



DREAM WEAVERS



Community Living Burlington Advocacy Newsletter

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INTRODUCING:



Stacey Decyk –
Editor-in-Chief



Gary
Chenevard –
Columnist



Jeff Hopkins –
Reporter



Crystal Logan–
Columnist



Scott Hedelius –
Reporter



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Facilitator

DREAM WEAVERS.... is self-advocacy. It is knowing your rights and speaking up for yourself to get what you need or want to make a difference in your life.

-Definition from the Dream Weavers

A Note from the Editor

Hello. It's a new year and we are publishing our second edition of our newsletter Dream Weavers. I hope you enjoy it!

- by Stacey Decyk, Editor-in-Chief



Gary's Lifestyle Corner

Everyone has a lifestyle. Most people's lifestyles are very, very unique. It is different from one person to another. Even people who look alike (twins) will have a different quality of and respect for life. That is the case for everyone. People who are of a different race or ability level should be

treated as equals.

We are all born the same. Our mothers teach us the skills we need for later in life. They always try to show us the right way to do something.

Being from Quebec, I was brought up in Ville La Salle, which is just outside of the city of Montreal. It was a very nice area to live and spend time in. At the age of 5 I moved from Montreal to Vancouver, B.C., where I lived until I was 20 years of age. Then I moved to Burlington, Ontario.

Since my move from out west, I finished high school graduating with full honours in June 1977 and receiving my Ontario Diploma; then I started to work. I had a part time job for a while, and then found a job which I thought I'd have forever. Unfortunately, it did not work out that way, there were layoffs and the plant was closed. I worked there for about 7 years. You make many friends and get to know many people. It was tough to leave and say goodbye to everyone there.

I then decided to try school for a short time. I went back to chef training, which I finished.

After about two years I started a part time job, three days a week. It was part time because I was living at home with my grandparents at the time. At the time of their passing, I started another job, the one I am still at and enjoy doing every day. It is with an organization called "Community Living Burlington" (CLB). I work as a receptionist. I work with three other people. We are all part of a very great organization. The people I work with and for are wonderful to know. I have been with CLB for fifteen years. I help out in many different ways with certain people who work there, not only the staff, but also the people who work at ARC and attend Life Skills at Community Living Burlington.

I started a group which involves advocating. I wanted to start something because the people with Community Living do not understand all the rights they have. After starting the group we had an election. I am the Co-Chair. We try to get people to stand up for their rights.

Living at home is one thing, but when you are suddenly on your own it is quite a change. You need to buy your own things for your apartment. This will change your respect of the value of money: how and when you will spend it. Perhaps you will need to save for new furniture, an appliance, or a TV.

You have to learn how to be independent.

-by Gary Chenevard, Lifestyle Columnist

J – What do you hope to achieve with advocacy?

R – Going out into the community, talking to people, city council, and the Mayor.

J – Where do you see our group a year from now?

R – In 2010 we should go and volunteer at different events throughout the city.

J – What issues concern you the most?

R – People should respect people with special needs in a way they would like to be treated.

J – What kind of person should be an advocate?

R – People who will fight for our rights and also for people in wheelchairs.

-by Jeff Hopkins, Q and A's Corner Reporter



Rod Bock

Getting to Know Us: Autism



Information from kidshealth.com that was reviewed by Steven Downshen, MD, originally reviewed by Wendelin A. Burdo-

Hartman, MD, was used for this article.

Autism is a neurological disorder that affects how the brain develops and works. Autism affects how a person communicates with others, their emotions and their senses. About 1 in every 500 babies is diagnosed with autism. Autism is more common in males than females. "It is hard to know what exactly causes autism because the human brain is complicated". Children and adults with autism see the world differently than others. They have trouble expressing themselves using words and body language. They also have troubles understanding the meaning of words. People with autism tend to keep to themselves and many need special help communicating, maybe using pictures or sign language to create sentences. People with autism may



Jeff's Questions and Answer Corner

Today I am interviewing Rod Bock.

Jeff – Why are you an advocate or why did you want to become an advocate?

Rod – People in our community need to know that we have a voice.

find it hard making friends or may only have a few friends. People with autism may act differently to what is going on around them. They may be bothered by sounds we find normal and may cover their ears. A gentle touch may even feel uncomfortable to some people with autism. Kids with autism may flap their arms and hands, say the same word over and over again, have temper tantrums, and may only play with the same toy all the time. Children with autism don't like change in their routine. They like to stay on a schedule that is the same everyday. They may organize things in a particular order and get upset if someone or something moves them.

The brain of a child has trouble making sense of the everyday world, which is a very important job for the human brain. A brain that functions properly understands sights, sounds, smells, touches and tastes. A brain of someone who has autism doesn't function in this way so the person may have trouble with functions such as talking to others, going to school and doing everyday activities. Some kids with autism may only need a little help with daily activities because they have a mild form of autism while others need more assistance.

"It can be hard to figure out if your child has autism." A parent is usually the first to think something is wrong with their child. "A parent might notice that their child doesn't speak (if old enough to), the child is not interested in people or behaves in other unusual ways". Autism isn't the only problem that may cause these problems. Kids can have problems such as hearing loss which could also cause a problem with speech. Doctors can do some test to see if a child has autism. The tests may include:

- Blood and urine samples
- Hearing exam
- EEG (test that measures brain waves)
- MRI (picture that shows the structure of the brain)
- Intelligence test (IQ Test).

A team of specialists will work together to figure out the problem with the child's brain. The team may include a pediatrician, pediatric neurologist, pediatric developmentalist, child psychologist, speech and language therapist and others. The team will study

how the child plays, learns, communicates and behaves. With the information gathered the team will decide if the child has autism or another problem. With help from special teachers, doctors, therapists and their parents, kids with autism can overcome or adjust to the difficulties in their lives.

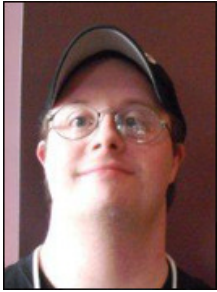
All kids need different help; learning how to communicate is one of the first steps. Kids with autism find it hard to learn and speak. Generally kids find it easier to understand words better when they see them. Therapists will teach communication using pictures, sign language or by pointing. By using these methods kids find it easier to learn and they may eventually talk. Some kids with autism may learn social skills such as how to greet people, wait their turn and how to follow directions. "Kids with autism may have trouble sitting still or controlling their temper so they need therapy to help them." They may also need extra help when it comes to making their bed, brushing their teeth or hair. "Medicine may help their moods or behaviour problems but autism never goes away with medication." Medication doesn't cure autism, it only helps the symptoms.

Many children with autism attend regular schools or attend special education classes at their community school. Some will need teachers who understand their difficulties with communicating and learning. Some children with autism need calmer, more orderly surroundings so they attend a private school or are home schooled.

Kids with mild autism will be able to live on their own. Kids with severe autism will always need help with their daily activities. With support and understanding from doctors, teachers, caregivers, family and friends, kids with autism will have a brighter future.

-Submitted by Crystal Logan, Columnist





As I See It

Advocacy Issue:

The need to provide safe transportation for those coming to **FAN Club** from long distances. FAN stands for Friday Night Activity Club. FAN takes place at

Brant Hills Community Centre.

Reasoning:

1. FAN starts at 7:00 p.m. and breaks up late at 10:00 p.m.
2. People have to wait for public busing for long periods and many may have to transfer.
3. People can be unsafe and in discomfort.

Possible Solution:

Could the City of Burlington provide Handi-Van service or cab transportation?

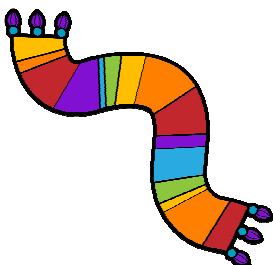
Example:

“After the FAN evening, I see many of my friends who are in residence, waiting in the cold, late at night, for buses. The bus schedules are reduced to long wait times because of the late hour. The fact that these friends are uncomfortable and might be unsafe is worrisome.”

-Submitted by Scott Hedelius, Reporter

Advocacy Update

Our advocacy group **Dream Weavers** meets once a month on the last Thursday of each month.



Here are five simple ways you can show respect to others

1. Be a good listener.
2. Do not call other people bad names like stupid or dummy.
3. Be trustworthy. Do not lie to your peers or other people.
4. Always remember to treat other people the way you would like to be treated.
5. Don't be concerned about whether people like you or dislike you. Be concerned that they treat you like a human being with the dignity you deserve.

-Submitted by Jodi Kaczur

Notes from the Editor



After reading Scott Hedelius' article, DreamWeavers is asking our readers if anyone knows of any other situations that put our members at risk and possible solutions. Don't hesitate to call me. If we all work together we can let our voices be heard!

If you have any comments call Community Living Burlington, 905-336-2225 ext. 429 and leave a message.

We hope to publish 4 newsletters a year.

-Submitted by Stacey Decyk, Editor-in-Chief

