

# THE BRAINY BUGLER

Volume 15 Issue 2

Summer 2014

## Toastmasters at CHIRS!

Toastmasters is an organization that provides people with an opportunity to practice public speaking and work on leadership skills. It has been around for ninety years and has almost half a million members in 126 countries. This summer we started our own chapter at CHIRS. This process had started about a year and a half ago when Dr. Lemsky had suggested that Gary and I attend a nearby Toastmaster meeting. She said it might be a nice opportunity to socialize and work on public speaking skills.

I remember the Wednesday afternoon that we first attended a meeting at Downsview Toastmasters. When we entered the large conference room, we stepped into a room full of professionals: Engineers, Accountants, Real Estate Brokers, a couple of men working in IT, and the CEO of a Flamenco dance company.

“When you walk in here, you are a Toastmaster member first and foremost” their VP of Education announced. It wasn’t just lip service. By the first month we had been assigned various roles such as time keeper, joke master and table topic master (the improv portion of the meeting). Soon after that we were giving speeches and not long after that we were given even more responsibility with the roles of General Evaluator and Toastmaster (meeting chair).

Our CHIRS group has named ourselves “A New Beginning”. We meet every Tuesday afternoon at head office. We walk in as staff, students, clients and volunteers but when we are the meeting we are Toastmasters ‘first and foremost’.

If you are interested in improving your public speaking skills in a no pressure atmosphere then I encourage you to attend a meeting. Special thanks to Downsview Toastmasters for supporting our new group.

*Dave S.*



*Rob A. with his award from Downsview Toastmasters.*



Community Head Injury  
Resource Services  
Of Toronto  
62 Finch Avenue West  
Toronto, Ontario  
M2N 7G1  
Tel: (416) 240-8000  
Fax: (416) 240-1149  
E-mail: [chirs@chirs.com](mailto:chirs@chirs.com)  
Website: [www.chirs.com](http://www.chirs.com)



- Inside:
2. Meet the Board
  3. We've Been Busy
  4. Summer Happenings
  5. Articles of Interest
  6. Picnic
  7. Picnic
  8. The Mentor Page
  9. Articles of Interest
  10. Toastmasters
  11. Articles of Interest
  12. Poetry and Art



*Every issue of the BBN we will be featuring some of our Board Members. Each member answers questions that were formed by some of the clients.*



**Dr. Nora Cullen** is a specialist in Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation and is the Chief of Staff at West Park Healthcare Centre. She works clinically with adults who have sustained a brain injury, assisting them with re-integration into the community. She is an Associate Professor at the University of Toronto and her research interests involve long-term outcome measurement following brain injury and the interventions that impact on those outcomes. She is a co-author of the Evidence Based Review of Acquired Brain Injury and the ABI Knowledge Uptake Strategy.

***What made you get involved with CHIRS? How long have you been involved?*** I have been on the Board for two years now. I see a lot of patients who are in need of what CHIRS provides. It helps me then to guide some of the programs that CHIRS has, from a government perspective and also in helping us send people from my agency towards CHIRS if it is the right place for them.

***What do you feel your role is being a part of the Board?*** Everyone has different perspectives and what I can bring is a clinical perspective from the point of view of a provider and researcher of ABI. This is an important perspective to have when making decisions in which direction an agency will go.

***How many times a year do you have the opportunity to interact with clients?*** I am invited to various events throughout the year. But unfortunately my time is limited so I don't get to go to many. But I would like to make it out to some of the upcoming events if time allows throughout the year.

***If you had one wish for CHIRS what would it be?*** I would wish that CHIRS would continue to do exactly what it is doing except more of it! A lot of people out there would benefit from it but there is no room. I hope in time there would be more opportunity to expand and have more programs and services to serve more people. It has been a privilege to be on the Board and work with Hedy and Carolyn. We are presently working on a strategic plan for the next 5 years and making goals for where we would like CHIRS to be.

# We've Been Busy!



*Scott M. tree planting in the Spring*



*Spa Day in the Club!*



*Danny S. and Shannon Y.  
playing Giant Jenga at the CNE*



Second Annual Iron Chef competition. Once again a great success! Special thanks to Man Chef Peter Graben for guest 'Chefing' with us!



# Outings and Articles of Interest



## Aquarium Trip

We took our first trip to the Ripley's Aquarium. It was a lot of fun and we saw lots of cool fish and interesting creatures!



## Allow Me to Introduce Myself

For years you have been reading my articles and poems in the Brainy Bugler Newsletter. I am a very passionate person who only writes about what moves me and if I do not feel passion, I will not write. I write not only for myself but for you who read what I have to say. When you read my written word and it moves you, then I have done my job and then I am happy too! You could say it is a win-win situation! So if you see me around CHIRS or anywhere else for that matter, I would love to talk to you. ( There is a picture of me on the front page! )

*Rob A.*

## Ruby At CHIRS!

Today I went to see where my mom and dad work. They work at CHIRS. People at CHIRS have had head injuries. Some people are in wheelchairs and some don't remember so well. When I was at CHIRS, some people were in a cooking group. It smelled good. I talked to a lot of people at CHIRS. Everyone said they liked each other. One person was in charge of filling out a schedule. That looked like a fun job.

Thank you for letting me come visit.

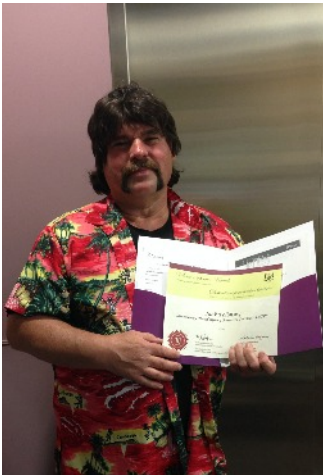
*Ruby (aged 6)*



# Summer Happenings

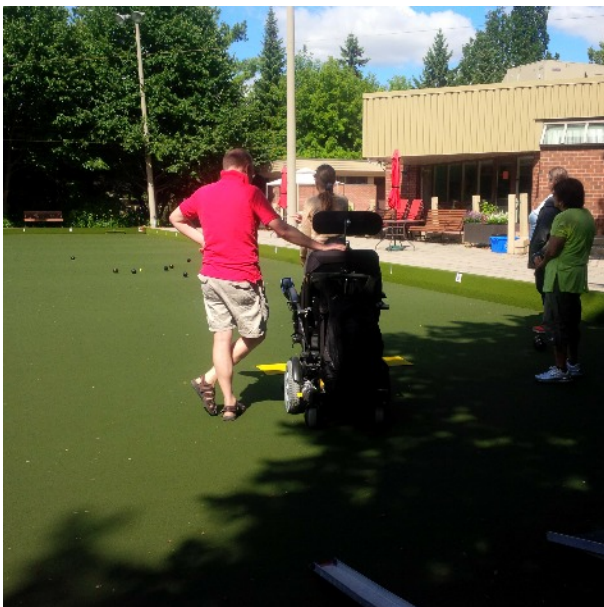
## Volunteer Service Awards

The 2014 Volunteer Service Awards took place on June 17, 2014. At this event, The Government of Ontario honoured individuals who have dedicated their time and services volunteering in their communities. Three of our fantastic volunteers were honoured for their 10+ years of service and commitment to our CHIRS community. We congratulate Narine Datt, Jack Polnksy, and Rosanne Wong for their dedication and support. Thank You!



## Lawn Bowling!

Munir invited us to play lawn bowling for a few weeks on a Thursday morning. Lorraine, Marcy, Janeta, Robert, Michael and Pete were in the group. It was not too far from head office and was a very welcoming place. It was beautiful and we had nice sunny days. It was 3 ladies against 3 gentlemen. Everybody gave it their best shot. We were learning as we went and Captain Munir kept track. We had fun! The score didn't matter as long as we had fun. *Editor's Note- Special thanks to Willowdale Lawn Bowling Club for the opportunity!*  
 Marcy H. and Lorraine M.



Community Head Injury Resources Services Toronto (CHIRS) 62 Finch Avenue West, Toronto, Ontario  
 M2N 7G1

Tel: (416) 240-1149 Web Site: [www.chirs.com](http://www.chirs.com) E-mail: [chirs@chirs.com](mailto:chirs@chirs.com)

# CHIRS Annual Family Picnic



Community Head Injury Resources Services Toronto (CHIRS) 62 Finch Avenue West, Toronto, Ontario  
M2N 7G1

Tel: (416) 240-1149 Web Site: [www.chirs.com](http://www.chirs.com) E-mail: [chirs@chirs.com](mailto:chirs@chirs.com)

# CHIRS Annual Family Picnic



The theme this year was Summer in the City. It was another great success, with a fantastic turn out. The weather was perfect! Special thanks go to Nick the Juggler and his kids, as well as Loblaw's and MVR Cash and Carry Wholesale for their generous donations.

# The Mentor Page

## Mentor of the Month

April 2014 - **Geoff E.**

### *Mentor Duties*

Wii Program Team Leader  
Cards-R-Us Vice President of Operations  
Mentor Researcher

July 2014- **Danny S.**

### *Mentor Duties*

Wednesday morning Barista  
Crazy 8's Facilitator

August 2014- **Marilyn T.**

### *Mentor Duties*

Friday Morning Club Coverage  
Mentor Garden Team  
Indoor Plant Manager

## In the Kitchen



*Maria making fresh bread for the club. She now makes pizza dough and homemade cinnamon buns too! Yummy!*



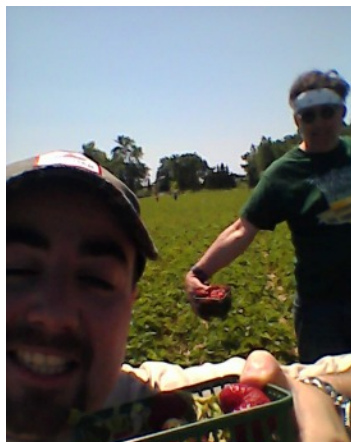
*Sharon and her amazing Wednesday pizzas, using the dough made by Maria in the bread machine!*

## Out and About and Mentor Group Happenings

**The Writer's Group-** Zia leads a weekly writing group with discussion and encouragement to write creatively. Here is one of his stories.

### Keep Looking

"Make sure you meet me outside the aquarium's front doors," Hannah instructed to Aziz before hanging up the phone. She knew Aziz had no desire for visiting the aquarium, since he's always taken nature for granted, but his renewed appreciation of nature resulted in this unexpected visit to the aquarium. Just as that wave of confidence for Aziz enjoying himself rested with Hannah, she thought aloud, "What could go wrong?" As the words left her mouth she watched her parents going for their daily stroll, only today they each carried an umbrella, and since Hannah had today arranged to meet Aziz outside the aquarium, she expected he'd have brought his umbrella. Unfortunately though, he didn't know of the storming sky, so it meant both were without an umbrella. Tragically comical, is how Hannah purposely left hers behind, assuming that he'd have brought his. When eventually discovering Aziz without his umbrella she laughed aloud and sought shelter beneath an overhanging roof. "Got room for one more" Aziz asks "Are you willing to be uncomfortable?" "Just as long as it keeps me dry!"  
*Zia L.*



*Wednesday Art Group hard at work*



*Strawberry picking*



*Checking out a rugby game*

**Community Head Injury Resources Services Toronto (CHIRS) 62 Finch Avenue West, Toronto, Ontario M2N 7G1**

Tel: (416) 240-1149 Web Site: [www.chirs.com](http://www.chirs.com) E-mail: [chirs@chirs.com](mailto:chirs@chirs.com)



# Articles of Interest

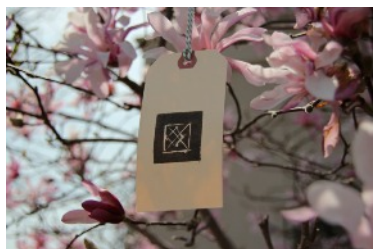
## Art In Life By Neil D.



This print shows the connection between family and life. The four corners represent each member of my family (me, mom, dad and brother) and shows how we are all connected to each other.



We are all connected to each other within nature and our environment. If you are connected with your family, you can understand their moods and what is needed to help them with their day and showing that you love them.



Life means love. Loving everything that is possible and not being scared of trying things and fitting in. Caring for the place you are living in.



This print came to mind because of the relationship with my brother and how my parents have to interfere as opposed to us all being happy together as a family. This interrelationship within my family impacts my life. When my family is connected and happy, I am happy. –Neil D.



I called this print life because you cannot isolate yourself from anything. Living with an injury, you must live as normal a life as possible. You have to stay connected to all things and fit in with the group.

## Photography Workshop-

*The following photos were taken by clients who took a 4 week photography workshop with ADS. They had various assignments and these are some of their favourites.*

Shannon Y



Mike V.



Sandra S.



Robert A.



# TOASTMASTERS

As you know from page one, *CHIRS* has started a chapter of Toastmasters' a group that promotes the art of public speaking. Every issue of the BBN will have something from our Toastmasters' group.



## Shayna B.: Toastmaster Ice Breaker

### How it started

When I was 8, I didn't have any signs of having any possible illness of any sort. One of my siblings did. My sibling was having terrible headaches. My parents decided to take all 3 of us to our hospital, the Hospital for Sick Kids, for an MRI. After our MRIs, it was discovered I had something on my brain. We asked to double check if it was my sibling with headaches or me. It was me. After investigating we found out the location of the something was on my brainstem. It turned out to be cancer. One of the functions of the brainstem is to let you know when you are full or need to eat.

### What Went Wrong?

My doctors went into my brain to take the original sample which was just a small one to do the biopsy. When they took the sample they unknowingly snipped a small part of my brain that left me unable to know the difference from true hunger and when I'm full. This situation continues to this day.

### New Discovery in my Brain

When the doctors were going into my brain, fluid was found on the left side of my brain. In order to treat my tumor, the doctors had to drain the fluid. My doctor, Dr. Retka, decided to try an inner shunt. This was a fairly new procedure, as back in 1995, shunts were not known or used as much. Three holes were drilled to release the fluid.

### The Next Treatment

After the shunt was put in we noticed that the tumor started to shrink on its own without any treatment, so we waited and slowly, seemingly on its own, it disappeared. We were told that it could come back, so we waited and watched and I seemed fine.

### Headaches Started

When I was 21, in 2008, I started having terrible migraines. So it started again, getting checked to see if my migraines were normal, or something more. After all the tests which included MRIs and blood work, my dad and I were asked to come to the T Wing of Sunnybrook for my appointment. We were spoken to and told that the spots that were found were cancer. I was diagnosed with Pilocytic Astrocytoma on both my left and right temporal lobes. I couldn't be given surgery because of the placements of the cancer in my brain. After Dr. Perry consulted with other doctors around the world on how to best treat this very rare case of cancer, it was decided that chemotherapy would be given via IV for six weeks and pills for two weeks. This went on for a year. I then had the chance to go on a great trip and when I asked my doctor, he gave me the ok to go off treatment for the month and that we would see how it was going after I came back. After my trip, they found that everything was stable and I got to go off treatment.

### Dizzy Spells and Falling

In 2010 I started to have a lot of dizzy spells and I was falling on the floor. We told my doctors about it at my next appointment after the following MRI. At first when they came in, I reported that everything was fine. When asked how I was doing overall, I told them about the falls and they referred me to another doctor. Dr. Saghal asked a few questions and said he would be right back. When the doctor returned we were told that my cancer had spread to my cerebellum on the right side, which is called Astrocytoma. This is in general a very rare cancer. I was offered two different radiation plans. One which would be a two week treatment that would provide a life with cancer but not life and the other option which would take five weeks but could provide a lot of problems along the way. After discussion with other present family members we chose the five week, which later turned out to be six weeks, but that's another story!

### Today

I am now doing pretty well. I have more chances to go out and communicate with others. I get to go to a whole bunch of groups which is great because I get to go out on a daily basis. If I didn't have an ABI then I would be stuck at my house watching TV all day. So I am proud this happened. Yes, this changed my life into a different world but it changed my life for the better.

## Articles of Interest

### I'm So Excited

On April 30<sup>th</sup> of this year, I along with other clients and staff at CHIRS, had an opportunity of a lifetime. That afternoon we gathered in the basement at our Head Office for a special and unique reason... now, we were finally going global. I sat in excitement knowing that I would be speaking to people with brain injuries, like myself, but yet different because they were in a totally different part of the world! I believe the brain injury groups that interconnect form a beautiful bond. It is a building experience for both parties, as you can learn so much from each one. On April 30<sup>th</sup> we connected with a group from Glasgow Scotland, via Skype, and had a chance to chat, and learn about each other.

I discovered that just like those of us at CHIRS they have a musical group that performs for audiences with the intention of making them happy and showing that just because they have a brain injury, life is not over and there is much hope. Technology being technology, and Skype being a new technology, the image on the screen was a bit fuzzy. But once we started to sing to each other, the purpose of our contact became crystal clear!

We started out by having Shannon sing a song called 'A Work in Progress.' The second song was sung by myself, called 'Coma Ride'. At that point SHIMS ( the group from Scotland) sang songs that they had written.

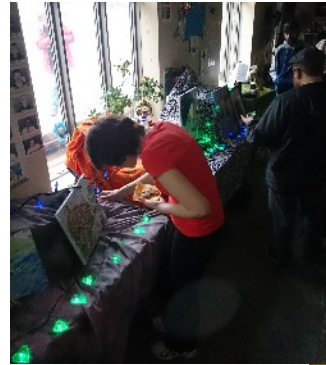
A positive thing that I took from this event was that I got to become friends with a member of SHIMS through email. This relationship has inspired me to want to sing one of their songs here, and truly bring our two groups together!

*Rob A.*



*Here is the Skype session with SHIMS*

### Art and Talent Show 2014



Our Annual Art and Talent Show was a success once again. We had many talented artists and performers come out and entertain a crowd of family, clients and staff. Here are a few of the highlights.



# THE BACK PAGE

## Poetry and Art

### A Synopsis of my Beginnings

At the time of my accident, it was 1952 (5 years old). My lower spine was crushed and part of my collar bone was transplanted in the injured area. I have no family history to reminisce about and was unable to bond with my younger brothers due to lengthy hospital stays and two body casts. I wore a steel brace when I was home from the hospital and did go to school, but missed a lot. My education suffered. Also at that time there was no healthcare and my father was having difficulty finding work. Money was not easy to come by and it was all my fault. Because of my spinal cord injury I am limited with what type of work I can do, and chose clerical work. My 20's were the most difficult period in my development because of my past: emotional negligence, issues of abandonment, betrayal and rejection led to feelings of low self esteem.

*Anna P-C.*

I wrote a poem which expresses how lonely and depressed I felt at times:

AS I AWOKE ONE MORNING  
MY LIFE IN DISARRAY  
A ROBIN PERCHED UPON MY SILL  
TO AWAKE THE COMING DAY  
HE SANG HIS SONG SO SWEETLY  
AND PAUSED A MOMENT'S LULL  
WHEN I CLOSED THE WINDOW HARSHLY AND LAID STILL

### Paintings By Yang Gie



*Yang Gie is a member of CHIRS who likes to paint. He prefers to use watercolour. Here are some of his paintings.*



*YOU ARE INVITED TO THE ANNUAL...*

# CHIRS CLIENT & FAMILY HOLIDAY PARTY



**Thursday December 11, 2014**

**Cummer Avenue United Church**

53 Cummer Avenue  
(Yonge St. & Cummer Ave.)  
6:30pm - 9:00pm



Special Performances by the  
CHIRY Balladeers and the  
Move & Groove Dancers!

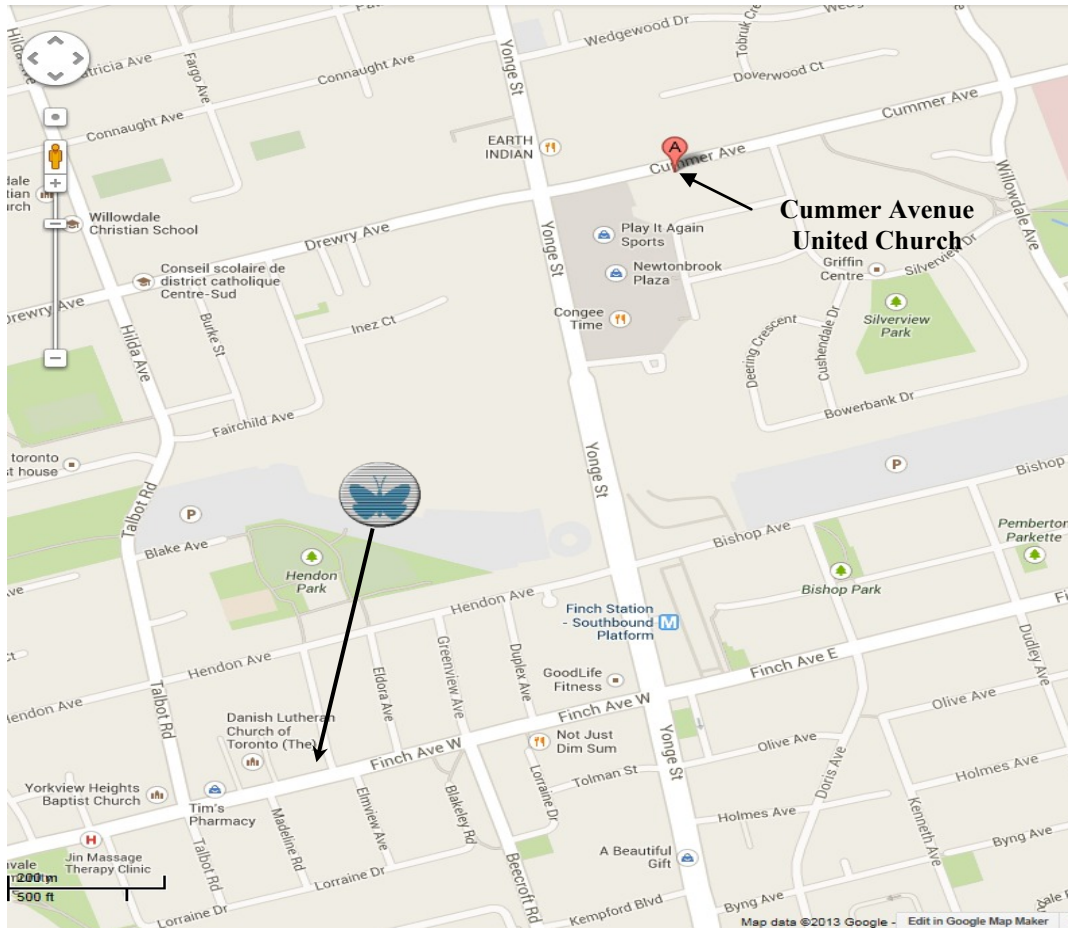


Merchandise and raffle tickets  
will be available for purchase.  
Win a lovely gift basket!

This event is **FREE** to CHIRS clients and families  
**R.S.V.P to 416 240 8000 ext 601 by December 1st, 2014**  
*Contact Sean at ext 268 for more details*

# Directions to Cummer Avenue United Church

53 Cummer Ave (Yonge St. & Cummer)



If traveling by car:

## FROM SOUTH

- Exit Highway 401 onto Yonge Street North. Continue driving north on Yonge Street, past Finch Avenue. Turn right onto Cummer Avenue. The church is on the south side of Cummer Avenue. Free covered parking is at the entrance.

## FROM NORTH

- Exit Highway 7 or 407 onto Yonge Street South. Continue driving south on Yonge Street, past Steeles Avenue. Turn left onto Cummer Avenue. The church is on the south side of Cummer Avenue. Free covered parking is at the entrance.

*Covered parking is shared with Pearson Place. If the parking is full, the Food Basics at Yonge/Cummer may be a good alternative.*

From the Finch subway station/terminal, you can either:

- Walk 0.5 KM north on Yonge to Cummer Avenue and turn right.  
**OR**
- Take the #97 Yonge Northbound bus and get off at Cummer Avenue.

Either way, the church will be on your right at #53 Cummer Avenue.