Greetings from the LAD Director

Have Courage and Be Kind

Toshi Jolliffe, LAD Director

Nice to meet you! I am delighted to have an opportunity to introduce myself.

I was born in Japan a few days after the Crown Prince, now the Emperor, was married. My mother watched the royal wedding as she rested in front of the TV. My older sister was always quiet when we were little, whereas I was such a lively girl. Whenever a photo was taken, I often made a funny face at the last moment before my parents could stop me. In the first photo I was happy with my “new” hair. Apparently, I had wanted pigtails like my sister, but since I did not have enough hair, my mother ended up making it like this. At that time no one knew that 20 years later this little Japanese girl would go to Tokyo to work as an airline cabin attendant, find a Scottish husband, move to Luxembourg and start a family.

The next photo was taken right after I was accredited as an LLL Leader. It shows me with my three children at the United Nations (UN) Headquarter in New York City, USA. LLL Leaders can tell what my two younger children are doing. I did not ask them to pose for the photo. It naturally became this way because I wanted them to keep still and be happy. We used to live close to where this photo was taken while my husband, Michael, worked for the Italian delegation to the UN. At that time I did not know that a few years later I would join the LAD for LLL United States Western Division and start accrediting Japanese Leaders in the USA. Nor did I imagine that I would be appointed LAD Director 15 years after that. La Leche League has become a large part of my life.

The last photo was taken in March at the 2016 LLL European Management Symposium in Frankfurt, Germany. My appointment as the LAD Director was officially announced at the opening session. It was an unforgettable experience to be welcomed by many Leaders at a conference. The LAD Council Meeting was also held and we celebrated a member’s birthday as well as our reunion.

I wrote English letters for the first time after I joined the LAD. I learned not only LAD work but also English writing from various LAD administrators. There was a lot to learn, and yet I enjoyed everything thanks to those who were there to help me. I am deeply grateful for their おもてなし (At)—“Love” in Japanese.

I watch one of my favourite videos, Cinderella 2015, in three languages: English, French, Japanese. In this film Cinderella’s mother explains a “great secret” which will help her throughout her life:

HAVE COURAGE AND BE KIND!

During my term as LAD Director I shall keep these words in mind. Thank you for your support as I start my new job. I look forward to working with all of you. Let me know how I can help.
LLL Philosophy

Writing to Applicants about the Concept on Human Milk

The wording of the concept about human milk has changed since we published the LLL Philosophy Notebook as Appendix 1 to *LADders* 2011-4 No. 7. This gives us an opportunity to take a fresh look at how we write to Applicants about the concept and to think of new ways to talk about this aspect of LLL philosophy. Applicants often think of this concept as somewhat of a “no-brainer” and may not write much about it. Here are some suggestions for stimulating discussion:

*Human milk is the natural food for babies, uniquely meeting their changing needs.*

Joan Peloso, Florida, USA writes:

It’s true that most Applicants have strong opinions on why human milk is best for their babies and for others’ babies. The answer can be so wide that most anything they write applies to the concept, and I don’t usually go into much detail with them. Instead, I use this as a jumping off point for their main focus as a Leader, leading meetings.

I ask the Applicant to consider the reasons she thinks human milk is best for human babies and plan Meeting 1: Advantages of Breastfeeding. I ask her to use the meeting planning guide in the *Leader’s Handbook*, which takes her back to the Leader’s source of how to lead, and to look at the questions to create a plan for the meeting. It’s suggested that the Applicant work with a Leader to plan the meeting, although it’s fine if she does it on her own. Then, if the Leader can use that plan before the Applicant is accredited, they can evaluate the meeting afterward. They consider how the plan went well, how the mothers responded to the questions during the discussion, what adjustments were made to meet the mothers’ needs that day, and what she might change the next time she uses that plan. This gives the Applicant and Leader an opportunity to work together before and after the meeting and to enhance their communication.

Often I ask the Applicant to send me a copy of the plan so I can add it to the meeting ideas I’ve saved and use when I lead meetings. That may make her feel like she can offer something to me. Often Applicants think they are not-yet-as-good-as the Leaders around them, and I want each Applicant to know that once she is accredited, she will be equal with her co-Leaders.

If it seems that she is not going to be able to do the meeting plan, I clarify that this isn’t a requirement for accreditation, and she’ll have many opportunities in the future to plan meetings.

Some Applicants may have noticed the change in wording. If they have already read the *Leader’s Handbook* they will have seen the old version of the concept and may have done pre-application work using documents that were published before the change was made. As noted by Joan Crothers, Rhode Island, USA, this opens a door for further discussion. The LAD representative can ask the Applicant what she thinks about the change, how it affects her thinking about this concept and what it adds to her understanding of LLL philosophy. One Applicant responded that she preferred the term “human milk”—it is for humans and perfectly designed by nature. She noted that science cannot duplicate human milk’s complex and dynamic composition. She also observed that the new wording removes the term ‘infant’ from the discussion. This makes it clear that human milk is not just for infants and recognizes the fact that a mother’s milk never loses nutritional value as it changes with the growing needs of the baby into toddlerhood.

When writing to Applicants about this concept, Shihh-june Lin, Taiwan discusses not only the qualities of human milk, but also the differences between breastfeeding and “breast milk feeding”:

* English translation follows each paragraph
We surely cannot say that we have understood human milk completely. However, when we compare human milk with other infant foods, none of them can rival the human milk. There is still a long way to go before it is considered the norm. Scientists must be curious to know how the components of human milk work in the baby’s body and meet his needs. Nevertheless, when we think about what we do know, we have to praise nature’s amazing qualities. It perfectly provides for physical development and is perfectly adapted to support human reproduction and breastfeeding.

In the early years after La Leche League was founded, there was no research on human milk. The term “breast milk” was hardly ever found in books. Therefore, in order to encourage other mothers to breastfeed, mothers in La Leche League described the superiority and functions of breast milk from a variety of aspects. For example, formula-fed babies are more likely to have to see a doctor than breastfed babies; breastfeeding mothers are able to respond to their babies quickly. Mother-baby interactions are interwoven with the milk itself. This tells people that human milk is better than artificial milk and lets people know the difference between them.

Although La Leche League had told mothers not long after that time that breastfeeding is much more than breast milk feeding, people still did not know that the components of breast milk could vary according to the baby’s needs. The milk is “customized.” Through breastfeeding, human milk can provide components in the right proportions and add extra elements according to the baby’s needs. This is the function that regularly expressed breast milk cannot achieve. It is extremely amazing!

So it is certain that breastfeeding is preferable to feeding expressed breast milk, not only because it meets the baby’s psychological needs, but also because of the physical benefits stimulated by the baby’s sucking. For these reasons, many mothers who have experienced breastfeeding encourage other mothers to breastfeed! As La Leche League Leaders, we also share our experiences of practising LLLI philosophy. It is through breastfeeding that we care for and communicate with our babies.
Benaifer Bandari, Great Britain considers some questions that might come up from mothers about this concept as a springboard for discussion:

Isn’t this obvious?
Many mothers who discuss the qualities of human milk speak of how much better human milk is for human babies, than the milk of any other animal. What this concept is saying is not that at all. It isn’t saying it is best, or even better than other milks.

Why not say it’s the best … it is, isn’t it?
We stay away from rating human milk in this way because in LLL we believe human milk for human babies cannot be rated – it stands alone because it is the only natural food made for human babies. It has qualities which are so unique, we cannot compare human milk to other milks.

What are the outstanding qualities?
There are so many! For each mother, different qualities will be outstanding. For example, the mother of a premature baby may be in awe of the special milk her body is producing especially for her early baby, tailored exactly to meet that body’s need to keep growing outside the womb. For another mother it may be the reassurance that on a hot day her body is producing a milk which will be so thirst quenching for her baby. Or perhaps it maybe the reassurance of knowing that the hormonal makeup of a mother’s milk changes according to the time of day so aiding the baby to awaken in the morning or relax and sleep at night—that really is outstanding!

I fed my first child formula. When I hear phrases like this, it makes me really uncomfortable.
No mother should be made to feel uncomfortable. We understand every woman makes her own choices, based on many factors we are not privy to. Another advantage of the phrase “Human milk is the natural food for babies” is that it really does not compare different milks and hopefully does not isolate parents who have made different choices with earlier babies.

OK, so tell me more about these outstanding qualities.
How about the fact that neither the quality nor the quantity of human milk is usually affected by malnutrition in the mother? Isn’t this an amazing fact which can do so much to alleviate suffering in countries where a mother may really struggle to take in optimum calories?

Another amazing fact is that even when the child is two, as the immune system starts to complete itself, human milk continues to reinforce that healthy immune system for as long as feeding continues. Of course, this is a general statement about the baby’s health. For many mothers what is truly amazing, is the wordless communication between mother and baby which happens at each feed. Through the baby’s saliva, secret messages are passed to the mother. When the mother “hears” this, her body responds immediately to produce the exact milk the baby has kindly requested. Today, it may contain extra antibodies tailor-made against poor grandad’s cough during a family gathering. Or tomorrow the gentle communication may request human milk containing agents to counteract the big sneeze a little toddler couldn’t hold in whilst cuddling the baby.

As the years go on, and science attempts to catch up with identifying new and more profound qualities of human milk, we can rest assured that we provided the natural food for babies with their uniquely changing needs.
Language: Taking Cues from Applicants
Lesley Robinson, CLA, Quebec and Eastern Ontario, Canada

An important thing that we do when corresponding with Leader Applicants is to affirm their experience, their ideas and their dedication. We do this by responding to specific things that they have told us, acknowledging their effects, noting their importance and pointing out their relevance to the work of a Leader. Affirming a Leader Applicant’s experience helps us to establish a rapport and serves as a basis for further discussion. We can enhance that rapport by reflecting back to Leader Applicants the language they have used.

We correspond with a diverse group of Leader Applicants. They come from a variety of backgrounds, have various family situations, with a range of educational and professional circumstances and a multiplicity of cultural, religious, political and social beliefs. Although they all meet the prerequisites, their experiences are varied and each is unique. We know that we have much in common, particularly when it comes to LLL philosophy, yet we can make no assumptions about how that philosophy is reflected in each Applicant’s life. Reflecting the language that an Applicant chooses shows that we make no assumptions, but that we understand the essence of what has been said.

Here’s an example. When talking about the concept on fathers, a Leader Applicant might say any of the following:

John has always been there for me and did so much when the baby was little.
My partner was such a great help in the early days.
My baby’s father is a great guy—he’s my rock.
I have always felt supported in my nursing relationship.

It is indeed possible that one might say any or even all of these things, but we cannot assume anything that has not been said. “John” may or may not be a partner. A partner may be a man or a woman. A husband may not necessarily be the baby’s father. The baby’s father may not be a partner. The Applicant may be raising the baby alone. By reflecting the language used by the Applicant we can affirm what has been said and then go on to expand the discussion in a way that acknowledges only what the Applicant has actually expressed. Here are some possible ways to do that:

Applicant: John has always been there for me and did so much when the baby was little.
LAD rep: John’s support was important to you, especially in the early days. What were the things he did that helped you the most?

Applicant: My partner was such a great help in the early days.
LAD rep: You really valued your partner’s help at the beginning. What were the most important things you needed help with?

Applicant: My husband is so proud and tells everyone at work how important the nursing relationship is.
LAD rep: Your husband wants the world to know how proud he is of you. How has that affected your confidence in your nursing relationship?

Applicant: My baby’s father is a great guy—he’s my rock.
LAD rep: You always know you can rely on your baby’s father. How have you seen his relationship with the baby develop as the baby has grown?

Applicant: I have always felt supported in my nursing relationship.
LAD rep: Support can make such a tremendous difference to a nursing relationship. What was your greatest source of support during the early days?
In each case the LAD representative is able to take the discussion further on the basis of what the Applicant has shared.

Here’s a different example:

Giving birth is enough to put anyone off hospitals for life!
My pregnancy was unplanned, so I had to re-think my career goals.
Any sort of professional training can give you only so much information. Once the baby is in your arms, you really start to learn from experience.
I wish medical school included more about breastfeeding.

If the Applicant does not specifically tell you about her educational or professional background, you are unable to make assumptions. Even a medical practitioner might make the first statement in the light of personal experience. Any of these Applicants may or may not have had professional training in a relevant field. How can we reflect this language to affirm the Applicants’ statements and expand the discussion?

Applicant: Giving birth is enough to put anyone off hospitals for life!
LAD rep: Giving birth in a hospital can be a daunting experience. How were you able to prepare for your birth?

Applicant: My pregnancy was unplanned, so I had to re-think my career goals.
LAD rep: A pregnancy can bring about a lot of changes. How did you feel when you first realized you were pregnant?

Applicant: Any sort of professional training can give you only so much information. Once the baby is in your arms, you really start to learn from experience.
LAD rep: It can come as a surprise that it is your baby who teaches you the most about adjusting to life with a newborn. What surprised you the most?

Applicant: I wish medical school included more about breastfeeding.
LAD rep: Medical training includes little about the normal course of breastfeeding. What do you think physicians need to know on the subject?

Just as we respond openly and without judgment to statements that are made at meetings, so we can respond to potential Leaders with encouragement and warmth, taking nothing for granted and allowing them to take the lead in the dialogue. In so doing we are modelling an approach for them to take as future Leaders.

Discovering Future LAD Representatives
Marie Beam, CLA, Maryland-Delaware-Washington, D.C., USA

Recruiting LAD representatives needs to be an ongoing endeavor, even when a department is currently well staffed. Changes, such as the move or retirement of a valued LAD representative, can leave an Area lacking adequate LAD representation. Planning ahead allows time for LAD orientation that can often take 6-12 months, and assures that LAD representatives will be prepared to meet ongoing LAD needs.

Looking for LAD Prospects
Here are some ideas for attracting prospective LAD representatives:
• Cultivate a relationship with supporting Leaders who do a good job helping Applicants prepare for leadership.
• Keep track of Applicants who quickly respond to dialogue or seem to have insightful perspective on LLL philosophy; contact them about a year after accreditiation.
• Watch chat lists and Area publications to identify strong writers/communicators.
• At Area Conferences and workshops, give positive feedback to Associate Coordinators of Leader Accreditation (ACLAs) to help Leaders see that the work is valued, and give them a desire to be part of the department. (See LADders 2011-2, “A Flat ACLA,” for instructions on making a visual prop to take with you to advertise LAD openings.)

• Place "Help Wanted" ads in the Area Leaders' Letter to spark Leaders' interest in LAD work.

LAD Work: Is It for You?
Once you have identified interested Leaders, share with them the six-page document, LAD Work: Is It for You? http://www.lliAlliance.org/top-lad-page/lad-representative-resources/ (password: 4LADreps)

Pre-Appointment Dialogue
In the search for someone new to help with the LAD workload, sometimes we encounter so many “No’s” that, when a Leader finally says “Yes,” it is tempting to offer her the position right away. However, just as we encourage Leaders to take the time for pre-application dialogue before recommending a mother for leadership, it is prudent to have a pre-appointment dialogue before offering a Leader a LAD position. Here are some possible topics and sample questions to explore, particularly if you have no prior experience working with her:

• About You: What experiences as a Leader influence your thinking as you consider joining the LAD? What interests, skills, or talents would you bring to the position?

• Timely response: The LAD is committed to responding to all communications within two weeks. Most responses will be quicker, but that amount of time allows for when several things arrive at once, or you need time to research or consult. Are you comfortable meeting the commitment to prompt responses? Is there currently room in your life to commit to regular LAD work?

• Having your work edited: The LAD writing style aims to avoid judging anything shared with us, keep confidentiality, and follow the LLLI and LAD Style Guides. Getting accustomed to the nuances of this writing style takes a while. Are you comfortable having your writing edited to conform to LAD expectations?

• Highlights of LAD work: Don’t forget to share what you find rewarding, enjoyable, and/or meaningful about LAD work.

In “selling” the LAD job, it is important to find the right balance between enthusiasm and realistic expectations. We don’t want to sound as if we are trying to dissuade someone from taking the position, yet we do want the Leader to be honest with herself about her ability to make the commitment and follow through with the necessary work to become an effective LAD representative. If you take the time to explore whether LAD work is truly a good fit for the Leader, you greatly increase the chances of a successful appointment.
Semi-Annual Report: Compilation
April 2016
LAD Council

- The information from the previous SAR is indicated in parentheses.
- Italics include/indicate estimated figures based on recent reports.

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| LLLI Total            | 5,870 (5,902)| 2,390 (2,252) | 1,342 (1,278) | 462 (378) | 184 (169) | 260 (277) |
**Semi-Annual Report**  
April 2016  

**Comparison of Four Reporting Periods**  
LAD Council

- Affiliates: Canada English, Canada French, Great Britain, New Zealand
- Non-USA ANs: European AN (Area Network), International AN
- USA ANs: Alliance AN, Garden State AN, Mosaic AN, Southern California/Nevada AN, Texas AN, US West AN

### Leaders

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### Groups

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### Accreditations

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Here is an extract from a Leader, written to the CLA, about a Leader Applicant who has moved to her Group.

Dear Cathy CLA,

An Applicant from a nearby Group is now attending the Group I am leading. She is still working on her Personal History and wishes to complete her application with her original supporting Leader, whose meetings she no longer attends. She does not want my support. I have concerns about her communication skills. Can you help me sort this out? Thank you.

Lucy Leader

Dear Lucy Leader,

Thank you for your observations on the Applicant. I appreciate them. How do you feel about the fact that she prefers to keep working with her original supporting Leader? Is there something that bothers you in the Applicant’s decision?

The original supporting Leader and the Applicant started their work together and if the Applicant wishes, they could continue to work from a distance. Maybe later when she knows you better, she will change her opinion and will start to work with you too.

Thank you for sharing your concerns about the Applicant’s communication skills. It’s precious for the LAD to hear your thoughts. We shall be aware about her need to develop these skills in order to become a Leader. The application is a time for learning, during which the Applicant’s skills and knowledge evolve. Communication skills are a major part of preparation. Many Areas organize Communication Skills training sessions. Are there some available close to your Group? You could encourage her to attend or you may choose to let her supporting Leader know about that. They could use that training as part of preparation for leadership.

Thank you for all you do for LAD! If you have further questions I’m happy to help you.

LLLove,
Cathy CLA

Elena Gvozdeykova, Bulgaria
Dear Lucy,

I appreciate you contacting me to discuss your options on how to handle this. Eventually you could be working together as co-Leaders, so it’s important to create the best possible conditions for that to happen. The first thing I did in considering how to support you was to refer to the Leader’s Handbook. There is a section there (p.129) that discusses what to do “When a Leader Moves to a New Group.” I’ve changed the passage to be about a “Leader Applicant” instead of “Leader” and hope it might give you some ideas for a way forward:

“If a Leader Applicant moves to your community, welcome her to the Group. In addition to the many tasks of settling her family, the Leader Applicant may be handling unsettled feelings. She may mourn the loss of relationships in her former community including her “old” Group and supporting Leader. Be understanding of her need for time to adjust. She may appreciate an opportunity to get acquainted with you, the other Leaders, Leader Applicants and Group workers. To provide her with background and a brief overview, you and the other Group Leaders might give a brief history of the Group and general information about the mothers the Group serves; they might talk about how you currently divide responsibilities. Your Chapter might plan an informal “get acquainted” meeting for the Leader Applicant to help her feel welcomed and comfortable.”

As you get to know one another, the Applicant may turn to you for support with aspects of her application. If you continue to have concerns about her communication skills, consider whether there are ways she can develop her skills. You might find it helpful to read other sections of the Leader’s Handbook, such as p. 138 “Consult with Co-Leaders: Do You Agree?” in terms of a Leader Applicant. You’ve described the other Group as being nearby, so perhaps you can meet with both the supporting Leader and Applicant to cover application work together, or incorporate application work into Chapter Meetings. After all, it is vital that you are in agreement about the Applicant’s readiness for accreditation. Does the Applicant’s ACLA know she is now attending the Group you are leading? The ACLA will be glad to know you are available to provide support too.

Building a relationship with someone new, to the extent you can feel mutual trust and work together comfortably, is likely to take time. There is a lot you can do with the Applicant that will enhance your experience of Leaders’ styles and enable you to enjoy being co-Leaders in the future. Let me know if I can be of any further help.

Cathy CLA

Alison Parkes, Great Britain

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Dear Lucy,

Thank you for contacting me regarding some concerns you have with a Leader Applicant who is now attending your Group’s meetings. The Leader Applicant wants to continue her application with her original supporting Leader and doesn’t want your help or support with the remaining application work.

This is unusual, Lucy; it must be confusing to you. Without further details questions arise. Has the Leader Applicant indicated that the change in meeting attendance is temporary or permanent? Has she given the reason for the change?

You have observed the Leader Applicant and concerns about her communication skills have now surfaced.

I’m happy to offer you some thoughts and ideas so you can develop an action plan, Lucy. Consider approaching the Leader Applicant to request she meet with you to discuss the change in meeting attendance and how this affects her leadership preparations as she works through the training curriculum. The original supporting Leader is not able to observe the Leader Applicant at LLL Meetings to gauge how well she is incorporating what she is learning about leading meetings and Group management. It is impossible for the original supporting Leader to introduce and work through exercises such as the Listening Exercise.
Please share your concerns about communication skills and how this relates to preparation for leadership. Share examples of what you have observed and how help can be found to help her improve her skills.

If the Leader Applicant is not receptive to your offer to discuss things together, let her know you’ll need to find a way forward, possibly including the Leader Accreditation Department (LAD) representative she is working with to ensure the Applicant’s decision to change meeting attendance is updated and your communication skills concerns can be addressed during the application.

How does this first step sound to you, Lucy? If you’d like to discuss things further with me, please feel comfortable to phone or email me anytime.

LLL Love,

Cathy CLA
Telephone:  
Email:  

Sylvia Walker, Canada

Dear Angela ACLA,

This email is very difficult for me to write and I hope you’ll understand. It is with great sadness that I write to tell you that I have decided to withdraw my application. I know that it is very late in the accreditation process to make this decision. What I regret the most is all the time and trust that you have given me; I appreciate it very much and I am sincerely sorry when I think of all the hours you spent reading my work and responding. Working on my application has helped me to deepen my philosophy of mothering. Your thoughts and your encouragement have helped me through a difficult time in my life. I will be forever grateful.

Many factors have led to this decision and I think that the responsibilities of leadership are just not compatible with my life right now. Homeschooling is a big commitment, which takes a lot of energy. I have recently separated from my husband and my children need me more than ever. I do not mean to justify my decision, I only wanted to explain with respect. That’s no excuse for wasting your time and causing disappointment.

Thank you for all your attention and once again, I’m sorry.

Denise Discontinue

How would you respond? Send your ideas for a reply or an extract you would like to share with other LAD representatives to Lesley Robinson at: mumpypiggy@gmail.com
My first experience with La Leche League occurred in the locker room of the local YMCA. Swimming with my 14-month-old son and six months pregnant, I attracted the attention of two other mothers, both LLL Leaders. We chatted and they invited me to a meeting. Living in a town where “even the cows bottle-fed their babies” I was thrilled to find other mothers who parented as I did, and a lifelong love affair with LLL was born!

From left to right - David, Cynthia, Ben, Shivani, Steven, John, Alex, Liz, Becca

I became a Leader 24 years ago, after the birth of my third child. I've led meetings in two states, and have been a lone Leader for the past three months for the first time. Now my husband and son are the ones to listen to me vent after a particularly difficult call. Maybe they miss my co-Leader as much as I do! I joined the LAD about a year and a half ago, and have been the CLA for New York for the past year. I love working with the wonderful women who want to carry on the work of helping mothers nurse their babies, and often need to fight the urge to work with each Applicant myself. They’re all such fascinating women who I want to get to know better.

My husband John and I have raised five children—our youngest son David just graduated from high school. We plan to celebrate that event by taking a “retirement” trip immediately after dropping him off at college for our first childless vacation in 29 years. We are waiting less than patiently for our older sons Steven (with wife Shivani) and Alex (with wife Liz) to make us grandparents. Our only daughter Becca and son Ben round out our family.

When I’m not helping moms, or supporting other women to do so, I love to read, knit, and in the past few years do lots of zumba. I expect I’ll have lots of time for all those pursuits with my last child leaving the nest.
Sandy Moore-Furneaux, Oklahoma, USA

In 1983, I found the organization that would change my life and my children’s lives for the better: La Leche League. I was raised by a mother who frequently lost her temper and raged, spanked, and threw things at people—sometimes very dangerous things, such as sharp knives and flaming pots. I was determined not to repeat that pattern with my own children—but how?

I attended my first LLL meeting to get breastfeeding information when Erik, born June 1983, was just a couple of months old. What a surprise! I didn’t just gain the breastfeeding information and support I needed; more importantly for me, I saw mothers gently responding to little ones of all ages, even when two toddlers started a tug-of-war over a toy. I listened in awe as one mother sweetly coaxed her little one to be still until she had cleaned up his messy bottom, then encouraged him to kick his legs, praising him for his “beauty in motion,” before she put on a clean diaper! I was hooked! I began reading every discipline book in the Group Library and learning ideas for loving guidance from the wonderful Leaders.

Rex was born in November 1985, one month before I was accredited. Brandon, third and last, was born in March 1989. Though I took a hiatus from La Leche League to attend graduate school in the mid-1990s after all three started public school, my heart never left. Even as my sons grew up and left home to build their own lives, I often took pregnant colleagues and friends to local meetings.

I was conducting research related to breastfeeding for my dissertation, yet my heart wasn’t really in it—there was an empty space inside of me. As time passed, I realized that the empty space had only partly to do with an empty nest; I was missing something that is integral to my being. I really wanted to be directly involved with helping mothers and babies breastfeed, sharing our gentle ways of parenting, and encouraging others’ interest in leadership. In 2008, one of the local Leaders, a very inspiring woman, asked me to become a Leader again. So I reactivated and left the doctoral program.

Several years later, early in 2014, the CLA for our Area announced she would be retiring and asked for someone to take her place. I already knew my husband planned to take his last sabbatical in 2015, so I didn’t volunteer, though it was tempting. Ten months later, she retired, and no one had stepped forward to fill the role. My husband and I were about to leave for a year in Germany, but I couldn’t resist the lure of LAD any longer. So I emailed the ACL and the RALA who was serving as Interim CLA, Janna O’Connell, and asked whether I could be the CLA for the Area from Germany. With a positive answer, I threw myself into completing the training while finding a house-sitter and pet-sitters for dogs, cats, frogs, and snakes and packing up our household for the big move.

As La Leche League is so important to me, I was very happy that I wouldn’t have to give it up while we were in Germany. While there, I held a secondary affiliation with La Leche Liga Deutschland and took helping calls. I attended the German LLL Conference and this March, I attended the European Management Symposium, where I learned so much about LAD work around the world and met others passionate about building La Leche League in
strength and numbers. Both conferences were incredibly inspirational and gave me great appreciation for our global network and reach.

That decision to follow my heart back to LLL has led to great fulfillment. In addition to local leadership and LAD, I also work with the LLL USA Social Media Team and am one of the LLL USA representatives on the Global Leaders Committee. I get to work with so many amazing people! Applicants motivate me to find new ways of meeting their needs and stimulating their development in the skills of leadership, and all of the wonderful Leaders with whom I work inspire me to grow and develop my own skills as a Leader and as a person.

It has been my joy to serve La Leche League in many ways. Becoming a RALA will allow me to serve LLL and all of you even better. So, I thank you for this opportunity! I look forward to joining all of you as we work together to build a strong future for La Leche League.

Cheryl Doiron, Manitoba, Canada

Hello! My name is Cheryl Doiron, and I am an Associate Coordinator of Leader Accreditation (ACLA) in La Leche League Canada-Manitoba/Saskatchewan and Northwest Ontario. I live in Winnipeg, Manitoba with my husband, Bryan, of 26 years. We have three young adults. Danielle is 22, and just recently graduated from Red River Community College with a diploma in journalism. She is currently working for the Winnipeg Goldeyes baseball team as assistant media relations consultant. This fall she will also finish up her bachelor of arts degree from the University of Winnipeg as she searches for a full-time position in her field. Our son, Edward (20 years old) is enjoying his job with a local audiovisual company. He has all but taken over our basement with all of his sound equipment and is very handy to have around when friends and family members are putting on parties or concerts! Our youngest, Suzette, is 18 and just graduated from grade 12. She will be the first of our children to leave home as she sets off later this summer for a year-long missionary trip.

I have been an LLL Canada Leader since 1998 thanks to the support of my family and some fabulous Leader mentors here in Winnipeg. I have been with the LAD now for three and a half years and enjoy working with CLA Sylvia Walker. As a Leader, I have always enjoyed supporting Leader Applicants. When I became ACLA, I was pleased to extend that support as a representative of the LAD.

When I am not helping mothers and babies in the Winnipeg South La Leche League Group with my wonderful co-Leader Rachelle, or corresponding with Leader Applicants and supporting Leaders, I spend my days as an Educational Assistant, working with international and immigrant students who are learning English. When my children were younger and I would read and create endless stories for them, I often wondered where I would be able to use my passions for reading, writing, and public speaking. I feel very lucky to have found not only my day job and LLLC, but now the LAD, in order to spend my time doing what I love.

From left (back row): Suzette (18), Edward (20), Danielle (22). Seated (front row): Cheryl and Bryan
Using Up-to-Date Resources

A good habit to cultivate is periodically to check the dates on the resources that you are using with Applicants, Leaders, and in orientation with new LAD representatives. Most LAD resources have a date in the lower left-hand corner, and if that date is more than five years old, you may want to check with your support person to see if a newer version exists. Many resources have been updated significantly in the past six years, and if the one you are using has not, your inquiry may set a needed revision in motion. Using up-to-date resources not only provides accurate information for the person you are working with, it also gives them a relevant resource to share with others, and helps to maintain a positive image of the LAD and LLL.

New Ways to View LADders

The full-colour version of LADders is often quite a large file, which may be difficult to email or too big to be easily uploaded to some websites. Although the important content of LADders is contained in the “Text Only” version, it is enjoyable to see the photographs and illustrations that are shared by contributors. In order to give you options without clogging up your mailbox, the following solutions have been found: You can view the current issue of LADders on a new dedicated website at:

http://mummypiggy.wix.com/ladders  The site also has a page containing all the photo letters that have been published and an index of articles by issue and by topic will be coming soon.

If you would like to download the full colour version of LADders to your own computer you will find the current edition as well as all back issues in a Dropbox folder at:

https://www.dropbox.com/sh/nvcsylq0me5uq4b/AABo0O1v3V_LPExExsz1GbUa?dl=0

Happy reading!

Reminder!

LADders welcomes articles in any language. If you would like to write for LADders you don’t have to be able to write in English. If you can provide even a rough translation, the LADders team will take care of editing the translation, so don’t be shy. Please contact a Contributing Editor with your ideas for articles. We look forward to hearing from you. Thank you. Merci. Vielen Dank. ありがとう, 謝謝. Благодаря. Grazie. Gracias. הודות...
Congratulations on your appointment!

Dania Amador
ACLA, Panama, Latin America

Kim Fleischer
ACLA, Pennsylvania West, USA

Christi Silva
ACLA, Southern California/Nevada, USA
Working With Children Close By

This is a picture of my four-year-old, Jackson colouring on the floor beside me as I am working on some LAD correspondence. Our computer is in the basement where our playroom is. Most days, he will play while I answer emails.

Nicole Bell, Southern and Central Ontario, Canada

This is my daughter and I together. I’m writing an email to an Applicant; meanwhile she paints a beautiful landscape. When she was a baby, breastfeeding time for her was LLL time for me, but nowadays we share other passions together - totally co-working!

Noelia Corta, Spain
I work on LAD applications with my youngest, Vivian (4) by my side in the evenings while she plays on her kids’ Kindle and watches a movie. She does these two things at the same time! All while her three older siblings, Shane (9), Wyatt (6) and Amelia (6) get to play a special video game with their dada. This is how I am able to get LAD work done easily in the summer. During the school year it is a little different when kiddos need to be in bed a little earlier. These are special times when Vivian and I can work on our “projects” together.

Stephanie Sutton, Illinois, USA

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