

**Learning  
Disabilities  
Association  
of  
Alberta**



# Our Thanks ...

## Alberta Education:

The operation of the Learning Disabilities Association is supported by a generous Education Support Grant for Non-Profit Educational Organizations provided by Alberta Education. We are grateful for their continuing support of our goals.



## Randy Anderson Learning Foundation/Edmonton Community Foundation:

The Randy Anderson Learning Foundation, an organization dedicated to supporting people with learning disabilities, has provided a generous grant to the LDAA to support its ongoing organization. The LDAA wishes to extend its sincere thanks to Larry Anderson for his history of philanthropy and support in memory of his brother, Randy Anderson.



## To Our Volunteers and Active Supporters:

A sincere thank you to the volunteers in communities across Alberta and beyond who are involved in so many ways to help us achieve our mission.

## LDAA Board 2010-11

Michele Pentyliuk	President	Edmonton
Judy Craig	Vice President	Edmonton
Bonnie Blankert	Secretary	Calgary
Lisa Boone	Director	Edmonton
Kerri Markle	Director	Calgary
Kelly Lehman	Director	Tofield
Sally O'Rourke	Director	Calgary
Julie de Boer	Director	Medicine Hat
Noreen Rude	Ex Officio	Calgary
Kate Welsh	Ex Officio	Edmonton
James Wilson	Ex Officio	Red Deer
Lorrie Goegan	Chair, Learning Disabilities Association of Canada and Alberta Delegate to the Learning Disabilities Association of Canada	Calgary

## Officials 2010-11

Kathryn Burke	Executive Director	Edmonton
Dina Hendzel	Communications Director	Edmonton
Gwyneth Turner	Accounting	Edmonton
William Radvanyi, Trendsetting Services	Web and Information Technology	Edmonton

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# Greetings from the LDAA President



I have volunteered with the Learning Disabilities Association at the chapter or provincial level for more than twenty years. There have, of course, been challenging times where I questioned my commitment, but I can honestly say that it has been a privilege working with the parents, professionals and staff who have a shared the commitment to work towards removing barriers for individuals with learning and attention problems.

I have spent countless hours at meetings, on the phone, at my computer, on the road, and otherwise occupied to do my part in the pursuit of this goal. These hours have eroded my leisure time and have at times infringed upon my family life. But they have enhanced both by my professional and my personal life. Here are some of the highlights:

- Having been part of the planning committee for several provincial conferences and attended many more, I have learned from some of the best in the world. The LDAA runs a top-notch conference in the area of special education and has attracted world-renown speakers. The information garnered from these experts as well as our local authorities has allowed incredible opportunity to expand my knowledge.
- Most individuals with learning disabilities struggle with reading and writing. Research clearly suggests that many people struggle unnecessarily and that early identification and intervention can significantly improve skill levels and achievement. Working on the Right to Read Committee of the LDAA has been a highlight of my career. I am extremely proud of the team's work on the Reading Readiness Screening Tool and the intervention workshops now being offered to teachers.
- I don't work for a school board, but as a school psychologist in private practice it is extremely important that I understand the environment and the every-changing landscape of public policy

and its impact on education. The LDAA's continued involvement in the proposed changes to Special Education has allowed me to have my finger on the pulse of these changes as well as an opportunity to influence them.

- Never in history have we been required to learn so rapidly and adjust so quickly to change. I have never been one to embrace technology and until recently I have felt that I was comfortably a decade behind. Social media is not likely to be a passing phase, however, so I have been fortunate to work with an Executive Director who has fearlessly embraced this new media and has dragged the rest of us luddites along behind her.
- I worked in the field for more than twenty years, but the collective expertise of my fellow board members spans more than 200 years. If I don't know an answer to a question, one of them likely does. How lucky I am to have such a resource at my finger tips.
- There has also been food and wine and the accompanying camaraderie enjoyed when the work is done. I have the opportunity to work with many amazing person and have made life-long friends.

My work with the LDAA is not over. I plan to remain on the board to the end of my six year term and will likely remain involved as a committee member. I thank each and every volunteer and staff member for their work and commitment. Together we will continue to overcome barriers and level the playing field for individuals with learning disabilities.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Michele Pentyluk'. The signature is fluid and cursive.

Michele Pentyluk

# Message from the Executive Director



**Work is wonderful when it is combined with one's passion. I am passionate about work to support people with learning disabilities. I consider it a privilege to represent the LDAA as its Executive Director.**

The LDAA fulfills a vital role in our province. Approximately 369,000 Albertans live with learning disabilities. Learning disabilities affect learning and quality of life at all ages. It is not just an education issue but one that impacts physical and mental health, employment, economic well-being, and much more. Learning disabilities affect us all.

The mission of the LDAA and its network is to maximize the potential of individuals with learning disabilities. The Chapters fulfill this responsibility through direct programs and services. The focus of the provincial body is to shape public policy and work to build a deep understanding about learning disabilities. We continue to work towards achievement of this goal through our priority projects.

At the provincial level, the LDAA has been actively involved and has provided input on education and special education reform. As a member of the Stakeholder Working Group on Action on Inclusion/Setting the Direction, we have tried, with respect and passion, to identify strategies to maximize the potential of people with learning disabilities and other exceptional learning needs. We have provided input into the new Education Act. We have been active in commenting upon proposed Teaching Quality Standards. We are members of the different Curriculum External Advisory Committees established at the provincial level.

The Reading Readiness Screening Tool is now being used in many schools in Alberta, on a pilot basis, to identify children at possible risk for reading problems. We are working with our

friends in the Francophone community to translate the tool into French.

We continue to focus significant effort on enhancing capacity. The LDAA has created a number of courses specifically designed to improve understanding about learning disabilities. Course modules have been developed and delivered on screening and early identification and on introduction to intervention. In 2010, the LDAA reached out to a high priority group by authoring an online course for physicians and health professionals about learning disabilities and mental health.

Our environment is complex. We face budget restrictions. Technology and communication are changing at breakneck speed. This environment offers both challenges and opportunity. It forces us to be both nimble and committed to continual learning. But, our network is up to the challenge.

I am indebted to the army of volunteers and staff who are profoundly dedicated towards achievement of our association's mission. You inspire me.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kathryn Burke". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Kathryn Burke  
Executive Director  
Learning Disabilities Association of Alberta

# Chapter Reports

## Edmonton

In 2010-11, the Calgary Chapter of the Learning Disabilities Association of Alberta:

- Hired a new Executive Director and Admin. Assistant
- Moved to larger office space at Fulton Place School
- Increased its membership to the highest levels ever
- Added more programs and expanded its focus to better serve youth and adults with LD
- Witnessed program attendance swell to an average of more than triple that from previous years
- Revived the annual Chocolate Festival Fundraiser at the Sutton Place Hotel

## Parent Information Series

The Parent Information Series has been an important part of supporting parents and other adults who support those with learning disabilities. The monthly sessions cover a broad range of topics. They provide educational opportunities to empower parents and others to advocate and support children with learning differences at home and school.

## Parent Support

Advice, support, referrals, and resource information is offered in Parent Support Sessions in a variety of ways including direct contact with staff over the phone, in-office appointments or via email. Monthly parent support meetings are opportunities for parents to come together, share their experiences and learn from one another.

## Extraordinary Parenting Workshop

(Formerly Taking Charge)

This in-depth, interactive and hands-on workshop provides parents with a better understanding of their child with learning disabilities. Mental health professionals facilitate the sessions that focus on student achievement, organization, persistence, confidence, and getting along. Parent feedback is overwhelmingly positive and the workshop is highly recommended for any family who has a child struggling in school.

## Adult Support

Advice, support, resources and referrals to community organizations is provided to adults with learning disabilities through direct contact with staff over the phone, in-office appointments or via email. A monthly support meeting is also held for youth and adults.

## The Right to Read Teacher Training

This program focused on training educators and other professionals about strategies for teaching reading to children with learning disabilities. Two one-week sessions were held; one focussed on strategies for elementary aged students, and the second for junior high aged students.

## Red Deer

The Red Deer Chapter exploded during 2010-2011 with the demand from Central Albertans outnumbering the staff to accommodate their needs/requests.

## Service Highlights:

- LD Red Deer experienced a 68% growth directly serving 788 families through programs and services. This excludes the up to 12 drop-in visits per week, the phone calls or emails for information or referrals.
- LD Red Deer's Summer Kinship Day Camps for children ages 7-9 and 10-12 years who are experiencing difficulties with social skills met with great success.
- LD Red Deer's Summer One-on-One Multidisciplinary Tutoring Program exceeded demand with a 60% increase in enrolment with many left on a waiting list until the fall.
- LD Red Deer's One-on-One Tutoring Program throughout the year exceeded demand and was filled to full capacity with a waiting list for services almost equal to the numbers of clients being served.
- LD Red Deer's Think Social Program for ages 7-9 and 10-12 years met with great success as many friendships were formed and continued outside of the fall/winter and winter/spring sessions.
- LD Red Deer's Speakers Series provided educational sessions for parents/caregivers, educators and professionals two to three times each month with increasing numbers of educators attending, many times outnumbering the parents/caregivers.
- LD Red Deer, in partnership with the Primary Care Network, initiated a new social competence program for youth ages 13-15 and 15-17 years titled Ultimate Frisbee, uniting program with a social activity. Demand for this program continues.
- LD Red Deer maintains a Resource Lending Library for the public and members' use.
- LD Red Deer hosted its first major fundraising event titled Mystery Date with a Star. Following a pre-dinner reception and

# Chapter Reports

auction, attendees drew to find out which star would be hosting their table for dinner at a participating restaurant. This event was so much fun that we moved it to a spring date in May for subsequent years.

- LD Red Deer's Irlen Screening for Perceptual Dyslexia or Light Sensitivity expanded to two qualified screeners serving the increasing number of clients in Central Alberta.

## Calgary

In 2010-11, the Calgary Chapter of the Learning Disabilities Association of Alberta:

- Provided programs and services to over 4,500 families
- Had 28,582 visits to its website
- Received 1,701 phone calls from individuals seeking information and resources.
- Served over 1,800 participants in programs, seminars and workshops
- Provided an excellent sessions to over 400 people at the conference *Colour Outside the Lines: Creative Responses to the LD Challenge*

### Social Skills Programs

Nine social skills programs were offered in 2010 with a total of 90 participants. These popular programs were once again run in partnership with Estelle Siebens Community Services, associated with Foothills Academy. Supervised by a registered psychologist, the program teaches communication, friendship and problem solving skills.

### Real Life Social Skills for Teens

This social skills program provided workshops on practical skills for children in grades 7 through 10. The teens participated in a variety of activities designed to teach the skills necessary for day-to-day life. Topics and activities included becoming familiar with public transit, restaurant etiquette, personal hygiene, as well as building friendships and job skills.

### Boys & Girls Club Social Skills Program

In collaboration with the Boys and Girls Club of Calgary, this after-school program provides opportunities for children to learn appropriate social skills, anger management, peer relations and problem solving skills which help to raise self-esteem and enable them to better integrate into society.

### Adult Directions Group

This year was the second year that we offered the Adult Directions Group after we noticed a dramatic increase in phone calls from adults with LD and/or ADHD who were struggling to find support. Facilitated by a registered psychologist, the sessions covered a variety of topics ranging from procrastination, time management and self-esteem.

### Parent & Educator Workshops

The Parent & Educator Workshops saw the highest number of participants this year due to its excellent topics and speakers. Topics included Nutrition and ADHD, Assistive Technology Tools and Family Support for Children with Learning Disabilities. The workshops are offered in partnership with the Calgary Learning Centre.

### Camp Amicus Residential Camp

This summer was an exciting year for Camp Amicus as its residential camp location was moved to the Goldeye Centre in Nordegg, Alberta. 2010 was the 28th year for Camp Amicus, which was a huge success with 188 campers. We offered five camps for children ages 8 to 17 with learning disabilities and/or ADHD. The camps provided wonderful opportunities for campers to develop social skills, friendships and self-esteem. We once again saw an increase in our returning campers, not only signifying the need for the camp, but also the desire to solidify friendships and understanding of social skills.

### Camp Amicus Day Camp

Three days camps across Calgary were offered in July and August of 2010 with a total of 40 participants. The day camps focus on teaching and reinforcing social skills in a fun and safe environment. Participants had a ton of fun going on fieldtrips around Calgary and making lasting friendships.

### Athletic Coordination Camp

This was the third year that we offered the Athletic Coordination Camp. The camp uses athletic activities and concepts to improve fine and gross motor coordination while teaching the essentials of team building. The two-week long camp was a huge success with a total of 16 participants.

# Highlights 2010-11: A Year in Review



## **A Voice at the Provincial Table**

The LDAA has been a voice, at the provincial table, for people with learning disabilities. In 2010-11, the LDAA was invited to participate as a member of the Stakeholder Working Group for Action on Inclusion/Setting the Direction. The association has participated in reviews associated with the creation of a new Education Act. The LDAA have provided input into proposed changes to Teaching Quality Standards, and will continue to be involved in 2011-12. The Association continued to be represented on a variety of Curriculum Advisory Committees for diploma level subjects.

## **Right to Read - Screening and Early Intervention**

The LDAA has continued to work with educators throughout the province with an interest in using the Reading Readiness Screening Tool (RRST). The RRST is now being used in select schools as a classroom based teacher administrated tool to identify children with potential risk for reading problems. The LDAA also began working with the Alberta Chapter of Parents for French Education to investigate options for adapting the tool for use in French Language Education.

## **Enhancing Understanding about Learning Disabilities**

The LDAA have invested considerable efforts in enhancing understanding about learning disabilities. Two course modules have been completed and have been piloted. The first addresses the logistics and advantages of screening for potential reading problems. The second module builds on the latter, and provides

an introduction to intervention. The LDAA prepared a well-received online course for Alberta Health Services/Healthy Children Healthy Minds Initiative on Learning Disabilities and Mental Health. The course was accredited for Continuing Medical Education Credits, and was posted online in March 2011.

## **Public Education and Communication**

Staff and volunteers from the LDAA have accepted a number of invitations to speak about learning disabilities and ADHD. From presentations at teachers conventions, public lectures and seminars for government officials, these opportunities help to enhance understanding. The LDAA has also willingly accepted opportunities to appear on radio shows and television, and these pieces have been instrumental in both raising the profile of learning disabilities and the association.

The LDAA partnered with the Alberta Teachers Association to circulate a poster to all schools in Alberta that outlined the steps, for parents, on what to do if a child was struggling to succeed at school. The LDAA also prepared and has circulated widely, a basic FAQ sheet on learning disabilities.

## **Embracing Social Media**

The LDAA continues to embrace social media. It has an active Twitter presence using the handle @LDAssocAb. The association continues to use Facebook as a strategy for disseminating information. The LDAA sponsors and contributes articles to LDExperience.ca, a site based on the principles of social media.

# LDAA Financial Statements

Statement of Operations for the year ending March 31, 2011

	2011	2010
<b>Revenues</b>		
Alberta Education Grant	\$71,000	\$71,000
Membership Fees	\$4,013	\$8,122
Donations	\$533	\$10,005
Interest	\$3,303	\$7,466
Casino Income	\$75,625	\$0
Share of Net Conference Revenues	\$0	\$5,218
Other	\$0	\$1,299
Grant Carried Forward to 2009/10	\$0	\$29,150
Grant Carried Forward to 2010/11	\$29,583	-\$29,583
Grant Carried Forward to 2011/12	-\$29,583	\$0
Casino Income Carried Forward to 2009/10	\$0	\$84,752
Casino Income Carried Forward to 2010/11	\$56,664	-\$56,664
Casino Income Carried Forward to 2011/12	-\$63,578	
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$147,560</b>	<b>\$130,765</b>
<b>Expenditures</b>		
Contracted Staff Services	\$81,702	\$67,169
Administrative/Office Expenses	\$11,185	\$9,043
Audit	\$2,153	\$2,601
Insurance	\$4,144	\$4,457
Conference, Meetings and Travel (Staff & Volunteer)	\$7,920	\$12,812
Share of net loss from 2010 Conference in Calgary	\$26,821	\$0
Membership Fees to LD Assoc of Canada	\$1,280	\$5,088
Programs and Public Awareness	\$36,407	\$17,641
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$171,612</b>	<b>\$118,811</b>
Excess (Deficiency) of Revenues Over Expenditure	-\$24,052	\$11,954
Fund Balances, Beginning of Year	\$255,154	\$243,200
<b>Fund Balances, End of Year</b>	<b>\$231,102</b>	<b>\$255,154</b>

Financial statements pertain to aggregated transactions for the LDAA's regular and casino accounts, and for the Mandin Memorial and Endowment Funds. Complete audited financial statements can be obtained by contacting the Learning Disabilities Association of Alberta.

# Recognizing Excellence in 2010–11

## Siobhan Isabella Reid Memorial Scholarship

The Siobhan Isabella Reid Memorial Scholarship was established in 1982. Scholarships are presented annually to a full-time student attending an Alberta University. Scholarship recipients must be in a program of study that will enable him or her to assist children or adults with learning disabilities. Scholarship recipients are evaluated on:

- Contributions to community or campus life
- Academic record
- The Award Committee's perception about their future potential to assist children and adults with learning disabilities.

Many fine submissions were received in consideration of the Reid Memorial Scholarship. The LDAA exercised its right to name two high quality award recipients.

**Ms Heather Brugger**, who is enrolled in Disabilities Studies at Grant MacEwan University, is one of two recipients in 2010. She is joined in this honor by **Ms Kacie Johnson**, who is enrolled in the Bachelor of Social Work Program at the University of Calgary.



## Previous Recipients of the Outstanding Achievement Award

Rose Prefontaine (2009)  
Brenda Martin (2008)  
Teddi Doupe (2007)  
Carol Mairs (2006)  
Gordon Bullivant (2006)  
Calgary Learning Centre (2004)  
Judy Craig (2004)  
Mark Rota (1997)  
Dr. Marilyn Samuels (External 1996)  
Brenda Brown (1995)  
Dr. Harvey Finnestad (External 1995)  
Isabelle Reid (1994)  
Bob Reid (1994)  
Ruth Lemke (1994)  
Betty Finch (1994)

## Mandin Award

The Mandin Award was established in 1991 in memory of Maurice, Susan, Islay, and Janelle Mandin. Maurice and Susan Mandin were teachers with a sincere interest in children with special needs. Isaly and Janelle, their daughters, were students. The Award has two purposes. The primary one is to provide resources that will have the greatest positive impact for children from age 4-21 within Alberta. The second goal is to encourage those children who receive funds to pursue their educational goals with enthusiasm and confidence.

**Connor Kitching** is the 2010 recipient of the Mandin Award. He was nominated by the Learning Support Facilitator at his school. His award was used to purchase software to help with writing and organization.



Thelma Scambler (1994)  
Gayle James (1994)  
Marlene Flynn (1994)  
Evelyn Unger (External 1994)  
Dr. Fred French (External 1994)  
Barbara Coloroso (External 1994)  
Mr. & Mrs. D. Harvey (External 1994)  
Don Nelson (1994)  
Kay Vaughan (1992)  
Keith Fewster (1987)

People recognized with the Outstanding Achievement Award become honorary lifelong members of the Association.

## Our Mission

To support people with learning disabilities achieve their full potential.

## Who We Are

We are a not-for-profit charitable association of parents and professionals linked to a network of Chapters in Calgary, Red Deer, and Edmonton.

## What We Believe

Every person is unique and this must be respected and reflected in public policy. Unwrapping the gifts of people with learning disabilities unlocks their full potential. People with learning disabilities are a vast untapped human resource. Early intervention and appropriate accommodation matter to everyone. The consequence of Learning Disabilities not mattering is community wide and impacts resources in employment, mental health, justice, health, and other human services. The loss of human potential is immeasurable.

## Learning Disabilities Association of Alberta

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