

# THE BRAINY BUGLER

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## CardSharks Celebrates 20 Years!



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2015 marks the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the CardSharks+ program. What began with just a couple of clients designing cards over a small kitchen table has expanded to 6 weekly groups held here at head office and at the Agincourt Community Centre in Scarborough, with over 85 client volunteer participants. Each year Cardsharks+ produces close to 10,000 cards consisting of all occasion, holiday and birthday cards. In addition to selling to the general public, we annually create for their clients and partners exclusive holiday greeting designs for the program's main supporters, the law firms of Thomson Rogers and Morrison Brown Sosnovitch. We look forward to 20 more years of creativity, design and growth.

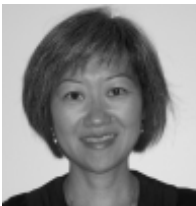
*Michael J.*

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# Meet The Board of Directors



**Karen Sasaki** is a Social Worker in the Brain and Spinal Cord Rehabilitation Program at Toronto Rehabilitation Institute, part of the University Health Network. For the past 25 years, she has provided individual and group counseling to hundreds of adults living with brain injury and their family members. In addition to her clinical role, she has been involved in numerous brain injury-related projects, committees, presentations and research initiatives. She also provides field instruction for graduate level Social Work students. As a member of the Executive Committee of the International Network of Social Workers in Brain Injury (INSWABI), Karen is committed to promoting world-wide collaboration in Social Work best practice, innovation and research.

***What made you get involved with CHIRS? How long have you been involved?***

Throughout my career, I have seen first-hand the many challenges faced by people after brain injury and I believe there's no other organization better equipped to facilitate patient transitions from hospital to community, than CHIRS. I've learned from former patients what it means to be part of CHIRS and I know that without CHIRS, many would have a greatly diminished quality of life and even need to enter long-term care. This is my third year as a member of CHIRS' Board and I am delighted to be part of this caring and dedicated team.

***What do you feel your role is being a part of the Board?***

I can offer my clinical understanding of the impact of brain injury and the needs of individuals and families as they adapt to the changes that follow. I enjoy working with the Board to ensure that CHIRS is responsive to client, family and system needs, to explore new opportunities that are consistent with CHIRS mission and vision, and to facilitate complex decision-making that considers multiple perspectives.

***How many times a year do you have the opportunity to interact with clients?***

Not as often as I'd like but I am looking forward to the upcoming Doors Open Toronto event and participating in other activities through the year.

***If you had one wish for CHIRS what would it be?***

That we had the financial means to bring the leading practices and standard of excellence that characterize CHIRS programs and services, to even more individuals and families coping with the reality of brain injury.

***Anything else you would like to share?***

Kudos to CHIRS staff and volunteers for sharing their extraordinary expertise, energy and commitment. It's an honour to be part of an organization that I've long admired.



## Articles of Interest

### CHIRS First Ever DOORS OPEN TORONTO!

This year, for the first time-ever, CHIRS hosted Doors Open. This gave us an opportunity to share all the great work that we do at CHIRS. Since this was our first time, we had no idea what to expect. The outcome was two amazing days. Over 150 visitors experienced the magic that we have become accustomed to. The real stars of this weekend were the clients who volunteered to share their experiences as part of a discussion panel. They spoke about changes in their lives, pre and post injury and how CHIRS has made a difference. Some visitors told us that they came because they had heard the buzz at other Doors Open locations--people were talking about CHIRS, the discussion panel and how the experience changed them.

Once again everyone here pulled together and showed the world, what a great place CHIRS really is.

*Mary B.*



### The Chiry Balladeers Perform at Bendale Acres



On August 5<sup>th</sup>, The Chiry Balladeers got to show off their talents for some friends at Bendale Acres. Over all a successful event and a big thank you for Emily Best-Shantz for inviting us. It was received so well they invited us back for another one!



## Save the date!

**Thursday December 3rd- Our Annual Holiday Party!**





## Articles of Interest



### Jody bears the torch at the Para Pan Am Games!

Jody S. who has been a ParaOlympian and is also a member of CHIRS, was asked to be a torch bearer for the Para Pan Am Games this year. A few of us went to cheer her on. Congratulations Jody!



### CHIRS Annual Staff vs Client Softball Game

It was approximately 6 hours prior to Drew Hutchison's start for The Toronto Blue Jays at The Rogers Center yet the same excitement was in the air as The CHIRS staff took the field at Hendon Park for **The Annual Staff versus Clients Softball Game**. Under ominous skies the game began with Josh Donaldson (Marnie), and Jose Bautista (Kimberly), leading their respective teams onto the field. Munir assured that players from both teams were protected from the sun's harmful UV rays. The game was a high scoring affair with both teams scoring a multitude of runs and it came down to the extraordinary defense of the clients as they squeaked out a 1 or 2 run victory which the author of this review can't recall exactly because I've hit my head a few times, eh? We can't wait until next year and a chance to retain our title.

*Quizzzy*



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# Out and About



*Marcy H. at Pan Am Games*



*David M. and Rob M. at Boardwalking*



*Danny S. and Emily at the Ex*



*Michelle G., Danny S., Shane O., Shannon Y., and Alanna R. at Earl Bales to see some music.*



*Francisco Q., Mike S., Jill H., and Jon W. at Waterfront Social*



*The 506 Street Car Tour group!*



*James C., Keith M., Kim G., and Sharon S. at the Front Street Food Fair*



*The Annual Euchre Tournament*



# CHIRS Annual Picnic 2015- Art in the Park!



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# CHIRS Annual Picnic 2015- Art in the Park!



This year's picnic theme was 'Art in the Park'. There was a display of many different types of art from some of our CHIRS members. We even had a real live artist (James O.) doing caricatures of people! Everyone enjoyed watching Dave and Marnie get covered in paint, and seeing the musical talents of those that were a part of a human piano (you had to be there!). The CHIRY Balladeers finished off the day with some tunes we could all dance to. Hope to see you all next year!



# The Mentor Page

## Volunteering In the Community

Maria and I started volunteering at the North York Seniors Centre at the end of September 2014.

Along with a few other volunteers, we set up for lunch, serve lunch, and clean up after lunch. It is usually very tasty! In the Spring I helped plant 2 small vegetable gardens. One was a flower garden and the other was a vegetable and herb garden for kitchen use. I check the gardens every time I am there. The gardens are growing very well. I am really enjoying my time there!

*Lorraine M.*



*The gardens before and after.*



*Maria and Lorraine*



*Peter the Safety Mentor fixing tables and building chairs! Always looking out for us!*



*The 'Quiet Butterflies' participated in the annual Terry Fox Run/Walk*



*Mark C. worked hard to get the city to get us some bike racks. Thanks Mark!*



*Dave and Hedy getting ready to draw names for the second annual raffle for the mentors. Thanks to James C. for all your hard work!*



*Chris B. who started at job recently at a local hotel received an award for Employee of the Month! Congratulations Chris!*



## Toastmasters

*The following speech will be presented at the 2015 OBIA Conference in Niagara Falls, Ontario.*

Good morning my name is Shayna Brothman and I am here to tell you that I love Toastmasters. I have been a Toastmaster for almost two years and am currently the President of our club which is called CHIRS New Beginnings. Toastmasters allows me the opportunity to write, to practice my brain and belong to the Toastmaster family.

In Toastmasters I have been given the chance, the opportunity and the privilege to start writing again like I did when I was a child. When I was a child, I used to write short stories, poetry and book reports. I used to love the creative aspect of it. As I got older I stopped having the time to write.

When I joined Toastmasters it gave me the opportunity to start writing again. Writing for Toastmasters has given me an opportunity to expand my writing skills. Now I really need to do research and make sure that I write more write more carefully (or at least I try to) and double check research as necessary before preparing a speech for any presentation. Additionally, since I know that I am speaking in front of people I know that I have to be creative in the way I present the material. Writing brings out my imagination and being at Toastmasters has allowed me experience that again.

Giving a speech at toastmasters is of course not the only thing we do. There are a lot of different roles at Toastmasters that help us practice our brains. For example, Table Topics is a quick improvisational speech that allows us to think on our feet. The role of Toastmaster, which is sort of like the meeting MC, makes it necessary to provide information to everyone and keep the meeting running smoothly and on time. When you are the Timer, which is another role, you have to keep track of how long speeches are running and let speakers know how much time they have left for speaking. A lot of what we are doing at Toastmasters is listening. This helps me practice my brain since I am a visual learner and not an auditory learner. By using my ears my brain has to gear up and focus on what others are saying. A great example for this is the Quizmaster role. The Quizmaster asks questions at the end of the meeting to see how well people have been listening. It is nice to give the correct answer or if I am the Quizmaster that day then I know my ears are really on the line.

Belonging to Toastmasters is a precious gift because it is a very special family. Our Toastmasters family is a very positive place where you can just be who you are. You don't have to be a turtle and hide in your shell. For a lot of people it is so scary when you first go up and talk to a crowd. But looking around at friendly faces makes it so much easier. Together we learn more about each other. Every Tuesday we learn something new. We may share inspirations, secrets, travels or new information on different topics. No matter what I can always count on my Toastmasters family for their input and support. It is so amazing watching everybody try to help each other be the best that they can be.

Toastmasters provides me the opportunity to write speeches, to practice my brain and belong to another family. Our Toastmaster meeting on Tuesday afternoons is one of the highlights of my week. My name is Shayna Brothman and I love Toastmasters!



*The CHIRS Chapter Toastmaster Group*



## Out and About

### Annual St.Patrick's Day Walk!



### Insurance Rally At Queens Park



CHIRS and BIST teamed up to show support to oppose the changes being proposed for accident victims getting less in their aftercare.

## Geneva Park 2015

Day 1: After a while, I made it up here to Geneva Park where I unpacked my clothes. I went down to have a good dinner. I made a speech at the end trip about what good cooks and hospitality I received.

Day 2: After breakfast we had a meeting about how or what people were doing for the day. A few people including myself chose to go for a canoe trip, which we did. After dinner we played a game.

Day 3: During the morning we went out for a nature walk, and then we did a scavenger hunt. After lunch we met in the games room to decide what people wanted to do. I decided to go swimming. After dinner we had marshmallows on the fire. I went to bed thinking good thoughts about tomorrow.

Day 4: In the morning with the rise of a bright sunshiny day, we got out for a nature walk. Then we came back to the cabins. After playing baseball, we had a party in the rec. room.

Day5: We all, myself included, were thinking about how lovely it is up here. Then as I said in the beginning I thanked the chefs and the courtesy of March of Dimes staff. On this, the last day we packed our stuff and parted. The beautiful park with good memories of the nice food and experiences I had of Geneva Park.

*David M.*





## Articles of Interest

### Balancing Act

The rain showed no sign of slowing, let alone stopping, but despite this persisting rain I knew that Bruno would still uphold the bet he had lost yesterday. After all, he fairly lost that bet when that plate fell from his arms and came crashing to the ground. Both Frank and Bruno work as waiters at the same restaurant, and while yesterday's shift dragged along they each needed uplifting, when seemingly by design, the most attractive woman that either had ever seen entered the restaurant. She must have felt the weight of the looks they immediately shot her, for, like a game of dodgeball, she kept playfully dodging those looks. She then watched Bruno hurry over to her table and ask, "Are you ready to order?" "Yes, I'd like the first ten items on the menu please," she said. With confusion plastered across Bruno's face he stumbled into the kitchen, when Frank crossed his path and reminded, "The customer is always right." Bruno then nodded in remembrance of learning that same lesson during his training. Next his instruction to the kitchen staff was exactly as she told it to him. Bruno didn't even preface it with any remark, not even one to capture the oddity of her request. He simply shrugged his shoulders. Her order was then promptly prepared, but as the stack of prepared foods grew higher on the counter, it didn't take a genius to determine that a trolley was needed. Frank happened to be beside a trolley for transporting numerous items, and without hesitation he began transferring the prepared foods from the counter onto the trolley. A quick glance down the aisle next to where the lady sat exposed an immediate problem, for still was that aisle littered with strollers, as three children were celebrating birthdays today. Rather than give those impressionable children a hint of a mistake, an exchange of head nods between Frank and Bruno signaled to Frank that he begin filling his arms with the prepared foods to bring to the lady's table. "That was impressive!" she says to Frank who deflects the praise to Bruno who must, by now, be begging for some of her sweet attention. "Can I interest you in the dessert menu?" asks Frank. Before she answered, Frank realized that, if her answer was "yes", then this was a glorious chance of involving Bruno, for he'd naturally be the one to bring her that dessert. Also this was a chance to conclusively determine who was the better waiter. "I'd like the apple cobbler please!" "Coming right up!" says Bruno. The aisle was still littered with the same strollers, so this quickly became a sole show-down for better waiter. As if the intensity wasn't high enough already, the most attractive woman said, "Now it's your turn Bruno!" She had seen Frank bring her the main course, but now it was time for Bruno to bring her dessert. As Bruno carried her dessert, the plate slipped from his grasp and came crashing to the ground.

*Zia L.*

### Freedom Through Swimming

I remember the moment I first went in the pool. I thought I was a good swimmer, but my husband told me differently on our holiday. I decided I need to register in the CHIRS swimming program right away, no time to waste! I thought that I was ready to learn, but I still panicked sometimes. Munir is very patient with me and has helped me to reach my goal to be a better swimmer. I am now very proud of my swimming abilities and so is my husband. Munir is a great team leader and I am always ready to learn from him!

*Lorraine M.*



### Venus and Jupiter

In the last 3 months or so, the planet Venus has been visible high in the west. This is a notable conjunction. Venus is the second closest planet from the sun. The planet Mercury is sometimes also visible in the west, however it isn't visible very often because it is low in the sky and close to the sun. This has been a good spring for viewing planets. The planet Jupiter has been visible for the last 3 or 4 months. It is a dazzling object through a telescope. There are at least 4 moons visible and the cloud bands are beautiful. The bottom line is that the night sky can be enjoyed by many including the amateur with the unaided eye.

*Andrey B.*





# THE BACK PAGE

## Connection

There are many things  
That connect,  
Whether it be good,  
Or bad

There are connections  
Between parents  
And their children,  
A deep, nurturing connection  
There are connections  
Between friends,  
Friends that will always  
Support you,

There are connections  
Between you  
And yourself,  
That only you can truly understand,

There are connections  
Between the enemies,  
Fighting  
To protect their comrades and beliefs,

There are connections  
Between lovers  
And haters,  
Trying to make their feelings absolute,

There are connections  
Between Earth  
And Heaven,  
Different places but both important

Connections,  
Everything is connected in some way,  
Hope, pray and believe  
They are perfect connections.

*Neil D.*

## Mindful Art



*Memory by RB*



*Anointed by Rob A.*



*Happy Girl by Ali B.*

For more Mindful Art please visit  
<http://mindfulartabi.com/>

### **In Memory Anna Carrabs**

We are saddened to announce the passing of Anna Carrabs, who died peacefully on Oct 9, 2015 at the age of 68. Anna was a beloved member of the CHIRS community. She was an advocate, and in her down to earth way brought so much joy to so many of our lives. She will be missed by all of us, especially her husband of over 30 years, Gino who 'loved her more than life itself.'

