

Annual Report

2025/2026





Learning Connections Hamilton

Board of Directors 2025-2026

Elisha Turney-Foss, Chair
Saood Baig, Vice Chair
Lyndyn Shaub, Secretary/Treasurer
Dawn Boardman, Director
Eryka Stewart, Director
Paul Klysen, Director
Kathryn Crooks, Director

Staff Team

Sara Gill, Executive Director
Jeimy Martinez-Sorto, Partnership
Coordinator
Leah Rondeau, Learning Navigator
Alicia Carisse, Learning Navigator
Fiona Gordon, Learning Navigator
Aleya Naeem, Learning Navigator
Jaroslava Halencak, Bookkeeper



Thank You to Our Volunteers

Anne Oakes
Julie Oakes
Noreen Burgess



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Hamilton

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What We Do

As Hamilton's adult learning network, we provide **educational planning services** for youth and adults wanting to upgrade their skills or retrain. We work with people to develop plans that are individual and goal oriented. Plans could include referrals to skills upgrading, completing high school, getting into post-secondary, apprenticeship training, other training or employment services.

We work closely with our adult education partners across the city to develop the annual **Literacy Services Plan**. This plan identifies key issues and actions that we work on throughout the year. We also coordinate an annual practitioner conference and spotlight sessions for learners.

We offer **Clear Writing and Accessibility** training and consulting services. We offer workshops, document editing as well as a 12-week online course through the Learning Networks of Ontario.

We also support employers with our **Workplace Education Services**. We can help employers identify skills gaps and create a customized training plan to increase employees' skills now and in the future.



Want to get upgrading, education and employment updates all in one place?

Subscribe to our monthly newsletter!

Mission, Moral Ownership and Ends

Our Mission - People in Hamilton will have a better quality of life through lifelong learning.

Our Moral Ownership (who we serve)

We support adults through lifelong learning to reach their goals. We support community partners to provide and coordinate services that support lifelong learning.

Our Mega Ends (what we want to achieve and for whom)

1. Access to Information and Supports

- a. Information about adult education programs and services will be complete, current and accessible.
- b. We'll support individuals to plan and connect to the supports and services that they need to reach their goals.

2. Community Benefits and Partnerships

- a. We provide the community with an objective support network for educational planning.
- b. Partnerships will support lifelong learning.

3. Moral Ownership Support

- a. Individuals will be encouraged and supported to achieve their goals through pathway planning, coaching, mentorship and guidance.
- b. Community partners will be supported through collaboration, service coordination and professional development.

4. Impact

- a. The public will be connected to lifelong learning opportunities.
- b. Opportunities for positive change will be identified and explored.
- c. Gaps in service will be identified and addressed.

A Message from the Chair Elisha Turney-Foss

Adult Basic Education Association (ABEA) is now Learning Connections Hamilton (LCH)!

After 43 years, we said goodbye to Adult Basic Education Association of Hamilton-Wentworth as the name of our organization. This was the culmination of over 2 years of work by the Board of Directors and staff team. This work was connected to our current strategic plan 2024-2027 with one of the key areas of focus being to increase the visibility of the organization and consider rebranding to achieve that.

Since 1983 we have supported adults in our community with their learning goals as Adult Basic Education Association (ABEA). As community needs have evolved, so have our services. The name ABEA doesn't reflect the breadth of our work or the diverse community members and partners we serve. So, for the past 2 years we have spent time working towards a new name that aligns with who we are and what we do

We chose Learning Connections Hamilton because we are a welcoming guide and connector in the adult learning journey. We connect individuals to the services they need. We provide supportive pathway planning to reach a wide variety of goals. We work with community partners to coordinate services and support their clients.

As we celebrate our successes, it's also important to acknowledge the contributions of those who have served on the Board of Directors. This year, we say goodbye to Lyndyn Shaub and Paul Klysen. Their contributions have been instrumental in shaping the direction of the organization and they will be missed. We wish them well as they embark on new adventures.

A heartfelt thank you to all our directors for your commitment, your passion and your ongoing support of the important work of Learning Connections Hamilton. I have no doubt that our collective efforts will continue to drive positive change for years to come.



Elisha Turney-Foss

Board Chair

From the Executive Director, Sara Gill

As a network and **support organization** we bring people together to share, plan and coordinate services in our community. We work closely with our workforce development partners to support upskilling, training, education and employment. We are grateful to the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development for their support of this work.

Our **Educational Planning Services** continued to grow to serve the needs of community members and community partners. We offer a variety of services based on the needs of the community member or community partner.

We are very grateful for the funding we received to support this work through

- Hamilton Community Foundation
- ArcelorMittal Dofasco Corporate Community Investment Fund
- City of Hamilton Community Enrichment Fund
- Telus Friendly Future Foundation



We are particularly proud of the continued work we are doing to raise awareness about apprenticeship and skilled trades. Through this work we're encouraging more people to explore and pursue these careers. But we're also providing support around upgrading, training and supports along the apprenticeship pathway.

Because of our focus on supporting apprenticeship, we partnered with Literacy Link South Central to support their apprenticeship projects. We supported the development of their **Apprenticeship Hub** through their Step Up and Succeed project. We also supported the **ARISE** Project (Apprenticeship Readiness Inventory Skills Evaluation) as one of the provincial case managers. We worked with pre-apprentices and apprentices to provide support around pathway planning, learning challenges and strategies and connections with sector-specific supports.

Thank You to Our Board of Directors

Changing the name of an organization that has served the community for over 40 years is not an easy task. The board worked tirelessly and certainly went above and beyond expectations of their volunteer role to make the name change a reality. They brought thoughtfulness, sincerity and a deep commitment to this work and I couldn't be more grateful for their efforts. Thank you for making a lasting positive impact on the organization.

Sara Gill
Executive Director

Our Community Partners/Networks in 2025-2026

Employment Ontario - Get SET (Skills, Education and Training) Providers

- CNIB Deafblind Community Services
- Collège Boréal D'Arts Appliqués et de Technologie
- Conestoga College, Academic Upgrading
- Continuing Education - Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board
- Hamilton Literacy Council
- Hamilton Regional Indian Centre - Native Learning Centre
- Mohawk College - Deaf Empowerment Program
- Niagara College, Academic Upgrading
- St Charles Adult & Continuing Education Centres - Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board

Employment Ontario - Fedcap Canada, Integrated Employment Services

- Hamilton Employment Ontario Network
- Hamilton Employment Resource Network (HERN)
- Hamilton Disability Employment Network (HDEN)
- Learning Networks of Ontario
- Our Future Hamilton - Community Partner
- Ontario Works
- Redbook Community Network
- Skills Development Flagship Committee

Congratulations to our **Leaders in Learning** Award Winners 2026!

Lynne Livingstone Memorial Award

Saher Saeed

Kim Brooks Memorial Lifelong Learning Award

Deborah Schwientek
Jennifer Tait

Excellence in Adult Education Practitioner Award

Cassandra Murphy
Vanessa Byrne

The CIBC Murphy Investment Group Individual Early Literacy Education Award

Marianne McKay

Agency Early Literacy Education Award

Lucky Day Nursery

The Hamilton Spectator Adult Literacy Learner Award

Audrey Karlos

Hamilton Regional Indian Centre,
Native Learning Centre

André Powell

Deaf Empowerment Program (DEP),
Mohawk College

Carol Ann Steward

St. Charles Adult & Continuing
Education

Gabriel Krzyworaczka

Continuing Education, HWDSB

Paulo Egbobawaye

Hamilton Literacy Council

Thank you to our award sponsors.



**And 3 friends
of Learning
Connections
Hamilton**