

CHILDREN AT RISK NEWSLETTER

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Message from the President

Submitted by David Allingham

Well, here it is September and I can't believe it! I would like to thank all those members who came to the general meeting in June and for those who volunteered to serve on the Board of Directors. For those who may not know it, we had our first meeting in July and I'm looking forward to working with this new Board and all of its members until next the next AGM in June when we start all over again. I think it will be a good year for all of us. Soon, if you call Children at Risk, you may notice that we will have hired an individual on a part-time basis 3 hours per day for 3-4 times a week to help out at the office and respond to calls, etc. It is our hope that by doing this, things will happen a bit quicker from an administrative perspective and, as we get our house in order, in other ways as well. We also hope that this will assist us in completing requests for donations that have large amounts of paperwork associated with them. Completing all of those types of requests in a more timely fashion may permit CAR to increase the number of groups we offer and possibly broaden our services into other areas as well.

I hope that you all had a great summer and that your problems with the school systems will be minimal!

GET TO KNOW YOUR BOARD!

Marlene Steppan – Vice-President

I feel privileged in accepting the role of Vice-President. I am the mother of a six-year-old son with autism and a four-year-old neuro/bio-typical daughter. Over the last three years, my son has benefited greatly from the social groups offered by CAR. Since my two children are now attending school full-time, I have some extra time that I would like to invest back in this wonderful organization that provides essential services to our kids. I am originally from Montreal and a graduate from Toronto University in Nursing. My career brought me to work in the North West Territories where I assumed the role of President of the Francophone Federation. Since then, I have moved to Ottawa and worked in both the private and public sectors. Beside my clinical experience, I have also gained expertise in program management, administration, human resources, marketing and workshop organization. I have enjoyed so much my role as vice-president at my daughter's daycare that I am ready to jump into another challenge. I feel very excited about joining this team to ensure the maintenance and expansion of services offered by Children at Risk.

Dean Ryan – Treasurer

I have been married to my wife Laurie for 16 years and have one son, Dylan who has autism. We feel very fortunate to have happened along the pumpkin carving display at the Merivale Mall a few years ago and learned more about CAR and what it had to offer. There is no doubt in our minds that Dylan has grown a great deal as a result of his involvement in the groups. I felt that it was time to give something back to CAR, and with my accounting background felt I could fill the role of Treasurer. Since graduating from college I have work for a chartered accountant for the past 17 years. CAR has made great strides in the past few years and I hope to help continue this trend so that when the next person learns that their child has autism they can look to CAR for help.

2005/2006 CHILDREN AT RISK BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President:	David Allingham
Vice-President:	Marlene Steppan
Secretary:	Mary McDonald
Treasurer:	Dean Ryan
Member at Large:	Craig Perkin
Member at Large:	Louise Pavelic
Member at Large:	Andrea Allingham
Member at Large:	Ed Gratton

Andrea Allingham – Member-at-large

I was born and raised in Winnipeg, Manitoba and moved to Ottawa on my own in 1979. I met David Allingham (President of CAR) in 1981 and a couple of years later we moved to PEI for 5 years. We were married in 1984 in Charlottetown, PEI and returned to Ottawa in February 1988. Until 1997 we both worked for the Federal Government until the adoption of our daughter, Samantha. Eighteen months later we adopted our son, Samuel who was diagnosed with autism at 22 months. Our family became involved with Children at Risk primarily through Samuel's attendance at Thursday's Child Nursery School. Since then I have played minor support roles in a variety of fund raising events. I look forward to becoming more involved with the Board of Directors.

Ed Gratton – Member-at-large

I am married to Kim Gratton, and we recently celebrated our 19th Wedding Anniversary. We are not sure how all those years got by us, but they did. We have two children. Joey is 10 years old, and has been diagnosed with Asperger's Syndrome, and Katie who is 8 years old, and has been diagnosed with Pervasive Development Disorder NOS. I always hate introducing my children this way, because it feels like I am defining them by how they are characterized within the Autism Spectrum. Let's try something else. Joey is in grade five, and has a deep passion for trains. If there is a locomotive anywhere near him, the world has to stop until the train passes by. He is a very sensitive young boy, with a compassionate heart and a high pitched laugh that always catches your attention. Katie is in Grade 3 and loves music. She sings in two different choirs, and is taking piano lessons, which she really enjoys. She is a very expressive girl, both when she is happy, and not so happy. She has a tremendous amount of energy, which she displays in ways that lights up the world around her...even if the world doesn't want that. We have been connected with Children at Risk for about 5 years now, having benefited from their Social Skills Groups and the Algonquin Students Program. It's time to see if something can be given back, and since I am used to meetings in my own vocation as a United Church Minister, I thought serving on

the Board would be ideal. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to do so.

Louise Blondin Pavelic – Member-at-large

I am a mother of 3 children, ages 8, 6 and 4. Two of my children have special needs. My son (age 6) is diagnosed with autism. We have pursued many treatment approaches for my children, they include dietary intervention, vitamin therapies and intensive applied behavioral analysis (ABA). I also develop Verbal Behavior Programs as a consultant (Senior Therapist) with 4 families who have children on the autistic spectrum. I am firm believer that we must advocate strongly for the services our children and their families require and deserve. I would like the opportunity to pursue and promote some of these services and awareness goals through the mandate of Children at Risk.

UPDATE ON SIBLING SUPPORT GROUPS

We regret to inform our members that we do not yet have a date for the start of the Sibling Support Groups. As posted in the last newsletter, our facilitators Karen and Alice announced their "retirement" in the spring. These positions require individuals with a strong background of working with children, plus a good knowledge of Autism to understand the dynamics of a family raising a child diagnosed within the Autism Spectrum Disorders. We are still hopeful that the groups can commence in October, but may have to postpone until the Winter if qualified candidates cannot be procured shortly. If this happens, consideration might be given to holding a Winter and a Spring group. Keep you posted!

<p><u>2006 ENTERTAINMENT COUPON BOOKS</u> Hot off the presses, the valuable <u>2006 Entertainment Coupon Books are NOW</u> available at the bargain price of only \$35! Already several parents are marketing this great savings book to colleagues, friends and families. With 50% discounts on dining out, fast foods, services, activities and merchandise, you cannot lose with buying this terrific book. To own this valuable coupon book, just email carsup@magma.ca or call 741-8255. Several Quickie Convenience Stores in the area will also be selling the books for Children at Risk (list to be posted on our web-site soon!).</p>

A PARENT'S APPRECIATION

Submitted by Brenda Desjardins

THANK-YOU! I just wanted to sincerely thank you for the donated tickets we received for the **Tunis Shrine Circus** this August. To say that Denis (our 9 year-old non-verbal autistic son) enjoyed himself would be an understatement. We were very fortunate to be able to enjoy the show from the disability seating . Denis was able to dance, make his quirky movements when he was excited and vocalize his excitement through the sounds he makes. All without us having to stress about annoying the people in front of us or people staring. There are very few things we can do as a family (Denis has an older brother) and this is definitely one of them. It was a treat to see the immense enjoyment on his face. It isn't often that Denis sits still for anything and he remained seated throughout most of the show – save the periods when he couldn't contain himself and he had to dance. The circus is everything he enjoys – lights and music.

Again, thanks so much – we appreciate it more than you'll ever know!



DONOR'S CORNER

In Memory of Elefteria Kokkinos (\$1130)
In Memory of Frank King (\$65)
City of Ottawa 2005 Community Project Funding Program (\$9,000)

FUNDRAISING UPDATE

Submitted by Brenda Reisch, Fundraising Chairperson



2ND ANNUAL EMERGENCY SERVICES CHARITY SOFTBALL TOURNAMENT

For the second year, the Ottawa Police, Fire & Paramedic Services came together to support Autism! On Saturday, June 18th, this fundraising event for the Autism Society – Ottawa Chapter and Children at Risk featured activities for the whole family.

Demonstrations included the fire ladder truck, paramedic, tactical, motorcycle and K-9 units, plus the fire safety house, Bytowne Fire Brigade antique fire truck, Moon Bounce for the kids and great baseball to watch!

With the BBQ, bike raffle (generously donated by **Villa Lucia Supper Place**) and corporate donations from **Canada Post, Ginsberg, Gluzman Fage & Levitz, Greely Lions Club, Fraser Milner Casgrain, Terlin Construction** and many private individuals over **\$3,400** was raised for the 2 charities! Many thanks to Will Barlow and his colleagues from the Ottawa Police for dedicating their time and energy in bringing everyone together to fulfill a vision of "Kids, Autism – Let's Help"!

10TH ANNUAL RAFFLE

40 lucky winners of the CAR 10th Annual Raffle were drawn at Family Picnic! Almost 2 months of dedicated ticket sales by our families and friends resulted in over **\$5,300** being raised!! These valuable funds will help to subsidize our Social Skill and Sibling Support Groups this Fall. Please join me in thanking all the businesses and individuals who donated over \$7,102 in prizes. In acknowledgement of their generous support, we hope to have a Consumer's Directory on our web-site soon that will list Merchants/Businesses who have assisted Children at Risk with donations and sponsorships!

ANNUAL FAMILY PICNIC

Sunday, June 26th was a hot and sunny day, the perfect weather for a BBQ in the park! Once again, families gathered for the annual Children at Risk/Autism Society/Asperger's Picnic. **Amanda from Enbridge Gas** barbecued hamburgers and hotdogs while our children frolicked in the water sprinklers. Activities included cookie decorating, fish pond, balloons, water balloon toss, the Annual Raffle draw plus a visit from the Tunis Shriner's Clowns. With no shortage of enthusiastic volunteers, our families had the opportunity to gather as a community for a fun and relaxing afternoon.



reception on Thursday, October 27th at Merivale Mall, the pumpkins will then be on display at all 4 malls until Saturday, October 29th. Plans are in the works to honour some of our long-time celebrity participants with a coveted "Gold Pumpkin" pin, as well as raising additional funds with celebrity posters (details to follow!)

What is critically needed is volunteers to man the displays and a Mall Manager for each shopping centre! Please email carsup@magma.ca or call 741-8255 if you think you can help out in this area.

We also invite everyone to attend the reception at Merivale Mall, 10 AM on Thursday, October 27th to meet the celebrities and see some amazing Jack-o-Lantern creations!



LINCOLN FIELDS SHOPPING CENTRE BBQ

Once again, our friends from **Riocan Properties** and **Oldies 1310** enabled Children at Risk to reach out for community support by hosting a BBQ on Saturday, July 16th! Despite the steamy weather, our volunteers and Majestic Pizza/Strandz Hair Design cooked up hamburgers and hotdogs to raise funds for Autism. With a donation from The Mike Fahey Band, over **\$526** was raised for Children at Risk! Hats off to all those who showed their support!!

10TH ANNUAL CELBRTITY-CARVED PUMPKIN CONTEST

We are expanding to include 4 malls – **Merivale Mall, Carlingwood Shopping Centre, Place d'Orleans and now Lincoln Fields Shopping Centre!!** This seasonal and fun fundraiser invites local celebrities and media personalities to carve a pumpkin for Autism. Starting with the celebrity

MACMILLAN'S FROZEN FOODS FALL CAMPAIGN

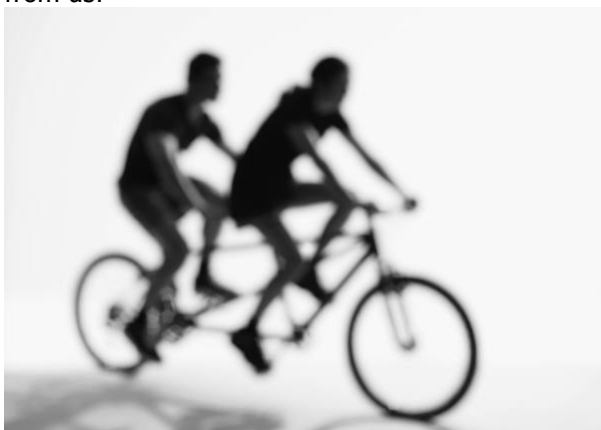
Enclosed you will find a flyer detailing the mouthwatering selection of frozen cookie dough, muffin batter, cakes, pizza products and specialty Christmas items. Orders need to be submitted to Children at Risk by ***Monday, November 10th*** for delivery on ***Thursday, November 24th***. Please note that these products are not GF/CF and the cookies/muffins may contain nuts. If you need additional flyers, please email or call the office and we will cheerfully send out more!!
(carsup@magma.ca 741-8255)

CHARITY COORDINATOR'S MESSAGE

Submitted by Brenda Reisch

Welcome back! I read in a paper recently that the beginning of September is really the New Year for most, with so many things resuming after the summer break. This certainly is true for Children at Risk, as we ramp up for the start of new Friendship Social Skill Therapy Groups, Sibling Support Groups (hopefully!), Educational Workshops, Information Seminars, Developmental Service Worker Student Placements and Fundraising Events & Activities. As you will see in the newsletter, Children at Risk and the Autism Society Ontario (Ottawa Chapter) are joining resources to present two workshops this Fall (RDI & PROMPT). Simy Illouze, the current Workshop Coordinator for the ASO Ottawa Council, has been working hard, researching and procuring these dynamic speakers to visit our community. With Children at Risk able to offer services of registration and accommodation, the teaming of these two Autism charities has proven to be beneficial for parents and professionals looking for more information and education!

More and more, Children at Risk is keeping in touch with its members by group email postings and announcements. We urge all members to check their email on a regular basis, as we are also actively soliciting ticket donations for concerts and entertainment events. Many of these donations come with short notice, so there often is not the opportunity to notify members by mail. Often we must post on a first-come/first-served basis as well, as there is not even time to draw names. So please, if you have an email address that you can give, we would love to include you in the group membership list so you can hear it first from us!



Autism Society of Ontario – Ottawa Chapter 10th Annual Cycle for Autism

Sunday, September 25, 2005

Ron Kolbus building,
Lakeside Gardens, Britannia Park

100 & 60 km Scenic Road Loop Tours
20 & 10 km Family Fun Ride
4 km Family Ride, Stride, Roll & Stroll

BBQ starting at 11 AM
Kid's Fun Centre
Balloon Animals
music by 106.9 FM The Bear

For more information and pledge forms, visit
www.autismottawa.com

ACTIVITIES IN THE COMMUNITY

Gym Classes

Corona Gym on Colonnade is interested in offering a gymnastics class for 7-12 year olds starting in early October. There were several children that attended a gymnastics class there this summer - the kids had a blast! For safety reasons, the class is held when the gym has no other classes going on - that means that the only time currently available is Sundays from 5-6:30. The cost of an 8-week class was approximately \$140. Depending on the needs of your child, it may be necessary for a child to attend with a therapist/worker/parent as required. If you are interested, please e-mail lmthib@cyberus.ca

Hill Rally

Submitted by Andrew Kavchak (954-3063)
Please mark off Wednesday, September 28 on your calendars and come and join us on that day from 12 noon to 1pm on Parliament Hill as we parents of autistic children protest for autism treatment and the development of a National Autism Strategy on Parliament Hill. Please bring any signatures that you have on the autism treatment petition, which is accessible at www.canadaautism.com

***Children at Risk & Autism Society – Ottawa Chapter
present:
Relationship Development Intervention (RDI) Workshop***

**Sunday, October 16, 2005
9 AM to 4 PM
\$50 parents/students \$75 professionals**

RDI is a program of treatment services developed by Dr. Steve Gutstein & Dr. Rachelle Sheely (Connections Center – Houston, Texas). Dr. Gutstein developed the ideas for RDI from 20 years research on ASD. For more info on RDI, visit www.rdiconnect.com

For registration forms and information, visit www.childrenatrisk.ca

Autism Awareness Centre Inc. Presents

**November 11 and 12, 2005
Travelodge Hotel, 1376 Carling Ave.
Ottawa, ON**

Rebecca Moyes

**Addressing the Social and Behavioural Concerns for Children
with Autism/Asperger Syndrome in the School, Home and Community
and**

Leslie Broun

**Visual Strategies for Teaching Children to Read and
Visual Strategies for Building Foundation Skills in Mathematics**

Registration Fees:

Parent Rate	Before Oct. 20	After Oct. 20
One Day	\$150.00 + \$10.50 GST = \$160.50	\$195.00 + \$13.65 GST = \$208.65
Two Day	\$250.00 + \$17.50 GST = \$276.50	\$295.00 + \$20.65 GST = \$315.65
Professional Rate	Before Oct. 20	After Oct. 20
One Day	\$195.00 + \$13.65 GST = \$208.65	\$225.00 + \$15.75 GST = \$240.75
Two Day	\$295.00 + \$20.65 GST = \$315.65	\$325.00 + \$22.75 GST = \$347.75

Please contact Vicki Harris at vharris@shaw.ca for more information or telephone toll free 1-866-724-2224 or (780) 474-8355. Fax: (780) 477-8350 or (780) 447-5445

Register on-line at www.autismawarenesscentre.com

From the Autism Support Ottawa List:

Ask Lindsay Moir
Wednesday, September 14, 2005
Back to school issues for 2005

Question: What are the back-to-school issues for September 2005?
(This is a compilation of several questions sent to me over the last two weeks)

Answer: The following warrant our attention over the 2005/06 school year:

Autism Treatment Injunction: As a result of a recent court injunction, preschool autism programs are not discharging students on their 6th birthday. By continuing to offer "treatment" this is creating an unprecedented demand for ABA and IBI services on a system with already long waiting lists. A significant number of families are opting to use the "reduced school day" and the "part time Home Schooling" provisions of the Education legislation to enable six year old autistic students to attend school part-time while receiving intensive therapy from other ministries. Previously this was not a problem because JK and SK programs are generally half-time. The injunction extends services to students who are usually in full-time attendance at school (Grade 1 age).

Safe School Act (Suspension & Expulsion): The Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC) has filed a complaint against the Ministry of Education and The Toronto District School Board regarding alleged discriminatory and disproportionate use of suspension and expulsion on special needs students. This is the culmination of two years of minimal response to concerns raised by the OHRC in August 2003 regarding this issue.

I believe that Keith Norton is trying to force the Ministry and school boards to put in place tracking procedures and alternatives to suspension for exceptional pupils-- something that I would certainly welcome. The Toronto DSB is a representative board--this is a province-wide problem. Look for the Safe Schools Task Force under Liz Sandals MPP to be very active early in the Fall as the Ministry tries to respond to the threat of OHRC action. Parents and others should make their voices heard to both the Task Force and the OHRC. A report from the provincial Principal's group reports that "there is no problem." Parents need to find their voice.

Sabrina's Law: This law regarding the management of the school environment to protect students with severe allergies goes into effect as of January 2006. In the Fall, boards and schools will be putting the final touches on mandatory policies and procedures to implement Sabrina's Law This law applies to all publicly-funded schools and boards (not private schools). Parents and health professionals can contribute greatly to the process of policy development. If this matter is of concern to you, volunteer to be a part of your board or school's team. If you think this is not a big deal, children too often die of anaphylactic shock in Ontario's schools-- Sabrina was a Pembroke Ontario 13 year-old who died after eating food in her school!. Brant MPP, Dave Levac, a former high school principal, introduced the landmark legislation. Well done, Mr Levac!

Compulsory school attendance till age 18: Mr. McGuinty has announced that he will introduce legislation to require compulsory attendance to age 18-- up from the current compulsory attendance of age 16. He also says that high schools will be required to find creative ways to serve the 16-18 year old population-- more "hands-on" programs, Work Experience programs, expanded Cooperative Education programs, community -based programs and apprenticeship School to Work programs.

Although aimed to appeal to potential dropouts, these kinds of programs are also attractive to many exceptional students. A broader range of options only helps to better serve exceptional pupils. Watch this Fall for announcements about these directions. Remember that the right to attend is to age 21.

Streamlining of Provincial Assessments: The ministry has announced that the EQAO Assessments will be streamlined and shortened. They will occur later in the year and an even wider range of accommodations will be available to students. Of course, to receive these accommodations in the Assessments, a student must have them provided throughout the year in their Individual Education Plan (IEP). Go to www.edu.gov.on.ca or to www.eqao.com for details. These changes should make it possible for even more exceptional pupils to participate in provincial assessments.

Labour peace: For the first time in about 15 years there is NO cloud of strikes, lockouts or job actions hanging over the education system. This labour peace for four years was achieved at considerable cost to the taxpayers of Ontario. Boards are receiving enhanced funding to hire additional staff and to pay current staff significant raises. Over the past few weeks, several boards have "discovered" that the increases in funding don't cover the actual cost of paying their staff! Some boards are imposing cuts in transportation, lunch supervision, non-teaching support staff or special programs in order to not run a deficit. Many of these cuts can impact on Special Education. Parents need to be vigilant and informed!

I hope that your new school year is off to a positive start!!

Lindsay Moir

Lindsay Moir retired from the Ministry of Education in 1997 and has been assisting agencies, associations and parents in obtaining appropriate special education services for exceptional pupils.

Family Net welcomes your questions about special education in Ontario.

E-mail Lindsay at ask.questions@sympatico.ca He will answer as many questions as possible.

We Want To Hear From You!

Currently Children at Risk is planning Social Skill Groups for the Winter/2006. We have had some feedback, but need to know from families that are interested in the following:

Life Skills Group for High Functioning/Asperger's Children

This group would cover many aspects of life skills including menu & meal preparation, cooking, laundry and other basic skills that are not usually covered in school. We also welcome suggestions from parents for group content, areas that they feel need reinforcement and skill development.

Social Skill Group for Higher Needs Children

This group would have a 1:1 ratio of child to facilitator, with a concentration of developing social skill interaction for children with greater challenges of behaviour, speech and group participation.

West-End Location

Most families are aware that Children at Risk has successfully held groups in Barrhaven, located in the Your Independent Grocer. However, we are still looking for other locations in the west-end that could fit the criteria for social skill groups. Cost is the first criteria, as the charity cannot look at a high rental location due to rental costs for our offices on Donald Street. The location must have a contained room that would be suitable for crafts/snacks (ie. no carpet!), large enough to hold some gross motor games, with washroom facilities close by. The location also must be accessible on weekends/evenings, as most groups are held at those times. Perhaps someone would know of a church or community centre that could offer these options?

To submit info on these inquiries, please email to carsup@magma.ca , call us at 741-8255 or fax your comments to 741-5530. We look forward to your feedback!

A Poem by Denise Gotell,
Itinerant Resource Teacher, Intermediate Autism
Program – Student Services, OCCDSB

The Stuff That Really Matters

(Dedicated to the educational assistants, resource
and classroom teachers who provide daily support
to students with Autism Spectrum Disorder)

At the end of the day, there was no embrace.
Did I send him home with a smile or a frown on his
face?

The school is big and noisy, too,
I get lost and overwhelmed, uncertain of what to
do.
Did you abandon me, or take my hand?
Did you lead the way with footprints in the sand?

That's the stuff that really matters.

I get so uptight, confused in class,
My brain is full; I may not last.
Did you ignore the signals or suggest I take a
break?
Did you hover over me or give me some space?
All I needed was to be alone in a quiet place...

The pace is fast, the words sound like
"gobbledygook".
Did you let me sink in that giant book?
Or did you break it down into small chunks?
Use simple language, so I didn't flunk?

That's the stuff that really matters.

Pictures help me to see,
What's complex in the world for me.
Did you add some visuals to the sheet for me?
Or did you forget and let me sink in the dark,
confused sea?

Touch, smell, taste, what I hear and see,
Sometimes too much stimulation overwhelms me.
Did you tell me to "grow up and get a grip"?
Or did you consider my sensory needs and my
mother's tips?

That's the stuff that really matters.

I thrive on routine and predictability,
Changes are difficult and sometimes scare me.

Did you warn me about that fire drill?
Or did you wish you had as I let out a shrill?
Did your lack of planning send me into a spin?
I hope not, cause then nothing will sink in.

Social situations are painful for me,
The jungle of recess, please rescue me.
Did you invite other kids to play some games?
Or did you leave me isolated, feeling lame?
Did you set me up to experience success?
Or after the fight, were you telling me to confess?

That's the stuff that really matters.

I'm a literal thinker; I don't understand the
abstract.
Expressions, idioms and jokes really set me back.
Did you explain what she meant when she said "a
penny for your thoughts"?
Or did you leave me to wonder – what's with that?

Say what you mean, mean what you say.
Spare me the pain of more confusion in my day.

I have a little toy that's so dear to me.
It makes me feel safe; it's always there for me.
Some say I obsess and go on and on,
But I was truly devastated when I realized it was
gone.
Did you make me sit in class in panic mode?
Or did you join me in the search, so I didn't
explode?

That's the stuff that really matters.

Frustration may lead me to lose control,
When this happens, I don't achieve my goals.
I may get rude and say nasty things to you,
Did I get a fresh start the next morning with you?
Did you look at me tenderly and say,
"Don't worry about yesterday; we all have bad
days."

You are my safety net; you are my guide.
Your calm, consistent nature helps me to survive.
I may not be able to thank-you for all you say and
do.
Just remember at the end of the day,
When you send me on my way,
If there's a smile on my face,
It's because of your amazing grace.

You remembered the stuff that really matters.