

CHILDREN AT RISK NEWSLETTER

235 Donald Street, Ottawa, ON K1K 1N1

(613) 741-8255 (Tel)

(613) 741-5530 (Fax)

www.childrenatrisk.ca
carsup@magma.ca

Issue 29

March, 2005

OLDIES 1310 & CHILDREN AT RISK

present

The 4th Annual ROCKIN' for RISK

(for Autism)

Saturday, April 2nd, 2005

WHAT: 50's/60's/70's rock & roll dance party featuring the live classic rock sounds of local band **Intersection**. Hosted by **Oldies 1310's Brother Bob**, the evening will also include contests, prizes and a Raffle and Silent Auction.

Returning again this year as our special guest - **Shawn Barry, Ottawa's premier Elvis Tribute Artist!** Welcoming **Capital Chordettes** quartet "Sleepless"!

WHEN: *Sat., Apr. 2nd* - 8 PM to 1 AM

WHERE: *Nepean Sportsplex, Salon A & B*

WHY: For over 25 years, **Children at Risk** has been helping Autistic children and their families in the Greater Ottawa area.

HOW: Tickets \$15 advance, \$20 at-the-door

For tickets or info, call 795-2153 or go to

www.childrenatrisk.ca

(LCBO licensed event, must be 19 years+)

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Submitted by David Allingham

It's March. Two months of kids or adults sick with the flu finally, finally coming to a close. I hope all has been better with your families.

One of the biggest CAR events of the year... Rockin' for Risk will soon be happening and any support you can give would be appreciated. (It's loud, but fun... and it is a good time).

Our organization has started to become more formalized which doesn't mean bureaucratic, although there is some of that, however it does mean that board members are more quickly able to get integrated into their role. For me it means I won't be "President for Life" and perhaps more of you will venture to try this job.

Your board has been putting a lot of focus on running groups in the west-end and has done so for each of the last two sessions. However, we understand that we need to find a better venue for the sessions... so if you have an interest in this then go find one for us! We need information like: is parking available, the cost, the size of the room, its proximity to washrooms, it's availability, and of course, contact names. Any assistance you can provide would be much appreciated

Financially, CAR is getting stronger. We are controlling our spending and revenue has been fairly stable which has resulted in a more positive cash position. We are nearly at a point where we would be able to sustain Social Skills groups and other services should a couple of major events not be as successful.

A very large thank-you to **Hewlett-Packard** for providing some fabulous replacements for the systems we lost earlier this year. I would also like to thank all those other kind individuals and organizations who came to our aid at that time as it greatly reduced our secondary costs for software licenses and other costs related to the system replacements.

Finally, it is with sadness that two extremely long term board members, **Janet Kooiman and Debbie Thorauge**, have indicated that they will not be putting their names forward next year and two other board members, **Amanda Telford and Denis Lalonde**, withdrew recently due to changes in their personal lives.

SO the Board needs YOU in JUNE.

FUNDRAISING UPDATE:

Submitted by Brenda Reisch
Fundraising Chairperson

UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA "MED SHOW"

Once again, Children at Risk was invited back to be a co-recipient charity with Operation Go Home. 3 nights of entertaining performances, plus silent auction sales resulted in a donation of **\$2,750** being presented to Children at Risk in January! Hats off to **Meds 2008** for their hard work in supporting local charities!!

OTTAWA 67'S 50/50 TICKET SALES

Children at Risk was designated at the recipient charity in charge of the **Rideau Kiwanis** 50/50 ticket sales for the month of February. All five games were played to a sold-out crowd, with outstanding sales of tickets resulting in a donation of **\$2,725** for Children at Risk. Many, many thanks to all our volunteers who helped make this event such a terrific fundraiser.

4TH ANNUAL "ROCKIN' FOR RISK" 50s/60s/70s DANCE

Saturday, April 2nd, 2005 marks the date for Ottawa's biggest and best rock and roll dance party! Hosted by MC "Brother Bob" of Oldies 1310 and headlined by our live band, Intersection, this retro evening of tunes also features a return visit by Ottawa's premier Elvis Tribute Artist, Shawn Barry, as well as The Capital Chordettes quartet "Sleepless". Rounding out the evening are costume and dance contests, door prizes, raffle and silent auction. So bring your dance shoes, credit card and appetite for those classic hits of yesteryear! Tickets are \$15 advance, \$20 at the door. Call 795-2153 or go to www.childrenatrisk.ca for retail ticket sales locations!



SHAWN BARRY PHOTO OPPORTUNITY

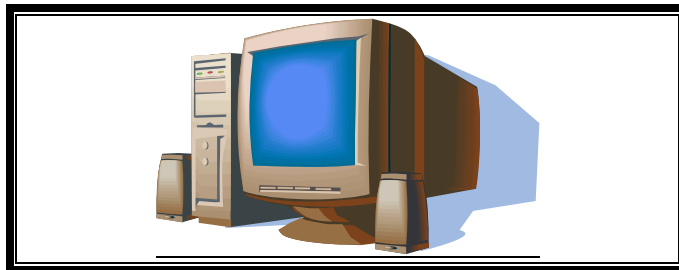
On Saturday, April 9th, the Lincoln Fields Shopping Centre is featuring "**An Afternoon with Elvis**". From 11 AM to 3 PM, Ottawa's premier Elvis Tribute Artist Shawn Barry will be performing, then offering photo package opportunities, with a package of photos to be produced by Japan Camera for only \$10, \$8 of which will be donated to Children at Risk! Don't miss this chance to get your photo taken with The King of Rock & Roll!!

GRECO MARTIAL ARTS SHOW

Tony Greco will again be holding his Martial Arts Extravaganza on **Sunday, May 15th**, at the Bronson Centre. Children at Risk is invited to sell raffle tickets at this high profile, high-energy showcase of local martial arts talents! More info to come.

10TH ANNUAL CHILDREN AT RISK RAFFLE

Tickets for this popular fundraising activity will be available at the beginning of May, with sales kicking off in Carlingwood Shopping Centre on Friday, May 6th and Saturday May 7th. Tickets will be \$2 each or 3 for \$5. **Anyone who can donate a prize or knows of a business that may support this activity, please call Brenda at 261-4442. Volunteers are needed to sell tickets at the Carlingwood mall as well.**



HEWLETT-PACKARD CANADA DONATION

At the beginning of February, Children at Risk received a delivery from **The Hewlett-Packard Canada Philanthropy Committee**. Spearheaded by local committee member, **Lise Bruneau**, our charity was the proud recipient of two HP Pavilion PC's and flat screen monitors, an HP Photosmart all-in-one printer/workcentre as well as a beautiful HP photosmart digital camera to replace the equipment that was stolen!! As a result, Children at Risk has been able to donate some of the used computers to other causes, as well as use funds donated to update our operating systems and software packages. With the help of **Larry King**, many hours were spent setting up our new systems and we are up and running.

Ms. Bruneau noticed our loss in the Ottawa Citizen September article and has been working tirelessly on our behalf since then to obtain a donation. Combine this with our new equipment financed from the **Project Clear Skies** donation (refrigerator & stove already in house!) and we will be "looking good" for our Annual General Meeting in June!

THE 2ND ANNUAL EMERGENCY SERVICES CHARITY
SOFTBALL TOURNAMENT

Once again **Will Barlow** of the Ottawa Police Services is organizing the Ottawa Police and Ottawa Fire Department Emergency Services staff for a charity softball tournament to support The Autism Society (Ottawa Chapter) and Children at Risk. The date of **Saturday, June 18th** has been set and the location this year is **Carlington Park** in the east-end. Activities will also include a tug-of-war, Jasmine's fire house, a ladder truck, fun bounce, BBQ, raffle and more. More details to follow!

As the previous year, we would like to invite donations of Canadian Tire money to help purchase a bicycle for our raffle. Any donations over \$10 will receive an income tax receipt! Please send or drop off donations to: Children at Risk, 235 Donald St., Ottawa, ON, K1K 1N1.

ANNUAL FAMILY PICNIC

Sunday, June 26th is the date for the ASO/Children at Risk/Asperger's Annual Family Picnic. It will be held at **Brewer Park**, 12 noon to 3 PM, with an inexpensive BBQ, games, activities as well as the drawing of the Children at Risk Annual Raffle prizes. Brewer Park is a water sprinkler park with plenty of play structures for children. Our picnic will be located under and around the covered structure, near the play area. Come and enjoy a relaxing afternoon in the park with an opportunity to network with other families living with ASD!

MACMILLAN FROZEN FOODS CAMPAIGN

Spring not only brings the warmer weather, but another MacMillan Frozen Foods campaign! Enclosed you will find the colourful flyer for frozen cookie dough, muffin mixes, specialty items, pizza and meat products. Help make this campaign as successful as our fall one was by passing them around to friends, co-workers, neighbours and relatives. MacMillan products are of the highest quality, delicious and easy to use!

Orders must be in by **MONDAY, APRIL 18TH**, with delivery on Thursday, May 5th. More flyers can be obtained by calling 741-8255 or emailing carsup@magma.ca

THANKS TO OUR BOARD MEMBERS

This year Children at Risk is losing several Board Members to "retirement" and we hope you join us in extending heartfelt appreciation and thanks to these members of the Autism community who, in addition to parenting a child with Autism, have exhibited a commitment to the well-being of all Autistic children and their families. Their dedication to the community has resulted in countless hours of meetings, committee projects, fundraising events and activities and more to ensure that Children at Risk can continue to provide services and supports in Ottawa and the surrounding region. Best of luck to the following in your future endeavors – we will miss you!!

AMANDA TELFORD	7 Years
JANET KOOIMAN	5 Years
DEBBIE THORHAUGE	6 Years
DENIS LALONDE	2 Years



DISNEY DREAMS TAKE FLIGHT

We regret to inform you that Children at Risk will not be participating in the annual Air Canada Dreams Take Flight trip to Walt Disney World this year. For 4 years, our charity has been fortunate to be included in this phenomenal initiative by Air Canada employees, allowing both Autistic children and their siblings the opportunity for a dream of a lifetime one-day trip to Disney. However, Dreams Take Flight is trying to accommodate more charities and will be cycling charities in and out. We hope to be "back on board" next year!

DONOR'S CORNER:

- Anne (Blair) & Hyman Mayberger Endowment Fund through the Ottawa Jewish Community Foundation (2003 & 2004 donation) \$134
- Domtar Inc. Ottawa area employees \$500
- McCarthy Tetrault Employees \$80
- CommuniCare Therapy \$100
- The Starship Group of Companies (Speedy Messenger) \$165
- In memory of Frank King \$155
- In memory of Edward Bedard \$270
- IBM Employee's Charitable Fund \$885.15
- Yves Desjardins – donation of Scanner

CHARITY COORDINATOR'S MESSAGE

Submitted by Brenda Reisch

We are approaching 3 years of existing solely on fundraising and donations, which in it self continues to present challenges, especially for a charity that has always been a service provider. Services cost money. While Children at Risk has always strived to be fiscally responsible, there is also a standard that must be maintained to keep services at a high level of quality and professionalism. Our Board Members have been working hard and will continue to work hard to ensure the services Children at Risk provides will be consistent, but also adaptive to the needs of the community. But just what does Children at Risk do?

Friendship Social Skill Therapy Groups

- Site-Based small group settings with low ratios of child/adult, using experienced Facilitators to work on social skill development for moderate to high-functioning children diagnosed within the Autism Spectrum Disorders – ages 4 to early teen

"Typical Teen" Social Skill Therapy Groups

- Outing based small group settings for children diagnosed with Asperger's Syndrome, organized with The Autism Society's Asperger's Parent Support Group. Overseen by a qualified Speech Pathologist, these groups use experienced Facilitators and incorporate peer mentors to establish social skills in various outing-related settings. Presently serving children in grades 7 & 8, 9 & 10 and up.

Social Skill Therapy Pilot Groups

(As a need in the community arises, Children at Risk attempts to provide services on a pilot basis.)

The following 2 groups are still in developmental stages:

- Life-skills based social skill therapy for children with higher needs that require lower ratios
- Life-skills program for moderate to higher-functioning children to establish household skills in a group setting.

Sibling Support Therapy Groups

- Held twice yearly, Children at Risk currently offers a younger and older group for siblings from ages 5 to 13. Experienced facilitators explore the complex relationships siblings of Autistic children experience in a group setting that includes crafts, games, projects and snacks – a special time for a sibling to be themselves!

Educational Workshops and Information Seminars

- As the need arises, Children at Risk will present workshops and seminars on current autism-related topics in the community, often speaking at schools, colleges and groups to educate and inform. Often in partnership with other Autism organizations in the area, these sessions are open to parents, extended family members, special needs workers and professionals.

Algonquin College Developmental Service Worker Student Placement Program

- For several years, Children at Risk has sponsored 2nd year student placements as part of the DSW program at Algonquin. Fall and Winter sessions see students working with families for 20-hour field home placements as part of the course requirement. This highly successful partnership often results in part-time jobs for students, providing needed workers for families running home intervention programs. Also includes sessions of class instruction provided by Children at Risk.

Community Connections and Information

- Children at Risk publishes quarterly newsletters and bulletins to keep members and the Autism Community informed of events, activities, meetings, workshops and other related Autism-community news. A member group email sends out regular notices of interest to members who often experience isolation that can be related to raising a child with Autism.

Other Supports

- These include an Annual Family Picnic, liaisons with programs like the Air Canada Dreams Take Flight trips and access to event tickets donated by various local sports and entertainment organizations.

Children at Risk has been "there for you" for over 26 years! Help us to be able to continue to help you – become a Board Member, make a donation, volunteer in the office and/or for fundraising events and activities! Get involved and see the rewards that come with being part of a community!



AUTISM SOCIETY EVENTS/ACTIVITIES

Highlights from the Geneva Centre Symposium on Autism

Wednesday, March 30 & April 6,
7:30-9:30,
Nepean Room, Bronson Centre,
211 Bronson Avenue

ASO Ottawa AGM

Tuesday, April 19,
7-9 PM,
Ottawa Citizen Building,
1101 Baxter Rd.

For more information and other news, go to
www.autismottawa.com or call 230-6305.

College Graduate Certificate Program in Autism and Behavioural Science

Submitted by Lynne Bowes
Program Development Team Member

Since August, 2004 a Program Development Consortium consisting of faculty and management personnel from 5 Ontario colleges (George Brown College, Algonquin College, La Cite Collegial, Mohawk College, and St. Lawrence College) along with community consultants and an Advisory Committee, has been working to produce a program to train graduates to work in the field of Autism Spectrum Disorders implementing Early Intensive Behavioural Intervention/Applied Behaviour Analysis programs.

This program is currently in the Curriculum Development phase, and is due to be completed and ready to deliver by September 2006.

Presently, several Ontario colleges have submitted proposals to the Ministry of Colleges and Universities to be able to offer this program as a 1-year full-time Daytime course, Continuing Education Part-Time course and/or Continuing Education Online course. Successful colleges have not yet been notified but they should know by the end of March if their proposals have been accepted.

Although the curriculum has not been finalized at this point, 10 courses will cover such topics as introductions to autism, applied behaviour analysis, working with families and teams, ethics and professionalism, treating challenging behaviours,

parent and staff training, non-violent crisis prevention and intervention, etc. There will also be two field placement practicums.

It is hoped that graduates of this one-year post-diploma program will help to alleviate the shortage and high turnover rate of qualified workers in programs providing services to children with autism spectrum disorders.

DO NOT MISS a PRESENTATION BY LYNNE BOWES AT THE CHILDREN AT RISK AGM ON JUNE 21ST!

Social Skills Groups / Sibling Support Groups

Submitted by Patricia Flanagan

We were lucky enough to enroll our youngest son, Seth, in the winter 2005 session of CAR's Social Skills Group. Thankfully, the Sibling Support Group is running at the same time and we managed to enroll Seth's older brother, Quinn, into this group.

Initially, we weren't really sure what to expect from either group. However, over the last few weeks we have been pleasantly surprised and impressed with the professionalism, caring, and concern that is seen in both of these groups. The group leaders are always available to talk, whether it is by phone, e-mail or in person and they are so understanding.

I would have to say that the best part about both of these groups is the fact that I do not have to drag my children to them. They both love attending their "special playgroups" and are learning so much from the other children and their instructors.

This past Saturday, when Seth woke up the first thing that he said to me was, "Mommy, I go to my playgroup today, at the brown school in Ottawa? I play with my new friends, and we don't work!" He was so happy and excited to go that I almost wish I had let him sleep longer so that I wasn't being asked this same question over and over for an hour; until it was time to leave.

Then, there's Quinn, who I thought for sure would never give up his Saturday morning Karate and Ju-Jitsu classes to attend a playgroup. However, he too has shocked me with his enthusiasm and eagerness to go play with his "new friends from Ottawa" and his excitement over what he is learning.

Now, I can only hope that we can manage to enroll in the next session of groups because I know that both of my boys are going to miss their new friends, new teachers, and the "brown school in Ottawa" (as Seth calls it).

Submitted by Sylvie Bourbonnais

Since January, my 5 ½ year old son, Travis, has been attending a Friendship Group every second Saturday morning, from 10:30 until noon at the Hardini Community Centre on Donald Street through Children at Risk.

Under the leadership of Elaine Bissonnette and her team (Chris & Sherry), 8 children get together to learn how to become a friend. Through all kinds of activities such as playing hot potato and hitting the piñata, the children practice their social skills with waiting for your turn, listening to your friend and reciprocating in an appropriate way.

With plenty of space and plenty of toys, the children never get bored. When I come back to pick up Travis, I like to peek through the window of the door. Every time I see 8 little boys, each with a big grin on their face, busy paying attention to the game they are playing.

I am very happy to send my son to Friendship Group. An interview is conducted prior to those play sessions and the children are matched according to their skills. Many children are even coming back for a second and third time! What a great way of spending a Saturday morning!!

I would strongly recommend it to any parents. The ratio of adults/children is low so that every child is properly supported and Elaine's team is well-versed in Behavioural Intervention and in teaching social and playskills. I sincerely thank Children at Risk for taking the time to organize the Friendship Group for our children!

OBJECTIVES FOR FRIENDSHIP GROUPS

To provide an opportunity to meet in a friendly and supportive environment.

To learn and encourage social skills within the group of peers (turn taking, asking for information, sharing, playing games cooperatively, peer initiations...)

To foster discussion skills about friendships and individual roles in a group.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES FOR ASKING SOMEONE TO PLAY

1. Role-play the steps for ASKING SOMEONE TO PLAY. Suggested role-plays involve the following scenarios:

a. Pretend it is snack, free-play or recess time at school and no one has started playing yet. Have the child initiate play with someone. Have the recipient say yes and also no sometimes, so that the student must remember to ask someone else or get another game.

b. Extend the role-play above to the point where no child will play any game and the child must seek the teacher's help rather than express anger at the other children, thereby risking loss of friendship.

c. Pretend it's a play-date at someone's house. Role-play selecting games that the other child really likes and games that the other child does not like to highlight the importance of choosing games that others enjoy.

d. Pretend that children are busy reading or finishing their work in school. Role-play waiting until they are done with their work versus asking them to play in the middle of their work.

2. Bait the skill. This means doing something that requires the student to initiate play. For example, say "If you want to play, ask me to play that game with you."

3. Correct inappropriate ways of asking others to play, such as demanding others to play or insisting on playing games that others do not like. Also prompt students who sit on the periphery, fearful of asking others to play. IMPORTANT NOTE: If you are going to encourage shy students to ask others to play, direct them to students whom who have previously coached to accept such offers.

4. Provide rewards for appropriate ASKING SOMEONE TO PLAY.

a. Give verbal praise for correct or partially correct ASKING SOMEONE TO PLAY.

b. Give tokens, pennies or points every time the student asks someone to play. When she/he gets an agreed-upon amount of tokens (e.g., five tokens), give a special reward (e.g., snack, stickers, or privileges to play a special game).

NOTICE

Our office has been receiving several requests for Life-Skills training for higher functioning, verbal children. Most children in special school units receive this as part of their course curriculum. However, children with Autism in regular school settings do not. Busy family settings do not always allow the opportunity for parents to teach these everyday skills of cooking, hygiene, cleaning, shopping, etc. We want to hear from YOU, our families, if there is a need for this type of group. Please email carsup@magma.ca or call 741-8255 to let us know if this is of interest. Groups can only be run if there is enough response!