



The BEAR Bulletin

Fall 2024

❖❖❖ *"helping children with dyslexia to read"*



Housekeeping

Our wonderful house on George Street got a bit of a facelift this summer. The risers on the indoor stairways received a fresh coat of white paint and are now bright and clean. The tile floor in the entry hall was stripped and waxed and shines. Nine pillars at the front of the building were refurbished and look fabulous! A security system was installed with cameras and software allowing our reception room volunteers to answer the door with a click on a tablet. And, of course, lovely purple petunias were planted to add a dash of colour! Thanks to all who help keep 'this old house' in such good shape.

Message from the President

Welcome back to our returning children, families, tutors and volunteers and a warm welcome to our first time children, volunteers and tutors who are joining us this year. Each tutoring year brings us new opportunities to work together to make our Learning Centre even better. I know that those of you returning will make our new family members welcome.

This year we have attempted to establish a schedule for the entire year to let children, their families, volunteers and tutors plan and let us know well in advance where special modifications and accommodations may be required. Please let us know throughout the year how the schedule is working and what we need to make it better next year.

As we grow let us not lose focus on the sole purpose of our Learning Centre, and all Scottish Rite Learning Centres across Canada, to help make a positive difference in the lives of each child who comes through our front door.

Michael Kirk—President

Welcome to Our New Executive Director

On June 25 the Scottish Rite Charitable Foundation Learning Centre Program announced that Bill Cave was the new Executive Director. In early May, before the appointment was made official he paid a visit to the Learning Centre for Hamilton, meeting with some Board members and the centre co-directors.

Since his appointment he participated in the Virtual Tutor Training Program offered by the BC Learning Centre. His hope is that Virtual Tutoring will be an additional tool for delivering our services to children and prospective tutors in appropriate circumstances in the future.

In July he attended the Calgary Learning Centre's AGM and Board Meeting on Zoom.

In September, following Supreme Council in Ottawa, Bill and his wife Jan travelled east and visited the Centres in Moncton, Halifax and Truro. While there they enjoyed several seafood dinners in places with outstanding views.

His plans for the Learning Centres is an update of the Handbook (something we all agree is long overdue) and facilitating 'face-to-face' meetings of Board Chairs, Tutor Trainers and Senior Tutors, to allow the sharing of information and the formulation of action plans to chart the future of Learning Centres across Canada.

We are looking forward to working with Bill and are excited to see what the future holds.

Meet Our New Tutors



Joshua D. E. Las is a Guatemalan Canadian and resides in the Strathcona Neighbourhood. His interests include fine art, tattoos, comics, animation and sports.

Claudia Ribeiro has returned to the Learning Centre for Hamilton: welcome back! She and her husband have 2 teenagers and a pup 'who is just the sweetest thing'. Among her interests are boxing, cycling and listening to music.

Jodi Northey lists her family as 2 children and a dog (whom she loves). Jodi, who lives in Burlington, has training in early childhood and elementary Montessori education. She likes sports, reading and learning.

Heidi Tadeson is a retired teacher, formerly with the HWDSB. The mother of 3 grown children she enjoys listening to music, playing the piano, reading and hiking. Her husband, Mark Tadeson, is City Councillor for Ward 11.

And Our Tutor-Trainer

Meredith Hutchings has taught reading her entire career. After graduating from York University, she began teaching in 1979 at the Perth County Board of Education in Stratford, Ontario, teaching elementary grades. Meredith continued her passion for teaching reading in Nova Scotia at a private school associated with Dalhousie University, while obtaining a master's degree in education. Working for many years with the Nova Scotia Community College and the Nova Scotia government in a variety of capacities, Meredith developed programs and curriculum for adults needing to improve their literacy skills to complete high school graduation diplomas including adults with physical and learning disabilities. When the Scottish Rite Learning Centre for Children – Halifax came to Meredith's attention, she became a volunteer tutor, a certified tutor, and was trained as a tutor trainer. Helping the Centre partner with the NS Government, Meredith collaborated with the Centre Director in Halifax, Thelma Gegan, to develop the tutor training program that has been delivered to adult literacy educators throughout Nova Scotia as well as volunteer tutors at four Scottish Rite Learning Centres across Canada. An Orton-Gillingham course was also developed and delivered to adults at the Nova Scotia Community College. Meredith retired from Nova Scotia in 2015 and was asked to be the Centre Trainer for Moncton. When she was asked to be the Centre Trainer for the newly opening Hamilton Centre, Meredith trained Julie Nickerson to take over the trainer position in Moncton. Meredith has been honoured to be the Centre Trainer and Supervisor for the Learning Centre for Children in Hamilton since its opening in 2018. She was an integral part of the process of gaining accreditation for the Hamilton Learning Centre through the International Multisensory Structured Language Education Council (IMSLEC), in 2023. Meredith lives in Ottawa with her husband, Peter.



From our Co-directors

October is National Dyslexia Awareness month. At the Learning Centre for Hamilton we are committed and dedicated people that are part of a team that continues to grow and offer special services for children with dyslexia all year round.

The following people are aware of dyslexia and how it impacts a child:

Board Members: President Michael Kirk, Vice-President Mario Kovacevic, Ian Anderson, Dale Chapman, Robert Dunne, Thomas Lewis, Alex Mouriopoulos, and Donald Thornton

Tutor Trainer: Meredith Hutchings

Present and New Tutors: Barbara Baxter, Michael Baxter, Margaret Cowan, Iris Duemm, Elspeth Daley, Megan Jukes, Josh Las, Barb Leisinger, Jennifer Marshall, Donna McManamy, Jodi Northey, Leah Panszyk, Claudia Ribeiro, Colleen Reinhart, Stephanie Shewfelt, and Heidi Tadeson

Volunteer Co-ordinator: Dale Chapman

Present and New Volunteers: Al and Arlene Baker, David Gordon, Kathy Hamilton, Brandon Morrison, Brian Muir, Dean Nazir, Linda Murray, Bob Philips, Bob Stewart, and Nancy Wood

Publications and Branding: Lee Gowers

If you have time and are interested, please contact the Scottish Rite Charitable Foundation Learning Centre for Hamilton and join this valuable team. We have a growing waiting list of children that need you.

The 2024-2025 tutoring year has started. Welcome back and welcome past and new tutors and volunteers. Welcome back and welcome past and new children and their families. Together we will work toward helping children with dyslexia to read. Here's to a good year.

Barbara & Michael Baxter

From our Tutor-Trainer

It is wonderful to see the Learning Centre for Hamilton back in operation this fall with so many eager children, families, and tutors. I am seeing wonderful lesson plans as well as plans from tutors for their sequence of lessons for the year. We have such a thoughtful and skilled group of tutors! We are very lucky!

This summer four new tutors began training. These new tutors begin their lesson delivery in October so the Centre is growing again!

Already, some colleagues of our tutors are inquiring about training and tutoring for next year. The word is spreading and resulting in professional educators coming to learn to be Orton-Gillingham practitioners. Perhaps this is a result of the Ontario Human Rights Commission releasing its two year anniversary report of the Right To Read Commission, or perhaps potential tutors are motivated by the Learning Centre for Hamilton's accreditation with the International Multisensory Structured Language Education Council. We benefit greatly from such keen and knowledgeable tutors joining our OG community of practice as our waitlist of hopeful children and families is also growing.

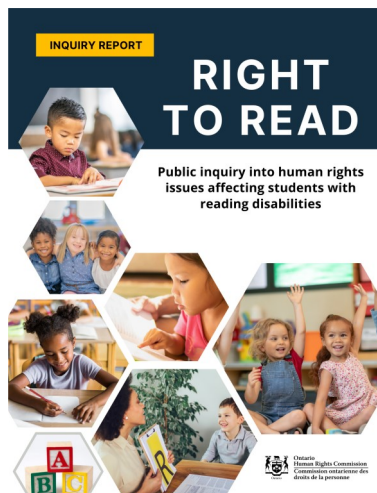
This year we feel more settled with our annual planning for the entire training year ahead. How helpful this schedule is for all involved! Tutors, families, all those involved with the day to day operations of the Learning Centre, and especially for the board members planning for the fiscal obligations of the year can now rely on dates for training and observations. As we grow, we are also gaining expertise in managing the Centre operations, including training. Thank you to all involved!

Meredith Hutchings

The logo features the text "Mark it Red" in a white, sans-serif font, with "Red" crossed out by a white diagonal line. Below this, the word "READ" is written in a bold, white, sans-serif font. The entire logo is set against a solid red rectangular background.

Mark it Red is the official Canadian celebration for Dyslexia Awareness Month. While silver is the colour of Dyslexia Awareness ribbons the movement to use red stems from red being a colour dyslexic people are familiar with: associated with mistakes, corrections and crossing out. It's time to change the narrative. #GoRedForDyslexia #BreakingtheSilence

The Right to Read



On October 3, 2019, the Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC) announced a public inquiry into human rights issues that affect students with reading disabilities in Ontario's public education system. The Right to Read inquiry, which focused on early reading skills, found that Ontario's public education system is failing students with reading disabilities (such as dyslexia) and many others, by not using evidence-based approaches to teach them to read.

The Right to Read inquiry report highlights how learning to read is not a privilege but a basic and essential human right. The report includes 157 recommendations to the Ministry of Education, school boards and faculties of education on how to address systemic issues that affect the right to learn to read. The report combines research, human rights expertise and lived experience of students, parents and educators to provide recommendations on curriculum and instruction, early screening, reading interventions, accommodation, professional assessments and systemic issues. Implementing the OHRC's recommendations will ensure more equitable opportunities and outcomes for students in Ontario's public education system.

In September of 2024 the OHRC released a two-year update on the Right to Read Inquiry report, in collaboration with Dyslexia Canada. The two-year update highlights important changes to the education system including:

- Ontario revised the Grade 1 to 9 language curriculum and instructional guides to reflect the recommendations in the report in both English and French. The new language curriculum was designed to improve early reading instruction and reduce the need for intervention.
- Ontario issued a policy/program memorandum that mandates early reading screening every year for all students in Kindergarten to Grade 2 students beginning in September 2024.
- The Ministry of Education is developing a French-language reading intervention program.

"The changes resulting from the *Right to Read* Inquiry have been transformative, shifting the province to a proactive approach to preventing reading difficulties," said Alicia Smith, Executive Director, Dyslexia Canada. "However, there remains much to be done, particularly in meeting the needs of older students with dyslexia. Ensuring that these students are properly identified and supported is our next crucial step toward true educational equity."

Some recommendations that have not seen enough progress include:

- Teacher education and additional qualification courses
- Accommodations
- Professional assessments

The responsibility of ensuring children realize the right to read is a shared one between the province, school boards and educators, along with teachers' unions, the Ontario College of Teachers, and Faculties of Education. The OHRC calls on all partners in the education system to work together to ensure that every child realizes their right to read.

- The OHRC made over **150 recommendations** for systemic changes for Ontario to meet its human rights obligations to students. The recommendations provide a blueprint to make sure the one million children in Ontario who annually require systematic and explicit instruction get what they need to learn to read.
- Students from historically disadvantaged groups, including those with dyslexia and other disabilities, students from lower-income backgrounds, Black and other racialized students, First Nations, Métis and Inuit students and multilingual students are disproportionately affected by access to the supports needed to learn to read.
- The OHRC's landmark report influenced other jurisdictions across Canada to re-examine approaches to teaching reading, as well as inspiring human rights commissions in Manitoba and Saskatchewan to launch similar initiatives.

Information reprinted from the Ontario Human Rights Commission website: www3.ohrc.on.ca

