

# GIVE THE GIFT OF A BETTER FUTURE

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You can GIVE a  
child a new beginning.  
A CHANCE to  
become all they can be.

One hundred years from now,  
it will not matter what my bank account was,  
the sort of house I lived in,  
or the kind of car I drove.  
But the world may be different  
because I was important  
in the life of a child.

- Dr. Forest E. Witcraft  
Scholar, teacher, Boy Scout leader

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Helping **CHILDREN**  
with Learning Disabilities  
reach their *POTENTIAL*.



Approximately **ONE** in **ten** children suffers from a *learning disability.*



But with proper assessment and support, they can learn and succeed.

## An Educational Challenge

Children with learning disabilities represent the largest group of students who are struggling in school and in need of remedial assistance. Despite best intentions, our public schools are struggling to support those in need and are facing even greater challenges ahead as school budgets are cut and remedial teaching resources are reduced. Without early intervention strategies and support, children with learning disabilities will fall further and further behind.

## A Mental Health Issue

Children with learning disabilities often suffer from low self-esteem which can lead to depression, anxiety disorders, and other mental illnesses. From an early age, they label themselves, or are labeled by others, as stupid and incapable. Though many have above average intelligence, these are the kids who, without incredible family and school support, end up in trouble — at school, at home, and in our neighbourhoods.

## An Economic Cost

Untreated learning disabilities have multiple societal costs. Many children, without support, will drop-out of school and become financially dependent. Others will require ongoing support from social services agencies as they struggle with emotional and financial issues. The most severely challenged will be lost to us entirely.

## What is a Learning Disability?

"Learning Disabilities" refer to disorders which may affect the acquisition, organization, retention, understanding or use of verbal or nonverbal information. These disorders affect learning in individuals who otherwise demonstrate at least average abilities essential for thinking and/or reasoning. As such, learning disabilities are distinct from intellectual deficiencies.

Learning disabilities range in severity and can impact:

- Speaking
- Reading
- Writing
- Mathematics
- Organizational skills
- Social skills

Learning disabilities are lifelong. People with learning disabilities are found among all socioeconomic, cultural and ethnic groups.

Definition provided from the Learning Disabilities Association of Nova Scotia ([www.ldans.ca](http://www.ldans.ca))

# Learning Disabilities: Facts and Figures

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The **most common long-term condition** suffered by children 0 to 14 years of age is learning disabilities.

*Reference: Statistics Canada's Health and Activity Limitation Survey (HALS) 1991*

**35%** of students identified with learning disabilities

**drop out** of high school. This is twice the rate of non-disabled peers and does not include students who are not identified and drop out.

*Reference: Washington Summit on Learning Disabilities, 1994.*

The Conference Board of Canada determined that dropouts from the high school class of 1987 will cost society more than **\$1.7 billion in lost taxes.**

*Reference: Dr. Doherty, Zero to Six: The Basis for School Readiness, HRDC.*



Without appropriate education or training, adults with learning disabilities **hold a job for only three months.**

*Reference: Ont. Ministry of Labour, Handicapped Employment Program*

Almost **50% of adolescent suicides** had previously been diagnosed as having learning disabilities.

*References: 1985, Dr. Peck, Crisis Intervention Treatment with Chronically and Acutely Suicidal Adolescents - Youth Suicide, NY.*



## Teaching *the way* CHILDREN *learn.*

### Grant's Story

By the end of grade 2, our son Grant could not read and math was a big mystery. Living with Grant's learning disability was like living in the eye of a hurricane that was wrecking havoc on our family.

Grant entered Bridgewater in grade 3. After his third day of school, he jumped into the car and said, "Mom, I LOVE school." We rejoiced when we received a report card that celebrated his strengths.

But more importantly, Grant began to laugh again. And that, in a nutshell, was the greatest gift of all.



### About Bridgewater Academy:

- Established in 1983, Bridgewater is the largest Nova Scotia school for LD students serving more than 100 students in 4 locations (Dartmouth, Truro, Yarmouth and Stellarton);
- Bridgewater is a registered charity and receives no government funding, but is officially designated by the provincial government as a specialized school for children with learning disabilities;
- Bridgewater's outreach programs support more than 500 students, parents and teachers province-wide each year;
- Students receive individualized learning plans that teach the NS Department of Education curriculum. Our remedial classes have an 8:1 student teacher ratio;
- Bridgewater is a school of necessity, not of choice. The goal of Bridgewater is to support only those students with learning disabilities who have not been successful in the public school system. We provide them with the skills they need to make a successful transition back to the public or post-secondary school system.

### Charlie's Story

Homework for Charlie and me was the nightmare before bedtime, but a month or two after Charlie had started at Bridgewater the nightmare was over. One night when he was quietly finishing his homework, not once having asked for my help, he looked up and smiled and said, "do you remember this used to make us cry?"

I remembered the bewildered and tired boy "before Bridgewater" and walked back into the kitchen and cried again.

# Bridgeway Academy's Fundraising Big Goals

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*No child in need is turned away.*

## The Bridgeway Bursary Program

One of the most significant barriers to getting students with learning disabilities the help they need is an inability to pay tuition. As a non-profit organization, Bridgeway Academy provides its services at the lowest possible costs, but still many need financial help. The Bridgeway Bursary Program will provide student bursaries and emergency funding to those most in need to ensure that children are not turned away on the basis of financial need.

**Our Goal:** To establish a student bursary fund to provide tuition support for families in need. **\$1,200,000**

*Support as many as possible, as soon as possible.*

## Bridgeway's Outreach Programs

Bridgeway Academy helps many more children and parents than those who attend our schools. Our outreach programs provide academic and social skills support to families and children through summer camps, workshops, after-school and social skill programs. We provide professional development opportunities for professionals who work with students with learning disabilities. Our community programs help raise awareness and advance our understanding of the numerous members of our society who cope with learning disabilities. Contributions to the Outreach Program will provide support to parents and children across Nova Scotia by extending the reach of Bridgeway's highly successful after-school programs, parenting workshops and the Bridgeway Reading Program.

**Our Goal:** To provide parents and children throughout Nova Scotia with access to Bridgeway's Outreach Programs. **\$300,000**

*Early intervention and testing to identify appropriate support.*

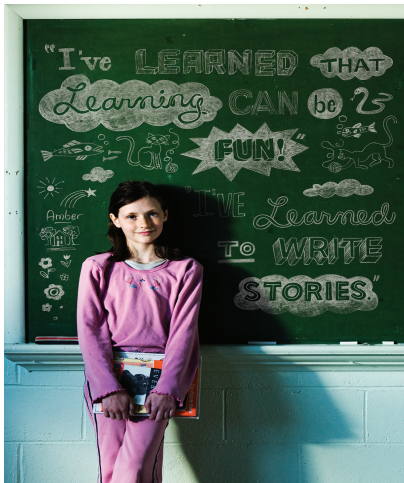
## Psycho-educational Assessment Services

Children need a psycho-educational assessment to determine the presence and nature of a learning disability. That assessment is crucial to designing effective student remediation for both public schools and specially designated schools like Bridgeway. Our government requires that children undergo a psycho-educational assessment before they can qualify for tuition support. Parents often wait years for school board-provided assessments, while their children continue to struggle. Access to private assessments outside of the public system is limited for people without financial resources to pay private psychologists. Through its community outreach initiative, Bridgeway seeks support to build the capacity to provide assessment services not only to Bridgeway students, but to those in need across the province.

**Our Goal:** To create a Psycho-educational Assessment Centre **\$300,000**

for *OPPORTUNITIES* and *Hope*.

# Bridgeway Academy's Fundraising Smaller Goals



## **School furniture**

**\$30,000**

We want our students to feel pride in their school. We try our best to become a second family at Bridgeway and want our schools to feel like a second home students can be proud of. The average cost of a school desk is approximately \$100 for a regular desk, \$300 for a standing desk. Our Kinesthetic learners benefit from specialized desks that allow movement that can range from \$1000 - \$2000.

## **Text books for classroom**

**\$10,000**

New editions of text books help ensure our students stay up to date and have access to the latest information. Most text books start at around \$100 and we currently do not have enough to supply all our students.

## **Sensory items**

**\$10,500**

Students who suffer from sensory issues need tools and aides to prevent sensory overload. This can range from head phones, tents to fidgets.

## **School technology**

**\$20,000**

Some students rely on technology to achieve desired outcomes in areas such as getting their thoughts down on paper or to help them read directions. We also have a need to stay up to date with current teaching technologies such as projectors and computer software.



Are *YOU* ready to  
**GIVE** a child  
a *new beginning?*

## *Join us*

We know there are as many as 5000 students with learning disabilities in Nova Scotia. Without the right support, they are at risk of academic failure, mental health complications and social isolation. This will have a long-term impact on their ability to complete post-secondary education, maintain a job and contribute to our provincial economy.

Bridgeway Academy is prepared to help. We have the programs to help students with learning disabilities succeed, and we are prepared to bring our schools and outreach programs to any community in our province. But we need the support of key corporate partners and donors to help us ensure that no student in need is turned away.

Join us, and make a difference in the life of a child.

for *OPPORTUNITIES* and *Hope*.

# Thank you.

## For thinking about a child in need.

### Bridgeway Academy's Mission:

Teaching children with learning disabilities the way they learn.



### Before, Now and After

Thinking you're different is a terrible thought.  
We have all been there.  
You feel frustrated, stupid and even scared,  
You were made fun of and called names.  
Just because you are different,  
You felt like you didn't fit in.  
But then when you were all alone,  
You found a family.

This family made you feel confident,  
And even taught you to read, write and spell.  
You feel like you're not the only one anymore,  
You don't feel that different or insecure.  
No, you feel successful and confident,  
Talented and maybe even smart.

You now can move on with your life  
And act like you're the same as everyone else.  
No one would know that you're that much different  
than them.  
But it's nice to know you are,  
Because being different makes you your own person.

A Poem by Sarah Hickman,  
Former Bridgeway student, age 12

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