

The BEAR Bulletin

Fall 2025

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



Going Green!

The 3 R's: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle. We are placing an emphasis on the first R: Reduce. Concerned about the large number of single use water bottles at the Learning Centre the Board did research into alternatives. Thoughts of hooking into the existing water supply were quashed, given the age of the pipes in the building (built in 1885). Systems that dispensed hot and cold water were then considered, but the chance of anyone turning on the hot water in error scared them off. So a system that provides clean, safe room-temperature water, and looks nice, was chosen and installed. We are happy to report that the system has been very well received.

Message from the President

Welcome back from what I hope was a full and relaxing summer. Once again, we have new tutors and children and families joining us, so everyone please make them welcome. There was some housekeeping and maintenance done to the building over the summer, including the addition of a water cooler to help cut down on the plastic we generate. Things at the Niagara Satellite are moving along, with the committee hard at work, and we hope to have things operating there in January. As always, the biggest problem is finding tutors so if you know of anyone down that way who might be interested, please let us know.

We had the pleasure of welcoming centre directors, tutors and board members from the other eight Learning Centres across Canada to a national conference in June. There was a lot of discussion and sharing: we now look forward to plans being put into action.

This will be my last message to you as Board President as I am hoping to step out of that role at our Annual General Meeting later this month. I would like to thank everyone for their generous support over the last five years and wish the new Board continued success.

Michael Kirk—President

Welcome and Welcome Back!

Children and tutors were greeted on their first day at the Learning Centre with gift bags. Each bag had a reusable water bottle, a note pad, a pad of sticky notes, a magnetic business card and a pen. All were emblazoned with the logo of the SRCF Learning Centres for Children. Full disclosure: some of these items had been ordered for the national conference in June. The water bottles pair well with the new water dispensing system, while the magnets allow families to have all contact information about the Learning Centre on hand—probably on the fridge!



What We Did on Our Summer Vacation 2025



Centre directors, board members, tutors and tutor-trainers from all nine Learning Centres across Canada, along with representatives from the Scottish Rite Charitable Foundation gathered in June for a 2 day conference. The conference allowed for much discussion, sharing of ideas and planning for the future. And we got to show off our unique Learning Centre.



Tutor training took place over two weekends in August. Tutor-trainer Meredith, along with returning tutors Alex and Elspeth were on hand to welcome our newest class of volunteer tutors. Pictured (starting at the right): Kim, Roxanna, Amber, Tracey, Elizabeth, Freda, Alex, Elspeth, Meredith and Nigel.



A decal with the logo for the Learning Centre for Hamilton now adorns the front door—so those passing by have an idea of what the building is.



Our thanks to the Scottish Rite Club of Hamilton for their ongoing support and accommodation of the national conference, the Celebration of Success and the tutor-training sessions for the Learning Centre for Hamilton. .

From our Co-directors

As we look to the future, the Scottish Rite Charitable Foundation Learning Centre for Hamilton is starting to grow. In 2017-2018 we had 4 tutors and 6 children on Tuesdays and Thursdays. In 2022-2023 we had 9 tutors working with 10 children on Tuesdays and Thursdays. In 2024-2025 we had 15 tutors working with 22 children Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. In 2025-2026 we have 22 tutors working with 27 children on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. We had 3 desk volunteers in 2018-2019. Today we have 10 volunteers working at the Centre reception desk. The Scottish Rite Charitable Foundation Learning Centre for Hamilton is working at a fuller capacity to better serve hardworking children to learn reading, spelling, and writing through the Orton-Gillingham multisensory structured literacy process.

Every lesson the children are supported by everyone involved with the Learning Centre for Hamilton and their loving, caring, and supportive parents/guardians.

Welcome back and welcome tutors, tutor trainer, children, parents/guardians, volunteers, and Board members. Together we are better like we have never been before. 2025-2026 will be an excellent year for all.

Barbara & Michael Baxter

From our Tutor-Trainer

Another new year with growth on the books! Eight new tutors and families are starting the Orton-Gillingham journey this fall. Many of these new tutors are classroom teachers within a variety of school settings. Others have literally decades of experience. We are also so glad to welcome two men to our community, who will no doubt play an important mentoring role to our young boys.

The involvement of these experienced teachers is a real feather in the cap of our Learning Centre for Hamilton. The fact that they are willing to spend their time, dedication, and commitment to learning the OG technique and tutoring twice a week on top of their busy schedules speaks volumes about how our success with children with dyslexia is recognized beyond our building. Also, getting the professional word out about the efficacy of OG into the schools bodes well for the spread of structured literacy throughout the Hamilton region.

We look forward to seeing the growth of these children's literacy skills as the year progresses. Some of our new children are into their teens and while the OG method is most effective when started with younger children even those who start a bit later benefit greatly from the program.

We are confident that this will be another banner year for the Learning Centre and always thank everyone involved for making this Centre such a successful place of learning, sharing, and such a dynamic professional community.

Meredith Hutchings

News from Niagara

On Tuesday September 9th, 2025, three members of the Niagara Learning Centre Board of Directors attended the CFUW (Canadian Federation of University Women) "Kick-off" Event at Club Roma in St. Catharines. With well over 100 members in attendance, this event provided the perfect opportunity to set up an information booth and spread the word regarding the opening of the new Learning Centre for Niagara in St. Catharines, and perhaps recruit potential tutors. There was a steady flow of curious visitors to the booth with lots of questions being asked, and there were several application forms picked up by women interested in tutoring, or who knew of a child that would benefit from this type of learning.



Brent Julian, Glenn Cooke and David Ross



The SRCF Learning Centre for Hamilton was the grateful recipient of a donation of \$7500 from the Arbor Memorial Foundation. Jim Panoff, manager of the Arbor Memorial Dodsworth & Brown—Ancaster Chapel submitted the Learning Centre as a possible recipient of a donation. The Foundation supports charities in the communities their employees live and work in. Pictured (from left to right): Sandy McMillan, Michael Kirk (Board President), Jim Panoff, Dale Chapman (Board VP) and Gary Magwood.

Corporate Support

Canada is home to many generous donors: data from 2022 shows that 5 million Canadians donated over 12.7 billion dollars to charities, in addition to the time spent volunteering. Canada is also home to many companies with generous employee giving benefits. Matching gift programs are those in which the donation made by an employee is matched by the employer: normally in a 1:1 ratio but might also be 2:1 or even 3:1. Donations may be regular (weekly, monthly, annually) or one-offs. There are some stipulations, such as a maximum donation amount. Official donation receipts for tax purposes are issued to the employee so the donations may be claimed. Many of those same corporations offer Volunteer Grants: employees or retirees volunteer for a minimum number of hours per year and the company makes a cash donation to the charity they are giving their time to. The Learning Centre for Hamilton is thankful to receive disbursements from some of these programs. To determine if your employer offers either of these programs check with your HR department.

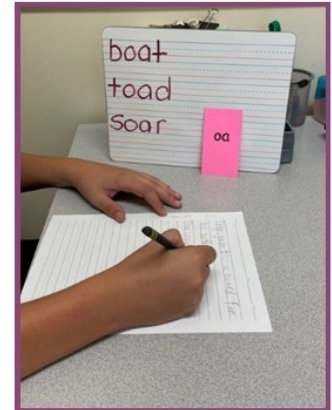
Dyslexia: RAISING THE VOLUME

October is Dyslexia Awareness Month: the theme this year is "Raising the Volume". Young people with dyslexia are asked to share their stories, challenges and successes. The intention is that these stories will help to inspire others, reduce stigma and motivate governments to identify and appropriately support children with dyslexia across the nation.

The Barrie Public Library is marking Dyslexia Awareness Month by devoting a page on the website to dyslexia resources. They have printed a list of dyslexia-friendly books, decodable books and an explanation of C-PEN ReaderPens (designed to assist those with reading challenges, such as dyslexia).

Volunteer Tutors Needed

help children with dyslexia to read



The Learning Centre for Niagara provides free, quality, evidence-based, remedial Orton-Gillingham tutoring to children with dyslexia.

There are 9 Learning Centres in Canada, and 3 Satellite Centres.

The Centres are funded through donations from the Scottish Rite Charitable Foundation, Masonic bodies, and individuals.

Each child receives 2 hours of tutoring per week during the school year: Monday & Wednesday or Tuesday & Thursday.

Tutoring takes place after school.

All lessons are held at the Learning Centre for Niagara, located at 93 Ontario Street in St. Catharines.

There is no cost to the child or their family.

Free training in the Orton-Gillingham method is provided to tutors and all materials are provided.

A tutor-trainer will oversee lesson plans and some lessons and be available for assistance.

As the children learn to read they also become more self-confident. Tutoring can be a very rewarding experience, for the tutor, the child and their family.

You can give a child the gift of reading!

Application forms can be found on our website:

dyslexiacentrehamilton.com



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