

# CHAP Connections

Autumn 2003

CHAP Program — [respiteservices.com](http://respiteservices.com)

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## Portfolio Opportunities



One of the goals of the CHAP Program is to connect families with knowledgeable and experienced workers to provide respite care and skill development for their son/daughter.

One way CHAP does this, is by offering opportunities for workers to attend various workshops and training sessions.

This summer, the CHAP Program, in collaboration with cluster members of [respiteservices.com](http://respiteservices.com), organized a three day "Skill Building Series". It consisted of eight workshops to give workers a well rounded set of skills and working knowledge to use when supporting individuals and their families.

The "Skill Building Series" workshops include:

1. Communicating Through Behaviour
2. Principles of Back Care
3. Feeding Tube and Seizure Care
4. Human Growth and Development
5. Ability and Integration Awareness
6. Creating Friendly Environments
7. Abuse Awareness
8. Working With Families

Each participant was given a certificate listing all workshops with a stamp beside those workshops attended.

For workers who were not able to take advantage of this opportunity or were unable to attend all the workshops offered, we hope to have the "Skill Building Series" workshops available at various points throughout the year. All workshops that are included in the series will be marked as such on the calendar of events, which you can find on page 3.

A certificate of participation will be given out at the end of each workshop/training session. Once participants have attended all the "Skill Building Series" workshops they will receive a personalized certificate of completion.

If you are a worker who attended the summer sessions and already have a certificate, remember to bring the certificate when you attend workshops in the "Skill Building Series" to have it stamped for completion!

This certificate is a great addition to a portfolio and illustrates your commitment to providing the best possible care!

## A Parents Perspective

I'm a single mother with 2 children. My adult son lives in Ottawa, and comes over for holidays. My teenaged daughter lives with me and needs assistance in all activities and daily routines. She needs 24 hour supervision due to her seizures.

It would be impossible for me to survive without respite workers, not only physically, but emotionally and psychologically as well. With CHAP, both my daughter and I can choose who works with her. This makes me rest easier. I see how she interacts with the prospective

worker, and base my decision on that. When my daughter is with her CHAP worker, I can get much needed rest, sleep, and do errands. I can recharge my batteries.

Now that I'm in my fifties, I need a worker to help out as it is becoming harder to lift my daughter. It's important that the worker can lift her so that she can get some exercise. Punctuality is big, as we are often on a schedule with Wheel Trans, and the worker has to have her ready to get on the bus. My daughter can get bored easily, so imagination, inventiveness, and

a sense of humour are needed. Responsibility is also key. Worker duties cannot be taken lightly.

CHAP is perfect for me, an essential service. For my daughter, it is hard to make friends. This program gives her needed social contact, and a chance at friendship. CHAP Parent

"Excellence is the result of caring more than others think is wise; risking more than others think is safe; dreaming more than others think is practical; and expecting more than others think is possible." Author Unknown

## News and Bulletins

"We make a living  
by what we get, we  
make a life by what  
we give"

Sir Winston  
Churchill

**Who are we?** Your CHAP Coordinators are: Ingrid Clifford, Tatjana Smrekar and the newest member to the team, Lynn Noble. Sadly, Patrick Fraser will be leaving the CHAP Program as of September 12, 2003. We wish him luck with his future endeavors! Kristy Frais, who some of you seasoned workers may remember, has made a move outside of the Toronto area and has resigned from her position as a coordinator. She will be missed!

**Recruitment!** Look for us at your school. We will be participating in various career fairs throughout the school year. In the fall, we will be attending the York and Ryerson Career Fair's. If you're in the neighbourhood stop by and say hello!

**Other Respite Options!** Are you working with a family that would benefit from out-of-home respite? We can help! Have them call one of our Access Facilitators at 416-322-6317.

**New Home!** We have now moved into our new home at 112 Merton Street.

**Referrals!** Do you have a friend that is interested in becoming a CHAP worker? Encourage them to send in their resume, we are always on the look out for experienced workers.

## A CHAP Workers Story

I arrived in Toronto one year ago, to embark upon my journey as a graduate student of occupational therapy. One of my first priorities: employment to supplement my canned beans budget. Hearing about CHAP from a fellow student, I submitted my resume, as much of my past experience had fallen within the realm of respite care.

To date, I have been happily working as a CHAP worker. Over the course of the past year, I have been actively involved with three different families and my responsibilities have tended to vary, depending on the unique needs of each family and child. Responsibilities have included the development of social skills and vocabulary through play therapy, the facilitation of physical activity (i.e. basketball, swimming) to improve upper body strength, tutoring school work, and of course, occasional trips

to candy stores and fun day trips! The families that I have worked with have become amazing friends. I am treated as 'one of their own' exchanging gifts on holidays, being sent care-packages and being invited to family functions such as recitals, BBQ's and parties.

To the families that I work with, I believe 'respite' to mean 'relief'. The time that I spend with the children that I work with offers parents opportunity to have time for themselves, however they chose to spend it. To the children that I work with, I believe 'respite' to mean a visit from a fun friend, a good time that will no doubt involve sugar and laughing (okay, and maybe a bit of spelling, math and some expectations of good behav-

our)...but hey!

If I was to share any tips with potential CHAP workers, I would suggest that you have your family clearly define your role. This role should include a discussion of expectations that you may have of their child. There will be times when you will have to discipline the child for example. Talk to the parents about how they would prefer you to deal with particular situations, as a consistent approach with many children is the most effective and easiest way for the child to process information. Additionally, love the family that you are with! There are many different families who need support. Search until you find a perfect match, both parties will gain the most from such an experience!

Take care, and enjoy your time with each other! CHAP Worker



## Upcoming Events and Workshops

Sept 16, 2003

Event: **CHAP Orientation**

Agency: respiteservices.com

Sept 19—Nov 18, 2003

Event: **Snoezelen**

Agency: Bloorview Macmillan Children's Centre

Oct 15, 2003

Event: **CHAP Orientation**

Agency: respiteservices.com

Nov 10, 2003

Event: **Emergency First Aid and CPR**

Agency: respiteservices.com

Dec 11, 2003

Event: **CHAP Orientation**

Agency: respiteservices.com

Sept 17—Dec 10, 2003

Event: **\*Child Abuse and Neglect**

Agency: Children's Aid Society of Toronto

Sept 25, 2003—Jan 9, 2004

Event: **Autism Training**

Agency: Geneva Centre for Autism

Oct 20, 2003

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

Agency: respiteservices.com

Nov 11, 2003

Event: **CHAP Orientation**

Agency: respiteservices.com

### UPCOMING WORKSHOPS:

Event: **Play Therapy**

Agency: Geneva Centre for Autism

Event: **\*Communicating through Behaviours**

Agency: Erinoak

Event: **\*Ability and Integration Awareness**

Agency: Recreation Facilitator

**\*Workshops marked with an asterisk are part of the "Skill Building Series".**

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](mailto: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

## Helpful Tips

Making good solid connections is a vital part of making in-home respite work. There are numerous components that are needed to solidify the connection between families and workers, and sometimes they can be challenging. The difficulty can often stem from the unfamiliarity of this new relationship. Feeling unsure and maybe at times nervous is often a part of the process.

What can you do facilitate the connection you ask? Here are some helpful tips from CHAP families and workers to start you down the road to a good solid connection.

“Before an interview with a family, make sure to ask what it is they need from a worker and likewise, tell them what you can provide. Also, make sure your availability matches their needs. This will save you and the family time before you even reach the interview stage.” **CHAP Worker**

“I think one of the most important things to do when you meet the family is to ask them to explain what they want and what they expect from you.” **CHAP Worker**

“Be willing to have an open mind and learn” **CHAP Parent**

“Give as much notice as possible to the family if you plan to resign because you've found another job, your school work precludes you from working those hours, etc. There's nothing worst for parents when they find out from the worker that they won't be back the next week. It creates an enormous amount of stress on the family and child.” **CHAP Parent**

“Offer some information about yourself that helps to build trust” **CHAP Worker**

“Please let workers know they should return calls even if they are not interested” **CHAP Parent**

“Let families know what your skills and capabilities are so your duties can be set up accordingly.” **CHAP Worker**

“Please realize that the reality out there is that parents are often unable to pay the rates demanded by support workers. It's unfortunate that many families receiving Special Services At Home funding from the government receive only enough to pay an hourly rate of \$8-12 whereas it seems that increasingly individuals seeking work are looking for work that pays in the \$12-20 range. This discrepancy makes it difficult for families to find and hire workers as well as to keep workers.” **CHAP Parent**

## Things to Remember



- ◆ Many community recreational options have a reduced or waived admission cost for respite workers or individuals with a disability. Don't forget to inquire!
- ◆ Be sure to sign SSAH invoice forms on a regular basis, to keep the family reimbursed, and the worker paid. Keep a record of payment!
- ◆ First Aid/CPR expires after 2 years of issue, so consider whether or not you need to renew.
- ◆ Contact a program coordinator with any changes to your information including availability, contact information, attendance at a workshop or training session or when you have agreed to work with a family. Remember to tell us the family's name and the times and days you are working.

**CHAP Program – [respiteservices.com](http://respiteservices.com)**

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Website: [www.respiteservices.com](http://www.respiteservices.com)

- ◆ Contact families as soon as you hear from them regardless of your availability to provide support. Parents appreciate a yes or no answer as opposed to no answer at all!

We would like to hear from you! Let us know what you think about 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? How often would you like to receive the newsletter? Please forward your comments to a CHAP Coordinator to be included in the next issue.