



The BEAR Bulletin

“helping children with dyslexia to read”



Message from the President

The Learning Centre for Hamilton has one more successful year of operation under its belt and the summer will be spent preparing to re-open this fall. With new and returning children as well as new and returning tutors the Learning Centre will be opening four days a week rather than the current two. This will also mean new volunteer opportunities.

Our June 8th year end BBQ was a fantastic success with upwards of 80 of our Learning Centre family in attendance. Once again, we owe a big vote of thanks to the Scottish Rite for providing us an exemplary facility not to mention delicious food for the event. We extend a special thank you to Richard Jones, VP of the Scottish Rite Charitable Foundation, for making the drive to Hamilton to attend and bring greetings from the Foundation. He inspired us all to continue tilting at windmills.

We look forward to seeing and hearing from you all as without your support and assistance we would never be able to do what we do.

Michael Kirk—President

A Day of Masonry

Georgie Bear, along with volunteers from the Learning Centre for Hamilton, took part in a **Day of Masonry**, held at the Hamilton Masonic Centre (Scottish Rite building) in April. The event was attended by members of masonic lodges, bodies of the Scottish Rite and Rameses Shriners. This was a great opportunity to let people know about the Learning Centre and the wonderful work being done there .

Tutor Training



April 23, 2023, we had our first opportunity in five years to all be together as tutors with our tutor-trainer Meredith Hutchings. We were fortunate to gather in the beautiful Round Room at the Scottish Rite. Tutor-Trainer Meredith delivered information and materials to the tutors in preparation for year end child assessments. Everyone became familiar and comfortable with the Gallistel-Ellis assessment tool.

A speech pathologist is required to deliver parts of module training. The Learning Centre for Hamilton is very fortunate to have new tutor Colleen Reinhart who is also a speech pathologist with the Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board. Colleen spent considerable time creating an extremely informative presentation for our tutors. We all developed a much better understanding of the relationship between speech (sound) and print (decoding).

Great thanks to Meredith and Colleen for sharing their knowledge and expertise. It was a great day of learning and getting to know each other as special individuals and tutors.

From our Co-directors

It took many people to have a successful year at the Learning Centre for Hamilton. Everyone involved was there in the best interests of the children who receive services to improve their reading and spelling skills helping them overcome dyslexia.

Thank you to the Learning Centre Board for your continued help and support throughout the year: Board President Michael Kirk, Vice-President Mario Kovacevic, Secretary Ian Anderson, Treasurer Tom Lewis, and Board members Dale Chapman and Don Thornton.

Thank you to dedicated volunteers: Volunteer Co-ordinator Dale Chapman, Publications Volunteer Lee Gowers, Website Designer Andrew Kovacevic, Reception Volunteers Dale Chapman and Kevin Vance, and Newsletter Editors Lee

Gowers and Kevin Vance. Thank you to associates that help at the Centre whenever needed: Ken Adamson, George Benton Sr., George Benton Jr., Ted Burns, Bookkeeper Leslie Drake, Chef Matt Payne of Blue-Collar Catering and assistants Shelley and Chyles, Matt Benedetti and Laura Schmidt of Benedetti Woodworking, Dave Walden of TW Properties, and Tony Stayrer of AS Security.

Thank you to Tutor-Trainer Meredith Hutchings for on-going guidance, support, and training of tutors and to the committed and dedicated tutors: Barbara Baxter, Michael Baxter, Elspeth Daley, Stacy Geddes, Jennifer Marshall, Sarah McKee, Donna McManamy, Heather McNulty, Colleen Reinhart, and Stephanie Shewfelt.

Congratulations to Sarah McKee on

obtaining her certification as an Orton Gillingham Practitioner this year.

Thank you to all parents for getting your children to and from tutoring sessions twice weekly every week. Congratulations to each child on your great determination and growth while attending tutoring sessions this year. Everyone is very proud of each of you!

Thank you to the Scottish Rite Charitable Foundation for on-going support. Also, great thanks to numerous groups and individuals who have financially supported the Learning Centre for Hamilton this year through generous donations.

Everyone involved with the Learning Centre for Hamilton is always appreciated in making the year successful. Thank you!

Barbara & Michael Baxter

From our Tutor-Trainer

The Learning Centre for Hamilton ended our year of tutoring on June 8th with a glorious celebration! Over eighty people attended the BBQ. The Centre has accomplished so much, and everyone involved should feel very proud! This year we added four new tutors and so we also increased the number of children and families being served. These new tutors bring a high degree of experience and professionalism and as a trainer, I am extremely impressed by the caliber of Orton-Gillingham tutoring that is delivered every week to our deserving children.

Thankfully, this year in person tutoring resumed. We saw the return of a tutor after a maternity break, as well as some tutors taking on additional children which is a requirement to complete certification. So, scheduling lesson times required an expansion in rooms used as well as volunteers to oversee all of the comings and goings. Our wonderful house is becoming quite the beehive of activity!

In April, all tutors came together for some training and for a presentation given by one of our new tutors, a speech language pathologist, who provided us with detailed information about language development and some common language challenges often faced by children with dyslexia. Over lunch, board members, tutors and volunteers were able to meet and share.

One of our tutors completed her training and joined the directors, Barbara and Michael Baxter, as a Certified Orton-Gillingham Practitioner. Training continues for all the tutors and this summer we will welcome a new cohort as well. We are growing!

The hardworking co-directors, Barbara and Michael, found some new furniture and many finishing touches to make our Centre even more welcoming. They also found us a wonderful polar bear mascot, Georgie! With a warm and comforting house, capable and caring tutors, and clever and appreciative children and families, we should all feel terrific about how far our Centre has come in just a few short years!

Meredith Hutchings

A Tutor Receives her Certification



Sarah McKee is our third tutor at the Learning Centre for Hamilton to complete the Orton-Gillingham Certification process.

For those of you who do not know what is involved, Sarah has completed 45 hours of classroom training, way over the required 100 hours of tutoring with two different kiddos, 8 observations where I observe and mark lesson delivery (nerve wracking!), book reports, some quizzes, a midtest, and a final exam. All components are required to be completed with an over 90% mark! You can understand why this kind of certification is considered a Master's degree in some places.

Sarah has completed her certification components with poise, humour, tremendous skills, and a creativity that shines through every lesson. We are so proud of your accomplishments Sarah and welcome you to the distinguished community of the Certified Orton-Gillingham Practitioners.

We are lucky to have you at our growing Learning Centre. Your children and families are lucky to have you as their life-long advocate. Congratulations!

Message from Tutor-Trainer Meredith Hutchings

A Different and Successful Fundraiser

For four years Gaye Culp and Mark Kenny have managed and hosted meat draws every other Saturday at M.J. Sam's Old Times Tavern on Parkdale Avenue North. Over the fall, winter, and spring of 2022-2023 they hosted and completed their 4th Highland Meat Draw.

Family members of Gaye Culp serve the communities as Freemasons or Eastern Star members. Through them Gaye became aware of supporting good causes. She had three conditions to her fundraiser: that she fundraise on her time as she is employed full-time at Highland Meats, that the meat for the draws only come from Highland Meats and that she gets to pick the cause.

At the Eastern Star Italian Dinner in Ancaster, Gaye and Mark presented a cheque for \$4300 to co-director and tutor Michael Baxter and new tutor, Jennifer Marshall, niece of Gaye and active Eastern Star member.

To date, through four draws, before and after the pandemic, Gaye and Mark have raised and given \$14,500 to the Learning Centre for Hamilton. They will continue their draw in the fall of 2023.

Great thanks to Gaye, Mark, and all patrons of Sam's who support a great and very appreciated fundraiser that provides support to children and their families *"helping children with dyslexia to read."*

Check your Insurance Coverage



Having a child undergo a psychoeducational assessment to determine if they have dyslexia can be an expensive undertaking and the cost is not covered by OHIP. However, one of our parents has relayed the information that some employee health care plans do cover the cost of that assessment: some cover a portion while others cover the entire expense. Check under the Paramedics paragraph of your benefit package.

"One thing we know for certain about dyslexia, is that this is one small area of difficulty in a sea of strengths"

Dr. Sally Shaywitz



The Year that Was



Meet Georgie Bear!



Donation received at the Eastern Star dinner in Ancaster.



Presenting our new and improved website!



New furniture for the reception area.



Lunch break during Tutor Training Day.



The Hamilton Shriners brought a donation!



Children, graduates, tutors, Board President Mike Kirk (far right) and SRCF VP Richard Jones (far left) at the end-of-year BBQ, held indoors because of the poor air quality caused by smoke from the forest fires.

Thank You to Our Donors

With the support of the Scottish Rite Charitable Foundation and generous donors we are giving children the gifts and lifelong skills of reading and spelling.

We extend our sincere gratitude to the following who donated during the 2022-2023 fiscal year:

The Barton Lodge No. 6	Brantford Scottish Rite Association	George Fairbairn	Mala Shetty
Beach Lodge No. 475	Scottish Rite Club of Barrie	Gregory and Denise Faraday	June Soper
Buchanan Lodge No. 550	Scottish Rite Club of Hamilton	Thomas Forbes	Gregory Splan
Dundurn Lodge No. 475	Edgemount Chapter No. 127 of the Order of the Eastern Star	Ralph Gilbert	George Stapleton
Electric Lodge No. 495	Primrose Assembly No. 8, IORG	Helen Gregus	Bruce Stewart
Landmarks/Doric Lodge No. 654	Shriners Club of Hamilton	Zeljko Haramic	Jim Stewart
Seymour Lodge No. 272	Proceeds from the 93 rd Scottish Rite Golf Classic	Alana Henderson	Larry Stewart
St. George Lodge No. 243	Proceeds from the 2 nd Wine and Survivor Loot Auction	James Hilgendorff	Ron Stinson
Lodge of Strict Observance No. 27	Proceeds from the 4 th Annual Meat Draw Fundraiser held at Sam's Old Times Tavern in Hamilton	Hal Hilgren	Matt Taggart
Temple Lodge No. 324	David S. Amis	McAllister Horne	Sharon and Steve Thiede
Past Master's Association—Hamilton	Ian and Linda Anderson	Arthur Inch	Donald Thornton
Ancaster Masonic Hall	Nick Angellotti	Alice Johnston	Philip Thornton
Central Masonic Temple—Hamilton	Barbara and Michael Baxter	Paul Jones	The J.D. Walden Family Fund
The Murton Lodge of Perfection	George Benton	Brent Julian	Robert Whitmore
Hamilton Sovereign Chapter of Rose Croix	Gerry Candelino	David Kemp	John Williams
The Moore Sovereign Consistory	Dale Chapman	Robert Kerr	Gokcen and Kelly Yikilmaz
Spring Assembly Reception Committee	Wah Chung	Vladimir Khayutin	Elaine and Clifton Young
Elgin Lodge of Perfection, Niagara Chapter of Rose Croix	Scott Clark	Elizabeth Kobayashi	Steve Zissopoulos
Valley of Barrie A&ASR	Amy and Kevin Collard	Lee Kools	Armagh Cash Register Limited
Valley of Guelph A&ASR	Stephen and Lorraine Cooper	Tom Lewis	Benjamin Moore
Valley of Hamilton A&ASR	Jennifer and Doug Dipper	Gerald I. Leroy	Bentley Canada
Valley of Niagara A&ASR	Scott Drummond	Kelly Mackey	Enbridge Gas
Valley of Peterborough A&ASR	Keith Evans	Eric Marshall	FB Form and Build Management Inc.
Valley of Toronto A&ASR	Peter Ewan	Jennifer Marshall	Milcorp Construction Ltd.
The Hiram Royal Arch Chapter No. 2	Michael Fabello	Tom Marshall	Mike's Campus Barber
St John's Royal Arch Chapter No. 6		Michael Martin	Perry Elevator Consultants
		Allison Murphy	Shaftsbury Murdoch XII Inc
		Malcolm Murray	te Boekhorst Wealth Management
		Olavi and Catherine Neimi	The Storage House
		Dimitrios Papavramidis	The Tiegan Group
		Ruth Pearson	
		Paul Perry	
		Tariq Qurashi	
		George Schmidt	

If you would like to become a donor (one-time or monthly) to the Learning Centre for Hamilton please visit our website dyslexiacentrehamilton.com

Donations will be recognized with official receipts for income tax purposes.

Testimonials from Some of Our Parents and a Graduate

We cannot say enough about the Learning Centre for Hamilton. Both of our children are dyslexic, and we were at a loss as to how to help them. We quickly realized that the support they had in place at school was not enough. As we started looking around, specifically for Orton Gillingham tutoring, we realized that getting the help our children needed was sadly out of reach for us. Once we found the Learning Centre for Hamilton we signed up as fast as we could.

This program has meant so much to our whole family. Our son Mason is on the second level right now and we must tell him to put the book down to go to bed! Before we started the program, he was fighting us on reading, getting a sore stomach before school and avoiding reading and writing at all costs. We are so thrilled to see his improvement. Since our daughter Lilly started the program, she has brought the basket of books beside her bed and is more accepting of reading to us.

We are so thankful for all the wonderful volunteers at the Learning Centre. They have made it a warm and inviting place to come for caregivers and children alike. This has become a home away from home. The dedication that all the volunteers have is outstanding. Because of the Learning Centre our children can feel success, accept their challenge, and know they are not alone. The Learning Centre has really given us so much already and we are truly forever grateful. Thank you so much to everyone who has made this place possible!

Parents Julie and Justin

We can't thank everyone enough.
The change with Tevin is huge!
He can read now.
His confidence has also improved.
He looks forward to his lessons.
Thank you to everyone at the
Learning Centre for Hamilton.
You have changed Tevin's life.

Parents Kelly and Gokcen

Thank you to the wonderful group of professionals at the Centre and the organization, for investing time, funds, and competencies into Liam's future. The skills and tools he has learned will benefit him for a lifetime. Our family is immensely grateful for the priceless opportunity Liam has been gifted. Every interaction and communication we have had throughout the application, acceptance, orientation, testing and tutor cycle has been top shelf. We could not ask for more. We look forward to year two of tutoring. We feel so blessed to be a recipient of this structured learning, that is delivered with skill, patience, and professionalism.

Parents Betty and Mark

In kindergarten, I was put in a special program for kids who were struggling with school and the program was at a different school, away from my friends. I was not great at making friends so I remember getting on a little yellow school bus every morning, sitting by myself and then at lunch I would sit in the sandbox alone. In grade one, the school near where I lived was finally built so I switched to go there and lucky my friends from before the special kindergarten went to that school as well. I don't really remember the grade one to three but I could barely read or write, so I was falling behind a lot. I went to a lot of after school programs to help me, not just for dyslexia but other things too: speech therapy, fine motor skills training, reading, writing, and even an eye specialist. Even though I have good vision, I'm bad at tracking things with my eyes, so I often lost my spot while reading. Some of these programs helped but others didn't really help me. For example my handwriting was so bad that when I would write a test, usually the teacher couldn't read what I wrote and I would end up failing the test.

When I was in fourth grade I was diagnosed with attention deficit disorder and dyslexia. I was given an Individual Education Plan. For me, this meant I was given a computer that I could type my assignments on and that helped a lot with writing assignments. But I was still struggling with reading.

Then, in sixth grade, I started the program at the Learning Centre for Hamilton and it's helped me a lot. My grades started to improve and I'm now on the honor roll.

The moral of the story is that life is full of challenges. I learnt that school is difficult when you have dyslexia. On the positive side, there are many very successful people who are dyslexic, for example Leonardo da Vinci, Tom Cruise, Walt Disney, Steve Jobs, Albert Einstein and many more. All these people overcame their struggles and became very successful.

*Lenny, from the first graduating class of the Learning Centre for Hamilton,
who we know will be successful at whatever they choose to do!*



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