

# KEEPING IT REAL

## Extend-A-Family

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*Selena Blake*  
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## Making Friends in the Neighbourhood by *Greg*



As parents, we instinctively want our children to develop good and enduring relationships with their peers, and when all goes well, children make friends naturally, through their desire to play. But for a child who has hurdles to overcome, making friends can be much harder. In many cases, we feel the need to intervene and provide direct support to help the child overcome obstacles that impede friendships, but there is a much simpler way.

After many failures, this author has learned that all you have to do is facilitate activities that are of interest to kids in the neighborhood, and they will come and make friends with your child, no matter what the challenge.

As an example, my son always wants to play with a girl who lives just a few houses away

from us. They know each other from school, but all of my attempts to set-up play dates failed because they were just contrived dates with nothing exciting to do. This circumstance changed one wintry day when we set out to build a snowman. Instead of being my son's playmate, I said, "Why don't you walk down the street and invite your friend to build the snowman with you."

Off he went, and sure enough, in five minutes his friend was at our house working on the snowman. She even stayed while my son went inside for ten minutes to fix the snowman's pipe he had constructed the prior week – she knew of its importance to him.

Once the snowman was finished, he took her inside to explore the many treasures in his room, all of which were pretty interesting

to her. Her interest and support allowed my son to make a good friendship. The only ingredient my son had been without was a mutually interesting activity.

Now I spend my time thinking about activities that will attract children to our house. Saturday night movies with pizza and popcorn, trips to the park to look at the planets through our telescope, water balloon fights, walks with our two newly rescued dogs, and just about anything else that kids like to do.

Friendships grow from play. Furthermore, when children want to play, they know how to be far more accommodating to another child than any adult can possibly be. I will keep finding things that kids like to do and leave the Friendship building to them.

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## Message from the Executive Director, *Ruth Fernandes*

Some twenty years ago, I was invited to my first Extend-A-Family celebration of friendship for families, hosts and community members. The idea of being a host family was presented to me and it seemed endearing. Not long after, our family was in! Along with our two daughters, we were blessed to meet another family and soon a mutual friendship grew. Extend-A-Family has since been a part of my life and taught me much about the value of being included and that all really means all.

While change usually moves us out of our comfort zone and can be difficult, it has the potential to help us grow. The change with our former Executive Director Anne Marie Cole retiring, certainly called for the rest of us to adjust to a new beginning. We most certainly miss her presence but are grateful we can hold on to her legacy of wisdom and sense of humour.

Forty years ago when parents came together echoing a desire for their children to belong in the community, Extend-A-Family was born. That need to belong has not changed and never will. The everyday fun things like skating with friends, traveling with classmates on a school trip, playing street hockey are what keeps it real. I am truly grateful to families for the many life lessons I have learned over the years. Thank you for reminding me to be the welcoming edge and that I need to be the change I want to see.

## Message from the Chair of the Board of Directors, *Jeff Short*

Years ago, I was an Extend-A-Family host for a young man who loved to sing, dance and entertain others. When we would hang out at his family's home, he really liked it when I would introduce him to an imaginary audience of adoring fans, and then he would come on stage and perform Rock Around the Clock and other "oldies." Because there were just two of us, I also played the roles of cheering audience and "back-up band," as he sang, danced, strutted and strummed his imaginary guitar. During our outings, we would often sing as we walked to the subway station. When we'd ride the subway, he really enjoyed sitting in the front car and looking out the window to see where we were headed. He helped me to realize that everyday events are fun and exciting with a bit of imagination and the right attitude. This is one of the many wonderful things that young people bring to our lives. I hope that this year brings plenty of opportunities for you and your families to take the time to enjoy the little things in life with each other.

## Call for Submissions

If you would like to submit an article to an upcoming Extend-A-Family newsletter and website, please send it to your coordinator or the office, indicating such. All submissions must have a signed release form from the author and any photographs must have a release form with permission from all persons appearing in the photo. All submissions are subject to the discretion of Extend-A-Family. We cannot guarantee that your contribution will be used, but given all that, we would love to hear from you!

# A Long - Standing Support Circle by Cate

Micheal's official support circle started over 24 years ago. Wait! What? Yes, it did! It started before our Dad retired about 20 years ago. Micheal's circle has been around for half of his life; he turned 50 this year. We had help in the beginning by means of a paid facilitator and we invited people who cared for Micheal, who were in his life, and who lived good and meaningful lives. Gradually, Micheal would set the agendas himself and we would help him with meeting notes, etc. Meetings would entail discussing Micheal's health, job situation, goals, connections with people and his community. Benefits of the support circle include, Micheal knowing there is more than the family who he can count on, that care for him, helping him accomplishing goals, a small business, as well as local and international speaking opportunities. A tool that has helped the circle to grow was participating in Micheal's PATH (Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope). Circle members have brought in people from their personal networks to make things happen. While it is true that some members have come and gone, Micheal has one member who has been in the circle since its inception,

and another who has been a member for well over a decade.

The circle changes to fit Micheal's life circumstances. Currently, because all is well, the circle meets a couple of times a year and is more like a get-together, but when called for, this can change to be more supportive and meet more frequently.

Hear me when I say that circles can be work, it can be difficult to ask people to participate (who wants to rock the boat, when people are already friends). Some may say no; they don't want to "formalize" their relationship with your loved one. Remember that relationships are what can ensure that people are safe. Those that value the circles, come together and create this beautiful thing that nurtures goodness and successes and helps during the not so successful times.

Both, my father and I, believe in the importance of circles, so much so that we each are members of others' circles and we have both seen that circles can look different.



## Support Circles

are a process for building community. They create an occasion for people to come together when asked by an individual who has a disability and / or their family. It is not a service or program but simply a process for support, learning and action. A support circle is a group of people who know, share concern and care deeply for a person with a disability. The support circle will involve the person who we share concern for, often their family members, friends, neighbours, community members and possibly a support worker or an agency person. A circle may assist to extend relationships, develop leisure activities, or find employment. A circle will assist to collect information needed for decision making, it will empower the person to find their voice/ express themselves and to be heard. Circles will meet regularly, often with a social or celebratory component.



## Resource Links

[www.familiesforasecurefuture.ca](http://www.familiesforasecurefuture.ca)

[www.planningnetwork.ca/en-ca](http://www.planningnetwork.ca/en-ca)

[www.extendfamily.ca/our-services/safe-secure-futures-networks](http://www.extendfamily.ca/our-services/safe-secure-futures-networks)



## Safe and Secure Future Networks

What's next? What happens when we're no longer available? Who is going to look out for our loved ones? Where should we put our energy in assisting our sons and daughters to live a full and meaningful life? The Safe and Secure Future Networks brings together parents and caregivers whose sons and daughters are adults or approaching adulthood, to explore the intentionality of seizing opportunities to build and sustain relational networks, contribute to community, enjoy leisure activities, and create a home of one's own. The Networks are a place of mutual understanding, where creative possibilities can be imagined, explored and actualized. And, when things get challenging, parents have a soft place to land!

Some of the upcoming topics will include: Mental Health and Wellness, Circles of Support, Real Life Real Home, Self-Care for the Caregiver, Passport Funding, DSO: Supports Intensity Scale and Service Navigation. We are pleased to have Kristen Carhart as the Facilitator of the East Network!

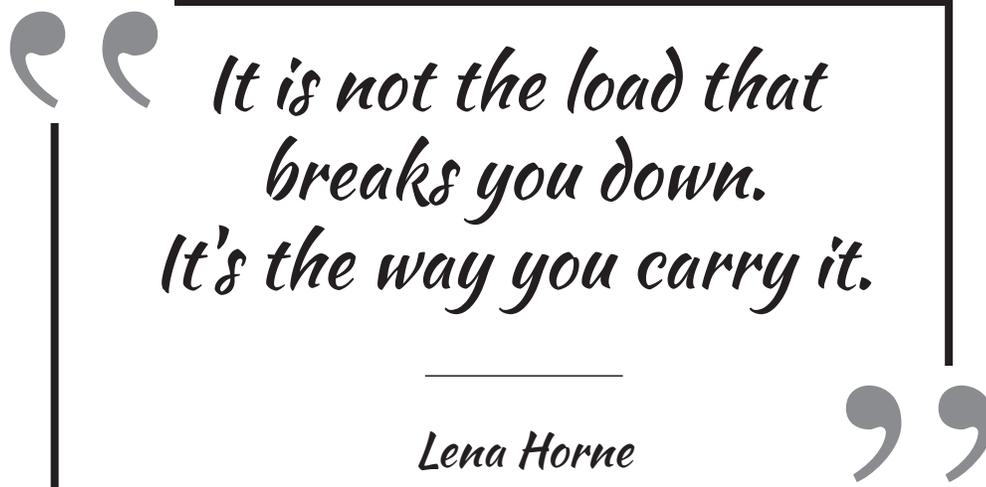
[www.extendfamily.ca/our-services/safe-secure-futures-networks/](http://www.extendfamily.ca/our-services/safe-secure-futures-networks/)

## Adult Sibling Group by *Megan*

My name is Megan and I've been attending the Adult Sibling Group for about two and a half years. I grew up with two younger brothers, William and Patrick.

Through the group, I've met so many different people. We all come from different backgrounds, and we each have our own unique stories and unique siblings and families. Yet there's this thread that connects us, and so many experiences and feelings that we share because of what we have in common: growing up with a brother or sister who has special needs. Once I attended my first meeting I knew I wanted to keep coming back. These were people who got it—and I had never experienced that ever before. My parents are wonderful and supportive, my friends are understanding, but these are people who understand my experiences on a whole other level. It's great to be able to share concerns and advice with one another, and also to be there to hear people's stories of success. Since joining the group, I've been able to open a conversation with my youngest brother, Patrick, about our experiences as siblings. And as the years go on, I know that I'll have Patrick beside me to support our brother William, and each other, through anything life will bring.

[www.extendfamily.ca/our-services/family-support-groups/](http://www.extendfamily.ca/our-services/family-support-groups/)



# Reflections of the Extend-A-Family Fall Workshop Series

## **Michael Kendrick's "Get a Good Life Workshop"**

I had the pleasure of attending Michael Kendrick's Get a Good Life workshop this past September. It was a meaningful day full of stories and conversations about reimagining life, discovering passions and life interests. What resonated for me was his message of "life tasting". What better way to express this journey we call life! It's never too late to develop a good life for yourself and your loved ones by exploring new interests and potentials. You can build on those experiential opportunities and they can evolve into strengths and gifts. Michael Kendrick shared "Life is fulfilling when one has passions and life interests that are motivating and sustained."

*Kristen*

My 15-year-old daughter attended Michael Kendrick's workshop with me. She sat happily throughout, absorbing positive feelings of a 'community' of people who cared: Michael's calm presentation captured that it is important to seek and create meaningful lives for those we care about; the parents and siblings who love their family member and were not just interested, but each invested in finding and creating good lives for their family members. While I learned a lot, my daughter felt a lot - and we both left the presentation with good feelings: that we all matter, that we all deserve meaningful lives, that we are not alone and that there are people who can help us.

*Ann and Aida*

[www.kendrickconsulting.org](http://www.kendrickconsulting.org)

## **Erin Sheldon's "Build Natural Supports Workshop"**

Erin was inspirational in demonstrating the importance of inclusion, the risks of exclusion and the courage it takes to keep going through our daily realities, challenges and miss-steps. - *Ann*

At these workshops we were able to learn and hear the value of inclusion, building natural supports and thinking of a good life for our boys. - *Naiomy*

Erin has given me the confidence to go out and find the right bridge builder /mother's helper to help me connect with others who want to be with my son.- *Workshop Participant*

Thank you, this has been very helpful in many ways. It's impressive how Erin was able to offer valuable information right across the entire age spectrum. - *Workshop Participant*

Erin shared that initially in her journey as a parent she only wanted her daughter to be "safe", she did not imagine her daughter being in her natural neighbourhood settings. She offered us this quote from a conversation with Lou Brown, to consider as we are making choices for our loved ones.

"Safety is found in wide open spaces with people who know Maggie well who have no power over her. Vulnerability is found in separate, closed spaces with people who have power over her and no competent witnesses." - *Workshop Participant*

[www.integration-inclusion.com](http://www.integration-inclusion.com)

Dr Erik Carter and Natural Peer Supports

[www.engagingalllearners.ca/sal/peer-mentoring](http://www.engagingalllearners.ca/sal/peer-mentoring)

## **SAVE THE DATE!**

Join us for a one day workshop on

**February 10, 2017**

## **David Pitonyak - Beyond "Difficult Behaviours"** Supporting Competence, Confidence and Well-Being

check out our website for details

[www.extendfamily.ca/news-events/conferences-workshops/](http://www.extendfamily.ca/news-events/conferences-workshops/)

# Adventure in Friendship by *Marian and Allison*

Marian and I met February 2015 and since then we have had a lot of adventures together. We usually hang out every other week and regardless of what we do, I always enjoy our time together. I appreciate the opportunity to see the world from Marian's perspective and it gives me a chance to act like a child again! Below, Marian has done a great job of sharing some of the fun times we have had together.

Taco night: this is what it was: Sal, Allison, Mummy, and I were there. I danced a lot to the radio. We each had our own mini ice cream!

CNE: we won two stuffies playing a bowling game and the duck pond game. We also tried deep-fried cookie dough with powdered sugar and chocolate chips. We went on rides, like the Gravitron 9000.

Canada's Wonderland: sadly, it rained but, I still think we had fun. We went to the water park and saw a groundhog next to the lazy river! It was the first time we had no height restrictions, so, we could go on any ride we wanted to!

Chuck E. Cheese's: we went with Ben and Lucy. We got so many tickets! It was for Allison's company Christmas party. We ate some pizza and played a lot of fun games!

Those were only the top 4 fun things. But on a daily basis, we walk Uffe (Allison's dog) and we have fun with that!



# Fresh Air and Friendship by *Aaron and Chiderah*

Aaron and Chiderah met almost 2 years ago and their friendship continues to grow. After a family trip, Chiderah surprised Aaron with matching traditional outfits!

Reflecting on their relationship, Chiderah shared:

"I like when Aaron comes to my house and we go outside to play sports"

"I like talking to Aaron, we talk about a lot of things"

"I like playing basketball, soccer and cards with Aaron"

"Aaron is my friend and I am happy."

Aaron shared:

"I enjoy meeting up with Chiderah and spending quality time with him. Getting fresh air and chatting together has really developed our friendship."



Check our website for Host opportunities

[www.extendafamily.ca/opportunities/volunteer-opportunities](http://www.extendafamily.ca/opportunities/volunteer-opportunities)

# A Host's Insights by Karen

In May 2012, Karen joined Extend-A-Family as a host. A host is an individual ideally from the neighbourhood or community who has expressed an interest in getting to know a child or youth with a disability. The Coordinator's role is to recruit, connect and support the relationship between a host and an individual with a disability and their family, which we refer to as the natural family. The frequency in which people get together depends on everyone involved.

Karen has been committed to connecting with a family and developing a relationship. Karen shares about her connection with this family, and the mutual appreciation the family and Karen have for each other.

"In the role of the host, I have enjoyed building a unique, genuine friendship with a person who has a disability. I have thoroughly enjoyed seeing how this friendship developed over time. It has been extremely rewarding for me to see the person I was developing a friendship with, become more comfortable and happy when I saw her.

The family's continued support throughout the whole process has been helpful. I feel comfortable in asking for advice when I was faced with a difficult situation. It helped that I went into this new situation with an open mind. Even though there were ideas on what this friendship would look like, it took some time to figure out logistics and what would be most beneficial. I also feel like it helped that we knew each other from the camp where I worked and she was a camper.

When we get together, we spend time doing things she enjoys (like puzzles or art projects). With help from her parents, I began to understand what she needed or wanted to do next. It was important to have a schedule for when I came over.

In the community, we have gone to the grocery store to buy ingredients, then have gone back home and made something. We also went on walks in the neighborhood and went out for ice cream.

For parents and children interested in building new friendships I would suggest that you go into this new adventure with an open mind. It is important to have clear expectations of what you want to get out of this friendship and in what area you can envision this new person in your family's life. The understanding is that friendships will most likely change and develop over time. The final piece of advice for parents would be to be involved in this new friendship, especially at the beginning."



**CHILDREN WHO LEARN TOGETHER  
IN SCHOOL ALSO LEARN TO LIVE  
WELL TOGETHER AS ADULTS AND  
ARE BETTER ABLE TO CREATE AND  
PARTICIPATE IN COMMUNITIES  
WHERE EVERYONE BELONGS.**



To find out more, visit Community Living Ontario at  
[www.communitylivingontario.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/10](http://www.communitylivingontario.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/10)

## Commence Conference

*hosted by*

Community Living Ontario

February 1<sup>st</sup> - 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2017 in Richmond Hill

See the website for details

[www.communitylivingontario.ca/media/#commence-17](http://www.communitylivingontario.ca/media/#commence-17)

# Art Corner



by Gabriel



by Oliver



by Eddie



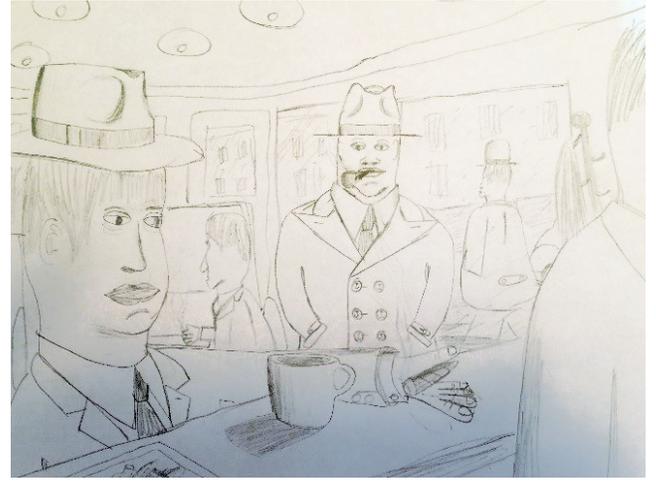
by Nicholas



by Tyler



by *Eddie*



by *Tyler*

## Blooming by *Naiomy*

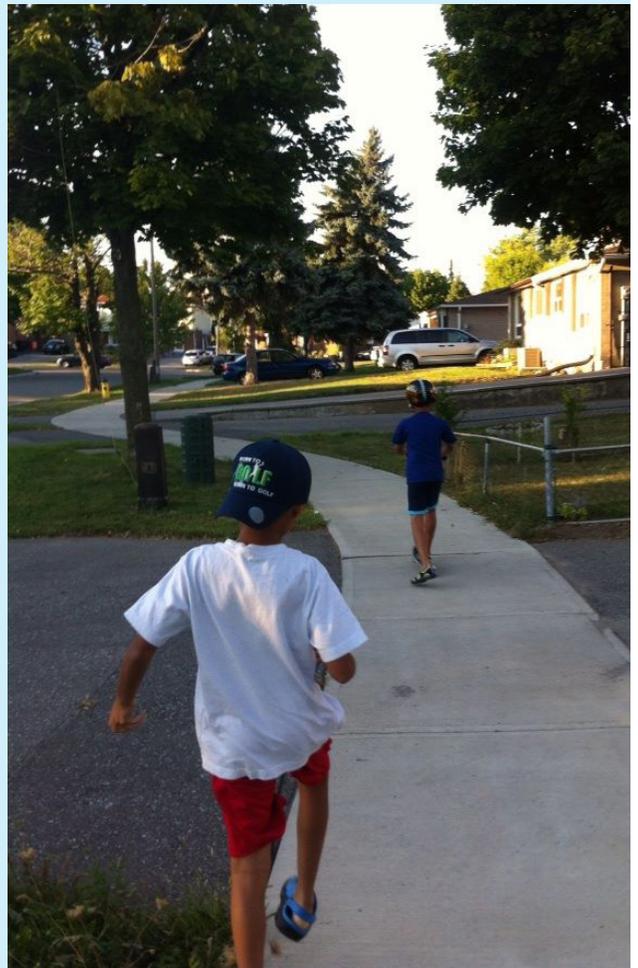
Every child is a different kind of flower, and together they make this world a beautiful garden.

I am a mom with two exceptional boys, and we have experienced an amazing change in our boys' lives this year. This all happened this year when we stepped out in faith to change our boys' school to our neighbourhood school. It has only been two months but we could feel the change in the first few weeks; our boys were given the opportunity to be in the regular class and accepted for who they are and were provided the support they needed.

Before the school started this September, we made some effort to know our neighbourhood and as they usually attend the local church camp, we were able to find children who attend the same school that they would be starting in September. Our church is learning to be inclusive and the children there know our boys and try to get them to be part of the group during the summer camp. This summer, Extend-A-Family Summer Students accompanied both boys to their community church camp. This made a huge difference by getting the boys interacting with the kids and the staff at church, and as a result, the church staff saw the value of our boys participating in the school-aged camp.

After school started in September, we had many opportunities where the neighbourhood children were interested in meeting our boys at home and hanging out with them. This gave them an opportunity to have friends, and be a friend to others. During Halloween time the kids in the neighbourhood visited the boys and made them feel part of the community. This is the first time in their lives and ours where we felt accepted for who we are and felt part of a bigger family.

Change will come but you have to take the first step. Our boys are happy, loved and valued. We are hopeful and it confirms the value of having a community and the possibility of friendships for our children. We are looking forward to the future and many more adventures with our community where we belong.



# My Trip to Dodem Kanonhsa by *Rebecca*

Today we went to Dodem Kanonhsa and we learned about Aboriginal culture. First, we participated in a Smudging ritual. Smudging is used as a cleansing ceremony for our mind, eyes, ears, mouth and our heart. It takes away our negative feelings and helps us feel calm. Smudging uses a shell and different types of plants to create smoke, they also used an eagle feather to help create smoke. An Elder from the L'mu tribe sang traditional songs with the drum, while some one else shook a shaker instrument. The Elder also talked about his culture and his language. I learned there are 53 different languages in the Aboriginal culture. We watched a traditional dance and learned how to call out different animals like a deer and moose. I had a great time Smudging and learning new things.



# Interview with Rebecca

How old were you when you first started to volunteer? What did you do?

--I was in grade 7, I would have been 13 years old. I first volunteered at a food bank and my church. I was in charge of checking expiry dates, looking for damaged items and helped to fill boxes with food.

Why did you start volunteering at the food bank and clothing bank?

--I wanted to help people who were in need, who do not have food or clothing.

Why did you pick to work at the food and clothing bank?

--I wanted to help serve people who don't have a lot. Also, I like to meet new people because I get to make new friends.

What is your favourite part about volunteering?

--I get to help out and learn many new things, like how to pack food and sort clothes by sizes, ages and colours. I like seeing all the different types of clothes. I also like working with my team.

Why is it important for you and others to volunteer?

--We get a chance to learn new things about the community and help the people who need it. We also get to learn new skills like communicating with others and working as a team. The food bank and the clothing bank need volunteers to help get things done and to serve their community.

## Parental Perspective by *Rita*

### “The Importance of Volunteering/Contributing in Valued Roles in the Community”

As a parent, I always want my daughter to work in the community just like anyone else. I understand there are some things she will have difficulty with just like any one of us. She loves to work and she is a hard worker. She amazes me all the time.

My daughter learns things most effectively by seeing and doing. Real life experiences are very important to her. Handson work is something that she loves the most.

We go to church every Sunday and we are active participants at church. Our family is involved in many activities and we enjoy helping out. My daughter gets to learn to do different things in a team while making social connections.

Volunteering in the community gives her a sense of belonging and a foretaste of what work looks like. Hopefully, this will give her an easier and smoother transition into adulthood.

Throughout the past two summers, with the help of the summer student program of Extend-A-Family, she has grown a lot and not just in age and in size! She has gotten to know people and people know her for who she is. Their acceptance and co-working gives her confidence in herself. Most importantly, she gets to really know herself, her strengths and weaknesses. She has become much more independent because she knows what she can do best and when she needs help.

I love to share my daughter's successes so you can find some encouragement, too.

# Summer Student Experience by *Raymond*

Through Extend-A-Family I had the opportunity to meet Martin and we spent the summer getting to know each other. One of our most memorable experiences was volunteering at a community B.B.Q run by a local Member of Parliament. At the event, we aided in setting up tents, tables, chairs, and booths. As well as providing information about the event to passersby. The highlight of the event was when Martin got to meet one of his idols which was Arnold Chan who is an MP in Toronto.



Martin has a passion for politics and could tell you everything you ever wanted to know about Canadian politics! So when Martin had the opportunity to meet the local MP of his district I could see how excited Martin was to meet him. They took a picture together and Martin was able to have a small discussion with Arnold Chan. One of the greatest experiences in life is being able to meet your idol and I was able to witness one youth experience this joy. Asking Martin to describe his feelings about the experience he stated: "It was exciting, fun and a great experience. I had fun meeting the different MPs, candidates and volunteers. My favorite part was meeting and taking a picture with Arnold Chan. It felt like I was on television." Martin was able to experience this!

## Summer Student Program

This past summer Extend-A-Family was able to offer our young people and nine University/College Students the opportunity to partner through the Summer Student Program. Children and youth up to the age of 20 years along with Summer Students participated in summer camps and various community involvements; swimming, ball games, group activities, art work, canoeing, volunteering at food banks, exploring neighbourhoods...

A lot of learning happened both on the part of children and youth as well as our Summer Students. This means it wasn't without some moments of challenge, frustration and anxiety. But then our best learning comes from when we are stretched.

Participating in the Summer Student Program is geared to be an extension of involvement through the year, partnering with Extend-A-Family.

If you are new to Extend-A-Family or would like to get involved kindly contact us through [info@extendafamily.ca](mailto:info@extendafamily.ca) or call our office at **416-484-1317**

# My Experience at MiniVet Camp by *Eddie*



It was really fun going to MiniVet camp this summer. Florence was my helper while I attended MiniVet camp. While at camp I played games such as Hangman, Pictionary and Heads Up 7 Up.

Everyone at camp was really nice. It was nice to see people I already knew, and it was nice to make new friends. Florence was really kind and she helped me enjoy my time at camp.

I was thrilled to learn Pet First Aid because it was fun and it taught me how to help sick animals. I learned how to put a bandage on a pet's paw, how to do CPR on a dog and when to take a pet to the vet. These skills are helpful because they taught me how to work with animals.

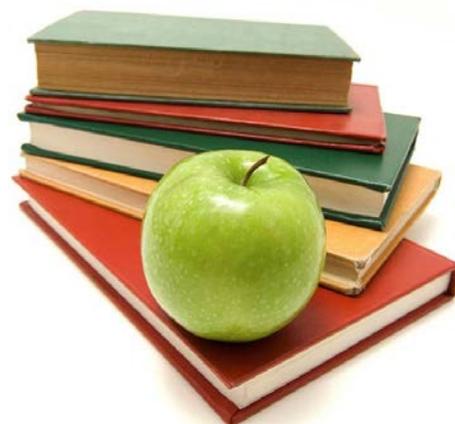
Interacting with the animals was fun because I got to play with them, feed them and clean their cages. I like helping animals because they like you more. It makes me feel good inside.

My favourite part of camp was going to the animal shelter and the animal clinic because I got to meet the veterinarian and the cute animals.



## Inclusive Education by *Hannah*

Our son Tristan just turned 8 years old. He is a very cheerful, helpful, friendly, and loving boy. While juggling all the early interventions, we started to explore what is the best educational option for him. We talked to parents, visited different school settings, including special education classes and a Home School Program class, and did research on pros and cons of these different settings. We concluded that our son will benefit the most in the regular classroom. When he becomes an adult, ready to contribute to society, there will not be a special place for him. He will have to learn to take care of himself, have a real job, have meaningful relationships and have a good life in general. To achieve such a vision, everyone, including himself, must have a high expectation of him.



He needs to be known, accepted, and cherished. Tristan has been fully included in the regular class since preschool years. He is doing great. He is learning, he has friends, and he is having fun. Our family members deserve a chance to shine in their neighbourhood schools with their peers.

# Wellesworth Junior School Friendship Circle

Friendship circle friends were asked what they enjoy about coming together, here's what they had to say:

"I like that we play lots of games."

"We make really cool art!"

"I love coming to friendship circle and think more people should be a part of this!"

"I think of myself as Dilweed the Beaver and he makes new friends here and so do I."

Throughout the year, we learned "to share, ask questions, be nice even if someone is grumpy, be patient, and have FUN."



# St. Anselm Friendship Circle

St. Anselm has been participating in a friendship circle. A friendship circle is a club where students meet up at lunch recess and play fun games and activities. It is a place where students can learn to be a friend, create new friendships and overall have a great time. There are many different activities to play and there is fun for everyone. To hear what friendship circle is all about, we asked some members what it meant to them. Here are some of the answers we received: "Friendship club is an inclusive club where you can gather with your friends and have fun." "The club is a welcoming and fun environment." "Friendship circle is a place where you can build new friendships."



For more information on friendship circles, please visit our website  
[www.extendfamily.ca/our-services/friendship-circles](http://www.extendfamily.ca/our-services/friendship-circles)

# Sexuality with a Focus on Healthy Relationships



**Workshop Dates:** April 5, 12, 19, 26 and May 3, 2017

Parent(s) and youth attend all 5 sessions together.

**Time:** 6:45- 8:30 p.m.

**Location:** Extend-A-Family Office 200-3300 Yonge Street

This workshop series is geared towards youth with developmental disabilities from 11 to 15 years of age. It is a five-week group session, offered once per week, that is designed to provide parents and their youth with practical learning opportunities. Included in the workshop are discussions about feelings, relationships and sexuality. Families will have an opportunity to talk about this important subject as well as network with other families who are interested in supporting their children in this important aspect of learning.

**Please note:** each young person attending the workshop MUST be accompanied by a family member who can help reinforce the information at home.

A list of topics covered in the workshops can be found by visiting

[www.extendfamily.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/2015-Sexuality-Topics.pdf](http://www.extendfamily.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/2015-Sexuality-Topics.pdf)

For the registration form, please follow the link

[www.extendfamily.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/SHR-Registration-Form\\_REV-Spring-2017.pdf](http://www.extendfamily.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/SHR-Registration-Form_REV-Spring-2017.pdf)

If you have questions about this workshop series, please contact

**Anne Murray** at **647-292-5328** or by email at [abm@extendfamily.ca](mailto:abm@extendfamily.ca)



## Ontario Helping Protect People with Developmental Disabilities

### Province Launches Service for Reporting Abuse and Neglect

The Government of Ontario is expanding ReportON, a new service for reporting suspected or witnessed abuse of adults with developmental disabilities.

The 24/7 phone line and email service is the latest step taken by the Ministry of Community and Social Services to further improve the safety of adults with developmental disabilities.

Abuse is often hard to identify. Examples can include being denied basic necessities like food, shelter, clothing or medicine. Even if you are unsure, but suspect abuse or neglect of an adult with a developmental disability, you should contact ReportON. Each call will be investigated and appropriate action will be taken.

People can access ReportON by calling **1-800-575-2222** or emailing

[reportONdisability@ontario.ca](mailto:reportONdisability@ontario.ca)

For text telephone (TTY): **416-916-0549** or Toll-Free **1-844-309-1025**

Investing in more services for individuals with developmental disabilities is part of our plan to create jobs, grow our economy and help people in their everyday lives.

Learn more at

[www.Ontario.ca/ReportON](http://www.Ontario.ca/ReportON)

# Awards and Acknowledgements

## Award of Inclusion

The Extend-A-Family Award of Inclusion is an annual award presented, recognizing the outstanding work that identified schools and community organizations have done in the area of inclusion, friendship building and partnership. Congratulations to the recipients of the 2015-2016 Award of Inclusion:

Leslieville Jr. Public School, Muirhead Public School, Pineway Public School, St. Anselm Catholic School.

## Acknowledgement and Appreciation

Extend-A-Family is very appreciative to all the schools and community centres who kindly provide space with an opportunity to build friendships and inclusive school communities. They include:

St. Anselm Catholic School, Birkdale Community Centre, Bloordale Middle School, Clairlea Public School, Constitution Place Retirement Home, Corvette Junior Public School, Dovercourt Boys and Girls Club, Earl Bales Community Centre, Islington Junior Middle School, Leslieville Public School, Macklin Public School, Muirhead Public School, Pineway Public School, Scarborough Centre for Healthy Communities, Scarborough Museum, Sir Ernest MacMillan Senior Public School, Smithfield Community School, St. Henry Catholic School, St. John the Evangelist Catholic School, Thistletown Community Centre, Topcliff Public School, Wellesworth Junior School, West Scarborough Neighbourhood Community Centre.

## Welcome

### Welcome Jumoke!

Hello there! My name is Jumoke Famutimi, I have been a part of Extend-A-Family since June 2016. I have over 13 years working with children, youth, and families and have diplomas in both Early Childhood Education and Social Service work. I have had the pleasure of working with amazing staff and families who bring me much joy in the work that I do by continuously teaching me new skills, exploring new discoveries and being constantly moved by the zeal of families and members in the community wanting to make and see change happen. I am excited to see what the future holds for all families at Extend-A-Family and I hope to create great memories as we walk through the various milestones in the life of your children and your family. Extend-A-Family is truly who they say they are - an extension to all families and I am glad that I can be part of such a wonderful organization. So let's walk this journey together with love, laughter, hope and determination. I look forward to your success.

### Welcome Kristen!

Hello! My name is Kristen Carhart and I started working with Extend-A-Family in June 2016. My professional background has been in social services and case management. I have had the honor of walking alongside many inspirational and resilient individuals, who have shaped my core belief in belonging, acceptance, and inclusion. I am a seeker of information, love art and creating, and I strongly believe that diversity and differences strengthen our communities. I am so excited to be part of such a rich and diverse team, who have shown support and encouragement through the transition into this position. The devoted families I have had the great pleasure of working with have been very welcoming and I feel empowered by their strengths and gifts. I look forward to continuing on this journey together.

### Welcome Elizabeth!

Hello, my name is Elizabeth MacLean, and I am a new member of the Extend-A-Family's Board of Directors. I discovered Extend-A-Family while searching for a way to help our daughter be and feel included at school. She has had a friendship circle for several years now, and it's made all the difference for her at school and at home with play dates. While a journalist by trade, I spend most of my time now advocating for inclusion at school and in the community. I feel this is the best way to help my daughter and others like her, to not only be accepted by the community but to reach their full potential.

# Farewell Anne Marie Cole, former Executive Director

Dear Anne Marie,

On behalf of the Extend-A-Family members, community members, funders, board and staff, we would like to thank you for your many years of service and connection. You have paved the way for many of us to not only believe that belonging is beneficial, but also should be demanded. You have taught us well, problem solved like the Batman you are, helped us see the bigger picture outside the box, the shades of grey in between the black and white. You have guided us well and now it is time for you to concentrate on being the loving Nana that you already are and spread your wisdom elsewhere in the world.

I would not be the person I am today, without your tutelage, pushing me when I resisted, praising me when warranted and caring for me when the chips were down. Now, having said all this positive lovey-dovey stuff, it is my delight to now be Robin to the newest Batman in town, Ruth. Having started with Extend-A-Family as a Host, then a Coordinator, Ruth has shed her cocoon and is spreading her new wings as Executive Director. She is flourishing in her role and it is my joy to support her. So, you leave us in very capable, willing and wise hands. Now, go and put on Big Red and hug those grandbabies and Retire Pretty!

Catey Nanna xo



*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

For receipt purposes we require the following information:

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Tel: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_



extend a family

Extend-A-Family offers a variety of support groups across Toronto. Visit our website or contact your coordinator or the office for further information.

**Phone: 416 484 1317**

**Email: [info@extendfamily.ca](mailto:info@extendfamily.ca)**

**Web: [www.extendfamily.ca](http://www.extendfamily.ca)**

**Dads' Group**

Location: Extend-A-Family office

Day: last Tuesday of each month

Time: 7:00 – 9:00 pm

Contact: Salvatore 416-530-0272  
[sr@extendfamily.ca](mailto:sr@extendfamily.ca)

**Adult Sibling Support Group**

Location: To Be Announced

Day: Thursday– once a month

Time: 7:00 – 9:00 pm

Contact: Jessica 416-239-7161  
[jvw@extendfamily.ca](mailto:jvw@extendfamily.ca)

**North East “Tea and Talk” for moms**

Location: Members' homes

Day: Tuesdays or Fridays– once a month

Time: 9:30 -11:30 am

Contact: Selena 647-292-5144  
[sb@extendfamily.ca](mailto:sb@extendfamily.ca)

**West Parent Support Group**

Location: Humber Valley Junior Middle School

Day: Thursday evenings – once a month

Time: 6:30 – 8:30 pm

Contact: Marissa 647-292-5357  
[mw@extendfamily.ca](mailto:mw@extendfamily.ca)

**East Toronto Evening Parent Group**

Location: Birkdale Community Centre

Day: Wednesday evening – once a month

Time: 7:00 – 8:30 pm

Contact: Kim 416-757-2780  
[ksp@extendfamily.ca](mailto:ksp@extendfamily.ca)

**Youth Sibling Support Group**

Location: to be announced

Day: Seasonally (4 times a year)

Time: 6:30- 8:30pm

Contact: Jessica 416-239-7161  
[jvw@extendfamily.ca](mailto:jvw@extendfamily.ca) or  
Salvatore 416-530-0272  
[sr@extendfamily.ca](mailto:sr@extendfamily.ca)

**Safe & Secure Future Networks – West**

Location: Royal York Road United Church

Day: Second Tuesday evening of each month

Time: 7:00 – 9:00 pm

Contact: Selena 647-292-5144  
[ssfnw@extendfamily.ca](mailto:ssfnw@extendfamily.ca)

**Safe & Secure Future Networks -- East**

Location: Donway Covenant United Church

Day: Last Tuesday of each month

Time: 7:00 - 9:00 pm

Contact: Kristen 647-292-5175  
[ssfne@extendfamily.ca](mailto:ssfne@extendfamily.ca)