

# September 2006 Newsletter

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## **Welcome new and returning Executive:**

Your executive members this year:

President: Lisa Drummond

Vice President: Tina Nicholson

Secretary: Francesca Bell

Treasurer: Ellie Arruda

Special Committee leaders:

Anna Mancini, Suzanne Cupido and Nelson Santos.

## **The Event That Keeps us Running, Literally!!!!**

**June Bread and Honey Race Event:** Once again thank you to all our wonderful, constant volunteers who participated in this event handing out shoe chips, attending to the Caring Network booth, handing out freezers to our younger runners, water to the runners and cheering them on. As usual an immense thank you to Ellie for organizing the event that takes months of planning through the Credit Valley Marathon Club, that has donated all their charity proceeds to us third year in a row!. This enables us to carry on our successful family events for the year.

## **Summer Picnic 2006 !!!**

A warm breezy day was the perfect backdrop for the Caring Network annual Summer Picnic and BBQ in July!! Such a wonderful day, for the children and adults alike. An afternoon packed with summer fun in the sun and a time spent to simply enjoy the carefree atmosphere with family and friends. Who could forget the endless buffet feast – interactive games and Clown entertainment, fabulous prizes – cool sensational sno-cones and of course the joyous jumpy bouncer! A special thank you to our volunteers, who gave their time and talent to help out with this year's picnic. We've been told by our newest members that they really enjoyed meeting other families and thanked us for the

warm welcome to our group. You're very welcome, and we look forward to seeing you all at our upcoming meetings and events throughout the year ahead.

## **9th World Down Syndrome Congress Making Waves**

This past August, I had the utmost pleasure of attending the Down Syndrome Congress in Vancouver held at the exquisite venue of The Vancouver Convention and Exhibit Center situated on the Burrard Inlet. What a blast! From all over the world, parents, children and professionals gathered for the purpose of discussing Down syndrome issues. Attending as well, were so many Down syndrome individuals involved in helping to run the many events of the conference and displaying their many artistic talents through song and dance.

There were 14 keynote speakers as educators and doctors sharing their research and expertise in their different fields on topics of Down syndrome concerns. There are a number of dedicated individuals working towards the improvement of life for the Down syndrome population.

The Down Syndrome Research Foundation is located in Burnaby , B.C.

As parents, you may be interested in receiving their publication **Hand in Hand** , just log on to the web site: [www.dsrf.org](http://www.dsrf.org). to read their many articles of varied interests.

As well as the keynotes speakers there were an incredible amount of sessions to choose from under topics such as Health, Education, Language, Genetics, Aging, Advocacy, Cognition and Literacy.

The Caring Network has purchased cds of the Plenary Sessions of the keynote speakers which may be shared among our members.

I also had the pleasure of personally meeting the young actress Andrea Friedman from California who gave the very first and very inspirational keynote address describing her life as a successful actress in television and movies, as well as being part of an accepting community. And at 32, Andrea drives her own car!!!

Ontario and Canada were well represented by members from CDSS, our own DSAO and DSAT from Ontario displaying their literature at the exhibition booths. All in all, the Congress was an experience to remember, learning so much more on Down syndrome issues.

Another resource for techniques for muscle-based sensory and speech therapy is Spectrum Educational Supplies based here in Newmarket. Log on to: [www.spectrumed.com](http://www.spectrumed.com).

Contact me at [lisa.drummond@sympatico.ca](mailto:lisa.drummond@sympatico.ca) if you have any questions.

## **Summer fun with golf-for everyone**

Family Golf Learning Centre on Joshuas Creek Dr. in Oakville. (Upper Middle Rd & 9<sup>th</sup> Line) It's a driving range / mini golf centre that offers summer day camps and golf lessons. They also offer to all Special Olympic athletes only - a FREE bucket of balls for the driving range and/or a FREE round of mini golf. Just let the attendant know and they'll ask that the Special Olympic athlete sign in. That's it. Simple and FREE. Cudos to Family Golf Learning Centre!!!! They're number is: 905-566-1403.

## **The 4th Annual DSAO Fall Conference: Circle of Friends**

**October 20<sup>th</sup>-22,2006**

At the Holiday Inn Waterfront in Peterborough 95.00 \$ for parents registered before September 25<sup>th</sup>.

See the **DSAO** website for registration forms. **OR call CHANGES at**

**705-749-6695.**

## **The Impossible IS possible!!!**

This saga began about 15 years ago... when at about the age of 5 Melissa, like most kids her age, outgrew her tricycle and got her first two wheel bike. Really cool pink color with tassels on the handle bars and training wheels to help with the transition from trike to bike. She did really well learning to ride that summer and we held off removing the training wheels until the next spring.... Well that summer came and went and the training wheels still on. Not that we didn't try to remove them and get her going on the two wheeler... it's just that her balance was off and she couldn't quite manage to get the momentum so to keep her riding we put the training wheels back on.... Anyway to make this 15 year long story short – every spring since then –it would be the same thing...we'd take off the training wheels, put her on the bike, run along side her, holding her upright – watch her fall off – zillions of times – she was padded up head to toe with knee pads, elbow pads, wrist pads, helmet – she was all geared up not to get hurt (physically anyway). She was a trooper – she'd get back up there every time.... And every time she'd go a few feet... KERPLUNK! We just couldn't put her through anymore and we'd always end up putting the training wheels back on. We felt defeated and we kind of gave up trying (unfortunately Melissa gave up too) so we thought – that's OK – not everyone is able to ride a bike. By this time, Melissa is 20 years old – stands about 4'11, even the biggest training wheels on the market couldn't hold her up. We'd

even looked into getting her one of the big adult size tricycles (very expensive)– so at least she could enjoy riding a bike of some sort. This past August she was going to be participating in a Triathlon for exceptional athletes – and riding a bike is one of the events, we thought we'd better get the “big” tricycle for her to use. The training session was already scheduled and we didn't have time to get the tricycle.. so we brought along Melissa's bike – I forgot that we had taken off the training wheels and I couldn't find them the day of the training session. So I thought she could just scoot the bike along with her feet this time until I get the training wheels back on. The first event was swimming and all went well – the next event was the bike race – so reluctantly I took out her bike and quietly mentioned to the coaches that Melissa couldn't ride the bike on her own and that I would hold her and run along side her for the race...we were in a large parking lot and the other kids were all set with their bikes, some also had training wheels too – but they were only 7 years old.. here Melissa was 20 years old!! That's a big difference! Feeling a little embarrassed one of the coaches, Ellie – came over and offered to help. She described the time that she taught her son Michael to ride his bike. How she too would take out the bike every spring and get him on and push him along – watch him lose his balance and fall – but determined to succeed and after countless bumps, bruises and scrapes he finally did it! She proceeded to give Melissa some tips - showed her – where to position the peddle to get the first good push off – hold onto the handle bars and look up – Ellie – held Melissa up with all her might and ran along side her calling out to keep peddling – look up – use your balance etc. Michael too (Melissa's boyfriend), edging her on and encouraging her.. “Come on Honey,, you can do it” After some time Melissa was tired out and was again ready to give up. Ellie looked at her and asked “do you know what my motto is?” Meli said “what” - Ellie said – “Impossible is nothing...” Melissa looked a little bewildered ( and breathless) Ellie explained to her that when things get tough and she feels like quitting... she says to herself – Impossible is nothing! Impossible doesn't exist in her vocabulary. It sometimes takes a while but everything is possible..... if you keep trying. So next thing you know... Ellie is again, holding onto the bike and Meli has her peddle in position and she's looking up and takes a deep breath...she says out loud, “impossible is nothing”.. “impossible is nothing”...“impossible is nothing”.. she kept on repeating it and like a miracle – there she went... riding the bike.. a two wheeler without training wheels!...We watched in amazement... her legs, peddling away and all we could hear is her repeating “ impossible is nothing”...and as she came to a stop she turned and said “I did it!”. Then came the tears of joy and elation begin to pour from our eyes and our hearts.. I hugged Ellie and we both sobbed with emotion... I couldn't thank her enough... for giving Melissa this new found freedom .... Not only the ability to enjoy riding her bike.. but for giving her a sense of self determination.. “ impossible is nothing..” a few words.. that mean so much... and now I pass this along to others who may think that it's impossible for their children to do something...take it from Ellie, Michael and Melissa....”Impossible is Nothing”

- thank you Ellie, Anna xxoo

## Upcoming Events

### **Mark your calendars! for our Down Syndrome Awareness Week Bowling Event**

As we organized last year we will be meeting at **Streetsville Bowl**

**On Thursday November 2nd,**

**At 6 PM**

For a family donation of \$10.00 this includes, bowling shoes, unlimited games , pizza, drinks and munchies.

Please wear your Down Syndrome Awareness Week tee-shirts received last year.

Limited number of tee-shirts available this year.

Please RSVP the number in your party joining us to Francesca at:

[bellfrancesca@sympatico.ca](mailto:bellfrancesca@sympatico.ca).

**See you all there!!!**