



# Count us in

Newsletter for the Down Syndrome Association of York Region

Volume 14

Winter 2004

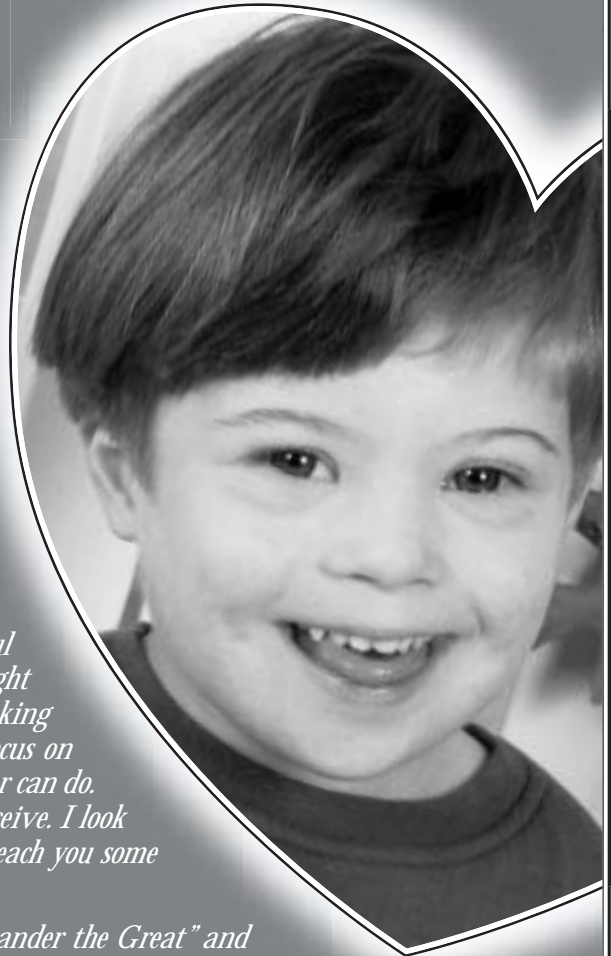
## *To my angel, my son,*

*The day you were born it was as though my heart was reborn. Ever since that day, you have carried my heart with you. Every accomplishment you achieve seems much greater than anything I could ever do and any sorrow you may feel seems more intense. My whole life, I have routed for the underdog perhaps that was God's way of moulding me into the person I am today, the person who was meant not to be a doctor or a lawyer but your mother. There is nothing more important to me than helping you become the best person you can be. I don't know why God gave me the honour of being your mother but I thank him everyday for you and all the blessings that you bring to our family.*

*I always thought a parent's job was to teach, but you have taught me so much more than I could ever teach you. You have taught me to love so unselfishly that it actually hurts. You have taught me that it is not important how fast you get somewhere but rather whether or not you have fun doing so. You have taught me that amongst the pollution surrounding us there is always a beautiful butterfly as long as you are willing to watch out for it. You have taught me that just as your smile makes others smile, being happy and making others happy is what really matters. You have taught me not to focus on what you do not have or cannot do but rather on what you do have or can do. You have taught me, to give can be much more rewarding than to receive. I look forward to the lessons you have yet to teach me, I only hope I can teach you some along the way.*

*I know with God's blessing you will grow into your name "Alexander the Great" and you will take your father and I along for the ride.*

*Love,  
Mama*



Alexander is three years old, born Oct 7, 2000. We found out the diagnosis approximately three weeks after birth, they did not detect the symptoms at birth. I personally felt okay with the situation, but I had to tell Stella, and for me that has been the hardest part of the process, along with health issues.

Stella, my amazing wife, within a short few months of learning our fate, dealt with it and was very proactive in how we dealt with Alexander. Our first hurdle was the catheter procedure at Sick Kids (thank God for them). The procedure closed up his PDA and hid ASD. I believe both Stella and my life changed once we left the Hospital. We were comforted by another young couple whose child's prognosis was not favourable. I really believe that every new parent should spend some time at Sick Kids hospital to gain an appreciation for his or her lot in life. After the experience at the Hospital, our main concern with Alexander is any health issues that may come along. Stella is an inspiration to me, she pushes Alexander to his limits always remembering that at the end of the day he is our 3 year old son, and should be treated accordingly. He has exceeded our expectations already. I also believe that part of his development is that we really have not felt any negativity towards Alexander. Our family, friends and strangers have been nothing short of amazing. They have treated him as a "regular kid", just the way it should be.

Our goal for Alexander is for him to be self-sufficient and happy, everything else is secondary.

*Darryl D'Silva*

# President's Message

I would like to welcome Kim and Mark Bryan to the DSAYR executive and committee. Kim has graciously volunteered to be our Secretary (a position that was recently given up by Bev Veitch, because of an upcoming family move) and Mark will be sitting as our Alternate SEAC (Special Education Advisory Committee) Representative for the York Region Public School Board. The Bryans have always been active members in the DSAYR and I look forward to working with them.

The DSAYR has also found a website designer. We are looking forward to launching our website in 2004. If you have any suggestions for content on the website please e-mail me at [DSAYR@hotmail.com](mailto:DSAYR@hotmail.com).

We are always looking for volunteers! We currently have vacancies on the Social Committee. If you are interested in helping organize the upcoming Family Picnic or any of our other events please e-mail or give us a call. We are also looking for a volunteer to organize the DSAYR's Public Relations and Publicity. If you are interested in this position, please let us know. All of our volunteer positions are extremely rewarding.

## *What's new with the DSAYR?*

Our Spring Networking and Speaker Night is booked for May 3<sup>rd</sup> at Trinity Anglican Church in Aurora. Our Speaker is Kathy Schaffer, Special Education Policy and Programs Branch, Ministry of Education and our topic is **Individual Education Plans (IEPs) New Standards and Directions**. This will be a very informative evening for parents, (even if your child is not yet in school) teachers and educational assistants.



The Annual Family Picnic has been booked for Saturday June 12, 2004 at Camp Green Acres, in Markham. This is always a popular event for our families.

More details, for both events, will be in upcoming flyers.

## *What's new with Ruby?*

Ruby is having an amazing year in grade 1. She is participating in class spelling tests (with modified words) is reading and learning math and having a lot of fun. Ruby's Educational Assistant (thank you Sandra) uses many innovative teaching methods to encourage Ruby's development. One of my favourites is the cheer they do to spell the months. (Give me a "M", give me a "A", give me a "R", give me a "C", give me an "H", what have you spelled? MARCH!) As they do the cheer, Ruby points to the letters on a board. They are also using touch math ([www.touchmath.com](http://www.touchmath.com)) and many of the visual learning techniques used by Len Nicholson (our fall speaker)

and Patricia Oelwein (Teaching Reading to Children with Down Syndrome: a Teacher and Parent Child available at Chapters and [www.cdss.ca](http://www.cdss.ca)).

Ruby has also taking up ice-skating (she is pictured with her EA on a school skating trip) and horseback riding at the GiddyUP stables with Laura Hunter (905-642-8001). Her progress has been phenomenal. Laura, and her husband Brett have an amazing program for children. I would never have dreamed Ruby could do some of the things she does while riding. Ruby is pictured with Snowman her favourite horse.



I always love to hear from our members, so please send your pictures, stories, drawings, poems – or anything to us in the mail or via e-mail. Deadline for submissions April 9, 2004.

## DSAYR EXECUTIVE

Elizabeth Lappin  
*President*

John Bryden  
*Vice-President*

Andy Brookes  
*Past President*

Kim Bryan  
*Secretary*

Tracey Armstrong-Smythe  
*Treasurer*

## COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Sue Hoey  
*Executive Advisor*

Beverley Weick  
*SEAC Separate School*

Linda Bernofsky  
*DSAO Representative*

(Vacant)  
*Social Direction*

Elaine Dawe  
*Meeting Coordinator*

Dawn Fawns  
*Phone Committee*

Theresa Burfield  
*Director*

Tanya Magee  
*SEAC Public School  
Representative*

Dr. N. Blustein  
*Medical Advisor to the Board*

## THE DOWN SYNDROME ASSOCIATION OF YORK REGION

1100 Gorham Street  
Suite 11B-345  
Newmarket, ON L3Y 7V1  
416-410-DOWN  
800-649-DOWN  
E-mail: DSAYR@hotmail.com

# Youth Bowling League

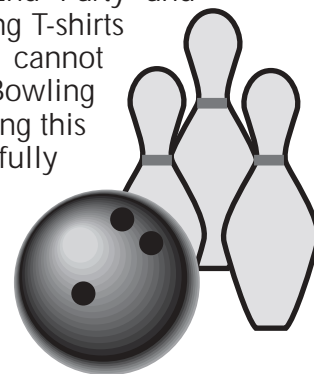
Our bowling season has begun with great enthusiasm for the "BOWLING BUDDIES" Youth Bowling League. Currently we have 10 young men and 4 ladies enjoying themselves immensely every Tuesday night at 7:00 at Aurora Bowl. This is our second season and we are going strong!! Come rain, shine, snowstorm, etc. every bowler will make sure they make their way to the bowling alley. This is 'Their'



night out to socialize, foster new friendships, and oh, bowl a couple of games in the meantime!! Make no mistake, they are very good bowlers and take their bowling seriously. But most importantly, the evening is also about having a fun night out which everyone looks forward to. This is VERY evident upon the first ten minutes of arrival. Everyone must go through the "Who's on my team?", "What lane are you on?", yeehaws, cheers, high-fives and laughter before one bowling shoe is put on one foot!! But let's not forget, this is also a great opportunity for the parents to catch up with each other, make new acquaintances and get the latest 'news', all done in a casual setting. This is certainly an enjoyable evening for everyone.

I personally would like to thank the Down Syndrome Association of York Region for sponsoring the league. They have been very gracious in supplying the league with trophies, which the bowlers received with MANY CHEERS and absolute JOY, a Year End Party and Christmas Party. We are soon to receive Bowling T-shirts which I know they will be ecstatic about. I cannot express the amount of joy given to the "Bowling Buddies" team of young men and ladies for having this opportunity to bowl, make new and hopefully lifelong friendships.

If anyone is interested, the league is currently made up with young adults 14 years of age to 20. If you know of someone who would be interested in joining the bowling group please contact me, Jutta Johnson at 905-727-0840.



# Down Syndrome Association of York Region

## MISSION STATEMENT

We are a group of parents, educators, and community support professionals who firmly believe in the inherent equality of persons with Down syndrome. We are committed to promoting a positive image of people with Down syndrome as being valued community members.

This newsletter reports items of interest relating to Down syndrome and provides a forum for others. The Down Syndrome Association of York Region (DSAYR) does not promote or recommend any therapy, treatment, etc. We will not espouse any particular political or religious view. Individuals or organizations referred to us do not necessarily endorse this publication or its editor. We wish to bring together those interested in Down syndrome and attempt to create an optimistic outlook and attitude. The editor reserves the right to make corrections to material submitted for publication.

More Than Meets the Eye  
St. John's, NL



Canadian Down Syndrome Society  
16th National Conference May 20-22, 2004

## More Than Meets The Eye

**16th Annual Canadian Down Syndrome Society National Conference**  
**The Fairmont Newfoundland Hotel**  
**St. John's, NL**  
**May 20-22, 2004**

Hosted by  
The Newfoundland & Labrador Down Syndrome Society

For more information on the conference including speakers, scheduled events and registration information visit  
**[www.webpage.ca/nldss/confmain.html](http://www.webpage.ca/nldss/confmain.html)**

### **"Relate"**

*This makes me think of my cousin Andrew, he is just 3 months younger than me, but unfortunately he has a disease called Down syndrome. But I don't think of it as a disease because he is a regular child like you and me and does the things that every ordinary child does. Sometimes I think, "Why does he have to have Down syndrome?" Why did this have to happen to him?" But then I stop because I think, if he didn't have Down syndrome, then I probably wouldn't have the special and really wonderful cousin that I have today.*

*By: Vanessa Mileto*

*Please join*  
***The Down Syndrome Association of York Region***  
*For Our*  
***Speaker and Networking Evening***  
*Our Topic is*

***Individual Education Plans (IEPs)***  
***New Standards and Directions***

*Presented by*  
***Kathy Schaffer***  
***Special Education Policy and Programs Branch***  
***Ministry of Education***

**Date:** Monday, May 3rd, 2004  
**Place:** Trinity Anglican Church  
79 Victoria Street  
Aurora, Ontario L4G 1R3  
**Time:** 7:00 pm – 9:30 pm

***Please join us for a wine and cheese reception and a networking opportunity from 7:00 pm to 7:30 pm. Our speaker will begin at approximately 7:30.***

Kathy will review the Ministry of Education Individual Education Plan Standards and talk about the role of parents in developing IEPs.  
Look for further details in an upcoming flyer.



*Coach Mike Young, Eric Froese, Nicholas Porter (sitting), Volunteer Nicholas Young (in grey hoodie), Volunteer Matt Davis, Nicholas Honeyman (far right)*

## ***He Shoots! He Scores!***

It's unanimous, Nicholas Porter, 12, Eric Froese, 10 and Nick Honeyman, 11 all think scoring and cheering are the best things about playing hockey on the Newmarket Nighthawks hockey team.

And thanks to Coaches and team founders Mike Young and Bob Mackenzie, the boys have the opportunity to fully participate in a team sport. Bob, whose eldest son spent several seasons behind the glass watching his youngest brother play hockey, co-founded the team to give kids who are developmentally delayed the opportunity to get out from behind the glass and to experience the game.

The team is co-ed and players of all abilities and ages are invited to join. The team wraps up its season at the end of March and begins again in December. For more information, contact Coaches, Mike Young at 905-898-6202 or Bob Mackenzie at 905-898-7451.

# EXPLORING LITERACY

## Children with Down Syndrome Can Learn to Read

On November 3 the Down Syndrome Association of York Region was pleased to sponsor another evening with special educator and consultant, Len Nicholson. Len led participants through a workshop designed to teach parents the sequence of steps involved in learning to read (which did not involve mastering the alphabet!), and provided strategies for helping our children achieve the skills needed at each step. The ideas were then put into practice as Len demonstrated, then facilitated, as each participant created a book which could be used to begin or continue the process of helping their child learn to read. The large turn-out for this evening workshop was gratifying -- the fact that about half of the participants were educators working with children with Down syndrome, not parents, was heartening. Our children are being seen as genuine learners!

A key skill necessary for learning to read is **visual discrimination** -- being able to find the similarities and differences in objects, pictures, symbols. [When we read we have to be able to see that c-a-n is different from c-a-t].

\*Start with choosing between two **objects**. *Give me the ball.*

\*When the child consistently makes the correct choice have the child choose from more than two objects.

\*When this becomes easy have the child choose between two **pictures** [*Show me the lion.*] then gradually work up to having him/her discriminate between several pictures.

The pictures can come from magazines, newspaper flyers, photographs, colouring books, inexpensive storybooks, postcards, etc.

\*Eventually have your child demonstrate his/her

understanding by pointing to pictures or symbols (eg. peccs, picsyms) on a "theme display" (a large collection of pictures grouped on one page, based on a particular theme (eg. clothing, animals).

\*Having your child *find the one that is the same* is another visual discrimination activity.

-The child can match pairs of identical objects, pictures and symbols.

-The child can match the picture of an object or person with the real thing.

-Eventually your child can put together "the ones that are the same" in terms of category. *All of the animals go here. All of the cars go there.* Sorting and classifying can become quite challenging (eg. summer clothes/winter clothes).

Christmas gift suggestions -- a ring stacker, a shape sorter, simple wooden puzzles and matching games (eg. Memory, Lotto) are fun ways to develop visual discrimination skills.

*Once you are sure that your child can readily discriminate a requested picture or symbol from a choice of many, he/she will be ready to work on whole word sight recognition. Most children with Down syndrome seem to learn better when taught to recognize entire words, rather than trying to teach them through phonics. The key is to teach using motivating words. A word will be considered motivating to your child if it is about something he/she is interested in or is considered by your child to be useful. Learning to read "food words" which may be found on a menu is motivating and, therefore, something your child will work hard to learn! The following sequence and strategies were adapted from Patricia Oelwein's book Teaching Reading to Children with Down Syndrome.*



\*Match pairs of words printed neatly on flash cards (visual discrimination). **It is easier for children to learn sets of words that are part of the same theme** (eg. words about transportation). *The adult tells the child what the word card says.*

\*Match the word with an object. *The adult tells the child what the word card says.*

*\*Match the word to a picture or symbol. The adult tells the child what the word card says.*

*\*When you think your child is able to independently read the word cards have him/her demonstrate comprehension. The adult does not cue the child.*

*\*Have the child select a word upon request. Show me 'dog.'*

*\*Have the child name the word when shown the card. Non-verbal children can match the word card with the object or picture. This is reading!*

*\*Teach simple, functional words (eg. I, like, see) so that short sentences can be built with the flash cards. (I like apples. I like grapes. I like oranges.)*

***If your child is struggling with a particular task, go back and practise the previous task. It is important that your child feel successful.*** Repeating the tasks (although not necessarily the same activity) several times each day is important. Matching socks, playing Concentration and helping to empty the dishwasher (the plates go here) are all visual discrimination tasks which can take place during the course of the day. Repeating the exact same activity many times is also beneficial.

*Many of these skills can be developed through the use of a simply designed, reusable, interactive, home-made book. You will need:*

- a 1" binder
- plastic page protectors (start with 6)
- cardboard to slip into the page protectors for stability
- 1 metre of self-adhesive velcro
- 5 theme-related pictures which will serve as the "illustrations" for the book
- several blank business cards (or cardboard cut to 2" X 3")

1. Insert the cardboard into the page protectors and place all 6 pages into the binder.
2. Turn the first page so that you have two pages at a glance.
3. On the left side place a 1" piece of velcro where the illustration will go. Along the bottom of the same page attach an 8" strip of velcro. This is where the sentence will go.
4. On the right side attach a 10" strip of velcro running vertically down the centre of the page. This is where the "choices" will be displayed.
5. Prepare the rest of the pages in the same way.

*The final product will be a five-page book. On the left side will be an illustration (eg. a cat) with a sentence at the bottom. The sentence is made with words printed on cards, one word on each card with velcro on the back, then attached to the velcro strip at the bottom of the page. **Be sure to always use the softer half of the***

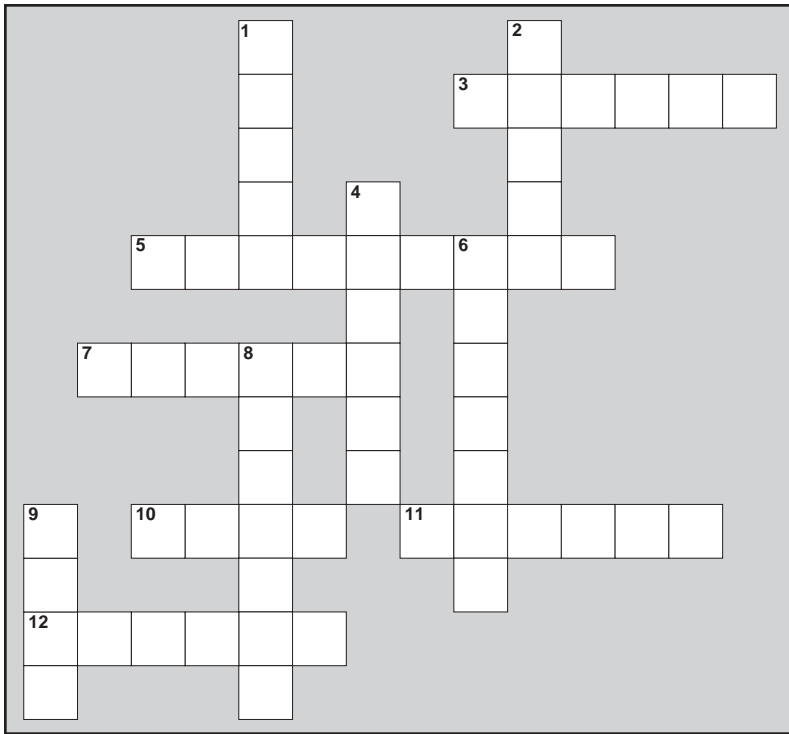
***velcro on the pages, and the rough half on the back of the illustrations and choice cards.*** In the beginning you will get the book ready by attaching all of the words, except the last one, to create a fill-in-the-blank sentence (I see a \_\_\_\_\_). Eventually your child can learn to build the entire sentence.



*On the right side will be a set of choices.* Each

*choice will be displayed on a card and attached to the velcro strip. **The number of choices, as well as the complexity, will be determined by your child's skill and comfort level.** In the beginning you can offer only one choice -- the correct one -- so that success, and continued co-operation, is ensured. As your child's comfort level increases so does the number of choices. In the beginning the choices may be pictures, one of which is identical to the illustration. The choices can then become symbols (eg. Boardmaker symbols), one of which corresponds to the illustration. In time the choices will be words (dog, cat, snake) and, eventually words that look similar (car, cat, can).*

*Periodically switch the order of the illustrations and/or the choice cards so that your child does not merely memorize the placement of the cards. More pages can be added as your child's need for a challenge increases. The same book can be used for many different themes. You can eventually create a "library" of ziploc bags containing illustrations and choice cards, one bag for each theme. By making sure that you are structuring the book in accordance with your child's comfort and skill level you will be providing the two of you with a rewarding reading experience. Your child will perceive the use of this book as a game and will want to use it over and over again. You will be thrilled to see how your child can learn. Sending the book to school once your child has mastered it at a particular level will give him/her a chance to show off his/her abilities, and perhaps even inspire the teacher to create one for use at school (you can offer to help) as an alternative to phonics and worksheets. The goals are that your child develops solid reading skills, comes to view reading as a meaningful activity, and proudly sees him/herself as a capable reader.*



**Across**

- 3 this container holds liquids (JJ)
- 5 a tropical fruit (AA)
- 7 this floats and goes pop (BB)
- 10 a type of silverware (CC)
- 11 another name for small (LL)
- 12 look in this to see your reflection (GG)

**Down**

- 1 the number after 6 (HH)
- 2 use this to dry yourself (DD)
- 4 take pictures with this (FF)
- 6 an animal that lives in the Antarctic (KK)
- 8 the room where you sleep (EE)
- 9 another name for a light(II)

**Additional Clues**

- (AA) this is made of 2 words, starts with p
- (BB) \_\_\_\_\_ gum, starts with b
- (CC) rhymes with pork, starts with f
- (DD) dish \_\_\_\_\_, starts with t
- (EE) where your bed is, starts with b
- (FF) this uses film, starts with c
- (GG) this reflects light, starts with m
- (HH) the number before 8, starts with s
- (II) another name for a lantern, starts with L
- (JJ) milk \_\_\_ or pop \_\_\_\_, starts with b
- (KK) this is a black and white bird, starts with p
- (LL) opposite of large, starts with L

bedroom camera little pineapple  
 bottle fork mirror seven  
 bubble lamp penguin towel

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**Canadian Down Syndrome Society**

[www.CDSS.ca](http://www.CDSS.ca)

The Canadian Down Syndrome Society (CDSS) is Canada's national voice for individuals with Down syndrome. Our mission is to enhance the quality of life for all individuals who have Down syndrome through advocacy, education, and providing information.

The Society accomplishes this mission by providing information and assistance to all those with an interest in Down syndrome, by advocating on behalf of individuals with Down syndrome in the areas of education, employment and healthcare, and by providing networking opportunities for parents and professionals in relevant fields.

This CDSS site has a wide range of information, including a Message Board, shopping on-line for Down syndrome resources, past newsletter articles and links to many Down syndrome organizations across Canada. It is worth a visit.



*Different Genes – Same Value*

## Parents as Partners Workshop Series

*Helping Parents of Young Children with Special Needs to Develop Effective Partnerships  
with Schools*

Workshop Two

# "Strategies for Effective Partnerships:

**Helping Parents of Special Needs Students  
Work Effectively with School Staff"**



**Wednesday, March 3rd, at 7:00-8:30 pm**

Keswick, Ontario Early Years Centre  
R.L. Graham PS, 70 Biscayne Blvd.

or

**Saturday, March 20th, at 10:00-11:30 am**

Richmond Hill at the Loyal True Blue and Orange Home  
11181 Yonge St., north of Elgin Mills Rd.

or

**Wednesday, March 24th, at 7:00-8:30 pm**

Newmarket, Early Intervention Services  
55 Eagle Street (west of Yonge, south of Davis Drive)

This workshop is for parents of children who have been identified with special needs, including autism, speech and language problems, physical or developmental disabilities. The workshops will feature information on school and community services, and activities that will help parents prepare for an effective partnership with school staff.

This workshop is offered at no cost to families.

For more information or to register, please call the Early Years Centre  
at (905)883-6901 or leave a message at ext. 703

Email: [parentsaspartners@apraxia.ca](mailto:parentsaspartners@apraxia.ca)

Online registration: [www.apraxia.ca/pap/workshops/register.html](http://www.apraxia.ca/pap/workshops/register.html)

We recognize the Government of Ontario for its financial support of the ECHO "Parents as Partners" Project.

# DSAYR DAY at WONDERLAND

Sunday, September 21, 2003

Thank you to all of our members and their families for attending the First Annual DSAYR day at Wonderland. We had a tremendous response and are looking forward to hosting this event in 2004. Thank you to Bev Veitch and Tracey Armstrong-Smythe for all of their hard work co-ordinating this successful day!





# The 3rd Annual Looking UP! Charity Bowl for Kids with Down Syndrome

Sunday  
November 3  
2003

Hosted by Beverley and Alex Weick to support charities involved with kids with Down syndrome and their families. The event was a huge success, raising awareness and money for all involved.



# Government Funding is Available

## *Special Services at Home*

The Ministry of Children's Services' (MCS) Special Services at Home (SSAH) program helps children with developmental or physical disabilities and adults with developmental disabilities to live at home with their families by providing funding on a time-limited basis to address individual needs. With this funding, families can purchase supports and services, which they could not normally provide themselves and are not available elsewhere in the community.

### **What funding and/or service(s) are provided under SSAH?**

Each family has a unique set of circumstances. You will need to describe your family's needs, establish your own goals and indicate the type of assistance you need. Funds may be provided for the following:

- Personal Development and Growth – This could include helping a person acquire new skills and abilities, such as improving communications skills or supporting a person as he or she undertakes more and more of the activities associated with daily living.
- Family Relief and Support – Families may have additional responsibilities in caring for a family member with a disability. SSAH provides funding for respite or parent relief and related supports. While the person with a disability will likely benefit directly, the overall goal is to help the family meet their identified needs.

The exact amount of support that your family may receive is determined by a number of factors including:

- The type and amount of service your family needs;
- What you need in order to enhance your ability to cope with providing care;
- The complexity of the support required as a result of the level of the ongoing functional limitation;
- Supports and services currently available in the community and how appropriate the supports are for your needs;
- Support networks of the individual and family;
- Locally identified priorities; and
- Availability of funds.

### **Who is eligible for this program?**

Children with a developmental or physical disability and adults with a developmental disability are eligible for SSAH if they:

- Are residents of Ontario;
- Have an ongoing functional limitation as a result of a disability;
- Require support beyond that which is a normal family responsibility; and
- Are living at home with their families.

### **How do I apply for this program?**

You will need to complete an application form, which can be obtained through your local MCS Regional Office. You will also need a medical statement or psychological assessment clearly confirming the diagnosis of your family member's disability. It is important that this document:

- Indicates the nature of the disability; and
- Supports your request for service.

This statement can be attached to your application, or it can be sent directly to the Ministry of Children's Services by the professional providing the medical statement or assessment.

### **Who do I contact for more information?**

Your local MCS Regional Office can help you find your local service provider.

Ministry of Children's Services  
Central East Region  
465 Davis Drive  
Newmarket, Ontario L3Y 8T2

#### **Phone/Fax**

Tel.: (905) 868-8900  
TTY: (905) 715-7759  
Fax: (905) 895-4330  
Toll Free: 1-877-669-6658

[www.children.gov.on.ca](http://www.children.gov.on.ca)

# Incontinence Supplies Grant – Easter Seals

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On January 1, 1999 The Easter Seal Society started to administer the Incontinence Supplies Grant Program for children and youth with chronic disabilities (physical or developmental) that result in irreversible incontinence or retention problems lasting longer than six months requiring the use of incontinence supplies. This program was previously administered by the Assistive Devices Program (ADP), under the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care. The program administered by The Society is fully funded by the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care.

The Easter Seal Society has a contractual agreement with the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care, in which it must follow Ministry set criteria for the program and meet specific reporting requirements.

## Eligibility

The program is for children and youth between the ages of 3 to 18 years of age with a chronic disability resulting in irreversible incontinence lasting longer than six months. Some children under the age of 3 may be eligible for funding depending on their diagnosis (for example, Spina Bifida, Prune Belly Syndrome). Children who are "bed wetters" are ineligible for funding as they do not meet the criteria set by the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care.

The application must be completed and signed by a medical physician licensed to practice in Ontario.

The child must be a resident of Ontario and hold a valid Ontario health card.

## Funding

There are three levels of funding:

- Level A: \$400/year for diapers (age 3 to 5 years), intermittent catheters (3 to 18 years), reusable garments (3 to 18 years)
- Level B: \$900/year: diapers (6 to 18 years), male external catheters
- Level C: \$200/year; enema supplies (3 to 18 years)

The grant is a contribution to the cost of supplies and may not cover all costs. Families receive a cheque every 6 months for half of the approved grant. Families must re-apply if they want to increase grant levels. Families are responsible to retain all receipts for the supplies they purchase, as proof of need is required for the grant.

Questions?

[www.easterseals.org](http://www.easterseals.org)

Telephone	Toll Free	1.800.668.6252 ext 355
	Local	416.421.8377 ext 355
Fax	Local	416.696.1035
Mail	ATTN: Tina Shier The Easter Seal Society, Ontario 1185 Eglinton Ave. East, Suite 706 Toronto, ON M3C 3C6	

# Assistance for Children with Severe Disabilities

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The Assistance for Children with Severe Disabilities (ACSD) program, formerly known as the Handicapped Children's Benefit (HCB), provides help to parents to assist with some of the extra costs of caring for a child who has a disability. The purpose of the benefit is to help children who have disabilities live as normal a life as possible at home and in the community. In order to qualify for this program, financial and medical criteria must be met.

## What funding and/or service(s) are provided under the ACSD program?

- Financial assistance ranges from \$25 to \$375 per month depending on the family's gross annual income and the number of other children in the family;
- A child is eligible for a dental card; and

*continued on Page 14*

continued from Page 13

- The program may help parents with extraordinary costs related to a child's condition. Examples include travel to doctors and hospitals, special shoes and clothing, parental relief, wheelchair repairs, hearing aid batteries, and financial assistance for basic dental care, drugs, eyeglasses, and hearing aids.

### Who is eligible for this program?

- The child must be under 18 years of age and live at home with a parent or a legal guardian.
- The income of a family will be evaluated to determine qualification.
- The child must have a severe disability that results in a functional loss.
- Extraordinary costs must be present which are incurred directly as a result of the disability.

### How do I apply for this program?

Parents applying for ACSD benefits need to obtain an application form from the nearest MCS Regional Office. Once completed, the application form should be returned to the Regional Office. Any available supporting documentation should accompany the application.

A Special Agreements Officer will review your application and contact you if further information is required. The decision about your application will be communicated in writing.

The rate is calculated in two steps:

1. Calculate extraordinary special needs costs, and
2. Assess the special needs costs in relation to total family income.

### Who do I contact for more information?

#### Address

Ministry of Children's Services  
Central East Region  
465 Davis Drive  
Newmarket, Ontario L3Y 8T2

#### Phone/Fax

Tel.: (905) 868-8900  
TTY: (905) 715-7759  
Fax: (905) 895-4330  
Toll Free: 1-877-669-6658

#### Area Served

Durham, Haliburton,  
Northumberland, Peterborough,  
Simcoe, Kawartha Lakes, York

## Jane Cameron

[www.janecameron.com](http://www.janecameron.com)

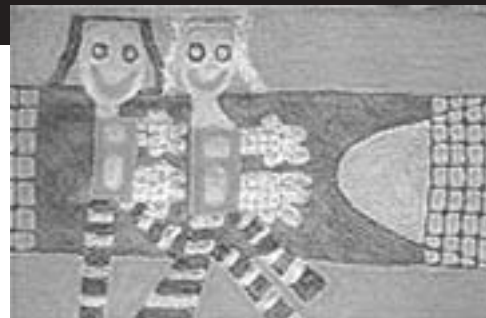
Born in High River, Alberta, in 1949, Jane Cameron had an exemplary life. She travelled the globe, met dignitaries and stars, filled her room with medals and trophies commemorating her feats, and earned the esteem of countless individuals who praise her art and her grace.

When she was diagnosed with Down syndrome at four months old, Jane's parents were told their daughter was "retarded" and that they should: "Put her in an institution and forget about her." They were shocked and, despite knowing little to nothing about Down syndrome they decided that what their child needed was as

much love, care and education as they could possibly give her.

Although her artistic talent was not discovered until Jane was about twenty, her tapestries now hang across the world. Jane's embroidered tapestries are glowing statements of her imagination and her love and affection for all living things. A life that could have been a tragedy became one of joy for Jane's parents and hope for other parents of children with Down syndrome.

Jane is an example of the unknown potential hidden in



*The Tapestry is called  
"Jim and Susan Tobogganing"*

many Down syndrome children, which only needs the opportunity to be discovered and developed.

#### Snow Poem

The snow is falling very fast,  
Falling fast and white  
The ground is covered now at  
last.  
Drifting deeper through the night

# OUR KIDS GO TO CAMP

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## In the mix

### At inclusive camps, kids with learning and physical disabilities are part of the camp circle

By Sharon Aschaiek

"Camp should involve the participation of everyone." The move toward integrated camps in Ontario is in keeping with trends in other provinces, including Quebec. "We've always encouraged it," says Louis Jean, director of the Association des Camps du Quebec (ACQ). Of 122 camps accredited by the ACQ, 42 are inclusive to varying degrees.

"There are some campers who would find a totally specialized camp not challenging enough," he says, "but they need special attention at a regular camp. Integrated camps solve that problem."

### Finding a camp that suits your child's special needs

The Ontario Camping Association (OCA) publishes a yearly camping guide that lists inclusive camps and camps working towards inclusion. The information's also available on the OCA Web site, [www.ontcamp.on.ca](http://www.ontcamp.on.ca).

The OCA's Sari Grossinger says parents must be diligent when researching an integrated camp for their special needs child.

Ask these questions:

- \* Will the facilities accommodate the needs of my child?
- \* What is the ratio of counsellors to campers?
- \* How are staff trained?
- \* Are there medical personnel on hand?
- \* Is the programming suitable?
- \* If the camp is only partly inclusive, will efforts be made to integrate my child into the group?
- \* Is the camp competitive or co-operative?
- \* Can my child and I meet with staff and tour the camp?
- \* How will my child get to and from camp?
- \* Can I stay in touch to be kept abreast of my child's progress?

Grossinger also advises parents to network with other families and learn about their camp experiences. As well, she says, be up front with the prospective camp about your child's needs, abilities and any medication he or she may be taking.

Camp Green Acres is also working to bridge that gap. Of the 900 campers age 3 to 13 that the Markham, Ontario day camp accommodates each summer, up to 150 are kids with special needs. Each special needs child works one-on-one with a mentor selected by the parent or a member of the camp staff, but every effort is made to ensure the camper functions as part of the whole.

"Everyone works together as a group," says Robyn Hochglaube, camp director. "Unless there's a need for an aid to step in, we make it as seamless and unobtrusive as possible."

Lyssa Caine, owner and director of Camp Joshua in Belwood Lake in Rockwood, Ontario, has also seen the benefits of fostering an inclusive camp environment. As a residential camp working toward inclusion, Camp Joshua accommodates 40 campers per summer, with up to seven being kids with physical or behavioural problems.

"We pick sites that are barrier-free, with more flat terrain, rather than rocky and steep," says Caine, pointing to one of the camp's modification strategies.

Caine also co-chairs the OCA's special needs committee with Grossinger, and says modification isn't necessarily as expensive or time-consuming as some camps think.

"Depending on the camp, the changes don't have to be so in depth, maybe just tweaking programming or installing a ramp," she says.

Most of all, it's about further promoting the values that camps already embrace: respect and teamwork.

"We're teaching kids to be selfless and look out for others, and become part of a unit at camp," Caine says. "They are learning respect and important social skills for down the road."

*\*This article originally published in the 2004 issue of *Our Kids go to Camp*. Reprinted with permission from *our kids publications ltd*.*

# SEAC Update: York Region Public School Board

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This update will focus on the November meeting and the “Ontarians with Disabilities Act” (ODA). Our October meeting had to be cancelled as a result of the provincial election.

The meeting was well attended. A group of teachers who are furthering their studies in special education were in attendance. Also in attendance was Mark Bryan. Mark Bryan has agreed to be the alternate rep for the Down Syndrome Association of York Region. Mark was introduced to the committee. I am grateful to Mark for taking on this role and I look forward to working in collaboration with him in the upcoming term.

The main focus of the meeting was a presentation by Louise Morrow and Karen Bett on “Ontarians with Disabilities Act” (ODA). YRDSB actions to date and plans for the next year were presented.

The Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA) received Royal Assent on December 14, 2001 and all sections of the Act were proclaimed by September 2002. In August 2002 the Ministry of Citizenship published “A Guide to Annual Accessibility Planning under the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001” and made it available on their website: [www.gov.on.ca/accessibility/english/act2001.htm](http://www.gov.on.ca/accessibility/english/act2001.htm).

## **Requirements under the ODA:**

School boards are required to prepare annual accessibility plans which:

1. Report on the measures the organization has taken to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities.
2. Describe the measures in place to ensure that the organization assesses its Acts/by-laws, regulations, policies, programs, practices and services to determine their effect on accessibility for people with disabilities.
3. List the policies, programs, practices and services that the organization will review in the coming year to identify barriers to people with disabilities.
4. Describe the measures the organization intends to take in the coming year to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities.
5. Make the accessibility plan available to the public.

## **Consultation:**

School boards are also required to consult with people with disabilities in preparing their plans. An Accessibility Planning Working Group is to be set up, and SEAC’s are mentioned among possible sources of representatives. It is also appropriate for SEAC’s as a whole to be consulted for input into preparation of the Accessibility Plan.

## **Mandates and Definitions under ODA:**

“The accessibility plan shall address the identification, removal and prevention of barriers to persons with disabilities in the [school board’s] by-law, if any and in its policies, programs, practices and services.” {ODA; s. 15 (2)}

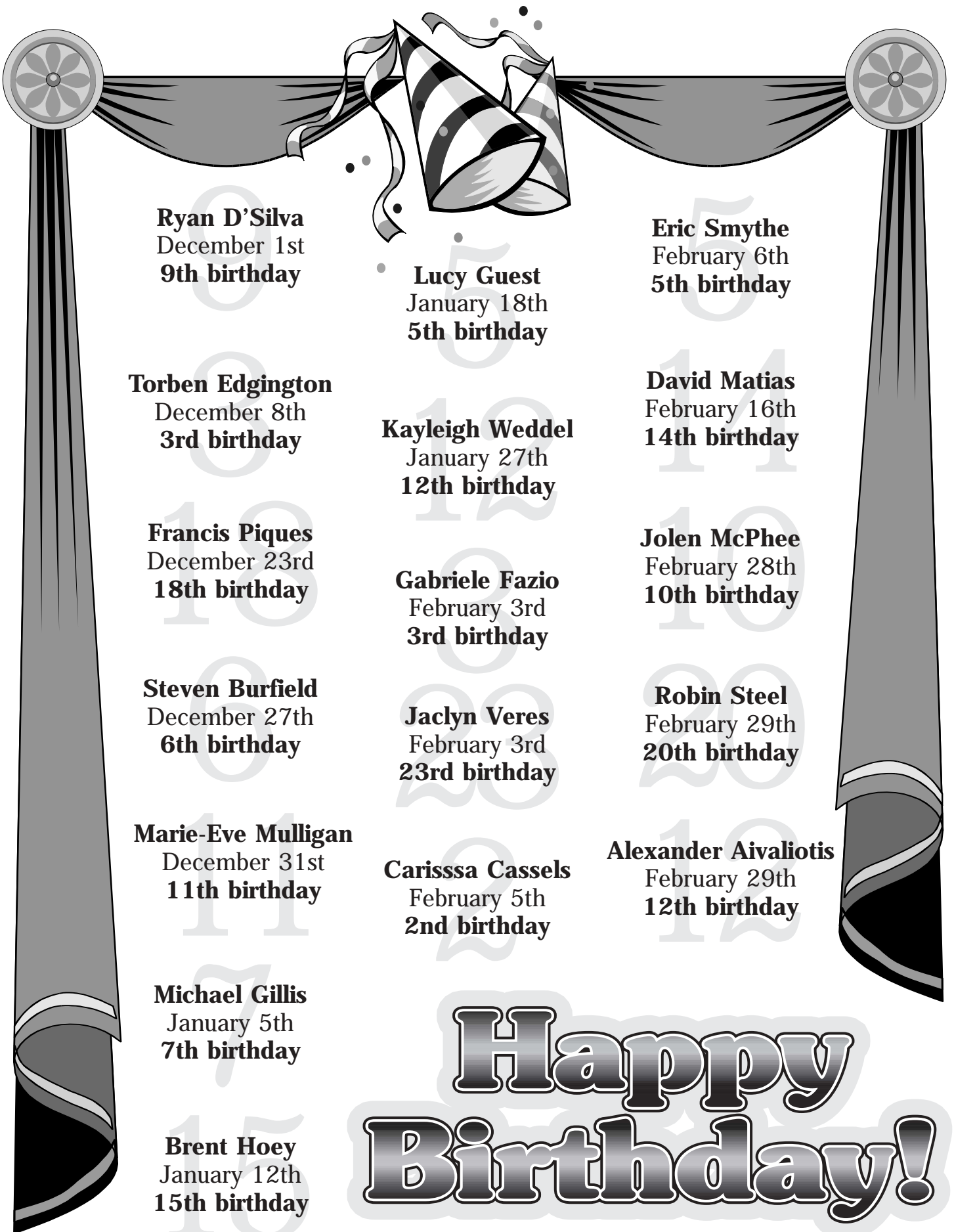
A barrier is “anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of his or her disability, including a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, an informational or communications barrier, and attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy or practice.” (ODA).

The ODA adopts the definition of disability from the Ontario Human Rights Code, which includes “a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language.”

Members of SEAC were given opportunity to review what the board has done to date and what the plans are for the next year. We were also given the opportunity to put our names forward to represent SEAC on an Accessibility Planning Working Group which I have done.

We discussed at length the barriers to accessibility and the majority of the members agreed that there are many. This legislation is a starting point for all us of to examine where we are today and where we want to be in the future. We were challenged to think about our own homes and workplaces and consider what would need to be done to make them accessible to all and the cost of doing so. It is pertinent to note that this legislation did not come with any direct funding to YRDSB to initiate these changes.

I believe this legislation will begin dialogue and start the process of change. We all need to be vigilant in ensuring those with disabilities achieve their maximum potential. One way we can contribute is by recognizing the challenges they face and eliminating the barriers.



**Ryan D'Silva**  
December 1st  
**9th birthday**

**Lucy Guest**  
January 18th  
**5th birthday**

**Eric Smythe**  
February 6th  
**5th birthday**

**Torben Edgington**  
December 8th  
**3rd birthday**

**Kayleigh Weddel**  
January 27th  
**12th birthday**

**David Matias**  
February 16th  
**14th birthday**

**Francis Piques**  
December 23rd  
**18th birthday**

**Gabriele Fazio**  
February 3rd  
**3rd birthday**

**Jolen McPhee**  
February 28th  
**10th birthday**

**Steven Burfield**  
December 27th  
**6th birthday**

**Jaclyn Veres**  
February 3rd  
**23rd birthday**

**Robin Steel**  
February 29th  
**20th birthday**

**Marie-Eve Mulligan**  
December 31st  
**11th birthday**

**Carisssa Cassels**  
February 5th  
**2nd birthday**

**Alexander Aivaliotis**  
February 29th  
**12th birthday**

**Michael Gillis**  
January 5th  
**7th birthday**

**Brent Hoey**  
January 12th  
**15th birthday**

**Happy  
Birthday!**

## INDIVIDUALIZED FUNDING

Individualized funding is a promising alternative model for financial government support of adults with special needs. It has proven successful in other parts of Canada and the world, and is slowly being considered here in Ontario.

The current, traditional model is that when people with special needs leave the school system in their early adult years they are placed on waiting lists for "service," they become involved in segregated day programs, some are offered limited job placements, and some will go off to live in group homes. Many families are shocked and disappointed with the lack of opportunities in their communities for adults with special needs. Many find themselves having to spend countless hours seeking activities and becoming full-time companions for their adult child who is now spending most of his/her time at home, becoming increasingly more dependent and closed off from social contacts. Individualized funding means that money goes directly toward meeting the unique requirements of each person with special needs, rather than into funding special programs and building special facilities. The money allocated to a family can be used to hire a support worker who can provide whatever level of assistance is needed for the client to participate, contribute and live his/her life to the fullest -- to have the same privileges and responsibilities that all adults have. This may mean living in a commercial

apartment building with room mates of his/her choice, seeking and doing meaningful work, attending college classes, volunteering in the community, or enjoying recreational activities with friends. It allows the person with special needs to have direct input into making decisions about his/her own life, and ensures that decisions are made in his/her best interests. It opens up an endless array of possibilities! This model makes much more efficient use of government money in that the existing community infrastructure (stores, banks, apartment buildings, businesses, recreational facilities) is being accessed. There are even positive implications for the health care system with a likely decrease in illness, abuse and depression which is often associated with individuals living and working in segregated settings.

In order to convince the politicians and bureaucrats to provide financial support using an individualized funding model you must submit and negotiate a comprehensive plan to the minister in charge of the Ministry of Community and Social Services. The Family Alliance of Ontario has a great deal of knowledge about government requirements, as well as experience in drafting, presenting and following up with these proposals. They are willing and eager to give advice to families interested in seeking this type of support and can be contacted at [www.family-alliance.com](http://www.family-alliance.com) or Family Alliance of Ontario/ Kinsmen Building, York University/ 4700 Keele Street/ Toronto, ON/ M3J 1P3.

## Green Acres Creates Special Needs Program for Summer 2004

Camp Green Acres, established in 1966, is a Toronto area Day Camp that offers children a fun and safe environment, and a chance to participate in a variety of activities. Green Acres would like to offer the opportunity to children with autism, Down syndrome, ADD, ADHD and Aspergers to join us at camp.

At Camp Green Acres we strive to develop a thorough understanding of each camper's needs. This allows us to discover and develop their individual abilities. Our main goal is to increase confidence and independence in a comfortable setting for your child as well as giving each child the opportunity to interact with other children.

Camp Green Acres can arrange for one to one or one to two Camper to Counselor ratio, plus additional activity staff depending on the needs of each child. This low camper to counselor ratio will help cater to your child's individual needs which will allow them to experience camp to the fullest.

With our dedication to providing special needs children with an outstanding program, Camp Green Acres welcomes Randie Newman as our full-time Inclusion Program Co-ordinator. Randie graduated from Early Childhood Education at Seneca College in 1992. Since then, Randie has worked at Day and Overnight Camps as a Counselor and Unit Head. Randie's teaching career has provided her the opportunity to work in a variety of Nursery School settings with both typical and special needs children. During the school year, Randie is currently on staff with the York Region Board of Education working with Autistic children.

Please feel free to contact Randie Newman at (416) 702-2695 or Green Acres Day Camp at (905) 887-1400 for more information.





## COMMUNITY LIVING HUNTSVILLE

is hosting this outstanding 2-day Conference at the  
**HOLIDAY INN/HIDDEN VALLEY**  
in Huntsville, Ont.

**APRIL 20 AND 21, 2004**

# **NORTHERN ROOTS**

## **NURTURING INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES**

***\*\*\*5 inspiring and internationally renowned speakers\*\*\****

*John McKnight*

*John O'Brien Jack Pearpoint*

*Carol Tashie Judith Snow*

**Early Bird Registration: \$150.00 by March 5/04**

**Final Registration \$175.00 by April 6/04**

**Fee includes luncheon both days**

**Accommodations arrangements through the Holiday Inn**

**Questions?**

**Call Sandy Nicholson at Community Living Huntsville.**

**705-789-4543 ext. 26**

**email: [childser@surenet.net](mailto:childser@surenet.net)**

Down Syndrome Association of York Region  
1100 Gorham Street  
Suite11B-345  
Newmarket, Ontario L3Y 7V1

Publication Mail Agreement  
#1951513

*Please Join*  
***The Down Syndrome Association of York Region***

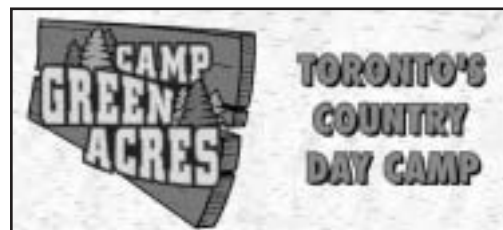
*For our free*

# **Annual Family Picnic**

**Swimming, Waterslide, Mini-Golf, Barbeque, Farm Animals,  
Games Entertainment, Sports facilities, Loot bags, Raffles and  
A whole lot more!**

**Date: Saturday, June 12th, 2004**

**Place: Camp Green Acres  
11123 Kennedy Road  
Markham, Ontario**



The camp is located on the east side of Kennedy Road about 3 km North of Major Mackenzie Dr.

**Time: 11:30 am – 5:00 pm**

This is always a very popular event.  
Join the fun this year, meeting old and new friends!