

CHILDREN AT RISK NEWSLETTER

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Issue 34

March 2006

5th ANNUAL "ROCKIN' FOR RISK"

DANCE

Tickets are now on sale for Ottawa's biggest and best 50s/60s/70s dance! **Saturday, April 1st, 2006** is the date for the annual Children at Risk "Rockin' for Risk", being held at the Nepean Sportsplex. Our event features live music by local band "Intersection", a visit by Ottawa's premier Elvis Tribute Artist Shawn Barry, Capital Chordettes quartet "Sleepless", door prizes, silent auction, raffle, dance and costume contests and more! Once again Ottawa's "hip cat", OLDIES 1310's Brother Bob Derro, will host a night of dancing, fun and fundraising - all for Autism!

Tickets are \$20 advance/\$25 door and are available through many retail locations in Ottawa (see list on our website, www.childrenatrisk.ca) or call the office at 741-8255.



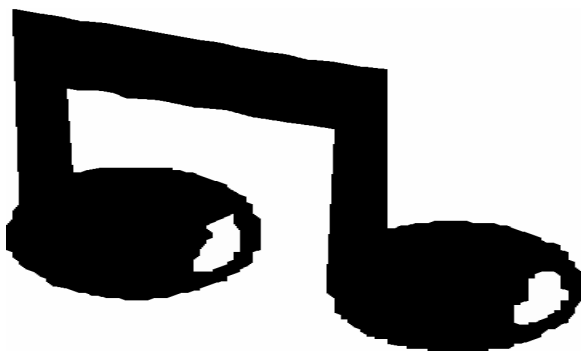
VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR ROCKIN' FOR RISK!

Come and have some fun at Children at Risk's
Annual Rockin' for Risk!

Many AWESOME jobs need to be filled
during this fun-filled evening. Shifts range
from 12-4 pm, 6-10 pm and 9-2 am!!

If you can help us out on APRIL 1st, please e-
mail Janet at janet.k@sympatico.ca!!!

Night Volunteers must be 19+ years old!
(LCBO licensed event)



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Submitted by David H. Allingham

It's that time of year again... Spring and that can only mean one thing, "Rockin' for Risk". So it's time to find that old Grease video and see if you can find some kind of wardrobe selection for this big dance. Then either volunteer or arrange to make sure you get out that night, buy a ticket and have some fun.

Speaking of that I had some fun selling 50/50 tickets in February by following the example of the food vendors I saw a lot of the game from the front row and got some good stair climbing exercise when play was stopped. Highly recommended if you like 67's games.

As far as the Board is concerned we are continuing to manage our expenses. With engaging some additional office staff part time, we are able to provide for better organization in the office and decrease the wait time for a response from those seeking our services or desiring to donate. If you have any innovative ideas for funding, we would be glad to hear it. We successfully hired some new group leaders and I'd like to welcome them to Children at Risk. This permitted us to develop some parts of a staffing plan to allow us to be more effective when looking for individuals who can assist the children and us. We are continuing with the process of formalizing our activities so that transitions can be made more smoothly and Children at Risk easier to run on a day to day basis.

This brings me to the Annual General Meeting (AGM) which we have scheduled for **June 15th at 7 PM**. PLEASE COME! We'll have some new policies to present; Sheila Bell will be coming to talk about what to do about our teenagers. While you are welcome to come to any board meeting, the AGM is really your best time to come and have an impact on the organization. Come tell us what you like and how you'd like to see us change. Come and vote for your Board, better yet - come and be on the Board!

CHARITY COORDINATOR'S MESSAGE

Submitted by Brenda Reisch

Our new winter sessions of Social Skill have begun, along with resuming our Sibling Support Groups after the hiring of 5 new Facilitators. Please join me in thanking **Marlene Steppan, Liz Schissler, Amanda Telford and Louise Pavelic** for their time and work in coordinating the hiring effort with updated job descriptions, resume screening and interviews.

Carol Laity has returned to the office to help with phone calls and administration, still recovering from a fall she had in December that severely injured her knee. With Carol back, we hope to be even more available to our families, answering and returning calls more quickly and getting information packages and registration forms out in record time! Please note, however, that our office hours are still part-time and you should call ahead if you plan to drop by.

The spring is a busy time, with Rockin' for Risk on April 1st, the Annual Raffle, our Annual General Meeting and Annual Family Picnic in June, plus often several other events and activities to fit in before school finishes. As usual, we will keep our families informed by our group email listing and occasional mailings. We always welcome suggestions for our community by email at carsup@magma.ca, telephone 741-8255 and FAX 741-5530.

PRE-"ROCKIN' FOR RISK" MALL SOCK-HOP

For all those guys and gals who can't wait until April 1st to be dancing fools (pun intended!), Lincoln Fields Shopping Centre and Arthur Murray Dance Studios are co-hosting an afternoon Sock-Hop at the Mall. On **Saturday, March 18th**, from 1 - 3 PM, Arthur Murray dance instructors will be demonstrating retro rock & roll dances like the jive, jitterbug, hand-jive and twist - to name a few! We welcome the public to attend and watch or even join in the fun, as the instructors will be on-hand to help you learn some new moves! At the same time you will be able to purchase Rockin' for Risk tickets at the advance discount of \$20. We will also be selling raffle tickets on-site for a "Bob and More" \$400 Gift Package that includes:

A Private Lunch for You and a Friend with OLDIES 1310's Very Own "Brother Bob" at Buffalo Charlies Bar & Grill

An Exclusive, Monogrammed OLDIES 1310 Outer Boundary 2-Piece Jacket

\$50 in Gift Certificates from The Wine Rack

\$50 in Gift Certificates from Lincoln Fields Loeb

Tickets are \$2 each or 2 for \$5 and can be purchased at **Legend Records in Lincoln Fields Shopping Centre** or through CAR, carsup@magma.ca or 741-8255. Prize will be drawn at 3 PM on March 18th just after the Sock Hop.

EVENT TICKET DONATIONS

Throughout the year, Children at Risk actively solicits ticket donations for our families* for local entertainment and sports venues. These tickets are requested for many reasons: the high cost of therapies for our children leaving little funds for outings, the opportunities to try an activity with your ASD child without worrying whether it will work or not, a reward for siblings who sacrifice much for their ASD brother or sister or even an outing for Mom & Dad to "get away" for a short time! Recently one family sent this acknowledgement that we want to share with you:

"Hi Everyone at Children at Risk. I just wanted to let you know how much we enjoyed the NAC orchestra tonight!!! It was better than we could have hoped for! This was Alex's and my first experience with a live performance and I can't tell you what it meant to us. Please send out our thanks to everyone!!"

Huge hugs, Kat

*Please note that tickets are offered to Children at Risk members with current

memberships first, only leftover or short notice donations are posted on the Autism Support Ottawa email listing. Currently we are requesting tickets for:

Disney on Ice
Harlem Globetrotters
Dora the Explorer

GROUPS UPDATE

Friendship Social Skill Groups

Our winter session of Social Skill Therapy groups began in February, with 6 groups servicing children from ages 4 to 16. 4 groups are Site-Based at our Donald Street offices, 1 is Site-Based at the Independent Grocer in Barrhaven and 1 is Outing-Based for teens, visiting recreation venues around the city.

We have tried to accommodate as many new referrals as possible in the winter session. However, not all children were able to be offered a group, as the groups are compiled with similar levels of functionality and ages. We aim to try and incorporate as many of our new applicants as possible for upcoming groups, with a spring session commencing in May.

Life Skills for Asperger/High-Functioning ASD Children

We are still planning a new group for **Life Skills for Asperger/High-Functioning ASD Children**, to commence in May. This group will offer a group approach for higher-functioning ASD children. Many children with higher needs are in special Autism

Units, where Life Skills is part of their curriculum. However, children that are integrated in regular classrooms do not have access to this skill development and we heard from families that it was often difficult due to time constraints/other family commitments for parents to set aside time to work on this area. This group would be held at our Donald St. offices, with sessions lasting 8 weeks, 2 hours each meeting, with topics like menu planning, meal preparation, housekeeping, hygiene, etc. The age range will be 10-13 years old.

Sibling Support Groups

Our **Sibling Support** groups are back! We re-started our groups just recently, with 8 - 13 year old sibs meeting on Tuesday nights and 4 - 8 year olds meeting on Saturday afternoons. Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, with the recognition of the challenges of being a sibling in a household raising a child with Autism.

Groups for Higher Needs Children

This group has been temporarily postponed. It is still the goal of Children at Risk to offer groups for ASD children with higher needs. Currently we do not have enough Facilitators to conduct these groups, but the Board of Directors will continue in its efforts to recruit qualified, experienced individuals. Recognition has been made that the structure of these groups would be different, with lower group enrollment numbers and also with ratios of 1:1 to address the children's higher needs/give more individual attention and direction. More info as it develops!

Activity-Based or Conversation-Based?

The spectrum that Autism presents causes challenges in planning Social Skill Groups to be effective, interactive and successful. Being that, ASD children can present from high-needs, non-verbal to high-functioning Asperger Syndrome - and anywhere in between. Throughout the years, Children at Risk have attempted to hold groups that consist of a group of children of a similar age range and level of functionality. In an attempt to help all children on the spectrum, we have tried to incorporate some "mid-level" functioning children into groups with higher-functioning children. These children present with verbal skills, communication and interaction capabilities, but can have challenges with comprehension and involvement in conversation-based group activities. We have recently decided that these children would better benefit from an "activity-based" Social Skill Group with lower ratios of 4 children to 2 facilitators to allow for individual attention when needed. When children are referred to Children at Risk, we will be making an attempt to identify these children that would benefit from an "Activity-Based" Social Skill Group and hope to commence at least one of these groups in the spring or fall!

Along with this thought, Sheila Bell has also identified a similar group of teens. These teens are placed in the high school system in regular classes, but without many supports. Our Outing-Based Typical Teens group is hoping to plan a modified version for these teens in the fall!

CLUB RAP

CHRISTINE MARTELL -FACILATOR

CAROLYN LAVIGNE -- CO-FACILATOR

Club Rap 4 is at the beginning of ten wonderful weeks of getting to know one another. Each session starts with a meet and greet and then we followed a schedule of activities to practice initiating and participating in conversations, i.e.: making sense in a conversation, respecting body space, eye contact, not interrupting others, statements and gestures of encouragement, appropriate tone of voice, and facial expressions. We practiced how to have fun together, telling and understanding jokes or riddles, acting out social scenarios, and how to express yourself without hurting the feelings of others.

The kids are encouraged to share any concerns from their week and problem-solve together. It is very moving to hear them congratulate each other's triumphs and support each other's disappointments. Carolyn and I are impressed by how well the kids identified and respected each other's particular interests, and the small acts of kindness and friendship.

The last part of each evening consisted of a variety of games and creative projects requiring problem-solving, co-operation, listening and communication skills, both in the gym, around the table, and out in the community, to build a skill set for them to use at school with peers or at home with family.

Carolyn and I feel privileged to spend time with your children. Taking this journey with the kids always brightened our lives.

MEET THE NEW FACILITATORS

Please Welcome Our New Group Facilitators **Jennifer Gonsalves, Lloyd Gonsalves, Nazima Khan, Sheri Curkovic and Lisa Gregory!** Jennifer, Lloyd and Nazima are presently running our Sibling Support Groups, with plans to facilitate other groups in the Spring. Sheri and Lisa are co-facilitators for 2 of our Social Skill Groups!!

Sheri Curkovic

Hi my name is Sheri Curkovic and I will be co-facilitating both a morning and afternoon social skills group. I have a degree in education and science. I am currently taking post-graduate courses in the Autism and Behavioral Science Program at Algonquin College. I have two beautiful children (one of whom is on the spectrum) and a wonderful husband. I am very excited and look forward to working with these families.

Nazima Khan

I have a BA in psychology and have worked in the field of neurobehavioural therapy in a clinical setting. I also have experience working with children on the ASD spectrum and have 9 years' experience at the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario. I will be co-facilitating the younger sibling support group and look forward to bringing

my experience and upbeat nature to the group.

Lisa Gregory

I am married and mother to three children one of whom has autism. Our family became involved with Children at Risk through our son's attendance at Thursday's Child Nursery School. During the past nine years, I have enjoyed volunteering for a variety of fund raising events and am enjoying assisting Liz Schissler as facilitator.

I have had the opportunity to both volunteer and work with children in different types of schools and daycare settings. I enjoy putting together language, social skills and math programs. I have successfully completed the Positive Behaviour Support Program at Algonquin College, April 19, 2005, graduating with honours. This program gives you the skills to work with children and adults requiring behaviour interventions to help them reach their potential.

During the last eight years, I have learned from and worked with many professionals. I have also been able to share what I have learned through the Algonquin College/Children at Risk Program by providing training to DSW (Developmental Services Worker) students.

Jennifer Gonsalves

Hi. I am Jennifer Gonsalves. I attended college in Saskatoon, SK and completed the Rehabilitation Worker Program in 1997. I worked as an Educational Assistant for four

years in Saskatoon before moving to Ottawa. Since my move to Ottawa I have been employed with the Ottawa Catholic School Board as an Educational Assistant. I am presently working at Frank Ryan Senior Elementary School. I have had ten years experience in working with adults and children with a variety of developmental, physical, emotional and psychological disabilities including people with ASD. Through Children at Risk I will be co-facilitating the Older Sibling Group, the Younger Sibling Group and a Lifeskills Group that will begin later this spring.

Lloyd Gonsalves

Hi. I am Lloyd Gonsalves. I graduated from the Child and Youth Worker Program at Algonquin College in 1995. Since this time I have ten years combined experience working with psychological problems, mental and developmental disabilities and behavioral issues. I have worked for the Ottawa Catholic School Board since 2000 and I am presently working as an Itinerant Behavioural Education Assistant at four schools. Through Children at Risk I will be co-facilitating the Older Sibling Group as well as a Lifeskills group later this spring.

FUNDRAISING UPDATE

Submitted by Brenda Reisch
Fundraising Chairperson

CAPITAL CHORDETTES ANNUAL CHRISTMAS SHOW & AUCTION

Ottawa's award-winning ladies barbershop chorus group continues to support Children

at Risk throughout the year. In December they presented a cheque for **\$2,059.53** at their Christmas Craft Show! On February 25th, they held their "Red Hot Blues" concert at CentrepoinTE Theatre (featuring Maria Hawkins), through which Children at Risk will also receive a donation. Please join me in thanking these wonderfully dedicated ladies, who spend their time raising their voices in song to support Autism!

For more information on the Chordettes, visit www.capitalchordettes.org

2006 ENTERTAINMENT COUPON BOOKS

Sales are now closed for the 2006 Entertainment Coupon Books! Once again, this fundraising activity proved to be popular, with 282 books being sold through our parents and Quickie Convenience Stores. These sales raised a profit of over **\$2,467!** Many Thanks to all those who sold/purchased the books and look for the 2007 Entertainment Coupon Book this August!

OTTAWA 67'S 50/50 TICKET SALES

February was a busy month, with 6 Ottawa 67's home games! I am proud to say our parents and friends rallied again this year to make an outstanding showing of volunteers, selling 50/50 tickets for each game. Hats off to all those who helped raise **\$2,489** for Children at Risk!

A SCHOOL INITIATIVE

Children at Risk wants to thank parent and teacher, **Tony Curkovic**, for encouraging a donation for Children at Risk. Tony teaches

at Featherston Drive Public School and, over the last couple of months, organized weekly outings for skating. Several students from the Autism Unit at Featherston often joined the group - my son Ian being amongst them. Tony suggested that each student could contribute a small amount for each outing, and that a donation of **\$102.22** be given to Children at Risk!

DONATIONS FROM THE HEART

Just before Christmas, Children at Risk received a small, whimsical Christmas Card depicting an ornament hanging on a Christmas tree. What was enclosed in the card was a cheque for **\$400** from **artist Jan Reatherford and Neil Herber!** Jan wrote in the card that for the last 4 Christmases, they have selected a charity and made a donation based on the number of Christmas cards they send. Jan's cards are a print of one of her paintings and below her holiday wish in the card is printed *"For every card we send, we are making a \$5 donation to "Children at Risk". "Children at Risk" provides services and programs to families of children diagnosed within the Autism Spectrum Disorders to develop their child's behavioural, communication and social skills, and to advocate for their ongoing needs."* Children at Risk was thrilled and honoured to be Jan's charity for the 2005 holiday season!

We also received several donations from the family of **Lori Anne Szivy**, who also have a new initiative of giving a charitable gift at Christmas instead of presents to each other. Children at Risk wishes to thank Lori Anne

for encouraging her family to direct those donations to help Autistic children and their families in our community!

MACMILLAN'S FROZEN FOODS FALL CAMPAIGN

Enclosed you will find a colourful tri-fold flyer, as well as the Spring-only meat insert, for MacMillan's Frozen Foods. Twice a year, Children at Risk offers this tasty cookie dough, muffin batter, pies, pizzas and specialty items. Orders must be in by **Monday, April 10** with delivery to Children at Risk on **Wednesday, April 26**. Please feel free to gather orders from friends, co-workers, relatives and neighbours! Extra flyers can be obtained by emailing carsup@magma.ca or calling 741-8255.

11th ANNUAL CHILDREN AT RISK RAFFLE

In April, we will begin gathering prizes, gift certificates, hotel accommodations, restaurant vouchers, etc. for our ever-popular Annual Raffle. Tickets will be available for sale in early May, \$2 each or 3 for \$5. We encourage families to take a few books of 12 to sell, and we also welcome donations from members who own/work with any local businesses that can extend support through a donation!

DONOR'S CORNER

Kiwanis Club of Kanata - \$1,000

ANNUAL FAMILY PICNIC

Sunday, June 25th is the date for the Children at Risk/Autism Society Ontario Ottawa Chapter/Asperger & Aspirations Support Groups Annual Family Picnic, to be held again in Brewer Park from 12 noon to 3 PM. This event offers an opportunity for families to get together in an informal setting and enjoy a low-cost BBQ, as well as children's activities and the draw of our Annual Raffle tickets. Mark this date on your calendar to spend an afternoon in the park and meet many other families in the Autism community!

MARCH BREAK ACTIVITY

"Snakes & Spiders & Lizards and Things"
Little Ray's Reptiles will be in Lincoln Fields Shopping Centre Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, March 14 - 16 from 11 AM to 4 PM. There will be Reptile Shows daily at Noon and 2:30 PM, along with a chance to make your own spiders, bugs or other crawly things in the Food Court. Presented by the Merchants of Lincoln Fields Shopping Centre!

ASO NEWS

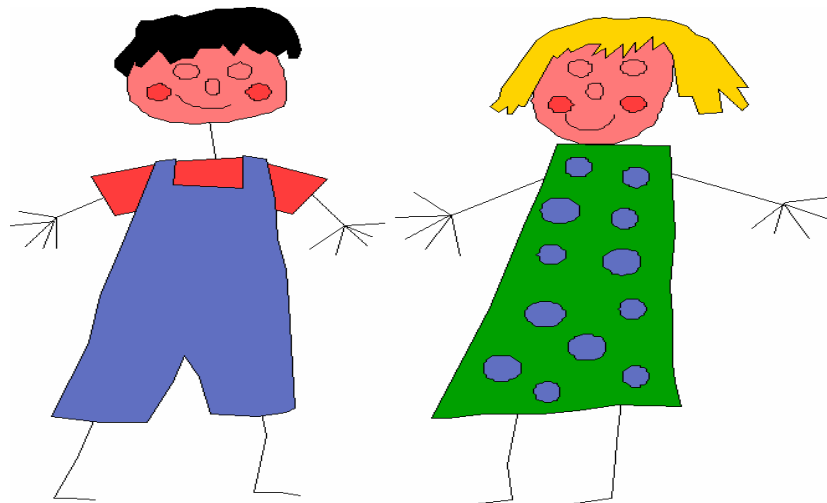
Once again the Ottawa Citizen, Minto and the Ottawa Congress Centre join together with other leading Ottawa companies to support the 9th Annual "**For the Kids**" **Charity Auction**, being held on Wednesday, May 3, 2006 at the Ottawa Congress Centre. This event will benefit three great local organizations and the children they serve.

Please buy tickets and join us that night or if you can volunteer to help, please contact the Autism Society of Ontario-Ottawa chapter at 230-6305 for more information or go to www.autismottawa.com

ASO, OTTAWA CHAPTER ANNOUNCES THEIR ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Wednesday, April 26, 2006 at 7 p.m.

Ottawa Citizen Building
1101 Baxter Road
Ottawa, Ontario



SUMMER CAMPS REGISTRATION - CITY OF OTTAWA

As of March 9, 2006 you can register your child into a summer program with the City of Ottawa. Their recreation guide is available on line at www.ottawa.ca or at your local community centers. The City will offer Shared Care support for children with mild to moderate needs and who may require support about 60% of the time. Shared Care is for children who can handle a 1 to 4 instructor/child ratio. Some additional funding may be accessed for a child with higher needs and who may require 1:1 care. It's a first come first serve basis, so early registration is encouraged. You may contact the Portfolio Manager in your area to determine if your child qualifies for this assistance program at the following numbers or emails:

OTTAWA-EAST

Portfolio Managers	Locations where Shared Care offered
Diane Cyr 580-2424 x 29300 Dianne.Cyr@ottawa.ca Michele Goodsell 580-2424 x 29320 Michele.Goodsell@ottawa.ca	ORC, Convent Glen St. Laurent Complex Richelieu Vanier Overbrook Community Centre Albion/Heatherington Sawmill Creek

OTTAWA-WEST

Portfolio Managers	Locations where Shared Care offered
Jodie Gilvear 580-2424 x 41226 Jodie.Gilvear@ottawa.ca Margot Quigley-Diotte 580-2424 x 29291 Margot.Quigley-Diotte@ottawa.ca	Bridlewood Nepean Sportsplex Greenbank Middle School Walter Baker Sports Centre Foster Farm Dovercourt Community Centre Hintonburg Community Center

Portfolio Manager - City Wide

Donna Quiggin 580-2747

Donna.Quiggin@ottawa.ca

The City is also planning a Special Needs Summer Camp Fair on April 13. Local and out-of-town (Toronto) camps have been invited to participate.

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