

THE BRAINY BUGLER

Volume 14 Issue 1

Winter/Spring 2009

CHIRS 1st Annual Mentors Appreciation Luncheon!

The CHIRS Mentors are client volunteers who take a leadership role. Every day, the Mentors devote hours of their time and energy to the CHIRS community. They assist the Adult Day Services team in many ways, often “front and centre” in programs or the drop in, but also “behind the scenes” helping with planning and set up of special events. CHIRS regularly “gives back” to the Mentors by buying them dinner once a month for their team meeting, but we wanted to do something special to show them how important they are to CHIRS. The challenge was, how do you run a special event without the people who usually help make it happen? The CHIRS administration team, who know all about working behind the scenes to make operations run smoothly, stepped in to help. Formal invitations were sent out, and on April 29th, they cooked and served a delicious traditional turkey dinner.

The CHIRS 1st Annual Mentors Appreciation luncheon included a video of CHIRS staff across the agency expressing their appreciation for the Mentors. Danny Caplan presented each Mentor with a certificate of appreciation. And in true Mentor fashion, the Mentors expressed their thanks for the opportunities that the Mentor program—and CHIRS—has given them over the years.



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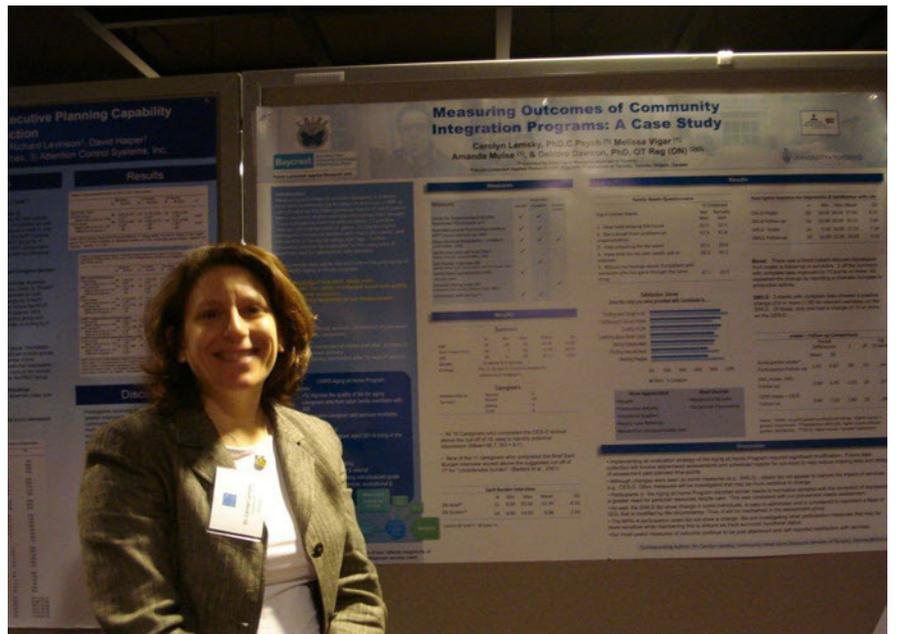
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Aldebrain Gets a New CRV! - CHIRS received funding to purchase a new Honda CRV vehicle to help support clients with their transportation needs. Congrats!

CHIRS at The Eighth World Congress on Brain Injury

At the International Brain Injury Association's Eighth World Congress on Brain Injury in Washington, DC in March of this year, CHIRS' Clinical Director, Dr. Carolyn Lemsky gave an oral presentation on her ground breaking work – Substance Abuse after Brain Injury Community of Practice: A Systems Intervention to Improve Access to Care in Ontario AND did a poster presentation 'Measuring Outcomes of Community Integration Programs – a case study' of the CHIRS Aging at Home Program. You can see Dr. Lemsky standing in front of the poster in the picture at the side.



The BBN group researched Sustainable Living and Environmental Issues, and wrote the following articles.

Environmentalism for Everybody

Lakeview power plant was located west of Etobicoke and closed down around 2004-2005. I was living next door to it, and during the summer I could see a dark cloud of smog from cars and plants. By closing down Lakeview, it was the equivalent of taking 500,000 cars off the road. I compliment the Premier, Dalton McGuinty and the Minister of Natural Resources. I've always been a political activist and a volunteer.

Where is the energy going to come from for the future? Hopefully we can wean ourselves from coal and nuclear power plants because our life depends on clean air.

In order to keep a safe environment, here are some things I try to do to stay environmentally friendly:

- I use a re-usable travel mug when I drink my coffee
- I recycle and reuse as often as I can
- I try to walk, or take public transit whenever I travel
- I donate clothing whenever I can
- I do not use or purchase plastic water bottles

I hope everybody takes care of Mother Earth.

Please.

Andrey B.



Wind Power, What it is?

It is a form of converting wind energy into other, useful forms of energy. Like using wind turbines to make electricity. Wind energy is an attractive alternative because it is plentiful, renewable, widely distributed, clean and most importantly it does not produce greenhouse gas emissions. However, not everyone agrees with the construction of wind farms because of the visual impact and other effects they have on our environment.

Effects of Wind Power on our Environment

The effect wind power has on our environment is relatively minor. Wind power consumes no fuel, emits no air pollution, and the energy used to manufacture and transport materials used to build wind farms is gained back after a short period of time. On the other hand, people worry because it may pose danger to birds and bats. However these dangers are relatively minor if compared to the deaths caused by other human activities.

History of Wind Power

Humans have been using wind power for at least 5,500 years. They have used it in Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan for irrigation, pumping and milling grain since the 7th century. Water pumping windmills were essential in the United States and around the world for farming, ranching and railroad (steam locomotive) development.

The modern wind power industry began in Denmark in 1979 with relatively small turbines. They are now all over the world and have gotten bigger and better.

Shannon Y.

Bio-Fuels In, Fossils Out

The issue of bio-fuels is a sensitive and forerunning subject in our media at the present moment. The use of fossil fuels is fast becoming an environmental nightmare. As well, it is proving to be a less than trustworthy means to sustain the current global energy demand, let alone a long term possibility.

Bio-fuels provide an alternative to standard fossil fuels because of their lessened environmental impact. They are a long term alternative to the gas-guzzling of our present society.

The use of grain based bio-fuels can reduce greenhouse emissions by up to 40 percent in a lifetime. And though the use of crops (grain, soy, etc) as a form of sustainable energy may seem daunting we must acknowledge that steps must be taken to attempt to reduce our consumption of non-sustainable resources such as fossil fuels. However, taking into account the lack of food on global markets, the use of grain based fuels would inevitably lead to increase in crop consumption. Therefore more environmentally friendly means of distributing these products could lead to increasing food prices across the global markets.. With agriculture being at the core of this country's economic functions, the export of grains as bio-diesel fuels could become a new and long range option for economic growth. As such, more and more options are being discovered for the use of bio-fuels and other long term sustainable energy methods. For the time being, perhaps we should acknowledge the need to better understand bio-diesel fuels, in accordance with the many other environmental friendly and sustainable alternatives available to us all.

Rachelle D.

CHIRS at THE WWE!

Mirko, who runs a wrestling group at the Club on Thursday afternoons, had an idea: Why not go and see the matches live? He did some research and found out that the World Wrestling Entertainment (WWE) was coming to the Air Canada Centre on Monday May 17.

So far so good. ... When he looked into getting tickets he found out that they were way out of our price range.

Now, that would've stopped most people. ...

But not Mirko... He decided to write a letter to the WWE head office in Connecticut.

And they responded by donating 10 tickets (7th row!!)to the sold out event.

From all of us who attended, thanks a million Mirko. We had a great time!





2010 St. Patrick's Day Run/Walk



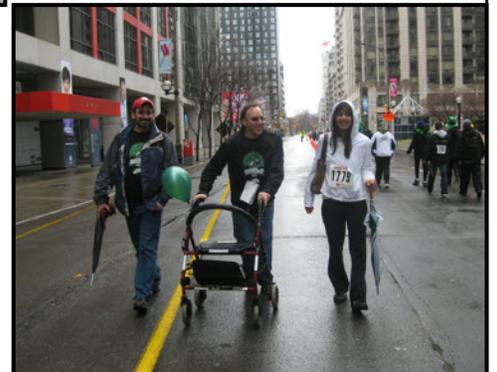
The St. Patrick's Day Run/Walk is an annual fundraiser hosted by Achilles Canada, a non-profit organization that provides people with various disabilities an opportunity to receive the physical, psychological, and communal benefits of running.



This year, the CHIRS community braved the rain and the time change to make this event both a success and super fun day for all! Just look at all the smiling faces!



*"The St. Pat's walk was good! It's great exercise for one and all."
Sandra S.*



"The event was rainy, but full of energy, excitement... and when you can encourage others, that's inspirational!" Rob A.



"It was great! It's nice to walk and get some fresh air. I made it pretty far... but then I was picked up by Wheel-trans on the way back!" David M.



A very special thanks to all who participated!



Spring...

The Spring Fling this year was a Totally Rad 80's Dance. They had bright coloured cupcakes that were yummy! The music was awesome and I danced with all the girls! The decorations were great and everyone had different styles from the 80's on. Simon H won for best costume.

Everyone danced in their own funky way. There was a dance contest which was won by Donna W. A great time was had by all!

Gail C and Jason G



Fling! 2010



A Short Story.....

Good idea!

“We can’t let them see this” says Karim, as beside him, his nodding sister filled the hamper with clothes from the floor. Once the hamper was full she decided to open a window to capitalize on these summer-like conditions in March. Expected in ten minutes were their parents, and after watching Aliyah frantically firing clothes into the hamper Karim joined by filling that same hamper with clothes missed by Aliyah in the rush. Should their parents witness clothes strewn across the floor they’d label them unfit of living alone, so to preserve this independence their parents must believe them capable of living together. Both realize how a tidy apartment is an awfully convincing statement. A shirt, fired by an unbalanced Aliyah was intercepted by Karim, who after furthering it from his nose, said, “Hey, this one’s still clean!”

“Let ‘em figure it out” spouts a laughing Aliyah.

Suspecting time had elapsed prompted Karim to begin approaching the door, but sneaking a peek at his wrist only left him without confirmation, so next he scanned the apartment’s surroundings for that needed confirmation. When unsuccessful, a deafening hush, only broken by the unnerving knock of the front door, permeated through the apartment.

“Mom and Dad are here,” stuttered Aliyah while staring at Karim. Karim’s contribution was a shrugging of his shoulders while obscuring his face with his hand.

“Is that the only ‘hello’ you can muster?” asks his father while intercepted in the doorway. “I’m shielding my eyes from sunlight,” says a quick witted Karim while nudging his sister.

“You make it sound like it’s a bad thing.”

“No, I’m enjoying it,” says Karim. “Good, let’s go enjoy an early summer’s day,” says Aliyah while returning that nudge.

Zia L

Epilepsy Awareness Day

Epilepsy Awareness Day fell on March 26th this year and the nation was encouraged to “Take the Purple Challenge!” and raise awareness for Epilepsy. Taking on the challenge, the CHIRS community tried to “out-purple” each other in a friendly competition to see who could wear the most purple. Epilepsy Toronto held an online photo submission contest. The categories were: most creative, most original, most stylish and the most funky. Our own Rowen B. won the most funky category, going all out purple to raise awareness. Well done and many thanks to everyone who participated!



Peter's Trip to Florida

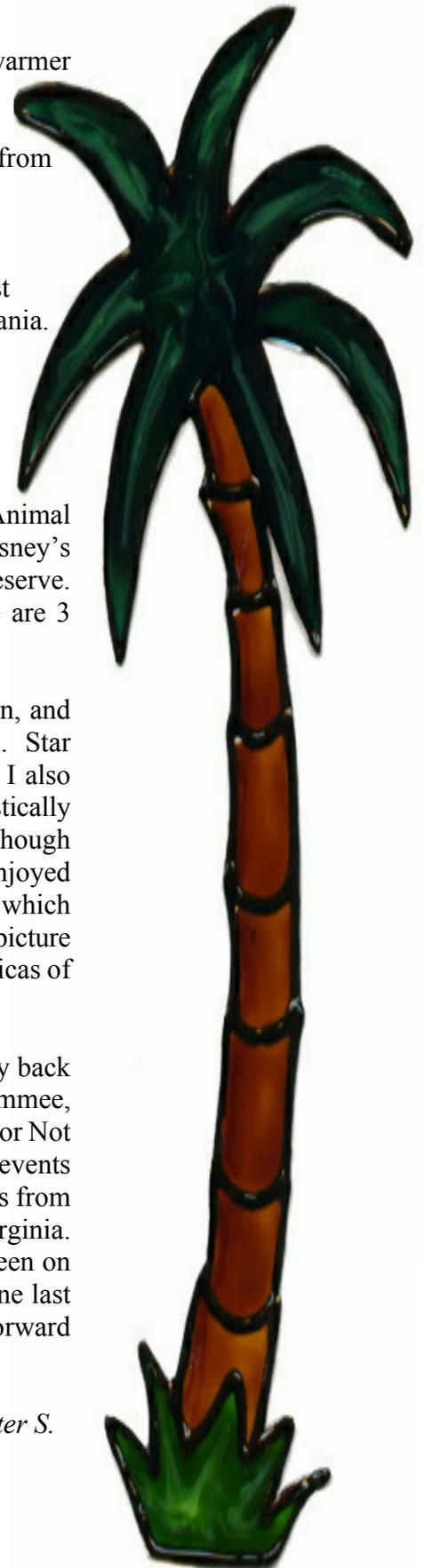
The more south we drove, the greener the scenery got. The weather got a little warmer as we got closer and closer to our destination. We drove from Toronto through Buffalo, then New York to Florida. It took us three days to get there, but we were happy to be in a warmer place. Although we were driving away from cold weather, we still had to wear jackets for a few days. But as our vacation progressed, the weather got warmer, and we wore t-shirts, shorts, and sandals.

Along the way we stopped at many outlet malls to do some shopping. The first and our favourite mall was the Prime Outlets located in Grove City, Pennsylvania.

As soon as we reached Florida, we got our keys to the room and checked ourselves in. We were tired, but were energized by the sight of the animals that were living around the hotel. There were flamingos, buffalo, many types of birds and fish. We didn't have to go to Animal Kingdom because there were so many animals on the hotel property. We stayed at the Disney's Animal Kingdom Lodge. It is a deluxe resort that opened on April 16th, 2001. Disney's Animal Kingdom is an African lodge-style resort nestled in a huge wildlife reserve. We were amazed by the breath taking African-inspired architecture. There are 3 dining areas, and we mostly dined at the Mara restaurant.

After a rest, we went to MGM studios, the Epcot Centre, the Europe Pavilion, and Hollywood Studios. My favourite ride is still Star Tours which I never miss. Star Tours is a full-motion flight simulator ride based on the Star Wars movies. I also enjoyed the mission space ride, which is another motion simulator ride that realistically mimics what an astronaut might experience during a space flight to Mars. Although I liked trying this new ride, I won't be going again next year! Another ride I enjoyed was the Great Movie Ride. Guests are ushered into vehicles resembling trains which take you on a journey through some of the most memorable moments in motion picture history with the use of film footage, special effects and audio-animatronic replicas of legendary movie stars.

We wished we could stay in Florida longer, but sadly we had to make our way back home. On the way through Florida, we stopped in a few places such as Kissimmee, Daytona and St. Augustine. In St. Augustine we stopped at Ripley's Believe it or Not Museum, the first one in the world to open! This museum showcased bizarre events and replicas of people and creatures. It was fun distinguishing the real displays from those that were fake. We then drove through Georgia, North Carolina and Virginia. In Pennsylvania we encountered quite a lot of snow, something we had not seen on the drive down. On our last night we stayed over in Niagara Falls and did one last day of shopping in the rain. Even though we had a great trip I was looking forward to sleeping in my own bed again!



Peter S.

Awareness Articles

Toronto Rehabilitation Foundation

The Toronto Rehab Foundation supports a cause that is important to me as I am currently a resident at The Toronto Rehab Institute (TRI). I have lived in the Complex Continuing Care unit, on the 5th floor, since 1985. Toronto Rehab provides twenty four hours a day, seven days a week nursing care. The overall goal at TRI is to advance rehabilitation and enhance quality of life. Toronto Rehab Foundation was established to improve TRI's facilities, equipment, and resources, as well as fund further research.

Since the ripe age of 10, I have been a guitar picker. This has helped me with my struggles living with brain injury. TRI has also helped me with my struggle with brain injury. I enjoy the friendly staff and the programs they offer. I have three fellow roommates and have made good friendships with them.

Dave B.

Kindred Spirits

I met my best friend, Judy, in my first year of high school and we quickly became "kindred spirits." We were inseparable, agonizing over boyfriends and what to wear to a school dance. When we graduated (me to take a communications program and she to become a school teacher), we pursued our individual careers and lost touch for a few years. I married, had a daughter and a son and then Judy did too, quickly having three girls in a row! Life was wonderful until Judy's husband died suddenly from a heart attack. I had just had my aneurysm and was in no shape to attend his funeral. Judy went back to teaching and has raised her daughters to be beautiful, spirited individuals. She has also shown me great kindness and sympathy, while every day must be a struggle for her. My best friend Judy is indeed my kindred spirit.

Note: Every year 1 in 5 North Americans is affected by a brain aneurysm, which is an abnormal bulging outward of one of the arteries in the brain. It has taken me fifteen years to partially recover from its devastating effects.

Jill H.

Animal Care

People own pets for many reasons, sometimes for a faithful companion which is always by their side. Owning an animal involves a lot because you have to give them exercise, clean their living area and feed them (both food and water). When you observe that your pet is not exhibiting its usual traits, it may be time to get your pet to see a vet. Do not say this to your animal out loud though as animals have an innate sense of these things and can be difficult when faced with the unwanted trip to the vet.

When you go on vacation and won't be able to care for your pet, arrange for someone to look after them (either ask friends or put them in a kennel). My wife and I own a rabbit and when we go away we use an agency called House And Home Minder. They send a person that we are comfortable with to come into our house and care for Scotch (our rabbit).

What really troubles me is when I hear of people who buy animals for their children as a novelty, and when the novelty wears off the pet gets abandoned. This is not fair to the pet as it gets used to an environment and then has to adapt to a new one. Worse still is when that animal is abused or poisoned. At this point I get really mad as I can't understand what makes a person think this way. Sometimes I cry.

Rachelle D.

Out of sight realism

John Lennon glasses, Elvis Costello frames,
Cost me some money but I'm not ashamed
At Yonge and Bloor I got a book mark, in
my mind it lit a spark
If you don't have your sight your world is
not right

How do you read, How do you write, How
do you move around without your sight
Many factors really that did not happen
overnight

Being blind is a cause, let us take a pause
Educate, Speculate
And if we do that, the world will be in a
better state!!

Rob A.

Ladies First Hockey Foundation

How many of you know about the Ladies First Foundation? More than likely, none of you. This is why womens' hockey remains an afterthought in our county despite the excellence, skill and drive of the women playing our national pastime. But for those of us who follow our national womens' hockey, we know just how good they are.

That is why a group of veterans from the National Womens' Hockey formed this organization. It was started by volunteers and continues to thrive and gain recognition. Two golf tournaments held throughout the year serve to raise funds for the women's team, enabling them to afford tournament fees, transportation costs, and living expenses. The types of expenses are well known to members of the Board, as some of them are players (both past and present) on the team itself.

There are gold tournaments to help raises the funds necessary to support the women playing. And there is also an opportunity to buy official team merchandise on the team's official website.

Together with communities, families and friends this organization is gaining momentum and recognition within Canada and the hockey world. After all, you need only look at the growing number of girls playing hockey, as well at the growing number of women in general who are adopting the love of this sport to realize just how important the Ladies First Hockey Foundation really is.

Rachelle D.

Mental Illness

I would like to write about mental illness. I was diagnosed with mental illness in 1995. I had to move back home briefly, even though I had a job and a bachelor's apartment. But I just couldn't handle reality. I had tried to find work. I had to keep busy by walking and resuming life. Otherwise, I would go crazy. I had to meet new friends. I leaped in front of an oncoming train to try and end my life. I bounced off the front of the train and landed on the platform. It was a miracle that a subway employee called 9-1-1. I was driven to St. Mike's hospital. I was hooked up to a ventilator and feeding tube, and couldn't function normally. But with the help of my family and friends, I was comforted. I was living, but I had problems with money management. I am doing much better! I'm happy to be alive!

Andrey B.

The Importance of Diabetes Awareness

Diabetes is a very important disease to understand because it is the fourth leading cause of death in the world. There are two types of diabetes; type 1 and type 2. When your pancreas can not produce the hormone insulin it is likely that you have type 1 diabetes. Insulin helps prevent glucose (sugar) from being built up in the blood and it allows us to use glucose for energy. Researchers still do not know the cause for type 1 diabetes. This type of diabetes is usually diagnosed before the age of 30. Type 2 diabetes is diagnosed when your body cannot produce enough insulin or cannot use the insulin that is produced. One is usually diagnosed with type 2 diabetes later in life. Type 2 diabetes is preventable. We can prevent ourselves from developing type 2 diabetes by eating a healthy diet, exercising, and taking care of ourselves.

We can help individuals with diabetes by donating our used clothing to the Canadian Diabetes Association through Clothesline. Not only does this help individuals gain a better quality of life, but we are also being environmentally friendly by reusing clothes. The Diabetes Association also accepts cell phone and PDA donations. These donations are practical and cost-effective.

Shannon Y.

Love

If we are going to talk about causes I have one that I feel is very important. As people, I know when we feel love we feel good about ourselves, I am talking about love in its purest form and not an abusive love.

Love is being soul mates, knowing what each other feels for each other without using words. When two people are together, and you know from the way they interact that it is so right. Sometimes I will watch a romantic movie and all of a sudden have to search out a box of Kleenex (hopeless romantic).

Amanda, my wife and I love to walk on the boardwalk hand in hand. Along the boardwalk there are several benches. I happened to walk by one bench and noticed a plaque with an inscription that told of a lady who passed away due to illness. Every morning she would sit on this bench under a tree overlooking the lake. It was at this time she felt joy, peace, solace serenity.

The bench was dedicated to her from all her many friends and I closed my eyes and imagined the overwhelming love that all her friends had for her. Now, if I say love is the answer I hope you feel that too!!!!!!!

Rob.A.

THE BACK PAGE

POETRY

BY DONNA WAINRIGHT

Joy of Life

Having a cup of tea; without any talk about your mark.
Nor having any fishes slipping in your path
Joy of life is cutting it with your knife.
Not feeling hungry, or in time to have a story.
Joy of life is the aroma of flowers filling the air.
Joy of life isn't hearing about crime, but knowing that somebody cares.
With drinking hot liquids that might leave you down.
Joy of life is sleeping in bed; without worrying about who's dead.

Lonesome

Being on your own, without someone showing how much they care for you.
Knowing how lonesome you are, not trying to do anything with someone else.
All you wanted is somebody's previous arm around your holy skin.
Ghost stew is for Halloween only for ghosts to use made of black bugs and buffalo chest.
Used to scar foolish ones who scar little ones.
Showing no care, but think of Angels everywhere.
Nor paying no attention with filling the room with silence.

SUDOKU!

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Congrats are in order for a fine group of CHIRS staff for reaching new employment milestones! Rohan T., Christine D., Audrey M., Wayne W. and Gabriel S. have been with CHIRS for 5 years! Pam K., Rachelle G., Betty M. and Benedict E. have been with CHIRS for 10 years! Last, but not least, Glenda J. has been with CHIRS for 15 years! CHEERS to you all!



Have you heard the latest? The next BBN Deadline for your articles, pictures and ideas is....August 15, 2010.