Impact of Learning Disabilities

The unseen cost

Today, nearly 1 in 10 Canadians suffer from a learning disability.

That means about 120,000 Manitobans (and 3.3 million Canadians) have difficulty functioning in a world that increasingly demands literacy and numeracy.

While we’ve come a long way in understanding learning disabilities, they remain a largely unseen financial strain on our society. The Roeher Institute, which advocates for all people with disabilities in Canada, estimates the average economic cost to society of an individual’s learning disability is nearly $2 million from birth to retirement. Taken together, learning disabilities represent a massive economic burden to Canada. Learning disabilities take an even more insidious toll on individuals and their families, leading to depression, unemployment and unfulfilled promise. People with learning disabilities may do poorly in school or drop out altogether. Once out of school, they frequently have difficulty finding employment. According to Statistics Canada, 42 per cent of people with learning disabilities are unemployed, which is six times more than the general population.

The unemployment statistics are bad enough, but they’re not as stark as the numbers we see from the justice system. Nearly one in four inmates in Canadian prisons have a learning disability.

We must do better.

About 120,000 Manitobans struggle with learning disabilities. We are working hard to help as many as we can.

Nearly 1/3 of parents who have children with a learning disability reported that they could not afford the learning aids their children need to succeed academically (ie. tutoring). Source: Pacfold.ca

You can make a difference! Donate today at www.ldamanitoba.org
Helping people overcome their learning disabilities

The good news is that once diagnosed, accepted and treated, most people with learning disabilities can overcome their conditions and enjoy satisfying, productive lives with their families and in our communities.

The Learning Disabilities Association of Manitoba helps people with learning disabilities and attention deficit disorders to reach their goals and live better lives. We work with people of just about any age – from school children and teens to adults, including prisoners.

Our organization is the only one of its kind in the province dedicated to providing learning disability and attention deficit disorder information, programming and services for individuals, families and professionals.

Our programming is successful, but we’re reaching only a fraction of our potential.

Too many people still don’t have access to the treatment they need. **We need your help to do more.**

Statistics Canada says more children in this country have a learning disability than all other types of disabilities combined.

You can make a difference! Donate today at www.ldamanitoba.org
The Learning Disabilities Association of Manitoba was formed in the 1960s by a group of parents trying to help their own children as they struggled with school work and how to progress socially. Little was known about learning disabilities at the time, so the first task of those parents was to research, learn and spread the word.

Working with professionals, we gathered information and supported one another as we tried to help our own children get past often rudimentary reading or math problems in the classroom. We knew our kids, so we knew their problems weren't about intelligence. With a growing body of research in our hands, we set out to prove that to the education system.

Over the next three decades we continued to build knowledge, working with child psychologists, doctors and educators alongside a host of sister organizations that rose up around Canada and the United States. We gave presentations to whoever would listen and worked hard to develop and refine educational programs to assist children as we tried to deal with their learning disabilities.

The end result was that more children with learning disabilities began to receive the attention and support they needed... though thousands more went undiagnosed and unsupported.

While we celebrate these advancements, too many children, teens and adults still fall through the cracks.

Help us do more.
Learning disabilities going untreated

Despite great strides forward by public schools in Manitoba in identifying learning disabilities in children, we still have a long way to go with both diagnosis and treatment.

Children with learning disabilities face rejection from peers and can suffer from very low self-esteem because of their own perceived feelings of inadequacy and ignorance. As they grow older and become teens, that leads to higher incidences of alcoholism, drug abuse, gang affiliation and school drop-outs.

The sad truth is that it often takes more than two years of falling behind before a teacher or parent spots a learning disability. And, because school’s resources are often limited, it takes time to respond to that child’s needs. There are private tutors for families who can afford them, but the vast majority cannot.

That is where the Learning Disabilities Association of Manitoba comes in. We have the expertise and the programming model to help children tackle their learning disabilities. We work in concert with educators, and directly with families, to support a system that needs to ration scarce resources.

We offer low or no cost options for families to get the help they need for their children, and the support they need for extended families. Our objective is to teach individuals and their families how to deal with learning disabilities.

Unfortunately, even with all the improvements to our education system, thousands of people fall through the cracks. Our regular intakes are full and our waiting lists are growing. Currently, we can’t serve everyone who comes to us. We know this means too many children are falling further behind.

Serious Consequences

No child should fall behind due to a learning disability. Donate today at www.ldamanitoba.org
As the body of research has grown over the years, so has our understanding of learning disabilities.

A century ago, learning disabilities were shrugged off as signs of low intelligence or brain dysfunctions. Today, we see things more clearly, we understand that not everyone learns and makes connections in the same way.

A learning disability means having a marked difficulty and lower function in taking in information (sensory data), processing it, or using it in creating the desired outputs despite average or above average intelligence.

We understand that learning disabilities stem from neurological disorders, as does ADHD. ADHD frequently accompanies learning disabilities. Present alone, ADHD affects the ability to learn.

People with dyslexia have problems with processing the smallest parts of language - phonemes - and appear to process information in a different area of the brain than non-sylexics do. Dyslexia is the most common cause of reading, writing and spelling difficulties.

Dysgraphia – Dysgraphia is neurologically-based handwriting disability in which a person has unusual difficulty forming letters or writing within a defined space.

Dyscalcula – Dyscalcula is a disorder diagnosed in those who are underachieving relative to their potential in mathematics, based on age, education level and measured intelligence.

Writing Expression Disability – As with reading, there are many levels at which the writing process can break down. A child may have difficulty with visual...
memory for words, phonemes and individual letters, generating and organizing ideas, or with the fine motor task of writing.

**Specific Reading Disability** – Individuals are diagnosed with Specific Reading Disability when they are persistently underachieving in the development of reading skills, given his or her age, education level and measured intelligence.

**Auditory Processing** – difficulty in processing sounds.

**Non-Verbal Learning Disabilities** – difficulty processing non-verbal information (i.e. perception of physical space, faces, social interactions)

**ADHD** – Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder generally interferes with attention span and impulse control.

**Social Perception** – Some individuals have difficulty interpreting social situations. They may not be able to understand the meanings behind facial expressions, tones of voice, body language or other verbal and non-verbal cues.

**Social Skills** – Some individuals have difficulty understanding basic social skills such as knowing when to interrupt a conversation, or knowing how close to stand to someone.

**Comorbids**

Frequently, learning disabilities present themselves along with other conditions such as:

**Anxiety** – frequent and excessive anxiety often accompanies learning disabilities and adds another challenge to learning.

**Depression** – people with learning disabilities commonly battle depression as they question their own intelligence and ability to perform like their peers.

**Tourette Syndrome** – this disorder is characterized by tics: involuntary, rapid, sudden movements or vocalizations that occur repeatedly in the same way.
What We Do

Helping Manitobans at every stage of life

The Learning Disabilities Association of Manitoba (LDAM) is the only organization in the province that deals with learning disabilities at every stage of life.

CHILDREN LITERACY

Literacy Tutoring – Our flagship program welcomes children up to age 11 where they learn about their disabilities along with their parents. Through one on one tutoring with our trained instructors, children improve their reading and writing abilities while mastering new learning skills and strategies. One of our programs also includes a social skills component. We also provide training for parents on how to support their children so they can more confidently approach their school work and various social situations.

Destination Learning Tutoring Program

This program works with children aged six to 11 who are struggling with literacy and who are also affected by learning disabilities or ADHD. The program boosts children’s literacy levels and confidence while also providing parents new strategies to help support their children.

LINKS – Linking Language to Learning is a literacy program designed for children who are experiencing difficulty in reading skills development, which may be attributed to a learning disability. The LINKS Program is dedicated to helping children become competent, independent learners through the experience of good books, and opportunities for good writing.

ADULTS

Destination Employment – We help adults with Learning Disabilities or ADHD find suitable and meaningful employment. This means helping teaching them to identify and understand how they learn and how this applies to the workplace. We also help them develop work-related skills in addition to identifying suitable jobs.

Continued over...

Too many Manitobans struggle with learning disabilities. Donate today at www.ldamanitoba.org
**Adult Support Group** – We provide an opportunity for adults with learning disabilities or ADHD to connect with their peers so they can learn about their disabilities and how to manage them. These supportive group sessions are facilitated by a trained and experienced program co-ordinator and ADHD coach.

**Working with Inmates** – Since 2011, we have been working with inmates with learning disabilities at Stony Mountain Penitentiary. The inmates we met struggled with learning yet had never been diagnosed with a disability. Many inmates consider it a revelation to finally understand what a learning disability is. Sharing their difficulties and learning ways to make their learning experience more productive gives them new confidence and determination to learn.

**Navigating the Journey**

We receive 1,000 calls, emails and drop-in visits a year from people seeking help in coping with learning disabilities. More than half (60 per cent) are parents concerned about their children’s struggles in school, using social skills with peers, as well as self management issues such as organization, time management, problem solving, and difficult behaviour. They don’t know how to manage the present and plan for the future.

We also hear from adults who are struggling in post-secondary education, stuck in dead-end jobs, on social assistance, dealing with major life challenges as well as professionals seeking support for their clients. We provide support, counselling, information and referrals to internal and external resources. Many of our clients return to us seeking support every few years.

Too many Manitobans struggle with learning disabilities. Donate today at www.ldamanitoba.org
Filling In The Gaps

Teens need support so they don’t fall through the cracks

Today, LDAM works in partnership with health care and education systems. We provide information, support, services and programs for children up to 11 years old, parents and adults 18 and over.

That leaves a gap in our services where we aren’t supporting teenagers. Our programming for children is primarily focused on tutoring and support for grades one to six. Support for adults is based on helping people find employment or develop social support networks.

It’s vital that we increase the diversity of our reach to connect to youth ages 12 through 18. Our teen years are already marked by intense emotional turbulence as well as physical and mental changes. Teens with learning disabilities have an even tougher time fitting in and getting by, let alone trying to develop and excel at any particular aptitude.

It’s also very important that we continue to improve the support we offer parents and families who need to take action as case managers for themselves in an underfunded and often disjointed system.

Because our focus is solely on learning disabilities, LDAM is the only organization that is suited to offer the broad base of support needed by people with learning disabilities and their families.

Programs coming soon to LDAM

Youth STREAM – Our new teen engagement and mentorship program is being developed to fill a crucial gap in our programming and community outreach. For years, we have been asked to provide support for teens with learning disabilities. This new program will give teens living with learning disabilities in Manitoba a vital resource to help them stay in school and overcome the challenges they face.

Arrowsmith - The Arrowsmith Program is a suite of cognitive programs developed from research in the field of neuroscience to address specific learning disabilities. The programs target 19 areas of cognitive functioning that are most commonly involved in learning.

LDAM provides information, support, services and programs for all ages.

We can’t do it without your help. Donate today at www.ldamanitoba.org
Where we’re going

If you have a learning disability, chances are you’ll never ‘outgrow’ it. It will be a lifelong challenge, but one that can be managed. Our goal is to be a centre that people with learning disabilities can turn to no matter what their age or situation. The right support in life transitions and crisis make the journey safer and more predictable, which leads to happier outcomes.

The Learning Disabilities Association of Manitoba is uniquely suited to give Manitobans the support they need to deal with learning disabilities throughout their lives. We work with children, teens and adults with learning disabilities, while also providing educational and networking support for their friends and families.

No other organization in the province deals with learning disabilities and ADHD in the same holistic way we do. We’re the bridge from early childhood through teen years and adulthood. When support systems from the educational system are no longer there, LDAM will remain as a vital foundation for thousands of Manitoba families.

Instead of feeling trapped and inadequate, the individuals we reach gain new hope that they can succeed in ways they never thought were possible.

With the support of individuals, corporations and government, we believe we can minimize the disruption and costs caused by learning disabilities to both individuals and society.

Learning disabilities are a life long struggle. Donate today at www.ldamanitoba.org
Your Help Is Needed

Why donate today, in Manitoba

Manitoba has the second highest high school drop out rate in Canada. While there are many reasons for this statistic, it cannot be ignored that a large number of drop outs have learning disabilities. Sadly, the stats also tell us that many people have never been diagnosed.

The staff and volunteers of LDAM believe passionately that learning disabilities can be overcome. Our programs are based on nearly half a century of research and implementing individual strategies successfully on a case by case basis. By cooperating with psychologists, educators, doctors and government, LDAM has grown to become the primary resource centre for parents, individuals and educators who seek to better understand learning disabilities.

Our programs provide real, practical help to a wide cross-section of our population, from children trying to read and write, parents looking for information to help their families and adults looking for work.

Our waiting lists are long and grow every day. While we’re fortunate to have stable funding from the United Way, it’s not enough to cover the constantly increasing demand for our services.

We need your help...

... to reach more children
... to help more people find productive jobs
... to teach more people to live independently
... to enhance more lives

Help us reach more Manitobans. Donate today at www.ldamanitoba.org
Leadership

The Learning Disabilities Association of Manitoba is the leading provider of educational and support services to individuals with learning disabilities and ADHD, and their families.

Donations to LDAM go directly to strengthening our programming that address the needs of people with learning disabilities of all ages.

Facts about LDAM

We provide information, support and referrals to 1,000 individuals a year through phone, email, drop-ins and appointments. We also offer education to more than 750 individuals through our conferences, events and workshops. And we provide skills training to more than 250 children, youth and adults through our various programs. We reach thousands more through information dissemination, our website and those who benefit from people we have educated and trained.

Centrally located in Winnipeg

Founded: 1966
No. of staff: 6
No. of intakes (including phone calls, visits, clients) per year: 1,000
No. of children served per year: 85
No. of adults served per year: 100
Executive Director: Marilyn McKinnon, BSW, Adv Cert F.TH.
Staff:
- Margaret Yacowar, MA
- Enda Egan, B.Com, B.ED
- Cher Benoit Cre Corn + ED Ast C and Shaunna Wall B. ED.,
- Michelle Intrepidi – B.ED, B. Conflict Resolution

Board of Directors

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Dan O’Rourke, Past President – Accountant
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Stan Bear – Aboriginal Health Care Manager
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Cliff Fox – Actuary
Sheri Moerkerk – Marketing Specialist
Carly Thompson – Marketing Specialist
Leslie Turner – Lawyer

We need your help. Donate today at www.ldamanitoba.org
How you can help Manitoba overcome learning disabilities

With a donation of as little as $10, you can make a real impact on the lives of people with learning disabilities.

### One time gifts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$10</td>
<td>Supports 1 hour of one-on-one tutoring with a child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$25</td>
<td>Supports 1 hour of counseling for a parent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$150</td>
<td>Supports a 10 week session of one-on-one tutoring with a child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$350</td>
<td>Provides an adult with help around essential reading and writing skills to pursue a more stable future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$500</td>
<td>Helps 4 individuals start tackling their learning disabilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$1,350</td>
<td>Provides complete psychologist’s learning assessment for a struggling youth or adult</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$2,500</td>
<td>Pays for an adult support group for one year</td>
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</tbody>
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### Monthly donations

Your donation can go a lot further if you make it monthly. For only $10 or $20 per month, you can become a regular contributor to LDAM, helping us help individuals and families overcome learning disabilities.

### Major gifts

We welcome the opportunity to discuss the potential for major gifts and donations. Whether they are one-time or ongoing gifts, they can help us expand our services to ensure we can reach and teach more Manitobans that learning disabilities can be conquered.

### Naming opportunities

We offer a number of naming opportunities for you to attach your name, your corporate name or that of a family member or a friend to an LDAM program or a part of our facility.

Support us today! Donate today at www.ldamanitoba.org