

Extend-a-Family

3300 Yonge Street - Suite 200
Toronto, Ontario
M4N 2L6
Tel 416-484-1317
Fax 416-484-1589

Email: info@extendafamily.ca
www.extendafamily.ca

Registered Charity
11890-4846-RR0001

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“Inclusion is simple but it is not easy”

Jack Pearpoint and Marsha Forrest

For time immemorial, someone has stood up and said something like “Everyone’s the same” or “We should all be allowed to vote” or “Include everyone” or “My people have the right to do that too. You shouldn’t exclude us” or “My child deserves the best schools too”. Now-a-days we call this ‘Inclusion.’ Generally we think of people with disabilities when we think of ‘Inclusion’ but we need to think bigger! Inclusion is everyone being included in everything they want to do. This means figuring out ways to accommodate people, all people, ‘as they are’.



Oftentimes we think no one is affected if someone is excluded or we think it’s best for the segregated person or for society. Think about this: when anyone is not included, the rest of us know that we will be excluded one day. When typical students see a labelled child sent to a ‘behaviour’ class, they learn that people should be separated for being different. When poor children grow up in an economically segregated neighbourhood, they can learn to expect only what they see, poverty and the resulting violence. When youth are constantly told they know nothing because they’re too young and inexperienced, it’s easier to believe elders have nothing to contribute and should waste away in segregated buildings. When any one of us is disrespectful to someone, it’s harder for that someone to be open-hearted to the next person. We create this.

Inclusion is the only thing that works. This is written so declaratively because we’ve all seen what happens when people are excluded: racism, sexism, homophobia, ableism, educational privilege, ageism, sizeism, violence, classism, environmental destruction, homelessness, and bigotry based on religion and culture. When the consequences of these social diseases are allowed to run rampant, without thought, we all pay a price.

Inclusion is not easy. It’s hard to see past someone’s behaviour to that someone’s heart. It’s hard work to re-evaluate our values and commit to something new. It’s hard to look past our own fear of difference. But imagine this: everyone around is exactly like you. Everyone wears exactly the same clothes, drives the same car, listens to the same music, eats the same food, and goes to the same place of worship. What would you talk about? ‘Nice shirt.’ ‘It’s the same as yours.’ ‘Well, I like your car.’ ‘It’s the same as yours.’ This might be amusing for about ten minutes, then what?



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Call for Submissions

If you would like to submit an article to upcoming Extend-A-Family newsletters, please send it to your coordinator or the office, specifying that it is for the newsletter. If you would like to submit a photograph, you can send it to the same person; please recognize that we **must** have signed release forms from **all** people appearing in the photograph. All submissions will be subject to editing at the discretion of the Newsletter Committee. Additionally we can not guarantee that your contribution will be used. Given all of that... **We would love to hear from you!**

From our Executive Director:

At Extend-A-Family we strive to live by the philosophy that all people have gifts and should be welcomed and supported to be contributing and valued citizens. Many of the articles in this edition emphasize the importance of feeling accepted, appreciated, safe and loved. In our busy technology driven lives it is refreshing, comforting and reassuring to read that meaningful relationships and a sense of belonging are still the foundation for a healthy, caring society.

Anne Marie Cole

From the Chairperson

I would like to introduce myself as the new Chairperson of Extend-A-Family's Board of Directors. It was an unexpected honour to replace the previous Board Chair Anne Bloom. I would like to acknowledge the dedication and commitment that Anne brought to this position; she will be missed.

I am married with two teenage children (a daughter and son) who guarantee that life is never boring in our house. We have been involved with Extend-A-Family since February 2002. I have been a Board member since June 2004.

I would also like to take this opportunity to suggest thinking about becoming a board member. Extend-A-Family is a small organization that is always looking for new board members. It is not an onerous undertaking. We are a small friendly group of people who are committed to Extend-A-Family and its mission towards inclusion in the community for people with disabilities.

Susan Walker Kennedy



The Blue Bracelet

The dark blue bracelet on my right wrist is inscribed with the words "SAFE AND LOVED". This is my badge of honour, my symbol of support for a new way of life that I am now committed to follow.

During the last couple of months I was asked by one family member, a new acquaintance, and a flight attendant why I wear my bracelet. Awkwardness made my answers less forceful than I would have liked. The result of such inquiries made me want to take a second look at the information I obtained at the Ontario Gentle Teaching Conference I attended in April of 2005.

The conference was divided into two main parts. There was time over the three days for me to listen to John McGee share his way of life. There was also time to attend workshop sessions that dealt with issues relating to Education, Family, and Agencies. Since I was a parent, I decided to focus my time on the area of family.

John McGee emphasized three things. The importance of coming together, that we listen to the information presented as well as to one another, and finally, that we celebrate with each other through the meals provided, the stories we share and the entertainment experienced.

So, how do we make those who are special in our lives feel safe and loved? It is done through a spirit of gentleness which is an expression of our love. It is by being connected to these special individuals that we provide them with the independence they need. It is through accepting this person as he or she is that we focus on their heart and not their behaviour. It is the love we have for each other that heals each of us as we travel along our journey. This is accomplished through our physical presence, our smile and gaze, our touch and our words.

The words and images that John McGee shared stirred within me a new attitude towards dealing with behaviour. It was as if my eyes were open again after a long sleep. Words were supported by videotapes taken of individuals he has met in places like Puerto Rico. These were fragile individuals who have blossomed under John's presence, his smile, his touch and his words. The message he attempted to deliver was now emblazoned on my heart and within my mind. It was the result of listening, watching, and celebrating during this conference that made it easy

for me to seek out the blue bracelet and want to wear it with pride.

The first workshop session was titled, Listening and Responding to the 'Language of Pain': Practical Strategies. The focus was directed towards two specific points. First, that 'challenging behaviours' are to be understood as an expression of pain i.e. 'the language of pain.' These are expressions that demonstrate themselves as ritualistic, repetitive, obsessive, negative, and/or violent ideation and acts. As a result of these expressions we need to respond with loving kindness and compassion. The second focus point illustrates how this can be done.

With a warm gaze, relaxed and supportive facial expressions...

With hands that are for holding, embracing, caressing and comforting the person...

With a soft voice...

With slow, gentle and quiet moments...

With words of love and friendship - especially during the worst moments...

The second session was a Family Panel which dealt with the issue of "Keeping People Safe". The panel consisted of some of the speakers who shared their own experiences and stories. Members of the audience were encouraged to ask questions or contribute to the topic in some way. The result of such a session was to point out that every story does not have an immediately happy ending or entirely positive process. Some stories are sad or cry out for help. We always love to hear "good things", but we need to hear the other side, the truth of the hard work, that still exists; stories that are not often told.

The final session dealt with "The Importance of Positive Social Roles". The focus here was on Who am I? Here, I had an opportunity to discover more about myself and it provided me with an opportunity to see my own sons in a "better way". The presenter defined the "role" as a person in a "place" doing something predictable. Negative roles lead to two life-defining problems: people's time (and thus, talent, energy and gifts) are wasted with negative repercussions for individuals and also for the whole community. As a result, Social Role Valorization states that it is important to do these things: enhance, encourage, deepen and support any positive roles that the person currently

holds.

One of John McGee's final subjects was that of hope and support. He emphasised the idea that it could take several years to become fully immersed in this new way of life and therefore I would have to be patient and supportive with myself during that time period.

Therefore I undertook the task of profiling my eldest son, Patrick. I focused on his likes, his personal interests, social traits and leisure role. I included pictures throughout the document. It has proved to be a challenging but rewarding task.

I extend my thanks to Extend-A-Family for providing me the opportunity to attend this conference. I went in with an open heart and it was definitely filled with good things.

Jim Devine

The Gift

Have you ever just needed someone to talk to? I know I have, because we all do.

Sometimes numbering two... three... four or more, each person providing new experiences and views upon rolling through your life's door.

We are all people who share in life's journey however; every new experience can lead to a great endeavour.

From classes with him or her to discussions about weather, the greatest feeling is the time you've spent together.

To have common interests is really what's best. You and your friend will discover the rest.

Being there when it counts, a friend is never far.

Encouraging you when need be. A friend will listen to your every worry.

The heart is a special place to keep these cherished commodities, growing larger and larger with every passing day.

Friends are worth more when kept in abundance, so share them with all who pass your way.

Franklyn Earl McFadden, 19 years old



Friendship Circles

News about Friendship Circles...

Extend-A-Family coordinators facilitate Friendship Circles in elementary schools throughout Toronto. A Friendship Circle offers an invitation to young people to cultivate a circle of friends. This small group provides an intentional opportunity for all members of the group to get to know each other better and to help develop friendships between the students. The Friendship Circle also gives students an opportunity to become meaningfully involved with their peer group in a supported manner. In this way, it is hoped that the Friendship Circle will help nurture the essential participation of students with their peers within the school community and to possibly extend this participation outside of school. If you are interested in exploring this idea with your child, please speak to your Extend-A-Family Coordinator.

Pleasant Public School

For a number of Grade 1 children at Pleasant Public School, the 2004-05 school year turned out successfully in more ways than one. A group of students who joined the circle of friends completed the year amongst an encouraging social circle. Eleven children met bi-weekly to share in games, songs and activities while strengthening their alliances with fellow classmates.

The small group was able to form tight bonds with one another, creating friendships that extended outside of school. Students gained knowledge of each other's strengths and weaknesses and continue to help each other



in daily struggles. Family gatherings enabled families new to Canada to find trustworthy contacts. Many families continue to get together and enjoy social events throughout the city and in the local community. Certainly the highlight of our year together was adapting the book *Mortimer*, by Robert Munsch into a play the circle of friends performed in the school's yearly talent show. Each child enjoyed a turn in the spotlight and the play went off without a hitch. Special thanks to one mother, Elena Shotov for helping us to pull it all together.

I enjoyed my many meetings with the children, and hope that their friendships will only strengthen as the years go by.

Laura McGinty – Educational Assistant

Holy Angels Catholic School

For me, it is a terrific learning experience to be involved with a Friendship Circle at Holy Angels Catholic School in Etobicoke. A young man I work with, named Dustin, is a great guy, but other students often seemed shy around him. The Friendship Circle supported these students to get to know Dustin and to become his friends.

I first learned about Friendship Circles through Dustin's parents. The facilitator from Extend-A-Family, Mirjana Prikril, is a great person to work with. She was very flexible and willing to work around our school schedule. Following a successful initial year, we had several students clamouring to be part of last year's Circle. Eventually



we even had to choose students from the number who showed interest in joining. There were so many! The students have gotten to know Dustin and are not shy as they once were. Dustin recognizes his new friends and will smile when they approach. He greets his friends in the hallway and outside at recess. They even spend time together outside of school.

We are excited for Dustin, as he continues to deepen his friendships. Dustin's parents appreciate that they have developed a relationship with the family of two of the circle members, who are brothers. The students are now asking how many people can be part of the Friendship Circle this year and are eager to spend more time with Dustin!

Michael White – Teacher



I Am Me

“I AM ME” was the title and theme of my daughter’s school play in June this year, based on the wonderfully inspirational writings of Virginia Satir. The school not only adopted the motto of, ‘I AM ME AND I AM OKAY’ for their production, they fostered and encouraged the continuation of this belief and attitude in the school and in all aspects of life.

Ancaster Public School is a very small school, with just over 100 students, tucked away on a quiet street in Downsview. There’s a very diverse population of students. However, rather than noticing any differences, the school was like one big, happy family, recognizing each individual member as being special and unique. If ever there was an exemplary example of team spirit and acceptance, it was at Ancaster. It’s quite a remarkable atmosphere there, and I’ve never seen anything like it anywhere else.

My daughter has multiple exceptionalities. She attended Ancaster for four years, and throughout those years, she was never made to feel at all different from any of the other students. With an attitude of total inclusion and acceptance of all, she (and I’m sure the other students as well) has left the school with the very strong conviction that she is who she is and she’s okay just the way she is!

Unfortunately, it’s time for my daughter to move on to another school for her last primary year, and I can’t help but wonder how she will be treated there, if she will be able to continue believing that she’s okay just the way she is. I would love for this attitude and faith to remain with her forever. Right now, she firmly believes in herself and others, and she loves and accepts herself and others just as she and they are.

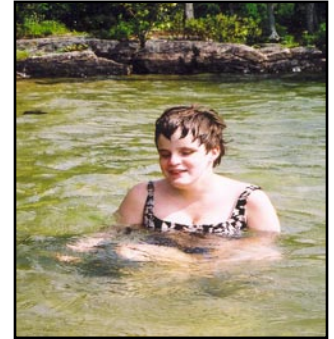
Wouldn’t it be wonderful if we could all be brought up to believe that “I AM ME AND I AM OKAY?” Wouldn’t it be a dream come true if all our very special children could be made to feel this way? I know I will do whatever I can, and hope and pray that my daughter will always remember what she’s learned from this very special school, and that she doesn’t have experiences in life that will change this wonderful faith she has.

Brandy



My name is Brandy. I go to W. Ross Macdonald School for the Blind in Brantford, where I live during the week. I go home by bus for the weekends. My family is my mom, dad, and sister, Jessica. I’ve been at “W. Ross” since I was 6, and will stay until 21

(now I’m 20). I joined Extend-a-Family when I was 3. My first friend there was Liz. Later she introduced me to Janet, Barbara, Heather and Mimi. We went swimming lots of times, to the fair at Mimi’s school, Extend-A-Family parties, Black Creek Pioneer Village, Kortright Centre, lots of concerts, sleepovers, tobogganing, and just hanging out. They helped get me to Camp Lake Joe five times and Camp Awakening three times. Now I’m too old for Camp Awakening but I will go to Lake Joe for two weeks this summer. My favourite activities are swimming and hanging out with nice people. In July, I hope I can go out and do some things and help with little kids. Thanks to all my friends I’ve met through Extend-A-Family for lots of fun times.



Upcoming Events

What: Community Supports Information Fair

When: Nov. 10, 2005 10 am – 2 pm and 6 – 8 pm

Where: North York Civic Centre, 5100 Yonge St., lower level, 5 blocks north of Sheppard on west side

Who: Families and professionals who want information on services available in the community for individuals with a developmental disability who are 16 years of age and older.

Why: Information displays and Presentations: 11 am – MCSS – Special Services Program, 1 pm – ODSP – Employment Supports, 7 pm Residential Programs and Day Supports

What: Kitchen Table Talks about SSAH – Dreaming while using SSAH

When: Nov. 24, 2005 5 – 9 pm

Where: North Toronto Memorial Community Centre, 200 Eglinton Avenue West, 2 blocks west of Yonge

Who: Families only

Why: An evening of dinner and discussion about Special Services at Home and ideas on how best to use it. \$10/person. Register at ssah-pc@rogers.com



Friendships Happen – Do Your Part

For the teacher who wants to foster positive relationships and friendships for all students, the first and most important step is to create a positive, cooperative classroom climate where all students feel valued and included. In such an atmosphere, each person's gifts, strengths, and differences are known and celebrated by all. Students feel free to be themselves and to learn to grow according to their individual capabilities. And, in this kind of atmosphere, positive relationships are natural outcomes.

Facilitating relationships is a unique process, which is determined by the student's ages, personalities, experiences, interests, etc. listed below are some techniques that teachers and parents have found useful for supporting relationships:

- Present students in the most positive light
- Encourage relationships
- Model concern and interest in all

students

- Structure activities in which students feel free to talk about their feelings and relationships
- Help build a support circle of friends
- Friendships = Benefits for Everyone
- Encourage learning groups for class
- Promote the inclusion of all students in extra-curricular clubs and activities in school
- Encourage students to interact in small groups of 3 or 4
- Follow through on school relationships

Although friendships cannot be mandated or forced, they can be facilitated and encouraged. In some cases, support may be required.

Students without disabilities identified 7 categories of perceived positive outcomes from inclusive education:

1. increased responsiveness to the needs of other people
2. valuing relationships with people who have disabilities
3. personal development
4. increased tolerance of other people
5. development of personal values
6. increased appreciation of human diversity
7. positive changes in personal status with peers

Students without disabilities who know a student with a disability are significantly more likely to recommend inclusive education. When asked why, the number one answer is that inclusive education was a basic human right.

Carlos and Lian

Hello. My name is Carlos Yap. I am 9 years old. I'd like to share my good experiences about my friend named Lian. He is also my schoolmate, 2 grades higher than me. My brother Miguel and I together with Lian have many good memories to cherish. One thing I know, Lian is a talented friend.

Just before we ended school last June everyone was in the gym. Lian was called up on the stage for a special award; he was given a medal and a certificate for best in Mathematics. Everybody were clapping for Lian; I was clapping and happy for him.

This summer, we went bowling at Bowlerama. Lian always scores the highest among us. He patiently waits for his turn to roll the duck pin ball. Whenever anyone gets a strike or double strike we give each other a "high five".

Spending time in the park with him is also fun. We slide, swing, play freeze bee, walk or just simply share our stories or jokes. We also enjoy playing board games like Snakes and Ladders, Bingo, and Sorry. As well as playing game cube video games such as Mario Smash Brothers.

During the summer we went swimming. We had fun in the water for one and a half hours. Simply swimming, laughing and playing like what other kids do.

For me, friends are fun and cool. Sharing is great. Love is sharing.

Carlos Yap



Certificate of Appreciation

At the end of the last school year, Sonya Gulliver and Laura McGinty, Educational Assistants at Pleasant Public School, were recognized by Extend-A-Family at the school's annual Awards Ceremony for their enthusiasm and devotion to the value of friendship and participation in community! Sonya has supported a Friendship Circle over the last two years. Her dedication and commitment have contributed to sustaining these friendships beyond the classroom. Laura's sensitivity to people's gifts and her creativity brought out the best in the children who have been part of the Friendship Circle. She has been instrumental in bringing children together and supporting friendships.



Inclusion: What's the Real Story?

New buzzwords take on emotional as well as intellectual meaning. Already, just the mention of the word “inclusion” is likely to turn otherwise reasonable adults into opponents, firmly planted in their opinions. But when people examine the intention of inclusive practices, there is usually little disagreement. Inclusion is a philosophy, not just a practice. Inclusive schools should provide the best instruction for all their students, regardless of the student’s abilities or disabilities.

Inclusive education can open opportunities for more interactive learning among students, more collaboration among teachers and more support from communities who will be receiving students well-versed in experiencing and appreciating diversity. Inclusion is implemented in a variety of ways. Generally, inclusion means that students with

disabilities attend their home school with their age and grade peers, and are in [mainstream] classes with appropriate support and services. Related services, such as speech or physical therapy, are provided within the context of the [mainstream] class, rather than being offered in the more traditional [segregated] model.

Students continue to address IEP [Individualized Education Plan] goals, but skills and objectives are infused within the curriculum everyone else uses. Examples include the student completing a shorter assignment, using assistive technology to access a specific, or creating a three dimensional project versus a term paper. Special Education [departments] become a resource or support that can be provided in a variety of general education settings instead of it being defined as a specific placement.

As schools redefine curricula, assessment procedures, and instructional strategies, they utilize Special Education resources in new and creative ways. The individual instructional skills that a Special Education [teacher] brings to a classroom complement the academic or content skills most general educators offer. Collaboration among teachers as well as support from administrators, families, and communities are essential for schools to prepare students for living in a diverse world. If children do not learn while they are in school that everyone belongs, when are they likely to develop that understanding?

Caren Sax and Doug Fisher

Extend-A-Family Word Find

E	A	W	E	S	C	H	O	O	L	O	U	D
B	X	W	R	E	S	P	I	T	E	A	P	P
U	Y	T	E	R	E	F	O	O	D	C	I	D
D	O	L	E	S	U	P	P	O	R	T	N	T
D	B	E	L	N	O	A	H	T	E	E	T	O
Y	S	A	C	G	D	M	H	O	I	E	U	G
E	T	R	R	I	F	A	E	R	S	O	A	E
V	F	N	I	R	M	I	F	L	Y	T	T	T
O	I	I	C	L	P	P	L	A	Y	E	A	H
L	G	N	I	T	A	K	S	E	M	A	G	E
M	U	S	I	C	R	A	F	T	S	I	M	R
S	A	F	E	S	K	E	R	A	H	S	L	E
C	A	R	E	L	T	N	E	G	O	O	F	Y

Find these words!!

Awesome	Boy	Buddy
Care	Circle	Crafts
Extend-A-Family		Food
Friend	Games	Gentle
Gifts	Girl	Goofy
Host	Learn	Loud
Love	Me	Music
Park	Play	Respite
Safe	School	Share
Skating	Support	Tag
Together	You	



Ten Things a Child with Autism Wishes You knew

Ellen Notbohm is a columnist for Autism Asperger's Digest and co-author of 1001 Great Ideas for Teaching and Raising Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders. This article has been condensed from its original version. It can be viewed in its entirety at www.autismspectrum.net/DesktopDefault.aspx?tabid=248.

Some days it seems the only predictable thing about it is the unpredictability. The only consistent attribute is the inconsistency. No question: autism can be baffling. And though once thought 'incurable' that notion is crumbling in the face of ever-increasing knowledge. Every day, individuals with autism show us that they can overcome, compensate for and manage many of its most challenging aspects. Understanding their needs can have a tremendous impact on a child's journey towards productive, independent adulthood.

Autism is a spectrum disorder, but core elements exist. Here are ten things that every child with autism wishes you knew.

1. I am first and foremost a child. I have autism. I am not primarily autistic. My autism is but one aspect of my total character. Like you, I am a person with thoughts, feelings, and many talents. I am still unfolding; we don't yet know what I may be capable of. Defining me by one characteristic runs the danger of setting up an expectation that may be too low. If I get a sense that you don't think I can do it, my natural response may be: Why try?
2. My sensory perceptions are disordered. The ordinary sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and touches of everyday life that you may not even notice can be hyper acute and downright painful for me. I may appear withdrawn or belligerent, but I am really just trying to defend myself from a world that is intrusively loud, blindingly bright, offensively smelly and difficult to navigate. My brain cannot filter the multiple inputs and I frequently feel overloaded, disoriented and unsettled in my own skin.
3. Please distinguish between won't and can't. It isn't that I don't listen to instructions. It's that I can't understand you. When you call to me from across the room, I hear: *^#@, Billy. #\$\$%\$&* instead, come speak directly to me in plain words: 'Please put your book in your desk, Billy. Its time to go to lunch'. This tells me what you want me to do and what is going to happen next. Now it's much easier for me to comply.
4. I am a concrete thinker. I interpret language literally. When you say, 'Hold your horses, cowboy!' what you really mean is 'Please stop running.' Don't tell me something is a 'piece of cake' when there is no dessert in sight and what you really mean is, 'This will be easy for you to do'. Idioms, puns, nuances and sarcasm are lost on me.
5. Be patient with my limited vocabulary. It's hard for me to tell you what I need when I don't know the words to describe my feelings. I may be hungry, frustrated, frightened, or confused, but those words are beyond my ability to express. Be alert for body language, withdrawal, agitation or other signs that something is wrong.
6. Because language is so difficult for me, I am very visually oriented. Show, rather than tell me how to do something. And show me many times; patient repetition helps me learn. A visual schedule is extremely helpful. Like your day planner, it relieves me of the stress of having to remember what comes next. It helps me manage my time and meet your expectations.
7. Focus and build on what I can do rather than what I can't do. Like you, I can't learn in an environment where I'm constantly made to feel that I'm not good enough or that I need fixing. Trying anything new when I am almost sure to be met with criticism, however constructive, becomes something to be avoided. Look for my strengths and you'll find them. There's more than one right way to do most things.
8. Help me with social interactions. It may look like I don't want to play with the other kids on the playground, but I simply don't know how to start a conversation or enter a play situation. Encourage other children to invite me to join them at kickball or hoops; I may be delighted to be included.
9. Try to identify what triggers my meltdowns. Meltdowns and blow-ups are even more horrid for me than they are for you. They occur because one or more of my senses has gone into overload. If you can figure out why my meltdowns occur, they can be prevented. Keep a log noting times, settings, activities, people. A pattern may emerge.
10. Love me unconditionally. Banish thoughts like, 'If he would just'. Did you fulfill every last expectation your parents had for you? I didn't choose to have autism. Remember that it's happening to me, not you. Without your support, my chances of successful, self-reliant adulthood are slim. With your support and guidance, the possibilities are broader than you might think. I promise you I'm worth it.



Staff Comings and Goings

Warm Salutations...

My name is Sharon Power. I'm one of the new coordinators for west Toronto. I just wanted to take this opportunity to say hi and say how much I'm looking forward to working with Extend-A-Family. It's a real honour and privilege to be invited to work in such a warm, caring and welcoming community organization that's dedicated to improving community relations in an inclusionary capacity. I'm looking forward to meeting with families and community organizations in the hope of facilitating positive ties that readily accept all members of our community.

Greetings...

Hi my name is Deanna Berry-Glamna and I am proud to work with Extend-A-Family. I've always wanted to work with a organization that promotes inclusion and the unification of people living in communities. I love learning about different cultures, helping others, and encouraging people to fulfil their dreams. I look forward to working with the families I'll be supporting.

Hi there...

I'm Rain C. Hood. I've been with Extend-A-Family for just over a year now. I'm having a great time here! The thing I really appreciate is the generosity of families: to let me into their lives, getting to know me, and then trying out some of the ideas we come up with. It's exciting work! Thank you.

Liz Short (this is a short excerpt from her retirement speech)

"Friendship is the gift we give ourselves." This quote keeps coming back to me as I reflect on my 18 years with Extend-A-Family. How do I thank you – let me count the ways: To my colleagues, past and present, it has been my privilege to work with you. I have learned from each one of you. Life lessons about being welcoming, sensitive, assertive, open-minded, and compassionate... all of which taught me to be a better advocate. To the families and hosts I have come to know, respect, and care about over the years, thank you for the treasured gift of your friendship. The student hosts, best buddies, and summer students added youthful idealism to the Extend-A-Family experience. And to all the Extend-A-Family members, the children and young people, thank you for your infectious zest for joy which increases the enjoyment of all those who have been warmed within your circle. From the families and hosts, I have learned about commitment, patience, courage and devotion. On a light note, there have been some growing pains as well, for example: being dragged, kicking and screaming, into the foreign world of computers! Simply put, this journey with Extend-A-Family has enriched my life. Thank you all!



Linda Ger Walters

Linda spent her most recent time with Extend-A-Family by facilitating the Out-of-Home Host Respite Project and the West and Central Mom's Groups for a few years. Previously she was Executive Coordinator of Extend-A-Family North York. Linda has left Extend-A-Family to be the Executive Director for Bereaved Families of Ontario. Her personal experience, warmth and compassion was important to families and we thank her for her dedication.

Marijan Grobbink

Marijan joined us three years ago as Coordinator to families in west Toronto. She also worked tirelessly coordinating the Summer Student program. Sadly, for us, Marijan has left us to continue with her studies. Marijan's energy and enthusiasm will be missed and we wish her well.

Phillip and Friends



This is Phillip Louvado (8 years old) and his brother Michael (5). Phillip is a great artist, beyond his years. His parents (Antonio and Beatrice) have been keeping a portfolio of his artwork since Kindergarten. Phillip made a booklet of Thomas and Friends, which captures his idea of friendship. When

interviewed, Phillip spoke about his book.

Interview:

Sam: "Tell me why you created this booklet of Thomas and Friends?"

Phillip: "I love to draw. It is about friends and family."

Sam: "What do friends do?"

Phillip: "Share, play, sleep over, go to birthday parties and pillow fight."

Phillip has an understanding of what a friendship is. Phillip's been involved with a Friendship Circle

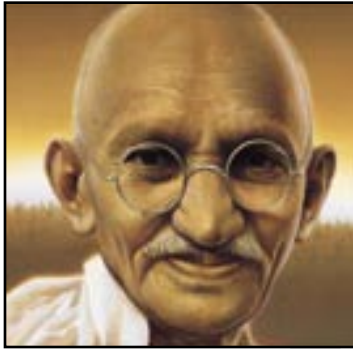
at his school for 2 years and will be again this year. I have seen many great changes in Phillip, since the first circle; he is building friendships and is encouraged by all his peers to participate in recess and home room activities.

We hope to expand the circle out of the school environment and that Phillip and other children will continue to benefit in the months to come.

Friendship takes time to cultivate, but it is time well spent.

Sam Rochese

Gandhi



This is an article about the life and impact of one person's belief and work, on a nation and a generation – Gandhi. He made a difference by his peaceful and non-violent approaches to humankind. This month marks the anniversary of this great leader's birth. M. K. Gandhi was born on Oct 2, 1869 to Hindu parents in India. He studied Law in London at the age of 22. Soon after, he went

to South Africa to practice Law and consequently found himself working to improve the rights of the immigrant Indians.

Gandhi's entire devotion to bringing justice in South Africa and later independence to India were motivated by his deep belief in truth, non-violence and love. He did not believe in fighting individuals but rather the evil in the system. Truth and non-violence are what Gandhi lived by.

As a lawyer he believed that the true function of a lawyer is not to fight for one side but to search out the facts and negotiate a solution in the best interest of both sides. It was in South Africa that Gandhi developed his creed of passive resistance against injustice. He practised Satyagraha, which is non-violent resistance or the force of truth and love, and was frequently jailed as a result of the protests that he led. Satyagraha was used by Gandhi as a means of political protest. It is the direct opposite of compulsion. It was conceived of as a complete substitute to violence. By the time he was 46 years of age, he had radically changed the lives of Indians living in Southern Africa.

Back in India, it was not long before he was taking the lead in the long struggle for independence from Britain. Gandhi adopted the craft of home spinning cotton cloth which symbolized his commitment to the political and economic regeneration of India. Gandhi believed that a country's power stemmed from the will of its people not from its political leaders. He never wavered in his unshakable belief in non-violent protest and religious tolerance. When Muslim and Hindu compatriots committed acts of violence, whether against the British who ruled India, or against each other, he fasted until the fighting ceased.

Independence, when it came in 1947, was not a military victory, but a triumph of human will. To Gandhi's despair, however, the country was partitioned into Hindu India and Muslim Pakistan. The last two months of his life were spent trying to end the appalling violence which ensued, leading him to fast to the brink of death, an act which finally quelled the riots. In January 1948, at the age of 79, he was killed by a fanatical Hindu who had been inflamed by Gandhi's efforts to bring reconciliation between Hindus and Muslims in riot-torn independent India.

He is fondly referred to as 'Mahatma' which means 'great soul'.

Gandhi's vision has been felt all over the world. His example of trust, tolerance and protest by non-violent means may be crucial to our survival seeing that the human race has the capacity to destroy life on our planet. Richard Attenborough's academy award winning film 'Gandhi' captured the imagination of a generation. Martin Luther King, the black civil rights leader, who

was also assassinated in 1968, paid tribute to Gandhi's example. The fusion of Christian doctrine and Gandhian techniques was adopted as the guiding principle of the Civil Rights Movement and Martin Luther King demonstrated as no one had done before, how Satyagraha, which germinated on South African soil and nourished in India, had universal application.

In the same vein as our philosophy at Extend-A-Family, the Gandhian belief is rooted in principles of love, gentle teaching and non-violence.

In the Mahatma's own words:

- Live simply that others may simply live.
- There is a limit to man's intelligence but the developments of the qualities of the heart knows no bounds.
- It is better in prayer to have a heart without words than words without a heart.
- My non-cooperation has its roots not in hatred but in love.
- My effort should never be to undermine another's faith but to make him a better follower of his own faith.

For information on Gandhian philosophy, visit the Canadian Foundation for World Peace at: www.gandhi.ca. The programs at the Foundation are aimed at conflict prevention, anger management, diversity training, and relationship and community building.

Ruth Fernandes

Discrimination Bus

Being me is hard.

People stare at you for a long time in the subway and on the bus.

They want you to be miserable.

They want you to feel awful inside.

To hell with that!

People should respect us, talk to us.

Don't be afraid of us.

We are human beings, and we have the right to do things like going on the bus.

Discrimination is not fun.

It hurts everybody.

So what if I am different?

Let me go on the bus, let me do this and that.

What's wrong with having this?

Every time I walk by people, they don't acknowledge me.

I just want to cry.

So what if I am like this?

God created people.

God created me.

I am a teacher.

I am teaching you about disability, about what it is to be different.

What's wrong with that?

I have the same rights as everybody else.

Andreas Prinz



Safe and Secure Futures Networks

Safe and Secure Futures Networks aim to empower families to develop and nurture a support circle with their family member who has a disability. A support circle is a group of people, primarily family and friends, who are invited to come together regularly, to focus on the individual and his/her evolving personal vision. Circle members are intent on supporting the person to have choice and control in his/her life and to experience a variety of meaningful relationships. Safe and Secure Futures Networks offer opportunities to share and learn from each other, building our confidence to invite people to meet, listen to hopes and dreams, consider possibilities, and plan with the individual we love, who may be vulnerable and at risk of isolation.

West Network

meets the last Monday of the month

Oct 31; Nov 28; Jan 30; March 27; April 24; May 29

Royal York Rd. United Church, 851 Royal York Rd. (2 blocks S. of Bloor). We will relocate for the February 27 meeting

Central Network

meets the last Tuesday of the month:

Oct 25; Nov 29; Jan 31; February 28; March 28; April 25; May 30

St. Simon the Apostle Anglican Church, 525 Bloor St. E. between Sherbourne and Parliament, KNOCK HARD on (east end) door near intercom at top of ramp or call Christy's cell 416.949.5215. Free street parking on Howard (S. of Bloor) or meter parking on Bloor

Hospitality begins at 7, Meetings end

at 9

To register, or for more information, please contact Christy Barber, Coordinator, Safe and Secure Futures at cb@extendafamily.ca or 416.487.4564. If you would like to know more about support circles and person-centred planning, I would be pleased to hear from you. Facilitator support, to get started, may be available.

Funding for Safe and Secure Futures, through a City of Toronto Community Services Grant, is greatly appreciated.

A variety of topics of mutual interest may be explored through guided discussions with a facilitator, such as:

- Relationships and a context in which they can develop;
- Person centred planning and individualized supports;
- Creating the right place to live; and
- Financial and estate planning
- Resource parents and community members may be invited to share their knowledge and expertise.

Moms Groups

We invite you to join us at our gatherings for moms who have children (of any age) with a disability. This informal time is designed for moms to share, be together and connect with each other.

Central Moms Group

Time: 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

Dates: Every Thursday from October 6 - to December 8, 2005

Location: Courtyard Coop, 10 Broadway Avenue, 3rd Floor Commonview Room,

(Building is located just east of Yonge. Access is gained through a driveway off Broadway. Building #10 is middle of three buildings facing the courtyard. Paid parking below ground, street meters, or Green P just north at Castlefield.)

Contact: Sharon Anderson
416.423.4092,
sa@extendafamily.ca

East Moms Group

(co-sponsored with Community Living Toronto)

Time: 9:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.

Dates: Every Thursday from September 15 - until the end of the school year

Location: Cliffcrest United Church, 1 McCowan Road at Kingston Rd

Contact: Janice Matthews
905.509.8494,
jm@extendafamily.ca

Community Living Toronto's Moms' Morning Out

Time: 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

Dates: Every Wednesday from October 5 - December 7, 2005

Location: Swansea Town Hall Community Centre - 95 Lavinia Avenue

RSVP: Laura Del Zotto 416.236.7621 ext. 299

Mom's Morning Out

Being relatively new to Toronto, getting connected with other moms was the best thing that ever happened to me! I look forward to each meeting and enjoy every minute there. At each meeting, with our sharing in very friendly and casual chats, we grow ever closer to each of our sisters in the common hope of learning from each other and doing our best to help our children with special needs to realize their dreams. Together we are able to have fun and share each others parenting challenges, celebrate achievements and giving each other hope. Personally, I feel that just having a listening ear does wonders! This has also meant being able to actively advocate for my child with special needs. I am empowered with invaluable resources to cope with life's many challenges as I continue my journey of learning.

Susan Wong



Honours go to...

Andrew Markle

In June 2005 Andrew Markle was rewarded the "Certificate of Achievement", in recognition of excellent achievement by a student in the Co-Operative Education Program at Winston Churchill High School. The Ontario Co-Operative Education Association sponsors this award. Some of the criteria in awarding the certificate are outstanding performance, consistent attendance, initiative, positive attitude, demonstrated effort, effective communication skills, and maturity. Well done Andrew!

Rebecca Beayni

At the request of Inclusion International and the Canadian Association for Community Living, Rebecca Beayni appeared before the United Nations in New York City on August 1, 2005. Rebecca presented a report to the members of the Disability Caucus, who are developing the convention on rights for people with disabilities. The caucus included representatives from all over the world and Rebecca's presentation was translated into six different languages. Rebecca also participated as a self-advocate on a panel in the Self-Advocacy and Inclusion session. Rebecca's new video "Revel in the Light" was made available for viewing and copies went to New Zealand, Kenya, Panama and Ottawa.

On September 22, 2005 at Cardinal Carter Academy an appreciative and inspired crowd was present at the official launch of the film "Revel in the Light: A Quiet Life Will Shine, the story of Rebecca Beayni. Written, produced and directed by Deiren Masterson of Masterworks Productions, the video gives a biographical portrait of Rebecca, a "woman whose openness to life touches and stirs those in the world around her". Rebecca would like her video to be used as a call to action, a call for justice for everyone who is marginalized. The film is available for purchase for \$25, with proceeds going to the Ubuntu Initiative. For more information, call or email Susan at 416-492-4494 or beayni@sympatico.ca.

Reach for the Rainbow, like Extend-A-Family, supports integrated opportunities that enrich the lives of children and young adults with disabilities, their families and the communities in which they belong. Their annual publication, The Scrapbook, highlights a range of camping and recreation experiences and supported volunteer opportunities during the last year. Among this year's award and scholarship recipients were both a family and an individual who may be familiar to other families through their association with Extend-A-Family.

The Ogle Family

"The Gift of Belonging Inclusion Award celebrates Reach for the Rainbow members and partners who enrich their community through inclusive values, lifestyles and practices." This year the Ogle Family (Helen and Terry, Hannah, Sarah and Miles) was recognized for "believing in what is possible and for helping create communities where everyone belongs." The Ogle family are former members of Extend-A-Family.

Jessica Leung

"The Michelle Julia Gringler Memorial Scholarship Fund recognizes outstanding camp leaders in bringing integration to their respective camp communities." Former Extend-A-Family summer student Jessica Leung has, for the last few years, been a support counsellor at the YMCA Island Camp, and the Seneca Summer Camps. She was described as someone who "sees the big picture. Integration is not only about the camper you are supporting, but it is also important to be aware of the other kids in the group." Congratulations!

Our thanks go to Fred Clemente and Mosaic Media for donating time and resources in doing the layout for the Extend-A-Family newsletter again this issue.

Thank you for your contributions!

Charitable Registration Number 11890-4846-RR0001

Please make cheques payable to **Extend-A-Family** & mail to:



Extend-A-Family
200-3300 Yonge Street
Toronto ON M4N 2L6

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