



Learning Centre
for Hamilton



Seasons Greetings!

¡Feliz Navidad!

Joyeux Noël!

Frohe Weihnachten!

Buon Natale!

Feliz Natal!

Vrolijk Kerstfeest!

С Рождеством!

(S Rozhdestvom!)

God Jul!

Mele Kalikimaka!

Nollaig Shona Duit!

Nadolig Llawen!

Wesołych Świąt!

Veselé Vánoce!

Maligayang Pasko!

3 Різдвом Христовим!

Crăciun Fericit!

Gleđileg Jól!

Sretan Božić!

The BEAR Bulletin

“helping children with dyslexia to read”

Winter 2025

Message from the President

We are now at the half way mark of the tutoring year and much has been happening at the Learning Centre for Hamilton. The house is full of children (23) and tutors (18) and reception room volunteers (10). Our family is certainly growing!

In October of this year the Annual General Meeting of the Learning Centre was held and a new Board was elected. We welcome David Gibson Jr., James Harper, Craig Knapman, and David Ross to the Board. Michael Kirk is now a director-at-large and will serve as a mentor (and sounding board) to me. Our most sincere thanks to Michael for his years on the Board, especially the last three as president. He has seen the Centre through its inception and growing pains with calm and thoughtful leadership, and a wicked sense of humour. Those are big shoes to fill but I will give it my best.

Several people from the Hamilton Centre are now sitting on National committees as proposed at the conference in June. They are discussing marketing, branding, fundraising, remuneration and technology, among other things. While each Learning Centre is distinct there is a need to have some common ground across the country.

In this edition of the BEAR Bulletin our tutor-trainer, Meredith Hutchings explains the process to become a certified tutor. There is also an update from the Niagara Centre. We hope you find our newsletters enjoyable and informative.

My wish for everyone involved with the Learning Centres for Hamilton and Niagara is a very happy Christmas and a healthy and peaceful New Year!

Dale Chapman—President

Congratulations!

Michael Kirk, Past-President of the Learning Centre for Hamilton has learned that he will become a 33rd degree mason in September 2026. The 33rd degree is an honorary degree granted to deserving Scottish Rite Masons by the Supreme Council of the 33° of the Ancient & Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry of Canada, the governing body of Scottish Rite for all of Canada. It is awarded to a Freemason in recognition of their outstanding service to the fraternity and society. In addition to his work at the Learning Centre Michael is involved with the College of Freemasonry and several other masonic and community organizations. His mother lodge is Century No. 457, and he is also a member of Beach No. 475 and Flamborough No. 357.



Support from the Community



Dale Chapman, Board President, happily accepts the gigantic cheque from (L to R) Alex Buck, Adam Baglieri and Theresa DiClemente.

Project Concern is an initiative of the Hamilton-Wentworth Regional Police Employees Charity Trust. Established in 1976 it is funded through payroll deductions of members of the Hamilton Police Service. A board meets regularly to review applications for funds from community groups: Hamilton-based charities improving the lives of children. Between twenty and thirty donations are made annually.

The Learning Centre for Hamilton was thrilled to receive a donation of \$1000 from Project Concern to help offset the cost of snacks for the children. With more children being tutored, and prices on the rise, this money will certainly help!

Many thanks to Jeff Valentine of the Shriners' Club of Hamilton for the suggestion to approach Project Concern.

Dyslexia and the Football Player

"It is not going to affect me because it is my superpower. So that is why I challenge anyone with dyslexia to keep moving forward and keep chipping away."

Rashan Gary plays Defensive End for the Green Bay Packers of the NFL. He was named to the All-American team while playing football for the Michigan Wolverines, was a first round draft pick of the Packers in 2019 and has twice been named to the NFL Pro Bowl team. Rashan Gary is dyslexic.

He was diagnosed in seventh grade at about the same time he started playing football. A teacher at that time told him he would never amount to much because of his 'disability'. He carried that comment as a chip on his shoulder, and motivation. A university graduate, pro footballer and business owner he hopes that teacher is watching! He gives all credit to his mom for advocating for him and pushing him to success.

Each year Rashan participates in the NFL's **My Cause My Cleats** campaign, which allows athletes to customize their cleats for a charity of their choice. The cleats are then auctioned off to raise funds for the charities. Rashan's cleats bear the logo of Made By Dyslexia, a nonprofit that provides resources for teachers and empowers dyslexic thinkers. Gary is now the Ambassador for dyslexia awareness.

Dyslexic Thinking in sports has many advantages, including strong visual memory, perseverance, intuition, exceptional focus and spatial awareness. This ability to visualize, or see how set pieces should play out, helps dyslexic players approach the game differently, and gives them an added advantage over others on the pitch. Other pro athletes who have used 'dyslexic thinking' are Muhammad Ali, Sir Jackie Stewart and Magic Johnson.

Rashad offers some advice to young people with dyslexia, "Take your time. Be open about your emotions. Talk to your family and your teachers so they can understand how you feel: once they understand they can find a way to help you."



Our Tutor-Trainer explains Tutor Training

We have started the year off with a larger than usual group of volunteer tutor trainees. This group consists of some very experienced teachers, who come to the Orton-Gillingham technique with extensive experience with children with learning difficulties. The Learning Centre is most grateful for their time and enthusiasm.

They are finding that learning the Orton-Gillingham technique requires time, and thoughtfulness. However, they are keen on becoming certified Orton-Gillingham Practitioners as this carries significant professional recognition of quality as a dyslexia interventionist.

To become certified all tutors must attend 45 hours of training, in person and online. This training covers the details required to tutor each of the five levels of the Scottish Rite Orton-Gillingham Program. As well, overarching topics are explored such as language and vocabulary development, the history of the English language, morphology, co-morbid conditions such as ADHD, and details about the assessment and diagnosis of dyslexia. Some of these areas are covered by experts such as a registered psychologist, a speech language therapist, and a psychometrist.

After 15 hours of introductory training, tutors begin tutoring a child twice a week for one hour each session. These lessons are crafted individually by each tutor specifically for their child and are vetted and screened by the trainer prior to being delivered. For certification, each tutor is required to teach at least 100 hours with a minimum of two children. These tutors are observed teaching a minimum of 8 times. Detailed feedback is provided in an apprenticeship manner to ensure that the tutors are mastering the steps of delivering an OG lesson. Volunteer tutors are asked to commit to tutoring at the Learning Centre for a minimum of 3 years. Of course, life can interrupt these plans, but if a tutor-child pair works together over this period of time, the tutor should be delivering lessons into Level 4 or even 5 of our OG program. Trainers are looking to certify tutors having seen them deliver lessons at these higher, more complex levels of the English language.

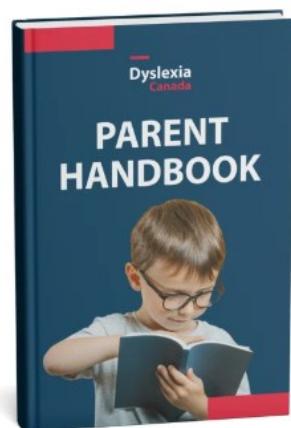
There are other requirements to become certified such as book reports, quizzes, take home tests, and even a final exam. In some universities, this process is delivered as a master's course.

The rigor of Orton-Gillingham training rises from the fact that reading and writing are some of the most complex tasks that the human brain tackles. In fact, the human brain is not hard wired to learn these complex processes but needs to rewire other parts of the brain in order to accomplish literacy tasks. OG specialists learn from the research of neuroscientists who continually study the complexities of the brain. Once becoming a certified Orton-Gillingham Practitioner, tutors are continually required to earn 30 professional development hours of additional training over 3 years, often by attending conferences led by these researchers. Orton-Gillingham trainers typically take as long as eight years to become a Certified OG Trainer.

The fact that experienced, dedicated educators are taking the time and effort to learn the OG technique and become certified, while helping our deserving children and families is a real testament that the Learning Centre for Hamilton is providing high quality delivery of in demand intervention for children with dyslexia. We should all be proud of our support for this Learning Centre.

Meredith Hutchings

Dyslexia Canada's Parent Handbook



The Parent Handbook was created to help families understand dyslexia and learn how to support children at home and at school. It was designed to be practical, easy to navigate, and grounded in current research. The handbook includes:

Dyslexia basics and identification – what dyslexia is, early signs, myths, and how screening and assessment work

Instruction and intervention – what effective reading instruction looks like, how to plan and monitor interventions, and the role of accommodations

Supporting your child – building confidence, fostering self-esteem, and understanding your child's rights in education

The handbook is available in print or digitally. To access your free copy please visit dyslexiacanada.org. and complete the online order form. As a national charity, Dyslexia Canada is committed to ensuring every child in Canada learns to read.

From our Co-directors

This time of the year is a time to give gifts. What is a gift? A gift is something given freely.

At the Learning Centre for Hamilton numerous people freely give gifts of their time and knowledge to help children with dyslexia to receive the gift of reading.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to every individual involved at the Centre who gives throughout the days, weeks, and months of the year.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to all donors for their generous support of the Learning Centre for Hamilton. Every contribution helps the Learning Centre provide children with the help they need.

Wishing everyone a joyful and restful holiday season and a happy new year 2026!

Barbara & Michael Baxter

News from Niagara

The Learning Centre for Niagara is a satellite of the very successful Learning Centre for Hamilton, with the intention of becoming an independent centre in the not-too-distant future. The Niagara Centre, located at 93 Ontario Street, St. Catharines, has been fully furnished by donations, and is now set up and ready to start accepting children.

There is already a list of children whose parents have applied for this exceptional opportunity; however, we need volunteers to be trained as Tutors. Tutors do not necessarily need to be teachers or retired teachers, the Hamilton Centre has several excellent tutors who have no previous teaching experience. All of the tutors have an inherent calling to help a child. The cost for Tutor training is fully covered by the Learning Centre.

There is a two-day initial training course for Tutors being held in Barrie in January 2026. We are hoping to have prospective Tutors attend, with the expectation that the Learning Centre for Niagara will be helping children to read by February or March 2026.

The Learning Centre is supported by the Scottish Rite Charitable Foundation; however, donations from the public are gratefully received and always put to good use. Donations to the Scottish Rite Charitable Foundation should specify "The Learning Centre for Niagara".

Learn more about the Learning Centre program: srcf.ca/learning-centres/

Learn about the Niagara Centre: dyslexiacentrehamilton.com/about-the-lc-for-niagara

If you are interested, or know someone who might be interested, in becoming a Tutor, Tutor Trainee or Non-Tutor Volunteer, application forms can be found on the website: dyslexiacentrehamilton.com. Applications for children to be entered into the program are also on the website.





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

Donation Form

Donor Information

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ Prov _____ PC _____

Phone _____

E-mail _____

Direct Donation to: Learning Centre for Hamilton Niagara Satellite

Payment Options

Cheque: Please make cheque payable to: *The Scottish Rite Charitable Foundation Learning Centre for Hamilton*

E-transfer: office@dyslexiacentrehamilton.com

Credit Card: Card # _____

Security Code (3 numbers on back of card) _____ Expiry (MM/YY) _____

Name on Card _____

Amount of donation _____ One time Monthly

Donation is in memory or honour of _____

Acknowledgement to be sent to: _____



Donations (one time or monthly) may also be made through [CanadaHelps](https://www.canadahelps.org) and directed to either the Learning Centre for Hamilton or the Niagara satellite. Visit [CanadaHelps.org](https://www.canadahelps.org) and search for Learning Centre for Hamilton. Official receipts for income tax purposes will be issued by CanadaHelps.

Donations of \$20 or more will be acknowledged with an official receipt for income tax purposes.

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

Donor Name: _____

Anonymous

If donating by cheque please complete this form and mail it and your cheque to:

SRCF Learning Centre for Hamilton
148 George Street
Hamilton ON L8P 1E5

If donating by credit card complete this form and email to: office@dyslexiacentrehamilton.com



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