

Spring 2014  
Printemps 2014



# INSPIRATIONS EXPRESS

A Snapshot of Our Special Needs Community  
Un coup d'oeil sur notre communauté aux besoins particuliers

[www.inspirationsnews.com](http://www.inspirationsnews.com)

**Tommy and Melanie** speak about bullying, and Cornelia de Lange Syndrome



**A new online edition**

designed to bring you the most current special needs news in between editions.

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Herzliah High School Secondary I and Talmud Torah Grade 5 and 6 students with 10-year-old author Tommy Glatzmayer, his sister Melanie, who has Cornelia de Lange Syndrome, and their pet rats. Tommy published the book *Melanie and Tommy have two pet rats and one Syndrome* to help people understand his sister and stop them from teasing her. Stay tuned for the full story in our upcoming Spring / Summer 2014 edition. (Photo credit, Tova Havis)

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## Camera Roll and Inspirations collaborate

Liam O'Rourke and Dan Tenveen of Camera Roll Productions believe in encouraging and supporting the social and creative advancement of youth with autism spectrum disorders (ASDs). Through their community-based organization, Camera Roll Productions, they teach students how to make video productions and work with technology to explore their creative potential, both year-round in their studio and at their summer camp. Their ultimate goal is to create work opportunities for youth and young adults on the autism

spectrum. When Cinémas Guzzo offered Inspirations screen time to air a promotional video, we contacted Liam and Dan. Our video sponsor, The Singer Wishing Well, saw the merit in working with a production group that includes people living with an ASD. The final product is fantastic, and all the more so because the Camera Roll group collaborated on the video. Special thanks to all of our stars who volunteered to participate in the filming of this video. For information about Camera Roll Productions visit [www.camerarollproductions.com](http://www.camerarollproductions.com).



Mackay Centre School students.



Liam O'Rourke from Camera Roll Productions filming students at Mackay Centre School for the Inspirations video.

Click to watch our video



Or visit our website at  
[www.inspirationsnews.com](http://www.inspirationsnews.com)  
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Wishing Well



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# The Transitioning Towards Independence Resource Fair

There are a plethora of resources that service children and adults with special needs in the Greater Montreal and surrounding areas. On March 13, 2014, over 40 service providers gathered at the EMSB to meet and greet parents, caregivers, teachers and students.

The event was spearheaded by Tanya Yankowsky, Carla Toffoli and Anna Gaultieri; a group of dedicated teachers from John Grant and L.I.N.K.S. High Schools. Under the direction of Principal James Fequet, these schools cater to students with special needs by encouraging personal and academic growth for all learners, regardless of the challenges they face.

The Fair featured resources that focus on transitioning from one stage of life to the next, including Marymount Adult Educa-

tion Centre (EMSB), and Endeavour at Place Cartier (LBPSB) which help transition students from high school to adult education, and Action Main d'Ouevre, that focuses on moving from school to work life.

Gamoon Lau from EDUCATE Montreal specializes in directing families to the most appropriate resources for their child. The community had the opportunity to hear her speak about educational planning and transitions. She informed about the Individualized Education Plan and how to choose the most appropriate school for your child.

The role of the Social Worker at the CLSC is a frequently asked question, and Stefanie Demberg, a social worker from CSSS Cavendish, responded to these questions during her lecture. Topics covered included how social workers can assist parents in finding appropriate resources, and accessing CLSC services and second-line specialized services like the CRDI.

The Fair was a great success, providing many families with answers and direction



Fair organizers Carla Toffoli, Tanya Yankowski, Jennifer Sagers, Anna Gaultieri, Erika Sullivan, and James Fequet.



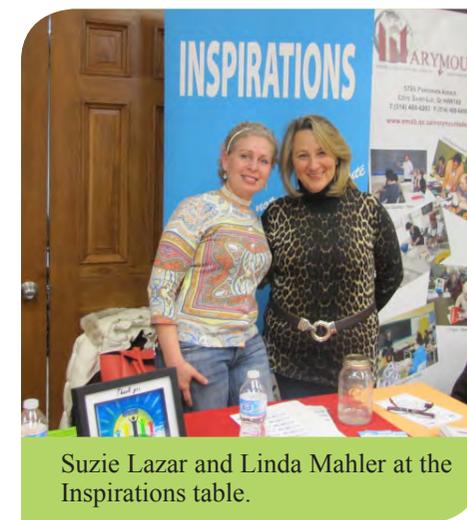
Martin Cheetham with students who were helping out at the fair.



Guest speakers Gamoon Lau, EDUCATE Montreal and Stefanie Demberg, CSSS Cavendish.



Julie Lapostolle and Jessie Francois, Programme Contact, Commission scolaire Marguerite-Bourgeoys.



Suzie Lazar and Linda Mahler at the Inspirations table.

in caring for their special needs child or adult. For information about resources in your community take a look at our Database of Special Needs Resources, hosted on our website [www.inspirationsnews.com](http://www.inspirationsnews.com).

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# Le Défi sportif Altergo: Jamais brisé, toujours unique



Crédits photos : © François Mellet et  
Alain Gauthier

Par Marina La Chêne

Unique au monde, le Défi sportif AlterGo est un événement international qui rassemble des athlètes de l'élite et la relève, de toutes les déficiences. Du 28 avril au 4 mai 2014, quelque 4 600 athlètes en provenance d'une quinzaine de pays se donnent rendez-vous pour 7 jours de compétitions à Montréal, Longueuil et Boucherville. Le Défi sportif AlterGo contribue à l'inclusion sociale des athlètes ayant une limitation fonctionnelle et au rayonnement de l'accessibilité universelle.

Événement sportif incontournable à Montréal,

le Défi sportif est aussi une organisation reconnue internationalement qui contribue à l'inclusion sociale de tous les athlètes handicapés. Huit sports seront présentés dans le cadre du volet scolaire du Défi sportif AlterGo : athlétisme, basketball, boccia, gymnastique rythmique, hockey-balle, natation, soccer et volleyball. Près de 85 écoles du Québec y seront représentées.

Vous pouvez découvrir la nouvelle campagne de publicité du Défi sportif AlterGo sur YouTube, sur Twitter, sur Facebook et sur le site Internet Defisportif.com.

Un piano brisé, mais qui délivre une

magnifique mélodie, une ballerine avec une jambe cassée qui danse gracieusement dans une boîte à bijoux. Malgré leur différence, chaque objet brille par sa performance et son caractère unique. Une manière de sensibiliser la population aux réalisations des athlètes ayant une limitation fonctionnelle.



Crédits photos : © François Mellet et Alain Gauthier

« Avec cette campagne nous souhaitons montrer une autre facette de la différence et rappeler qu'en relevant des défis quotidiens, les athlètes ayant une limitation fonctionnelle font preuve d'une énergie et d'une force de caractère hors du commun, a commenté M. Maxime Gagnon, directeur du Défi sportif AlterGo. « Le Défi sportif AlterGo est un événement majeur pour le sport adapté, nous sommes très fiers que les athlètes d'ici et d'ailleurs puissent s'accomplir et se dépasser ici même à Montréal. Nous encourageons le public à venir les encourager du 28 avril au 4 mai prochain. »

## Information

Marina Le Chêne, Agente de communication  
(514) 933-2739, poste 236

## Canada strikes it rich at the Sochi 2014 Paralympic Games: #WHATSTHERE



Canadian skier Mac Marcoux and guide Robin Femy compete in the Men's Giant Slalom visually impaired at the Sochi 2014 Paralympic Winter Games in Sochi Russia. (Photo, Scott Grant/Canadian Paralympic Committee)



Canadian Josh Dueck competes in the Men's Super Combined Sit Ski event at the 2014 Sochi Paralympic Winter Games in Sochi. Dueck went on to win the gold medal. (Photo, Scott Grant/Canadian Paralympic Committee)

The Canadian Paralympic Team finished the Sochi 2014 Paralympic Winter Games ranked third among all nations in the gold medal count, achieving its performance target for these Games. Canadian athletes won seven gold, two silver and seven bronze medals in Sochi.

"Canada's veterans performed extremely well in Sochi, collecting multiple medals," noted Team Canada Chef de Mission Ozzie Sawicki. "Brian McKeever (a visually impaired cross-country skier) winning three gold medals and Josh Dueck (sit skier and Canada's flag-bearer for the closing ceremony) with a gold and a silver were outstanding. As well, exciting new talent emerged at these Games, such as 16-year-old visually-impaired alpine skier Mac Marcoux, who won a gold and two bronze medals with guide Robin Femy, which certainly bodes well for the future."

Check out Team Canada's provocative Paralympic video that defines their motto, 'It's not what's missing, it's what's there'. #WHATSTHERE. <http://www.paralympic.ca/whatsthere>.

For information about Team Canada at the Sochi 2014 Paralympic Games, please visit [paralympic.ca/team-canada](http://paralympic.ca/team-canada).



# April is Autism Awareness Month

World Autism Awareness Day is on Wednesday, April 2, 2014, leading us into a whole month of autism awareness celebrations. Here are some events you can participate in.



**L**ight It Up Blue is a unique global initiative to help raise awareness about the growing public health concern that is autism. Launched by Autism Speaks in 2010 in support of World Autism Awareness Day, iconic landmarks around the world Light It Up Blue in celebration to show their support, including Complex Desjardins, Montmorency Falls, and the CN Tower. Show your support by lighting it up blue on April 2!



Tracy Pennimpede and Andre Pereira

**T**he 2014 Montreal Autism in Motion Conference and Exhibit on March 30, 2014, will feature renowned speakers, including Alan Kriss from Specialisterne Canada, and Inspirations Special Advisor Nick Katalifos, exhibits, networking opportunities and provide motivation for all

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Krista Leitham of Autism Speaks Canada presents an appreciation gift to Montreal's Walk Now for Autism Speaks Canada's local presenting sponsor MEGA Bloks. With Stephanie Pinsonnault, MEGA Bloks, Jason Goldsmith, The Big Blue Hug, Tanya Furci-Argento, MEGA Bloks.

**M**EGA Bloks hosts tours of its toy factory for all students every Friday morning, all year long. In honour of Autism Awareness Month, they have reserved all of their April tours for children with autism. If you would like to bring your students on a tour any time of the year, contact Mattie at [mvadrahani@megabrand.com](mailto:mvadrahani@megabrand.com).

Registered new and returning Montreal's Walk Now for Autism Speaks Canada teams can enter a contest to win a tour scheduled for Friday, April 4, 2014 from 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon. Visit [www.walknowforautismspeaks.ca](http://www.walknowforautismspeaks.ca) to participate.

those involved in the autism community including parents, teachers, professionals, and the academic and medical communities.

Organizers Tracy Pennimpede and Andre Pereira present this year's conference in collaboration with Giant Steps School.

For information contact [info@mtlautisminmotion.com](mailto:info@mtlautisminmotion.com). To register, visit <http://www.mtlautisminmotion.com/at-tend/>.



**M**ontreal's own artist and autism advocate Jason Goldsmith of The Big Blue Hug was commissioned to design Autism Speak Canada's official walk t-shirt, which will be given to participants at all walks across the country.

Goldsmith created three beautiful designs based on his inspirational paintings 'RISE', 'Together' and 'Come Together'. And participants across the country get to vote for their favourite. The design with the most votes will be put on the t-shirt. Visit Autism Speaks Canada's new website to cast your vote: [www.walknowforautismspeaks.ca](http://www.walknowforautismspeaks.ca) or [www.facebook.com/AutismSpeaksCanada](http://www.facebook.com/AutismSpeaksCanada).

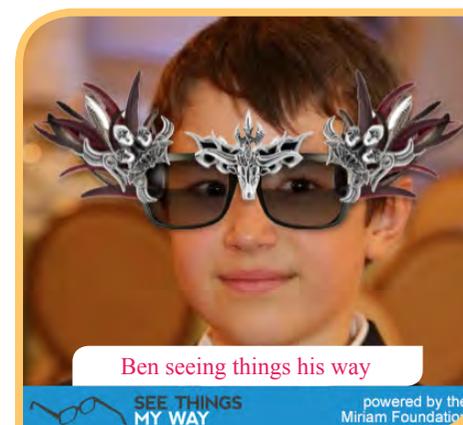
**T**he Miriam Foundation's innovative fundraising and awareness campaign *See Things My Way* was initially inspired by Temple Grandin, who teaches us that to understand how people with autism spectrum disorders (ASDs) and developmental disabilities think we have to look through their lenses. Co-chaired by Aldo Bensa-doun and Jean Coutu, this two-tiered campaign aims to change the futures of people with ASDs and developmental disabilities by raising twenty five million dollars over five years to improve the care system, from eliminating waiting times for early diagnosis and treatment, to professional training, research and ancillary clinical services like job creation and respite care.

On April 2, *See Things My Way* reminds everyone to talk about autism. Log on to [www.seethingsmyway.org](http://www.seethingsmyway.org) to create funky virtual glasses, share your photo on social media, and encourage donations on the website.

The Big Blue Hug's t-shirt drawing titled 'RISE', drawn by Ellis Goldsmith, a boy with autism who found his voice through drawing. Ellis drew this after attending the Montreal's Walk Now for Autism Speaks Canada.

Registration for the Montreal Walk Now For Autism Speaks event is now open! Visit [www.walknowforautismspeaks.ca](http://www.walknowforautismspeaks.ca) to register your team. The walk will take place on Sunday, May 25, 2014 from 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 noon at McGill University's Tomlinson Fieldhouse, (475 Pine Avenue West); a new indoor venue, with a three kilometer walk scheduled outdoors at the adjoining Molson Stadium.

The event will feature a new 'Interactive Zone', where service providers of sports, recreational and cultural programs will provide live interactive activities for walk participants, and a 'Pit Stop' along the walk route for sponsors to showcase their product or service, along with employee cheer squads. If you are a service provider or a local organization that would like to participate, contact Krista at [kristaleitham@autismspeaks.ca](mailto:kristaleitham@autismspeaks.ca).



Stay tuned to our website ([www.inspirationsnews.com](http://www.inspirationsnews.com)), our Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/inspirationsnews](http://www.facebook.com/inspirationsnews)) and our Twitter feed (@inspirationsmtl) for more events in celebration of Autism Awareness Month.



# Quebec Roots: The Place Where I Live:



Ryan Cave-Beninger  
(Photo credit, Photography  
Copyright Monique Dykstra 2013)

By Wendy Singer

The 'Leaders on Wheels' (The Mackay Satellite Class at Westmount High School), are about to become published authors! They are participating in this year's edition of Quebec Roots: The Place Where I Live, by contributing a chapter on what it is like to navigate the world in a wheelchair.

Coordinated by Line Richer, this initiative was developed in collaboration with the Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport, and the Blue Metropolis Montreal International Literary Festival. It brings professional writers and photographers together with young Anglophones across Quebec to stimulate their creative and critical skills, develop their awareness about how Anglophones and their communities contribute to Quebec's cultural diversity, and explore identity by examining the communities in which young people live.

With the guidance of Young Adult fiction

author, journalist and teacher Monique Polak, professional photographer Monique Dykstra, and teacher Sebastian Pichette, the group extracted powerful thoughts that have the potential to change stereotypes and perceptions.

While Polak thoughtfully molded ideas into compelling prose, Dykstra gave the students a crash course in photography, allowing them the opportunity to snap photos of one another.

In her 30 years of teaching, Polak has never been more moved by a group of students: "They all have an openness, resilience, an interest in others and the greater world. They are a reminder of goodness, potential, and our capacity to overcome challenges."

The collection of personal anecdotes includes a powerful list of what the students want the world to know about them and others that rely on wheelchairs. (See list below)

"These students not only have a lot to teach us about being in a wheelchair, but also about having courage," says Polak. That being said, she reminds us that these students are just regular teens, like all other high school students.

The Leaders on Wheels will attend their book launch at this year's Blue Metropolis Montreal International Literary Festival. "This has been a great opportunity for the students to write stories and create images that will reach people outside their usual audience," says Pichette.

The book will be launched at the Hotel 10 on Sherbrooke Street West on May 2nd at 10:00 a.m. The printed book will be on sale at [www.blumetropolis.org](http://www.blumetropolis.org). The free online book will also be launched at the May 2nd event.



Leaders on Wheels with teacher Sebastian Pichette and photographer Monique Dykstra



Monique Polak works with student Ryan Cave-Beninger and teacher Rose Sondola



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1. We don't like it when you stare at us. We are not strange.

2. Be friendly to us. We are regular kids who happen to go to school in wheelchairs. Yeah man!

3. If you see us struggling to pick something up or open or close a door, ask us, "Do you need my help?" Don't just walk past us without saying

anything.

4. Be patient with us. Some of us stutter or have difficulty speaking.

5. We are powerful. We can do everything even if it is sometimes hard.

6. Don't feel sorry for us. We are happy.

### ADULT COURSES

Giant Steps School is offering a variety of right courses to adults on the adult spectrum and for the general population starting the week of April 14th to June 20th 2 hrs/week. Courses for the general population include: Beginner Language courses.

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Adapted Travel by Ilana Spector



## BURLINGTON, ONTARIO



During the course of my life I have visited Burlington, Vermont many times, while never setting foot in Burlington, Ontario (<http://www.tourismburlington.com>). That all changed recently when en route to Buffalo, New York, we decided it would be nice to stop over somewhere on the way.

Burlington is conveniently located between Toronto and Niagara Falls, at the centre of southern Ontario's "Golden Horseshoe" and has a population of 175,000.

There are some people I know who base themselves in the Burlington area when visiting Toronto. The Royal Botanical Gardens

are a draw, so is hiking on the nature trails, bird watching, museums, and the galleries at the Burlington Art Centre and presentations at the Burlington Performing Arts Centre. Spencer Smith Park is the large waterfront park where the pier, discovery landing (pond, rink, and restaurant) and major festivals are held.

Looking ahead, the sweetness of Mother Nature launches spring in Burlington with the Maple Syrup Festival at Bronte Creek Provincial Park and Mountsberg Conservation Area. It's the season to engage your sense of smell and sight with the effervescent lilacs, daffodils and more than 100,000 tulip blooms, all bursting into colour at the Royal Botanical Gardens.

In the summer the waterfront and downtown come to life with the annual Sound of Music Festival. Canada's largest free music festival kicks off summer festivities the week leading up to Father's Day. Stroll the downtown streets, lakeside boardwalk or Waterfront Trail; enjoy an invigorating mix of acclaimed Canadian and international performers, and emerging performers on bis-

tro patios and the waterfront stages. There is also rock, jazz, folk, roots, pop, blues, Celtic, country and children's entertainment – musically something for everyone. And there are many other festivals: watersports, boating, golf and outdoor activities to enjoy at local parks and beaches. Burlington also has a swimmable and sandy beach, something which really intrigues me for a future summer visit. The Beachway Park Pavilion provides changing rooms, outdoor showers, seasonal concession facilities featuring the snack shack and year round washrooms.

Amenities at the beach include the pavilion, parking, a pay phone, a playground, and lots of sun, sand and water. Yes, I will have to make a return trip.

Burlington strives to be an accessible city for travellers with special needs. You can take charge of your travel needs by consulting The Canadian Travel Agencies guide for those with special requirements. Go to <http://www.tourismburlington.com/travel-tips/visitors-with-disabilities> for all of the details.



## WHERE TO STAY:

I am a huge fan of the Homewood Suites brand of hotels, having stayed there on trips to Washington, Chicago and Dover (New Hampshire). Well we were fortunate to find one in Burlington at 975 Syscon Road, right next to a Hilton Garden Inn managed by the same Westmont Hospitality Group. There is free outdoor parking.

Easily accessible from the Q.E.W. (at Burloak Drive) and near Highways 403 and 407, the hotel is located in downtown Burlington right on Lake Ontario, minutes away from an extensive selection of restaurants, boutique shopping and popular attractions such as the Lion Safari Ontario.

The spacious suites come complete with fully equipped kitchens, including a two-burner stove and full-size refrigerator. Guests can choose between studios or one or two-bedroom suites featuring separate living and sleeping areas. You can relax with a coffee in front of the fire in the hotel lodge area and grab any last-minute items at their 24-hour convenience store. Pets up to 25 pounds are welcome here. There is complimentary high-speed wireless internet access and a heated indoor pool.

The hotel has a mobility and hearing accessible non-smoking one bedroom suite featuring one King bed and a roll-in-shower. This suite also has a visual alarm and notification devices for the doorbell or door knock and incoming telephone calls. The kitchen, built to lower scale, is fully equipped down to utensils, and includes a full-size refrigerator, microwave, dishwasher and twin burner stove. The dining area can easily double as workspace. This suite provides a private bedroom with a HDTV and a separate living area features a full-size sleeper sofa, chair and HDTV.

Mornings start out with a hot full breakfast while complimentary evening dinner and drinks are offered as well Monday through Thursdays between 5:30 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. which proved to be very convenient when we checked in. They even offer a complimentary grocery shopping service.

Mike Cohen can be reached at [mcohen@inspirationsnews.com](mailto:mcohen@inspirationsnews.com). Follow him on Twitter @mikecohencsl.

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