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Embracing Life

Issue No. 1
Fall, 2007

Welcome to our first issue of *Embracing Life*,

the HDSA's updated and upgraded newsletter. Professionally designed by graphic artist, Paul Curwen of Mango Advertising and Design, this newsletter is the next step in the HDSA's evolution towards becoming stronger, bolder, and more connected. We hope you like the changes. Let us know what you think!

Dates of Interest

Oct 19-21 DSAO Provincial Conference
Nov 1-7 Down Syndrome Awareness Week



Halton
Down Syndrome
Association
HDSA

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Eye On Education

by Dianna Bower and Ellen Whitehouse,
current SEAC reps for the Halton District School Board

Did you know...?

that the Canadian Down Syndrome Society has a policy statement on IQ testing? To read it, go to www.cdss.ca. Enter the site, then click on the following: ABOUT US / Policies & Statements / IQ Testing. There is also reference to IQ testing in Effective Teaching Strategies: A Focus on Down Syndrome. You can buy this booklet online from The Prep Program at www.prepprog.org. It costs \$20.

that you may choose not to share the results of a psychological assessment with the school board, even if they have paid for it? This right, and the right to remove the assessment from your child's school file (OSR) are part of legislation. As parents and guardians of children with special needs, it is important to understand why a test or assessment is being done. Make sure any testing is done to benefit your child, rather than just being standard procedure.

that there is an Itinerant Teacher for the developmentally and physically challenged in all areas of the HDSB (east, west, and north)? An Itinerant Teacher can come in to the classroom and provide assistance to staff that may not have experience with students with Down syndrome.

that assistive technology is available for our students, including computers and the Clicker4 literacy software? In a recent study done in British Columbia, Clicker4 was proven to be an effective tool for teaching literacy to students with special needs. Clicker4 is available in all Ontario schools. If your child is not currently set up with Clicker4, your local Itinerant Teacher can install it and provide training to staff members working with your child.

that in the fall of 2006, the HDSB paid for its teachers and EAs to take the Signed English course in order to benefit its students that use sign language?

that the "hard-cap" enrollment of 20 students per elementary class required by the provincial government, only needs to be met by October 31? After that, as more students register in growth areas, the numbers are allowed to rise.

that if you know of a fabulous individual involved in special education (teacher, EA, or student), you may nominate them for a SEAC award? Nominations are submitted each spring. You can obtain a nomination form from the Board's web site.

For more information about special education at the Halton District School Board, log onto www.hdsb.ca, then click on Parents & Community (at the top of the page), All About Learning (scroll down to find it), and then Special Education.

SEAC Reps Needed!

For over five years, Dianna Bower and Ellen Whitehouse have represented our children at the Halton District School Board's Special Education Advisory Committee, Dianna as our representative and Ellen as our Alternate. In order to focus on other areas of their busy lives, Dianna and Ellen are stepping down from their positions on SEAC as of this October. We welcome anyone interested in taking over these roles to contact Dianna at (905) 319-0336 or Ellen at (905) 878-1911. SEAC representatives advise the school board on issues that relate to special education, and help

ensure that the rights of our children are protected. No prior experience is required, and training will be provided. SEAC meetings are held the first Tuesday of every month at the J.W. Singleton Centre at Guelph Line and Upper Middle Road in Burlington, and run from 7:00pm to 9:30pm.

Our heartfelt thanks go out to both Dianna and Ellen for the many hours they have spent providing a voice for our kids. Some of you may not know that in addition to being SEAC rep all this time, Dianna has also acted as both Vice-Chair and Chair of SEAC, and sat on numerous committees. Both Dianna and Ellen were also instrumental in getting the HDSB to provide sign language training to all of its teachers and Educational Assistants. When you see them, be sure to say thanks!

We are still looking for an Alternate to work with Karen Drexler at SEAC for the Halton Catholic District School Board (HCDSB). If you are interested in filling this role, please call Karen at: (905) 257-8369.

On the Cover

Emily Boycott is off to Shanghai, China, to represent Canada in the 2007 Special Olympics World Summer Games from October 2 – 11. Emily has been a Special Olympics athlete for 10 years and her sport is rhythmic gymnastics. Learn more about Team Canada and see a profile of Emily by going to www.teamcanada2007.ca.

We wish her good luck and happy travels!

Message from the President



The start of fall brings many changes. It seems the summer has just started when, all of a sudden, our children are 'back to school'. For my family, this year brings three new schools, each with its own different bus schedule and new challenges for each child.

I include the above as a reminder to all that our world is in a constant state of change. Our association is also changing. I am very proud of the work we have done as a result of our Strategic Planning. Under Leanne Kirk's guidance and leadership, we have developed some new process frameworks, and completed our first tasks: a new logo, the survey, and now an enhanced newsletter. And there are still more changes ahead.

For me this has also been a year of great changes, both professionally and within the association. In my career, after spending a number of years with The DATA Group, I have moved into a new role at Xerox. DATA has, and continues to be a FABULOUS supporter of the HDSA. Through their Charity Golf Classic Event they have honoured us with a donation of \$7,500, and they continue to assist us with our printing needs. A sincere thank you to all the wonderful people at DATA who make this happen!

In May I participated in the first Canadian Down Syndrome Society's (CDSS) Affiliate Council. This group represents local associations from Newfoundland to Victoria. It is amazing that for all of our differences, we are very similar. Groups are challenged to grow and provide different supports for the different age groups. The Affiliate Council is working together to share best practices, success stories and build on our collective experience.

I have also represented the HDSA at strategic meetings for the Down Syndrome Association of Ontario (DSAO). This group continues to knit together various Ontario Associations. By sharing experiences and knowledge at conferences, we are all able to learn from each other. Again this year, the DSAO has put together a great group of presenters. Register soon for the October Conference in Peterborough!

At the end of summer, we often have new families join us at the Boycott's annual BBQ. As new parents of a child with Down syndrome, we can be upset or confused by what new challenges await our family. By connecting with other parents, we learn that the path for our child is open to a number of possibilities. We learn that, at a time when our new 'special' child is most like every other new baby, we should learn more, advocate better and enjoy our child. Welcome new families! We are thrilled to have you join our organization and hope that we can be of some support for you and your children.

Looking forward to seeing you all at events throughout the year;

Paul



Proceeds from DATA Golf Tournament Benefit HDSA

by Allan McNeill

My Dad and I got up early in the morning, to be at the Blue Springs golf club before registrations started. We picked up Emily Boycott on the way.

Our first job was helping on the registration desk selling chances to guess the number of golf balls in a bag. Emily and I both made a guess, but we didn't win. The correct guess won the balls. There were 143 balls in the bag.

When the tournament started Emily and I ran a putting contest on the chipping green. We met and talked to every golfer and collected \$530, which was added to the tournament proceeds.

At dinner, I said grace. We sat with some of the organizers from The DATA Group of Companies, and shared stories with them. During the award of prizes, Emily and I were both given a pair of tickets to a Blue Jays home game. Emily took her father and I took mine.

When we drove home, we visited with Emily and her mom.

We have already offered to run both a chipping contest and a putting contest at next year's tournament. Emily and I will need the help of two or three other self advocates then.

This year The DATA Group of Companies will send the Halton Down Syndrome Association \$7500. I was glad to be a part of this event.

Meet the Strategic Planning Committee

At the first strategic planning session back in January, members spoke passionately and decisively about their needs and the needs of their children. From those initial discussions, the core groups were formed. The Project Managers would like to introduce themselves and tell you a bit about why they have taken on these important roles.



Riky McNeill
Project Manager, Advocacy

Life changed forever on September 20, 1982. On that day, I gave birth to my 6th child, and the world of Down syndrome opened up to me.

My baby was beautiful to me, so floppy, his body melted into mine as I rocked him for hours, pondering his future - and mine - and silently I wept. My busy household, my oldest daughter in university, my youngest, our first son, ten years old, and now this little baby with unknown needs.

A very bubbly young woman appeared from Parent Infant program. She helped me with Allan's development and consoled and encouraged me. She also suggested that Neil and I meet with some other parents. The next thing I knew the HDSA was born with Neil as its first elected president.

The parents in the association were so understanding and inspiring to me. There were heart and feeding problems and I thought that Allan got off easy with his good health. Some of the parents even planned having more children. I thought that was very brave.

We held garage sales and bake sales. Our regular meetings were small, close and supportive. We shared ideas and best practices in all aspects of our children's development. We bought some computers and leading edge educational software. We introduced speech therapy and our meager income funded these programs.

At age four a big setback! Allan was diagnosed with leukemia. Three years of chemotherapy and countless trips to Sick Kids followed. This period is a blur, I try to forget. Our involvement in the HDSA ceased, except for the great support and compassion from its members.

Allan is 25 years old now. I love him more than ever and am so proud of him. He is cured of leukemia!! He finished high school and now works in the office of an elementary school and at Home Hardware. He travels by bus all across this city like a pro. He lives at home - our only child now. We are actively back in the HDSA. Neil as Treasurer, I as Advocacy Project Manager. I never had such a fancy title!! With it comes work! I believe in our kids and want the world to know how much they have to offer.

I will work as best I can to empower our children to be confident self advocates, as well as supporting parents in their roles as advocates for their children. I will eagerly hear ideas from you to accomplish this goal. Give me a call.



Lori Aker
Project Manager, Marketing

My journey with Down syndrome began 7 years ago when my third daughter was born. From the moment the doctor spoke the words, "Guys, there's a problem with the baby" my life has never been the same. There have been many highs and many lows.

One high is the many wonderful (no, incredible!) people I've met since her birth. To think that I might never have known them!

The lowest low? Raising her in a world that doesn't understand her worth. This, I need to change.

I need to show the world the wonderful things she brings to our family. To make people understand that, despite the challenges we face, I truly wouldn't trade her for the world.

The HDSA has so much going for it. We have money in the bank, contacts in many sectors of society, skills & talents, but most of all we have a fierce love for our kids that won't be stopped. As PM of Marketing I hope to give us a polished and professional image that will help us build strong partnerships, and be a respected voice, in the community. I hope you will be part of the exciting changes taking place. We're stronger together than we are alone.



Bruce Whitehouse
Project Manager, Networking

Ellen, Heather, Fraser and I live in Milton. We became involved with the HDSA about 1 year after Heather was born. At that time, it wasn't as easy to get in touch with the HDSA - The organization has come a long way but we still have lots of opportunity for improvement.

After Heather was born, the doctor informed Ellen that she thought Heather had Down syndrome (Ds). This news came as a complete surprise to us both.

Neither one of us had experience with Ds and we had no concept of what the future held. Speaking only for myself, I can now say that I was both devastated and misguided. But I can also guarantee that Ellen has shouldered the biggest share - the continuous appointments and the constant extra effort to achieve the milestones that we all look for.

I can tell you that the future is not nearly what I had envisioned and feared in the first few days. Sure, we will always be aware of the differences, but I truly believe that both Ellen and I (and Fraser too, except he doesn't know it yet) have come to more fully appreciate the diversity of our world and the

beauty that life has to offer – largely because of Heather's influence. I became involved as the Networking Project Manager because I believe that the HDSA can achieve really great things in our local communities.

The Networking area can help ensure that we change the way society views individuals with Ds. I would like to see hospital staff properly trained and equipped with information to help new parents start the Down syndrome journey with an informed and positive approach. And, I look forward to the day when Heather and others with Ds are valued as contributing members of our communities – people who hold meaningful jobs, can lead independent lives and can enjoy all that life has to offer.

I sit on the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters committee promoting 10/20 – an initiative to encourage and equip employers to expand hiring practices so that by 2020 10% of new hires will be people with a disability. Serving on this committee gives me an opportunity to expand the awareness of the abilities of persons with a disability, specifically those with Down syndrome, and assist in overcoming the challenges that are faced by both individuals and employers.

The accomplishments I have outlined will only come about through the efforts and contributions of many. I urge each of us to look at our strengths and our interests then decide how we can best contribute. There are many opportunities to help change our organization and the society in which we function. Getting involved is the first step.



Anne Lannan
Project Manager, Support

I have been a member of the HDSA since my son, David, was a few months old. Over the past 16 years David and I have both been fortunate to have formed many friendships with families from the association. I served on the HDSA Board of Directors in the late 1990s and worked bingos in Oakville for 12 years so David could participate in the Speech and Language program. Over the years I have helped with organizing parent meetings, the newsletter, and our 20th anniversary Silent Auction. A former newspaper reporter and editor, I have worked for a non-profit industry association for the past 18 years. My commitment to the continued growth of the HDSA and my knowledge and experience in providing programs and services in an association environment were key factors in becoming involved in the strategic planning process. Although David and I will be moving outside Halton in the next few months, we will continue to be involved in HDSA.



Stewart Bell
Project Management
and Web Master

One of my operating goals in life at the moment is to provide my children with the tools and support to make them better than myself and, ultimately, the best they can be. I use myself as a resource to do this and figure that out of the 2816 hours I have outside of sleep and work per year I can easily devote a portion of this time to a less selfish cause than myself. Collectively small efforts can turn into big rewards and I am involved to do just that.

Check this out!

City of Burlington Parks and Recreation Department's fall Special Needs program:

Bright Beginnings (ages 1-5)
Fri 9:30-11:00am **NEW**

Special Fishes (ages 8-36 months)
Mon 2:30-3:00pm **NEW**

Wet and Wonderful Wednesdays
(integrated, ages 5-18)
Wed 4:30-6:30pm

Adventures and Aquatics (integrated, ages 5-12)
Sat 9:30-12:00pm

Dunk and Dive (ages 13-21 yrs)
Sat 1:00-3:30pm **Time Change**

5 Pin Bowling (ages 13+) Wed 4:30-6:00pm

Out and About (ages 16+) Thurs 7:00-9:00pm

Friday Activity Night (F.A.N.) (ages 13+)
Fri 7:00-10:00pm

For more info, call Becky Hamber at
(905) 332-1996 x227 or email
specialneedsprograms@burlington.ca

Community Living Mississauga's Future Planning Seminar:

Part 1 in a series, you will learn how to establish a specialized will that ensures your son/daughter's future is as secure as possible.

Date: Wednesday, October 17, 2007

Place: Community Living Mississauga
6715 Millcreek Drive, Unit 4,
Mississauga

Time: 7:00-9:00pm

RSVP: Shanta Maharajh at (905) 542-2694
ext. 2223 or shantam@clmiss.ca



Welcome to Leanne Kirk

Vice President and Strategic Planning Co-ordinator

Have you ever wondered what would happen if that person working with your child were to wake up and find that they are, themselves, the parent of a child with Down syndrome? Would they become more patient? Would they have higher expectations?

That's what happened 11 years ago to Leanne Kirk, our current VP. In the midst of an extensive career in the field of disabilities that included running an employment program, being an Educational Assistant, a special education teacher, and a Resource Consultant, Leanne became the proud mother of Riley, a little boy with Down syndrome.

"It made me look at everything differently. I wanted more for him than what was currently available," says Leanne.

Leanne and her husband, Mike, joined the HDSA soon after Riley was born and, like most of us, began researching how to raise and support their son to the best of their abilities. They chose to home school their son, following a curriculum from the National Academy of Child Development www.nacd.org.

"I learned more from home schooling Riley about how children with Down syndrome learn than I did in my entire career," she says. "I don't think we have yet fully discovered how to tap into our kids' learning potential. I'd like to bring all of the best methodologies together to allow us to fully understand and tap into the capabilities of people with DS. My belief is that our children are the Teachers and we can learn so much from them. That is my dream."

But that's only one of Leanne's dreams. In her journey as Riley's mother, she has become aware of the vast resources acquired by other parents through their own journeys with Down syndrome. She believes that by bringing together these collective talents, ideas, visions, and needs, something powerful can be built.

So when she was asked to fill the role of VP for the HDSA, Leanne saw an opportunity. She was clear from day one

that she would not be a traditional Vice President, but rather she would use her skills to help build a community of support. She wants members to feel empowered by an organization that has a strong and powerful voice, she wants to build strong partnerships with other associations and businesses, and she wants our kids to have access to better programming with more options.

"As parents, we know our children the best," says Leanne. "Imagine what we can create if we come together collectively."

In addition to her teaching and support roles, Leanne also worked in the area of strategic planning, which makes her the perfect choice to lead us in developing our own strategic plan. She is confident in the team that's in place, proud of the work done to date, and optimistic for the future.

"The people who have built this association have done so much, and acquired such experience," she says. "All of that, coupled with the energy and enthusiasm of people bringing forth new ideas, and we have a chance to make a real difference. We all have in common a desire to get the best for our kids."

Leanne says she is here to bring people together, and to put processes in place so that we have a sustainable community that is constantly renewing itself.

"What we have accomplished so far is amazing," she says. "We are a volunteer organization, yet people are working at it like it's a part-time job. Now we need to draw on everyone's resources and focus on the most important tasks so that our growth is sustainable."

Like all of us, the Kirks are a busy family. Since Riley, their family has grown with the addition of Gillian, 7, and Kelly, 2. Besides being a full-time mom and our VP & strategic planner, Leanne somehow found the time to train for and run a 21 km half-marathon recently in Oakville.

Welcome, Leanne! With your energy and spirit, we're glad you're on our team.

Survey Results & 5 year Plan

Over the summer, the Board and project managers conducted a survey to determine the needs and interests of our membership. This was the first major initiative of the Support group, and thanks go to Anne Lannan for all of her efforts.

As a result, we were able to do a detailed review of members' needs, and develop plans for the next 1 year, 3 years, and 5 years. Details of the survey, and our short and long-range plans will be presented at an upcoming strategic planning session. Watch your email for more information.

Below is a brief summary of some of the things we learned from the survey.

Breakdown by age of our members with Down syndrome.

1-3yrs.....	10%
4-7yrs.....	14%
8-12yrs.....	21%
13-19yrs.....	31%
20-30yrs	18%
30+ yrs.....	4%

The biggest health issue noted in the survey was dental, with 54% of respondents indicating that their child with DS had dental issues within the last three years. Hearing and vision difficulties came in second at 50% each.

Most individuals (61%) use the computer less than 5 hours a day, (44%) watch 5-10 hours of TV per week, and (53%) go to the movies 1-4 times per year.

The most common service (64%) accessed by members is private speech therapy. There were many issues and concerns raised around employment and housing, including too few options being available, long wait lists for programs, jobs, and housing, and employment incomes that are too low. None of the respondents had children with DS living outside the home.

You were asked to list, in order, what you wanted from the HDSA.

Here's what you said:

- #1: Develop friendships for child and family.**
- #2: Provide resources and information.**
- #3: Opportunity to network and socialize with other families.**
- #4: Provide forum for gatherings to share information.**
- #5: Direct funding.**
- #6: Advocacy for child and family.**

Your comments told us that there is a lot of work that can be done to improve the lives of people living with DS in our community.

Come to the next strategic planning session and find out how you can be part of the effort to make that happen.



HDSA Scores Well in Donner Awards

With a total of \$70,000 in prize money awarded each year, the Donner Canadian Foundation runs Canada's largest and most prestigious awards program for non-profit organizations. Eleven awards are granted each year in a variety of categories.

This year, the HDSA applied for a Donner Award in the category of Services for People with Disabilities. Thank you to Neil McNeill and Paul Bandiera for going through the lengthy application process so that we could all benefit.

The Donner Canadian Foundation evaluates an organization's performance in 10 areas, including financial management and program costs. Each organization is given a score, and the one that scores the highest in a category wins.

This year, the HDSA scored 7.4 in our category, with the winner scoring 8.8. The lowest score was 2.9, with a median score of 5.85. 122 organizations submitted their records for evaluation.

The HDSA will receive a summary of the Donner Foundation's evaluation later this year. With momentum building through our strategic planning process and the development of our five-year plan, a Donner award is sure to be within our grasp in future years.

For more information visit:
www.donnerawards.org



Annual BBQ Lots of Fun!

Many thanks to Debbie, Dave and Emily Boycott for, once again, hosting our annual barbeque. Although the weather was not as good as in previous years, our spirits were brightened by the presence of three beautiful new babies! To the new moms & dads, thanks for sharing your little ones with those of us who miss those cuddly early days.



IN THE LOOP!

news from other associations



Self Advocates

The CDSS is looking for articles, photographs, stories and artwork for its magazine, *Voices*, which is written by and for people with Down syndrome. If you would like to submit an item, email it to voices@cdss.ca.

Any self advocate who is a member of CDSS will receive a copy of *Voices* four times a year. They will also be included in CDSS' supportive employment initiative, which strives to increase awareness of the capabilities and value that people with Down syndrome can bring to the workplace.

Any self advocate can become a member of CDSS for just \$5 a year. When renewing your family's HDSA membership, just send along an extra \$5 and your self advocate will be enrolled in the CDSS.

2007 National Conference

The CDSS celebrated its twentieth anniversary by "Coming Home" to Calgary for the 2007 National Conference. Several HDSA members were able to attend and they report an experience that was fun, educational, and uplifting.

"We woke up bright and early Saturday morning. After a pancake breakfast cooked by the Calgary Stampede committee, we went to our first workshop. It was called, "Be the Best You Can Be." My girlfriend and I learned that it is important to have meaningful conversations with people around you. This will help you become the best you can be."

- quote from Allan McNeill, reporting on the CDSS National Conference in Calgary

Advocacy

The CDSS has taken a strong position in response to the Society of Obstetrics and Gynecology's recent guidelines calling

for the option of genetic screening to be offered to all Canadian women regardless of maternal age. In addition to doing radio interviews, the CDSS has written a commentary that was published in the *Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology* Canada in July. The article focuses on the importance of providing fair and balanced information to prospective parents, which describes not just the challenges of a life with Down syndrome, but also the rich and rewarding lives possible for citizens with developmental disabilities in Canada.

To read the complete article, and to hear radio interviews by Krista Flint, Executive Director of CDSS, visit www.cdss.ca.

It is the CDSS' position that if screening programs are extended, then education and awareness programs should also be extended. The Nova Scotia Down Syndrome Society has begun a petition to encourage our political leaders to enact a Prenatal Diagnosed Conditions Awareness Act. This Act would ensure that appropriate resources are set aside for education and awareness campaigns so that new and prospective parents are given current and reliable information about diagnosed conditions, and connections to support groups are made.

The petition is on the CDSS website. Click on News, then scroll to the bottom of the page. The petition is under Latest News and is dated September 4, 2007. It is written in both English and French, and you can sign the petition online.



Down Syndrome Association of Ontario

The DSAO is hosting its 5th annual provincial conference in Peterborough, Ontario, from October 19th – October 21st, 2007. The featured speaker will be internationally renowned educator and lecturer, Mr. David Hingsburger.

Mr. Hingsburger is a prolific and sometimes controversial writer who speaks plainly about issues relating to people with disabilities. To see some of the many books he has written, go to www.diverse-city.com. And for a fresh take on the world of disabilities visit Mr. Hingsburger's blog called *Chewing the Fat*, at <http://davehingsburger.blogspot.com>.

Also presenting at the conference are Dr. Ian Manion, Child Psychologist from the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario, and Joy Hayden, Director of Programs and Services from the Down Syndrome Research Institute.

The conference costs \$125. A registration form and conference details can be found at www.downsyndromepeterborough.ca



Down Syndrome Association of Toronto

All teens with developmental delays, aged 13-19, and their friends are invited to a TEEN DANCE held once a month at St. Anselm's Church in Toronto.

Admission is \$5 and includes a snack and drink. The dances are supervised, so parents can leave their teens at the dance.

Dates for 2007 are: October 12, November 9, and December 14.

St. Anselm's Church is located at 1 MacNaughton Rd, 2 blocks east of Bayview, at the corner of Millwood Ave. and MacNaughton Rd.

For more information, contact Madeleine Greey at (416) 469-0852, (mado@madeleinegreey.com), or Biserka Livaja at (416) 690-8089, (bismark@sympatico.ca)

Update on Evan & Jacob

We are lucky to have these two amazing young boys as part of our association. At different stages in their battles with leukemia, Evan Hill-Burnell and Jacob Stretton continue to be an inspiration to all of us with their optimism and strength. You will be pleased to hear that Evan has finished his two years of chemotherapy. He is feeling well and has started school. Jacob began his treatments in April. Though he still has a long road ahead, he maintains his wonderful sense of humor and spunky nature. Our best wishes go out to both families.



Evan Hill-Burnell gets some encouragement from his friend, Allan McNeill. Allan is a leukemia survivor, having battled the disease when he was the same age as Evan.



Jacob and Ryan share a special moment together at Sick Kids hospital.

My Friend Jacob Stretton

by Ryan Works

My name is Ryan Works. I am 11 years old. My best friend is Jacob. He is 10 years old. Jacob and I like to listen to High School Musical. We love basketball and baseball. One day I went to visit Jacob in the hospital. He looked ok, but he is very sick. I can tell because he is always tired. Jacob has leukemia. Jacob is funny and brave and he likes to play with me. I want Jacob to get better soon.

Swap & Shop

From time to time we all find ourselves with items that we no longer need and would like to pass on to someone else. Here you can advertise toys, equipment, etc. that you'd like to either sell, lend, or give away.

If you have an item to advertise, email Lori Aker at akers@sympatico.ca. Include a description of the item, whether you are selling, giving away, or lending, how much you are selling for, and your contact information. Keep in mind that your contact info will be printed in the newsletter and distributed to all of our members. Please include only items that are in good condition.

Item	Cost	Contact
Girl's "Melania Baby" blue leather shoes (with pink flower), size 24, made in Italy. Never worn. Bought for \$60 one year ago.	\$10.00	Lori (905) 632-2829
Kids' walker (for learning to walk), good condition, very solid base, made of very strong plastic.	Lend	Leanne (905) 257-3330
Trip Trap chair (missing its seat belt)	Lend or sell	Leanne (905) 257-3330
Various Melissa & Doug puzzles (good for OT work)	Lend	Leanne (905) 257-3330
Little Tikes push-along car (no pedals, push with legs)	Lend	Leanne (905) 257-3330
Signing books: The Joy of Signing, Sign for Me	Lend	Leanne (905) 257-3330
Topics in DS series: How to teach your child with DS to Read; Gross Motor Skills in Children with DS; Teaching Math to Children with DS; Communication Skills for Children with DS; Down Syndrome and Vitamin Therapy	Lend	Leanne (905) 257-3330
Book: More than a MOM	Lend	Leanne (905) 257-3330
Thematic unit books for Preschool	Lend	Leanne (905) 257-3330
Safety 1st potty with pull-out step, 1 year old.	Free	Lori (905) 632-2829

Sharing Resources

by Leanne Kirk

We all have come across some great resources in our journeys as parents. This section of the newsletter is for sharing ideas, resources, websites, and books that you have found to be a great asset and help in your experience with your child.

Websites for TOYS!

www.toysenseplus.com

Toysense Plus is based in Kitchener and has an extensive online store with toys for newborns to adults. You may have seen them present at a previous CDSS conference. On their web site, toys are nicely organized into categories, which makes shopping easy and gives you ideas for building your own toy inventory. They offer a great range of toys, some you can find in many stores, but it is definitely more specialized than a regular Toys "R"Us or even Mastermind.

Check out...

Mini Wiggly Giggly Ball:

a great toy for preschoolers, this ball is soft but also makes sounds when you catch or throw it. Great sensory input! This ball is hard to find in other stores.

Puff the Pop Up Dragon game:

a great introduction to first games and turn taking. You can also find similar games at other stores, e.g. Pop-Up Pirate at Toys "R"Us.

www.toystoolsandtreasures.com

Toys, Tools & Treasures is a Burlington company that offers online shopping for a broad range of toys for preschoolers to adults. It is owned and operated by Wendy Clifton who is an Occupational Therapist. Her main goal in starting this company was to make therapeutic and educational toys accessible and affordable to families. And that she has done! She offers a full range of therapeutic-type toys at a fraction of the cost of therapeutic toy companies.

Great service, toys are affordable, and you can pick them up yourself if you want to save shipping costs. Toys range from scooterboards to writing aids to sensory toys. Also on this site is one of the best introductions and overviews about Occupational Therapy that I have seen. Worth the read!

Book Review

More Than a Mom

Living a Full and Balanced Life when your Child has Special Needs
by Amy Bakin and Heather Fawcett

Written by two mothers from Guelph who have children with special needs, this book is full of resources and research, but most importantly it shares the experiences of over 500 mothers who also have kids with special needs. It provides you with ideas and inspiration on how to take care of yourself, the simple message being, "Don't lose sight of yourself, your goals, your dreams, relationships or career, despite the intensive demands of raising a child with special needs". More Than a Mom explains why and how to find balance in your life. An excellent read. These women also do workshops! If you would like to borrow the book, call Leanne Kirk. It is also available at Chapters or your local library. The book's authors have a web site. If you'd like more information about the book or its authors, go to www.morethanamom.net.

In Your Community

Did you know that the ErinoakKids Burloak site has an excellent toy and resource lending library? You can use their Boardmaker program (picture symbols, also referred to as "Pics"), which is often used in schools and preschools to help a child have a visual picture of what their day will look like. Boardmaker can also be used to make social stories for your child (books about things in your child's life). A staff person is on hand to assist you. You can sign out books and toys, anything from parachutes to tunnels, puppets, see saws, rocking horses, and other therapeutic toys. There are also educational games, story building kits, etc. that are good for school. You can pick up new toys each week if you like. Before going out to buy, check out this library and borrow a few.

The center is located at 1122 International Blvd, and is available to all clients of ErinoakKids, including those on wait lists. It costs \$25 per year, and is well worth it. Hours of operation are Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9:00am to 3:00pm. The contact person is Belynda Burton. Call to make sure she is there before you go: (905) 315-6649.

Web Sites of Interest

www.life-trust.com

This web site offers services to families around tax credits and long term planning for their son or daughter.

www.dltk.com

This is an excellent site for school resources. You can make printable calendars, bingo games, nursery rhyme games, etc. And it's all free.

If you have a resource that you would like to share, please call Leanne Kirk at (905) 257-3330.



To find out more about the Halton Down Syndrome Association please visit our web site at:

www.haltondownsyndrome.com



Halton
Down Syndrome
Association
HDSA

2008 Membership Renewal

Due December 31, 2007

Please Note: the \$25 annual fee includes a full joint membership to the Canadian Down Syndrome Society (CDSS) for one year. An extra \$5 will enroll your self advocate in the CDSS, who will mail a Quarterly magazine written by self advocates for self advocates.

Name: _____

Parent: () **Caregiver:** () **Sibling:** () **Self Advocate:** () **Relative:** () **Friend:** ()

Please add your e-mail address (to ensure you receive important info)

Email: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

We are updating the database, please complete the following:

Name(s) of Child(ren) in your family	Name of School Attending	Date of Birth (year/month/day)	Male/ Female (M or F)	Down Syndrome ✓

Release of Information is Optional. However, please return this form even if you do not wish the information published in the HDSA directory. If the release is not signed, this information will solely be used to update HDSA's records and for HDSA internal uses.

AUTHORIZATION TO RELEASE INFORMATION

I hereby authorize The Halton Down Syndrome Association (HDSA) to deliver this information to the CDSS for membership set-up & to publish the above information for purposes of compiling an 'Association Directory' for distribution to its membership.

Signed: _____ **Dated:** _____

Please make cheques payable to HDSA and mail to:

HDSA, P.O. Box 86003, 1011 Upper Middle Road, OAKVILLE, ON, L6H 5V6

Office use - Verified _____

Did You Know...?

The Camelot Centre on Shoreacres Road in south Burlington offers day programs for adults with intellectual disabilities over the age of 20. Funded by the Ontario Trillium Foundation, the Camelot Centre seeks to provide individualized programming tailored to the specific needs of each student.

Spots remain available for the fall! Cost is \$40 per day and funding from the Passport program can be used to pay this cost. (Application forms for Passport can be found on the Ministry of Community and Social Services' web site, or from Halton Support Services). The Centre runs from 8:30am-4:00pm and has a safe, controlled environment with professional staff.

For more information or to print an application form, go to:

www.camelotcentre.com, or call
Trish Malstrom,
the Director at (905) 633-7700.

Statement of Policy and Disclaimer

This newsletter reports items of interest relating to Down syndrome. The Halton Down Syndrome Association does not promote or recommend any therapy, treatment or product. The opinions and views expressed in this publication may not necessarily be those of the association or its members. We wish to provide access to information and bring together those interested in Down syndrome. The editors reserve the right to make corrections to material submitted for publication.



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We thank The DATA Group
of Companies for their assistance
in printing our newsletter.

