



A Message from the Chair

Bright autumn leaves and crisp cool weather signal Fall is here! Other reliable signals like returning to school and work routines are different during this COVID-19 pandemic. Worrisome cases of variants – particularly amongst the unvaccinated – are overwhelming our nation’s hospitals and impacting the return of our students to the classroom. Nevertheless, our LDA network is well supported by our dedicated professionals and volunteers. We are thankful for their commitment to our families.

Thealzel Lee
Chair, Learning Disabilities Association of Canada

A Message from the Executive Director

Fall is upon us again and with that, a new season of planning. In the coming months, LDAC will be very active on a number of fronts.

First, I wish to thank and congratulate our current cadre of board members who have served LDAC with distinction over the last year. With the arrival of September, our AGM is set for September 24, 2021 and with that a new board. Many thanks go out to Marilyn Irwin who will be finishing her term this month. Joining the board will be:

- Catherine Dunn, member at large (Manitoba)
- Lou Lamari, representative for LDAM on the LDAC board
- Jani Tsui, member at large (BC)

Many thanks as well to the number of returning board members who have graciously volunteered their leadership skills in service to LDAC. The AGM will be held on September 24, 2021 at 11AM EST over Zoom. If you don’t already have the login details, please contact me at mark@ldac-acta.ca.

LDAC operations over the fall months will be quite occupied on a number of initiatives. First, we are proud to be activating on behalf of the whole Canadian LD community as participants in Public Services and Procurement Canada’s (PSPC) advisory board on accessibility issues. This initiative is part of a broader federal government effort to review the Accessible Canada Act that came into force on July 11, 2019. An Act to ensure a barrier-free Canada, it represents Canada’s most significant disability rights legislation in over 30 years and is



LDAC NEWSLETTER – Fall 2021

intended to transform how we address accessibility in areas under federal jurisdiction.

Its timing falls well with the oncoming of LD Awareness Month in October where this year, LDAC will be presenting a weekly webinar series presented by our sponsors, the RBC Foundation, BrainAhead, and Landmark College.

The arrival of a new board also presents an opportunity to renew our strategic plan. Last year brought us a new plan but we surpassed all our goals! With a new board, we will be aiming to dream bold! If your organization hasn't yet submitted candidates to represent it on the national board, please reach out to us. We want and need your energy to make a national association of relevance to you!

Finally, LDAC operations will be focused on the pursuit of additional and diversified revenue sources to develop a sustainable organization of value to LD issues nationally.

Mark Buzan
Executive Director, LDAC

Committee Reports

Research Committee

I am honoured to begin my term as Chair of the Research Committee. This position was previously held by Lynne Wawryk-Epp, a Registered Psychologist, who has been working with children and young adults with Specific Learning Disorders (SLD) for over 25 years. Lynne is a Past President of the Learning Disabilities Association of Saskatchewan and has been a member of the Learning Disabilities Association of Canada (LDAC) since 2016. Lynn is recognized for her contributions to LDAC, and I will benefit from her and ongoing mentorship and support of current Research Committee initiatives.

The Research Hub is a user-friendly, online database of Canadian research that directly relates to SLD (<https://www.ldac-acta.ca/ldac-research-hub/>). With the support of two Mitacs grants, themes pertaining to recent Canadian research have been identified and will inform reports, written in English and French, that highlight themes in recent Canadian SLD research, synthesize and critique the last decade of Canadian research pertaining to SLDs, and identify topics in need of further exploration.



LDAC NEWSLETTER – Fall 2021

Putting a Canadian Face on Learning Disabilities (PACFOLD) was started in 2004 by LDAC, and led by a team of top Canadian researchers, to find out what it means to be a child, youth or adult with SLD in Canada (<http://www.pacfold.ca>). The PACFOLD Study remains the most comprehensive examination of the impact of living with a learning disability (LD) in Canada, but it is time to revisit this data. PACFOLD investigators, and current experts in disability statistics and information retrieval, have expressed interest in this project and will seek funding to inform our current understanding of the impact of SLD on the lives of Canadian children, youth and adults, and what their challenges are.

October is Learning Disabilities Awareness Month. Student interns have been working on awareness campaigns to help people pay particular attention to children and adults with SLD. During this month, I challenge each of you to learn or teach one person something new about learning disabilities.

Gabrielle Young, PhD
Associate Professor, Faculty of Education, Memorial University

Provincial/Territorial Updates

Quebec

We are happy to announce our 47th annual Conference <https://institutta.com/evenements/online-conference-2022>: “Heart, Head, Hands, Act with benevolence and competence”. Because of the ongoing health situation, the event will be online on *March 23rd, 24th and 25th, 2022.*

We will have about *120 speakers* in French and in English under the themes, benevolence, inclusion and collaboration. Several international experts have already confirmed their presence: Mr. Tom Hierk, Ms. Temple Grandin, Mrs. Barbara Blackburn, Ms. Shelley Moore, Mr. Andy Hargreaves, Mr. Gordon Porter and several others.

To make sure you receive all the news for this event (program, ticket sales, etc.) please register for our specific newsletter here!
<https://institutta.com/evenements/online-conference-2022>

We are looking forward to meeting you online!

PEI

We are soliciting support of lighting up the Island in the first week of October and have various Town Halls etc. agreeing to use their floodlights with Teal/Blue



LDAC NEWSLETTER – Fall 2021

bulb(s). We will distribute to each location our rack cards and from there hope folks will identify with us and LD month.

In addition, we are still hoping our Patron (Her Honour the Lt Governor of PEI) will be able to host an event but under COVID this may not happen. As a back up we are planning an LD awareness event for the end of October which may allow time for further relaxations under COVID protocols. This would be a gathering of invited guests who have some connection with LD's either living with one, supporting someone or, for example, someone we feel can help us in the future.

The calling to the Bar of the first self disclosed Indigenous Lawyer on PEI, Michael Sima event was held. Michael has LD's and received support from us after initially failing the exam. The ceremony was conducted in two parts. Firstly, as a traditional call and secondly as an indigenous service. You can see from the pictures that it was a wonderful occasion even under the pandemic restrictions. Apart from the presiding Judge, sponsoring Lawyer and the Lt Governor, Senator Brian Francis was also invited as the former Chief of Chiefs on PEI. Here is the CBC article on the event: <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/prince-edward-island/pei-bar-call-historic-ceremony-1.6151589>

We also received support at the PEI Harness Racing Gold Cup and Saucer event with one of the Ambassadors, Savannah Oakes, highlighting her own struggles with LD's and from this we received a general donation. Here is the link: <https://www.facebook.com/redshoresPEI/posts/4167300046639335>

In October we are also starting a prototype tutoring program to offer support to adults with dyslexia. It will be using an existing remediation program for 20 weeks to demonstrate from an established baseline what progress can be made in their literacy skills attainment. The target group will be adults who were not diagnosed in school and did not attain GED. We have funding for this and if we can demonstrate locally it will be used to negotiate with Government for additional supports for adults. Not rocket science and something that has already been demonstrated elsewhere I am sure, but there is nothing locally that we can see addressing this specific area.

On existing programs, we see an increase in the last three months of service demand. Compared to June/July/August 2020 tutoring demand has increased by 70%. This may not be representative as it was under COVID. The comparison to 2019 shows that we increased service provision by 40%. Still not enough.

As an LDA we are also in transition at the moment as we have an AGM at the end of September and our annual audit currently in process. Prior to the AGM we are actively recruiting new Board members and a new Executive and also aim at finalizing our Strategic Plan which has been in limbo for the last 18 months or so.