



# The BEAR Bulletin

❖❖❖ *“helping children with dyslexia to read”*



## Celebrating a Window

When the board of the SRCF Learning Centre for Hamilton met in September it was the first time the item 'Window' did not appear on the agenda! The window spanned the two tutor rooms on the main floor, but a large gap was present between the separating wall and the window, meaning what was said in one room could be clearly heard in the next. No more! And no more drafts either! Our thanks to Nordik Windows and sales rep Levi for the design and installation of two top windows in 2021 and the bottom bay window this summer.

## Message from the President

Welcome to our new students, tutors, and volunteers and welcome back to our returning ones. We are growing and now offering tutoring four days a week, the start of a new adventure for all of us. There have been some noticeable updates made in the tutor rooms including new paint courtesy of your co-directors Barbara and Michael Baxter. The window shared by the tutoring rooms on the main floor has also been replaced. The new window is the last brick to be put in place from our original renovation plans. Please let us know when you see additional places for improvement. Your comments and suggestions are always welcome.

### Ontario Recognizes Our Volunteers

The Ontario Honours and Awards Secretariat of the Ministry of Citizenship and Multiculturalism has released its list of 2023 Ontario Volunteer Service Awards recipients and the Learning Centre for Hamilton has four names on that list.

Don Thornton, Lee Kools, Dave Walden, and Tom Lewis have each been recognized for their volunteer service and they received awards at ceremonies held in September in Hamilton, Kitchener, and Niagara Falls.

We applaud and celebrate their contributions and thank the Province of Ontario for recognizing their volunteer commitment to make the world a better place.

### Our Learning Centre is now Accredited



After a rigorous application process our Learning Centre for Hamilton has received accreditation from IMSLEC – The International Multisensory Structured Language Education Council, an international accrediting body based in the United States. This means that we have now become the first Scottish Rite Charitable Foundation Learning Centre in Canada to receive this internationally recognized accreditation. It is a great honour to have been recognized in this manner and we will continue to work very hard to maintain the high standards set by the accrediting body to maintain accreditation.

*Michael Kirk—President*

## From our Co-directors

Bigger and better!

In September of 2018 the Learning Centre for Hamilton officially opened on Tuesdays and Thursdays with four tutors providing two Orton-Gillingham lessons per week to four children with dyslexia. The goal was to improve the reading and spelling skills of those children. Since then, those children have graduated from the Learning Centre program and have either successfully graduated from or are experiencing success in their last years of secondary school.

In September of 2023 the certified and accredited Learning Centre for Hamilton officially opens Monday through Thursday with 14 tutors providing two Orton-Gillingham lessons per week to 16 children with dyslexia. With training from Meredith Hutchings and the involvement of 45 volunteers (including Board members,

tutors, volunteer co-ordinator and Bear Bulletin editor) and various service people from Hamilton and surrounding areas, a very successful program has been established and will be delivered.

In five years, we have grown and have learned to be better each year in having a welcoming, supportive, and professional Learning Centre.

In August, after a 2-year process, the Learning Centre for Hamilton was officially accredited by IMSLEC (International Multisensory Structured Language Education Council). Since officially opening in September 2018, many people involved with the Learning Centre for Hamilton have worked hard to have it become a professional Learning Centre recognized by the Scottish Rite and now also acknowledged by IMSLEC.

Great thanks and congratulations to Tutor-Trainer Meredith Hutchings and every individual involved in the extensive process to become IMSLEC accredited. Everyone connected to the Learning Centre for Hamilton will continue to work hard to provide the best professional services and standards to children with dyslexia.

Welcome to the new and welcome back to the returning children and their families, tutors and volunteers! Welcome back to the Board members. Welcome back tutor-trainer Meredith Hutchings. They say it takes a community to raise a child. At the Learning Centre for Hamilton, it takes a dedicated and committed team to give a child with dyslexia the gift of reading and spelling.

Wishing everyone a great new year 2023-2024!

*Barbara & Michael Baxter*

## From our Tutor-Trainer

We are very lucky to have attracted some very experienced new tutors to the Learning Centre for Hamilton. Five new tutors have begun training and will start tutoring in early October. This brings our tutor count to a grand total of thirteen tutoring sixteen children. The Centre is growing nicely!

This summer six days of training saw the five new tutors get started, as well as additional training delivered to five other tutors. Welcome Margaret, Barb, Leah, Megan and Iris. You can learn more about them on the next page and see what an accomplished group they are. Training will continue throughout the fall with more modules being taught to the new tutors, and everyone being observed at least once.

Observations are a mandatory part of the training with every tutor required to have at least eight observations completed successfully to become a Certified Orton-Gillingham Practitioner. Written feedback is provided about every part of the lesson to ensure that the delivery of the lesson is smooth, accurate, and at as brisk a pace as the child can manage. This apprenticeship approach ensures that each child receives a quality lesson delivered with complete integrity to the OG technique which has been designed to rewire the dyslexic brain. Each lesson is crafted according to what the tutor sees is required for that child to progress towards fluency in reading and spelling.

The other big news is that the Scottish Rite Charitable Foundation Learning Centre for Hamilton has been accredited by the International Multisensory Structured Language Education Council! IMSLEC is considered one of the finest organizations training Certified Orton-Gillingham Practitioners and is recognized as such by the International Dyslexia Association. The process for our Centre to become accredited has involved a team from the Centre. All aspects of the Centre have been scrutinized to meet the stringent criteria for accreditation. The Hamilton Centre can now share the IMSLEC logo with all Certified tutors. We are confident this will help us to gain recognition as a Centre delivering high-quality intervention for children with dyslexia. We look forward to sharing and learning from other IMSLEC accredited Centres to help us as we grow.

*Meredith Hutchings*

## Meet the New Tutors



Our new tutors posed for a group photo outside the Learning Centre for Hamilton.

Pictured, left to right, are Barb Leisinger, Leah Panszczyk, Margaret Cowan, Lucy Berthoud, Megan Jukes, Iris Duemm and tutor-trainer Meredith Hutchings.

*We welcome them all and wish them a most fulfilling and enjoyable year!*

### Our Mission

To provide free, quality, evidence-based, remedial Orton-Gillingham tutoring to children with difficulties in reading, spelling, writing, and related scholastic skills formally identified as the specific learning disability dyslexia.



**Barb Leisinger** recently came back to the Hamilton area from London and is very happy to be closer to her children. Barb previously tutored at two Learning Centres, in BC and London. In her spare time she curls, hikes, swims, gardens, and cooks.

**Leah Panazczyk** is the mom of a “brilliant dyslexic boy” and is passionate about children’s right to read. A graduate of York University and the University of Toronto she has a keen interest in Canadian, women’s and ancient history and likes to play Scrabble.

**Margaret Cowan** earned her B.A. and M.A. in psychology. Previously she tutored at and was director of the Learning Centre for London. Married with two sons she enjoys reading, gardening and is a member of the Society for Learning in Retirement.

**Lucy Berthoud** has led a very interesting life. Born in Ontario, raised in Quebec, she has lived in Norway, Singapore, Chicago, Orlando and Dubai. She has tutored staff and their children at the hotels her husband worked in. Lucy is very much into her ancestry, and she also swims and bikes.

**Megan Jukes** is a graduate of McMaster University and was an elementary teacher for 33 years. She worked one-on-one with Chinese and Korean students teaching ESL and FSL. She enjoys puzzles, card games, and is in a handbell choir.

**Iris Duemm** enjoys hiking with her dog, Lizzie, canoeing, running, soccer, and dodgeball. She has previous experience in tutoring with the Phonics Academy of the HWDSB and Reading Rocks Centre for Diverse Learners.

Tutor-Trainer Meredith Hutchings delivered the first two Orton-Gillingham modules with the new tutors at the Scottish Rite in mid-August.



## Signs of the Times



With more children, more tutors, and more volunteers, we were in need of more designated parking spots. The outside of our Learning Centre is now decorated with several of these stylish signs indicating which spots are for those using the Centre. With thanks to Ken Brisbois of the Hamilton Shrine Club for his help in getting the signs made quickly and at a great price.

Dyslexic kids are creative, 'outside-the-box' thinkers. They have to be, because they don't see or solve problems the same way other kids do ... It's not a bad thing to be different. Sometimes, it's the mark of being very, very talented.

Rick Riordan

## Family Ties



R. W. Bro. Hector Brown congratulates Bro. Jim Thompson.

This photo, which appeared in the Yorkton This Week & Enterprise, dated Wednesday, January 6, 1993 shows Bro. Jim Thompson receiving the Gold Honor Award. Bro. Thompson was initiated into masonry in 1929 and had been presented with his 50 years and 60 years jewels. He was a member of the York Rite, which bestowed the Gold Honor on him. The presentation coincided with his 90th birthday. James Sharp Thompson was the paternal grandfather of Learning Centre co-director Barbara Baxter. Barbara and Michael have been associated with the SRCF Learning Centre for Hamilton since August 2018 and now feel this involvement was meant to be, carrying on the commitment of Jim.

## Thank you!



Our deepest appreciation to our volunteer receptionists:

Dale Alex Al and Arlene  
Kevin Brian Bob  
Doug Mike Hrant

Yours are the first faces people see when entering our Learning Centre—so keep smiling!

## The “Red Apple Trophy”: 2023 Edition



The 94th edition of the “Red Apple Trophy” was held on Friday, June 16, 2023 at the Southbrook Golf & Country Club in Binbrook. The Scottish Rite of Freemasonry Valley of Hamilton Golf Classic is a fundraising event with the proceeds in support of the Scottish Rite Charitable Foundation and the Learning Centre for Hamilton.

There were fifty hole sponsors with about ninety golfers registered, and twenty others attending just the dinner. An excellent meal was provided and during dinner, to round off the day, piper Jim Stewart played a selection of tunes that were enjoyed by one and all.

Thanks to the golf committee and everyone who supported this special event that, from all accounts, was a major success. The tournament raised over \$14800, up from the \$10800 raised in 2022. The funds will be dispersed equally between the Charitable Foundation and the Learning Centre for Hamilton.



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