

CHAP[®] Connections

Autumn / Winter 2004

CHAP[®] Program — respiteservices.com

Volume 2, Issue 2

LASTING CONNECTIONS by Carissa Chapman

Your Life
is an
Adventure!



Enjoy a tiny
Adventurous
moment,
Close to home.
It changes your
perspective,
Reminding you
that the world
Is deep and rich
and full of
Colour and miracles.

SARK

www.planetsark.com

Since the age of three years old, I have been an aspiring teacher. My experiences have thus reflected this aspiration, leading me over the years into such endeavours as tutoring, coaching, and instructing sports skills camps. My interaction with the CHAP Program continues my involvement with animated learning environments and provides another source of pride and accomplishment in my life; also giving rise to countless moments of laughter and fun, hysterical moments and amazing memories.



I have been a CHAP worker for a few years, and am currently working with three families. With two families, I provide assistance where needed, often taking siblings off by themselves or helping with errands. The other family requires more specific use of my skills and I spend the majority of my time working solely with their son. Despite differences in how I spend my time with each family, I hold very strong working and personal relationships with each one. This, for me, is the key to providing the best possible experience for the family, as well as being an enriching part of my own existence.

My passions in life are teaching, children and sports. These were either decided from a young age or

are a reflection of my most powerful life experiences. I like to think it was a bit of both! Regardless with what ability or in which situation I may find myself, my three passions are where I see myself making a difference in our world. They are the ties that bind, and I strive to incorporate my love of sport and teaching into the work I do with children. I have found that this personal approach not only adds excitement, but often sparks a new interest. It is in these moments where I am filled with the greatest pride: seeing a child completely immersed in learning a skill or grasping a new concept.

From my experiences over the past few years, I have learned that skill development and building self-esteem are common goals that I share with parents. Expectations vary from family to family, but having a genuine interest in their child is often enough to start building a more productive plan of action. My most valuable tool is communication with the parents. Not only does this provide guidance when needed, but I am able to monitor changing expectations and occasionally provide another opinion on arising issues.

As rewarding as it is challenging, being involved in respite care has been a constant reminder of how

complex our world is on social emotional and intellectual levels. It is easy to overlook the simplicities that are there to appreciate in the everyday. For me, the ideal balance is found sharing in the investigative wonder of a child and watching them develop at their own pace. Being affiliated with the CHAP Program has provided me with invaluable experience not only for future teaching opportunities, but for interacting with all of humanity.



I am unfortunately in the process of saying goodbye to my surrogate families, as I am off to supplement my credentials at teacher's college this fall. However, I leave with the comfort in knowing that the bonds I have formed with these amazing people are not ones that can be severed by distance or time; they are indeed connections that will last a lifetime.



News and Bulletins

Tell me, I'll forget.

Show me, I may
remember,

but involve me and
I'll understand.

Welcome Back! Join us in welcoming Anna Marie Teasdale back to Respite Services, she rejoins us after a year off to further her schooling. She will resume her position as the Access Facilitator for Autism.

Cheerio! We will be saying a temporary goodbye to Lynn Noble, CHAP Coordinator and Access Facilitator for Adults as she takes time off beginning in October to travel. Please join us in welcoming Meagan Blunt to the position of CHAP Coordinator and Adult Access Facilitator.

Resources! Our Resource website will be going live and all CHAP workers are invited to share their resources with fellow workers. Please include articles and items such as books, places to visit, activities and videos.

Recruitment! Look for us at your University or College's career fairs. CHAP will be there actively recruiting workers. Remember to pass on information about the CHAP Program to your friends and family members as well and encourage them to send in a resume.

respiteservices.com is hosting the **Respite Information Fair 2004** at the Geneva Centre for Autism, 112 Merton Street, Toronto. Agencies and Families will come together to share information and learn about respite options in Toronto. The Fair will run on Saturday, October 23 and Sunday, October 24, 2004 from 10:00 – 4:00. We are interested in hearing from CHAP workers who would be available to provide child care for families during the Fair. The child care will be provided at the Geneva Centre for Autism. If interested please contact a CHAP Coordinator at 416-322-6317 ext 3, 4 or 6.

OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN A YOUNG ADULT'S LIFE!

Dear Tatjana,

Thanks to the excellent recruiting support provided by the CHAP team we have been able over the last (4+) years to consistently find excellent workers for our (30) year old daughter with autism, Chantal.

We have always advertised the position as an opportunity to make a difference in a young adult's life and we are happy to say that each worker has taken on that challenge very successfully. Chantal has been able to develop her gross motor skills and increase her level of participation in the community as a result of the excellent guidance, supervision and companionship provided on a part time basis over the years by as many as (6) different workers.

When we say different we really mean it. Each worker represents a different nationality (i.e. British, Swedish, Dominican, Indian, American, German) and brings to the assignment different professional backgrounds (i.e. Registered Nurse, Certified Child Care Worker, Physiotherapist, Teacher, Naturopath). Their rich and diversified educational backgrounds have allowed Chantal to experience life more fully in the community.

What do we look for in a part-time worker/companion for Chantal?

- (a) a high level of enthusiasm and dedication to the assignment
- (b) St. John ambulance or comparable emergency care certification
- (c) Appropriate educational qualifications in a field of developmental services (i.e. child care, nursing...)
- (d) Resourcefulness and initiative in executing the different elements of Chantal's life plan over which they have a direct influence.



To summarize it in one sentence, the best candidates are qualified to handle an emergency with poise, are tremendously enthusiastic about the possibility of improving Chantal's basic living skills and quality of life and constantly exhibit much creativity and initiative in finding new activities which further Chantal's progress and enjoyment.

We take this opportunity to salute you and your team and our workers Helena, Angie, Celia, Briar, Kristina and Rita for the outstanding support they have provided to Chantal and us over the last (4+) years.

Marie and Jacques Guilbault

Upcoming Events and Workshops

Aug 6—Dec 13, 2004

Event: **Snoezelen Training**

Agency: Bloorview MacMillan Children's Centre

Sept 20, 2004

Event: **Emergency First Aid and CPR**

Agency: respiteservices.com

Oct 22, 2004

Event: **CHAP Orientation**

Agency: respiteservices.com

Nov 9, 2004

Event: **CHAP Orientation**

Agency: respiteservices.com

Dec 2 & 9

Event: **Behaviour Management**

Agency: Reena

Sep 16, 2004

Event: **CPI—Non-Violent Crisis Intervention**

Agency: Geneva Centre for Autism

Sept 22, 2004

Event: **CHAP Orientation**

Agency: respiteservices.com

Oct 23—Oct 24, 2004

Event: **respiteservices.com**

Respite Information Fair

Agency: respiteservices.com

Nov 10—12, 2004

Event: **Geneva Centre for Autism**

International Symposium

Agency: Geneva Centre for Autism

Dec 15, 2004

Event: **CHAP Orientation**

Agency: respiteservices.com

CHECK THE WEBSITE FOR MORE INFORMATION ON WORKSHOPS & EVENTS!

If you would like to attend an event or have further questions, please contact Natalie Blackwell at nblackwell@respiteservices.com or 416 322 6317 ext 7. Please check the website information for any cost associated with the workshop and make your cheque payable to the Geneva Centre for Autism.

Community Helpers for Active Participation

THE RESULTS ARE IN.....

Here are your responses from the survey that we did last update:

- * On Average, you have been working with the CHAP program for 2 years.
- * 76% have connected with families
- * 86% felt that your expectations have been met with the CHAP program.
- * 87% gained the experience they were looking for.

Suggestions you had for other workers

- * Maintain on-going, honest communication.
- * Every once and a while have a meeting or telephone call with the parents to go over ideas and make sure you're on the same page.
- * To be flexible with the families that you work with, this may include doing the laundry or cleaning once in a while to help the family out.
- * Be clear about your needs and expectations and ensure you understand the family's expectations and needs as well.
- * CHAP workers should always be welcoming and accessible.
- * Have a communication book so that families know exactly what happened on a specific day.
- * Explore your environment; Toronto has a lot of wonderful opportunities for you and the person you're supporting.
- * Be positive and give 100% all of the time.

Suggestions you had for the chap program

- * Having workshops/networking on the weekend.
- * To have an on-line chat room for workers to communicate and share ideas.
- * Communicating with the families can be difficult especially when language barriers exist, they're not clear of their responsibilities and/or cannot provide direction.

Thank you for participating in the survey. Your feedback and suggestions are appreciated.

CHAP® Program – respiteservices.com

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We would like to hear from you! Any suggestions for the newsletter? Do you have information to share with other CHAP workers? Do you have any questions you would like answers to? Have you discovered a great resource that other workers may want to know about? Please forward your comments to a CHAP Coordinator.