



# 2021

## Annual Report



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# About LDS

## Who We Are

LDS is a growing, innovative nonprofit charity that offers accessible, inclusive, research-based expert learning and related supports for learners with suspected or diagnosed learning differences. Our comprehensive programs span the full development cycle from ages 3 to adult and offer a holistic approach to academic and social-emotional development to ensure all students have the skills and confidence they need to realize their full potential.

Our expanding Research-informed Individualized Student Education (RISE) programs and services are currently delivered in multiple ways including at our Learning Centres in East Vancouver and North Vancouver, on our electric bus mobile classroom, at a growing number of local schools, and virtually across British Columbia through our online adaptive RISE at Home learning platform.

## Purpose

LDS supports learners aged 3 through adult with learning differences, including those who have suspected or diagnosed learning disabilities (clinical term) such as dyslexia, dysgraphia, dyscalculia, auditory processing disorders, attention deficit disorders, autism spectrum disorder, executive functioning challenges and related social-emotional and self-regulation challenges. Many of our learners are also designated as gifted or twice exceptional.

Our RISE instruction programs target student-specific learning needs and provide one-to-one, specialized instruction that is progress monitored to ensure optimal adaptation to the needs of each individual learner. Since 1970, LDS has sought to ensure our programs are inclusive and financially accessible.

## Mission

Our mission is to empower all children and youth with learning differences to recognize their unique strengths and develop the tools to achieve lifelong confidence and success.

## Vision

We believe that all children should have access to the academic support they need to succeed. We are focused on promoting community awareness and fostering a greater understanding of the issues and challenges faced by children with learning differences. Through early intervention, our goal is to make a transformative difference in the learning and life outcomes of students. Our ultimate goal is to effect system change with wide-ranging societal benefits.

## Service Principles

### Holistic

We coordinate with parents and guardians, general classroom teachers, resource teachers, counsellors, psychologists, family doctors, pediatricians and other professionals to build a full picture of each student's learning profile.

### Individualized

We develop customized learning plans and practice careful instructor matching for each unique student.

### Accessible and Inclusive

We work to design our spaces and deliver our programming so that students and families find them inclusive and physically as well as financially accessible.

### Technology Enhanced

We integrate assistive technologies into programs and make these tools available to empower students and enhance student learning and progress.

### Integrated

We strive to complement and enhance students' experiences at school and to empower children and families toward self-advocacy.



# Values

Community  
Kindness  
Acceptance  
Achievement

## Here's What Our Students And Families Have To Say:

“Thank you for your help and support. I felt I was heard and understood while talking to you. I am doing all what you suggested and wishing [my son] can be benefited from it. I would love for him to be comfortable and happy in his learning and not be so anxious. Thanks again, as a mom I feel very grateful to be working for [my son's] benefit with LDS.

*Parent of a Grade 2 student*

“The LDS team is incredible – the way they connect with the children, the way they do their lesson plans, the way they connect back to the parents so that we can connect with the schools and in our home – so it is full circle.

*Jennifer S., parent of two LDS students*

“[The LDS instructor] is amazing at getting my daughter engaged and excited to learn. My daughter has grown by leaps and bounds and is getting better at reading all the time. Thank you, I could not do this alone.

*Mother of a grade 3 student*



# Message from the Executive Director

Thanks to our growing community of families, students, partners and supporters, the year 2021 was filled with new and growing programs, outstanding achievements from our amazing students, and a lot of wonderful learning! We want to thank every person and organization who has joined us on our mission to transform lives of children and youth across British Columbia and provide them with accessible, comprehensive expert learning supports.

In 2021, LDS continued to grow and advance our mission to serve all children and youth with learning differences. To facilitate this growth, we welcomed many new instructors with diverse teaching expertise, new core team members to ensure our programs are accessible and optimally structured for each student, and new board members to help build and expand our community and our depth of knowledge and experience in many areas.

2021 was also a year of innovative program development for our increasingly diverse student population. Throughout this report you can read about our comprehensive new programs, such as RISE TEAM, a life skills and employment transition program, Early RISers, an early education and intervention program supported by an expert team of early childhood professionals, and Summer RISE Intensive, a rigorous program designed to help students maintain and improve their foundational skills in preparation for the coming school year. In 2021 we also introduced LDS Access, a first-of-its-kind electric bus mobile classroom that delivers our RISE programs and technology directly into students' own neighbourhoods across the lower mainland.

Collaboration, community, and new partnerships were also a key theme for us in 2021. For example, we partnered with the University of Waterloo's Social and Intelligent Robotics Research Laboratory (SIRRL) to successfully introduce social robots into our programming, and we expanded our partnership with the University of British Columbia to facilitate access to psychoeducational assessments for our families.



Our workshops, outreach, and programming were made possible with community collaborations and support from new partners Vancouver Public Library, Vancouver Society of Childcare Centres, Play Roly, and SmallTalk, among others. In 2021, our programs and impact continued to receive significant coverage from media groups including CBC radio, Global TV, CTV, CKNW and Black Press.

We are honoured and privileged to be supporting our incredible students and families and are so proud of how we have grown together. Thank you for your role – as a team member, supporter, funder, volunteer and partner - in this success, and we look forward to sharing more successes with you as our journey continues!

Yours in community,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "RS Forbes". The signature is stylized and fluid.

*Rachel S. Forbes, JD*  
**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

# Message from the Board Chair

2021 was a year of remarkable achievement for LDS. We achieved record growth of over 30% in students supported, programs, instructors, facilities, and donor support. We launched ground breaking new programs that materially increased the depth, breadth and accessibility of our services. We enhanced and expanded our existing programs to deliver more comprehensive and effective support to our students. And we teamed up with multiple new education and community partners to strengthen and increase our capacity.

On behalf of the LDS Board of Directors, I would like to sincerely thank our dedicated and passionate LDS staff and instructors for your outstanding contributions this past year. Your dedication to excellence in all aspects of your work transformed the lives of over 400 children and youth. You demonstrated our LDS values every day in your thoughtful and caring support of our students. You made a big difference in our community and we could not be more proud of you.

I sincerely thank our committed board directors for your dedication to our cause and LDS mission. Through the generous volunteering of your time and resources you are providing expert guidance and direction that is enabling LDS to make material progress toward our goal to support all vulnerable students with learning differences.



We would like to thank all of our families, education partners, community partners, and media supporters for all of your kind, thoughtful and inspiring support. We are privileged to work alongside you in our community.

Our work at LDS would not be possible without the ongoing generous support from our thoughtful and caring donors, sponsors, and financial partners. We are so very grateful for your kind and generous support that has enabled LDS to continue to innovate and expand our comprehensive services to support a growing number of children and youth.

With your ongoing support in 2022 we look forward to continuing the advancement of our mission to support all children and youth with learning differences achieve lifelong confidence and success!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gregory D. Sullivan". The script is fluid and cursive.

Gregory D. Sullivan, Ph.D.  
**BOARD CHAIR**

# 2021 at a Glance



**404** **UNIQUE STUDENTS** SERVED IN  
2021 ACROSS ALL PROGRAMS

**51 YEARS**  
**serving children** with Learning Differences

**38** **instructors and teachers** with specialized training supporting students with learning differences, executive functioning, social-emotional, mental health, attention deficit and other needs.

 **\$144,056**  
**in donations** raised for our internal bursary fund during our 2021 \$100K for 100 Kids fundraising campaign

**8** **RISE** at School programs in local and independent schools throughout the region

**87+** **features** on television, radio, print and online news programs throughout BC

**TENS OF THOUSANDS**  
**of families** provided with information and resources



# Continuing to Expand and Strengthen our Comprehensive Learning Support



Our LDS programs are carefully designed to be holistic, individualized, accessible, inclusive, technology-enabled, and classroom integrated. LDS instruction programs follow our unique RISE proven methodology designed specifically to meet the needs of each individual student. Aligned with BC's Core Competencies and research-based curricula, the RISE method targets student-specific learning loss and educational needs and provides one-to-one, customized instruction from highly skilled and specialized instructors under the guidance and case management of our learning support team. We collaborate with leading universities to ensure that RISE incorporates the latest research and evidence-based approaches and provides the most effective learning support to students with learning differences.

In 2021 we developed and delivered many new RISE-based programs in response to the growing and diverse needs of our students and families. And we delivered our programming to nearly 100 more students than in 2020, an increase of over 30%.



Please See  
[Ldsociety.ca](https://ldsociety.ca) To Watch  
Our Inspiring Video  
That Captures Our  
Wonderful LDS Staff,  
Students, Parents,  
Programs, Technology,  
And Impact.

“LDS draws from a deep pool of instructors with diverse training and experienced learning support managers to provide their multi-method RISE programming that is grounded in current education research. I commend their offering of a wide range of programming options that are current, 'state of the field' and enable optimization of each remedial program design. Importantly, LDS has diligently followed a holistic approach to instructor training, remedial program development and student assessment to deliver comprehensive individualized support that is ideally suited to each student's needs.

**Dr. Nancy Perry, University of British Columbia  
Professor and Dorothy Lam Chair in  
Special Education**

“Just dropping a note to say that [my daughter] is enjoying her instruction sessions and finding them both really helpful! This is great news, I am really pleased. She finds [the instructor's] choice of reading matter very interesting - donkeys and hippos. She has found it easier to read and research her science project since starting. And she said she is finding [her math instructor's] sessions really, really helpful! She can tell a difference at school already.

**Guardian of a grade 7 student**

“[My son] is really enjoying his time with LDS so far. He's quite interested in the TutorCruncher app as well. He is most impressed with the fact that he feels he is learning something new

**Mother of a grade 5 student**

“[My daughter's] reading has improved tremendously with the instructor's dedication to narrowing in on the areas she really needs to work on.

**Guardian of a grade 6 student**

## New Programs in 2021

### RISE at Home BC

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic arrival in early 2020, we worked with our technology partners to accelerate the development and launch of our specialized adaptive online learning platform, RISE at Home. RISE at Home combines online learning with personalized instruction and utilizes dynamic and interactive software that enables LDS instructors to customize lessons based on the student's individual needs. Over the past two years LDS has refined and enhanced RISE at Home to successfully support a growing number of students in Greater Vancouver. Recognizing the critical challenge of education support inaccessibility for students with learning differences in regional communities across BC, LDS developed RISE at Home BC to support students in all BC regions, targeting those where support accessibility is challenged.



### Early RISers

Early RISers is a first of its kind, innovative early childhood education program that brings together Speech-Language Pathologists, Kindergarten teachers, Early Childhood Educators, Behavioural Interventionists, and Occupational Therapists to offer families a unique technology-embracing program that provides assessments, skill learning, parent networking and strategies to overcome children's challenges by leveraging strengths.

Early RISers was designed and facilitated by early childhood experts and focuses on key areas of learning and development including early literacy, early numeracy, speech language acquisition, social and emotional learning, and physical literacy to provide families a detailed snapshot of their child's learning and development, and engage young children in hands-on learning opportunities carefully scaffolded to individual child's needs.

“Participating in Early RISers has been incredibly meaningful and impactful for my son, and our family,” said Jaye, whose 3-year old may be experiencing some developmental delays and joined the first Early RISers session held in autumn 2021. “The program is just what we feel our son needed; a close look at his skills and development from different professionals. We have learned so much about his development, interests, skills and personality. Our hope is that this program can reach many, many more families like us as it grows over the years.

**Jaye, parent of a 3 year old in Early RISers**



Please See  
[Ldsociety.ca/Early-Risers](https://Ldsociety.ca/Early-Risers) To Watch Our Moving Early RISers Video And See The Transformative Impact It Is Having On Our Young Families.





## LDS Access

In response to the critical issue of learning support inaccessibility, we partnered with our community to develop LDS Access, a mobile classroom service that enables us to bring our learning support programs directly into communities where it is needed most. We worked with local companies Green Power and NGSI to customize a clean energy all-electric minibus to create a mobile classroom custom-tailored for students with learning differences, the first of its kind in Canada. A local award-winning artist, Carson Ting, was inspired by our LDS Access initiative and created a mural that wraps around our bus, capturing the essence of our LDS mission and vision.



LDS Access incorporates our state-of-the-art assistive technology including our new socially assistive robots and leverages our network of educational, community, technology, and financial partners to provide a unique, innovative, technology-enhanced learning support service for students right in their own neighbourhood.



## Speech Language Therapy and Social Language Groups

In 2020 we introduced our Speech Language Pathology (SLP) program for preschool and school-aged students. This program uses evidence-based methods and creates an individualized speech therapy program for each child, ensuring that sessions are fun, motivating and goal-oriented. In 2021 we piloted and are now expanding small social language groups, in which students of similar age can practice social language skills and development.



## Resource Highlights

Recognizing that each student has a unique way of learning we develop our one-to-one RISE programs drawing from a wide variety of resources and curricula including:

- *Sound Partners*
- *REWARDS*
- *Reading A to Z*
- *Self-Regulated Strategy Development (SRSD)*
- *Orton-Gillingham*
- *JUMP Math*
- *Singapore Math*
- *Dynamic Math*
- *Wordly Wise*
- *Words Their Way*
- *Social Thinking*

In 2021 we continued to expand our in person and online resource library and RISE Assistive Technology studio.

We also improved our assessment and progress monitoring methodologies with enhancements to our post-session and mid- and end-of-year reports to families. And this year we are further expanding our reporting to include monitoring of social emotional learning and student self-reflection as well as providing additional opportunities for our staff to discuss strategies and outcomes with families and student's educational and support teams.



# Instructors



LDS instructors include BC certified teachers, special education assistants, psychopedagogy specialists, Orton- Gillingham certified instructors, speech-language pathologists, and experienced inclusive education professionals. Passionate for making education accessible for everyone, LDS instructors meet students at their level and work on building each student's confidence, foundational skills, and reignite students' love of learning. LDS instructors help students identify strategies to make learning a success in and out of the classroom.

Below is a sample of biographies from our exceptional group of instructors. A current, full list of biographies is provided on our website, under "Our Team", including links to blog post profiles of some instructors.



## Anotidaishe

Anotidaishe (she/her) is an instructor with a great passion for seeing students reach their full potential in all aspects of their life. She holds a Bachelor of Science degree from Simon Fraser University and has a background in learning and developmental disabilities. She has worked with children from various backgrounds with different learning needs. Her experience also includes working as a Behaviour Technician to help children diagnosed with Autism, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), and Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD). Anotidaishe believes the most important thing in teaching is to create a positive environment where students can believe in themselves to overcome academic challenges. She does this by building a rapport with her students to ensure that a student feels comfortable making mistakes, and that they understand that making mistakes is all part of the learning process.

“ I just want them to know that they're in a safe zone, and they can make as many mistakes as they have to, and it's okay... I want students to see that they're valued and that they are able to do the work.

**Anotidaishe**



## Emma

Emma (she/her) holds a Bachelor of Kinesiology degree with a minor in Psychology from UBC. Driven by her desire to learn more about increasing accessibility to support services, she recently returned to UBC and completed her Masters in Occupational Therapy. Over the years, Emma has worked as an Education Assistant and Youth Programmer at local schools, community centres, and nonprofit organizations. She has formal training in working with children and youth to facilitate positive learning outcomes through Equitas and the Coaching Association of Canada. Emma is passionate about empowering children and youth to be independent and confident in their skills. She is excited to provide equitable learning experiences and individualized support to her students with the LDS team!

“ *When I first learned about LDS, I was drawn to how holistic the programs were... LDS focuses on academic outcomes, but there is an underlying focus on social-emotional skills and the child's overall well-being. LDS also incorporates assistive technology and speech-language pathology to best engage children in their learning. I think having all of these evidence-based strategies and individualized supports for the students is so important.*

**Emma**



## Gaurika

Gaurika (she/her) holds a Masters of Education in Special Education (Learning Disabilities) from the University of British Columbia as well as a Bachelor of Education in Special Education and a Bachelor of Science in Home Science (major in Human Development) from India. She spent over two years in India as a Learning Support Teacher for students with learning differences. She enjoys encouraging kids to realize their full potential in a way that is comfortable for them while also fostering a fun and positive learning environment. Furthermore, she believes in building socio-emotional competencies in her students to help them develop resiliency and have a sense of belongingness.

Gaurika is thrilled to be part of the LDS team and provide personalized intervention to students.

“Everybody is so passionate about what they are doing and the difference they want to create in students' lives and in the community – it's incredible, and I think that's what is driving this organization to where it is today.

*Gaurika*



## Sofia

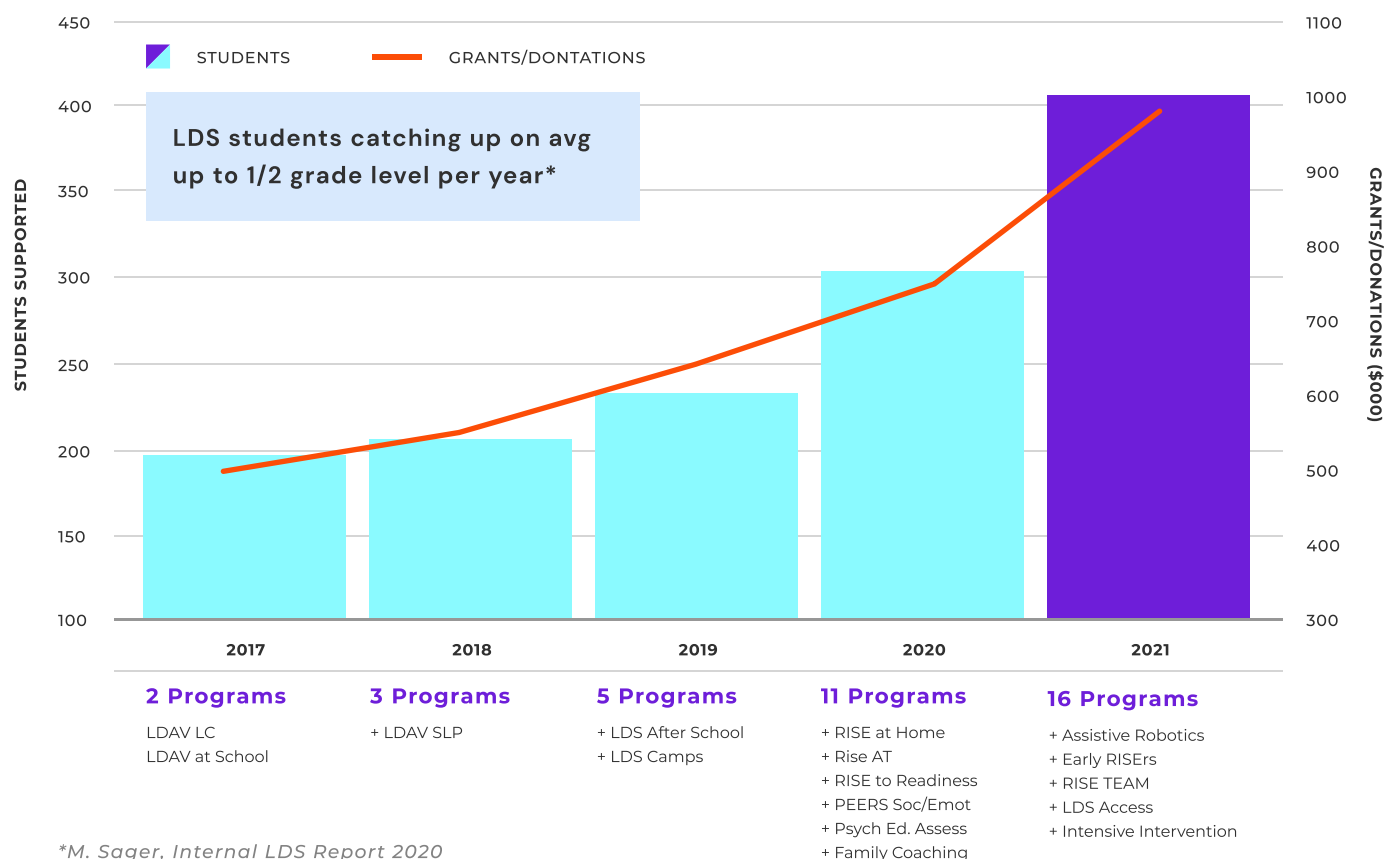
Sofia (she/her) is a psychopedagogy specialist and holds a Master's Degree in Neuropsychology and Education. She is involved in the educational world and creates engaging and effective educational content and experiences for students with learning differences, both in English and Spanish. She is passionate about learning disabilities and psychometric testing. Her psycho-neuroeducational approach ensures the development of cognitive skills in students for both their academic and personal life. She began her professional experience in the education field as a bilingual elementary school teacher in Guadalajara, Mexico. She founded and directed Minds to Shine, a centre that provided individualized services to children with learning disabilities.

“I love working at LDS because I get to see my passion for learning come out in my students. It's so meaningful watching them succeed, moving from an 'I can't' outlook to an 'I did it!' sense of achievement!

*Sofia*

# Growth and Impact

## LDS 5 Year Growth And Impact



The above graphic shows the growth in LDS students supported and LDS donor and grantor financial support over the past 5 years. The increase in financial support has enabled us to dramatically expand the depth and breadth of our programming from 2 core programs in 2017 to 16 programs in 2021. And we have more than doubled the number of students supported from just under 200 in 2017 to over 400 in 2021.

We are continuing to enhance existing programs and add additional new programs in 2022 with further material increases in the number of students supported. Our longitudinal studies of LDS student progress conducted with UBC show that our LDS students are catching up by up to 1/2 grade level vs general classroom peers each year. The transformation and outcome shift for our students is life changing. When cumulated over our entire growing student population the positive impact in our community and region is remarkable.





# Excellence Through Expertise and Technology

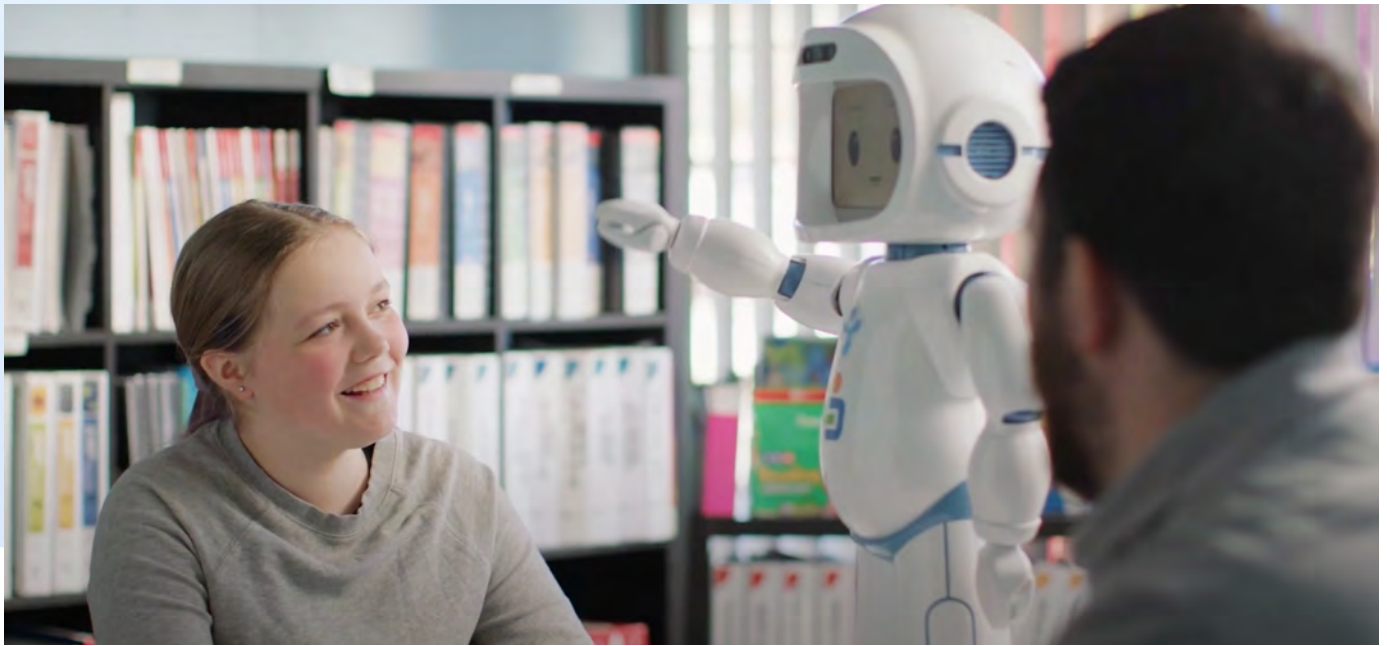
During 2021 we continued to build on the strength of our RISE Assistive Technology (AT) program. We hired an Assistive Technology Manager, Mike Gray, with a degree in Mechanical Engineering and a Masters in Biomedical Engineering to lead our exciting and innovative program. We built relationships with more AT partners, integrated more AT in our programs, and worked with our instructors and students to explore novel ways to teach and learn. Our RISE-AT program is increasing the accessibility and inclusiveness of our support, providing students additional opportunities to leverage their individual strengths, and helping LDS instructors to teach more effectively, promote greater student engagement, and enhance student learning and progress.

RISE-AT is now sponsored by 17 technology companies including BeeLine Reader, BrainCo, FrontRow, Grammarly, Harkla, InteraXon, Lexilife, LIVEIT, Livescribe, Microsoft, MeisterLabs, Osmo, Pyxera Global, SAP, Scanning Pens, SMART Technologies, and Texthelp. With our sponsors' generous support, we continue to integrate AT into our customized programs that build greater student engagement, confidence and ability to self-regulate.

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**“** Grammarly is a software tool that offers real-time writing assistance on all of your devices. Grammarly doesn't just correct things for you, it offers reasoning for its feedback so you can learn to improve your writing long term. It also offers feedback on your tone to make sure you're coming across the way you intend. We understand these can be very helpful features for students with various types of learning differences, and we are very proud to be able to offer Grammarly licenses to LDS and its students and families to help enable this learning and support!

**Sheridan Smalley, Grammarly**



During 2021 we launched our RISE Robotics program with the University of Waterloo's Social and Intelligent Robotics Research Laboratory (SIRRL). We custom programmed our 2 socially assistive "QT" robots and integrated QT into student lessons to study the effectiveness of teaching and learning alongside QT. Throughout the year we observed many positive student responses to QT including increased engagement, focus, energy, and social-emotional learning. In 2022 we are continuing to enhance and expand our RISE Robotics program and we will be presenting our results at conferences in the near future.



“It has been a pleasure to partner with LDS in our exciting investigation of socially assistive robot interactions with students with learning differences. It is wonderful to be able to extend my research over the past 20 years working with children with autism where we observed significant increases in engagement in the presence of a socially assistive robot. After completing a pilot and follow-on study which investigated the impact of a socially assistive robot on learner engagement, I am very encouraged by our promising results thus far with LDS. As we move to the next phase of disseminating our research findings to the broader community, I look forward to sharing our work which is leading to material positive impact in LDS programs.

**Professor Kerstin Dautenhahn, Director SIRRL**

# Accessible and Inclusive Support

Access to critically-needed learning support is challenging for many families in our region. LDS is committed to ensure that all students have access to the learning supports they need to succeed in school and throughout life. In 2021 we continued to remove key barriers to support that many families face, including by developing our mobile classroom program, LDS Access, and early years program, Early RISErs, by facilitating access to financially assisted psychoeducational assessments, by providing social skills support to teens and guardians, and by creating a fully funded life skills and employment readiness program for teens.



## Psychoeducational And Level B Assessments

We are very pleased that we are able to offer referrals for psychoeducational and neuropsychological evaluations to many of our families in 2021 through our ongoing collaboration with the University of British Columbia's Psychological Services and Counselling Training Centre (PSCTC). The PSCTC is a university-based setting for clinical training and research within the UBC Faculty of Education. Through our partnership, we were able to refer qualifying LDS families for affordable assessments with very significant reductions in wait times.

We also have several LDS team members who are trained and qualified to deliver and debrief the Kaufman Test of Educational Achievement Third Edition (KTEA™-3), an individually administered program that provides in-depth assessment and evaluation of key academic skills.

Having additional information and deeper understanding about a child's learning strengths and stretches helps both families and LDS be better advocates for each child and ensure that they receive learning supports that are customized to their individual needs.

## Social Emotional Learning Through Our Camp Programs

Our 2021 camp programming responded to our campers' individual student intake assessments and included fun, skill- and confidence-building activities, social skills, mental health support strategies and key learning fundamentals for students with suspected or diagnosed learning differences. Our RISE Spring Break and Summer Camps continued to be a fantastic way to expose elementary students to new ways of learning, allowing them to build their confidence with their peer group in an inclusive and welcoming space.



**“** We just wanted to say also a massive thank you to everyone involved for the excellent spring break camp that [my daughter] enjoyed with you in East Van. She had a marvelous time and keeps saying she would like to attend LDS everyday instead of school! She particularly enjoyed the small group, student/teacher ratio and all the fun activities, and we enjoyed seeing all the things she brought home- the worry monster is such a great help!

**Mother of a grade 3 spring break camper and explicit instruction student**



## PEERS

After our instructors and facilitators undertook specialized PEERS training in 2020, we delivered in 2021 our first cohort of PEERS, a social-emotional skills training program focused on teenagers and their guardians/parents. The progress that both teens and their guardians achieved during our PEERS program was exceptional, and the friendships and connections that were made amongst the teens and amongst the guardian group have been wonderful.

Developed by Dr. Elizabeth Laugeson at UCLA, the Program for the Education and Enrichment of Relational Skills (PEERS®) is world-renowned for providing evidence-based social skills programming to preschoolers, adolescents and young adults with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), anxiety, depression, and socio-emotional issues. Research studies indicate that PEERS improves teen social skills and mental health symptoms, as well as family stress levels.



## RISE TEAM

Our RISE TEAM program combines our RISE one-to-one programming with additional Training to advance their Employability, Abilities, or support Matriculation (TEAM). This innovative employment readiness project was designed to help teens with learning differences transition from high school to paid employment, training, or higher education. In 2021 our highly successful RISE TEAM program included remedial instruction to focus on the needs, interests, and abilities of each teen student.

## Family Coaching

Family Coaching continued to be a highly valued service that we offered in 2021 to current and prospective LDS families. This program paired family members with our expert staff to help navigate questions about their child's learning and progress, and help learn how to best support learning at home, how to navigate the educational system and advocate on behalf of their child – especially for those new to the area of learning differences or new to British Columbia or Canada.



“PEERS and other LDS programs taught our son that through that [enhanced] confidence he has a lens that he seems himself as a full human being.

*Jennifer S., parent who went through the PEERS program with one of her sons*



# Partnering with the Community



In 2021, LDS continued to build and develop our partnerships to enhance the quality, strength, diversity and accessibility of the services we offer to our families.

To help us provide the highest quality research and evidence-based education services, our education partners include UBC Departments of Education and Psychology, University of Waterloo's Social and Intelligent Robotics Research Laboratory (SIRRL), and the Possibility Engineering and Research Lab (PEARL) at Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital.

We continue to build and expand our partnerships with other community organizations. Examples during 2021 include:



**Vancouver Public Library** and **Richmond Public Library** partnerships to deliver family-focused workshops that assist parents in addressing challenges they may face. Workshop themes included: the value of early intervention, tips to support speech and language development, how to manage when learning isn't coming easily, addressing math anxiety, and working with challenging behaviours.

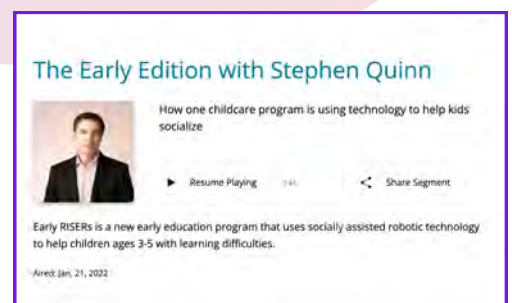
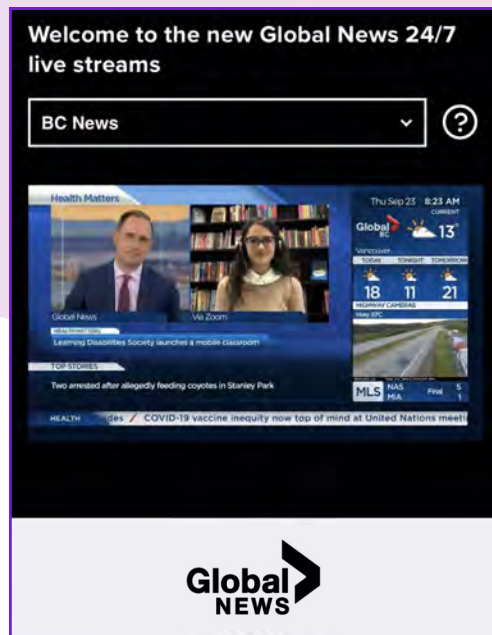
**Cedar Cottage** and **Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood Houses** and **Thunderbird Community Centre** partnerships to develop and deliver homework club programming, peer mentoring, and our LDS Access mobile classroom program to families in their neighbourhoods.

**Stigma Free Society** partnership to integrate SFS training into our LDS programming. Stigma Free Society is a nonprofit that provides critical services to destigmatize mental health and other 'invisible' health issues.

# In the News

In 2021 we were grateful to have LDS and our programs and activities featured in over 20 media stories in local and provincial television, radio, print and online publications. This supportive media coverage is integral to our ongoing efforts to raise awareness and understanding of learning differences, of LDS, and of the students and families we serve.

In 2021 we also disseminated resources and information to our families and to our community regularly through our ARISE monthly newsletter, online and in person workshops, social media channels, and through our informative blog that provides resources and informative strategies for families and teachers supporting children with learning differences.



# Human Resources

Our people are essential and foundational to our success serving the diverse and complex needs of our students and families. Throughout 2021 we made material investments in our team, and now have significantly more full time specialized instructors and professional educational support and core team members than ever before. Each one of our team members brings tremendous experience, expertise and energy to their work; below is a sample of some of the new leaders and team members we welcomed to our team in 2021.



*Jennifer Fane, Ph.D.*  
**DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION**

Jenn (she/her) holds an interdisciplinary Ph.D. in education, public health, and social policy from Flinders University (Australia) and a Bachelor of Education degree from Simon Fraser University. She is a passionate advocate for responsive and transformative education that prioritizes the learner and their needs and goals. She began her teaching career as a kindergarten teacher in the New Westminster School District and has been working in a range of educational settings such as schools, early years centres, and universities in both Canada and Australia for the past 15 years.

Dr. Fane is a published author and scholar in the areas of education, early years, and teacher education, authoring over 20 peer-reviewed academic publications and a co-authored book. Her work as a teacher educator has been recognized nationally through the Australian Awards for University Teaching where she was awarded a Citation for Outstanding Contributions to Student Learning. In her roles as a teacher, teacher educator, professor, and educational researcher, Jenn is keenly aware of the challenges children, parents, and schools alike face in supporting children with diverse ranges of abilities, and the very real struggle this creates for children and families with diagnosed or suspected learning disabilities. Jenn values being able to apply her education and skills to support the exceptional work within the organization and serve its students, families, and the broader community.



*Abigail Lobo, MA*  
**LEAD CASE MANAGER**

Abigail (she/her) is an Inclusion Specialist and holds a Master's Degree in Applied Psychology. She began her journey in the field of special education as an ABA Therapist at a special needs center in Dubai. For over 5 years she worked closely with children with a range of learning difficulties and developmental delays, and supported them at schools and within the community to forward their academic, social, emotional and behavioral learning. In 2017, she founded the Inclusion Department at a school in Dubai where she worked closely with students and their families from diverse backgrounds and learning differences. She supported teachers and caregivers in reducing barriers to learning, encouraged the use of appropriate accommodations and strengthened the need for adopting a growth mindset.

Abigail believes every individual has their own set of strengths and limitations and views 'disability' as just a matter of being differently-abled. She values the importance of community and believes in the adage 'it takes a village to raise a child'. She enjoys learning from her learners, credits powerful provision (no matter how small) and strives to ensure no child is left behind.





*Mike Gray, MASC*  
**ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY MANAGER**

Mike (he/him) has a BSc in Mechanical Engineering (mechatronics option) from the University of New Brunswick and a MASC in Biomedical Engineering from U of T, working in Dr. Elaine Biddiss' group at the Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital's PEARL lab (Possibility Engineering and Research Lab). His thesis focused on the gamification of upper limb therapy for children with cerebral palsy. Post his Master's degree, Mike also worked at the University of Victoria's Assistive Technologies Lab and worked on the development of modular assistive robotic platform.

Mike is very excited to advance the LDS Assistive Technology program, including our socially assistive robotics initiative, and to advance LDS IT priorities that will enable us to build further capacity and streamline operations to support more students more effectively.



*Carol Yeh*  
**INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

We would like to thank Carol Yeh for the dedication and expertise she offered to LDS as Interim Executive Director while our Executive Director was on parental leave for four months during summer 2021.

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## A Special Thank You

We would like to acknowledge the ongoing skillful and caring contributions of the following core LDS team members to our organization. Please see their full bios on our website under 'Our Team':

*Helen Sawchuk* **CPA CGA FINANCE MANAGER**  
*Alice Bromfield* **FAMILY AND STUDENT SERVICES MANAGER**  
*Alexa Rochfort* **FAMILY AND STUDENT SERVICES COORDINATOR**  
*Thaia Gorniak* **COMMUNITY MANAGER**



# Board of Directors

Our Board of Directors is formed by a dedicated group of professionals with broad and diverse experience including in special education, accounting and finance, non-profit organizations, risk management, communications, human resources, organization management, governance, advancement, law, strategic planning, and business development. Each of our directors is passionate about our mission, with many of our directors having close connections to children, youth, and adults with learning differences.

In 2021 we were grateful for the ongoing volunteer contributions of Hamlet Abnoui, Susan Aitchison, Hon. Wendy Harris Q.C., Lauren Minogue, Dr. Nancy Perry, Ph.D., Kevin Riley, Greg Sullivan, Ph.D., and Joyce Wagenaar. We welcomed three new directors to the Board as well to our Governance, Human Resources, and Advancement Committees, respectively:



*Brian Duong*

Brian is honoured to be able to both support and help shape the inspiring work done by LDS. He is a lawyer at Hunter Litigation Chambers, maintaining a generalist practice in civil and administrative litigation. Brian holds law degrees from the University of Toronto (JD) and the University of Cambridge (LLM) and is a former clerk of the British Columbia Court of Appeal. He has been a member of the Massachusetts and British Columbia bars since 2009. Brian graduated with a degree in finance from the University of British Columbia. In his spare time, Brian can often be found on a squash court or with his boys.



*Shelley Gray*

Shelley is the Chief Executive Officer of the Industry Training Authority (ITA), a Crown Corporation responsible for managing, supporting, and promoting British Columbia's trades training and apprenticeship system. As the first woman to hold the position of CEO at ITA, Shelley is highly motivated to work towards creating a more inclusive skilled trades and apprenticeship system that reflects our diverse population.

Recently, her leadership was recognized by YWCA as a Women of Distinction nominee (2021) and by Business in Vancouver as an influential leader on their inaugural top 500 leaders list (2021). Shelley sits on industry Boards and Committees, including the Canadian Council of Directors of Apprenticeships, Vancouver College, and the Vancouver Board of Trade Diversity and Inclusion Leadership Council and is a volunteer mentor with Minerva BC.

Shelley has a Bachelor of Arts in International Business from the University of Alberta, a Leadership Development Certificate from the UBC Sauder School of Business, and an INSEAD Executive Leadership Certificate.

Shelley is very inspired by the early intervention work of LDS, which allows each student the ability to see and realize their full potential from early on in their life. She knows first hand how important it is for young learners to know their options won't be limited by their learning strengths and stretches.



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### *Dana Montalbano*

Dana currently serves as a Board Director for the Glenn Gould Foundation and most recently, served as a Board Trustee for the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra and on a number of VSO committees. She has acted as a Board Trustee for Arts Umbrella's Association and Foundation Boards, Co-Chair and Board Liaison of Arts Umbrella's Capital Campaign, and chaired and served on a number of committees. She has also been Vice Chair and trustee at the Community Arts Council of Vancouver, and Gala Chairs for the YWCA's Women of Distinction and the inaugural Vancouver Public Library Foundation Gala. In November 2019, Dana with her husband was awarded the Giving Hearts Awards – Outstanding Philanthropist. In June 2021, she was awarded Science World Patron.

Dana has a teenage son who was diagnosed with dyslexia at 7-years old and because of that, she understands the exponential difference learning supports and advocacy provide for children with learning disabilities. She is passionate about ensuring all children with learning differences have the supports they require, and as a result, can have the opportunity to thrive academically, emotionally, and socially. Dana sees that LDS provides the learning supports children with learning differences need to meet their full potential and achieve their dreams.



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### *Susan Aitchison*

In autumn 2021, we honoured Susan Aitchison for 11 years of dedicated service to LDS, including as past Chair of the Board of Directors. During a formative time in our LDS history, Susan devoted her expertise and countless hours of her time to growing, developing and professionalizing LDS. Susan was instrumental in deepening our commitment to individualized, specialized education support, in growing our partnerships, and in helping to build a foundation for further growth and progress that LDS will continue to benefit from for years to come. The LDS community is very grateful for the generous contributions of Susan and her family.

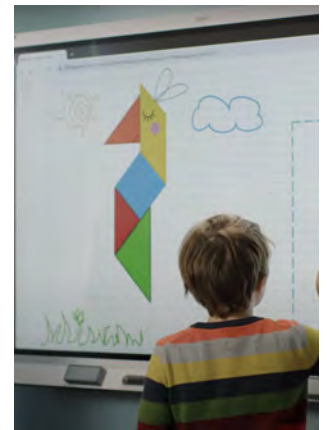
# Development

We are dedicated to our mission to serve all children and youth with suspected or diagnosed learning differences. In most years prior to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic this required us to develop financial support for at least 60% of our families. In 2020, a year with significant social and economic stress, this percentage rose to above 80% and during 2021 remained above 75%. As such, LDS continues to seek material financial support from a wide range of organizations and individuals in order to ensure ongoing accessible and inclusive support for our growing number of families.

We are very grateful for the ongoing support from our individual donors, corporate sponsors, and granting partners for their support of LDS and our mission. Please join us in thanking the following individuals, companies, foundations, and agencies for their thoughtful and generous support.

## Grants

Grants form a critical part of our funding. In 2021, we were grateful to receive significant program and core funding from many grantors, including Social Venture Partners Vancouver, the City of Vancouver, the Province of British Columbia Gaming Branch, Employment and Social Development Canada, Vancouver Foundation, KPMG, Telus, Diamond Foundation, CIBC Miracle Day, RBC Foundation, Ted Rogers Foundation, Vancity Community Foundation, CKNW Kids Fund administered by the United Way of the Lower Mainland, and several anonymous funding sources. We also would like to acknowledge external grant funds that go directly to our families in order to assist them, including from CKNW Kids Fund, Variety Children's Charity, Jordan's Principle, and BC government autism funding unit.



## 100K For 100 Kids Campaign

Through the kind generosity of our donors, our 2021 \$100K for 100 Kids campaign raised an inspiring \$144,056! The thoughtful contributions of our generous donors enabled us to support over 140 children and youth in 2022 with our expanded comprehensive programming. We greatly appreciated the heartwarming notes of encouragement from our individual, foundation, and corporate supporters throughout our campaign. We thank all of you for making a big difference in the lives of our students and families that we serve. Your ongoing support is critical to ensure all learners receive the transformative educational support they need and deserve.

## Make A Difference Campaign

In 2021 LDS hosted our first spring fundraising campaign. Our 'Make a Difference' campaign was designed to engage more people as donors to LDS and featured a generous matching component, where donations between \$5 and \$50 were matched with a \$50 donation. We are very grateful for the several hundred new donors and supporters this campaign attracted and we look forward to your continued support and participation in our community.



# Our Donors

Alice Santilli	Chris Stuart	Gillian Verge
Almunir Kamdar	Christa Couture	Gina Ungaro
Alysia Baldwin	Christine Bergeron	Glenn Eleiter
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Anonymous Donors	Darya Abdollahi	Jennifer Dober
Anotidaishie	Dave Eleiter	Jillian Gear
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Melissa Sager	Ronith Cogswell and Paul Dorby	Thomas A and Ida M Tait
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Michelle Reid	Rubia Apdal-Villamin	Timothy Hoggan
Mike Bryden	Ryan Vopni	Tina Caron Ahroon
Naomi Devine	Salina, Ara, Hamlet	Tony Guglielmin
Naslishah Thony	Sally Morrison	Trista Baldwin
Neil Jensen	Sara L	Tyler Fairbrother
Nejeed Kassam	Sarah Vopni	Vicki Vopni
Nick Maile	Sarah W	Wendy and Eric Harris
Paisley Murray	Scot Atkinson and Lisa Dalton	Wendy Simmonds
Pam Sack	Scott Martin	Westbourne Projects Ltd.
Pamela & David Richardson Family Fund, held at Nicola Wealth Private Giving Foundation	Sean Luck	William Flood
Patricia Rupnow	Semanur Gulen	Windsor Plywood Foundation, held at Vancouver Foundation
Patrick White	Shawn Aspden	Yash Singhal
Paul Bahia	Shelley Gray	Zhivago Marakathalingasivam
Paul Sarachman	Sierra Skye Gemma	
	Sonia Basso and Bruce Barker	
	St. Mark's College, UBC	

# Our Sponsors





# Our Community Collaborators

BC Catholic  
Big Sisters of the Lower Mainland  
Capilano University  
Catholic Educators Conference  
Cedar Cottage Neighbourhood House  
Chairman Ting  
Chatterblock  
Douglas College  
Foundry Kitchens  
Electrum  
Greater Vancouver Board of Trade  
Green Power Motor Company  
Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood House  
NGSI Inc.  
North Vancouver Public Library  
NorthShore News  
OurKids  
PACE Program  
PEARL (Possibility Engineering and Research Lab) at Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital  
PlayRoly  
Postmedia  
Queens University  
Richmond Public Library

SAP  
Simon Fraser University Cooperative Education  
SmallTalk  
Social Venture Partners Vancouver – Communities of Practice  
Stigma Free Society  
T.J. Firenze of Firenze Financial  
Tekworks  
Telus World of Science  
Thunderbird Community Centre  
Thunderbird Elementary School  
University of British Columbia Cooperative Education  
University of British Columbia Faculty of Education, Educational and Counselling Psychology, and Special Education  
University of British Columbia Psychological Services & Counselling Training Centre (PSCTC)  
University of Waterloo's Social and Intelligent Robotics Research Laboratory  
Vancity Community Investment group  
Vancity Economic Inclusion group  
Vancouver Society of Childcare Centres  
Vancouver Mom  
Vancouver Public Library



# 2022 To Date

We continue to build on our wonderful 2021 accomplishments with the addition in 2022 of impactful new services and supports for our families and community.



## RISE Now

Following our previous successful pilot adult program we continued to receive a growing number of requests for support from adult learners. In response to this growing need, we developed RISE Now, our adult program that supports the diverse needs, skills and goals of adults challenged with learning differences.

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**Learn. Develop. Succeed.**

In addition to growth and enhancements of our existing programs, in 2022 we are making concerted efforts to increase the accessibility of our communications, including the launch of our new logo and supporting phrase.

# Financial Update



## Treasurer's Report as at and for the year ended December 31, 2021

This report is intended to be read in conjunction with the audited financial statements of LDS (the Learning Disabilities Society of Greater Vancouver) (the "Society") for the year ended December 31, 2021, on which MNP LLP issued an unqualified opinion on May 30, 2022.

A strategic priority of recent years for the Society is to ensure it has and maintains the infrastructure to continually scale operations and provide services to the largest number of children and youth with learning differences possible.

We continue to focus on establishing a reliable and consistent funding base while being diligent in displaying fiscal responsibility with the concentrated use of funds to deliver our programs.

The Society continues to prepare itself to provide services to an increasing number of children and youth with learning differences in future years. These include the following, which are reflected in the financial results for 2021:

## Program Delivery And Organizational Staffing

The core business of the Society is its service delivery, which is done by the professionals that make up our staff. The Society continues to build our program delivery staff, and to bring more into full time roles, which is reflected in the increase in program expenditures wages and benefits from \$505,000 in 2020 to \$711,000 in 2021. This has allowed the Society to continue to expand and deepen existing services and be innovative with new program models and geographical reach in 2021 and beyond.

## Funding Diversification

The Society continued to focus on securing additional funding to be used towards providing program services in future years. In addition to building on existing funding partnerships and our fundraising drive efforts, the Society's innovative LDS Access, Early RISers and Summer RISE Intensive programming was particularly helpful in engaging a number of new funding partners during 2021. This resulted in the Society obtaining grants and donations totaling approximately \$1,190,000 (compared to \$734,000 in 2020 and \$630,000 in 2019).

## Limiting Administration Expenditures And Realizing Efficiencies

By being vigilant in identifying and realizing increased business operation efficiencies, the Society continues to focus on limiting administrative expenditures and maximizing the effectiveness of directing funding resources towards delivering programs. In 2021, general and administrative expenditures were 7.3% of total expenditures (compared to 8.3% in 2020 and 8.8% in 2019).

While the Society successfully continued a number of areas of focus during 2021, to ensure the success of future programs there continues to be a concentration on securing increased funding and the fiscally responsible use of all funding received. This focus is paramount in ensuring the Society is able to achieve our mission of ensuring children and youth with learning differences and their families have access to the tools they need to increase self-esteem and achieve transformative, lasting success in school and in life.



# Financial Statements

## Statement Of Operations For The Year Ended December 31, 2021

	2021	2020
	\$	\$
<b>Program Revenues</b>	547,170	250,756
<b>Program Expenditures</b>		
Amortization of deferred equipment (note 10)	(28,993)	–
Amortization of equipment (note 10)	29,868	–
Communication	50,230	62,427
Instructors	628,760	345,078
Learning centre facilities	214,952	170,846
Training and development	14,975	12,101
Wages and Benefits	711,298	504,642
	1,621,090	1,095,094
<b>General and administrative expenditures</b>		
Amortization of deferred equipment (note 10)	(1,266)	(1,382)
Amortization of equipment (note 10)	3,711	1,463
Interest and bank charges	15,567	8,883
Office and miscellaneous	25,870	28,817
Professional fees	20,326	10,363
Salaries and related benefits	64,273	52,001
	128,481	100,145
<b>Program loss before funding</b>	<b>(1,202,401)</b>	<b>(944,483)</b>
<b>Funding</b>		
Grants (note 3)	472,889	423,820
Donations (note 13)	717,468	309,923
Other income	8,514	19,406
	1,198,871	753,149
<b>(Deficiency) of revenues over expenditures before other items</b>	<b>(3,530)</b>	<b>(191,334)</b>
<b>Other Items</b>		
Canada Emergency Rent Subsidy (note 15)	–	9,060
Canada Emergency Wage & Temporary Wage Subsidy (note 15)	–	180,656
Government Forgiveness (note 7)	10,000	10,000
(Loss) on sale of investments	–	(216)
	10,000	199,500
<b>Excess of revenues over expenditures</b>	<b>6,470</b>	<b>8,166</b>







Learn. Develop. Succeed.

## Contact Info

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- ✉ [info@ldsociety.ca](mailto:info@ldsociety.ca)
- 🌐 [ldsociety.ca](http://ldsociety.ca)
- 📍 **Head Office** 3292 East Broadway  
Vancouver, BC V5M 1Z8

LDS respectfully acknowledges that we live, work, and learn on the unceded territories of the Squamish, Musqueam, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations, and on the unceded territories of many other Nations as we expand our virtual operations throughout the province.