

# Care in Action

MARCH OF DIMES CANADA NEWSLETTER

2015

## In My Own Words – My Daughter Ashleigh

*Beth Robbins is an artist with a keen interest in exploring the interplay between creativity and healing. As a retired nurse and mother of an extraordinary special needs child, she attended art classes with her daughter as a form of therapy for Ashleigh and to deepen their mother-daughter bond. What blossomed was Beth's own awe and wonder at the beauty and interconnectedness of life.*



*Beth has donated a series of her beautiful images to March of Dimes Canada as a token of her gratitude for the care and support Ashleigh and the family receives from the organization.*

*Beth talks about March of Dimes and her very special family.*

I think I first heard about March of Dimes Canada when my daughter, Ashleigh, was a young child or perhaps, it may have been even earlier, during my teens. I recall hearing that March of Dimes was an organization working with individuals with physical challenges.

Fast forward many years later to 2009 when I met up with March of Dimes again, but this time truly began to understand in a profoundly significant way the many and substantial roles they play in so many people's lives, as well as in Ashleigh's and mine. Ashleigh had finished school and a one-year life skills program at our local community

college but due to her multiple disabilities was still completely dependent on me. I was not only her mom but her caregiver, private nurse, speech therapist, social convenor, chauffeur, work placement facilitator... the list went on. Whatever the need, I was there for her with an open and loving heart determined to help. However, her utter dependence on me became a source of great concern. What would become of Ashleigh should I become seriously ill or die? How would this affect her, her life, her well-being? How would she fend for herself?

Fortunately, one of the organizations I reached out to was the March of Dimes' Acquired Brain Injury Services. After a couple of months of preparations, Ashleigh moved into her own apartment, supported by staff and programming from March of Dimes. She hasn't looked back. All of these steps to Ashleigh's independence and sense of self-worth have been encouraged and supported by March of Dimes Canada. She hasn't looked back.

What impresses me about March of Dimes? March of Dimes isn't concerned about impressing; they are making a difference, they are changing lives for the better, they are leaving an imprint; they care.

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# Gifts from the Heart

## Istvan and Barbara Haas Fund – Legacy Donation

In 2012, March of Dimes received a significant bequest from a long-time donor who wished to see his gift increase the independence of Canadians living with disabilities. From this, was born the Istvan and Barbara Haas Fund, a memorial tribute to the late parents of Mr. John Haas, who were Holocaust survivors.

Through a series of competitions across Canada, the Istvan and Barbara Haas Fund has granted between \$10,000 - \$15,000 to successful candidates, towards recreational devices or vehicle retrofits. Mr. Haas directed that funds should be allocated to the acquisition of assistive technology, for people whose needs are both physical and financial.

Each recipient has pledged to use the retrofit or assistive device to not only become more independent, but to benefit his/her community as well.

In 2013, a vehicle retrofit was awarded to a family in Halifax, Nova Scotia, and two families in Summerland, British Columbia, one with a young girl living with cerebral palsy and a polio survivor.

In 2014, the initiative provided vehicle retrofits in Nova Scotia and British Columbia, an assistive recreational device in Quebec, and expanded in 2015 to include another vehicle retrofit in Alberta.

Vehicle modifications allow people living with disabilities the freedom of mobility, as well as access to and participation in the community that so many of us take for granted – but modifications can be prohibitively expensive, and out of reach for those with limited or fixed incomes.

This wonderful gift has left a lasting legacy, and will continue to touch families and create a ripple effect far beyond what the late John Haas could have imagined. For that March of Dimes Canada is enormously grateful.



**Alberta Retrofit winner David D'Amour with his sister Danielle, and Mary Lynne Stewart, National Director of Fund Development & Communications and Andria Spindel, President and CEO**

### YOUR SUPPORT

Because you care ... because you give ... March of Dimes Canada delivers life-changing programs and services to children and adults with disabilities across Canada. Please continue to support our mission.

### Ways to Give

Consider these ways to donate:

- ▶ Make a **monthly** gift. Monthly gifts are a convenient, automatic and effect way to give that reduces administrative costs.
- ▶ Make an **Annual Gift**.
- ▶ Make a **Legacy Gift** in honour or in memory of a loved one.

### More Ways to Help

There are many other ways to give to March of Dimes Canada, including planned gifts, gifts of securities and corporate gifts. For more information, call Donor Relations at 1-800-263-DIME (3463) or visit us at [www.marchofdimes.ca/donate](http://www.marchofdimes.ca/donate).



**Quebec Retrofit Initiative Winner Andre Bougie coaching and playing electric wheelchair soccer in his new equipment**

# Rock for Dimes



Rock for Dimes Calgary

For a decade, amateur musicians have been trading in their suits and ties for ripped jeans and guitars in March of Dimes Canada's battle of the bands fundraiser - Rock for Dimes. What began in 2005 as a single fundraising event

in Toronto has grown into a national, multi-city event that has raised over \$1.2 million for Canadians living with disabilities.

Rock for Dimes allows these musicians to blend their love of performing with philanthropy, living out their rock star dreams while supporting a great cause. Some of the judges who have volunteered their time include Dave Genn from 54/40, Mike Reno from Loverboy, Jeremy Taggart from Our Lady Peace, Josh Trager from Sam Roberts Band and Tyler Stewart from the Barenaked Ladies.

"It is an honour and a blast to be involved in Rock for Dimes year after year. The cause is wonderful of course, but what keeps me coming back is the fact that the corporate bands are so obviously having the times of their lives," says Dave Genn of 54/40, who has been judging Rock for Dimes in Vancouver since its inception.

March of Dimes Canada is seeking new communities to host Rock for Dimes fundraisers. For more information, or to find a Rock for Dimes event in your city, please visit [www.rockfordimes.ca](http://www.rockfordimes.ca).



## In My Own Words

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March of Dimes has given Ashleigh much more than independence. She has a profound sense of self and acceptance, of pride in who she is and of her abilities, and a joy of life beyond measure. All of this has been nurtured further through the services she receives from March of Dimes. So as I see it, March of Dimes' most important work is in their relationships with the individuals and families they serve.

March of Dimes is the solution and I am forever grateful for their contribution to Ashleigh's "inDEPENDENT LIFE". Mahatma Gandhi expressed it best: "You must be the change you wish to see in the world". Let's join with March of Dimes Canada and be the change we wish to see, solutions for independence.



# Michael Deng

## In his own words – Why I’m a Monthly Donor

I have been donating monthly to March of Dimes Canada for over two years. I decided to support this program after a friendly young man came to my door, and explained to me that I could foster independence and strength in people with disabilities by becoming a monthly donor. His friendly attitude had me at *hello* and I have been donating ever since!

I was humbled to be invited by March of Dimes Canada to their Rock for Dimes Toronto fundraiser.

After attending this annual event and hearing from participants in the Conductive Education®

program, it confirmed that my donations are being used to help people with disabilities build independence and become stronger.



# Helping Make our Programs Possible

Throughout the past year, March of Dimes has been the beneficiary of a number of corporate partnerships and individual donations that help expand programs, support fundraisers and allow more Canadian families with disabilities to become independent and empowered.

In 2015, March of Dimes Canada was thrilled to announce that for the fourth time it received the Pendle Fund at the Community Foundation of Mississauga Grant to help support the growth of its L.I.F.E. Mississauga program. The L.I.F.E. program helps young adults ages 18 to 45 living with disabilities to develop the skills required to achieve independence. The program provides participants with a learning environment to expand their social and professional skills while practicing the daily responsibilities of adulthood.

Most young adults have challenges as they transition into adulthood, but those with disabilities can also face physical and social barriers to participation in their home, school, work and community.

The grant will allow even more participants to benefit from this program. To date, \$115,000 has been donated



**Brian Reusch of the Community Foundation of Mississauga at the opening of L.I.F.E. Mississauga’s new accessible community garden**

by the Community Foundation of Mississauga to support L.I.F.E.

**March of Dimes Canda gratefully acknowledges the support of all our corporate partners, foundation and individual contributors. For more information, or to see our donor wall, please visit [www.marchofdimes.ca/donate](http://www.marchofdimes.ca/donate).**