

The Scottish Rite Charitable Foundation Learning Centre for Hamilton



The Bear Bulletin

Volume 3 December 14 2020

Different teddy bears have been used as logos with the Canadian and US Scottish Rite Learning Centres to emphasize service to children and the warmth and friendliness of the Centres. In Canada, a warm fuzzy and friendly polar bear is used as a distinctive symbol to indicate the independence of the Canadian program in the cooler part of North America, while reaching out to children in need. You will note that the polar bear carries the logo of the Scottish Rite Charitable Foundation of Canada and is copyrighted.

The Learning Centre for Hamilton Board as of December 2020:

President Michael Kirk
Vice President Mario Kovacevic
Treasurer Tom Lewis
Sustainability Fund Ian Anderson
Fundraising Ken Laliberte
Grant Applications Michael Kirk
Premises and Equipment Dave Walden
Promotion Don Thornton

Our Mission: Scottish Rite Charitable Foundation of Canada

To provide quality, state-of-the-art, free remedial tutoring to children with difficulties in reading, writing and related scholastic skills formally identified as "dyslexia"

Learning Centre for Hamilton President's Message

Our Learning Centre is committed to providing the best possible outcomes for the children we serve and on the safety of all.

We do not know how long the current conditions will last and the Learning Centre will be adhering to the best public health advice as we make future decisions. The Learning Centre is actively preparing and planning for a return to in person tutoring and rest assured that when it reopens, we will have incorporated every safety recommendation. We have already prepared and stocked the building with personal protective equipment as well as establishing safety protocols and are reviewing them regularly to ensure we can open safely and quickly when the time comes.

2020 has brought significant challenges in being able to meet our core commitment but with the help and support of our volunteers and the families of our students we have been able to

successfully adapt. Moving to an online format was not an easy choice and it has been challenging but here we are providing consistent weekly tutoring with everyone pitching in to make it successful. **It has been a learning experience for us as many are finding themselves mastering new computer and communications skills to operate in our “new normal”. It is no surprise that the children we serve have often been the ones helping us through the technical challenges as they are the ones who work best with new technology.**

Thank you to the volunteer tutors and other staff for their continuing dedication to providing high quality tutoring to the children we serve. Thank you to the families of our children who support and assist them. Thank you to all those who continue to support the Learning Centre either financially or in other ways for without you there would be no Learning Centre. **Last but not least thank you to our children who bring their eagerness to learn and positive and inspiring attitude to each tutoring session – they make it all worthwhile.**

President Michael Kirk

A Word from the Past President Learning Centre for Hamilton

As I write this the Annual General Meeting of the Learning Centre is in the past and I have delivered my last report as President. It is with a great deal of gratitude that I congratulate Michael J. Kirk on his election as our new President and I am pleased to offer him my full support as he takes us to the next level.

These past several years have been a joy for me as the Learning Centre developed from an idea to its gradually coming into shape. **We are now a fully operational Learning Centre with tutors and other volunteers operating from a building which has been fully renovated to accommodate the needs of our growing community. The children are learning to cope with dyslexia and our tutors are fully involved and dedicated to each child’s success.**

As we have progressed our community has grown and we have been able to accommodate more children, however our ability to grow is dependent upon people who are prepared to take the training to become tutors and others who have time and interest in being volunteers to further the work that we do. We pay for the training of the tutors so there is no expense for these people to join with us. Each new tutor allows us to remove a child from our growing wait list thereby improving that child’s future and the joy of being a part of that child’s success is very fulfilling for all involved.

Many people have been a part of this journey and it would be unconscionable for me not to acknowledge their contribution. I won’t mention names for fear of leaving someone out, but you all know who you are, and I want you to know that we would not be where we are today without your contribution of time, talent and resources. I know that as we move forward there will be other challenges, but hopefully not as severe, as our present pandemic, but I also know that with the dedication of our many supporters we will be up to the challenge and this Centre will continue to prosper and add to the lives of the children we serve. **Thank you for your confidence in us.**

Don D. Thornton, Past President

Learning Centre for Hamilton has a great team; doing what is best for children

With Much Thanks...

- Thank you to **President Don Thornton** for his “heart and soul” involvement with the **Learning Centre for Hamilton**. He has been the only one involved from the very first day of initiating the idea of the Learning Centre of Hamilton nine years ago. Since 2016, Don Thornton has served 4 years as President since the incorporation of the Learning Centre.
- Thank you to **Vice President Mike Kirk** for his **extensive research and work** regarding provincial and national safety standards and procedures during COVID 19 **and endless support** of the Co-directors in their new position. The Learning Centre of Hamilton is in a position to re-open in-person within 24 hours when we are safe to do so.
- **Thank you to Executive Director for Canadian Scottish Rite Learning Centres Matthew Todd and Dr. Gareth Taylor** for **approving our safety plan in July 2020 and for National Scottish Rite approval in September 2020 to move forward safely with online tutoring with our children of The Learning Centre for Hamilton**
- **Thank you to the Safety and Online Plan Committee:** Mike Kirk, Don Thornton, Mario Kovacevic, Meredith Hutchings and Michael and Barbara Baxter for developing the in-person and on-line safety plan
- **Thank you to Tutor Trainer Meredith Hutchings** for **safe in-person online tutor training** at The Centre in mid- September. Our tutors under the guidance of Meredith Hutchings were trained in how to effectively deliver an Orton-Gillingham lesson online.
- **Thank you to Board Member Mario Kovacevic** for **safety training and Zoom usage training** in September 2020 with volunteers and tutors. Monitors and tutors were trained by Mario in how to use the Zoom format to initiate, record and store lessons.
- **Thank you to Dale and Lee Chapman, and Steve Warren** who have helped with **scheduling lessons** with monitors, tutors and parents/children
- **Thank you to Mason and other monitor volunteers** for inviting, observing and recording online lessons
- **Thank you to Book Keeper Leslie Drake** for being right next door in the Scottish Rite Tower and keeping track of important information and money... and **answering all our many questions**
- **Thank you to the Board of the Learning Centre for Hamilton** for their **input and support** of the safety plan and the re-opening online plan in the fall of 2020. The Learning Centre for Hamilton will continue with online tutoring until June 2012.
- **Thank you tutors** for your dedication, commitment and time to the children of The Learning Centre for Hamilton; we strive to “teach to read”
- **Thank you to tutors, parents/guardians and children** for **adapting to a new online platform and format of Orton Gillingham instruction; staying true to the pureness and effectiveness of our program**

Do not go into this school year with 2019 goals. This is 2020. Have 2020 goals. Safety. Connection. Mental wellness. Physical health. Maintain relationships.



Meet the Staff: Meredith Hutchings Tutor Trainer and Supervisor

Meredith Hutchings, a certified member of the Orton-Gillingham Practitioners and Educators, has been the Tutor Trainer-Supervisor for the Learning Centre for Hamilton since 2018. She also has served in this same capacity for the Moncton Learning Centre but will retire from this position as she has just completed training a new trainer for that centre. Meredith brings with her a wealth of knowledge and experience from her extensive thirty year plus background in education in Ontario and Nova Scotia. Meredith was the Curriculum Consultant for Adult Education in the province of Nova Scotia and in this capacity was actively involved with training adult educators, including a partnership with the Halifax Learning Centre to certify some as Orton Gillingham Practitioners. She was co-author of an Orton Gillingham based course which is being taught to adults at some campuses of the Nova Scotia Community College. She developed the training program being used at the Hamilton Learning Centre with Thelma Gregan, the Director and Trainer of the Halifax Learning Centre. Her background includes extensive knowledge of learning disabilities acquired through courses, teaching, and volunteer tutoring. **We at the Learning Centre for Hamilton greatly appreciate Meredith's commitment and dedication to ensuring that our tutors are providing a high level of Orton-Gillingham instruction to the children we serve.**

Message from Meredith Hutchings; Trainer/Supervisor

It has been my pleasure and honour to be the trainer/supervisor for the Hamilton Learning Centre since 2017. After years of tirelessly working to raise funds and coordinate the construction of the Learning Centre building by Don Thornton and the team of Scottish Masons, I was asked to assist with approving children, training volunteer tutors and supervising the tutoring. **We are just beginning to see the results of what can be accomplished by providing well deserving children and their families with an effective intervention for dyslexia.** The Orton-Gillingham technique which is used at our learning centre is really just teaching the structure of the English language and how to apply this knowledge when reading and spelling. Two years after taking on the challenge to learn the Orton-Gillingham technique, our first group of hard-working tutors (including our wonderful and very hard-working co-directors!) are about to complete their training and become fully

certified OG Practitioners. **Our first group of children are also about to graduate from our learning centre! We have all been quite thrilled to see how these children have blossomed and leap frogged up reading and spelling levels. Parents coo with praise and thankfulness as they see their children accomplish better grades at school and become more confident in themselves. As the Trainer/Supervisor, I couldn't be prouder!** I look forward to growing the Centre now that we have an A team and some children who can be called upon to inspire other children and families as we welcome new faces to receive our science driven services. **My thanks to our entire team! It does take a village to teach a child.**

“Since we have had the privilege of joining the Learning Centre team, we have seen leaps of improvement in our son’s ability to read. Not only has this helped him in an academic setting, but also in his personal life. His mood is much more positive, and he is happy. He exudes confidence and even our family life is easier. We are so proud of his accomplishments, with the help of his tutor, who sincerely takes a personal interest in him. We could not be more grateful and appreciative for the program!” Parent Ilona

Meet the Learning Centre for Hamilton Tutors:

Presently we have 6 tutors teaching the Orton Gillingham Program to 10 children. We are teaching the program as true to OG as we can online. Lessons are prepared by tutors weekly and are reviewed with recommendations by tutor trainer Meredith Hutchings. Every lesson is individualized according to each child’s strength, weaknesses and progress.

Welcome to new tutors Stacey Geddes and Sarah McKee who started their training in March 2020. Present tutors, hoping to achieve certification in early 2021 are **Nikki Brooks, Michael and Barbara Baxter. Meredith Hutchings** is also tutoring a child. **Best wishes to tutors, John Stevenson and Claudia Ribeiro**, who left the program for personal reasons. We hope they rejoin us in the future. Great thanks to these tutors who willing give of themselves to training, lesson writing and teaching every week. They are a huge part of the success of the children at the Learning Centre for Hamilton.

Presently we are actively pursuing new tutors through the school districts and retired teachers. We have a waiting list. Parents are anxious to have their children receive a much-needed program; their children have the “right to read.”

Thank you to Benedetti Woodworking of Hamilton for creating special blending boards used by our tutors

Special Donation to the Learning Centre for Hamilton



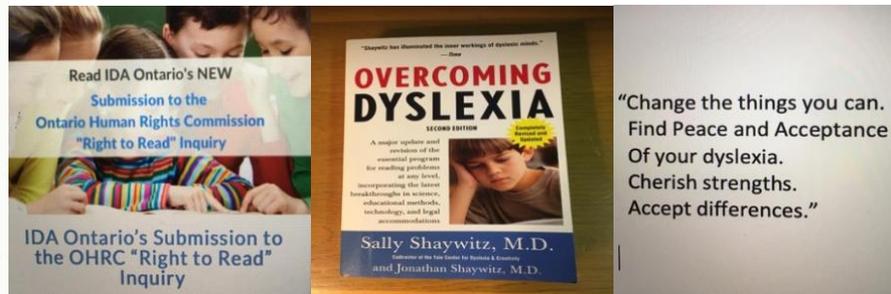
“So, a few years back Mark Kenney my fiancé and I were approached to do a meat draw a Sam’s Old Tyme Tavern in Hamilton by some of the patrons and the owner Sam himself. I said we would do it under 3 conditions. We would only do one draw a month, the meat had to come from employers Highland Packers, and I got to pick the charity. That night I was going to a Scottish Rite Fundraiser and spoke to my brother-in-law Tom Marshall a member, my sister Bev Marshall and niece Jennifer Marshall who are Northern Stars about a charity that I could help benefit. That’s when my niece, a Hamilton teacher, suggested the Learning Centre for Hamilton and the rest they say was history. For \$2 you could win a \$20 bag of meat and a second prize of a shirt, hat, coat, etc. Items were donated by Sam’s Tavern, friends, and Mark’s company Tim’s Tires in Caledonia and Hagersville. We also had a 50-50 draw. The first year we started late doing monthly draws and by May we had raised \$1500. Year two we started earlier and with a lot of persuasion decided to do more frequent draws. We raised a grand total of \$4500 and had a great time doing it. Year three we were on pace to surpass our previous year, but unfortunately COVID-19 shut us down in March. We still managed to donate \$4500.”

“Mark and I enjoyed our draws and met a lot of special people in the process. Sam and his patrons were very generous people and made all the donations possible. We were just the vessel that delivered the donations. Hopefully in the very near future we will be able to continue our meat draws and once again donate to such a wonderful cause.” **Gaye Culp**

**Huge special thanks to Gaye Culp and Mark Kenney for taking on this wonderful fundraiser and raising \$10,500.00 with the support of Sam, Sam’s Tavern patrons and the business of Tim’s Tires in Caledonia and Hagersville.
The Learning Centre for Hamilton is forever grateful**

“The tutoring has helped me with my self-confidence while attending my regular public- school programs. Learning Centre tutors take the time to make sure that I understand the concepts being taught. I really enjoy the Zoom tutoring format and am grateful to participate.” Child Charlie

“Allowing a student with a hidden disability (ADHD, Anxiety, Dyslexia) to struggle academically or socially when all that is needed for success are appropriate accommodations and explicit instruction, is no different than failing to provide a ramp for a person in a wheelchair”.



“Rite to Read” Inquiry makes Ontario the first Canadian province to join a growing global movement drawing attention to both the unique needs of students with dyslexia and the broader need to update educational practices to align with the established science of how children learn to read. In recent years, [parent-led dyslexia advocacy efforts](#) have enabled [legislative changes in 43 U.S. states](#), as well as curriculum and policy changes in England, Ireland and Australia.

OVERCOMING DYSLEXIA 2nd edition. 2020. By Dr. Sally Shaywitz and Dr. Jonathon Shaywitz Substantially updated. The most comprehensive, state-of-the-art, and practical book available on identifying, understanding, and overcoming reading problems. Drs. Shaywitz provide the tools that parents, teachers, and dyslexic individuals of any age need. Drs. Shaywitz debunk common myths surrounding dyslexia, using their extended experience to embrace and guide the dyslexic child and adult with love, compassion, and understanding.

Dyslexia is a characteristic of who we are; embrace it

Information about Orton Gillingham and Dyslexia

The Learning Centre for Hamilton provides free **science-based Orton Gillingham** training and remedial tutoring to children with diagnosed difficulties in reading, spelling and writing. These children have dyslexia which is specific learning disability. **Based on current research 1 in 5 children have dyslexia.** The Orton-Gillingham technique is a structured, multi-sensory, sequential tutoring technique.

At the Hamilton Learning Centre this intervention is delivered one-to-one. By learning how the English language is structured, **the dyslexic brain is “rewired” to overcome difficulties with reading, spelling and handwriting by establishing new neuropathways.** The Orton Gillingham technique shows proven results in helping children with dyslexia make significant gains in reading, spelling and written expression. **An OG intervention reduces academic gaps,** often bringing children with dyslexia to perform at grade level within 1 to 3 years.

**“The lessons are very good for the future
and I know I can look back at them someday when I need to.” Child Layla**

Co-Directors’ Message

Since being closed down in March due to the ongoing pandemic, The Board and Co-directors of the Learning Centre have been faced with many challenges. As a result of team work and the efforts of many, we have successfully transitioned from in-person to on-line lessons for our tutors and children. Initially we had been informed that on-line lessons would not be allowed as an alternative to in-person lessons. After evaluating our situation and the physical restrictions of our centre in terms of meeting safety guidelines for distancing, it was decided that we develop an online learning plan. This planning began in June.

On July 8, a three-stage plan for reopening was sent to National Executive Director Matthew Todd. This included plans for the possibilities of on-line tutoring, on-line tutoring from the Learning Centre and reopening for in-person tutoring.

On July 15, President Don Thornton presented our Centre report and addressed our previous request for online tutoring to the National Board during a conference call with all National Presidents and Centre Directors. On July 19, Matthew Todd gave approval to Vancouver, London and Hamilton to do on-line tutoring.

From mid-July and through August, much planning was done to research technical formats for lesson delivery, develop our online program, and develop safety protocols to be used at the Learning Centre. All necessary personal protective equipment needed for when the centre can physically reopen was purchased. Once the Zoom platform was selected as our method of lesson delivery, training of monitors and tutors began.

In mid- September, our tutors under the guidance of Meredith Hutchings were trained in how to effectively deliver an Orton-Gillingham lesson online. Monitors and tutors were also trained by Mario Kovacevic in how to use the Zoom format to initiate, record and store lessons. The decision was made to begin teaching formal lessons on October 13th, after monitors, tutors, and families, had completed practice sessions using the Zoom format. After two months of online lesson delivery, tutoring is progressing well. Monitors, tutors and children have adapted to the new format and technical issues encountered in the early stages have been resolved. We thank all those involved who have helped us reach this stage in our online process and look forward to providing programing in this format until we can all safely be at the Learning Centre again.

**Great thanks to all Board Members, volunteers, tutor trainer, tutors,
parents and children for a very successful ending to the year of 2020. Enjoy
the festive season and bring in the New Year with new joy and hope.**

Be safe. Take care!

Learning Centre for Hamilton Co-directors Michael and Barbara Baxter

**VOLUNTEERS
DO NOT
NECESSARILY
HAVE THE TIME;
THEY HAVE
THE HEART**



Thank you to donors from the past and the year 2020

Money is regularly needed to: maintain the Learning Centre of Hamilton, pay the trainer and cover the tutor training cost, supply the tutor rooms with needed materials, supply the library and office with resources related to the Orton Gillingham program helping tutors “teach to read” and provide for PPE to keep our learning environment safe.

**Learning Centre for Hamilton is grateful to the National office
for \$3000 towards 2020-2021 PPE expenses**

Great Thanks to...

**Many generous and kind individuals
Elgin Lodge of Perfection Welland ON
Niagara Chapter of Rose Croix Welland ON
The Lodge of Strict Observance AF & AM No.27 GRC Hamilton ON
Millcorp Construction Ltd – John Militello Toronto ON**

**Season’s Greetings and Happy New Year 2021
to all Scottish Rite Learning Centres across Canada**

***Vancouver British Columbia*Edmonton Alberta* Calgary Alberta*Barrie Ontario
* London Ontario * Windsor Ontario* Moncton New Brunswick* Halifax Nova Scotia**

**From the Learning Centre of Hamilton
Season’s Greetings and Happy New Year 2021**

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