

The BEAR Bulletin

Vol. 5 June 2021

FIRST LEARNING CENTRE TUTOR IN TRAINING



Nikki Brooks

My husband and 3, now adult, children, and I operated a dairy farm in rural Ancaster for 35 years. We have retired, sold the farm and now live in Ancaster. I also worked off the farm as a teacher, first in Burlington and then for most of the later years in Brantford. That 35 year career "living" with grade 7 and 8 students every day for the school year was a highlight of my life and I learned much from them. In retirement I became a volunteer at the Brantford hospital and the Stedman Hospice becoming involved in my second passion which is wellness and health care. My formal education is in English language and kinesiology, both of which prepared me well for teaching in the classroom and in the gym.

When the Scottish Rite team was in the early stages of planning for the Learning Centre and recruiting prospective tutors, a member of our church and a Scottish Rite Mason, Butch Rogers, spoke about it at the men's breakfast and my husband brought the literature home. In the classroom I had encountered more than one student who was, in my limited knowledge at the time, a classic case of dyslexia and I had no tools to correctly help these kids. I watched the sad situation unfold as they got further and further behind and withdrew into a low self esteem with limited success as students. The school system does its best with a wide spectrum of language learning challenges in kids but is not able to specifically address something as complex as dyslexia. When I read the literature that had been presented at the men's breakfast I knew that this was something I was going to pursue. My thinking was that if I could help kids be successful, it might soften the memory of the ones I was not able to help and also allow the ones that I can help to blossom into their full potential to be confident, contributing citizens in their world. I was among the first group of tutors to be trained and here I am tutoring a wonderful child who has moved forward eagerly and successfully to gain skills that can allow her to use language competently. The work for children is intense and not easy at times but very rewarding for them when they see the results over time.

TESTIMONIALS FROM OUR CENTRE

"I am grateful for the opportunity to have Ingrid enrolled in this program. We appreciate everyone's support to ensure the children are provided the resources they need to help them during their learning journey. Thank you!"

Marina (parent)

"We love the third-party oversight with its transparency especially as we navigated to online. It was a very seamless transition. But first and foremost, the leaps and bounds in our son's reading, writing, and overall confidence was so much more than we could have expected. He is nearing the end of the program and from not wanting to read anything except graphic novels he has progressed to read several series of novels since he started".

Aoife (parent)



The training for tutors is copious and time consuming but very thorough and rewarding as it leads to successful delivery of a very specific skill set to an otherwise compromised group of students. Thank you to the Scottish Rite for recognizing the problem, sponsoring the tutor training and offering a learning opportunity to kids who deserve to be successful and can be just that with the Orton-Gillingham program.



Dr. Michelle Sala

Dr. Sala has joined our Tutor training program and will be providing essential training to our tutors as part of our continuing effort to make excellence and continuing tutor training improvement part of our mission.

Dr. Michelle Sala attained her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology in 1997 and has been registered with the College of Psychologists of Ontario since 1998. Originally from Montreal, Dr. Sala has obtained the majority of her clinical experience in the province of Ontario where she has worked in Sault Ste. Marie, Thunder Bay, Timmins and currently in Southern Ontario, where she has opened her private practice since 2006. Dr. Sala is very excited to provide necessary services to the Learning Centre for Hamilton and being part of the Orton-Gillingham team.

With an extensive background in children's mental health, as well as both treatment and assessment services for children and adults, she will be an invaluable resource. In treatment, she has strong foundations in cognitive-behaviour therapy with an emphasis in mindfulness. She brings a wealth of knowledge and experience from her work with both individuals and families that will enhance our Centre's ability to respond to the diverse needs of our children.

In the area of assessment, she has particular skills in the areas of ADHD, learning disabilities and Autism in both children and adults. Her unique background as a bilingual psychologist with experience in clinical and school psychology has allowed her to provide assessments and consultations to school boards and other mental health agencies in both English and French. Dr. Sala has also been involved in the direct training of other professionals in providing quality services for children and families.

Will You Help?

My Brethren,

The Learning Centre for Hamilton needs your help. As the COVID pandemic drags on, much longer than expected, more and more of the traditional fundraising has vanished. The Christmas Performance & Dinner, the Golf Tournament, even the Beef & Corn Roast, have all been lost and are in danger of being lost again this year. Throughout this crisis the Learning Centre has continued online tutoring of children dealing with dyslexia. This has been a very difficult process made possible because of the perseverance of the centre's program directors.

If your lodge, like many, plan out their annual charitable donations we would request that you keep the Learning Centre for Hamilton in mind.

Should you wish to make a personal donation or bequest your support is also greatly welcomed. A monthly donation of \$25, \$50, or \$100 helps to keep the lights on and the centre in a positive financial situation.

All donations will be gratefully received and faithfully applied.

Make cheques payable to:

The Scottish Rite Charitable Foundation
Learning Centre for Hamilton
148 George Street Hamilton, ON L8P 1E5

TAX RECEIPTS WILL BE ISSUED FOR ALL DONATIONS

We Thank You

Thanks to everyone who played
Friends of Learning
Wine Survivor 2021
we raised \$5240

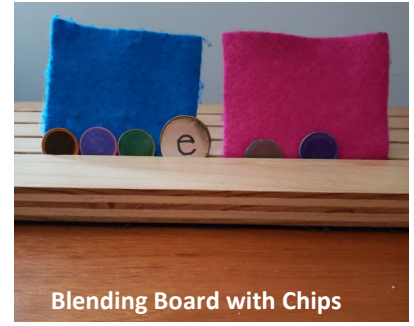
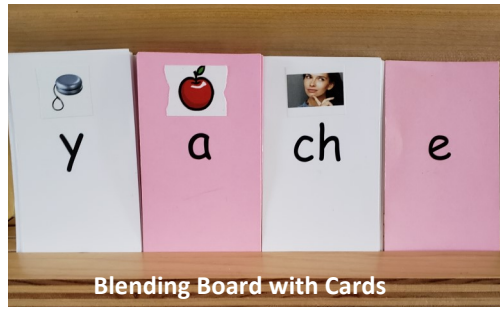


Creative Fundraising! \$5240

I am a member of The Barton Lodge #6 and North Star Lodge #322. I joined the Scottish Rite while living in Windsor and am a Member of Moore Sovereign Consistory. I was asked to help out on the Learning Centre golf tournament and we had to cancel the tournament due to COVID. A friend of mine ran a Wine Survivor to benefit the Owen Sound Women's Shelter. With her permission my wife and I copied her idea and created the Friends of Learning Wine Survivor 2021. We used Facebook as a way to communicate amongst the teams and announce the daily cast offs. People had fun following along and waiting for the daily results. The final night we did on ZOOM so everyone could watch the results live. It was a lot of fun!

Thank You Greg & Wendy Splan

Tutor Trainer Meredith Hutchings Report



The 2020-2021 school year has been quite a challenge for all the Hamilton Learning Centre families and tutors. We decided we needed to move to online learning as the COVID 19 pandemic was hitting Ontario regions quite severely, especially across southern Ontario.

We were approved to deliver online tutoring and have done so consistently during the entire school year. Our tutors, families, and volunteer monitors have been amazing, and attendance has been solid. This consistency has resulted in positive improvements to our students' reading and spelling skills.

For our online learning lesson delivery, the most effective piece of "technology" which has helped us to keep true to the Orton-Gillingham multi-sensory, explicit instructional technique, is our wooden blending board. Produced by Benedetti Woodworking in Hamilton, these invaluable wooden boards have slots at just the right angle and depth to hold our phonogram cards and felt squares.

We use them like this. Tutors hold up the phonogram deck cards to the camera for the visual drill and then place these into the slots of the wooden board as they would have placed them on the tabletop. External cameras with longish cords are lowered down to the

tabletop so that the cards are the focus of the screen. As tutors tap the cards, our children say the phonogram sounds and blend as they would in person.

For spelling, the boards' slots fit our squares of felt perfectly so that the children can tell tutors how to 'build' the word they are asked to spell. Our squares are colour-coded to match the colours of the cards in the deck for suffixes, Latin roots, prefixes, and syllables. Once the felt squares are in the board, the camera can then be dropped to tabletop again. The word is spelled following our SOS steps (Simultaneous Oral Spelling).

If the child is just beginning in our program, small plastic chips are placed in front of each square to represent each sound in each syllable. Sounds and then letters are tapped by the tutor and said by the child. The child prints the word on the lined paper provided by the Centre and shown to the camera for the final approval of the tutor.

We are so pleased that the reliable and effective Orton-Gillingham method has been transferred to online thanks to our wonderful Benedetti Blending Boards.

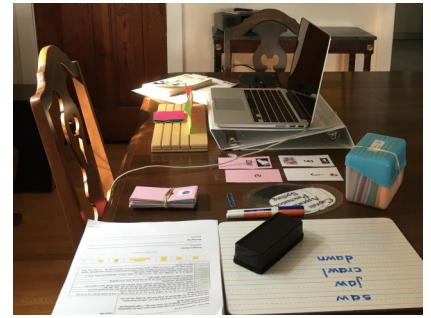
We look forward to returning to our wonderful Learning Centre for Hamilton to tutor in person.



The Learning Centre



Empty Classroom



Tutoring from Home

President Mike Kirk's Message

Summer 2021

Here we are at the end of our 2020 -2021 tutoring year and what a year it has been! We started in September with online tutoring in the hopes that it would be a short-lived solution to the pandemic shutdown and that return to normal face-to-face sessions would be quick. That was not the case and we are still hearing of the possibilities of some form of online learning within our tutoring system into 2022.

Our children, tutors and volunteer staff have proven themselves to be resilient and adaptable and I am confident that whatever challenges come our way will be met. We will be ready to open our Learning Centre to in-person tutoring on literally 24 hours notice when the time is right, and we will also continue to be ready to present online learning.

While the end of our school year has traditionally been a time for everyone to celebrate in person we will have to move that along into the fall, but rest assured we will all meet together for a celebration when the time is right.

While fundraising has been challenging, our core supporters have been there for us and we encourage those Masonic groups and individuals who so generously supported us in the beginning to continue to support us. The large fundraising events that used to be relied upon will not return for some time so we each as individuals need to remind ourselves that the need has not gone away, and it now is time for individual giving and small initiatives to fill the gap.

Co-Directors

Michael and Barbara Baxter's Message

It takes a team to help a child have the right to read. This year's success would not have been possible without the dedication, hard work, and support of all of our Learning Centre for Hamilton team members. All of these people must be recognized as we end our tutoring year.

First we must recognize our children and their families for being adaptable and hard working as we moved through the year. Congratulations to Charlie, Paige, Dylan, Natalie, Layla, Dakota, Sydney, Jake, Ingrid, and Maggie for your online progress. We are very proud of you.

Thank you to our Tutor Trainer Meredith Hutchings for her training, support, and volunteer tutoring as well. Thank you to our tutors Nikki Brooks, Sarah McKee, Stacy Geddes, and Barbara and Michael Baxter for providing instruction and guiding the children through the Orton-Gillingham program.

Thank you to our dedicated team of volunteer lesson monitors: Dale Chapman, Lee Gowers, Don Thornton, Mike Kirk, Ian Craig, David Gordon, Mahai Samoila, Steve Warren, Dave Monette, Peter Smith, and Gary McLean, for giving of their time to observe and record lessons each week.

Thank you to our Board of Directors: President Mike Kirk, Vice President Mario Kovacevic, Past President Don Thornton, Ian Anderson, Ken Laliberte, Dave Walden, and Tom Lewis, for being so supportive of the Learning Centre and ensuring its continued operation.

Thank you to Lee Kools for designing and typing the Learning Centre Newsletter. Thank you to Centre Bookkeeper Leslie Drake who kindly helped throughout the year.

We wish everyone a happy, safe, and healthy summer and look forward to working with all of you again in the fall.



If you do not wish to receive future newsletters from the Learning Centre for Hamilton please contact office@dyslexiacentrehamilton.com. Thank you.