

**30 years
of Service**
1979-2009



**Children at Risk
NEWSLETTER
DECEMBER 2009**

Issue #49

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Charitable Registration #
10691/3775/RR/0001

Our Mission Statement

To provide 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.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Rollin' for Risk Bowl-A-Thon
January 17, 2010

9th Annual "Rockin' for Risk" 50s/60s/70s dance
April 10, 2010



Children at Risk Annual Raffle
May/June 2010

Autism Community Annual
Family Picnic - June 13, 2010

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Christmas is a time of giving and receiving. More and more I notice that some families, businesses and corporate representatives take this opportunity to direct their giving to charitable causes to receive the Spirit of the Season in return!

In 2009, Children at Risk *gave* back to our Community throughout the year with Group Supports, Ticket Donations and events like the Annual Family Picnic. In order to be able to continue, we need to *receive* donations, grants and gifts-in-kind of merchandise or certificates.

Even though 2009 was a tough year for Children at Risk – we continued to offer supports for the Autism Community, even some new ones like a Summer Science Camp! Help us to help you, our families, by encouraging those whom you know to support the cause of Autism through a donation to Children at Risk. Some options are:

- Direct cash Gifts or Gifts of Securities
- Corporate Matching Gifts
- In-Memoriam Gifts to remember a loved one or good friend
- Planned Giving and Identifying Children at Risk in a bequest
- Name Children at Risk as your designated charity in United Way Campaigns
- Renew your Annual \$20 Children at Risk Membership
- Consider hosting a 3rd-party Event or Activity for Children at Risk

We know that many of you already support Children at Risk in many of these areas and for this we give you heartfelt thanks! May your holidays bring you peace, joy and happiness with best wishes for 2010!

Paul Lacroix, Children at Risk, Board Chair



**Holiday
Snowflake
Party**

Where: Dovercourt Community Centre
When: Sunday, Dec. 19, 2009 - 1 to 4 pm.
Activities: Holiday music and a sing-a-long. Face painting and craft activities from 1-4 and optional swimming from 1-2 pm.
Free photo with Santa.
Cost: Free to Autism Ontario and Children at Risk members.
RSVP by phone at 613-230-6305 x 21.

2009/2010 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

| | |
|-----------|----------------------|
| President | Paul Lacroix |
| Treasurer | Lesia Gilbert |
| Secretary | Mark Lalonde |
| Director | Hazel Smith |
| Director | Robert Jaffray |
| Director | Andrea Mailhot |
| Director | Diane Theron |
| Director | Stephanie Casagrande |

CHILDREN AT RISK 2009 REPORT ON SERVICES

Social Skill Therapy (Friendship) Groups

(Based on sessions of 8-10 weeks, 1 ½ hours/wk)

| | |
|--|---------------------|
| Ages 4-6 years | 15 children |
| Ages 7-9 years | 19 children |
| Ages 9-11 years | 19 children |
| Ages 12-13 years | 6 children |
| Ages 14-16 years | 17 children |
| Asperger "Typical Teens" (8 week session, 2 hrs/wk) | 20 children |
| March Break & Summer Science Camps: | 30 children |
| TOTAL: | 126 children served |

Sibling Support Workshop

| | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------|
| 1 Full-Day Session Ages 7-12 | 14 children served |
|---------------------------------|--------------------|

**GRAND TOTAL OF NUMBER OF CHILDREN
RECEIVING DIRECT SERVICES FROM
CHILDREN AT RISK: 140**

NEW EMAIL ADDRESS

Just a reminder that Children at Risk's email address is now car@childrenatrisk.ca. We are hoping this will help avoid issues of SPAM and JUNK filters for both sender and receiver! Please make the change to your mailbox/authorizations to ensure you keep receiving our emails!

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Submitted by Brenda Reisch

December, 2009...OH, MY GOODNESS – DECEMBER 2009!! Where has this year gone?! It has been a blur of Social Skill Groups, Fundraising Events & Activities, a few holidays ...

Believe me – Children at Risk marked 30 years of Service to the Autism Community by *increasing* our supports, despite a decrease in donations and corporate funding. I was very surprised to realize that we offered services to 20 more children this year, an increase of over 16% from 2008. Part of this was made possible by partnerships like the South Nepean Autism Centre, who helped to fund 4 additional social skill groups in 2009! We are delighted that SNAC will also help us kick off the New Year with funding for 2 groups in our Winter Session!!

Children at Risk continues in our attempt to fulfill its mandate to "fill in the gaps" in existing services for Autistic Children and their Families. Our Social Skills Science Camp, created and run by Facilitators Elaine Bissonnette and Sheri Curkovic, helped many families "fill the gaps" they experience during March break and Summer holidays. We end this year with a Dream – to raise enough funds in 2010 to meet a "gap" in Summer Day Camps for Higher-Needs ASD children. Despite unsuccessful applications for Dragon Boat and HOPE funding in the coming year, we will be making appeals to any and all corporate and philanthropic donors to help make this Dream a reality! However, as we attempt to balance our budget in 2009, this Dream still remains a distant glimmer....

I want to take this time to say THANK-YOU – to our Donors, Volunteers, Supporters, Partners – who made it possible for us to survive now over 7 years of Service solely on Fundraising and Donations! We begin a new decade of Service in 2010 with hope, anticipation and a dedicated commitment to the Autism Community in Ottawa and the surrounding region.

**All the BEST for a lovely Holiday Season and
HAPPY NEW YEAR!**

FUNDRAISING UPDATE

Submitted by Brenda Reisch, Fundraising Chairperson

UPCOMING EVENTS/ACTIVITIES SINCE SEPTEMBER 2009 ...

What Happened:

BLAST-OFF TO KIDS WELLNESS DAY – SEPTEMBER 19, 2009

Children at Risk was delighted to be chosen as recipient charity for the Optihealth 3rd Annual Blast-Off to Kids Wellness Day! We had a wonderful day at the Ben Franklin Dome, with the Blast-Off Run, Bouncy Castles, Little Ray's Reptiles, Junkyard Symphony, Spring Action Trampoline demos, Silent Auction, Raffle and more!! Congratulations to Raffle Winner Ray Villeneuve with his ticket being drawn for the Trip to Edmonton. Many thanks to Dr. Joel and associates for including Children at Risk – plans are in the works to continue with our charity for next year's event, too!

14th ANNUAL CELEBRITY-CARVED PUMPKIN CONTEST

Thanks to phenomenal contributions by 112 local Television, Newspaper, Radio, Sports, Political and Business Celebrity Carvers, we had another banner year, taking our funds raised to yet a higher level than ever before (\$10,500 last year) – raising **\$13,082.88!!!!!!!**

It has been a bit of a leaner year overall for Children at Risk with support and contributions, as we know so many are struggling with job loss, pension reductions and more. That is what makes this event year so very special, in that we raised more than last year, despite the economy!

However, we know this all could NEVER be done without our Army of dedicated Volunteers who helped with the Reception and the many hours of manning our 4 displays! Join me in also thanking our Pumpkin Mall Managers – Hazel Smith/Mark Lalonde, Alison Armstrong, Angele Jodouin/Melody Grealy-Fredette & Bambina Lemme – as well as our Host Malls – Merivale Mall, Lincoln Fields Shopping Centre, Carlingwood Shopping Centre and Place d'Orleans!!

FUNDRAISING UPDATE (Cont'd)

14th ANNUAL CELEBRITY-CARVED PUMPKIN CONTEST (Cont'd)

Top Lucky Thirteen Celebrities (Final)*



1. Tanya Hill, owner of Il Paradiso & Strandz in Lincoln Fields Shopping Centre
2. J.J. Clarke – CTV Ottawa Weather
3. Ed Hand (Rogers TV) & Nancy Stapleton (Y101 FM)
4. Wayne Scanlan – The Ottawa Citizen Sport
5. Sandra Blaikie – A-TV Ottawa News
6. Stuntman & The Shark – 93.9 BOB FM
7. Mayor Larry O'Brien – City of Ottawa
8. Katherine "Kitty" Dines – "Rude Awakening" Virgin Radio 106.9 FM
9. The Garlic King – Really Lebanese
10. Derek & TL – Rogers TV "Daytime"
11. Bill Welychka – A-TV Weather
12. Doc & Woody – CHEZ 106.1 FM
13. Greco Lean & Fit

4th Annual "ROLLIN' FOR RISK"

Bowl-A-Thon for Autism
Walkley Bowling Lanes
Sunday, January 17, 2010, 1-4 PM



Minimum Pledges of \$120/team for entry. All pledges over \$20 will receive an income tax receipt. Join us for fun, prizes and a rockin' & rollin' good family time! See info and pledge sheet included.

FUNDRAISING UPDATE (Cont'd)

CANADA REVENUE AGENCY GOLF TOURNAMENT

In September, the **Technology Services Division, Information Technology Branch of CRA** held its 4th Annual Golf Tournament for Children at Risk! Thanks to parent Randy Fix, this phenomenal group quietly holds this event for Autism - raising not only awareness, but valuable funds for our charity! This year he raised **\$4,000** - now in excess of \$14,000 for CAR over 4 years !!! Please join me in extending our appreciation!

CAPITAL CHORDETTES & CHILDREN AT RISK

On Saturday, December 5th, the Capital Chordettes Ladies Barbershop Chorus continued its commitment to Autism and Children at Risk by presenting their 2009 Annual Donation of **\$2,029** to Brenda Reisch at their Christmas Craft Concert! Since 2004, this grand group of ladies has supported Children at Risk – with funds now totaling **\$18,573.85!!** Their dedication to our charity is matched only by their dedication to their craft, as those in attendance were entertained with beautiful Christmas carols. For more information on the Chordettes, visit their website at <http://www.capitalchordettes.ca>

2009/2010 ENTERTAINMENT COUPON BOOKS

They are still available! For only \$35, you too can own this premier discount coupon book that can save you hundreds (even thousands) of dollars on dining out, fast food, services, merchandise, sports and recreational activities. Check out our website www.childrenatrisk.ca for a list of Quickie Convenience Stores that will be selling the book for Children at Risk until January or through our offices (613-741-8255). The book is also available through parent Merle Hagerman in the Centrepointe area (613-226-4982) and at the Kanata Optometry Centre, 99 Kakulu Rd. (613-592-6193), as well as Pflug Optical, 1580 Merivale Rd. (613-723-2766). They make great stocking stuffers and books are available for other major cities like Montreal and Toronto!

FUNDRAISING UPDATE (Cont'd)

50/50 TICKET SALES – OTTAWA 67'S & OTTAWA SENATORS

This Fall has been extraordinarily busy in the department of 50/50 ticket sales! Delightfully, though we thought this opportunity was lost, Children at Risk was granted once again Charity of the Month at the Ottawa 67's hockey games for 7 games in September/October. Partnering with the South Nepean Autism Centre, this activity earned each charity **\$1,235.09!** Many thanks to the Ottawa 67's Hockey Club and the Kiwanis Club of Rideau for making this possible!

In addition, the Ottawa Senators Foundation invited Children at Risk to provide Volunteers for 3 Sens games in November – with 4 more games coming up in the New Year. This opportunity earned Children at Risk over \$1,000 – and our Volunteers also got pizza, free parking and were offered Sens and Star Wars tickets that had been donated at the time! Hope to see you at the games!

Ottawa Senators 50/50 Ticket Sales – Volunteers Needed: Saturday, January 9, Tuesday, January 26, Thursday, February 11 & Tuesday, March 2 – 2010.

Volunteers:

- must be at least 16 years of age or older (but 16-18 teens must be very mature)
- need to arrive 2 hours before the games at 5:30 PM
- will be given free parking, pizza and a drink AFTER sales are done
- will sell up to the end of the 2nd period, then have to cash out before leaving or staying to watch the game (if tickets are available)

Please check your schedules and let me know if anyone can help out at any or all of these games by calling 613-741-8255 or email us at car@childrenatrisk.ca

Macmillan's Frozen Foods Fall Campaign

Thanks to our families who help keep this a popular fundraising activity! With your help, we raised close to \$400 for Children at Risk with the Fall order. Watch for our Spring Campaign to come out with our March Newsletter!

FUNDRAISING UPDATE (Cont'd)

DONOR'S CORNER

| | |
|--|----------|
| In Memory of Karen Hemmings | \$25.00 |
| In Memory of Jeremy Hawley | \$80.00 |
| Metcalf & District Lions Club | \$100.00 |
| Sunslip Ceramics | \$140.00 |
| In Memory of Jean Wilhelm | \$155.00 |
| Bambina Lemme (working at Navan Fair) | \$166.50 |
| Elizabeth Park Protestant Congregation | \$200.00 |
| Gloucester North Lions Club | \$250.00 |
| Resell-Seguin | \$500.00 |
| United Way Directed Donations | \$600.16 |



VOLUNTEERS

V is for the **V**ery special people that you are
O is for the **O**verwhelming support & compassion you offer others during their time of need
L is for the **L**ittle things you do that make such a difference in someone's life
U is for the **U**nspoken words that sometimes mean just as much
N is for the **N**eed you fill when others aren't able
T is for the **T**ime you give of yourselves on top of your own busy schedules
E is for the **E**motional support you continually give
E is also for the **E**ndless energy you all seem to possess
R is for the **R**esponsibility you have taken on & never once complained
S is for the **S**miles you bring to kids & families by just being you

Thank you from the bottom of our hearts!

FUNDRAISING UPDATE (Cont'd)

2010 MARCH BREAK SOCIAL SKILLS SCIENCE CAMP *

Monday, March 15 - Friday, March 19, 2010
9 AM - 12:30 PM

Children at Risk is delighted to again offer a Science Camp for Asperger's Syndrome ASD children during the upcoming March Break!

Age range is 7-10 years old.

Under the leaderships of Elaine Bissonnette (Lead facilitator and Behavioural Consultant) & Sherri Curkovic (Co-Facilitator and Science Teacher) this half day science and language based activity will focus on group and team work.

*Location:

Children at Risk, 235 Donald St., Suite 212

*Cost:

\$275 + *Current Children at Risk Membership (\$20)

Email: car@childrenatrisk.ca or call 613-741-8255 if interested.

Nancy Gibson

RCP Coordinator
Ottawa Chapter

613-230-6305

nancy@autismontario.com



AutismONTARIO.com



REALIZE COMMUNITY
POTENTIAL PROGRAM

THANK YOU



My son Gabriel recently completed a Social Skill Group with Liz, Yass & Amanda. I wanted to let you know that Gabriel and another boy in the group, Christopher, have already connected for a play date this past Sunday - so the Social Skills program allowed Gabriel to make a new friend ... totally worth my investment! ☺ He was so happy when Christopher called him to invite him over for the afternoon. Thanks.

Ursula

Re: Ottawa Senators Game - Wow ! that was a pretty exciting finish to a game that started out kind of hum drum and we almost got a pizza slice too !!!! MANY THANKS to CAR and The Ottawa Senator's Foundation for the tickets. It was a pretty fun night for our family. Thank You !

Brenda MacMillan & Family

Thanks for the tickets for Star Wars : In concert in November 2009. The orchestra and choir were amazing. The special exhibits and fans dressed in costumes added to the experience for my children who were singing the Star Wars theme song for days after!

Bill Kelly

We had an awesome time at the 67s game on Friday night - it was the Teddy Bear throw night and the boys were totally overwhelmed with the impact of all the teddy bears on the ice. The game was really good tied at zero-zero until the third period ... the anticipation of throwing the teddy bears was huge and when it happened - what a sight. And of course, Tyler Toffoli had to score the Teddy Bear goal so it just couldn't have been planned any better. He is also the Player of the month - so Emmanuel was in heaven. We have all his friends convince that he is THE player. Lots of fun and smiles from my family and their friends that night. AND, I got to purge some of their stuffed animals - bonus for me...tee hee! Thanks for the tickets.

Ursula

THANK YOU (Cont'd)

As Christmas approaches, it makes us reflect back on our year and look forward to the year ahead. Our family was very fortunate to be the recipient of tickets to the Shriners' Circus this summer. The Shriners realized our sons special needs and escorted us to seats in the front row. Unfortunately, we did have some problems there with our son, as he is terribly afraid of balloons. When several balloons came floating in our direction, the Shriners came to assistance when they realized our son's fears. They handled this matter with the utmost care and respect. They helped us escort our son to a seat slightly further back. Albeit he was still upset, they in turn helped us leave the Big Top 1/2 way through the performance, without too much disruption to the other patrons. Perhaps, some would see this is not a good experience. For us, we came away feeling very fortunate. We did have a good time. Part of this good time, was the respect and assistance our son received by the Shriners. We look forward to another year ahead, knowing, that there are people who walk among us who have a kind and tender soul, and look out for our special individuals in the community. So Shriners, thank you not only for your tickets, but for your kindness, assistance and compassion. Happy Holidays to all of you.

The Gibbons Family, Kanata, Ontario

Hey There Children at Risk!!

We the Kirkland Clan of Williamsburg, wish to express our heart felt thank you to those businesses etc. whom have given the gift of tickets and an afternoon or evening out to the families with members with ASD, without such donations, families as mine would not ever have these luxuries with their children! With warm hugs and huge appreciations we gratefully and happily say thank you – without you our lives would be without these small pleasures ...

The Kirkland Clan

Thank you so much for the Dog Show tickets at Scotiabank Place. The kids really enjoyed it. It was great to see Justin interested in the dog show. It is always nice to go to an event that everyone likes. We had lots of laughs!

Thank you again,

The Prelorenzo Family

THANK YOU'S (Cont'd)

We were very lucky to received tickets for an Ottawa Senators game on October 22, 2009! My sons really enjoyed the game and were very grateful!! Many times it is financially impossible to afford such outings this is why generous donations are always very much appreciated and we would like to thank everyone who make these donations possible!!

Lucie Villeneuve & Family

I wish to thank the donors for the Ottawa Senators game tickets we received through Children at Risk last. My son still couldn't believe that he actually was at a real Sens game (Atlanta Thrashers). The next day when he saw the replay on CTV-he was so happy to say "We were there"

Thank you,

Esther

Thanks for the 67 tickets for the November 15, 2009 game. We had a great time.

Thank you,

Sheryl Kerr

We recently were lucky enough to get a family set of tickets to the Star Wars in Concert presentation. It was a phenomenal show - especially with several Star Wars fans in the house. Thank you very much for making these available. It was a fantastic night!

Sincerely,

The Bottomley Family

We wanted to thank you for the tickets once more. We all had a really good time and especially Patrick was so thrilled. He is such a STAR WARS fan. Funny story when the show was over and we were quite a few people in the elevator, Patrick asked everyone if they enjoyed it and then he said we should all give thanks to George Lucas.

Thanks,

Rosy

THANK YOU'S (Cont'd)

Recently my Dad mentioned that he would like to take our boys to a play of some sort so I was scanning the TicketMaster website. I came across Star Wars playing at Scotiabank Place and thought that this would really interest my boys (and Dad)! Later that week we received an email from Brenda that she had 33 tickets to this show! We quickly gave our request for 4 tickets. Thank you Brenda for taking time out of your day to meet my Dad and the boys so he could get the tickets. They all had a ball and memories to last a life time! Thank you to the donor - we are very grateful for your contribution!

Nanda Wubs

Hi Elaine and Sheri: Thank you very much for taking the time to prepare and send the summary of the social skills group. I've read it over carefully, and it all brings back fond memories of your sessions with Erik and the boys! In fact, I thought that the 'rules for social engagement' were so good (I always liked those charts you had on the wall!) that I cut and pasted them onto a new document which I've printed out for Erik's room (see attached). He will enjoy seeing 'your rules' again, and we can review and apply them to everyday life. Just yesterday Erik's brother was telling me that Erik doesn't talk at all on the school bus, so I reviewed some strategies with Erik. Some of them were almost direct quotes from your chart, so I know that this will be used a lot. I added 'the picture' at the bottom to let Erik know that you two are 'monitoring' him!! Thank you, again, for all of the thought, effort, knowledge, understanding and reflection that went into the sessions (are you both multi-taskers or what?!). Have a very Merry Christmas, both of you.

Cheers, Teresa and Erik

P.S. Interestingly, all of this -- writing things down step by step -- applies in so many areas of Erik's life. We do this for his writing assignments. If we make a writing plan, he can do the writing totally independently. It shows that the writing and the team work aren't so much the issues, it's the sequencing of events/facts building up to the task that gets in the way of performance. It even applies for the laundry! If I ask Erik to fold a huge pile, he is stuck. If we sort it into ownership piles, he does a beautiful job. I love trying to figure out what 'the block is'...just as the two of you did so well with breaking the tasks down, writing it down and using video. It is all possible!!

Autism Circle

IOKDS
INTERNATIONAL ORDER OF
THE KING'S DAUGHTERS AND SONS



The King's Daughters and Sons is a Christian service organization, organized 123 years ago in New York City. It quickly spread throughout North America and to many countries around the world. Today, there are over 5000 members, most live in the USA. About 100 members live in the Ottawa area under the umbrella group called the Ottawa City Union, made up of seven Circles.

The projects in Ottawa are:

- The King's Daughters and Sons Apartments, a low rent seniors apartment building at 567 Cambridge Street South
- Scholarships at Carleton University, Saint Paul University, and the University of Ottawa.
- The King's Daughters Dinner Wagon, Ottawa's Meals On Wheels, was initiated by The King's Daughters and Sons in 1968 and continues to have support from the Circles and members.

Our two new projects are Autism and Literacy.

On November 30, 2009 an organizational meeting of the newly formed Ottawa Autism Circle was held at 10:00 a.m. Nine people met in the lounge of The King's Daughters and Sons Apartments, 567 Cambridge Street South. Planning prior to this meeting included sending information about The King's Daughters and Sons to Autism Ontario, Children at Risk, and interested individuals. Representatives of these organizations had previously spoken to The King's Daughters and Sons members; Tracy Davidson, Manager of Chapter Development & Fundraising, Autism Ontario - Ottawa Chapter, to the Ottawa City Union; and Brenda Reisch, Executive Director of Children at Risk, to the Chautauqua Circle. Both Brenda and Tracy kindly distributed email information to their respective membership lists. During the meeting Brenda and Tracy spoke about the organizations they work with and how they support individuals living with Autism, as well as families and professionals within the community. Doreen Murthy, Ontario Branch President, led a meaningful devotion focusing on faith and Autism. Marlene Basarab presented an exciting proposal for a fund raising concert to support Autism. An enthusiastic response started the planning process for a fall 2010 concert. Jackie Maurais, Ottawa City Union President and Phoebe McLelland shared information about The King's Daughters and Sons. Debbie Ng's assistance was greatly appreciated. Brenda Reisch was elected Circle President and Tracy Davidson was elected Secretary. Cecilia Pinto agreed to be the Circle representative to the Ottawa City Union. Carol Waters agreed to act as Treasurer awaiting approval at the next meeting in February 2010.

Annual dues are \$30.00 which includes a subscription to The Silver Cross magazine. Further information is available on the Website at www.iokds.org.

The Dreams Take Flight 2009

The Dreams Take Flight 2009 Trip from Ottawa was extra special for Children at Risk families – with a record 15 ASD children and siblings being sponsored for the October 14th flight through our charity!

Dreams Take Flight – Ottawa: Our goal is to make a difference in the life of a child who has been affected by serious medical or social circumstances. A child that has never been to Walt Disney World gets the chance to have his and her dream come true. Since October 1995, Dreams Take Flight - Ottawa Chapter, has given special needs children an incredible day where their ongoing struggles are forgotten. These children are treated to a wonderful day of magical memories at the happiest place on earth - Disney World.



Dreams Take Flight is the perfect vehicle for all of us in the community to show a united front in investing in our future: our children. Unfortunately, there are far too many physically and socially challenged children in the world and Dreams Take Flight is our way of reaching out to as many of them as we can. This program gives the children a chance to forget about doctors, nurses, illness and troubled backgrounds if only for a day. It is our sincerest wish that this extraordinary day had a profound

positive affect upon these children now and in the future. We hope that these magical memories remain as a ray of hope for the rest of their lives.

Taken from Ottawa Dreams Take Flight Website <http://yow.dreamstakeflight.ca/>

*Adam had an awesome time with the Dreams Take Flight in October. I had to ask him a lot of specific questions so that he could tell us what his day was like, there was just too much to remember. I happened to find a website that one of the reporters put together that re-caped the whole day and had pictures as well. When I showed it to Adam he was then able to give me more info and elaborate on how the day went and how much fun he had. We are all looking forward to the wrap-up party so we can also get a better idea of what the day was like. Adam has kept all his mementos (hat, blanket, t-shirt etc.) around him in his room to remind him of his special day. A BIG THANK YOU to Children At Risk, Air Canada and all the volunteers. These kids would not be able to experience anything like this without you! I hope this continues for a long time so that others can have the experience as well. Thank you! **The MacMillans***

*Our son Jay went to Disneyworld this fall with Dreams Take Flight. He had a marvelous time and was royally treated, coming home loaded with souvenirs and even a treat bag from Giant Tiger! His volunteer group leaders were great and even went on rides with the kids. We wish to thank all the people who made this possible. **Maurice and Mary Vellacott***

*This is Quinn & Seth Flanagan. We would like to say a special thanks to the volunteers, Dream Take Flight and Children at Risk for our trip to Disney World. We loved it! It was the best thing that we could ever wish for because Seth & I have always wanted to go there but we could never afford it. So, we were really happy and excited when you guys said we could go. My favorite ride was Thunder Mountain and Seth's favorite ride was Splash Mountain. We really hope the other kids had as much fun as we did. Thank you!!!! **Quinn & Seth***

UPCOMING EVENTS

New Parent Guide re: children with speech/language problems!

A new publication has just been released, titled "Helping Students with Speech and Language Disorders: A Parent Guide to Supporting Success at School." It is produced by the Ontario Association for Families of Children with Communication Disorders (OAFCCD).

This 40 page Parent Guide will help parents of students with speech and language problems throughout the province.

It will help parents to:

- Navigate the speech and language service system
- Prepare for transition to school
- Understand the special education systems
- Participate for the Individual Education Plan (I.E.P.) development
- Prepare for an Identification and Placement Review Committee (I.P.R.C.)
- Engage effectively with the school system

This easy to read Parent Guide is full of tips to empower parents as they support their child's success at school.

The guide is chronologically ordered with information covering transition to school, elementary and high school and the transition to post secondary education or employment.

You can order the publication at OAFCCD's website at <http://www.oafccd.com>, at a cost of \$10 for OAFCCD members, and \$20 for non-members.

You can also purchase the publication here in Ottawa for \$15 non-member (still \$10 for members) if you pick it up directly from Joyce Mortimer, a local OAFCCD Ottawa chapter member (i.e. you save the cost of shipping). Email to contact Joyce is ckingmortimer@sympatico.ca and list "OAFCCD Parent Guide request" in the header.

UPCOMING EVENTS (Cont'd)



Barrhaven Childcare Centre
56 Kennevale Dr. Ottawa
613-825-9385 ext.14

Do you have concerns about your child's development?

Are you a parent looking for a place to connect or to discuss your concerns?

We are here to help you.

Drop by to see us.

No appointment or registration needed.

Elaine Bissonnette, a Behavior Consultant will be available on site to provide parents with information on general behavior management strategies for their child's development.

Specialists will be invited monthly to provide more in-depth information on language/communication, fine/gross motor needs, self help and play skills strategies.

These services are free of charge. Our hours are Tuesday and Thursday afternoons from 1-3 p.m.

For more information contact:

Dale O'Reilly
Manager of S.N.A.C. Resource Centre
Barrhaven Childcare Centre
56 Kennevale Dr. Ottawa
613-825-9385 ext.14
barfrc@on.aibn.com

"Dear Family & Friends Letter"

Although this has been sent out over the years, I thought it timely to once again print this Help for the Holidays article. The "Dear Family and Friends:" was written for the purpose of it being sent to relatives and hosts of holiday gatherings who might need a crash course in what to expect from their guest with autism. Article reprinted by permission of editor/author, Viki Gayhardt.

Dear Family & Friends:

I understand that we will be visiting each other for the holidays this year! Sometimes these visits can be very hard for me, but here is some information that might help our visit to be more successful.

As you probably know, I am challenged by a hidden disability called autism or what some people refer to as a pervasive developmental disorder (PDD).

Autism/PDD is a neurodevelopmental disorder which makes it hard for me to understand the environment around me. I have barriers in my brain that you can't see but which make it difficult for me to adapt to my surroundings.

Sometimes I may seem rude and abrupt, but it is only because I have to try so hard to understand people and at the same time, make myself understood.

People with autism have different abilities: some may not speak, some write beautiful poetry, others are whizzes in math (Albert Einstein was thought to be autistic), or have difficulty making friends. We are all different and need various degrees of support.

Sometimes when I am touched unexpectedly, it might feel painful and make me want to run away. I get easily frustrated, too. Being with lots of other people is like standing next to a moving freight train and trying to decide how and when to jump aboard. I feel frightened and confused a lot of the time, like you would if you landed on an alien planet and didn't understand how the inhabitants communicated.

This is why I need to have things the same as much as possible. Once I learn how things happen, I can get by ok. But if something, anything changes, then I have to relearn the situation all over again! It is very hard.

When you try to talk to me, I often can't understand what you say because there is a lot of distraction around. I have to concentrate very hard to hear and understand one thing at a time. You might think I am ignoring you--I am not. Rather, I am hearing everything and not knowing what is most important to respond to.

Holidays are exceptionally hard because there are so many different people, places and things going on that are out of my ordinary realm. This may be fun and adventurous for most people, but for me, it's very hard work and can be extremely stressful. I often have to get away from all the commotion to calm down. It would be great if you had a private place set up to where I could retreat. If I can not sit at the meal table, do not think I am misbehaved or that my parents have no control over me. Sitting in one place for even 5 minutes is often impossible for me. I feel so antsy and overwhelmed by all the smells, sounds, and people--I just have to get up and move about. Please don't hold up your meal for me--go on without me and my parent's will handle the situation the best way they know.

"Dear Family & Friends Letter" (Cont'd)

Eating in general is hard for me. If you understand that autism is a sensory processing disorder, it's no wonder eating is a problem! Think of all the senses involved with eating: sight, smell, taste, touch AND all the complicated mechanics that are involved with chewing and swallowing that a lot of people with autism have trouble with. I am not being picky-I literally cannot eat certain foods as my sensory system and/or oral motor coordination are impaired.

Don't be disappointed if mommy hasn't dressed me in starch and bows. It's because she knows how much stiff and frilly clothes can drive me buggy! I have to feel comfortable in my clothes or I will just be miserable! Temple Grandin, a very smart adult with autism, has taught people that when she had to wear stiff petticoats as a child, she felt like her skin was being rubbed with sandpaper. I often feel the same way in dressy clothes.

When I go to someone else's house, I may appear bossy and controlling. In a sense, I am being controlling because that is how I try to fit into the world around me (which is so hard to figure out!) Things have to be done in a way I am familiar with or else I might get confused and frustrated. It doesn't mean you have to change the way you are doing things--just please be patient with me and understanding of how I have to cope...mom and dad have no control over how my autism makes me feel inside.

People with autism often have little things that they do to help themselves feel more comfortable. The grown ups call it "self regulation," or "stimming". I might rock, hum, flick my fingers in my face, flap my arms or any number of different things. I am not trying to be disruptive or weird. Again, I am doing what I have to do for my brain to adapt to your world. Sometimes I cannot stop myself from talking, singing, or partaking in an activity. The grown ups call this "perseverating" which is kinda like self regulation or stimming. I do this only because I have found something to occupy myself that makes me feel comfortable, and I don't want to come out of that comfortable place and join your hard-to-figure-out-world. Perseverative behaviors are good to a certain degree because they help me calm down. Please be respectful to my mom and dad if they let me "stim" for awhile as they know me best and what helps to calm me.

Remember that my mom and dad have to watch me much more closely than the average child. This is for my own safety, preservation of your possessions, and to facilitate my integration with you tippies (what we autistics fondly call you neurotypical folk!) It hurts my parents' feelings to be criticized for being over protective or condemned for not watching me close enough. They are human and have been given an assignment intended for saints. My parents are good people and need your support.

Holidays are filled with sights, Sounds, and smells. The average household is turned into a busy, frantic, festive place. Remember that this may be fun for you tippies but it's very hard work for me to conform. If I fall apart or act out in a way that you consider socially inappropriate, please remember that I don't possess the neurological system that is required to follow tippy rules.

I am a unique person--an interesting person. I will find my place at this celebration that is comfortable for us all as long as you'll try to view the world through my eyes!

Autism Ontario and Children at Risk – Who is Who??!

With parents of newly diagnosed children coming on-board each year, it seems that there is on-going confusion over the differences between the charities of Children at Risk, Ottawa and the Ottawa Chapter of Autism Ontario. We are separate, registered charities – each with our own membership and fees. My simple explanation is that Children at Risk is a LOCAL charity, while Autism Ontario is a PROVINCIAL charity with chapters – like Ottawa! Children at Risk was and continues to be a Service Provider, while Autism Ontario is an Information/Lobbying/Connector charity. I like to often refer to us as “Sister Organizations” for Autism.

Here is some info on the Ottawa Chapter of AO:

About Us

Autism Ontario - Ottawa Chapter

*Living or working with a person who has a developmental disorder like **autism** or another **Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)** can be very challenging. Trying to sort through the myriad of information, services, programs and treatments and deal with school boards, agencies, family and the ongoing needs of a person with autism/PDD or Asperger Syndrome, only adds to the challenge. We're here to help. At the **Ottawa Chapter of Autism Ontario** we understand the challenge of dealing with autism/ASD. We are an independent, non-profit organization committed to improving the quality of life for people and families living with autism and related disorders. Our membership is composed primarily of parents in the Ottawa-Carleton region and interested individuals and professionals who deal with autism and related disorders. The chapter is run by a Leadership Council. The officers of the Council are volunteer members of the Chapter who are elected annually by the general membership. We provide information, support, resources and advocacy to advance the quality of life for persons affected by ASDs within our community. The **Ottawa Chapter** has been in existence for over 30 years and was one of the first chapters. There are now 29 chapters throughout the province. **Our Mission** - To ensure that each individual with an Autism Spectrum Disorder is provided the means to achieve quality of life as a respected member of society.*

To further confuse our Autism Community, we also have in Ottawa the Provincially-funded Realize Community Potential Program, run by Nancy Gibson, in the Ottawa Chapter offices. Here is some information on RCP:

*Autism Ontario's **Realize Community Potential Program** is a new project designed to directly support parents of children with ASD through greater access to ASD information, direct contact between parents and Autism Ontario chapters, improved access to ASD Experts in local communities, and to provide a mechanism for supported community-based learning opportunities for children with ASD.*

What is also somewhat little known is that Children at Risk was actually born from Ottawa Chapter of Autism Ontario (formally known as the Ottawa Chapter of Autism Society). Over 30 years ago, the parents of ASD children had little if no services and recognized this need. In 1979, Children at Risk was formed as a Registered Charity to run government-funded programs for Autistic children. This continued until 2001-2002, when the provincial government amalgamated several children's services to run under the Ottawa Children's Treatment Centre. As of August 1, 2002, Children at Risk no longer operated government-funded services. Yet, as a Registered Charity, CAR could continue to exist – as long as it could raise its own funds to operate!

We hope this helps to make clearer the similarities and differences between AO and CAR – membership with one does not mean you have membership with the other. However, many parents in Ottawa are members of both!

As an adult with ASD and having three children also diagnosed on the spectrum of ASD, Children at Risk, has been a god send to our family.

Firstly, allow me to give you my points of view.

Being an adult, being singled out, left out, and cast aside all my growing years into adulthood, CAR, has been inviting of volunteering, inclusion, friendly, positive and encouraging. Adults such as myself, do not get the redirection that others may get, and CAR personnel and volunteers have been both accepting, understand, they are good at corrections where correcting needs be, with myself and others. Personally without this organization and their encouragement for involvement indifferent situations, I would never have gotten out the door, they allowed me to participate in a few of the fund raising benefits, giving me an opportunity to interact with adults and families, encourage me to make the best of my abilities, and to attempt to overcome my disabilities.

Children at Risk accepts my inabilities and enhanced my abilities, allowing me to partake in the bowling at Walkley bowling, to have my family present taking part in the bowling games, me I was selling raffle tickets, and collecting trash.

Also I took part in the rock and roll benefit in the spring, my mom came with me, to the set up afternoon, and people there were good to a point, the loud balloon's popping near me set my nerves on edge, so I moved to hanging up posters etc... that evening my mom and me, teamed up yet again to sell the raffle tickets, it was wonderful, loud music, so nobody knew how loud I get, I was able to get beyond my awful thoughts of everybody was laughing at me, and gossiping about me, you know how it is when you think you are the butt of all ignorance of jokes and bullies. That was a great night, I was flying high, having a great time.

In fact that was the first night in over 3 years that I had gotten out of the house and my husband actually joined us later that evening at the party.

The picnic this past summer was another date to put to paper, the permanent ink to paper to remember, mom and me met at the park across from the university and began to volunteer, mom got her gloves from the car, and she participated in the collecting of loose garbage and the city of Ottawa owned garbage cans that were already overflowing, that to me was disgusting, and mom said people are lazy, and she said they needed to be taken care of so that the children would notice!! Mom did that, I walked about, then had a hot dog, and took over handing out the hot dogs and burgers. So the picnic was awesome, my child and his dad came to the event, and had a nice time the location for my little one was the best choice, as the little water detail is what kept his attention not the tug of war nor the balloon toss, the opportunity at all the events involving the kidlets having a garage sale type thingy where the children are able to shop for gently used things is an added bonus.

So without taking up the entire newsletter, I wish to state thank you and success to CAR, without you I would still be a rural shut in.

Still on the fence as to should your Autistic Child get the flu Shot? Submitted Anonymously

Instead of asking yourself, or someone else, perhaps the more sensible question is “Do I want to have the ingredients of a flu vaccine injected into my child’s bloodstream or even my own?”

While flu vaccines vary according to manufacturer, the following are some typical ingredients:

- Killed or attenuated (half killed) viruses, which are meant to stimulate and enhance immune reaction against these organisms.
- Egg or chicken embryo protein, which can cause problems for those allergic to eggs
- Ethylene glycol (antifreeze)
- Phenol (also known as carbolic acid) which is used as a disinfectant
- Formaldehyde, which is a known cancer-causing agent
- Aluminium, which is associated with Alzheimer’s disease
- Neomycin and other antibiotics, which can cause allergic reactions in some people.

Other questions you may want to ask yourself before getting a flu shot are: “Is my child healthy enough to handle the toxic load?” and will manufacturers choose the correct flu strain this year?”

Vaccines are injected directly into muscle tissue, therefore, the ingredients are transported by the blood directly to our organs, glands and brain. As a result, the ingredients bypass the body’s own natural protective immune system mechanisms that are designed to keep out foreign invaders. In very young children, the elderly and the nutritionally deficient, these ingredients can over-stimulate the immune system, actually causing, not preventing illness. In addition, neurotoxic substances, such as heavy metals and chemicals, can remain in the tissues, constantly stimulating immune-activating cells. Therefore the immune system has no chance to rest, as it does with natural infections once they have been brought under control.

Another downfall to the flu vaccine is that the three strains of influenza it contains are chosen based on predictions and which viruses were most prevalent the previous year. Considering how many virus strains there are, and the rate at which they mutate, how effective is a manufacturer’s guess regarding last year’s viruses likely to be?

If we get the flu shot and don’t have a strong natural immunity, there is a good chance that we will experience symptoms of the flu. And, if we are already in a weakened health condition, the stimulating assault on our immune system caused by the toxic ingredients in the vaccine could make matters worse.

Symptoms of lowered immunity include frequent colds and flu, cold sores, allergies, continual fatigue, candida yeast overgrowth, painful joints and muscles, parasite infections, eczema, psoriasis and inflammatory disorders.

The only true immunity is what the body naturally produces. The best protection against getting the flu is to build a strong immune system by:-

- Eat a nutritious whole food diet in which alkaline minerals are abundant.
- Eliminate the colon regularly – fibre rich diet or a herbal preparation.
- Avoid white sugar
- Exercise regularly
- Get sufficient rest
- Wash your hands often

Still on the fence as to should your Autistic Child get the flu Shot? (Cont'd)

- Use natural immune enhancers such as Echinacea, oil of oregano, and oxygen supplements. Homeopathic and herbal alternatives to the flu vaccine are available through holistic health practitioners and health food stores.
- Avoid people who have the flu.

As if one dilemma wasn't enough, this year you also have - Should I get the H1N1 vaccine?

Just in time for the flu season, the H1N1 vaccine started to ship around the world. With mixed messages and conflicting advice running rampant, many people find themselves unsure as to whether or not they should get vaccinated. H1N1, a mixture of swine, bird and human viruses, has killed at least 6,770 people globally, according to the WHO. Although most people suffer mild symptoms such as aches or fever, but recover without special treatment, it says.

So should you get the H1N1 vaccine?

The vaccine itself is not without risk. Here is some summarized facts and commonly asked questions regarding the H1N1 vaccine.

Are all vaccines created equal?

No. There are two types of H1N1 vaccines: the old-fashioned needle-injection and the nasal spray. The injection, often referred to as a "shot", contains fragments of the killed H1N1 influenza virus. The nasal spray, which most children would surely prefer, actually contains a weakened virus.

Does it matter which one I get?

Yes. While the nasal spray may be preferable to children over an old-fashioned injection, experts warn that certain group of people should avoid the nasal spray. Young children, pregnant women, and people with weakened or compromised immune systems are advised against getting the nasal spray. The spray, which actually contains a weakened but living virus, could potentially be strong enough to result in serious health complications.

Are they safe?

Officials at the National Institute of Health claim there are "no serious side effects," aside from redness and swelling at the site of injection - but recent news reports give a different story. A source at the NIH admitted that the vaccine(s) were one of the fastest human vaccines in development, according to CBS correspondent Sharyl Atkinson. In order to get these vaccines to market so quickly, the United States government granted "liability protection" to swine flu vaccine manufacturers. This protection allowed the drug companies to fast-track production by adding unlicensed components, some of which have been shown to cause autoimmunity in animals. In other words, you might be taking a vaccine that has been licensed without normal safety regulations - and if you suffer adverse reactions, the drug manufacturer is immune from legal liability.

Swedish Aftonbladet daily, published a list of 52 side effects of the vaccine, some of them very scary. A female cheerleader in the U.S.A. was paralyzed because of the vaccine and similar reports are being made by Norwegian medical staff; Turkish Ministry of Health sent a memorandum to all the vaccination centers in Turkey about similar side effects; A Turkish doctor went into coma while being vaccinated; Similar incidents were recorded in Switzerland and 172,000 doses of vaccines sent to Canada by GlaxoSmithKline were called back, as they can trigger lethal allergic reactions and Canadian authorities were advised not to use them. How much of them were already used is unclear. So are they safe - no one really knows?

Still on the fence as to should your Autistic Child get the flu Shot? (Cont'd)

Aside from being rushed-to-market, are there any unsafe ingredients I should know about?

Some shots will contain the mercury-based preservative thimerosal, which some believe to be harmful to children. The CDC claims there is no evidence of this. However, a US Congressional Report on Mercury in Medicine, released in 2003, claimed that there is a link between thimerosal and the development of autism, along with other brain development disorders. Additionally, some vaccines use squalene, an immune adjuvant that causes the immune system to react in a powerful and unnatural way. The purpose is to reduce the amount of vaccine needed per dose. The American Journal of Pathology published a study in 2000 which cited a possible link between adjuvants and arthritis and other chronic inflammatory diseases. Critics claim the use of adjuvants was another unsafe result of the vaccine being rushed out the door.

Are they safe for my children?

Many of these vaccines were tested on a few hundred healthy children. It is unclear how children with certain allergies or health conditions might react, as they haven't been thoroughly tested.

What if I'm pregnant?

Pregnant women are 6 times as likely to die if they are infected with the swine flu, so most experts advise pregnant women to take the vaccine. Pregnant women should only take the injection, not the nasal spray. But www.mercola.com recently published an article that the swine flu vaccine causes miscarriages in pregnant women and in Germany they are not recommending the vaccine for pregnant women citing that there is not enough known as to the effects on the unborn foetus.

So what's the bottom line? Should I take it or not?

Well, the World Health Organisation claims that 30-50% of people infected with influenza have mild or no symptoms at all. On the other hand, serious health complications, including death, have been occurring in 1% of swine flu patients. If you fall into one of the 5 groups advised by the CDC, you should probably give stronger consideration to getting vaccinated but in light of recent reports even that advisory is in question. But everyone's situation is different. There's a risk associated with getting the vaccine, and there's a risk associated with not getting it. Advice is to educate yourself as much as possible and make an informed decision, based on your age, your medical history, and the general strength of your immune system. Other than that your own option is to flip a coin!

As an aside if you like conspiracy stories check-out <http://thesop.org/journalism/2009/06/28/journalist-files-charges-against-who-and-un-for-bioterrorism> for the allegations that the H1N1 is a man-made pandemic orchestrated to make Pharmaceutical companies millions and allegations of Bioterrorism.

Compiled from various Health related news and media sources.

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