



The BEAR Bulletin

Winter 2024

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



Congratulations!

On Sunday November 24 the Sovereign Grand Commander of The Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry of Canada, David Bennett, 33°, together with Jim and Linda Stanley cut the ribbon to open the new Truro Satellite Learning Centre. The Halifax Centre was incorporated in 2009 and currently has 80 children enrolled and 65 tutors!

This brings the number of SRCF Learning Centres in Canada to nine with one satellite and one centre (Niagara) in the planning stages.

Message from the President

As we once again approach the holiday season and the mid-point in the tutoring year, it is a time to reflect on our past accomplishments and plan for our future successes. The Learning Centre for Hamilton held its Annual General Meeting on 18 November which coincided with a visit from Bill Cave, the Executive Director of the Scottish Rite Charitable Foundation Learning Centre Program for all of Canada. Bill and his wife, Jan, spent a few days in Ontario touring the existing Learning Centres as well as the site of the future Niagara Centre.

I encourage all our Learning Centre family members to take time during the holiday period to enjoy the company of family and friends. If travel is in your plans do so carefully and if staying home and celebrating is what you have planned just relax and enjoy. No matter where you spend them may your holidays be filled with good health and happiness.

We look forward to seeing everyone back safe and sound in January.

Michael Kirk—President

Thomas Lewis, 33°

The Hamilton Learning Centre has enjoyed the unwavering support and guidance of dedicated Scottish Rite members beginning well before the Learning Centre became a bricks and mortar reality. One of those supporters was Tom Lewis, 33° who was one of the original members of the Steering Committee formed to investigate the possibility of a Scottish Rite Charitable Foundation Learning Centre for Hamilton. Tom continued as a Board Member and Treasurer of our Learning Centre up until his passing in the last week of November. His clarity in managing the finances of the Learning Centre in no small part accounts for our financial stability and continuing success.

As a Board member Tom also represented the Valley of Niagara and was deeply involved in the establishment of a satellite Learning Centre in Niagara. His hard work and perseverance moved the Niagara project to a point where we now have a fully furnished facility in place.

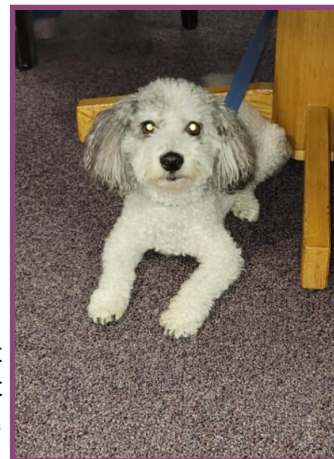
Tom will be sadly missed and while remembering him may we each strive to honour his memory by continuing to emulate his spirit of commitment and dedication.

Meet Our New Reception Room Monitors



Maggie (on the left) recently moved from a house to a condo and was experiencing some anxiety issues when left alone. Her adult, Nancy, was encouraged to bring Maggie along when she did her shifts as a volunteer monitor. Maggie has made herself right at home! She welcomes everyone arriving at the Centre and even paws at closed doors to remind people that she is there and would appreciate some attention. When Nancy's grandson was diagnosed with dyslexia she went online to learn more about it and found the website for our Learning Centre and the need for volunteers. She and Maggie started with us this fall.

Mason (on the right) really enjoys greeting people at the Centre, and they all love being greeted! Mason was named by his adult Bob's wife, Margie. The explanation for the name is that she would have two masons, but at least one mason home with her! (Members of the craft will get the 'joke'.) Bob found out about our Learning Centre through his masonic connections and began volunteering as a monitor this fall.



Our furry greeters certainly add to the warm and welcoming feel of our Learning Centre!

With Much Appreciation



Board President Michael Kirk gratefully accepted a donation from R.W. Bro. Earl J. Walsh. The donation was made in recognition of M.W. Bro. Robert J. McKibbin, Past Grand Master and Past DDGM of Toronto District 3.



Tutor Margaret Cowan was presented with a parting gift on her last day at the Learning Centre by Board President Michael Kirk. Margaret is moving to Halifax with her husband and son.



Trafalgar Lodge No. 712 recently raffled off a pair of platinum tickets for the Leafs—Flyers game on March 25 with proceeds donated to the Learning Centre. Board President Michael Kirk and Board member Dale Chapman presented W. Bro. Michael Wright with a certificate of appreciation. Congratulations to Barb L., a tutor at the Centre, winner of the tickets. Go Leafs Go!

From our Co-directors

This fall has been another period of growth for the Learning Centre for Hamilton. We are happy to see our Learning Centre family grow with the addition of new children, families, tutors, and volunteers. Everyone has settled into their new routines and 21 children are experiencing good success through the Orton-Gillingham Program delivered by 15 tutors under the supervision of trainer Meredith Hutchings.

In November we welcomed special visitors, new National Executive Director Bill Cave and his wife Jan. Bill and Jan got to see how we function together as one big family in the best interest of our children.

Our Learning Centre family has had some changes. We are sad to say good-bye to two special tutors Margaret Cowan who has relocated to Halifax in the fall and Colleen Reinhart who will be relocating to Ottawa in the new year. Thank you to both ladies for their commitment and hard work on behalf of the children they were tutoring. We wish each of them the best in their new life journeys. Our sincerest sympathy to the Learning Centre Board and family and friends on the passing of treasurer Tom Lewis from St. Catharines. Tom was a very valued Board member and his contributions to the Board and Learning Centre will be truly missed.

Thank you to everyone far and near for your donations and support. Thank you to our Learning Centre Board of Directors for supporting all individuals involved with the Learning Centre for Hamilton. Together we are successful helping children overcome dyslexia. We wish you a festive and joyous time with family and friends during the holiday season. Merry Christmas 2024 and Happy New Year 2025.

Barbara & Michael Baxter

From our Tutor-Trainer

The fall seems to have just slipped by so quickly! It is hard to believe that our new tutors have been tutoring since early October. These tutors are welcome additions to our Learning Centre family and their children are settled in and already show signs of pride with their progress.

The fall has been busy with training sessions for these new tutors, and especially with in person observations. The tutors are required to have at least eight observations completed in order to become certified Orton-Gillingham Practitioners. These observations start soon after tutoring begins in order for the trainer to ensure that the lessons are being delivered according to OG standards of practice. The tutors are expected to get high marks when observed to show that they are following all the steps of an Orton-Gillingham lesson with precision and fidelity. The precision and pace of a lesson is critical as we rewire children's dyslexic brains to automatically decode and encode English words accurately and quickly.

I am pleased to report that these new tutors are off to a skillful start! Other observations were also conducted with Centre tutor trainees who are further along with their training. Understandably, being watched with such focus takes getting used to. In many ways, becoming a Certified OG Practitioner is an intensive apprenticeship process resulting in a close-knit community of very skilled interventionists. We are truly lucky to have such a high caliber of tutors making such a difference in the lives of our children and their families.

Meredith Hutchings



This story is often repeated in Orton-Gillingham circles to remind people of the difference being made by tutors.

One day a man was walking along the beach when he noticed a boy picking something up and gently throwing it into the ocean. Approaching the boy, he asked, 'What are you doing?' The youth replied, 'Throwing starfish back into the ocean. The surf is up and the tide is going out. If I don't throw them back, they'll die'. 'Son', the man said, 'Don't you realize there are miles and miles of beach and hundreds of starfish?' 'You can't make a difference!' After listening politely the boy bent down, picked up another starfish, and threw it back into the surf. Then, smiling at the man, he said, 'I made a difference for that one'.

Adapted from The Star Thrower by Loren Eiseley

Volunteer Tutors Needed

help children with dyslexia to read

Volunteer Tutors are always needed at the Learning Centre for Hamilton, but especially now as two of our wonderful tutors are re-locating and our waiting list of children is growing. All tutoring is done after school and training in the Orton-Gillingham Approach is provided at no cost to the tutor. Tutoring can be a very rewarding experience, as evidenced by the comments made by the present tutors and highlighted on the website.

More information about becoming a tutor, what the position entails, along with application forms for potential tutors can be found on the website: dyslexiacentrehamilton.com.

Tutoring at the Centre has been a rewarding and inspiring experience.

I love working with incredible young people every week!

The Board of the Learning Centre for Hamilton

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Vice-President	Dale E. Chapman
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	Alex Mouriopoulos

The Board thanks Leslie Drake for her time, effort and expertise as Bookkeeper for the Learning Centre for the past eight years. She has done an outstanding job of managing the accounts and filings. Leslie is handing over the books as she concentrates on her other jobs and activities.



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Charitable No. 75398 4129 RR0001



The Scottish Rite Charitable Foundation
Learning Centre for Hamilton
"helping children with dyslexia to read"

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Donations (one time or monthly) may also be made through **CanadaHelps**.
Visit CanadaHelps.org and search for Learning Centre for Hamilton.
Official receipts for income tax purposes will be issued by CanadaHelps.

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Donors names will be printed in our newsletter. Please let us know how you would like to be recognized.

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