

2020 Annual Report



Idanr • Learning Disabilities
Association of Niagara Region

The right to learn, the power to achieve



United Way
Niagara

A Proud Community Partner

Our Vision

LDA-Niagara Region's vision is that of a strong and inclusive society where individuals living with learning disabilities are confident, successfully educated, resilient and self-sustaining.

Our Mission

Our purpose is to provide resources and support to individuals who are affected by learning disabilities within the Niagara Region. We provide leadership in learning disabilities advocacy, research, education and services.



2019 – 2020

Board of Directors

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A Message from LDANR's Chair

Dear LDANR Members and Friends,

As I look back on the 2019-2020 year, I see it as a year of resilience and a time of being together while also being apart. The COVID-19 pandemic has changed our world – but we all must remember what the world was like before and work together to envision what we can be after. I know that all of our members have faced many challenges and difficult decisions over the past several months around their children's learning, and the LDANR has worked hard to be with you every step of the way.

In March, when life changed dramatically, the LDANR made the decision to move online – working quickly to offer our programs in a different way, while also coming up with new supports for families. The response we received was overwhelming, in fact we held 16 webinars and had over 575 attendees across these, and all of our online program spots filled up. As we move forward, the LDANR is committed to continue to offer our programs in a safe and accessible way, as we all navigate this new reality together.

Beyond our webinars, a year in review, we have seen:

- Over 130 program volunteers
- Over 550 Participant Spots filled
- 4 staff
- 68 instructors
- 7 programs
- 2 summer interns
- 4 fundraising events
- 8 Board of Directors

Beyond these numbers, we do have some other major successes and achievements to celebrate! First, is our new transition program – The SOAR Secondary program, accompanied by a series of caregiver workshops, aims to ease the transition to high school by equipping grade 7-8 students with the necessary skills to navigate their new school environment and advocate for their learning needs, thus

fostering strong socio-emotional skills to set them up for success. In SOAR Secondary, participants will work on identifying their individual strengths and areas of improvement, communicating their needs, and developing strategies to prepare for a positive transition to high school. We are very thankful to the Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF) for the funding to provide this new and exciting program.

The LDANR is also excited to move into new office space at the The Branscombe Mental Health Centre! This new space will allow us to continue to expand our programming and offer a safer space for families to visit regarding program questions and payments. We are very thankful to the Niagara Community Foundation and BCM Insurance Company for the financial support to make this move possible.

Our continued success and ability to work through the challenges that 2020 has brought would not be possible without the hard work and dedication of the LDANR team. Before ending, I want to take this moment to say a thank you to all of our members, LDANR staff, volunteers, funders, and the entire Board of Directors for their tireless commitment to the LDANR. Each and every single one of you has supported the LDANR through this period of flux and transition – without all of your support and understanding we would not be the organization that we are. I imagine there will be more changes as we work through and beyond 2020 – and I hope that each of you will stay with us as we do so.

In closing, we are so grateful to be able to continue to do the work that we love to do – working to provide leadership in learning disabilities advocacy, research, education and services, and advancing the full participation in society of children, youth and adults with learning differences. All of our members can trust in the fact that the LDANR will always do everything we can to support them and their children – and that while we may be apart physically, we are all committed to creating a strong and inclusive society where individuals living with learning disabilities are confident, successfully educated, resilient and self-sustaining - together.

Jayne Morrish, MA
Board Chair

2019 – 2020

Staff

Samantha Sendzik
Executive Director

Emily Glencross
Program Coordinator

Sara Warriner
Project Coordinator

Stephanie McCorrison
Math Coordinator

Annette Cote
Bookkeeper

A Message from LDANR's Executive Director

Dear LDANR Community,

Given the current moment in time, it can be difficult to recall life “pre-pandemic”. The 2019-2020 fiscal year was wrapping up just as COVID-19 was in full force here in Canada.

Looking back on the 2019-2020 year, we are incredibly proud of what we were able to accomplish. The summer of 2019 was an exciting time for the LDANR, as it was the first summer we would expand our S.L.A.M. Summer Camp to serve more children with increased funds from The Branscombe Family Foundation. These funds allowed us to increase the number of spots offered over the summer from 180 to 240, hire additional staff, and split the age groups to allow for more targeted literacy intervention.

The fall of 2019 saw the very first offering of one-to-one math support through our JUMP Math program, thanks to a Grow grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF). Prior to JUMP Math, you may recall that we piloted a small-group math support program, S.M.A.R.T. Math, however in this program we found it difficult to individualize the content to each student's needs. With the learning gaps being too significant to plan for small-group instruction, it was decided that we would proceed with one-to-one instruction. We have since built strong partnerships with Brock University and Niagara College who have been instrumental in assisting with volunteer recruitment. We look forward to having JUMP Math programming for the years to come.

While implementing these new initiatives, we also continued to offer our long-standing regular literacy

and coping skills programming, adding a new Let's R.E.A.D. site in Beamsville with funds from The Humeniuk Foundation – a new funding partnership that we are very grateful for!

Over the past 6 months, the pandemic has certainly shifted our organization's service delivery model, and the 2020-2021 year has looked quite different than expected. Regardless of our change in delivery, our focus remains the same – to provide resources and support to individuals affected by learning disabilities in Niagara. In-person programming, while preferred, has been postponed for the time being, and has been replaced by remote support, including both webinars and programming. This new online delivery model has allowed us to develop creative solutions which may, in turn, become a part of our regular program offerings!

Over the coming years, we remain committed to working hard to provide quality programming to children and youth with learning disabilities, while ensuring the safety of participants, staff and volunteers.

And, of course, all of the work that we do – online and in-person – could not be done without the unrelenting support of dedicated volunteers, staff, Board of Directors, funders, and community partners. For this, we thank you!

We look forward to continuing to work with you to further our mission of supporting individuals with learning disabilities here in Niagara to reach their fullest potential.

Samantha Sendzik, MA
Executive Director

LEARNING DISABILITIES ASSOCIATION OF NIAGARA REGION

Statement of Operations for the year ended March 31, 2020

	Unrestricted Fund	Relocation Fund	Operating Reserve Fund	2020	2019
REVENUES					
Operating revenue (schedule 1)	\$ 66,547	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 66,547	\$ 40,523
Grant revenue (schedule 2)	233,497	2,373	-	235,870	187,730
Fundraising income (schedule 3)	33,822	-	-	33,822	31,228
Interest	1,202	-	-	1,202	1,238
Donations	11,140	-	-	11,140	14,420
Sponsorships	5,500	-	-	5,500	6,500
Total revenues	351,708	2,373	-	354,081	281,639
EXPENSES					
Accounting and bookkeeping	10,422	-	-	10,422	9,353
Bank charges and interest	2,263	-	-	2,263	1,861
Fixed asset purchases (note 3)	1,650	-	-	1,650	11,703
Fundraising expenses	4,310	-	-	4,310	4,068
Insurance	1,407	-	-	1,407	1,411
Memberships	50	-	-	50	229
Moving expenses	-	2,183	-	2,183	-
Office supplies	865	-	-	865	1,346
Payroll fees	1,593	-	-	1,593	1,384
Permits and rental fees	8,144	-	-	8,144	3,859
Photocopying expenses	350	-	-	350	2,695
Professional development	688	-	-	688	2,947
Program supplies	19,534	-	-	19,534	14,243
Public awareness and advertising	271	-	-	271	199
Rent	9,360	-	-	9,360	9,090
Resources expenses	1,607	-	-	1,607	-
Salaries and benefits (note 5)	266,102	-	-	266,102	231,889
Staff and board events	1,621	-	-	1,621	1,879
Telephone and internet	1,869	-	-	1,869	1,787
Travel	931	-	-	931	557
Website and computer costs	69	-	-	69	432
Total expenses	333,106	2,183	-	335,289	300,932
EXCESS (DEFICIENCY) OF REVENUES OVER EXPENSES FOR THE YEAR					
	\$ 18,602	\$ 190	\$ -	\$ 18,792	\$ (19,293)

Fundraising

Fundraising is an integral piece to sustaining LDANR's programs, and ensuring affordability of our services. Over the 2019-2020 year, our fundraising efforts assisted us in achieving and exceeding our fundraising goal by almost \$4,000! This was made possible by the revenue secured through our local Delta Bingo halls (St. Catharines and Niagara Falls) as well as our regular fundraising events.

During the 2019-2020 year, the LDANR also held 2 major fundraising events – a trivia night and a golf tournament. These events are always a hit with the participants, and we are so thankful to those who continue to attend and

sponsor year after year. We hope to continue to grow these fundraisers in the coming years, while also running smaller-scale fundraisers throughout the year. You can support the LDANR's fundraising events by participating, sponsoring, donating, or just helping to spread the word. Every little bit counts!



The LDANR staff doing some learning disabilities trivia at the 2019-2020 Golf Tournament Fundraiser!

You can also support the LDANR by hosting a third-party fundraising initiative. For example, in fall 2019, Luis Pimentel, owner of Siul Moda Fashion, held a fundraiser for the LDANR by selling his merchandise in support of our agency. This upcoming fall, our 2019-2020 instructor of the year is running a half-marathon to raise funds for the LDANR. We are so grateful to Luis and Mike for thinking of the LDANR for these initiatives! If you are interested in hosting a third-party fundraising event for the LDANR, please reach out to info@Ldaniagara.org.

Appreciation Event

Additional to our fundraising events, the LDANR also holds an Annual Appreciation Event to recognize our volunteers, staff, funders, and community partners. Unfortunately, this year's Appreciation Event was cancelled due to COVID-19, however we want to take this opportunity to thank all of the staff, volunteers, funders, and community partners who made the 2019-2020 year a success. You can view the full list of staff, volunteers, donors, funders, and community partners towards the end of this report.

At this event, we also typically announce the recipients of our annual awards – Volunteer of the Year, Instructor of the Year, and Outstanding Contributor. The award recipients are as follows:

Volunteers of the Year – Jane and Nick Casson

Jane and Nick have been regular Bingo volunteers for the LDANR for over 6 years (!!). Jane and Nick began volunteering for Bingo when their grandson attended the LDANR's programs, and they continued to volunteer thereafter.

Funds raised through Delta Bingo bring in roughly \$14,000 annually for the LDANR, however these funds are ONLY received if we secure volunteers to attend our scheduled Bingo timeslots. It is a constant struggle to find and keep regular Bingo volunteers, but Jane and Nick continue to step up to the task, with filling over half of the volunteer timeslots (bringing in approximately \$7,000 per year for LDANR!).

Words cannot express our gratitude towards Jane and Nick. We thank them for all their years of service that have helped us raise much needed funds to continue offering our programming.

Instructor of the Year – Michael Szymanski

Mike has been involved with the LDANR for a number of years now as both a volunteer and program instructor. In his role as an instructor, Mike consistently went above and beyond to provide support to the volunteers, and was instrumental in his work supporting students with learning disabilities and their families through our programs and beyond. We want to thank Mike for the dedication and enthusiasm he has demonstrated over the years, and wish him well as he pursues a career in social work. Thank you, Mike!



Outstanding Contributor Award – The Branscombe Family Foundation

The Branscombe Family Foundation has been funding the LDANR's S.L.A.M. Summer Camp for over 8 years. S.L.A.M. Camp is a full-day literacy summer camp for students who are a minimum of one year behind in their literacy development due to an identified or suspected reading disability. This camp has grown exponentially since its inception, growth that was only possible with the generous support of The Branscombe Family Foundation.

In 2019, the LDANR was approved for another 3-year grant from The Branscombe Family Foundation to expand S.L.A.M. Camp by offering 60 additional camp spots each summer to address camp waitlists. This expansion also allowed us to separate the group of children into two age groups, resulting in more targeted and individualized instruction.

We are so incredibly grateful to The Branscombe Family Foundation for their continued support of our agency. It is thanks to The Branscombe Family Foundation that we are able to keep camp costs low for families, and continue to further our mission of providing services to individuals affected by learning disabilities here in Niagara.



"I just wanted to say how amazing my son's tutor has been. Each week, she plans interesting and creative activities that are catered toward my son's interests! My son loves hockey and his tutor always brings hockey-themed activities to keep him engaged. As a result of this, he has improved FOUR reading levels at school! His also provides amazing feedback each session to let us know what he has been working on so that we can continue to work on those words at home. We are so thrilled and impressed with the program! Thank you for everything."

-- Reading Rocks Parent, Winter 2020



The LDANR's impact on the community is apparent through the feedback we receive from program parents, staff, volunteers, as well as the children. Testimonials found throughout this report highlight the purpose of the work that we do, and motivate us to ensure we are able to continue offering affordable, direct-impact programming to individuals with learning differences in Niagara. Revenue from funders, donors, sponsors, fundraisers, and minimal program fees allow us to continue providing these meaningful experiences to families throughout the community.

Reading Rocks

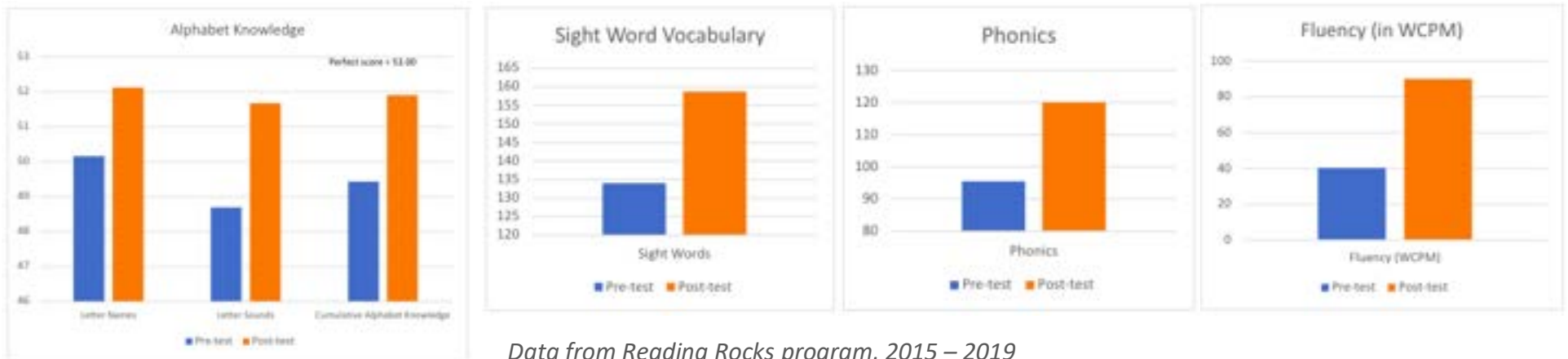
Grades 2 – 10

Reading Rocks is an individualized tutoring program for children in Grades 2 to 10 who are performing a minimum of one year behind in the area of literacy due to a diagnosed, identified, or suspected reading disability (dyslexia). Participants work one-to-one with a trained tutor to enhance their literacy skills such as phonics principles, sight word knowledge, and reading fluency. Sessions are taught using a combination of direct instruction and engaging literacy games and activities. Participants use individualized workstations to set goals and visualize their progress throughout the program in order to boost self-confidence and intrinsic motivation.

“Our daughter has gone up 2 reading levels at school since September. Which is faster than she usually does. We couldn’t be happier with the skills she is learning and the enjoyment she has for reading now. Thank you for this program!”



-- Reading Rocks Parent, Fall 2019



Let's R.E.A.D

Read, Explore And Discover

Grades 2 – 4

Let's R.E.A.D. is a small-group literacy support program for children in Grades 2 to 4 who are performing a minimum of one year behind in the area of literacy due to a diagnosed, identified, or suspected reading disability (dyslexia). Participants work on foundational literacy skills such as phonics principles, sight word knowledge, and reading fluency. Sessions are taught using a combination of instruction and engaging literacy games and activities. Participants also receive some direct literacy instruction in their area of greatest need.



“I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for being so patient and understanding with [my son]. [My son] enjoys going and looks forward to his evenings. He has been going through a lot and acts out so I cannot say enough for [the instructors] and everyone being so kind and thoughtful in ways to help [my son]. [My son] can sound out words and read books to his younger siblings. He would not do this 3 months ago. I firmly believe that Let's R.E.A.D. has helped him in a lot of ways” - *Let's READ Parent, Fall 2019*

Reading Rocks Jr.

Kindergarten – Grade 1

Reading Rocks Jr. is a small-group early literacy intervention program for children in Kindergarten and Grade 1 who are behind in their emergent literacy skill development. Participants work on building foundational reading skills such as phonological awareness, early sight word vocabulary, printing and fine motor skills. Sessions are taught using a combination of instruction and engaging literacy games and activities. Participants also receive some direct literacy instruction in their greatest area of need.

“We had a great experience. Was exactly what we were looking for. We were hesitant to try the program because our son is quite behind but we found he was doing amazing. He enjoyed going and was very sad when we told him he was finished. He has asked to attend again.”

-- *Reading Rocks Jr. Parent, Winter 2019*



B.E.S.T.

Better Emotional and Social Times

Grades 3 – 5

The Better Emotional and Social Times (B.E.S.T.) program is a small-group, self-advocacy and coping skills program for children in grades 3-5 who are experiencing secondary characteristics associated with learning difficulties (i.e., low self-esteem, poor social and/or emotional regulation) due to a diagnosed, identified, or suspected learning disability. Participants work on identifying their individual strengths and areas of improvement, how to seek out support when needed, and how to navigate stressful or anxiety-inducing academic situations. Sessions are taught using a combination of discussion, instruction, and engaging games and activities in both a whole-group and small-group setting.



“[My son] loved the program! Since participating in the B.E.S.T. program, [my son] has become more aware of his own emotions.”

-- *B.E.S.T. Parent, Fall 2019*

S.L.A.M.

Sunshine, Learning, Achievement & More!

Ages 6 – 11



Sunshine, Learning, Achievement, and More (S.L.A.M.) is a full-day summer learning camp for children ages 6-11 who are performing a minimum of one year behind in the area of literacy due to a diagnosed, identified, or suspected reading disability (dyslexia). At S.L.A.M., children spend half of the day working on enhancing literacy skills such as phonics principles, sight word knowledge, and reading fluency. The other half of a typical day at S.L.A.M. is spent participating in **coping skill and recreation-based activities** designed to assist with the secondary characteristics associated with learning difficulties (i.e., low self-esteem, poor social and/or emotional regulation). S.L.A.M. staff teach these skills using a combination of discussion, instruction, and engaging games and activities in both a whole-group and small-group setting.

“My daughter was so nervous and anxious about going to camp this summer but after the first day she declared that she wanted to go to camp all summer. Thanks to the staff and the programs she felt excited, happy, and safe. Most of the time she didn’t even realize she was learning something. A special bonus to the fun she had was that we saw a boost in her confidence and an improvement in her literacy skills. Yay!”

– *S.L.A.M. Parent, Summer 2019*

J.U.M.P Math *New*

Grades 1 – 8

JUMP Math is an individualized tutoring program for children in Grades 1 to 8 who are performing a minimum of one year behind in the area of math due to a diagnosed, identified, or suspected math disability (dyscalculia), and who are showing signs of math anxiety. Participants work one-to-one with a trained numeracy tutor to build foundational math skills and computational fluency. Sessions are taught using a combination of direct instruction and engaging math games and activities. Participants are also able to set goals and visualize their progress throughout the program in order to foster math confidence.



“JUMP Math gave [our son] the tools and knowledge on how to express what was in his head and to put it on paper. He was no longer frustrated or discouraged. After every JUMP Math class, [our son] came home bubbly and talkative. He shared with all of us his “math night”. So much so that none of us could get a word in. His excitement was contagious and the entire family felt happy and great!”

-- JUMP Math Parent, Winter 2020



For more program information, visit our website at www.LDANiagara.org

Thank you to our Staff and Volunteers

Program Volunteers

Ankush Ankush
Kloe Arruda
Zuha Ather
Naureen Balouch Sajid
Sally Bellevue
Zak Birt
Emily Bonisteel
Olivia Bosetti
Joanna Bruce
Liberty Clements
Cassandra Collins
Sydney Cook
Laura Cote
Lauren Cowan
Marina Crudu
Taylor Demers
Carli Dortono
Crystal Dreyer
Wenni Du
Kate Elliott
Rolake Fakunle
Alexis Fernandez
Stephanie Fraser
Janvi Gantara
Kylee Gault
Jemima Generalao
Farrah Glabb
Rebecca Gobbi
Caroline Grant
Rachel Harvey
Betty (Manan) He

Kyla Higgins
Evelyn Ho
Trang Hoang
Gracie Hodgson
James Hooten
Mariah Horne
Caitlin Ireton
Sydney Jeffrey
Arvith Jhirad
Shauna Jung
Suji Kaur
Komalpreet Kaur
Ramneet Kaur
Haleema Khan
Faryal Khan
Ginny Kim
Janelle Klosler
Demin Kong
Megan Kostuch
Samantha Kucherawy
Taylor Kuiack
Khadijah Ladhani
Rachel Lapinski
Monica Lee
Joleen Leek
Jessica Li
Tamara Lobo-Colaso
Anthony Locante
Therese-Marie Macri
Maria Malik
Hamna Malik
Alesia McBride
Lara McConvey
Sydney McGann

Megan McIvor
Sam McLean
Alexis Minniti
Vraj Mistry
Sara Monfredi
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Brianna Morehouse
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Thao Nguyen
Alex Okon
Manasvi Pandya
Anjelica Pangilinan
Alessandra Perri
Devon Price
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Emma Rupcic
Mustafa Sadozai
Karem Salcedo
Erika Scorcio
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Salony Sharma
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Maninder Sodhi
Ulissa Sommer
Madeleine Sommerville
Hannah St. George
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Emily Tremeer
Felicia Tsai

Melanie Ulch
Katerina Valcheff
Ashley Van Der Kley
Thea Van Loon
Shannon Vermeer
Wangui (Joy) Wachira
Kiersten Walsh
Qi (Chee) Wan
Zhen Wang
Mary Wasilik
Leanne Weiner
McKenzie Wilson
Jessie (Saiyu) Xue
Erica Yagi
Clover Yu
Gabrielle Zajackowski
Mixue (Mia) Zhang
Lingling Zuo
Anna Zwanzig

Event Volunteers

Naureen Balouch
Julia Suggit
Heloise Taucher

Bingo Volunteers

Jane and Nick Casson
Kim Woods

Placement Students

Hannah Alkema

Thank you to our Staff and Volunteers

Rachel Ayinde
Jen Bedford
Katy Dube
Joceline Gaffin
Santiago Garcia
Mikael Gauthier
Amy Granton
Kendra Horlick
Ateeba Khan
Uma Kumari
Lisa Peter
Fernanda Rosenboom
Emma Ross
Stephanie Runge
Madi Scarselli
Michelle Sheikh Al Ghannameh
Jordan Sheridan
Braden Young

Program Staff

Sierra Anderson
Amanda Bahnuk
Madeline Baylor
Elizabeth Cole
Rebecca Craig
Oriana DeFrancesco
Mikayla DePalo
Eva Distefano
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Samantha Strayer
Alexa Sullivan
Mike Szymanski
Paulina Van der Zalm
Ciara Vujovic
Brianna Weaver
Sarah Weirts
Julia Zaniol



Lend a hand and become an advocate, volunteer, sponsor, donate, facilitate, fundraise, or simply help spread the word!

To Join the LDANR team, visit www.LDANiagara.org
Volunteer intake forms are available online!

Thank you to our Funders



**United Way
Niagara**



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Trillium Foundation



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The
Humeniuk
Foundation

Thank you to our Sponsors



Thank you to our Supporters



Thank you to our Community Partners



Thank you to our **Research Team**



The LDANR is grateful for our continued partnership with Brock University's Child and Youth Studies Department and the numerous undergrad and grad students that get involved with the LDANR programs. The research team, led by Dr. John McNamara provides LDANR with undergrad and grad students who collaborate with the LDANR to study the efficacy of the programs to ensure quality programs continue to be implemented year after year.

Thank you to our **Donors**

Bob Burnett

Rotary Club of St. Catharines

Lisa VanderBurgt

Billie Wright

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Jennifer Cosby

Kim Robertson-Woods

Kiwanis Club of St. Catharines

Frozon Paiwand

Yue Ming

Frank Stewart

Green Wood Gems

Luis Pimentel

Kiwanis Duck Race

Linda Kukulak

Benjamin Moore

Les Dickson

Star Sanders



ldanr • Learning Disabilities
Association of Niagara Region

The right to learn, the power to achieve

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