LADders is a publication by LAD representatives for LAD representatives
Its purpose is to help LAD representatives do their jobs with confidence and pleasure by offering a place to share information and experiences.

European Management Symposium 2012 and LAD Council Meeting
LAD Council

Sunshine, blue skies, pleasant temperatures and spring blossoms greeted over 100 Leaders who attended the European Management Symposium (EMS) in Frankfurt, Germany, March 22-25. It was a wonderful opportunity for LAD representatives from many parts of the world to get together to share experiences, wisdom and friendship. LAD sessions were attended by LAD representatives and by other Leaders interested in Leader accreditation.

A variety of LAD topics were offered:

• LLL application, a commitment to LLL
• Helping Leaders understand the issues behind mixing causes
• Techniques for making your LAD work easier
• Sharing joys, ideas and concerns (for CLAs of Europe)
• How the LAD evaluates separation using the Mothering Experience Prerequisite
• Area-specific approaches for an application
• LAD orientation
• Exploring LLL philosophy in the 2010 edition of The Womanly Art of Breastfeeding

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European Management Symposium 2012 and LAD Council Haka
Thanks to funding from their Areas and Area Networks, ten members of the International LAD Council were able to attend and to stay an extra day after the EMS for the first LAD Council meeting in five years. Below are some notes from that meeting.

Recent achievements of LAD International include:

- Recruiting and orienting LAD representatives for Areas without a LAD presence, including Australia and Taiwan.
- Implementing use of Great Britain’s Leader Applicant’s Handbook, which has been well-received in areas that have begun experimenting with it as a single resource for leadership preparation.
- Improvements in LLL entity LAD Web sites to make them more effective tools.

Among the challenges cited, the most significant were:

- Lack of a Leader Department in new entities has left LAD dealing with issues formerly addressed by the Leader Department.
- Need for translations is a HUGE issue for growing new Areas. Rather than trying to translate a multitude of documents, translating Great Britain’s Leader Applicant’s Handbook was proposed as a way to make available a single, comprehensive resource for those populations where adequate resources in the language are not available.
- Finding help when there is a heavy workload of new applications presents the challenge of encouraging LAD representatives from other Areas to share the workload. It might help if LAD conducts a survey to discover LAD representatives with language abilities whom we might contact for help.

Separation was discussed at great length, since the LAD is receiving increasing numbers of applications with separation, and it is an ongoing challenge to apply uniform standards when assessing whether a mother who has experienced extensive, ongoing separation meets the Mothering Experience Prerequisite. LAD is spending time and energy to consistently uphold Board policy regarding baby’s need for mother’s presence.

The question was asked, “Why is the LAD now receiving so many more applications with extensive separation?” When the prerequisites were revised in 1998, the concepts were not changed, but there was a change in accepting applications with some separation. It has been observed that as we accredited Leaders with some separation, they in turn recommended mothers with more separation, and so we have progressive “generations” of Leaders perceiving that mothers with increasing levels of separation are good candidates for leadership. Some Leaders are not distinguishing between “part-time, flexible separation” where the LAD has been accrediting and “early, full-time separation” where infants are expected to adapt to the mother’s work schedule. The number of referrals and appeals has jumped dramatically in the past few years as more Leaders are recommending mothers who do not meet the prerequisites.

LAD Council’s goals for addressing this issue proactively in the months ahead include publication of an article on separation in Leaven 2012-3; creation of a LADders appendix that will provide resources on separation for LAD representatives to consult; and preparation of a new article for Leaders to help explain how separation is regarded in the context of LLL philosophy.

Current Applicant Databases need to be shared periodically with R/ALAs so that there is a backup list of Applicants and their contact information in the event that the CLA needs help with her workload. CLAs are being asked to include along with their Semi-Annual Report a copy of whatever forms they use to keep track of Area Applicants; this can be anything from an electronic spreadsheet to a handwritten chart.
“Designing Your Own Application” is an option that has been offered Applicants for the past few years, providing flexibility in the order that an Applicant may choose to tackle different aspects of leadership preparation. Interestingly, less than 10% of Applicants avail themselves of this option; most seem to prefer a step-by-step approach to the application, guiding them from one task to the next.

Numerous topics were suggested for future issues of LADders. Plans are underway for two new appendices, one on the “Separation” topic and a collection of “How Would You Respond?” sample responses. The editors would welcome more non-English articles, so please share articles from your own entity publications.

The LLL Application – A Commitment to LLL

Session speakers
Ineke Leiter, co-Administrator of Leader Accreditation, LLL Europe
Lesley Robinson, Administrator of Leader Accreditation, LLL Canada

When a new Leader is accredited she signs her official Statement of Commitment, but her commitment to LLL begins long before that.

When we consider a mother for leadership, we already expect a certain commitment to LLL. We are looking for mothers who have already demonstrated this commitment. Take a look at the prerequisites to applying for leadership. The organisational experience prerequisite includes membership in LLL. When a mother becomes a member of LLL, she is showing a commitment to the organisation as a whole. We hope that she has become a member because of a commitment to our mission and not just because she has to if she wants to apply for leadership.

A Task Force will be examining LAD practices in the months ahead and making recommendations for the LAD’s future. The Task Force is to be composed of representatives from LAD Council, LAD representatives, newly accredited Leaders, and Executive Management. Recommendations have been made for participants, and the Task Force is to be overseen by the Board co-Chairs.

For the Year Ahead, LAD International’s goal is to continue what we have been doing: Updating resources, welcoming innovations, promptly addressing questions and concerns, disseminating pertinent information, maintaining a strong network of LAD representatives so that we can meet the changing needs of Applicants worldwide—and remembering always to express our appreciation for the hardworking LAD representatives who do such a fantastic job!

LAD Sessions at the European Management Symposium

It is also part of the prerequisites that a mother supports LLL purpose and philosophy. We expect that an interested mother is already familiar with LLL’s purpose and has made a personal commitment to a philosophy of mothering that reflects the concepts of LLL philosophy.

We also expect that an interested mother will have attended a series of meetings (where available). When a mother attends a complete series of meetings, she has experienced what we offer to mothers. She is familiar with the style and atmosphere of our meetings. She feels comfortable and at home at LLL and wants to share this with others. We expect that she will have become involved in the life of the Group. Not only does she attend and participate, but she has gone further to contribute to the Group.

It is important for her to own and to be familiar with the contents of the most recent edition of The Womanly Art of Breastfeeding (if available in her language) as a primary resource for LLL Leaders. What if The Womanly Art is not available in her language? A mother who regularly attends meetings will be familiar with the contents, since meetings are based on the information in The Womanly Art.

A mother who wants to apply for leadership will also need to have a recommendation from an LLL Leader. The Leader should be able to recommend the mother wholeheartedly based on the mother’s commitment and on the discussions they have had.
The Leader Recommendation asks about the candidate’s involvement in LLL, so the Leader needs to be aware of the candidate’s commitment to LLL and will have discussed it with her before writing her recommendation. The Leader confirms that the candidate is a member. The Leader is expected to have discussed each of the ten concepts with the mother. LLL philosophy will have been presented at meetings, but the Leader’s pre-application discussions with the candidate may be the first time she has heard these concepts expressed formally. The Leader will know from her discussions and observations that the mother supports each concept and demonstrates all the concepts in her actions. This demonstrates her personal commitment to LLL philosophy.

The Leader will also discuss with the mother her plan to fulfill the basic responsibilities of leadership. In making the application, she is making a commitment to fulfill these responsibilities in the future.

The Leader is asked in the recommendation whether the candidate owns the most recent edition of *The Womanly Art of Breastfeeding*. Reading *The Womanly Art* can inspire the Applicant at the outset of the application. For example, regular Series Meetings, Enlist the help of the Leader during the application. She serves as the model of a Leader’s commitment. She can begin to treat the Applicant as a “co-Leader” in matters of Group management—discussing selecting books for the Group Library, making arrangements for meeting venues, publicising meetings. She can share the planning of meetings and fundraising or social activities. She can ask her to help with setup and cleanup before and after meetings.

The LAD representative expects to see this commitment and can encourage it. If an Applicant seems not to be active, keep in contact and repeat expectations. Allow her the opportunity to back out gracefully. Perhaps the commitment has turned out to be more than she expected. No time spent on an application is ever wasted, either for the Applicant or putting LLL last. This is part of a Leader’s commitment.

The needs of family must always come first for a Leader. The Leader can discuss this with the mother before writing her recommendation.

The application time itself is an opportunity for the Applicant to prepare for the commitment of leadership. She can practise for this commitment by spending approximately the same amount of time on her preparation for leadership as she would expect to spend on the responsibilities of leadership once she is accredited.

The LAD representative sets expectations for the Applicant at the outset of the application. For example, regular correspondence sets an example for her to follow. Tell her that she can always expect a response from you within two weeks and let her know that you expect the same from her. Contact her at least once each month, even if she has not sent any application work. Remind her that you expect a response. Take opportunities for contact by sending items that will be useful to her in her preparation for leadership, such as issues of *Leaven, Breastfeeding Today* and Area Leaders’ Letters as they are published, invitations to Area Conferences, District Workshops, Leader/Leader Applicant Days and Chapter Meetings, sample meeting plans and articles of interest.

Suggest ways that the Applicant can set aside time for regular application work, such as by meeting regularly with the Leader to work on the *Leader’s Handbook* Checklist. Offer your help with the *Breastfeeding Resource Guide* and invite her to practise exercises and plan for Series Meetings. Suggest taking advantage of small blocks of time by keeping a notepad handy to jot down ideas and keeping LLL books available. Let her know that she can send short instalments of application work and suggest that she reward herself for every achievement.

Help her to make a plan for her application, so that she knows how she will be using her time to keep on track and fulfill her commitment. Some LAD representatives suggest a detailed timetable for when the Applicant should expect to finish elements of application work and when she expects to be accredited.

The Leader Recommendation form also asks for specific ways that the candidate has demonstrated a commitment to LLL. How has the mother been involved in the Group? Has she hosted meetings, has she taken a Group job, such as librarian, treasurer or publicity? Has she participated in the Group’s fundraising efforts? Perhaps the mother has been involved in LLL beyond regular Series Meetings. She may have attended additional meetings such as Chapter Meetings, Enrichment or Evaluation Meetings, the meetings of another Group, or workshops and/or conferences. These all demonstrate an interest beyond that of the average member of the Group. We hope that a candidate for leadership will already have become involved in the life of LLL beyond regular Series Meetings.

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The needs of family must always come first for a Leader. The LAD representative can discuss putting family first without putting LLL last. This is part of a Leader’s commitment.

Enlist the help of the Leader during the application. She serves as the model of a Leader’s commitment. She can begin to treat the Applicant as a “co-Leader” in matters of Group management—discussing selecting books for the Group Library, making arrangements for meeting venues, publicising meetings. She can share the planning of meetings and fundraising or social activities. She can ask her to help with setup and cleanup before and after meetings.

The LAD representative expects to see this commitment and can encourage it. If an Applicant seems not to be active, keep in contact and repeat expectations. Allow her the opportunity to back out gracefully. Perhaps the commitment has turned out to be more than she expected. No time spent on an application is ever wasted, either for the Applicant or for LLL. We are all enriched by it.

When the time comes for the new Leader to sign her Statement of Commitment, she will be comfortable in doing so, having prepared thoroughly and already having made a commitment of her time, energy and passion to LLL in the work of her application.
Techniques for Making Your LAD Work Easier
Session speakers
Marie Beam, LAD Council
Lesley Robinson, Administrator of Leader Accreditation, LLL Canada

This session included an “electronic handout.” Leaders who had brought laptop computers were able to upload a collection of sample documents directly from a USB flash drive. Others signed up to receive emails with documents as attachments. This made it possible to include a large number of complete documents in the “handout.”

Working style
Every LAD representative has her own working style. Techniques which seem logical for some may seem too complicated or even alien to others. As we say at the beginning of a Series Meeting—take what works for you and leave the rest. Some LAD representatives prefer to use paper for correspondence and for recordkeeping, whereas others may be using exclusively electronic means to store files, reports and archives. Either way, you will find forms and systems useful.

Becoming familiar with resources on LAD Web sites
You will find basic information about Leader accreditation on the LLLI Web site. Go to: http://www.llli.org/leaderpages/lad/app/applicant.html

Leader Applicant Web Pages:
Enter your LLLID. Click: Resources—Leaders—Applicants

Leader Accreditation Materials for LLL Leaders:
Enter your LLLID. Click: Resources—Leaders—LAD (on the left)—Materials for Leaders
Among the listed materials is “Working with a Leader Applicant.”

The LLL Alliance for Breastfeeding Education Web site contains many recently updated resources on the Leader Accreditation Department pages. Go to: http://www.llleus.org/LAD.html (username: LAD, password: LADis#1) Please also check your entity’s Web site for LAD documents specific to your entity.

Organising your LAD files
If kept electronically, documents in a file can be numbered chronologically to keep them user-friendly. Electronic files can be backed up in web-based emails or stored on an external hard drive or an additional computer to avoid loss. Information about creating files electronically is also available in the LADders article “How to Dump That Filing Cabinet and Keep Secure and Organised Electronic Records,” Issue 2010-3, No. 3. An advantage of electronic files is that files can be shared with a number of LAD representatives for orientation purposes. Some LAD representatives are happy to read files on a computer screen and keep completely paperless records, whereas others prefer to print out what they need in order to read or store it. Do what works for you.

Keeping track of Applicants
LAD representatives use a variety of Word document tables and Excel spreadsheets for keeping track of Leader Applicants and their progress. Examples are available in electronic form. These would work for an ACLA to keep records of the Applicants she works with, for a CLA who has to keep track of Applicants in the whole Area and for the RALA or ALA, so she can maintain a record of all Applicants in the Areas she supports.

What to send Applicants/Leaders, and when
Some LAD representatives send a complete guide to the application along with their introductory letter, so that the Applicant can see what needs to be accomplished. She can plan her application and decide where to start. Others begin with a simple introductory letter to establish contact with the Applicant before sending details of the work of the application. Examples of guides to the application are available in some languages. Some LAD administrators and entities are developing or have developed handbooks for Leader Applicants such as the Leader Applicant Resource Kit by Karin Gausman and LLL Great Britain’s Leader Applicant’s Handbook by Alison Parkes. Karin and Alison are the former co-Directors of LAD. These handbooks are already in use in different parts of the LLL world and we shared them at the EMS.
Application checklists
A number of checklists are available for keeping track of various aspects of LAD work. A Leader Applicant progress checklist can be used by a LAD representative as a coversheet to a file or by an Applicant herself, so that she can see what she has achieved and what remains to be done. An application checklist can be useful for a LAD representative in processing a new application. Word or Excel documents, with or without tables and spreadsheets, can work for checklists. Some LAD representatives may find colour coding to be useful. Again, find what works for you.

“Template” letters
Examples of introductory letters to Applicants and sponsoring Leaders, response letters to the personal history and to the acceptance/bias exercise are available. There’s no need to create something new for each Applicant. Of course letters to Applicants need to be personalised, but there is much that is repeated frequently, so beginning with a template allows you to focus on the individual Applicant’s writing, while at the same time bringing important points into the discussion. Remember that the LLL Philosophy Notebook (published as an appendix to LADders 2011-4 No. 7) can provide sample paragraphs for your letters to Leader Applicants in response to personal histories.

Editor’s note:
If you would like to receive the documents and resources mentioned in this article, contact Lesley Robinson at: lesleyrobinson@rogers.com

A History of the Mother-Baby Relationship Concept
Betty Crase
Former Director of the LLLI Center for Breastfeeding Information, currently an LLLI Professional Advisory Board Communications Facilitator

From the start, when LLL was founded in 1956, the importance of mother and baby being together was a fundamental concept of La Leche League, just as were the other concepts. Some research on the critical nature of the mother-baby relationship—such as Harry Harlow’s famous infant monkey experiments and John Bowlby’s and Mary Ainsworth’s early work on attachment—was becoming available at that time.

During its first decade, as LLL grew and expanded beyond the confines of Franklin Park, Illinois, USA, and the direct oversight of the Founders, there began to emerge a variety of interpretations of what LLL and LLL philosophy were really all about. In 1972, the decision was made to clarify and confirm LLL philosophy.

The 1963 edition of The Womanly Art of Breastfeeding was used as the defining source of organizational philosophy and policy. Eight concepts were adopted in 1972; the mother-baby relationship concept was added in 1973; and the concept on loving guidance was included in 1975.

The original wording of the mother-baby relationship concept in 1973 was:

The baby has a basic need for his mother’s love and presence which is as intense as his need for food. This need remains even though his mother may be absent for a period of time for needs or reasons of her own.

Seeking to determine a mother’s personal understanding of and experience with the concept was challenging, and it grew increasingly so as more and more mothers entered the workforce, went back to school, or were otherwise regularly separated from their infants. Concern was expressed by some Leaders about making mothers feel guilty if they had to work outside the home to help put food on the table and couldn’t be with their babies. The issues of juggling mothers’ choices versus infants’ needs were debated. Some Leaders felt that there could be no separation at all for any reason if a woman wanted to become an LLL Leader. By 1978, it became obvious that this concept and the surrounding issues needed serious consideration and discussion.
The first hint of likely change in the wording of the mother-baby relationship concept appeared in Leaven, Issue Sep-Oct 1978. Articles followed in every issue of Leaven in 1979 about the in-depth discussions taking place, reviews of the extensive and longstanding body of research confirming the importance of mothers and babies being together, and citing the concerns of current experts (including Dr. Benjamin Spock, Dr. T. Berry Brazelton, Selma Fraiberg, Louise Kaplan, Marshall Klaus, John Kennell, and Alice Bricklin) on meeting the needs of infants.

The adopted revision to the mother-baby relationship concept was published in Leaven, Issue Nov-Dec 1979:

*In the early years the baby has an intense need to be with his mother which is as basic as his need for food.*

The following information accompanied the announcement of the revision in 1979:

*Simply stated yet complete, this concept speaks to the need of the baby. More clearly than before, the Board believes that this new wording puts the League’s emphasis where it was always meant to be.*

*La Leche League has been, from the beginning, the baby’s advocate. It has always recognized the unique and essential character of the baby’s need for his mother. And now—unequivocally stated—we reaffirm this enduring belief.*

Yet, not only are the baby’s needs met by his mother’s loving presence. Mother herself is enriched and enhanced through this relationship.

Several months later, an informational pamphlet entitled *Mother-Baby Togetherness*, No. 116, was published. It briefly summarized the findings and recommendations of a number of experts in the field. The purpose of the publication was to help Leaders and mothers seeking leadership to better understand the evidence behind the organization’s position on the importance of the mother-baby relationship. The pamphlet was last revised and produced in January 1992.

Over the years, the LLLI Board of Directors (BOD) continued to refine the policies pertaining to the education of Leaders and exploration of the concept during leadership preparation through the LLLI Leader Accreditation Department. At the February 1985 Annual Session of the LLLI BOD, the Board approved the following as its policy statement in Appendix 17:

**Mother/baby relationship**

*In considering a mother for leadership, the focus shall be on the mother’s breastfeeding experience, on her awareness of her baby’s need for her presence, her continuing flexible availability to her baby, and her willingness to support the philosophy of LLLI.*

At the October 1998 Board meeting, “LLLI Prerequisites for Leadership—Guidelines for Leaders” was added to Appendix 18 of the *Policies and Standing Rules Notebook*. Several *Leaven* articles addressed the new Guidelines, starting with “Many Pictures of LLLI Philosophy” (Dec 1998-Jan 1999) and “Is This a Change?” (Feb-March 1999). “The Heart of the Matter” (June-July 1999) introduced the “Picture a Leader” Education Campaign and kicked off the “Picture a Leader” Leaven column, which appeared in 1999-2000.

At the August 2004 Board Meeting, paragraph 11 of the “Guidelines for Leaders” in Appendix 18 was revised to eliminate this sentence: “A mother who experiences extensive, ongoing separation from her baby is unlikely to fulfill the Mothering Experience Prerequisite.” The LLLI Board of Directors included in Leaven, Issue Dec 2004-Jan 2005, this statement in their “Report from the Board” article, “Board Actions”:

*This change does not affect LLLI philosophy as found in The Womanly Art of Breastfeeding and expressed in the concept statements. No change has been made to the concept statement: “In the early years, the baby has an intense need to be with his mother which is as basic as his need for food.” This new wording in the “Guidelines for Leaders” is intended to recognize in a positive manner—that is [to] acknowledge and appreciate—that this concept, like all of LLLI philosophy, can be lived in varied ways in mothers’ lives.*

This change in wording does not affect the mothering experience prerequisite itself: all the prerequisites remain unchanged.
This is as true today as it was when it was written in 1980. The needs of babies have been and always will be the same. The mother-baby relationship concept, which is at the heart of LLL philosophy, has remained unchanged since the current wording became official in 1979:

**In the early years, the baby has an intense need to be with his mother which is as basic as his need for food.**

Betty Crase, who has been an LLL Leader for 35 years, has filled many roles through the years: ACLA; LLLI Board of Directors member; Director of the LLLI Center for Breastfeeding Information; Director of the LLLI Breastfeeding Resources Centers and LLLI Coordinator of the Research Review Committee; LLLI Alternate Representative to the US Breastfeeding Committee and US Department of Agriculture Breastfeeding Promotion Consortium; Manager of Breastfeeding Initiatives for the American Academy of Pediatrics; IBCLC. She and her wonderful husband of 44 years live in Southern California, USA; they have four adult children and four breastfed grandchildren.

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**Working Outside Your Area – Is It for You?**

LLL Alliance Leader Accreditation Department

*Originally published in Alliance Link, 2012 No. 2*

Just as the basics of the mother-baby couple are the same the world over, so too are the mission and message of La Leche League. Leaders, no matter where they live, receive the same basic preparation during the application time, which means that the work that Leader Accreditation Department (LAD) representatives do to help mothers prepare for LLL leadership is the same as well.

Keeping our LAD work local was quite practical when we relied on postal mail to send all of our correspondence and documents. With the predominant shift to email and the availability of LAD documents on Web sites, it now can be just as quick and easy to work with an Applicant a thousand miles away as with one nearby. Many LAD representatives have discovered that they can expand their own horizons by taking on applications from other Areas as their own time and energies allow.

**What is an “ACLA-at-Large”?** Any LAD representative who is working with an Applicant outside her own Area is an “Associate Coordinator of Leader Accreditation-at-Large” for that Applicant. Some entities have one or two LAD representatives who work exclusively as ACLAs-at-Large, meeting the needs of Applicants from many different Areas. But there are many other ACLAs, Coordinators of Leader Accreditation (CLAs), and Regional/Administrators of Leader Accreditation (RALAs) who help out by taking on the occasional application in response to a plea for help from a CLA who wants to be sure that each Applicant receives prompt attention, particularly when her own workload may be heavy.

¿No habla ingles? Joan Peloso, CLA for Florida and Caribbean Islands, U.S.A., has used her Spanish skills to help Florida Applicants who are not fluent in English, as well as to assist with Latin American Applicants. Joan observes that serving as an ACLA-at-Large can bring a fresh viewpoint to an application, especially if the Applicant and/or LAD representative for the Area are experiencing conflict. An objective LAD representative from outside the Area can help ensure that established LAD policies and protocols are being followed.
Diane Beckman, ACLA for North Carolina, U.S.A., adds this perspective: “The only thing more fun than working in the LAD in your own Area is working as an ACLA-at-Large for other Areas! Over the past decade, I have worked with Leader Applicants in Missouri, Minnesota/Dakotas, Northern and Southern California, Iowa, and Wisconsin, U.S.A., and then in French-speaking Canada, France, French Guiana, Spain, and Future Areas in Europe. I have enjoyed the opportunity of virtually and literally traveling around the world to do this rewarding work. I have gotten to work with Leaders, CLAs and RALAs across the country, and to see both the unity of LLL across borders and the diversity of different areas of the country. As a French teacher, the chance to correspond with Applicants in French has been a stretch, necessitating my learning new words—from ‘diaper’ to ‘plugged duct’! I have also had the privilege of traveling to France as a Summer Study Abroad Faculty Director and making my LAD work part of those trips. Leaders and Applicants not only invited me for dinner, but invited my family and my students. This has truly been one of the most profound and rewarding gifts that my involvement with LLL has brought me.”

**English-speakers needed, too:** Interest in La Leche League is spreading rapidly in many other parts of the world. Often potential Applicants living in a country where English is not the local language are fluent in English, and are happier working with a LAD representative who can communicate in English, rather than their local language.

**Filling the gap:** Joan Crothers, RALA for the Great Lakes Region, U.S.A., recently served as CLA-at-Large for an Area that had been without a CLA for a couple of years. Two local ACLAs and five out-of-Area ACLAs-at-Large split the workload among them so that this Area’s LAD needs could be met.

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**Fitting LAD Work into Your Life**

*Susan R. Moore, Regional Administrator of Leader Accreditation, LAD West, USA*

How do we fit LAD work into our busy lives while still keeping family first? “The Balancing Act” on page xv of the *Leader’s Handbook* offers time-tested tips for busy Leaders. If it has been a while since you read this section, it is worth taking a fresh look at this passage, which could also be titled, “How to Work on Something That Really Matters to You in Ten Minutes a Day Without Losing Sight of Your Family.”

Does that sound like you, fitting in ten seconds here and ten minutes there? Maybe at the end of the day, if the house is quiet, tiredness is courageously postponed for an hour so that you can respond to a letter with empathy or congratulations, or help set a new Applicant on one of the most cherished journeys of her life.

What we accomplish as LAD representatives matters—to many and to us—and our families are the reason we are here. LAD representatives specialize in tools that can bring us to the heart of our beloved roles quickly, to pick up where we left off the last time we had ten minutes. As time and technology move forward, some classic hints are worth hearing again, and some newer hints worth exploring.
Visual reminders and cues can help us to focus. Janna O’Connell, LAD West RALA, writes, “I have a wall chart where I keep track of Applicants’ accomplishments. It makes it easy to see at a glance where they are with things for quick email check-ins.”

Pat Andrews, ACLA for Texas, USA, relies on “an application checklist that I fill out and attach every time I email the Applicant and the Leader. It helps all of us see where we are at.” Linda Wieser, ACLA for Michigan, USA, and LLL Canada, agrees, “In evaluating her relationship with the LAD, one Applicant specifically mentioned that she liked having a list of what she had left to complete included in each email.”

Beverly Stieger, ACLA for Connecticut, USA, keeps a colored file with each Applicant’s name in large letters and her support Leader’s name in small letters. The folders stay right next to her computer and printer so that hard copies can go right into the folder.

Mobility is another key factor for busy mothers. Adele Delgado, ACLA for Southern California/ Nevada, USA, uses Dropbox to make documents accessible from either her computer or iPad. “I use Dropbox to put in files, and I can read them anywhere and send quick emails. Dropbox is a great idea for backup, accessible from any computer anywhere.”

If your response (like mine!) was Drop what? go to https://www.dropbox.com/ to watch a brief video of what Dropbox has to offer. Dropbox on an iPad or laptop is an electronic version of the portable bag with pen, paper, and a letter needing a response. No longer do you need to be in front of a computer on a desk to reply.

What if you don’t have the mobility of electronic devices? Janna writes, “I print off their writing so I can read it whenever I have ‘waiting time.’ I highlight important points and write comments in the margins so it’s easier when I respond to them.”

Beverly keeps a folder for Applicants’ writings that “moves around the house with me. This way I can read and jot down comments while being with my children. When I have free time to compose a response on my computer (usually in the morning or during nap times), my responses are already written in the margins.”

Entertainment
For mothers of little ones, Beverly shares that, “It was always helpful having activities that my boys could do right next to me: coloring, modeling clay, miniature cars, stickers, puzzles, etc. I ask my three-year-old if he wants to do some homework with mommy. He likes working on his projects or just playing while I work, and when he needs a break, I usually do, too!”

Sara Pullum-Pinon, ACLA for Oregon, USA, finds that “Usually, I can get out a couple of brief emails while standing at the kitchen counter while my little ones are at the table painting. Right now, they’re doing that while I bounce the sleeping baby in the sling and stand up to write emails. It works for me!”

Having a bag of toys that are only available during LAD-work times can improve your chances that they will hold your child’s attention for a little while.

Planning
Though scheduling is always tentative, planning for potential LAD time is essential. Janna tries to keep up daily with any quick email responses, “or let them at least know I received their email and will get back to them in a few days with a detailed answer.”

Sara finds that she works best if she mentally sorts out which jobs are small and which are big. “Anything that requires a larger amount of time or more serious concentration gets saved until everybody is asleep. After the kids go to bed, I stay up for an hour or two, and I can hear myself think. That’s when I can write longer emails or read with more focus.”
Remember that, though we want to respond promptly, the LAD allows up to two weeks to respond in full—even to emails. A thoughtful response is essential to the sensitive communication we provide. It is always a good idea to save an especially sensitive letter overnight and send it only after you have had a chance to read it with fresh eyes.

Sara sums up wisely, “When a Leader is committed to putting the needs of her baby first, she demonstrates that she is able to prioritize her actions, both on the fly and in her longer-term plans. The patience and self-discipline that we develop as we follow LLL philosophy about mothering give us tools that help us relate well to our co-Leaders, and that allow us to help mothers with empathy and kindness.”

Plan now to create a LAD work strategy that encourages you to continue to prioritize and “be flexible when family needs arise. Enjoy life.” (Leader’s Handbook, page xv)

Susan Moore lives with her family, dogs, cats, chickens, and ducks in the hill country of Texas, USA. She was accredited as a Leader in 1992, has served as CLA for LLL of Texas, and is currently serving as RALA for LAD West. She is employed part-time as the Director of Religious Education at her church. She enjoys gardening, cooking, reading, and spending time with her family.

Global LAD

In the LAD, we are dedicated to supporting Leader Applicants to become Leaders. Some LAD representatives go to great lengths to provide that support. This column, “Global LAD,” aims to celebrate the ways in which LAD representatives around the world use enterprising ideas to facilitate Leader accreditation. The column will also explore some of the challenges to the LAD in different parts of the world. The articles below focus on LLL in some parts of Asia and share the experience of two LAD representatives who found exceptional ways to offer their support.

Do you have something you would like to tell about? We would love to hear what is happening in the LAD in your LLL entity, whether that is to describe a positive story or to share some of the challenges you face. Please send any suggestions or draft articles to Alison Parkes, Contributing Editor at: rnparkes.family@ntlworld.com

Remembering LAD Trip to Japan
(9 – 26 May 1991)
Pam Ahearn, former Director of the LAD

This trip began with Penny McArthur, RALA, Asia and Africa, discussing with me, as Director of the LAD, the challenges we were facing in advancing LLL’s presence in Japan. There was a lack of LLL materials translated into Japanese, so it seemed that the best way to move forward was to go there and meet with Leaders and Applicants. Leaders in Okinawa, a beautiful southern island in Japan, also contacted us, asking that we come to visit them, too.

We collected donations to cover the expenses and they were delighted that we were coming!

We stayed with Leaders throughout our trip. They did an excellent job preparing for us, setting up Leader and Applicant workshops. Penny and I were deeply touched by their generous hospitality. Leaders with babies/older children came from all over, some flying, and others spending many hours on several trains to get to the workshops. Some Leaders and Applicants spoke English, and if they didn’t, bilingual Leaders translated for us.
Penny and I, separately, met Applicants one by one to do oral personal histories. We also did the Preview and tape-recorded all of our sessions with Applicants. There was no delay in feedback this way! If the Applicant did not speak English, a Leader translated for us, which was a lot of work for the translating Leader! We also worked with some Leaders who were joining the LAD.

The personal history crosses all cultures. It represents the heart of what makes us unique. It touches the experience that we all have regardless of where we live. It gives us a universal bond with mothers who are searching for positive childbirth experiences, positive breastfeeding experiences, and the best child rearing they can find for their children. The personal history of an Applicant in Japan is similar to one in Zambia or Canada or Mexico. We are united as mothers. This is what has enabled LLL to expand to other cultures. Our philosophy through the concepts ties us together.

Sometimes I hear people question how LAD can accredit Leaders when there are no print resources available for them in their own language. It is helpful to have print resources. Then again, it points out why the personal history is so important. The Leaders I have accredited around the world could lead a Group anywhere in the world. I remind people that in the beginning of LLL, the Founders had no print resources. What they had was their collective personal history experience, which enabled them to reach out and help other mothers.

There are a variety of ways to obtain a personal history if writing is an obstacle. We have used oral personal history, translators, tapes, anything to overcome the obstacle of language barrier. We were coming up with new ideas all the time, and I am confident that the LAD continues with the creativity that is sometimes needed.

Penny and I have wonderful memories of our trip to Japan, and of all the women we met. Although we may not see each other again, we are united in our LLL work, helping mothers and babies, and that transcends all boundaries.

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**Working with an Applicant with No Common Language**

*Toshi Jolliffe, Administrator of Leader Accreditation, Asia, Africa and the Middle East*

The first few monolingual Japanese Leaders were accredited about 25 years ago. They corresponded with American ACLAs with the help of bilingual Leaders as translators. Both the Applicant’s personal history and ACLA’s responses were sent to the translators first. Postal mail was used exclusively in those days and it took a long time to complete an application. When I first heard this story, I did not realise I would be in the same situation as an ACLA in the future.

I recently worked with a Chinese-speaking Applicant with a translator’s help. In China some bilingual Leaders were accredited first, after having worked on their applications in English. They started a Group in their native language and attracted local monolingual mothers. Some of them applied for leadership. Sponsoring Leaders were willing to serve as the translator. However, an Applicant may feel more comfortable about expressing herself in her personal history if somebody new serves as the translator. I therefore sent a search to the Leaders’ mailing list of the Future Areas in Asia, Africa and the Middle East. A bilingual Leader in a different country in the Area soon offered her help. This is often how LLL takes root in a new country: bilingual Leaders serve as bridges and gradually attract local monolingual mothers.
When the Applicant whom I worked with completed her application, there was a pleasant surprise! The Leader who served as the translator became interested in LAD work and decided to apply to be an ACLA. It turned out that she followed the application without knowing that she would be joining the LAD in the future. The ACLA's orientation progressed very smoothly and she is now excited about starting correspondence with real Applicants in their common language.

Toshi Jolliffe and her husband, Michael, live in Luxembourg, Europe, with their son, Seiji (16). Their older son and daughter are studying in Great Britain. Toshi joined the LAD in 2001 and she is currently on the LAD Council, supporting Asia, Africa and the Middle East.

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**How Would You Respond?**

Here is an extract from a letter from a Leader Applicant, written to her LAD representative during her application. There is no right single answer. Sharing our own possible approaches can help us to consider a variety of ways to respond.

**Sample Responses**

Thank you for contacting me regarding your interest in becoming a La Leche League (LLL) Leader, and for sharing a little of your own positive breastfeeding experience with your daughter. It sounds as though you are already very active in your community, supporting breastfeeding mothers in your work as an IBCLC and through the peer counseling group you have set up.

LLL does have some prerequisites that every mother who applies for leadership is required to meet. I have attached “Thinking About LLL Leadership? (compact pdf version).” You can also download it at: [http://www.llli.org/docs/lad/thinkingaboutleadership.pdf](http://www.llli.org/docs/lad/thinkingaboutleadership.pdf) One of the prerequisites is that a mother has nursed a child for at least one year upon being accredited. Though your current breastfeeding experience is not a match with this prerequisite, I am wondering if there may be mothers in the peer counseling group who might meet all of the prerequisites and also be interested in becoming a Leader. I would be very happy to work with you to explore the possibilities and provide you with more information. Please feel free to contact me anytime.

Sally Allison, USA

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**Dear CLA,**

There is a desperate need for an LLL Group in my community. The nearest Group is 200 km from here, across the border in another country. I am a Board-Certified Lactation Consultant and I have been working in a maternal health unit where I have set up a peer counselor program to support new mothers with breastfeeding. I would love to be able to provide the kind of mother-to-mother support that an LLL Group could offer, so I would like to do your training to become an LLL Leader. My own breastfeeding experience was a few years ago. I had complications after the birth of my first child, so I wasn't able to breastfeed him. With my daughter all went well and I enjoyed a great breastfeeding experience. She refused to nurse when she had an ear infection at around eight months and would not go back to the breast, but overall it was a wonderful experience for both of us and I'd love to be able to share that with other mothers. Please let me know how to proceed.

Sincerely,
Kara

As you can see, LLLI requires Leaders to have a minimum experience of nursing her baby for about a year. Although your breastfeeding experience does not meet the prerequisites to becoming a Leader, you do have valuable contact with a network of breastfeeding mothers and may spot possible candidates now or in the future. Please contact me or your nearest Group Leader(s) whenever you would find it useful to discuss more details.

As a mother yourself, you have experienced eight months of positive breastfeeding with your daughter and this is a strong motivation for you to share breastfeeding support with other mothers. In your professional role as a lactation consultant you have set up peer support for new breastfeeding mothers. That is a wonderful achievement!

Nina Robertson, Great Britain

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**New Extract**

Dear CLA

There is a lovely mother in our Group whom I would like to recommend as a Leader Applicant, but my co-Leader is not sure. She feels that Sarah’s mothering is not in line with LLL philosophy because she has encouraged her baby to feed to a schedule rather than “on demand,” and the baby started sleeping through the night at eight months. Would this rule Sarah out of becoming a Leader Applicant?

Regards,
Anne Leader

How would you respond? Send your suggested reply or an extract you would like to share with other LAD representatives to Eleanor Becker at: ellleanorbecker@gmail.com

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**A Taste of LAD International**

Claire Grosjean, CLA, France

*English translation follows*


En France nous avons coutume de dire que le « LAD is fun » et j’y ai trouvé épanouissement, grâce à notre équipe avec qui j’ai pu nouer des liens solides et aussi parce que j’aime ce travail auprès des stagiaires : mettre en relation leur histoire personnelle avec le travail d’animatrice, les aider à prendre confiance au fur et à mesure de leur avancée dans la formation. J’aime être quotidiennement au cœur des concepts. Mes filles grandissent et s’épanouissent, me confortant dans ce choix de les guider avec amour.

Lors de ma première participation à l’EMS en 2008, j’ai réalisé concrètement l’internationalité de LLL ! Partout dans le monde, les animatrices ont le même discours et vivent la même philosophie !!! J’ai trouvé cela extraordinaire ! J’en suis revenue avec beaucoup d’énergie.

Peu de temps après, j’ai pris le poste de CLA, (la première année en collaboration avec Laetitia Cabeau). J’apprécie de coordonner ce département et de veiller à ce qu’il reste un pilier de l’association : Le LAD participe de près à la prospérité de LLL.

My name is Claire Grosjean. I am married to Patrick and we have two children: Julia is nearly 15 and Alice is 11. I first went to LLL when Julia was 10 days old. Very soon LLL’s support and philosophy helped me to mother my high-need baby. Two years later I became a Leader and I joined the LAD two years after that in 2001.

In France we always say “LAD is fun” and I flourished there thanks to our team, with whom I formed solid relationships, and because I love working with Applicants. I love to make connections between their personal histories and the work of a Leader and to help them to feel confident as they make progress in their applications. I love the fact that I am always immersed in the concepts. My daughters are growing and thriving. I am so glad that I chose loving guidance.

When I attended my first EMS in 2008, I was able to appreciate the international nature of LLL. All over the world Leaders share the same message and philosophy. I found that very special and I came home energised.

Shortly afterwards I became CLA. (I shared the position with Laetitia Cabeau for the first year.) I enjoy coordinating the department and taking care of this pillar of the organisation. The LAD is at the heart of a flourishing LLL.

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Gretchen Rivera Rigau (de Cummings),
CLA, Puerto Rico

*N English translation follows

Nací en San Germán, Puerto Rico en 1957. Mis padres, el Dr. Jim Rivera y la Sra. Ileana Rigau, me inculcaron la pasión por el ejercicio, el baile y el disfrute de poder ayudar al prójimo. Me gradué del Recinto Universitario de Mayagüez y recibí diploma de Artes Plásticas y Humanidades en 1980.

Me mudé a la capital San Juan para trabajar como maestra de arte, y tuve mi primer bebé en el 1985, me uní a los grupos de apoyo de la Liga de la Leche Internacional, me enamoré de La Liga y las Lideres y me acredité como nueva Líder en 1988 por Frances Gonzales, la fundadora de LLLPR. Me mudé a Mayagüez donde abrí mi primer grupo de apoyo de lactancia para madres de LLL.

Actualmente sigo en la Liga de la Leche Internacional como Líder muy activa y soy coordinadora de aspirantes a Lider de LLL Puerto Rico. Mis compañeras Rosa, Sara y yo somos conductoras del programa de radio Liga: Lactancia al Día que sale al aire y al internet todos los sábados de 10:00 – 10:30 am (14:00 – 14:30 GMT) por: www.wpra990.com

Mi otra pasión es el arte, el ejercicio y el baile: he dado clases de ballet, he sido maestra de aeróbicos y fundé en 1999 la academia de bailes de danza del medio oriente: Arabian Dreams y la compañía de bailes Los Sultanes del Oeste - la cual comparto y disfruto con mis hijas organizando shows para los bailarines.

Mi esposo, Hilton Cummings y yo tenemos 3 hijos, Hilton Ricardo de 28 años, Gretel de 22 años y Carla de 17. Vivimos en Cabo Rojo, en el occidente de Puerto Rico y tenemos cuatro perros y muchos gatitos. Mi esposo me ha ayudado, motivado y apoyado en todos mis proyectos a través de 30 años de matrimonio.
I was born in San Germán, Puerto Rico, in 1957. My parents, Dr. Jim Rivera and Ileana Rigau, encouraged my passion for exercise, dance and the desire to help other people. I graduated from the University of Puerto Rico in Mayagüez in 1980 with a degree in visual arts and humanities.

I worked as an art teacher in San Juan, our capital, and had my first baby in 1985. I joined La Leche League and was accredited as a Leader in 1988 by Frances Gonzalez, founder of LLL Puerto Rico. I moved back to Mayagüez, where I started my first LLL Group.

I am very active in LLL and I am the Coordinator of Leader Accreditation for LLL Puerto Rico. With my co-Leaders, Rosa and Sara, I host a radio program entitled “Lactancia al Dia” (Every Day Breastfeeding) which is broadcast and available on the Internet every Saturday from 10:00 to 10:30 am (14:00 – 14:30 GMT) at: www.wpra990.com

My other interests are art, exercise and dancing. I have taught ballet and aerobics, and in 1999 I set up my Middle Eastern dance school, Arabian Dreams, and the dance company, Sultans of the East, which I share and enjoy with my two daughters organizing dance shows.

My husband, Hilton Cummings, and I have three children, Hilton Ricardo (28), Gretel (22), and Carla (17). We live in Cabo Rojo in the west of Puerto Rico and we have four dogs and lots of cats. My husband has helped with all my projects throughout our 30 years of marriage.

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Email list for Applicants

Here’s an easy way to regularly touch base with Applicants: Create an email list of Applicants you are currently working with. Once a month or so, send a message to all of them using “bcc” so that Applicant privacy is maintained. You can vary what you send: an article, information about an Area event, ideas for writing the personal history, or publications such as Horizons, the newsletter for Applicants published quarterly by the Alliance LAD. Make sure to keep your list current by adding new Applicants and removing those who have been accredited or discontinued. Your friendly note can also serve as a reminder for an Applicant to send a response to your most recent application correspondence!

LADialogue

Are you a member of “LADialogue”? This online chatlist is a forum for discussion of LAD topics, procedures and LLL philosophy. It is open to any LAD representative actively working with Applicants or performing other LAD duties. It includes LAD representatives from all over the world. When your immediate LAD support person is not available or doesn’t know where to locate a resource, LADialogue is a good place to ask for help. The collective minds of many LAD representatives are excellent at remembering materials that have been used in the past—and where to find them!

LADialogue is not a particularly “busy” chatlist, but if you are concerned about receiving too many emails, you can select “Daily Digest”, or choose “Web only” and simply check past messages when you are interested in catching up.

If you are not a member of LADialogue but would like to join, send an email, along with your LAD position and Area, to LADialogue-subscribe@yahooogroups.com. Or, LAD representatives can visit the group’s home page at http://groups.yahoo.com/group/LADialogue/ and request to join from there. Hope to see you online!
Congratulations on your appointment!

Andrea Aschwanden-Schumacher  ACLA, Switzerland
Adele Delgado    co-CLA, Southern California/Nevada, USA
Sharon Fairborn    co-CLA Southern California/Nevada, USA
Ellen Longman    ACLA, Israel
Satoko Odagiri    ACLA, Japan
Sara Pullum-Pinon    CLA, Oregon, USA
Melinda Ring    ACLA, Kentucky-Tennessee, USA
Colleen Rivera    ACLA, Maine-New Hampshire, USA
Monika Schmid-Herzog    ACLA, Switzerland

We are privileged to include in this issue Betty Crase’s article on the mother-baby relationship concept. It helps us see how this concept has become the basis of LLL philosophy and why it is important to respect it. We hope you will find the article informative.

A new column starts in this issue, “Global LAD”! Please share your stories about how internationally you work in this department. The Contributing Editor, Alison Parkes, will be happy to hear from you at: rnparkes.family@ntlworld.com

This issue of LADders includes some articles about the 2012 European Management Symposium (EMS). A “Fun Evening” was organised on Saturday at the EMS with songs, dance, brief dramas, etc. The LAD Council performed a haka, a traditional Maori war dance from New Zealand. The haka is customarily performed by the New Zealand rugby team as a challenge. On this occasion, we wanted to honour the LAD Council members from New Zealand who were unable to attend the EMS. A real haka can be viewed at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZaDRJ_oHnKo

The LAD Council’s performance at the EMS has been uploaded to: http://youtu.be/j_CZoAAoyYA

The following are some pictures from the EMS. The next EMS will be in spring 2014. We hope to see many LAD representatives there!

LAD Council

(L-R )Lesley Robinson, Alison Parkes, Toshi Jolliffe and Silvia Barco, ready for the haka
Lesley Robinson (Samurai) and Marie Beam (Geisha) in special costumes provided for our performance by Toshi Jolliffe

Juliet Matthee, CLA (left) and Mara Kriel, ACL of South Africa

The Haka Team

Sally Allison in fierce warpaint

*LADders* is a publication by LAD representatives for LAD representatives, designed to offer LAD representatives a place to share information and experiences. © LAD Council 2012