drop In</p> <p>12 Parent Workshop "Getting into the School Year"</p> <p>27 Medicine Hat Parent Workshop "Building Parent Teacher Relationships"</p> <p>28 Lethbridge Parent Workshop "Building Parent Teacher Relationships"</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>LDAA Calgary Chapter</u></p> <p>Wed. Social Skills Recreational Drop In</p> <p>TBA Social Skills Program for 8-12 year olds</p> <p>9 Parent Workshop TBA</p> <p>14 Social Skills Program for 8-12 year olds start</p> <p>14 "Picture This" Social Skills Program for teens start</p> <p>18 Walk the Red Carpet Fundraising Event</p> <p>25 Medicine Hat Parent Workshop "Individualized Program Plan - role of parents and teachers"</p> <p>26 Lethbridge Parent Workshop "Individualized Program Plan - role of parents and teachers"</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>LDAA Calgary Chapter</u></p> <p>Wed. 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May I Watch ...a Book?"</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>LDAA Calgary Chapter</u></p> <p>14 Parent Workshop TBA</p> <p>29 Medicine Hat Parent Workshop "AD/HD A Medical Perspective"</p> <p>30 Medicine Hat Parent Workshop "AD/HD A Medical Perspective"</p>

Writer's Block: Overcoming Adversity

Positive Stories from People with Learning Disabilities & Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

The Learning Disabilities Association of Alberta is proud to present its annual writing contest for individuals with learning disabilities/Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). Entries will be accepted until **close of business October 31, 2006**. We hope that you will participate.

Details are below:

Writer's Block: Overcoming Adversity writing contest is an opportunity for individuals with learning disabilities/ADHD to share stories about a success that was achieved and/or a skill or talent that was recognized. Don't forget to introduce yourself, and tell us a little about yourself as well!

Story ideas may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Did you work really hard at achieving something and found you were successful at it?
- Did you win an award for something you created, or performed in a talent contest?
- Did you write a story or article that made the newspaper or was published in a newsletter?
- Did you draw a picture that you later sold to a friend or stranger?
- Were you recognized for your outstanding service at work or as a volunteer for an organization?

Prizes:

1st Prize: \$200.00, 1 year free membership to the LDAA chapter nearest you, and the *Parent Advantage & Make School Work for You* Publications.

2nd Prize: \$100.00 and 1 year free membership to the LDAA Chapter nearest you.

3rd Prize: \$50.00

Make sure to complete and sign the "Information Sheet" and include it with your submission. Please also read, sign, and include with your submission the "Exclusion of Liability" form. Participants under the age of 18 must have a parent or guardian sign the above-noted forms for them. Please note that all entries must be accompanied by the above documents to be eligible, therefore, we will not accept any faxed or e-mailed entries. **Any entries that are not the originals, or are missing these documents cannot be accepted.** You may find these documents on our website at:

http://www.ldaa.ca/ld_month.htm

If you have any questions or require further information, please do not hesitate to contact the Learning Disabilities Association of Alberta at 448-0360 or info@ldaa.ca.

A Child in Your Classroom Has ADHD – How do you Approach His or Her Parents

Adapted from the Article by Barbara King

As teachers, we value collaborative and cooperative relationships with the parents of our students. We want to celebrate successes together and work as a team when there are challenges in a child's education. One of these challenges can be approaching a parent whose child is exhibiting symptoms of ADHD. Although approaching a parent whose child may have ADHD can be difficult, it is important to do so in order to ensure the child is appropriately assessed by a health care professional.

When we approach parents with the discussion of a child's behavior and attention problems, tackling the issue of the child possibly having ADHD can create an enormous amount of stress for the parent and for you as the child's teacher.

Listed below are some tips to use when approaching a parent to tell them that you have concerns about their child:

- Do approach the parent with sensitivity and have your discussion in private
- Do share with the parent your concerns regarding the child's behavior and academic performance. Be specific about what you have observed – share your observations and collections of the child's work. Parents may indeed have seen some of these behaviors at home
- Begin to explore solutions and strategies with the parent – engage them in the process.
- Share strengths that you have already implemented that are working – even those that are not working. This is a clear message to the parent that you are not giving up on their child

- Do treat the problem as something that can be addressed. A child who is struggling is not a lost cause. Be sure to inspire hope.
- Do meet with the parent on a regular basis to discuss the child's progress. A parent's acceptance of the problem may be difficult to obtain after one meeting but may evolve after several meetings.
- Do tell the parent that you are committed to helping his or her child

Strategies to Avoid

- Don't label the child. Focus on the behaviors that the child is demonstrating (i.e., not sitting still, distractibility) with the parent rather than telling them that you think their child has ADHD.
- Don't blame or judge parents. Recognize that their child's behavioral problems may be the result of a medical condition.
- Don't approach the parent when the classroom is full of children. Schedule a private meeting to discuss the issue.
- Don't attempt to make a diagnosis. Ask the parent to discuss the issue with the child's physician
- Don't push medication to the parent as a "quick fix" to the problem. Although medication is often critical to success, it is only one component of a total treatment program.

Although it may be difficult for a parent to accept that his or her child may be demonstrating some concerning behaviors, by working together, parents and teachers can do their best to help the child succeed.

Barbara King has worked in Special Education for 17 years. She is presently working as a Developmental Learning Teacher and Curriculum Lead Teacher in a secondary school in Owen Sound, Ontario. To read the whole article, visit: http://www.janssen-ortho.com/JOI/pdf_files/061201_05eCR_article.pdf.

Advocating Tips for Your Special Needs Child

Advocating for your child with special needs can be a daunting and exhausting task. In addition to the medical or dietary needs, your child also has specific behavioral and learning needs as well. With every new year and new person, the process of advocacy starts again, which sometimes takes up enormous time and energy and can seem overwhelming.

Here are a few tips to help you in your advocacy efforts:

1. Keep a binder or divided file folder for all of your child's records. This includes medical records, letters, reports, report cards, Individualized Program Plans, and anything else that you feel is important to your child's success and well being. Make sure to keep the information organized in sections, and by date, for easy access when needed.
2. If possible, obtain any policies regarding the care of your child (i.e., hospital, school board, daycare, etc.). Some organizations have these policies on their website, but don't be afraid to ask for them yourself.
3. At the first opportunity provide relevant information about your child's needs and progress to whomever is working closest with your child. Never give out originals, but photocopy or have the professional photocopy the information they need.
4. Follow up meetings and conversations, no matter how brief, with a letter thanking that person for their time; noting the key points of the conversation / meeting and what it was about; and the decisions that were made (be very specific about this). End the letter with an invitation for the other person to clarify any misunderstandings in your letter, in writing, by a specific date (usually in a week). Indicate that if you do not hear from them, in writing by that date the you will assume your letter is correct and what was decided at that meeting will be done. Keep a copy of the letters in your binder or file folder, organized by date.
5. Follow up. Personally check back with the person you've been talking to or meeting with to make sure that the decisions have been implemented. Discuss your child's progress and determine if any changes need to be made—don't forget to follow up that conversation or meeting with another letter as well. Talk to your child everyday about his or her day. This is a good way to see how your child is affected by these decisions.
6. Keep a journal of all conversations and meetings, dates of assessments, and any comments made by your child that is important to their success.

The key to successful advocacy is good documentation and a paper trail. This keeps a clear and concise timeline of your child's progress and allows professionals the "big picture" so that they can assist your child to achieve to his or her fullest potential.

Resources

The Internet has become a tool to find information quickly. It is important, though, to assess the credibility of the information source and apply your own judgment. Anyone can publish a website. Happily, universities, government, professional organizations, journals, magazines, and individual experts are increasingly publishing information for the public to access freely.

Below are some websites that you might find interesting. Please remember that the LDAA has no control over the information published on other websites and does not endorse any products or services on these sites.

Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario Online Courses

<http://www.ldao.ca/courses/index.php>

These courses are offered through distance education. This online learning environment accommodates the learner's own schedule while allowing for full interaction and communication.

Workshops & courses available are:

- Parent Consultation in Education
- Parent Workshop Series
- Professionals Workshop Series
- Adult Workshop Series
- Youth Workshop Series

Educational Resources on ADHD

www.janssen-ortho.com/JOI/en/educational/adhd.asp

Janssen-Ortho Inc., a research based pharmaceutical company is dedicated to the advancement of better health and a better quality of life for all.

And as such, they have a section on their website, "Educational Materials", that might be of some interest to our readers. In addition to fact and tip sheets on ADHD, articles, and reference to other resources, these pieces might be of particular use:

Learning About ADHD for Parents & Teens

These are brochures that inform parents and teens of what ADHD is, and provides behavioral strategies for both to work toward success in school and in life.

Educator Handbook for ADHD

This 24 page handbook provides easy-to-read information on what ADHD is, the signs, and strategies to effectively work with students who have ADHD.

Coloring Book

This book is designed for younger children to teach them the basics of ADHD.

LDAA Office

P.O. Box 29011, Lendrum P.O., EDMONTON, Alberta T6H 5Z6

Phone: (780) 448-0360; Fax: (780) 438-0665; E-mail: info@ldaa.ca; Website: www.ldaa.ca

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