

On The Horizon

LDA Life and Learning Services

LDA
LIFE AND LEARNING
SERVICES

SPRING 2011

*Individualized Services For Success in School, Work,
Relationships and Independent Living*

NEWSLETTER



LDA Helps Families Navigate School Systems

has a learning disability a -- journey that led them to call LDA Life and Learning Services.

Q: Why did you call LDA?

Mrs. Smith: For years I had tried to navigate the scenario (with the school) by myself, and it just wasn't making a difference. Then one day I found myself talking with a friend about it, and they said, "Why don't you call LDA?" I had never heard of LDA, but I said to myself, "it can't hurt!" because I had been talking and talking, year in and year out, and it seems like no one was listening. So I called LDA.

Q: How did LDA make a difference?

Mrs. Smith: The first thing that happened was an educational consultant accompanied me to my son's annual review, and boy what a difference!

"I could feel that they truly cared and were listening and wanted to know what would be the best way for them to help."

She was a wonderful advocate on behalf of my son. I must say that I sit here today with nothing but gratitude! I found an organization that really understands what parents go through.

Mr. Smith: We are now getting results. We are no longer feeling like we are beating our heads against a brick wall! Our son loves the changes that have happened since LDA has been involved.

Mrs. Smith: We are seeing great improvement with our son. Our son is growing, not just academically, in the work program, but also socially.

Mr. Smith: If you as a parent are feeling frustrated, helpless and alone, call LDA right away! They will stand up for you. They have the knowledge and experience. They will help you over the hurdles you may be having with your child's education. They will be there for you, and they will get results, depending on your circumstances. Call 585-263-3323 today.

Our Services

- **Clinical Services** - are provided across all programs by a team of professionals, including Behavioral Specialists, Nurses and Clinical Psychologists.
- **Educational Consulting** - works with families of children preschool through college who require assistance accessing supports and services available.
- **Employment Support Services** - focuses on the Individualized Placement and Support Principle Approach.
- **Individualized Services** - includes Person Centered Planning, Medicaid Service Coordination, Fiscal Management Services and Community and Day Habilitation Services.
- **Residential Services** - offers a continuum of residential living support and services ranging from several hours per week per individual up to 24-7 supervision.

For more information, call our
Intake Specialist at 585-263-3323.

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Learning Disabilities Association of the Genesee Valley, Inc.
339 East Avenue • Suite 420 • Rochester, New York 14604
Phone 585-263-3323 • Fax 585-263-2461 • www.LDARochester.org



Colin Garwood

Letter from the Executive Director

At LDA we are all very excited because we are fortunate to have on our staff forward-thinking leaders who are pioneering approaches to services that will result in lower cost and more meaningful supports for those we serve. This allows many of our individuals the opportunities to give back to the community in very productive ways.

Nationally and statewide there is a vibrant movement to increase employment opportunities for people with disabilities. In fact, on January 25, 2011, the former Assistant Secretary of the Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) wrote, "Society absolutely knows how to properly support people with medical, learning and behavioral challenges without resorting to institutional or segregated placement. It also is time that institutions, an obsolete service model, are finally removed from the menu of choice."

Employment Services Director Stacy Russell and her highly skilled team stand firm on the employment first platform. The employment team has a belief that all individuals with disabilities have the right and the capability to work in a competitive job. For too long, individuals with disabilities have been either out of work, underemployed, or working in segregated settings with often-times uninspiring tasks and little pay. We are, and will be, exploring the many different ways that we can encourage and support everyone we serve to obtain a real job with real pay, benefits and personal satisfaction.

LDA's history and DNA, if you will, has been about serving youth and adults who have learning disabilities. Kim Segal and her team have been working together in support of some new and emerging LDA services that support school-age students, students transitioning to post-secondary and work environments and adults who are struggling with a change in life that presents obstacles to their safety and well-being. We are excited about these new service opportunities because we know there are so many individuals who, with a little timely help, can move forward with their lives and be better prepared to achieve their life goals.

Speaking to Kim Segal

Education Services Director

Q: Tell us about one of your services?

LDA's Educational Consulting Service works with families and students to assist them with navigating their way through educational systems, whether it is the K-12 system or post-secondary education. Education Services Director Kim Segar and her team provide support to families and students to understand evaluative materials, education law and regulations and how this information translates to the provision of services and supports for students struggling in school.



The most common feelings parents express when they call us are frustration, helplessness and uncertainty. Parents can see that their child is struggling and often already have attempted to work with schools to help their child. But the child continues to struggle, and the parents are at a loss for what to do next. The most frequent statement I hear is, "I wish I had learned about LDA earlier!" Unfortunately, by the time some families reach us, valuable time has been lost.

Our consultants are master's level educational professionals with an in-depth knowledge of education regulations, evaluation, educational programming and progress monitoring. Although every case is different, our approach is the same – student centered. The consultants review the students' evaluations, report cards, state standardized testing, and current supports and services. We meet with parents to discuss the information and set goals to help students be successful. Sometimes this may involve connecting parents to supports and services outside of school. A key component of this service is making those connections to the school team and facilitating productive communication between all who are involved. In most cases, the schools are glad to see us because often schools are a little overwhelmed with the demands of the day and meeting the needs of diverse learners. Regardless of our different roles, we all share the common goal of wanting students to be successful.

Community workshops about LDA programs and services are available. For more information or to arrange a presentation for your group, call (585) 263-3323, ext. 211.

Employment First

by **Employment Services Director Stacy Russell**



Employment in the general workforce is the first and preferred outcome for all working-age citizens with disabilities, regardless of level of disability.

How does the Employment Program work, and who does it serve? A person has to be considered “most significantly disabled” by the department of Adult Career and Continuing Education Services – Vocational Rehabilitation criteria (ACCES-VR) formerly known as VESID. This means that the person has three or more functional limitations that significantly impact their ability to work, and they are unemployed, underemployed or struggling on a job that they want to keep and need immediate job coaching. We have several levels of assistance from the Job Developer, who focuses on placement, Job Coaches, who work on skill acquisition, and Long Term Employment Counselors, who assure that the individual manages everything related to maintaining his or her job. Some issues addressed include:

- Speed / Productivity
- Interpersonal relationships with co-workers
- Impulsivity concerns
- Organization of time & information
- Dependability

A few of the underlining principles include:

- The current low employment rate of citizens with disabilities in the workforce is unacceptable.
- As with all other individuals, employees with disabilities require assistance and support to ensure job success and should have access to those supports necessary to succeed in the workplace.

All citizens, regardless of disability, have a right to pursue the full range of available employment opportunities, and to earn a living wage in a job of their choosing, based on their talents, skills and interest.

How has it been working? Just ask Cathy D., who had been in a sheltered workshop for 27 years and was finally

given the support she needed to get started. She now is working as a HR Associate at a local department store. Onaje O., a young man feeling very frustrated that no one would take him seriously about becoming a nurse, now is working as a Patient Care Technician in a hospital and going to school to become a fully licensed registered nurse.

For more information about Employment Services, please call us at (585) 263-3323.



Join Helen Pluta In Supporting LDA’s Mission

On the Horizon shines its spotlight on Helen Pluta, recipient of our 2010 Outstanding Community Partner in Learning Award. We recognized Helen for her passion for enriching the lives of children and adults with learning and developmental disabilities.

Giving a gift to support a cause you are passionate about is a gratifying experience. Knowing that you made a positive impact in a child’s education or helped an adult stay actively engaged in their community through work or volunteering is powerful.

We encourage you to make an impact in a child’s life by giving a gift to our Education Services. Visit www.LDARochester.org and click on the “Donate Online” button or call us at 263-3323, ext. 247 to talk about the many ways you can make a difference.

Mission Statement

LDA Life and Learning Services is a not-for-profit agency helping individuals with learning disabilities, attention deficit disorder, and other developmental disabilities seek personal success in school, work, relationships and independent living.

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www.LDARochester.org

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A Focus on our Future!



Thanks to funds earmarked for the National Academy Local program (www.NAFRochester.org) we were able to bring James Walker on board into the Informational Technology (IT) Department. James served as an intern for six weeks during the summer and continued to work with us by volunteering after school. With that said, we are pleased to announce that we have brought

James Walker back to the IT staff as a part-time employee. James is a senior at East High and will be pursuing a career in Information Technology. We are very happy that James is joining us as the IT Technician working on a very large project to set up and deploy 85 new computers. Welcome & Congratulations, James!

2nd Annual LDA Cycle Classic Road Race & Tour

**FATHER'S DAY,
SUNDAY, JUNE 19TH, 2011**

Time: 9:30 AM — 1:00 PM

Start/Finish: Hunt Hollow Ski Club
7532 County Road 36, Naples, NY 14512
585-374-5428

Competitive Riders
Compete in the 36 mile timed race.

Recreational Riders
Enjoy the 36 mile tour or a more leisurely 22 mile ride.

Children under 13 must be accompanied by an adult.



**For more info. or to register:
Call 263-3323, ext. 247 or visit www.BikeReg.com**