



NEWSLETTER JUNE 2008

Issue #43

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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

- Children at Risk Annual General Meeting – June 5, 2008
- Autism Community Annual Family Picnic – June 22, 2008



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

It was great to see many members at "Rockin' for Risk" in April. Once again, so much fun was had by all. It is wonderful to see an annual event supported by not only the Autism Community, but the Ottawa Community at large! We are now coming up to our Annual General Meeting. Several long-standing, dedicated Board Members are leaving this year. Their departure will be felt, but we are looking forward to having new candidates step forward - a couple having already expressed their interest. Serving as a Board Member with Children at Risk is a great opportunity to not only give-back to you community, but to also make a difference! If you think you have something to offer, we would welcome your application. If you feel you cannot serve on the Board of Directors, we would also welcome your help heading a fundraising project on on a Committee. It is the pieces that make a whole, no contribution is too small!

I look forward to see you on June 5 at the AGM as well as the Annual Family Picnic on June 22.

Paul Lacroix, President, Board of Directors

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF CHILDREN AT RISK, OTTAWA

Thursday, June 5, 2008

235 Donald Street, Room 212 – 7:00 p.m.

You are invited to attend the Annual General Meeting of Children at Risk. This evening will also be an opportunity for all friends and families of Children at Risk to meet informally and to discuss issues around supporting children and families within the Autism Spectrum Disorders. **Wine and cheese will be served!**

****Special Presentations****

Children at Risk is delighted to be able to showcase 2 new programs: The Cooking Club - We welcome **Lee Anne Lock** and **Jean Grant-Kearney** to tell us about this life skill/social skill program that offers teens with Asperger and High Functioning Autism a chance to develop basic food preparation skills in a fun and social environment. Happy Trails Summer Camp – **Art Mackie & Nathalie Gour**, along with **Elaine Bissonnette** will be attending to fill us in on this exciting new venture that is designed to provide more supports for higher-needs ASD children.

The following business will be conducted:

1. Minutes of last meeting
2. President's Report
3. Treasurer's Report & Appointment of Auditors
4. Fundraising Report
5. Election of new Board

Standing for re-election to the Board are:

Paul Lacroix, Amanda Telford, Hazel Smith, Lesia Gilbert

The following positions are vacant: 3 to 4 Members at Large*

**With the "retirement" of several long-standing Board Members, there is a critical need for community members to step forward! We encourage parents and friends to get more involved with the Autism Community through service on the Board of our local charity! More information, time commitments and job descriptions can be obtained by calling the office.*

2007/2008 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President:	Paul Lacroix
Vice-President:	Marlene Steppan
Secretary:	Andrea Allingham
Treasurer:	Lesia Gilbert
Member at Large:	Ed Gratton
Member at Large:	Amanda Telford
Member at Large:	Hazel Smith

SAYING "GOOD-BYE"

With the upcoming Annual General Meeting, three long-standing members of our Board of Directors will be stepping down from their positions! Vice-President **Marlene Steppan** (who also ran the portfolio of Human Resources), Secretary **Andrea Allingham** and Member-At-Large **Ed Gratton** (who ran the portfolio of Groups Liaison) all joined our Board in 2005. For three years, these three dedicated parents have been an integral part of Children at Risk. They have helped to take our small charity to a higher level of professionalism and accreditation with initiatives for standardized policies, procedures and hiring practices. They have all spent countless hours in meetings and working on documents to make Children at Risk a better support for the Autism Community – not to mention participating in fundraising events and activities. We know that they will continue to be involved in Children at Risk and wish to sincerely thank them for contributions!

WELCOME ABOARD

My name is **Jean Grant-Kearney** and I work as an Educational Assistant for the Ottawa Carleton District School Board. I have been working as an EA for the past 4 years and truly enjoy working with the students. I have an Honours Degree in German and French from Carleton University and have worked as an Executive Assistant for a Member of Parliament as well as a teaching assistant in a Daycare. I have two wonderful girls and in my spare time spend many hours both coaching and supporting my daughters in competitive soccer.

WELCOME ABOARD (Cont'd)

Hi, my name is **Lee Anne Lock** and I have facilitated 2 Cooking Groups in Kanata in the last year. It is a life and social skills program for teens 14– 19 with Asperger Syndrome or High-functioning Autism. I graduated from the Developmental Service Worker program at Algonquin College in 1978. I have worked for the school board for 30 years as an EA at Crystal Bay School for 16 years, then Earl of March in the Community Living class for 4 years and am presently assisting in the regular program at Earl. Outside of my regular job, I tutor children of all ages and learning capabilities, assist a Speech Pathologist with a group of young children and assist older people with light housekeeping and running errands. As you can see I love working with people of all ages as do my 2 wonderful teenage daughters who still live at home and help out whenever they can. I also thoroughly enjoy being a facilitator with the cooking group. I am still learning new ways to improve the program to better teach the students and also making it an enjoyable experience for everyone. I look forward to many more cooking classes.

REQUESTING CLARIFICATION

Although we understand that no confusion is intended, we are asking that all members help us out by making family and children's names clear. There are many 2 name families in our membership who have joined/registered under one name (ie. Mary Smith and John Doe – they are a family, but both use different last names). When registrations, payments and emails are sent in for children – sometimes only one surname appears – and that name is not on our files! It is confusing for our administration to try and figure out the puzzle at times. Cheques are sent by Mary Smith for their child's group payment – and the child has the last name Doe. We sometimes even receive emails that might be maryandjohn@hotmail.com with only first names signed in the email! We are asking that all members please be clear in correspondence, emails, cheques, etc. to indicate if their child's surname name is different than their own – especially if you need receipts in the name of one parent! Thanks in advance!!



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Submitted by Brenda Reisch

Cycling – not just something that happens outdoors, with your gloves, helmet and the fresh air to breathe and move in! Cycling is something that also happens with many organizations – but especially charitable ones. Children at Risk is especially vulnerable to the effects of this natural occurrence. Members on our Board of Directors cycle out and in as older Directors “retire” and new ones (hopefully) take their place. Without a government paycheck each month, income cycles up and down. Charity fundraisers conducted by sponsors cycle recipient charities, usually not supporting the same one for more than one year. Children at Risk just recently was informed by two of these (that had been an annual event for several years) that the events would no longer be held (for our charity). Even events/activities that are owned and operated by Children at Risk can experience cycles of reduced income due to less participation and/or increased expenses – also recently experienced by our Bowl-A-Thon and Rockin’ for Risk Dance. The success of events can be weather dependent. The result of a low period in the cycle unfortunately translates to less monies available for valuable (and needed) supports for a period of time – until a high period in the cycle comes!

Yet the number of new referrals requesting services seems to grow steadily – Children at Risk now has an all-time high in memberships with over 300 families! An immediate reaction to less monies and an increased need for services (unfortunately) means that things like membership and service fees are prone to increases. Children at Risk recently (after many years of holding steady) did initiate an increase in membership fees and will probably be forced to review fees for group services for this Fall.

In this day and age, corporate sponsorships of previously municipally-funded services like arenas are now becoming the norm. We see signs encouraging you to Adopt-A-Road, Adopt-A-Park – how about Adopt-A-Charity??!! Rogers Television has locally led the way in an initiative like this by adopting Children at Risk as a charity partner for 2006-2008. However, it does not have to be only corporate organizations that follow this lead.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE (Cont'd)

Many of our members already have “adopted” Children at Risk through volunteering and donating – and we thank you for your dedication and commitment! But we need many more of you to make an investment in YOUR charity – to help us make sure we can continue to be here for you. It can be as simple as buying or selling a book of Raffle tickets – with 4,500 tickets in 375 books of 12, you can see how easily our Raffle could sell out, earning \$7,500!

Members can approach their banks, churches, employers, local merchants and more for support. If you hear of a fundraiser supporting another charity, put Children at Risk forward for their next event. Or even make your own fundraiser, like **Marissa Basile** did to celebrate her 17th birthday, supporting her cousin and others in her community! My own motto in successful fundraising is that “you can always ask”. The answer may not always be “yes” – but not asking ensures it will always be “no”!

Looking back to 2002, I am sure the Board of Directors of Children at Risk were not optimistic that 6 years later this now independent charity would still be standing and supporting so many ASD children and their families. We encourage more of you to “Adopt” YOUR charity and the sky will be the limit!

FUNDRAISING UPDATE

Submitted by Brenda Reisch, Fundraising Chairperson

UPCOMING EVENTS/ACTIVITIES SINCE MARCH 2008

What Happened ...

7th ANNUAL “ROCKIN’ FOR RISK” 50S/60S/70S DANCE – Saturday, April 12, 2008

Once again Ottawa rocked and rolled to the retro sounds of Elvis Tribute Artist Shawn Barry and live band Intersection! We were delighted to see old friends and new patrons come out to support this more than “fun” fundraiser for Children at Risk, helping to raise close to \$4,000 for our charity.

FUNDRAISING UPDATE (Cont'd)

7th ANNUAL "ROCKIN' FOR RISK" 50S/60S/70S DANCE (Cont'd)



We wish to extend special mention to **"Brother Bob" Derro** from **OLDIES 1310**, **Jo & Richard MacArthur** from **Proactive Imaginations** (poster and ad design), **the Johnson Family (especially Laura)** for organizing and running the Silent Auction, all our many donors of services and merchandise/certificates (see attached advertisement that ran in The Ottawa Citizen), our multitude of Volunteers (organized by **Paula Tam**), parents who gathered/gave donations (especially **Merle Hagerman**), **Crabtree & Evelyn** for their "60 second fix" hand massages, Algonquin College for their wonderful service and accommodations, **Rebecca Weaver** for organizing our supplies and all the many others who truly made this event a team effort and a wonderful success. We are hoping to do it all again in 2009!

13th ANNUAL CHILDREN AT RISK RAFFLE - MAY/JUNE 2008

Tickets are NOW available for our 13th Annual Fundraising Raffle! After many weeks of gathering quality prizes, we can proudly offer them for sale. The prizes are fabulous! As we sold out 4,000 tickets last year, we printed 4,500 tickets this year! I hope everyone can join me in trying to make this year another sell-out!! Unsold tickets represent lost Fundraising \$'s for Children at Risk. Funds raised will support our Community-Based Special Projects. These include Sibling, Friendship and Family Support Groups, Educational Training Workshops and Information Seminars as well as updating resource materials. These valuable activities receive no government funding and are supported solely through Fundraising efforts and Donations.

Note: Tickets can only be sold to persons 18 years and older!

FUNDRAISING UPDATE (Cont'd)

The Raffle will be drawn at our Ottawa Autism Community Annual Family Picnic on Sunday, June 22, 2008.

Our Raffle offers:

- Tickets \$2 each, 3 for \$5 or a book of 12 for \$20!
- Prizes worth a total of \$8,438!
- 38 draws, with an average Prize Value of over \$222 (1st 10 prizes \$400 and up value each!)
- Maximum 4,500 tickets sold - That's just over a 1 in 100 chance of winning!
- Minimum Prize Value of \$25!

Call our office at 741-8255 or email info@childrenatrisk.ca to get your tickets!

OTTAWA AUTISM COMMUNITY ANNUAL FAMILY PICNIC

Sunday, June 22, 2008

Brewer Park, 12 Noon to 3 PM



Volunteers please contact Janet Kooiman

janet.k@sympatico.ca

Check out the flyer at the end of the newsletter!

What is On Now/Coming ...

- Children at Risk Annual General Meeting – Thursday, June 5, 2008
- Annual Family Picnic – June 22, 2008
- Annual Open House – September, 2008
- Family Photoshoot Fundraiser – September, 2008
- 2nd Annual Rogers TV – Ottawa 67's Ball Hockey Tournament – September 13, 2008
- 13th Annual Celebrity-Carved Pumpkin Contest – October 23-25, 2008
- MacMillan's Frozen Foods Fall Campaign – November 2008

DONOR'S CORNER

In Memory of Elaine Black	\$70
Community Foundation - Joan Gullen Fund	\$100
IBM Employees' Charitable Fund	\$1,412.45

COMMUNITY FOUNDATION OF OTTAWA GRANT

With the interest and success of the Fall Cooking Club (sponsored by the RCP Program) Children at Risk was approached by the parents who initiated this group, **Margo Sim** and **Anita Acheson**, to see if this support could be continued. As this was an exciting new initiative, Children at Risk applied to the Community Foundation for a funding grant. We recently received the news that we have been granted \$8,220, which covers the financing of 3 sessions for the Cooking Club. Currently we are in session with a Spring group and are looking to the Fall and Winter for additional sessions. Please join us in expressing our appreciation to the Board of Governors of the Community Foundation of Ottawa for recognizing the value of this life-skill based group and extending funding!

TICKET DONATIONS THANK YOU'S

Children at Risk regularly makes requests for ticket donations to support our families. Recently our families were able to attend "Music & Humour with Eugene Levy" at the NAC – sponsored by **TELUS** and **United Way!** Here are a couple notes of appreciation:

Thank you Brenda, and thanks for the tickets to the concert today. I took my younger son Dominic (who is 5) and he enjoyed it. It was very well done! *Joanne*

Thanks for the tickets to the Show yesterday, it was great, not too long and great laughs to go along with it. We all enjoyed it. *Nadia Petti and Family*

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

Submitted by Hazel Smith

Children at Risk has been serving Families within the Autism Community for 29 years but at no time has the demand for services been so great and the sources of income been so hard to come by. As many of you are aware, Children at Risk is solely dependent on funding raising, donations and membership fees to subsidize the services provided and cover the running costs, as it receives no Government funding. Competition for charity contributions is fierce and while Children at Risk is always exploring new sources of revenue and fundraising initiatives, they often lose income from events or activities that are cycled to other charitable causes in the community.

HOW CAN YOU HELP? (Cont'd)

One of our greatest resources is our numerous dedicated Volunteers - providing their time at fund raisers and getting behind other events and activities to enable their success. However, we do recognize that, as families, your time is sometimes a scarce commodity. As we explore many different and varied ways to assist the charity we are also reaching out to the Membership by altering some famous words to suit – "Ask not what Children at Risk can do for you - ask what you can do for Children at Risk"!

I have compiled a basic list of how you can help in many other ways:

- Re-Gift by donating unwanted (new) Christmas and Birthday gifts – both Adult & Children's – Children at Risk can often issue you an income tax receipt for the value of the items and they are always welcome for raffles, auctions, prizes and more!
- Donate unused store gift cards, restaurant certificates etc.
- Mention the need for prizes to relatives, friends or neighbours that may have contacts, staff discount or connections with Store or Restaurant Managers.
- Many large companies and Government Departments offer Staff Volunteer Days or will match funds for monies raised at Charitable events that their staff participate in – ask anyone you know if their company does this, would they consider choosing a Children At Risk fundraiser?
- If you can't help at a fundraiser, you may still wish to help out before or after an event with some of the administrative tasks.
- Would you be prepared to take on a task such as Macmillan's Frozen Food fundraiser? The compilation can be handled from your own home and Children at Risk will pay mileage expenses for deliveries.
- Do some web surfing (again at home!) to help Children at Risk search out charity supports in the form of events or activities that can be applied for.

We would also like to hear any suggestions from Members that can assist with our fundraising efforts. Email info@childrenatrisk.ca or even call the office at 613-741-8255.

FAMILY PHOTOSHOOT FUNDRAISER

Through **Artistic Photos**, Children at Risk will be scheduling a day in September for a photo shoot. The cost of the sitting is \$25 and you will get 12-16 shots of assorted group and individual poses. With the sitting, you receive one 10" X 13" portrait and can order Custom Packages from the proofs, even mixing and matching different photos! The final photos will be back in plenty of time for Christmas/holiday time!! Date to be announced soon.

2ND ANNUAL ROGERS TV-OTTAWA 67'S BALL HOCKEY TOURNAMENT

This exciting event is to take place on Saturday, September 13, 2008. Come and enjoy a fantastic day outside while playing ball hockey with your friends. Recreational and Competitive Divisions are available. Registration Forms and Event Info will soon be posted on the Ottawa 67's Website at www.ottawa67s.com Proceeds will go to Children at Risk – so mark this date on your calendar now and get your team together!!

AN INSPIRATION TO OTHERS



It was an honour to receive a telephone call from parent **Brenda Carlson**, aunt of **Marissa Basile**, to tell us of a phenomenal initiative by her niece. Marissa's cousin is **Chris Carlson**, who is ASD diagnosed.

Throughout their lives, Marissa and Chris have been close, despite (or maybe because of!) the disability. Marissa has always been very protective of Chris, understanding his behaviours, while allowing him to socialize with her circle of friends. For her 17th birthday, Marissa (like most teens) wanted a party. However, she wanted this party not for herself, but to help make a difference for kids like Chris. Knowing that Chris has been associated with Children at Risk, Marissa sent out an invite to her friends (see page 11) – asking them bring a donation for our charity. At the party, she sold beverages and snacks to raise even more money! In the end, parents Philip and Joanne, plus sister Vanessa were delighted with the results and proudly handed us a cheque for **\$600!!** See the article published on April 25 in The News EMC Ottawa South paper on page 13 of the newsletter.

Barrhaven Family Resource Centre and South Nepean Autism Centre's ANNUAL PICNIC In The PARK

Tuesday June 10, 2008 from 9:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m. the Barrhaven Resource Centre and the South Nepean Autism Centre will be having their annual end of year picnic at South Nepean Park 700 Longfields Rd. in Barrhaven. There will be approximately 100 attending the picnic. The Lions Club will be bringing their train for rides around the park. We will have lots of activities set up for children including our own bouncy tent. Bring your bathing suit as the water pads will be operating. Hope to see you there!!

Any questions please call Dale O'Reilly

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

POEM

Submitted by Peggy Lobay

Attached is a poem my granddaughter wrote for her mom. Chip (my granddaughter) is 12 years old and has been diagnosed with PDD-NOS. She is in grade 6 at Churchill Alternative School.

Mom, you make me feel happy
Happy is orange, like OJ in the morning.
It is soft like a kitten's fur.
It is like a diamond sparkling before your eyes.
It is nice and light, like a feather.
It is as big as a blue whale.
It sounds like the ocean on a quiet night.

By Chip Lobay



HAPPY TRAILS – 2008 SUMMER FARM CAMP

In collaboration with **Happy Trails Riding Stables**, Children at Risk, Ottawa is pleased to sponsor a Summer Program for children on the autism spectrum with higher needs. This personalized half day camp will focus on a flexible approach that will ensure a pleasant experience for all participants. Although riding is an important part of the program, interactions with the other farm animals will be encouraged while experiencing the full benefits of nature in a safe farm environment.

Location: Happy Trails Riding Stables, 5979 Leirim Rd, Carlsbad Springs, ON (6 km from Highway 417/Anderson Rd exit, just East of Walkley Rd)

When: 9:00 am - noon

Session 1: July 21- July 25

Session 2: July 28 – August 1

Session 3: August 11- August 15

Session 4: August 18 – August 22

Criteria:

- 8-15 years old children on the autism spectrum who would benefit from added support.
- Willingness to wear a safety helmet.
- Wanting to come to camp is a pre-requisite.
- No anger management issue.
- Independent with toileting.
- Members of Children at Risk, Ottawa will be given priority. *

Staff to kids' ratio: 1 staff to 1-2 children (small group environment of 4-6 children per session); Bilingual staff available on site.

Cost: \$300/session payable by cheque to Children at Risk, Ottawa, once eligibility to the camp is confirmed; The cost also includes 2 private lessons required to familiarize the child to the farm environment and introduction to the animals; payment must be received before the first private lesson.

Screening interviews: The lead facilitators will meet with all potential candidates and their parents for a 1.5 hour interview at the Happy Trails farm; the purpose of this meeting is to ensure that the program is appropriate for your child and meet his/her needs.

Registration Deadline: June 6, 2008 (limited spaces available)

How to apply:

Please contact **Nathalie Gour** at the Camp Registration office at 613-302-5152 or recreation@happy-trails.ca for any questions or to book a screening interview. Application forms will be sent upon request.

*Children at Risk: For information on how to become a member, please call 613-741-8255, send an email to info@childrenatrisk.ca or visit their website at www.childrenatrisk.ca.

POEM FROM HAPPY TRAILS

I saw a child who couldn't walk
Sit on a horse, laugh and talk.
Then ride through a field of daisies
and yet, he couldn't walk unaided.

I saw a child, no legs below,
sit on a horse and make it go
through woods of green
and places he had never been
to sit and stare, except from a chair.

I saw a child who couldn't crawl
mount a horse and sit up tall.
Put it through degrees of paces
and laugh at the wonder in our faces.
I saw a child born into strife,
take up and hold the reins of life
and that same child, I heard him say
Thank God for showing me the way...

Jayne Pedigo

STRONGER YOU MAKING A REAL DIFFERENCE FOR CHILDREN WITH ASD

Submitted by April Copelli

(Mother of two children with ASD)

Being a mother with two ASD boys, I am always looking for opportunities for my little guys to get out and join a club or class that is something outside of their usual ‘OT’ or ‘Speech’ therapies. However, such groups are few and far between to find for children 4-5 years of age.

One evening I was browsing the Autism Ontario site and a questionnaire caught my attention. It was a survey regarding a class for ASD teens that Janet, owner/Head Sensei of Stronger You, was currently running. Since I was looking for something fun for my four and five year old boys, I emailed Janet to see if she offered any programmes that may work for them as well.

She told me they offer a Small Samurai class and though it is for regular mainstream children, they would willingly accept my ASD boys to give it a try and if need be, set them up with a one-on-one ‘assistant sensei’ through the class. My two boys are very different, Aidan who is my youngest is high energy and jumps right into things, my oldest Luka is more reserved and it takes a lot of guidance and encouragement for him to try new things. The regular class worked well for Aidan (with support set up for him), but totally overwhelmed Luka. So we went ahead and registered Aidan to continue with the group. Aidan loved the class and arrived each week ready to do his ‘best’, but he was having difficulty following the regular structure along with the other children. However, Janet and her team continued supporting him each week to do his best and ‘follow’ the group as much as he could.

Then, a few weeks ago, Janet contacted me saying that she was trying to format and design a new group called **Special Small Samurai**. She too saw the need for creating a separate session geared more to the needs of Children on the spectrum. Her goal was to give the kids one-on-one assistance in a smaller ratio group, while also offering them flexibility in allowing them to be themselves. We were thrilled! We also took Luka again to re-try the class with its new smaller ratio and format and he adjusted very well.

STRONGER YOU (Cont’d)

Now, a few weeks in, both of my boys are enjoying this wonderful group. Janet has created an ASD specific class that meets the varied needs of each of my children and this is a feat in and of itself!

Special Small Samurai is something so different from the weekly therapy sessions my two are used to attending. This group offers one-on-one ratio, physical exercise, social skill guidance and practice, a flexible, but still structured (for predictability) class format. All of these things meet the criteria that most of us parents of ASD children are looking for. But the priority here is that it’s FUN and not just another therapy session to get to. The kids can go and run and jump and play and burn off some energy and they have a blast doing it!

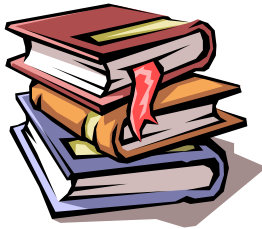
I am thrilled to be a part of the early stages of Stronger You’s Special Small Samurai. I am so thankful that someone saw the need to create a group here in Barrhaven for young ASD children. It is so wonderful for us that we can send both boys and take a step back and allow them the freedom to do their own thing. Both of our guy’s leave the class each week with red cheeks, they are sweating and tired and have exercised both their bodies and their minds.

Thank You to Stronger You, to Janet and all her crew of trained volunteers, for opening this opportunity to our family and allowing my boys the time and space to celebrate who they are. We truly appreciate it! We are so thankful for your hard work, dedication, patience and your energy!!!! Chasing my two around and keeping them focused is quite an undertaking and you all do it very well!

If any parents are looking for a new and interesting way to stimulate the needs of your ASD child, Stronger You may just work for your child too. Contact janet@strongeryou.com for more information about this wonderful group. I hope to see you there!

RESOURCE CORNER

Submitted by Liz Schissler, Social Skills Group Facilitator



Books

“My Big Book of Feelings: How to Control and React to the Size of Your Emotions” by Amy V. Jaffe and Luci Gardner

This book is available through amazon.ca for under \$20.00. It is a spiral-bound book that can be used as an interactive workbook for children, parents and professionals. It explores a variety of different emotions with pictures, words and rating scales. Its colourful visual graphics and minimal use of text make it appealing to children.



DVDs

Depending on the age of your child and their social needs, these DVDs may be of interest to you or your child’s school program:

- **Fitting in and Having Fun DVD series** - This series, currently being used in a social skills group within Children at Risk, is ideal for school-aged children. Each DVD reviews specific situations that might arise such as accepting criticism, taking turns, making friends, etc. These DVDs feature school-aged children interacting in a variety of real-life settings; insights into what the children are thinking and what can be done to improve social interactions are explored in these DVDs. Information for ordering this series can be found at: <http://www.tdsocialskills.com>
- **Model Me Kids DVD series** - This series is ideal for younger children. It explores such areas as play dates, transition to school and maintaining conversations. Information can be found at: <http://www.modelmekids.com/social-skills.html>

RESOURCE CORNER (Cont’d)



Interactive Websites

Autism Awareness: This website, based out of Alberta, is a very comprehensive website providing conference listings, an online bookstore, reviews of recently released books as well as many links to information and resources.

<http://www.autismawarenesscentre.org/>



SOCIAL SKILL GROUPS – 10TH SESSION

Children at Risk is pleased to announce that we have received funding to offer a parent feedback session to be held following each of the Spring Social Skills Groups. This funding has been provided through grant money given to us by the Realize Community Potential Program, Social Opportunities Initiative through Autism Ontario. This session will focus on providing parents with feedback and general strategies related to social skill development. Parents will also be given an opportunity to review specific resources that have been used within the group and to individually address any areas of specific interest.

Currently there are 4 different social skills groups running for a variety of age groups and needs. The specific information within each feedback session will vary according to the needs of the children in each of the groups and the specific areas that have been worked on.

We look forward to piloting this valuable initiative.

Thank you from the staff at Children at Risk

PRESIDENT'S PEEVES

Submitted by Paul Lacroix, Board President

It always amazes me that the Canadian government just doesn't get it! Recently, the newspaper headlines told of one of Ontario's larger manufacturers wanting \$140 million to preserve jobs in Ontario. Discussion then ensues about this \$140 million investment and the Return on Investment (ROI) for the government by keeping jobs and helping the economy. If companies get into trouble because of their gross mismanagement, should we, the taxpayers bail them out?

So, if Return on Investment is part of the argument, and it is a very big part, then how about the ROI to be gained by putting this \$140 Million towards the needs of Ontario taxpayers who have family members with Autism? This is all about proper allocation of our tax dollars in order to get the best results for Ontario.

Some estimate Autism is a \$5 billion annual problem for Canada in direct costs, lost productivity, etc. So Ontario might be \$2 billion of that per year, every year. The productivity loss is staggering ... parents not being able to work, incredible debt, bankruptcy, stress related illnesses etc. Individuals with Autism are not getting the support they need and ultimately this will cost taxpayers \$ billions because of the lifelong services and support they will need - all because the government is not willing to make the up-front spending. The government refuses to enforce the Education Act, there are no standards for "therapists", the medical costs and time wasted by the medical profession because of inept government policies (or lack of them) are skyrocketing ... it never, ever stops.

When you look at this on the basis of ROI there is no contest. Autism wins hands down ... it is a no-brainer.

PRESIDENT'S PEEVES (Cont'd)

But the manufacturer's issue is more focused, the average voter can relate, whereas the Autism issues are dispersed and out of sight for the most part. Often the disability is referred to as "invisible" and "isolating". So politically it is better to give manufacturers the money. Economically it is illogical. One of the jobs of government is to assure the proper quality of life for those less fortunate and when it comes to Autism, the federal and provincial governments have yet to prove they can provide this support. Granted, supports and exposure for Autism have increased in the last decade - but only on the backs of the parents as they lobby, demonstrate and take the government to court to prove the critical need for services.

Some companies asking our tax dollars to bail them out will not be around in 10-15 years ... but we will still have the autism issues to deal with and they will be much greater and much more costly than they are today. Interesting how Autism was talked about so much during the election but, once again, little is being done.



For information on upcoming events check out AutismOntario.com.

Disclaimer:

This Newsletter is for informational purposes only. Children at Risk does not support, endorse or recommend any method, treatment, product, remedial center, program or person for people with autism or autism related conditions

**Marissa's
Party
Invite
and
Photos**

It's my 17th birthday party,
&
YOU'VE BEEN INVITED

_____!

Date

March 29th 2008

Place

Canterbury Community Centre, Hall B

Time

8:00pm-12:00am (community centre doors lock at
9:00pm, and there are no in and out privileges)

Attire

Semi-formal, black and white ONLY (green accessories;
green tie, green makeup, green jewellery...etc)

R.S.V.P

Let me know if you are able to make it by March 25th,
by email or by phone (613-247-0461).

Remember

I'm raising money for a children's foundation named,
"Children at Risk", which supports kids diagnosed with
Autism, and it would be awesome if you could bring a
donation!

**Absolutely no alcohol or drugs before or during the
party will be permitted! Any suspicion of such use you
will not be allowed to enter the community center!**

BAGS WILL BE CHECKED

Can't wait to see you there!!

♥ ♥ ♥



OTTAWA AUTISM COMMUNITY ANNUAL FAMILY PICNIC Sunday, June 22nd, 2008 12 Noon- 3 PM Brewer Park

Brewer Park (Seneca St. off Sunnyside) is a sprinkler water park, so bring your suits and get wet! The Annual Family Picnic is a great time to celebrate the start of summer, see old friends, meet new friends and frolic in the park. Below is a list of planned activities. Some items and activities, like the food, are at a low cost or you can bring your own picnic lunch! Hope to see you there!!

Activities & Features

B.B.Q. HAMBURGERS, HOT DOGS, DRINKS, CHIPS
COOKIE DECORATING
FISH POND
PARACHUTE TOSS
WATERMELON
BALLOONS
BUBBLE PLAY

“MOON BOUNCE” INFLATABLE COURTESY OF AUTISM ONTARIO RCP PROGRAM

- 2:00 PM –13th ANNUAL RAFFLE DRAW
- 2:15 PM - WATER BALLOON TOSS (**PRIZES**)
- *NEW* - “Pick ‘n Pay” table of children’s toys, Disney Items
(gently used or small defects)

IN ADDITION, WE WILL BE ENTERTAINED BY TUNIS SHRINE KLOWNS!



BBQ courtesy of Enbridge Gas Distribution

ADVERTISING

Professional Assistance for your child with ASD/Special Needs

We provide 1:1 therapy & small ratio social groups for children aged
3 - 6 & 7 - 10

2 DSW graduates, trained ABA/IBI therapists, certified in First Aid & CPR
Sessions will begin **July 14th** (*Early registration preferred to better plan sessions*)

We offer:

- **Home based, fun, safe learning environment
- **Personalized session and program plan designed to meet the needs of each individual
- **Group sessions designed & geared towards the individuals' ages and abilities
- **Initial "meet & greet" prior to commencement of program
- **Flexible hours and accommodation

Located in Barrhaven

Contact Ashley & Brooke for more information!

abbatherapy@gmail.com or 613-863-1484



References available!

Marissa Makes Local News

LOCAL NEWS

Youth gives birthday money to charity

BY SHEENA BOLTON
sbolton@thenewsemc.ca

Instead of receiving gifts for her birthday, Marissa Basile of the Hunt Club area, had her friends and family give her money that she donated to the Children at Risk.

"Well I decided to have a big cheer for my 17 birthday because I turned 17 on the 17th [of March] and I thought that since I don't really get to spend much time with my cousin Chris [Carlson] because he goes to a different school [and] I thought what better way to help him out than raising money," said Marissa. "I thought since I was getting so much from my parents I would give back and I thought that was perfect to give them my birthday money."

Her cousin, Chris, 16, has high functioning autism.

Marissa held a big birthday celebration at the Canterbury Community Centre.

"It was suggested to me by my aunt because [Children at Risk] are a big part of my cousin's life," she said.

"Chris has autism and because it is such a huge factor on him I thought it would be perfect, this way I could help him out more. I could help a charity and give him more money to put together a group or club he could be a part of because I know he has a hard time with that."

Through her birthday celebration, Marissa managed to raise \$600.

"The kids that came to the party knew that you could make a donation but mainly the money came from my birthday cards so I had everyone who brought me a birthday card drop it into a box and later on that night I counted all the money," said Marissa. "I'm very close with Chris, he comes over every second weekend and he hangs out with me and my friends where he can learn social skills and how to communicate."

This is the first time Marissa had ever raised money for a cause on her own, but already has ideas for future fundraising.

"I was really surprised that I got that much money. I was shocked but

I was really happy in the end because I knew that my aunt and uncle were really excited about it and I knew Chris was really excited about it, so it was a really good feeling after," she said.

"I think it's a very unselfish example to the community of what can be done and to other teens as well of how you can help, it's one way as a teenager that you can reach out and help your community," said Brenda Reich, fundraising chairperson for Children at Risk.

Children at Risk is a non-profit Ottawa organization that helps children, teens and adults who have autism. They also have programs for the other family members so they can gain a better understanding.

"An autistic individual, children and teens, are very challenged and it is challenging for them to even interact with people but Marissa and Chris have had a relationship over the years and I think she feels almost like a big sister to Chris and accepts who he is for what he is," Ms. Reich said. The money raised will go



PHOTO SUBMITTED

Instead of receiving presents Marissa Basile raised money on her 17th birthday for Children at Risk to help support autism. Here Marissa celebrates with her cousin Chris Carlson who is autistic.

towards a program that helps high functioning autistic teens with their social skills.

"Our main expenses are for our social skill therapy groups and it costs us \$3,000 to \$5,000 to run each of the groups, Chris has participated in a few over the years," explained Ms. Reich. "We can run the groups and

we don't have the money so that's what it will probably go towards, to cover at least one to two children in these groups, they are pretty crucial."

One of the groups Chris was recently involved in is called Typical Teen, which is an outing based group for teens. Children at Risk brings in peer mentors, so siblings, friends of siblings, who take the autistic teens in groups and go on different outings. They are accompanied by a speech pathologist that helps the autistic children improve their social skills.

"When we can get members of a community to reach out and help it takes a real weight off of the families because they tend to fund a lot of our fundraising events we are always calling upon the families to participate or volunteer and they have a 24/7 concern raising a disabled child and yet they still help," said Ms. Reich. "It's so nice when you can go outside of the autism community to say the Ottawa community and have people help."



Thanks for making this year another Rockin' Success!

- | | | |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| A Head of Time Hair Studio | Greenbank Flowers | Patty Boland's Irish Pub |
| Air Liquide | Hair World | Peloso Cleaners |
| Algonquin College | Hewlett-Packard | Pflug Optical |
| Anika Arts & Flowers | Hockey Hall of Fame | Philthy McNasty's |
| Arthur Murray Dance Studio | Holiday Inn Select Hotel | Planet Botanix |
| Brewers Select | Intersection | P.J. Quigley's Bar & Grill |
| CD Warehouse - Kanata | Jill Alexander | Prime 360 |
| Campbell Ford Automotive | J.T. Auto Parts - Kemptville | Radisson Hotel |
| Carling Motors | Lacroix Sports | Ragtime Vintage Clothing |
| Casa Loma | Landpride Loot | Rink Pro Sports |
| Chances R Restaurant | Legend Records | R.K.I.L. |
| Club de golf Dunnderosa | Les Suites Hotel | Rockin' Johnny's Diner |
| Clubhouse Sports | Lindeman's Wines | Rockwell's Restaurant |
| Cody Party Centres | Loeb - Greenbank | Rogers Television 22 |
| Colonnade Pizza - Merivale Rd | Lord Elgin Hotel | Rosemary Scragg |
| Cork's Winery | Louis Steak House | Royal Oak |
| Costco Wholesale | Mary Jackson | Speedy Messenger |
| Crabtree & Evelyn | Merivale Bowling Lanes | Steamers Coffee House |
| CTV Television | Midway Fun Park | Stonebridge Gol & Country Club |
| Dance Ottawa | Molson Canada | Sullivan Images |
| Delta Chelsea Hotel | Monkey Joe's | Summerhays Grill |
| Discovery Toys | Moore's Clothing for Men | Swiss Chalet - Kirkwood |
| Disney Store | National Arts Centre | The Barley Mow |
| Dollarama - Carlingwood | National Golf Course Owners Assos. | The Disney Store |
| Don Thompson Jewellers | Newport Restaurant | The Electrical & Plumbing Store |
| East India Company Restaurant | Oldies 1310 | The Ottawa School of Speech & Drama |
| East Side Mario's - Hunt Club | Ontario Place Corporation | The Putting Edge |
| Fernande Steppan | Ontario Science Centre | The Sam Group |
| Frames by Rockwell | Ottawa Citizen | Tim Horton's - Navaho |
| Fratelli's Restaurant | Ottawa Rapids Baseball Team | Topper's Pizza |
| Gilmore Printing | Ottawa Senators Foundation | Tops Car Wash Co. Ltd. |
| Grace O'Malley's | Ottawa 67's Hockey Club | Toronto Zoo Foundation |
| Grand & Toy | Ottawa Sports Gallery | VIA Rail |
| Great Canadian Theatre Company | PakalnisNet | Wine Station |

613-741-8255 • www.childrenatrisk.ca



No student succeeds alone

One-on-one personal attention is what makes students successful. More teachers in our schools means they'll have more time for each student. More psychologists, speech therapists, social workers and other professional staff means more help for students with special needs and at risk of dropping out.

We know that the more teachers and other professionals a school has, the more successful students will be. When it comes to investing in our schools, it makes sense to invest in people.

Visit ontariostudentsfirst.ca for more ways we can make schools safe and successful.



Illustration by: Michelle Gledhill

Invest in Your Ottawa-Carleton Public School Education Team