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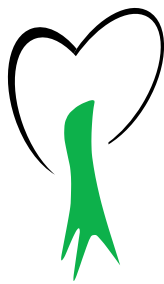
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extend a family

Winter 2012



Members of this very enthusiastic friendship circle, gathered at Extend-A-Family's Winter Gathering Celebration at North Toronto Memorial Community Centre to enjoy the activities, entertainment, food and of course each other's friendship. Their friendship circle, facilitated by Extend-A-Family, has been meeting for five years, every other Thursday, with different groups of students participating over the years. The group is self motivated with two girls each week planning activities for the lunch time gathering. Activities may involve playing active games in the gym, having a talent show or having a conversation about what is important to them. Some of the words friendship circle members have used to describe the friendship circle are: fun, we're able to express our feelings with friends, make some more friends, bond with old and new friends, games and activities are fun, we can share and talk about things with one another, loyal and trustworthy.

To find out more about friendship circles please contact your Extend-A-Family Co-ordinator.

Courage

With courage you will dare to take risks, have the strength to be compassionate, and the wisdom to be humble. Courage is the foundation of integrity.

Keshavan Nair

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Call for Submissions

If you would like to submit an article or photograph to an upcoming Extend-A-Family newsletter and website, please send it to your coordinator or the office, specifying that it is for the newsletter and website. All submissions to the newsletter must have a signed release form. If you would like to submit a photograph, you can send it to the same person; please recognize that we must have signed release forms from all people appearing in the photograph. All submissions will be subject to editing at the discretion of the Newsletter Committee. Additionally we cannot guarantee that your contribution will be used. Given all of that... we would love to hear from you!

FROM THE HEART.....

I've worked with Extend-A-Family for over 20 years and during that time I have witnessed many acts of courage from the families we support. I've learnt that courage comes in many shapes, forms and sizes but regardless of its disposition it is always spoken from the heart. Courage is not tempered with anger, frustration or hostility. Instead, it is imbued with genuine compassion, love and understanding.

Courage in everyday life may not warrant media attention or headline news; it may not appear large or grandiose. But for the families we serve, their acts of courage require a strength and conviction that often surpass mere acts of bravery. Sometimes an act of courage on behalf of the children or young people we support can be the difference between inclusion or exclusion, of friendship and belonging or loneliness and isolation.

I believe that speaking from the heart requires a level of selflessness that is rarely recognised or accorded credit. Sometimes it takes courage to advocate for your son or daughter and speak with a genuine heart; sometimes it takes courage to share your vulnerabilities, worries, concerns, joys or desires; sometimes one just needs to stand up and go against the grain; at other times, it takes courage to listen, ask for help or say no thank you; sometimes it just takes courage to genuinely speak from the heart, and live each day fully in the present moment.

It is with this courage in mind that I feel free to express my joy at the birth of two beautiful babies – my first grandchildren. As I watch these two precious little miracles grow and change every day, I wonder what kind of world they will grow up in. My hope is that they too will be able to speak with courage and belong to a more compassionate society that welcomes and embraces each others' differences. Mahatma Gandhi said "Be the change that you wish to see in the world." Change happens when people have the courage, commitment and belief that each of us can and will make a difference.

Anne Marie Cole, Extend-A-Family Executive Director

EXTEND-A-FAMILY BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Courage! What is it? Who has it? We often hear about acts of courage on TV or in the paper. Usually someone has pulled a victim from a burning building or an airplane. Were these heroes fearful as they acted? Definitely, yet with the help of an adrenaline rush and an inner disposition of caring they acted anyway. And yes, these are acts of courage but not all courage is so spectacular or so bound in time.

Nelson Mandela said this about courage: "I learned that courage was not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it. The brave man is not he who does not feel afraid, but he who conquers that fear." At Extend-A-Family we know that parents struggle on a daily basis to overcome their fears about their children's lives and futures. They struggle to dream good dreams for their children; they search for ways to enrich their children's lives; and they see the bigger picture and work with others to ensure a better future for all. So it seems to me that the good news is that our families and their children are given more opportunities than most to succeed as fear conquerors. They also may experience more doubts about how to proceed. Try as we might, the perfect plan will always elude us.

How can we maintain our efforts to create a meaningful life for those that we love if we are never guaranteed that we will succeed? It is good to remember Winston Churchill's words: "success is not final, failure is not fatal: it is the courage to continue that counts." Then continue we must! Seek strength from those who love you and rely on the courage that comes from loving someone deeply. This is courage for the long haul.

Michele Schmidt, Extend-A-Family, Chairperson

B CURRENT & THE ARTS

From a young age, I knew I was interested in theatre. I was known for dancing and twirling in cute little dresses, putting on performances for my mom and company. However, I always thought this was a phase and I would grow out of and I did, until I joined b current. When my Extend-A-Family coordinator suggested the art group b current to me, I was very hesitant. As the years have gone by I was not one for public speaking or being in front of other people. I went there with the impression that the majority of it was just simple classes in the arts: drawing, dancing, singing, acting, writing etc. Little did I know that there was no real drawing or painting.

In the beginning I was pretty scared. In fact, I cried at least five times during my overall experience. I was afraid I couldn't do it or I'd make a fool out of myself. I think it's safe to say my confidence was depleted but that was why having the rest of my peers there was so great. They taught me to be strong, through the tears and challenges. In the beginning, there was one woman in particular that helped me see that despite my fear, I should press on. It seemed that she was like



myself and had little to no confidence at one point in her life and now here she was, a big time star, she's even doing a television show. Through her support, as well as everyone else's, I saw that there was no need to be afraid.

The hardest thing I think I had to do throughout the entire art program was sing. The first two times I stepped up to sing, I started to cry. At one point, I even had a little panic attack but the teachers continued to push me to stand there, if I couldn't sing it I could say it. This was hard too, but I did it and in the end I didn't run off crying. It was important for me to go through this so I could grow

as an artist.

What I remember more importantly than almost everything else was what the teachers said to me. I was called in to have a meeting with them and I was quite nervous, so I hid behind a woman and listened to them. She told me that the reason they pushed me was because they knew I could do it. Another woman said that she would not let me get away with doing half of what she knew I could do.

It was rather refreshing to know that this group of individuals saw my potential. I forgot about my creative side a long time ago. It was locked up inside of me. The group of youths I was with, some even around my age were extremely supportive. This wasn't like my high school experience so I most definitely appreciated it. It seemed their emotions were not far off from my own and so it was no longer just a group of people but more like a family and we all grew together. This group has done so much for me and even though I know I won't see them either for a while they have changed my life.

Jay (Jeanette) S.,(b current performer)

TORONTO ROCKET REPORT BY TOBY AND ANDREA



On July 21st 2011 the Toronto Transit Commission put its newest subway train the Toronto Rocket into service. The day started at the Downsview Subway Station with a few speeches from dignitaries, then passengers including myself boarded the new train. The new train feels the same excluding the new features. The media was also at Downsview so that meant that they were going to talk to the people on the train. One of them ... City TV, talked to me so I ended up on the news at six as well as other footage in the story during the newscast. The moment felt important as I have never been on TV before. These trains were supposed to start in 2009 and deliveries should have ended in 2011. However it was pushed back a few years. As a transit enthusiast and TTC rider this was annoying. However it was worth the wait and the new Toronto Rocket is cool.

Toby (TTC Enthusiast)

This summer I got to spend a week with Toby. From the moment I met him, I knew he would be teaching me a lot of things I did not know about transit and other cool topics but I did not expect to have such a great experience riding public transit. For most people, riding public transit is just a part of their daily routine but after spending time with Toby, public transit became much more interesting to me. During my week with Toby we had the opportunity to be among the first riders of the new Toronto Rocket. We rode the new train from Downsview Station all the way to Finch and had a great time talking about all the new features the train has. I am so glad I got to do this with him because he taught me a lot of things about the Toronto Rocket which helped me answer questions during an interview for City TV and also because I felt like I was part of something bigger, all thanks to Toby!

Andrea (Summer Student)

Photo Source: <http://www.citytv.com/Toronto/citynews/news/local/article/144260—ttc-s-new>

Strength and Courage

It takes strength to be certain,
It takes courage to have doubts.

It takes strength to fit in,
It takes courage to stand out.

It takes strength to share a friend's pain,
It takes courage to feel your own pain.

It takes strength to hide your own pain,
It takes courage to show it and deal with it.

It takes strength to stand guard,
It takes courage to let down your guard.

It takes strength to conquer,
It takes courage to surrender.

It takes strength to endure abuse,
It takes courage to stop it.

It takes strength to stand alone,
It takes courage to lean on a friend.

It takes strength to love,
It takes courage to be loved.

It takes strength to survive,
It takes courage to live.

Author: Sylvia Kelly



VOLUNTEERING WITH EXTEND-A-FAMILY

A STORY OF FRIENDSHIP

Hello there! For those of you who may not know me, my name is Jessica and I am friends with Cheyenne. I got connected with Extend-A-Family over the past year and through my friendship with Cheyenne, in addition to making a new friend, I have learned a lot about the importance of friendships.



I have chosen to invite Cheyenne into my life because I personally feel that building an inclusive environment is something everyone needs to contribute in order to help maintain a healthy community that is welcoming and inviting for

all. From personal experience, having a family member with a challenge has allowed me to witness first hand, the impact of the lack of social interaction. Friendship can be relaxing and comforting for anyone who may feel distanced from people or; their community. I felt that doing this for and with someone will not only help the community move one step closer to being that much more inclusive to everyone, but that it can also serve as a mutually rewarding experience. I wanted to make a positive difference in a person's life.

Some of the things Cheyenne and I enjoy doing together include going to the mall, park, carnivals, and having ice-cream. Over time, I have learned, not only from asking Cheyenne, but through her expressions, that our friendship has made a difference. She says she enjoys having me as a friend for my company; we each have a friend to talk to, and someone to do fun things with. Hearing this makes me feel and know that when I am with Cheyenne I am with her as a true friend. Our time together will continue to be a rewarding one.

Jessica Pillai, (Volunteer Host)

COOKING WITH FRIENDSHIP

Before I started volunteering with Ryleigh, I was a little nervous about how I would relate to someone who couldn't verbally communicate. I needn't have worried; I very quickly realized that it didn't matter at all that Ryleigh can't speak verbally because she communicates in other ways. When I meet Ryleigh at the cooking class every week; she always greets me with a big smile and my heart melts every time. If



you knew Ryleigh, you'd know that her laugh is contagious. During the cooking class we spend time cooking with her peers and sampling the delicious food we've made. Everyone in the cooking class appreciates Ryleigh's laughter. Her presence fills the room with positive energy. I'd highly recommend volunteering with Extend-A-Family; developing a friendship with Ryleigh and her family has been a very rewarding experience.

Kelsey Munro (Volunteer Host)

VOLUNTEERING AT ETOBICOKE HUMANE SOCIETY

A vibrant young woman, Ashley, was searching for some meaningful volunteer work where she could share her love for animals and exercise her compassionate nature. Ashley connected with the Etobicoke Humane Society Cat Shelter this past summer, and was welcomed with open arms and paws! Ashley talked about some of her roles and responsibilities "I clean the cat litter and cages, feed the cats, and played with them. I made friends with the kitties, I love playing



with them!." Ashley said her 2 dogs sometimes acted funny because she would come home smelling like cats, but she still loves her puppies! "Sometimes it's kind of smelly, but I like taking care of animals." Ashley said volunteering at the Cat shelter made her feel "happy and excited" she enjoys learning new things and is looking forward to continuing her involvement volunteering at the Cat Shelter throughout the year!

Ashely F. (Youth Volunteer)

REFLECTIONS FROM PARENTS ATTENDING THE SUMMER INSTITUTE AT RYERSON UNIVERSITY



Attending the Summer Institute was a wonderful experience. It was amazing to see so many people from all over the world with one common goal in mind: Inclusion. It was a PACKED week. There was so much to learn and so much to share. I was touched by other people's experiences and in many of them I recognized my own. It was at times emotional, but also inspirational. The modules I attended and the discussions afterwards were very educational. I enjoyed the presentations, the arts, the poetry, the music and songs that many talented people displayed through the week. I particularly enjoyed the last evening at the Glitter Party with my group.....we had fun and good laughs. As a parent of a child with many challenges and needs, I know that the work never ends. There is a lot to learn, and a lot yet

to be done. At times it can be discouraging and tiring. Attending a gathering like this has renewed my confidence and renewed my hopes and dreams for my son. It was definitely an enriching experience.

Filomena Nait (Parent)

The Summer Institute at Ryerson University on Inclusion was very refreshing. I experienced a lot of new things, and met a lot of new people. I have learned so much. I will try to incorporate what I have learnt in my daily routine.

Jean Williams (Parent)

The Summer Institute was an eye opener to me with regards to Inclusion. I learnt from the various speakers and workshops

that a person's disability should not be an obstacle to inclusion of people in schools and community. The Summer Institute empowered me to further advocate for my son. The various talks were very informative and all the participants were very accepting of each other. I would strongly recommend anyone who is working towards Inclusion to try and attend the Summer Institute.

Anthony DeSouza (Parent)

I can't think when I was last in a structure of this kind, with the pulse of energy all around me, and the readiness to learn for the sake of learning, of growing.... This was very attractive to me -openness, relatively unstructured learning, and a readiness to engage with issues where the results were unquantifiable...

The effect of many contacts, often deep if brief, with people from all over the world became clearer to me after the experience was over. It was in the difference between my response to the opening and closing circles. I came to the Institute naive, knowing little to nothing about it, and in every sense was "on the edge" of the opening circle. After much mutual engagement with people who were able to take risks in communicating, I was at the end a MEMBER of the circle, moved by the rituals, grateful for the opportunity to meet with so many people who were excited by ideas, excited by their quests even as the Institute helped them to formulate these, and open to connecting.

Naive when I arrived, sceptical at the outset, I had been enriched by the experience of the Summer Institute.

Avril Shar (Parent)

EVOLVING FRIENDSHIPS FROM THE SUMMER INSTITUTE



This summer I attended the Summer Institute, a world conference on disabilities and inclusion. We talked about many issues that affect all people with disabilities such as inclusion, accessibility, improving school systems, social barriers

and advocacy. We attended presentations, shared information and took classes together. We listened as others told of their experiences and realized that these issues and problems are universal. This was just the tip of the ice-berg! There was so much more that we did and explored. The best thing that my daughter Torrie and I did was to make a new friend. His name is Gray Ruffel and he comes from New Zealand. We met Gray through our Extend-A-Family coordinator at High Park for dinner. It was a beautiful summer evening. The talk was very inspiring and supportive as Gray related to Torrie; he shared how he counselled the youth in

New Zealand and that he has plans to become an Anglican Minister. Torrie was able to tell Gray how she planned to work with people with disabilities. Gray invited Torrie to e-mail him and let him know how things were going. Torrie was very impressed and inspired to have met Gray. I hope Torrie continues to be inspired by all those around her, especially mentors like Gray. The Summer Institute brought us together. Perhaps next year you will attend the Summer Institute and come away just as inspired as I was. It was a wonderful experience!

Susan King, (Parent)



FRIENDSHIP CIRCLES

BEYBLADE CLUB AT HOLY ANGELS CATHOLIC SCHOOL



Friendship Circle at Holy Angels Catholic School has been going strong for about four years. A supportive school environment that encourages the building and maintenance of friendship has allowed this friendship circle to thrive. This year the friendship circle has decided to set up a Beyblade Club.

The club meets over lunch, play grounders on the playscape, eat lunch together, then set up their arenas and like playing beyblades with one another. Other group

games and activities are also enjoyed. Last year the same friendship circle went to the movies, laser quest and go-carting, all taking place outside of school..... much fun was had by members, siblings and their parents. Thanks to Principal Levay, Mr. Sloan, Mrs. Neal as well as staff, parents and children for providing a nurturing environment, which values belonging, inclusion and of course friendship.

LUNCH CLUB AT CUMMER VALLEY MIDDLE SCHOOL

A group of grade 7 and 8 students are slowly coming together at Cumber Valley Middle School. They are happy to call their gathering the 'Lunch Club'. They are a neat group of young people who have wonderful ideas about having fun together, playing games, enjoying treats,



doing art and listening to music. Cumber Valley M.S. has been very open to being inclusive. The school staff at all levels are supportive of students who wish to make a difference. Much of the work of inclusion cannot happen in isolation. It is the joint efforts of parents and the school or neighbourhood community that contributes to friendships and relationships. Best wishes to the Lunch Club in their spirit of staying welcoming and growing!

FRIENDSHIP CLUB AT MUIRHEAD PUBLIC SCHOOL

The words 'Friendship Club' at the Muirhead P.S. stir a feeling of great excitement.

18 students from the grade 5 class are part of this exciting club. Ms. Nanthacumar, a grade 4 teacher has been a definite draw to the students' desire to be a part of



this group. The games played have a team twist to them and taking turns is a given. The kids seem to know that respect is a necessary part of being together.

We have learned to laugh with each other. Mr. Brent the classroom teacher has no difficulty with playing a tune and getting the students to keep the beat. Ms.

Robbins, the Principal, is wonderful in seeing that no one should be left out of the group. Play dates and out of school gatherings are exciting options for the friendship club to look forward to in the New Year!

MY WEEKEND AT RE:ACTION4INCLUSION



Last year when I was in grade eleven, my support circle suggested I attend a weekend workshop for high school students called reAction4Inclusion hosted by Community Living Ontario. It was for a whole weekend at the end of March. When I got there, I shared a room with two other girls who were from Yukon. They were lots of fun to talk to and share a room with.

There were teens from all over Canada. We attended workshops but it wasn't all work. There were lots of activities that

were fun and involved everyone. There was even a dance and I danced all night!

My favourite speaker was Norm Kunc. He said even if you have a disability you are just like everyone else. I got to see different people speak about disability.

We were there for three days and two nights. I loved the conference! If anyone is planning on going, I really do strongly recommend it!

Jilly C., (High School Student)

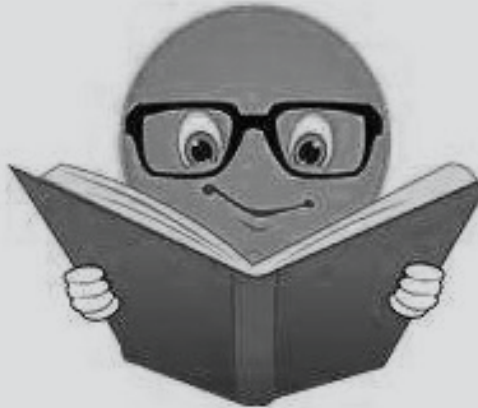
BOOK REVIEWS

"The Are Word: helping individuals with intellectual disabilities deal with bullying and teasing"

by Dave Hingsburger

When I saw this book, I felt compelled to buy it for the Extend-A-Family library and read it within a day...it is a short read (36 pages) and very relatable; it tells of real life experiences and some snippets of cool advice. Just remember, that there are two hurt people in bullying instances; the bullied and the bully.

As I prepare for step-parenthood, I have been infusing some of my reading (between fiction, history, disability related nonfiction, etc) with books centred around children. Enter: The Are Word. Thankfully, bullying does not affect my step-children-to-be directly. I have some experience from my childhood and even though I was told I could tell my parents anything, I felt a sense of shame and blame about the whole issue, like it was my fault and my weakness, like I did something wrong. It turned out well in the end; I finally gushed the situation to my mother, she and I immediately met with the girl and her mother and it was fine ever since. Looking back, I understand now, that because her "differenceness" was hidden from her classmates, they did not relate to her and did not understand; she did not have friends in her class, and was ostracized. Soon after, she had a speech project and spoke about her challenges and in no time had friends in her class. I



also witnessed some bullying my sibling endured and felt helpless. They did not know what a wonderful kid my sibling was, the pain they caused...

There are many online resources about bullying. Can bullying be eradicated? Maybe the seed lies in loving and respecting one another, like the people in our lives and the strangers we encounter.

No Ordinary Boy; The Life and Death of Owen Turney

By Jennifer Johannesen

I was very honoured to be invited to the book launch for No Ordinary Boy on November 16, 2011 at University of Toronto's Hart House; what a beautiful setting for an inspirational reading. I sat down at the venue, with my newly purchased book (waiting to be signed after the reading), a glass of water and,

with 10 or so minutes to spare before the reading commenced, I opened the book and started reading only to lose track of time as I became totally immersed in the book. The next thing I knew Jen, the author was being introduced.

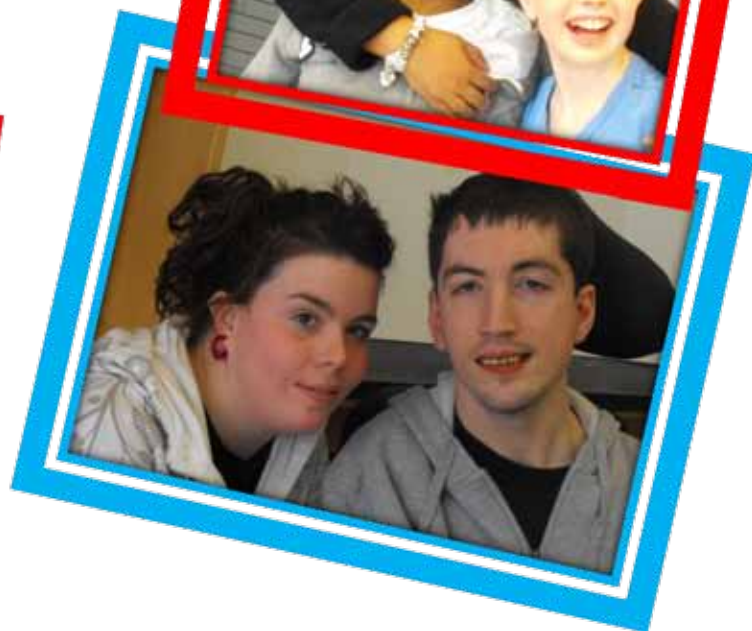
Jen authored the book after her son Owen's death, and it is an honest representation of life of a mother who just wants her child to be happy and comfortable, her decisions and thoughts as she journeys through life's complications and celebrations. Jen shares her rationale for medical and schooling decisions. She writes with humour; little snippets of mothering Owen. Interestingly, she chose to open most chapters with parts from specialist reports, funding requests, Goal Attainment Scaling Form, report card and Toronto District School Board reports. Ultimately, this book is one about love, acceptance and reality. I highly recommend this book.

Cate Houghton

No Ordinary Boy is available at Amazon.ca as well as the Extend-A-Family lending library.

Extend-A-Family has a rich lending library of books and DVDs available... please contact the office to inquire about books or resources.

Extend-A-Family Friendship Gathering February



2011 at North Toronto Memorial Community Centre



PREPARING FOR SCHOOL

I remember vividly the day my son received his diagnosis. Despite feeling like the world had turned upside down, I was suddenly fearful for his future. How would I ensure his needs were met both now and in the future? He was only three years old but I knew that I needed to advocate for my son. I was uncertain when I rolled up my sleeves as a parent to begin my journey learning how to support my son's best interests in the school and community. Our biggest learning curve was in preparing our son and the school system for his entry into kindergarten. There is no magic involved in advocating for your child, (speaking on one's behalf); it's mostly determination, hard work and lots of collaboration. When faced with a challenge one needs to use creative approaches to problem solving, while working towards an end goal.

When working with school systems or professional bodies, remember, **you ARE your child's expert!** You have valuable information and insights to share. Believe in yourself and your child. When presenting your child to a school body or professionals be sensitive to how your child is portrayed. Do not focus solely on your child's needs or diagnosis, instead focus on their strengths, interests and what motivates them. Reframe how you speak about your child; focus on the positives but be aware of their needs and what supports are necessary for their success in school and community, be confident in your ability in pursuing the vision you hold for them now and in the future.

In light of my personal experience in advocating for my son through his school years, I've compiled a list of resources that may be of value to you and your child as he/she enters the school system.

IDENTIFICATION **PLACEMENT**
REVIEW COMMITTEE otherwise known as an IPRC is a formal meeting which determines the **exceptionality** and the **placement** of the student based upon their needs.

Note: One to one supports are not determined at an **IPRC**.

The regular classroom, in the child's neighbourhood school is first consideration if it meets the needs of the student and is reflective of the desires of

the parents.

For further information on IPRC please refer to this Ontario Ministry of Education document

"Special Education: A Guide for Educators".

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/speced/guide.html>

You need to know about **Individual Education Plans (IEP)**. This document identifies the learning goals and strategies needed to best meet your son or daughter's needs. For further Information about IEPs view "**The Individual Education Plan, A Resource Guide 2004**". <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/speced/guide/resource/index.html>



Transitions may cause some anxiety for your son or daughter. Whether your son/daughter is entering school for the first time or you are preparing for life after high school, steps need to be taken to prepare and plan for these transitions. For children who are entering kindergarten, please view the document "Planning Entry to School." It addresses transition planning for children with special needs.

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents/planningentry.html>

Transition Plan is part of the IEP for exceptional students who are 14 or older (excluding gifted students). This is the long term planning for your son/daughter's future when they leave school. It is the responsibility of the parent to request in writing to ask the Principal to initiate this post-secondary planning process. The planning and development of the Transition Plan is a collaborative approach between parent, school, the student and any community supports which are actively involved. Please see "Transition Planning: A

Resource guide, 2002" www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/speced/transiti/transition.html

Final words

When advocating for your son or daughter while in the school system, have a vision for them; it is your destination that matters; it's easier to plan when you know where you are going. When going to school meetings, always take someone to support you, ask for clarification when you don't understand something, monitor your emotions and take notes. Everyone's behaviour is better when there is an audience, which holds true for parents and staff. Remember to share the strengths and gifts your child brings and the value of them being in the classroom. Don't lose sight of their needs as their success will be contingent on the manner those needs are supported. Know your rights, your child's rights, respectfully teach and remind others when needed. Be gracious; acknowledge efforts and good deeds by everyone supporting your child! Believe in yourself, your child and their school community. Most people want to embrace the path of inclusion. Foster partnerships and positive energy! It is **HARD WORK!** Offer support and acknowledge what is right and be respectful. If it is important, be persistent, challenge dated ways of thinking, and offer a fresh alternative to stagnant ideas.

Today, my son is a valued member of his neighbourhood school and community; in a regular class and has strong support of the staff, students and their families in his school. We continue to learn the education policies and strive for a better future for my son. We have made strong connections in our community through our neighbours, his friend's families and from being active in our school community too. There is no magic formula. Be clear in your goals and find your supports, do your homework regarding education policy and your school board's policies and get to work. It is worth it!

For further information on educational resources please visit our website at www.extendafamily.ca

Kim Southern-Paulsen

Extend-A-Family Coordinator

EXCITING HAPPENINGS AND UPDATES 2012



Transition Planning Workshop

Facilitated by Extend-A-Family
January 19, February 16, March 22 Evenings
For Further Information
Contact: Sharon Power sp@extendafamily.ca or
Anne Murray abm@extendafamily.ca

Sexuality Workshop

Sexuality and healthy relationships are an integral part of each person's life, regardless of our ability, talent or orientation. Extend-A-Family www.extendafamily.ca will be hosting a workshop series on Sexuality and Healthy Relationships in the spring of 2012. The workshop will be held once every week on Wednesday evenings from 6:45 to 8:30 pm, for 6 weeks, starting from March 21st to April 25th 2012. There is a registration fee of \$50. Please contact Extend-A-Family if the fee is a deterrent. The workshop is designed for young people between 9 and 15 years of age, accompanied by their parent or guardian.

For further information you may contact Ruth at 416-493-0323 or at rf@extendafamily.ca



New!

East Toronto Parent Support Group

Location: Oakridge Public School
Day: every other Tuesday evening
Time: 6:30 – 8:30 PM
Contact: Kim Southern-Paulsen
Email: ksp@extendafamily.ca

Sibling Support Groups

Adult Sibling Support Group

contact Jessica jvw@extendafamily.ca

Youth Sibling Support Group

contact Sam sr@extendafamily.ca

or Jessica jvw@extendafamily.ca

Extend-A-Family's
Winter Gathering
will be on February
5th at 2pm at Earl
Bales Park. See
flyer for further
information.



Commence 2012 Conference:

Designed to support professionals, educators in their efforts to support young adults with an intellectual disability to achieve success in their final years of high school and as they transition into the adult world. If you are a parent or student this event is for you too. You will be amazed by the possibilities.

To register visit
www.communitylivingontario.ca or contact Joel
MacIntyre 1-800-278-8025 ext. 236

Re:Action4Inclusion Conference

March 02 – 04 2011 Orrillia, ON

This event for youth will inspire and challenge you to make inclusive communities. Hosted by youth for youth, this conference brings attention to social bias and attitudes towards disabilities.

Contact: Linda White at 1-800-278-8025 ext 23. linda@communitylivingontario.ca



EXTEND-A-FAMILY, SUMMER STUDENT PROGRAM 2011



Each year Extend-A-Family hires University or College students to support children and youth in summer camps or in community. This past summer Extend-A-Family hired 7 students to support our

young people so they could be part of the summer experiences in the city. Here are some comments from parents whose children were supported by students:

"I can see the joy on my child's face that he enjoyed his time with the student."

"The student is wonderful, knowledgeable and highly supportive. She takes initiative."

"The student did a great job supporting my son. There was a lot of good communication. The student learned what my child's interests are and got my son out to do things that he does not do."

If your son or daughter would like to participate in the inclusive summer experience and are twenty years of age or under, he or she is eligible to participate.

Applications go out to families in February each year. The family, Extend-A-Family and the student partner together to make the young person's week/s of summer an inclusive and fun experience.

Summer Student Experiences

"This past summer me and my summer student had two weeks together. I was looking forward to spending time with my summer student; because we've spent time together before and we like to be together. When we met, we planned our two weeks together. We went to Reference Library, the Eaton Centre, the ROM, Ontario place, etc. We spent lots of time in the library because we went to the Sherlock Holmes exhibit. I love Sherlock Holmes books."

Torrie K., High School Student

MY EXPERIENCE AT PAZZIA



During my time with Bianca, my summer student, we took a trip to her family restaurant, Pazzia Osteria. It is located in Etobicoke off of the Queensway between Islington and Royal York. It is very close to Lake Ontario. It took us one hour and a half to get there and one hour and a half to get back by TTC. The restaurant was closed to the public so we got the whole place to ourselves. Bianca's dad, Vittorio, gave me an apron to wear to keep my clothes clean. I looked at the menu and decided what I wanted to make, for the appetizer. Vittorio taught me how to cook mussels (not the real muscles). I put a bunch of live mussels into the pan. Then I mixed the sauce with the mussels and scooped them on to the dish. Then I gobbled it all up. I was dipping bread into the mussel sauce. Then we moved on to the main course. I cooked veal parmigana and penne al'olio (pasta with parsley, chickpeas, olive oil, bread crumbs, and bocconcini cheese). Vittorio

placed the veal into the frying pan and I watched over it. When it was done, I put lots of cheese on top. Then I put the veal back into the pan to melt the cheese. We also made Shirley Temples to drink (Sprite, ice Maraschino cherries, and grenadine.) Buon appetito! I brought lots of leftovers home for my family. I learned that cooking requires a lot of thinking, teamwork, and creativity but it is lots of fun. The next day Bianca and I practiced cooking and made a pizza. Maybe I can become a chef one day too!

Sarina L. (High School Student)

THE COURAGE TO BE RESILIENT

When asked to write something on resiliency, I struggled with what to share in this article. I asked myself where do I start and what would be of most meaning. It all came to me as I visited a dear friend, recently started on chemo, and with a new diagnosis of shingles. As a usually strong individual, she was now experiencing her own vulnerability, with little strength to get out of bed, I read a poem on her fridge and 2 lines resonated with me:

It takes strength to hide your own pain,

It takes courage to show it and deal with it. (Sylvia Kelley)

I realized that whatever worlds we are in of developmental disability, cancer, relationship building, conflicts, etc., courage helps us face the unknown, fears and vulnerabilities. And resiliency is the tool with its definition of, "an ability to overcome adversity and bounce back; an attitude of hope and optimism." (Wayne Hammond, Resiliency Canada/initiatives). At the root of it all, is that

courage comes from the French word 'corage' meaning 'heart and spirit'. So how do these all weave together?

Reflecting on our Extend-A-Family community of families and individuals, I have been touched by their resiliency of creating meaningful relationships, amidst the adversities that come across their path. It has been with the courage individuals have shared at their most vulnerable moments, and the openness to allow another in, when a 'heart' can be shared. Only with this courage of sharing the pain and vulnerability, can a strategy in a resilient framework be shared. For in a 'wheel' for developing resiliency, one wedge is coloured, as all the others remain white. The reason for the coloured wedge is that it is the most powerful for resiliency and getting through difficult times. It is identified as 'caring and support.'

Take a moment to reflect for yourself. How are you sharing with others your vulnerability and letting someone in to give their heart that will support your

own resiliency? How can you be there for another to support them to overcome their challenges and provide caring and support? How can you share your own heart with yourself to care and support yourself and be resilient? For in having this courage, you will be resilient.

Anne Murray,
Extend-A-Family Co-ordinator

Resources:

Call/email Anne if you would like more information about developing your own resiliency abm@extendafamily.ca 416-930-2080

www.resiliency.com

Site for Resilience in Action organization and source of many valuable articles.

www.resiliencyinitiatives.ca

Canadian organization that provides model, and resources.

Books:

The Resiliency Advantage, Al Siebert

Raising Resilient Children, Robert Brooks and Sam Goldstein

EXTEND-A-FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS MAKE THE DIFFERENCE WORKSHOP

On May 12, 2011 Extend-A-Family hosted a parent workshop highlighting the importance of relationships. The intention of the workshop was to demonstrate the value of shared relationships for our sons and daughters via story telling. We were fortunate to have a diverse group of presentations; all presenters shared bits and pieces about their lives, their interests and how the people in their lives made great differences. A thirteen year old boy presented with his friends; the parents of a teen boy acted as narrators and shared their son's story which was overseen and censored by their son; and a young lady shared stories of her youth, her often difficult school experiences and her courage and resilience to begin to self advocate and pursue her dreams. She went on a class trip to Europe with her high school, creating opportunity for discovery for her and her classmates. She now attends George Brown College and has become an inspirational speaker on the topic of inclusion and inclusive education.

The varied presentations were done with humour and caring and painted the picture anything is possible if we give opportunities for friendships to grow and prosper and it really does make a huge difference!

Here is what some of our parents thought about the workshop:

"I liked the workshop, it provided the opportunity to see and

listen to the individuals with disabilities talk about their lives. I enjoyed listening to Crystal's speech about her journey and her feelings about the education plan that school offered her. It was powerful."

"Thank you very much for inviting me, it was amazing. The thing I liked the most about this workshop, is "Relationship makes difference" was the rawness of the presentation, I would not change a thing."

"I really enjoyed the workshop; hearing the personal stories from the individuals and parents, themselves. Best little thing I loved was the humour that all 3 presentations had - the humour said to me "There is no need for you to feel sorry/pity for me or for yourself."

"I liked the circle of friends' discussion; the interaction and camaraderie amongst the kids was amazing. Watching them being there for Dave and just having fun was very heart warming and uplifting."

"Seeing the kids and how they are doing...helps me to picture my daughter when she is their age; it's helpful."

We thank all of the presenters and parents for attending our workshop; it was truly an evening of sharing, inspiration and humour. Some parents have reported the effects of this workshop have been long-lasting and are changing future plans for their sons and daughters!



SUPPORT CIRCLES UPDATES

ASHLEY'S POWER PARTY

Ashley invited people close to her to celebrate her life and dream about her future. Extend-A-Family facilitated the Path with Ashley's desire to have a power party theme. Ashley is now on the road to attaining some of her



goals for the future. To find out more about having a map or path facilitated for your son or daughter contact your family coordinator.

DAN'S MAP

My brother Dan had his Map developed by Jack Pearpoint and Lynda Kahn last winter. In preparation family, friends and dedicated workers piled into the living room. It was great to see how many people believe in Dan and want to assist him with his journey. Seeing stories drawn out in pictures using colourful markers and pastels was very engaging. Mom, Dad and the facilitators created a welcoming, comfortable environment which helped open up conversation, enabled people to connect and remember stories together. We were continuously reminded of how valuable building and nurturing relationships are in each of our lives. The pieces of Map began to flow naturally. It was wonderful to see the relationships Dan has in his life. I see how Dan's personality has kept these relationships strong. He teaches each of us as he continues to grow with the support and



dedication of his family and friends.

Experiencing this process has helped us all become better listeners. Deep listening opens up the space for people to really think and answer their own questions. Rather than giving people answers, this process has allowed us to explore conversations by asking meaningful questions. Dan's Map is unique to him. Everybody's Map and Path looks different. I saw how this session was flexible and unique to Dan. The person at the centre is empowered by having their own voice. During difficult times, Dan's vision of the future has been kept alive by the support of his family and friends. The support circle is looking forward to reconvening and exploring the wonderful opportunities and possibilities for Dan's future.

It is so beautiful to tell your story and truly be heard!

Jessica Van Wyk (Dan's sister)

MY DAUGHTER'S SUPPORT CIRCLE

My daughter had a very quiet, solitary life here at home, dreaming of marrying a famed hockey player Sidney Crosby, working with children, riding horses getting out there in the world and increasing her confidence and finding a better life for herself. But now some dreams have turned into reality because a support circle was formed for her and her life has taken some drastic turns in the most positive ways. It's highly doubtful that she'll marry Sidney Crosby, but many of her other dreams are coming true.

My daughter's support circle is quite a formidable one, a large group consisting of family members with the exception of only one. Needless to say, the meetings can be quite interesting and dynamic at times. But, things happen! And with the guidance of our wonderful facilitator, from Extend-A-Family, the group and all that is accomplished is a Godsend for my daughter.

Since the start of the group, she has accomplished so much, and continues to thrive in too many ways to mention. She has volunteered at two different day camps with young children. One sibling helped my daughter become TTC

competent. Encouraging her to use the TTC independently has given her the freedom to get out and experience so much more, like visiting siblings, horseback riding lessons with her cousin, Zumba dance classes in our neighbourhood. Another support circle member has helped set my daughter up on Facebook and with an email address and she is now in close contact with her friends and family members.

Members of the support circle are also learning and growing as a result of being a part of the group. Two members have attended Sibling Support Groups; one went to the Power of Support Circle workshop and also to Brendon Pooran presentation through Safe & Secure Future Networks.

As a person, my daughter has grown in so many wonderful ways. Once very shy, she is now finding her voice and speaking up. Her confidence and pride in herself is increasing greatly. She loves all the activities and volunteer work she does. Her relationships with the group members is continually growing and strengthening. She is experiencing things she never would have done before, things we wouldn't have even known about.

The support circle is a hardworking group and everyone shares in working towards the same goal- the betterment and growth of my daughter's current and future life and the fulfillment of her goals.

My daughter's life is so full. She is currently a member of the Toastmasters International Leadership Program, attending weekly sessions. She is assisting weekly at the Sunday school classes at church. She is connected with a local community centre and has started doing some volunteer work with them. She sees her buddies from the Best Buddies Program at Havergal College.

My daughter loves all that she does and is thriving and growing amazingly! The support and love coming from the support circle has helped to transform her life and she is so very happy while fulfilling her dreams and growing as a young adult. She is a changed person and the world is out there waiting for her and the possibilities are limitless. This is all thanks to her hard work, commitment, enthusiasm and courage, and of course, the hard work and commitment of the members of her support circle.

Jocelyn Cook, Parent

EXTEND-A-FAMILY & COMMUNITY SUPPORT GROUPS

Adult Sibling Support Group

Location: Extend-A-Family main office

Day: once a month

Time: 7:00 – 9:00 PM

Contact: Jessica Van Wyk

Email: jvw@extendafamily.ca

Dads' Group

Location: Extend-A-Family Main Office

Day: last Tuesday of each month

Time: 7:00 – 9:00 PM

Contact: Sam Rocchese

Email: sr@extendafamily.ca

Safe & Secure Futures Network (West Region)

Location: Royal York Road United Church

Day: First Monday evening of every month

Time: 7:00 – 9:00 PM

Contact: Sharon Power

Email: sp@extendafamily.ca

North East Support Group

Location: members' homes

Day: Tuesdays – once a month

Time: 9:30 – 11:30 AM

Contact: Selena Blake

Email: sb@extendafamily.ca

West Parents Support Group

Location: Long Branch Baptist Church

Day: Every other Wednesday

Time: 9:30 – 11:30 AM

Contact: Sharon Power

Email: sp@extendafamily.ca

Mom's Morning Out East Support Group

Location: Cedarbrook Community Centre

Day: Every other Thursday

Time: 9:30 – 11:30

Contact: Tamara Bailey

Email: tb@extendafamily.ca

Youth Sibling Support Group

Location: Extend-A-Family

Day: last Thursday of each month

Time: 6:30 – 8:30 PM

Contact: Jessica Van Wyk or Sam Rocchese

Email: jvw@extendafamily.ca or

sr@extendafamily.ca

East Toronto Parent Support Group

Location: Oakridge Public School

Day: every other Tuesday evening

Time: 6:30 – 8:30 PM

Contact: Kim Southern-Paulsen

Email: ksp@extendafamily.ca

Safe & Secure Futures Network (Central & East Region)

Location: St. Simon the Apostle Anglican Church

Day: First Tuesday evening of every month

Time: 7:00 – 9:00

Contact: Anne Murray

Email: abm@extendafamily.ca

For support group start up dates in the New Year check our website at www.extendafamily.ca or contact the designated coordinator.

IN LOVING MEMORY OF JULIAN DIAZ- MCARTHUR, OWEN TURNERY & PATRICIA MANZO.

You must not think that I have gone
Please don't grieve or pine
I'd rather see you smiling
Laughing - working - looking fine

Death is an exciting key
Which opens many doors
It leads us into other worlds
Quite similar to yours

Life is not an accident
Death is not the end
God designed a mystery
Life and death do blend

So do not think that I have gone
Please don't brood or pine
I'd rather see you smiling
Laughing - working - looking fine

Alan Pemberton



"Only through our connectedness to others can we really know and enhance the self. And only through working on the self can we begin to enhance our connectedness to others"
Harriet Goldhor Lerner

NEW BOARD MEMBER ADAM PEARSON

Hello Everyone,

My name is Adam Pearson and I am the current Treasurer on the Extend-A-Family Board of Directors. I was born and raised in Ottawa and as a young adult I was actively involved with a non-profit organization called Camp Misquah. Camp Misquah is a summer camp for children and adults with developmental disabilities where I experienced many great summers working as a lifeguard and camp counsellor. I built numerous close friendships with a number of the campers and involvement with the camp was an important part of my life.

After graduating from university last year, I moved to Toronto to pursue an employment opportunity with Ernst and Young LLP. Through my online search I came across the Extend-A-Family organization and knew that I would be a great fit as their mission and values are similar to those of Camp Misquah. I was happy and excited when I was asked to take the role of treasurer because, as a chartered accountant student, I am able to apply some of the new skills I am learning toward a good cause. I have been a board member now for 6 months and have thoroughly enjoyed my time with Extend-A-Family. I am looking forward

to, what I am sure will be, an awesome upcoming year with Extend-A-Family and the road ahead!

New Members and Hosts

A warm welcome to Extend-A-Family's newest members and volunteer hosts. We hope that you benefit from your connections with Extend-A-Family and look forward to a lasting relationship with all of you. To find out more about applying for membership or volunteering with Extend-A-Family visit our website at www.extendafamily.ca or contact the main office at 416 484 1317.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT & APPRECIATION

- Extend-A-Family would like to acknowledge the following schools for their partnership and support in building friendships and creating an awareness about inclusion in the community: St. Vincent De Paul C.S., Stella Maris C.S., St. Cecilia C.S., St. Clare C.S., Our Lady of Perpetual Help C.S., St. Luke C.S., Holy Angels C.S., St. Henry C.S., Transfiguration of our Lord C.S. Portage Trail J.C.S., Regent Heights P.S., R. H. McGregor P.S., George Webster P.S., Dallington P.S., St. George's J.S., Hollycrest M.S., Cummer Valley M.S., Muirhead P.S. Kingsview Village J.S., Eastview P.S.
- Pleasant P.S., especially Principal Linda Brown-Merling and teacher Avery Simpson.
- Oakridge P.S. for housing the new East Evening Parent Group.
- Loblaws Cooking School for sharing their passion and creativity for cooking.
- Etobicoke Humane Society for welcoming volunteers to explore their love for animals, especially kittens.
- Extend-A-Family would like to acknowledge Crystal Chin for her time and effort in teaching students and the community at Cummer Valley Middle School about the need for friendship. She empowered and educated the students in thinking about the value of participation and belonging for all people.
- Extend-A-Family would like to acknowledge Ann Barrett for her willingness and open spirit in addressing parents and youth. Ann has the history of a connection with Extend-A-Family as a host. She has brought knowledge and learning about the topic of sexuality and relationships to parents.
- A special thank you goes out to Mother Cabrini Catholic School, former Principal Del Giudice, and her supportive staff, parents and of course the wonderful children at the school for working in partnership with Extend-A-Family over the last four years. Thank you for supporting friendship and inclusion at your school. A heartfelt thanks.....for all that you do.
- Extend-A-Family would like to thank Scarborough Historical Museum for their enthusiasm and welcoming volunteers and encouraging them to share their talents in the museum and the summer camp. It is such an inclusive and hospitable environment!
- Extend-A-Family would like to thank Fairlawn Neighbourhood Community Centre for creatively welcoming volunteers and going the extra mile to help them feel comfortable!

"It takes a lot of courage to show your dreams to someone else." Erma Bombeck

Thank you for your contributions!

Charitable Registration Number 11890-4846-RR0001

Please make cheques payable to **Extend-A-Family** & mail to:



Extend-A-Family
200-3300 Yonge Street
Toronto ON M4N 2L6

For receipt purposes we require the following information:

Name _____ Tel: _____

Address _____