

## **COUNCIL – OCTOBER 8, 2013**

### **PROCLAMATION REQUEST** **LEARNING DISABILITIES AWARENESS MONTH**

#### **Recommendation**

The City Clerk recommends:

1. That October 2013 be proclaimed as “Learning Disabilities Awareness Month”; and
2. That the proclamation be posted on the City’s website and published on the City Page Online.

#### **Contribution to Sustainability**

N/A

#### **Economic Impact**

N/A

#### **Communications Plan**

The Corporate Communications Department posts proclamations issued by the City on the City’s website under “Council – Proclamations” and on the City Page Online.

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of this report is to respond to the request received from the Executive Director of the Learning Disabilities Association of York Region.

#### **Background - Analysis and Options**

The correspondence from the Executive Director of the Learning Disabilities Association of York Region, received October 1, 2013 is attached. (Attachment 1) This request was received too late to be placed on the last Committee of the Whole meeting Agenda. Due to the time-sensitivity of the proclamation to proclaim October 2013 as “Learning Disabilities Awareness Month”, we respectfully request that Council ratify the action taken.

The proclamation request meets the requirements of the City’s Proclamation as follows:

“That upon request, the City of Vaughan issue Proclamations for events, campaigns or other similar matters:

- (i) Which are promoted by any organization that is a registered charity pursuant to Section 248 of the Income Tax Act”

The Learning Disabilities Association of York Region is a member of the Learning Disabilities Association of Canada (LDAC) which is a registered charitable organization. Their mandate is to raise awareness, reduce the stigma, and celebrate the unique achievements and capabilities of people living with learning disabilities. The theme of this year’s campaign is “**LD is Not who I am. It’s what I have**” and will focus on children, youth, and adults with learning disabilities, with emphasis on encouragement to reach their full potential. Council has granted this proclamation in the past.

### **Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2020/Strategic Plan**

This report supports the strategic priorities established by Vaughan Vision 2010 plan:

Service Excellence

- Promote Community Safety, Health & Wellness

### **Regional Implications**

The proclamation will raise awareness across the region.

### **Conclusion**

Staff is recommending that October 2013 be proclaimed as "Learning Disabilities Awareness Month", and that the proclamation be posted on the City's website and on the City Page Online. Given that the next meeting of Council is on October 29, 2013, this report recommends that Council ratify the decision at its meeting of October 8, 2013.

### **Attachments**

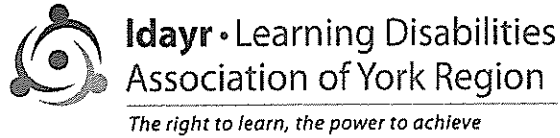
Attachment 1 Correspondence from the Executive Director of the Learning Disabilities Association of York Region, received October 1, 2013

### **Report prepared by**

Connie Bonsignore, Administrative Assistant to the City Clerk

Respectfully submitted,

Jeffrey A. Abrams  
City Clerk



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**Celebrating 37 Years in York Region**

Mayor of Vaughan  
Maurizio Bevilacqua

Town of Vaughan  
2141 Major Mackenzie Drive  
Vaughan, ON  
L6A 1T1

Dear Mayor Maurizio Bevilacqua

October is Public Awareness Month for Learning Disabilities across Canada. This year's campaign theme is, **"LD is NOT who I am. It's what I have."** This theme focuses on children, youth, and adults with Learning Disabilities as well as their families and friends.

The campaign seeks to encourage young people to reach their full potential.  
The right to learn, the power to achieve:

*"My Learning Disability does not define me. Just because I have trouble reading does not mean that I cannot read. Do not define me by my Learning Disability; define me by the valuable and different perspectives I have to offer because of the way I learn."* – Elisa Blasi (LDAYR Student Ambassador & Post-secondary Student)

*"There is more to each story than the cover. I would appreciate and challenge you to read the whole book and not just assume things about who I am by just looking at my cover."*  
– Matthew (LDAYR Student Champion & Secondary Student)

As Executive Director of the Learning Disabilities Association of York Region, I am kindly requesting the Town of Vaughan to declare October as Learning Disabilities Awareness Month. In addition please post a message on your website or social media outlets.

As part of this campaign, we have developed a poster motivating young people to push their limits inside and outside the classroom through the student voice. I kindly request your support in helping us distribute this poster throughout your municipal facilities. To contact me contact me directly please call: 905-884-7933, ext. 22.

Sincerely,

Lynn Ziraldo  
Executive Director  
905-884-7933, ext. 22





**ldayr • Learning Disabilities  
Association of York Region**

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**Celebrating 37 Years in York Region**

## **LEARNING DISABILITIES ASSOCIATION OF YORK REGION CELEBRATES LD MONTH:**

### **“LD is NOT who I am, it’s what I have”**

**York Region, October 1<sup>st</sup> 2013** – The Learning Disabilities Association of York Region (LDAYR) was founded in 1976 to provide leadership in Learning Disabilities (LD) and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), advocacy, research, education and services to advance the full participation of children, youth and adults. Much has been achieved over the years, but the cause and aims of the organization remain- to ensure that every student struggling in school and every adult experiencing barriers to reach their full potential.

Learning Disabilities Awareness Month, beginning on October 1<sup>st</sup>, celebrates the kick-off campaign to promote the organization’s initiative on anti-stigma for individuals living with an LD and/or ADHD. This year, the theme for Learning Disabilities Awareness Month throughout Ontario is: *“LD is NOT who I am, it’s what I have.”* This theme aligns with the organization’s goal to change the way the general public views those around us living with a Learning Disability. Here are some messages from a few inspirational advocates:

*“My Learning Disability does not define me. Just because I have trouble reading does not mean that I cannot read. Do not define me by my Learning Disability; define me by the valuable and different perspectives I have to offer because of the way I learn.”* – Elisa Blasi (LDAYR Student Ambassador & Post-secondary Student)

*“There is more to each story than the cover. I would appreciate and challenge you to read the whole book and not just assume things about who I am by just looking at my cover.”*  
– Matthew (LDAYR Student Champion & Secondary Student)

*As I reflect on who my son is, I would say my son is a wonderful person who has the capacity to be anything he wants. He is determined, sensitive and a hard worker... That is who my son is. My son also has a Learning Disability which has shaped his learning experience but it does not define who he is.*  
– Mom of Matthew (LDAYR Parent Champion)

Learning Disabilities are life long but with early diagnosis and appropriate supports, youth with LDs and/or ADHD can become competent and independent adults who reach their full potential, and lead satisfying lives. LDAYR is committed to supporting the right to learn, the power to achieve, and will continue until that is a reality for everyone in our community. Help LDAYR achieve these goals!

To find out more information about Learning Disabilities and/or ADHD, or to find out what events, programs, and services are happening in your community, please visit our website at: [www.ldayr.ca](http://www.ldayr.ca).

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### **MEDIA CONTACT**

Lynn Ziraldo – Executive Director  
Learning Disabilities Association of York Region  
Tel: 905-884-7933 x 22  
Email: [info@ldayr.org](mailto:info@ldayr.org)



**United Way**  
York Region  
Partner Agency



## OCTOBER

### **O** is for “October” - Learning Disabilities Awareness Month!

A full month to celebrate and feature our success stories and to recommit our energy as we all strive to support individuals who struggle with the challenges associated with this identification and to assist them to reach their full potential.

### **C** is for “Confidence”

Confidence is acquired through success. For individuals with a learning disability there are often periods of performance inconsistency. Some days they are capable of accomplishing certain tasks and other days they cannot. We must ensure that awareness efforts result in sensitive support for bad days, celebration of good days and an environment that actively and safely explores relevant strategies and supports that increase the good days. *Rick Lavoie*

### **T** is for “Teachers” and the vital link to success that they provide

The education profession works to ensure that instructional approaches reach every student. “Every student learns in his or her own way, the doers, the thinkers, the watchers and readers, and everyone in between”. Learning for All K-12

### **O** is for “Open Minds that think Out of the Box”

Individuals with learning disabilities think differently. It falls to us to try different approaches, modify our methods and to keep it fresh. There are always ways to grow and increase awareness - a win for us all.

### **B** is for “Backed by Us All”

It really does take a village and the LDA York Region Board is up to the task. LDAYR strives to address needs of all concerned; students, parents, adults and community organizations.

### **E** is for “Expertise”

Our strongest resource is our individual strengths and what we bring to this organization. Diversity is always a strength! All for one and one for all!

### **R** is for “Respect”

We do not take lightly our moral responsibility to ensure respect and dignity for individuals with learning disabilities. It is the cornerstone of our association’s mandate. As advocates we are entrusted to model this key component for a healthier community.



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Association of York Region**

*The right to learn, the power to achieve*



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# Myths and Facts about LDs

**1. MYTH: Learning disabilities (LDs) do not really exist.**

**FACT:** LDs are real. Recent research indicates neurological differences in the brain structure and function for people who have learning disabilities.

**2. MYTH: Learning disabilities are all the same and/or easily understood.**

**FACT:** Learning disabilities are *complicated*. The extent of their impact and the areas of learning they affect vary greatly from person to person; combine in any variety of ways; and vary depending on context.

Helping is *not* as complicated: people with LDs need to determine which modes of learning work well for them, and use these strengths to compensate for the areas affected by their LD.

**3. MYTH: Students with LDs cannot learn.**

**FACT:** Students with LDs can be successful learners, at all levels and in any situation, by compensating for their weaknesses by using their strengths; by using alternative, individualized teaching and learning materials and methods; and by choosing tasks that suit themselves.

**4. MYTH: More boys than girls have learning disabilities.**

**FACT:** Although four times as many boys as girls are identified as having LDs by schools, research studies suggest that many girls who are not identified also have the most common form of learning problem - difficulty with reading. Many girls' learning difficulties are neither identified nor treated - possibly because boys who are struggling are, in general, more disruptive in classes.

**5. MYTH: Students with LDs are just lazy.**

**FACT:** Students with LDs generally have to spend more time to adequately complete school assignments. This extended effort can often lead to difficulties in completing assignments on time, maintaining course requirements such as tutorial reading and studying. These difficulties should not be misinterpreted as 'laziness'.



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**6. MYTH: Students diagnosed with LDs at school age should have outgrown them by adulthood.**

**FACT:** LDs are a lifelong condition. If the diagnosis of a learning disability in childhood is accurate, the disability will endure into adulthood. Specific learning strategies and adjustments can be developed to address problems, and can make it so that LDs are not a pressing issue, but the learning disability itself remains.

**7. MYTH: Learning disabilities are a school issue.**

**FACT:** LDs affect one or more modes of learning, *anywhere that mode is used*. LDs tend to be noticed most often when they impact on school-learning, but exist in all areas of life – work, family, relationships, etc.

**8. MYTH: Accommodating the needs of students with LDs in schools is too difficult, time consuming and expensive.**

**FACT:** Accommodations implemented for students with LDs are also generally good examples of universal learning strategies. They can improve teaching and learning, not just for students with LDs, but also for the overall student population and other minority groups, such as people from a non-English speaking background. Teachers can also benefit from this approach by developing a range of flexible teaching and learning strategies that can be implemented in a number of different environments.

**9. MYTH: Providing academic adjustments such as accommodations and individualized teaching gives students with LDs an unfair advantage over other students.**

**FACT:** Academic adjustments are determined on identified deficit's resulting from a student's LDs. Adjustments ensure equal and fair participation in a learning environment and ensure actual learning is recognized. Students with LDs are required to meet the same academic standards as their peers.

**10. MYTH: LDs can be cured.**

**FACT:** There have been occasional claims by individuals of "curing" learning disabilities in various ways. Learning disabilities are a life-long condition; many people learn to successfully cope with their





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LDs to such an extent that it is no longer an issue for them, and certain intensive study methods do help some people, but there is no researched evidence that one person's solution will work for all.



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who I am,  
it's what I have.

## OCTOBER is LD Awareness Month

### Help us set the record straight.

Visit our website or give us a call to find out how:

[www.LDAYR.org](http://www.LDAYR.org)

905.884.7933 x23



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