

# THE BRAINY BUGLER

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## Our Mentor Team Keeps Growing!



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For more photos from the Mentor Appreciation See page 10



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*"A mentor is someone  
who allows you to  
see hope inside yourself"*  
*Oprah Winfrey*

# Hallowe'en Dance 2016



## Articles of Interest

### CardSharks Gives Back

This fall, the CardSharks program team leaders and participants began the task of sorting, organizing and managing our inventory. We came to realize that we had a great number of holiday cards from seasons past and we really wanted to do something special with them. So we decided to offer the gift of holiday wishes to a couple of really special places – Bendale Acres Nursing Home and Sick Kids Hospital. Bendale Acres is well known to CHIRS – the CHIRY Balladeers perform there during the holidays and some of our CHIRS clients call Bendale home. CardSharks participants prepared 350 cards with a hand-written holiday wish in each one and they were given to residents. 330 cards were taken to Sick Kids Hospital and were given to the kids themselves so they could send them out to their loved ones. In January we received a letter of thanks from the hospital and a drawing from one of the children. We feel good knowing that our cards helped to spread a little bit of holiday cheer to those who needed it.

*Kerry M.*



## Therapy in the form of a Dog!

Bella is a therapy dog with St. John Ambulance who visits regularly at Aldebrain. Rob is one of her regular ‘clients’. This is what Rob had to say: “Bella is a good dog. My visits with her make me feel calm. I enjoy seeing Bella every Monday, it is something to look forward to.”

*Robert M.*



## Articles of Interest

### Working Miracles Are Not Easy

I love being a role model to people everywhere in the world. I appreciate all my viewers and supporters. And I must be an amazing writer since I haven't had a bad comment yet out of all the blogs I have written at this point. Even if I do get bad comment or 2 it would just make me do a better job on the next post. Now I know why I've always quit every retail job I've had. Because it never made me happy. I always had to do whatever the manager said and I always had to deal with difficult customers and it was so draining. Working for the man has never been my strong suit, but I knew after I graduated high school I needed to make money. And making money was always the good part, but always being told what to do was what I hated about the job. What I've learned through the years is that, working in retail was never for me. And I know this might not be the greatest story like a few of my other ones but I'm only human. And maybe this story will bore the hell out of all of you or maybe a lot of you can relate to this story. What I can tell you is if you don't love what you do, stay with it until you find the job you've always wanted or if you've always wanted to start your own business you should go for it! I don't write to make money, I do it because I love doing a great job of inspiring people and because I wanna share my experiences with all of you. And I hope you learn something from my stories. Because there is so much more to life than making money, so much more that we can all learn or experience everyday on a daily basis. Because that is what life is all about, finding abilities in ourselves that we never even knew were there and learning from our mistakes. I think everyone should live in the moment and celebrate your lives everyday. Because we only have one life so treat every day like it's your last. Because we're all going to die someday and we don't wanna ask ourselves what if or I should have done this or that. I'd like to think we are all on the same page when I say we want to spend our last days on this earth in a positive way. And I know when I die I'll rest in peace knowing I did everything I wanted to do in my life and knowing I made an impact on the world and an impact on myself! How do you wanna look back at your life?.

*James F* writes a blog called *Stories about Real Life* <https://jfreyvision.blogspot.ca/>

### November Moustache Winner!



Many members of the CHIRS community participated in Movember this year. Our team, The CHIRY MOMO's raised \$1000.00 (our best fundraising year ever). Thank you to everyone who donated to this great cause that supports Men's Health. Congrats to this year's Mr. Movember, Jason. Stay Classy CHIRS!

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## Out and About

### Volunteering as a Friendly Visitor at Toronto Western Hospital

My name is Simon Arruda and I started attending Card Sharks at CHIRS in 2011. I was a bit nervous when I first started, I didn't know if I would like it or if I would make friends. I slowly got more comfortable over time and started making friends. My goal was to get experience through Card Sharks that might lead me to future employment and also meet some new people. I began working with Denise and Michael at CHIRS to create a resume and learn more about employment. Michael and I searched everywhere and kept giving my resume out to different places in hopes of finding a job. My dream was always to one day work in the medical field because that is what interests me the most. After a lot searching and a lot of waiting I got an interview for a volunteer position at Toronto Western Hospital. I was pretty calm during the interview and I told the volunteer coordinator about my past – that I have an acquired brain injury and worked very hard to get my high school diploma as well as go to Humber College afterwards for upgrading my education with a



specific interest in the medical field. After school I volunteered in several nursing homes visiting patients but was looking for something more. My family supported me and encouraged me to keep working and trying. I got the volunteer position at Toronto Western Hospital in June of this year and so far I really like being at the hospital. I like being around the nurses and doctors, I like visiting the patients and talking to them about how they are doing. My position as a friendly visitor is to see how patients are doing, offer them a newspaper and sometimes speak Portuguese to the Portuguese speaking patients. I miss Card Sharks, being at the Club and seeing my friends at CHIRS but it's so good to be involved in helping patients by being a friendly, helpful visitor while they are recovering. It's still my dream to work in the hospital one day but until then I'll keep working hard as a volunteer and keep learning as I go.

*Simon A.*

### ABI Play at the Flying Pony- Two Perspectives

David S invited us to watch a play about ABI. It was part of a series called 150 Stories. A few of the actors had come to CHIRS to interview some of us with an ABI too. We met David at The Flying Pony at 6pm. Our CHIRS team made about ten, and then there were many others that made up the whole audience. The Flying Pony is very small and cute. They serve hot and cold drinks with cookies and muffins. The play was great! After the show was finished they had the floor open for questions. Some people did not know much about ABI. Overall it was a great experience.

*Lorraine M.*

I had the opportunity to watch a performance at the Flying Pony. This performance was based on ABI and was put on by some young people who got together to illustrate both sides of the effects of ABI. In this skit there was a sister and a brother. The girl was very creative prior to her injury. The brother had no comprehension of why his sister wasn't up and around like her usual self. He tried to push his sister by telling her what she was able to do, almost forcefully. He even became aggressive in communicating with the doctor and it wasn't until the doctor showed the brother the sister's gradual progress that he understood. He then became more supportive in her ABI recovery. This skit was an amazing insight on the family's reaction and also into the life of someone living with ABI.

*Sam*

# CHIRS Annual Holiday Party



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# Aldebrain Annual Holiday Party



# St. Georges Annual Tree Trimming Party



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# Toastmasters

In March, our clients embarked on a new venture. Our Toastmaster group joined forces with our newly developed CHIRS catering team, to showcase a lunch and learn presentation that aims to shine a light on ABI and the experience of living with an ABI. The first group that we presented to was the Toastmaster club located in the MTO building at Downsview. Downsview Toastmasters was instrumental in helping us develop our own Toastmasters Club and were very excited to be part of this occasion. For the lunch and learn, members of our group ran their meeting and our caterers provided an awesome lunch. It was a very positive event. Andrew Lu, the president of the Downsview group, wrote us an email in which he stated: "I am so impressed that your club is running well and members are so confident speaking out side of the club. It was a great joint meeting and everyone loved the food!"

As part of the meeting, Rob and Shayna gave speeches. Here is Rob's speech:

## Rob's Speech

June 3<sup>rd</sup> 2004 is a day that I will never forget.

That was the day that I had a major seizure that sent me to the hospital and left me facing a new reality. I never figured that I would have to eat food from a blender and never in my wildest dreams did I consider that I would have no strength in my legs and fall countless times or that my memory would be affected to such a degree. I was in a coma for two weeks. When I came out, I knew that things were different. I couldn't think as fast as I did before. I was confronted by an endless stream of doctors telling me things that I didn't understand. I would forget things easier. I was scared and paranoid. I worried that I was not in control of what was going on in MY life. My emotions exploded out of control at the drop of a pin. I found myself crying a lot of the time. I lost a lot of things during those weeks. But thankfully my wife stayed with me and I came to an understanding of my situation. Things were going to be different but I was going to make it the best it could be! Soon after I decided that one of my life goals would be to educate and advocate about ABI (Acquired Brain Injuries). I remember the first time that I was asked by two friends to speak at a brain injury fund raiser. Since I am good with words, I took this opportunity on and was very grateful that there was a podium to hang on to as I was very nervous. To find out that people are moved by what you say made me feel like I was making a difference. But I knew that I needed to improve my speaking skills to really get my message out! For this reason I jumped on the opportunity, when asked if I wanted to, to become part of the group from CHIRS who took part in the Toastmaster meetings at Downsview. Downsview presented the opportunity to be part of a family that did not judge and encouraged me to realize that my speaking skills could improve and reach other members on a personal level. You guys were amazing...Memories I have of Downsview, that stick with me today, are...Sylvia who upon joining Toastmasters took on the role of secretary right away, which I thought was a great venture. Mark who completed his CC in record time (in thirteen weeks) and my favourite speech that he presented was 'Balls to the Wall' about an airplane and how, in an airplane, you lifted the throttle to lift the plane so it will rise into the air. Scott who had a speech about his friend with an intellectual disability and the relationship they built that showed him that his friend was not challenged at all! And of course, who can forget Rakesh's classic piece of advice to Vicky on the eve of her wedding...God gave you have two ears and one mouth so don't forget to listen twice as much as you speak. Speaking on behalf of all of us who came to Downsview from CHIRS. You filled us with courage. Because of our involvement in your group we became more confident in our ability to write and present our speeches. You also gave us the courage and guidance to start our own chapter of Toastmasters at CHIRS. In my role of VP of Membership I am proud to say that we have over 20 members in our group and that our meetings are fun and enlightening. A few months ago I completed my 10<sup>th</sup> speech and earned my CC. The speech I wrote I named "It is What I do" Basically What I do is try and help people reach their potential. And this wouldn't have been nearly as successful without my involvement with Toastmasters.

# The Mentor Page

## Mentor Appreciation Dinner 2016



The 2016 Mentor Appreciation Dinner took place on November 15. The theme of the dinner was sports related with an emphasis on the Mentor Team. The basement was transformed into a dressing room with the help of ADS creativity and Sean and Dan's extensive collection of Jerseys and sport paraphernalia.

*David S. Mentor Coordinator*



## Mentors at Work!



Peter, our Client Health and safety Mentor completed the assembly of a standing workstation and a cart to help move things around. Thanks Peter for all your hard work!



## Mentors in the Community!



### **The Quiet Butterflies at the Terry Fox Run**

The Quiet Butterflies raised \$180.00 this year in the Terry Fox Run. They have done so well and hope to be ready for lucky number seven next year. It is my hope that we will grow in numbers to an even bigger team! Because we do these walkathons it makes it easier for some of our members to go on some of the day trips that CHIRS provides. If you are interested in joining our team, come and find me in the club! Let's work a little harder next year to raise even more!

*Lorraine M.*

# In the Club

## Friendship Week



# THE BACK PAGE

## Deep Thoughts By Tenzin



## About Meditation

Now-a-days when we talk about meditation we think we have to sit still and think nothing and concentrate. But in real life we can do meditation everywhere. When we are working, when we are smoking, when we are in the meeting. We can do it everywhere. Our mind is like a monkey-mind every time chattering, chattering. It is always there and it feels like we can't concentrate on one thing but meditation can teach us to slow down and be in the moment.

How to do meditation:

When we do meditation we concentrate on our breathing. Inhale from your nose and exhale from your mouth. It is ok to feel emotion and for thoughts to come to your mind while you're doing meditation. When the thoughts and emotion come in your mind you can tell your mind or your conscious to only to think about your breathing. You can do meditation even for 30 seconds. When and where ever you are. Our mind is like a wavy sea we can't see the depth unless the sea is clear. Our mind is also the same. There are thoughts and emotion coming up everyday. Meditation can help us control our thoughts and emotion to be in control.

