



# INSPIRATIONS EXPRESS

A snapshot of our special needs community  
Un coup d'oeil sur notre communauté aux besoins particuliers



Gym teacher Bob Simpson with student Nico at Défi Sportif award ceremony at the Mackay Centre School.  
Read more on page 7 of this edition. (Photo credit, Joanne Charron)

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## Special Needs Department • YM-YWHA

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### Children, Teens & Young Adults

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|--|---------------|
| <b>SUNDAY FUN IN THE GYM/SWIM</b>              | 4 - 12 years  |
| <b>LEGO BUILDING - NEW</b>                     | 4 - 12 years  |
| <b>SENSORY ART - NEW</b>                       | 4 - 12 years  |
| <b>YCC DAY CAMPS (SPECIAL NEEDS SPECIALTY)</b> | 4 - 12 years  |
| <b>MULTIMEDIA CLUB - NEW</b>                   | 16 - 25 years |
| <b>CHAVERIM</b>                                | 20 - 35 years |
| <b>MISCHAKIM</b>                               | 30 - 45 years |

### Adults

- |  |            |
|--|------------|
| <b>CLUB RENDEZ-VOUS DROP-IN CENTRE</b> | 18 years + |
| <b>KOULEINU YACHAD: WE ALL BELONG</b>  | 16 years + |
| <b>SUNDAY LEISURE TIME</b>             | 50 years + |
| <b>FAMILY OUTREACH PROGRAM - NEW</b>   |            |
| <b>VISUAL ART FOR ADULTS</b>           | 20 years + |
| • MIXED MEDIA                          |            |
| • OPEN STUDIO                          |            |

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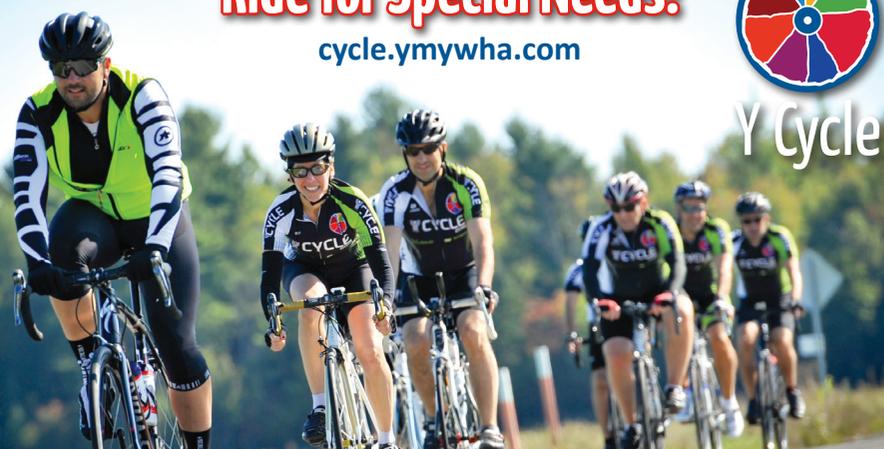
Special Needs Family Camp ext. 267  
Special Needs Programming ext. 235  
Y Cycle for Special Needs ext. 228

## Ride for Special Needs!

[cycle.ymywha.com](http://cycle.ymywha.com)



Y Cycle



Proceeds from our annual **Y Cycle for Special Needs** are used to support the YM-YWHA Special Needs department, which provides children, adolescents and adults with intellectual and physical disabilities with the opportunity to participate in programs that take place at the Y.



## SPECIAL NEEDS Family Camp



### Y Bridge

Proceeds from Y Bridge Luncheon support the Y Special Needs Family Camp, a unique program for families with children who have special needs and their siblings, held at the Y Country Camp. This 4-day program caters to the whole family, allowing members to enjoy the experience of summer camp as a family unit and also separately, in a warm, welcoming atmosphere. We provide FUN in a safe, supervised environment, and provide opportunities for learning and personal development.

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# Raising awareness and funds for autism

## Edward Murphy Elementary School raises awareness for autism

By Pamela D'Adamo

During Autism Awareness Month, Edward Murphy Elementary School, within the English Montreal School Board, participated in a neighbourhood walk to promote autism awareness.

All students, plus their friends and family members, participated. Each class created a poster board with slogans and symbols representing autism, which they displayed while they walked. It was a great success!

A tree was created at the main entrance of the school which students decorated with symbolic puzzle pieces that they crafted. Donations received on the day of the walk will be used to purchase specialized sensory materials and furniture for the school's ASD programs. The event was organized by Ms. Alana and Ms. Pamela, the school's ASD class teachers.

*Pamela D'Adamo is an ASD senior class teacher at Edward Murphy Elementary School.*



*Students from Edward Murphy School's two ASD classes sitting under the autism tree.*



*Pamela D'Adamo with students Diego, Timothy, and John, participating in the school's autism awareness walk.*

## INSPIRATIONS EXPRESS

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## Team Inspirations is a top company fundraiser

*Thanks to John Paul I High School for raising an amazing \$683.00 for Autism Speaks Canada through their fundraising efforts. This amount was added to Team Inspirations, English Montreal School Board. With the generosity of the John Paul I community, Team Inspirations raised \$1,198.00, ranking the top fifth company team.*

*Team Inspirations held its own fundraising event, Laugh It Up Blue. Thank you to everyone who came out to share in the fun. Together, we raised over \$200.00 for Autism Speaks Canada.*

## Montreal walks for Autism Speaks Canada recap

By Wendy Singer

This year's Walk Now for Autism Speaks Canada Montreal was a great success. Participants and supporters came out to walk and meet exhibitors despite traffic, road closures, and impending rainy weather! It was Inspirations' honour to be a media sponsor for this year's event, along with Laval Families Magazine, The Beat, and CTV. We were delighted to greet so many of you in the tent that we shared with Peter Hall School (and all of the delicious puzzle piece cookies their students made).

Before the walk, 1,120 walkers and a total of 89 teams had tons of time to meet 17 exhibitors and sample offerings from Glutino, Kernels, Kinnikinnik, and Pure Source. They enjoyed adapted martial arts demonstrations by AutismeKaraté and TaeKwonDo Art students, were serenaded by I Can Dream Theatre Group, enjoyed a yoga warm-up with Monica Merleau of Shevaya Wellness, perused the artwork of the Creatability group (which was represented by several artists who have autism), and played with toys at the event's national sponsor Toys"R"Us Babies"R"Us tent.

Honourary Walk Ambassador Casey Vormer, and Honourary Walk Chair Maude Watier addressed the crowd with poignant words, while co-masters of ceremonies Paul Karwatsky, co-anchor of CTV Montreal's noon and evening news shows, and Kim Kieran, traffic reporter and promotions coordinator of The Beat 92.5, kept the event running smoothly.

The weather was on organizer extraordinaire Krista Leitham's side. The walk took place outside on the track with just a drizzle. The sky opened up to deliver a major downpour just as the last of the participants and vendors were packing up. The event brought in \$94,281.00 for autism awareness and research.

*Stay connected at [www.autismspeaks.ca](http://www.autismspeaks.ca) to learn which programs will benefit from these community funds and For information on next year's walk.*



*Krista Leitham of Autism Speaks Canada with Walk supporter Cathy Chryso of Gel-Moments. Cathy painted blue manicures for participants, and runs the annual fundraiser The Blue Heart to support Autism Speaks Canada.*



*Crestview Elementary students crafted puzzle piece pins to raise awareness by selling them to the school community and to Walk participants.*



*Monica Merleau of Shevaya Wellness, a special needs yoga specialist, leads a yoga warm-up at the Walk.*



*Crestview Elementary School of the Sir Wilfrid Laurier School Board's walk team.*



# Special needs campers to publish a book

By Cindy Davis

When one thinks of summer camp, activities like swimming, sports and sing-alongs generally come to mind. While those are all important parts of the camp experience, one group of special needs campers at YCC summer day camp at the YM-YWHA are including book publishing in their summer lineup. Thanks to a partnership with the Jewish Public Library (JPL) and the Kids Write Network - an organization that encourages children to self-express through writing, the campers in the Manhigim (leader) group at the day camp are taking part in writing workshops that will culminate in the publication of their own book about their camp experience. The published work will be available on loan at the JPL and the participants will each receive a copy. There will also be a launch party for the participants to celebrate this enormous accomplishment at the end of the summer.

“The goal is to give (the campers) a voice and to enter their world to better understand what they are going through,” says Helen Georgaklis, founder of the Kids Write Network and leader of the workshops. “We’ll also highlight how they feel about camp and how it benefits them – how they feel safe, happy and secure there. It will bring awareness to the benefits of summer camp for kids with all needs.”

Georgaklis and her team have developed a six-step program to help children through the writing process, and though there may be additional challenges, Georgaklis finds the process very beneficial to children with special needs. “For a lot of these kids there are no stories written by kids for kids that they can relate to,” she says. “The books I produce draw out their story. I’m not looking for perfection in the story or illustrations; I’m looking for their voice and their story.”

Maria Ressina, head of Library Services and Outreach at the JPL says that this workshop, which takes place once a week at the JPL and once a week at the YM-YWHA, is a natural fit for the library. “Our job as a library is to promote self-expression and understanding and to be open to each experience and how people interact with the world,” says Ressina. “This project is an opportunity for the JPL to collaborate with an organization that is doing great things and to provide a space where they can be comfortable and happy.

Being surrounded by books might inspire them and, here at the JPL, they can be loud, they can wander – everyone here is welcome just as they are.”

The book, which will be called *Voices of YCC Manhigim*, will include each camper’s unique perspective of camp. In cases where the campers are non-verbal, their stories will be expressed through illustration, or with the help of camp staff. Ressina notes that the stories end up reading as “mini time capsules of their lives,” and that the workshops offer a different kind of outlet than what the kids are typically asked to do at school. “Here,” she says. “Their own reality is the assignment.”

Marcy Kastner, director of Early Childhood Education and Day Camps and coordinator of Children’s Services at the YM-YWHA, says that they are also thrilled to be involved. “I think it is fabulous for the children’s self-esteem in becoming young authors and to gain exposure to the library and the workshops. It gives them the opportunity to be proud of themselves and to be creative at the same time.”



Special needs campers at YCC summer day camp at the YM-YWHA are including book publishing in their summer lineup. (Photo courtesy of the JPL)

For more information on the Kids Write Network, please visit [www.kidswritenet-work.com](http://www.kidswritenet-work.com).

Cindy Davis is the public relations coordi-

nator at the Jewish Public Library in Montreal as well as a freelance journalist.

This article was previously published in the *Canadian Jewish News*.

## EFFECTIVE PARENTING New Trends and Approaches

### Monday evening seminars autumn 2016



Faculty of  
Education

Department of  
Educational and Counselling Psychology



**Monday October 17 6:30-8:30pm**

“Unlocking the spelling system of English: How to give all children the keys to literacy” | Dr. Rob Savage



**Monday October 24 6:30-8:30pm**

“Understanding neurodevelopmental conditions: What parents need to know” | Dr. Armando Bertone



**Monday November 7 6:30-8:30pm**

“The myths and merits of children’s iPad use from the cradle to the classroom” | Dr. Adam Dubé



**Monday November 14 6:30-8:30pm**

“Healthy mind, healthy child: How parents can help their children overcome anxiety” | Dr. Tina Montreuil



**Monday November 21 6:30-8:30pm**

“Homework without tears: Navigating practice, projects, and test preparation from home” | Dr. Steven Shaw

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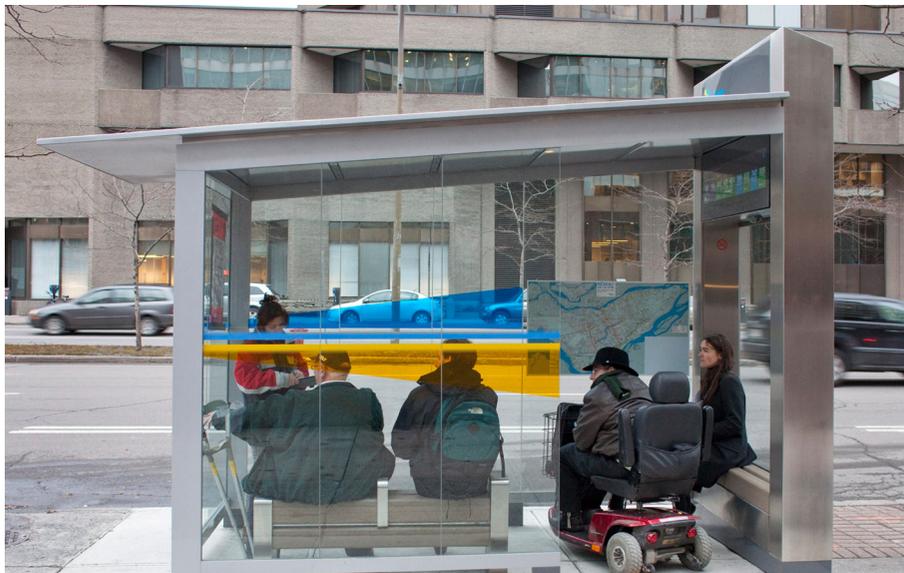
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*Our Fall 2016 / Winter 2017 edition will feature a spotlight on accessible transportation. We will review an app that assists people with visual and hearing impairments, accessibility at Pierre Elliott Trudeau Airport, and more.*

*We'd love to hear from you. If you have news to share on this topic, or would like to advertise your service, contact us at [info@inspirationsnews.com](mailto:info@inspirationsnews.com).*

*Photo courtesy of Société de transport de Montréal.*

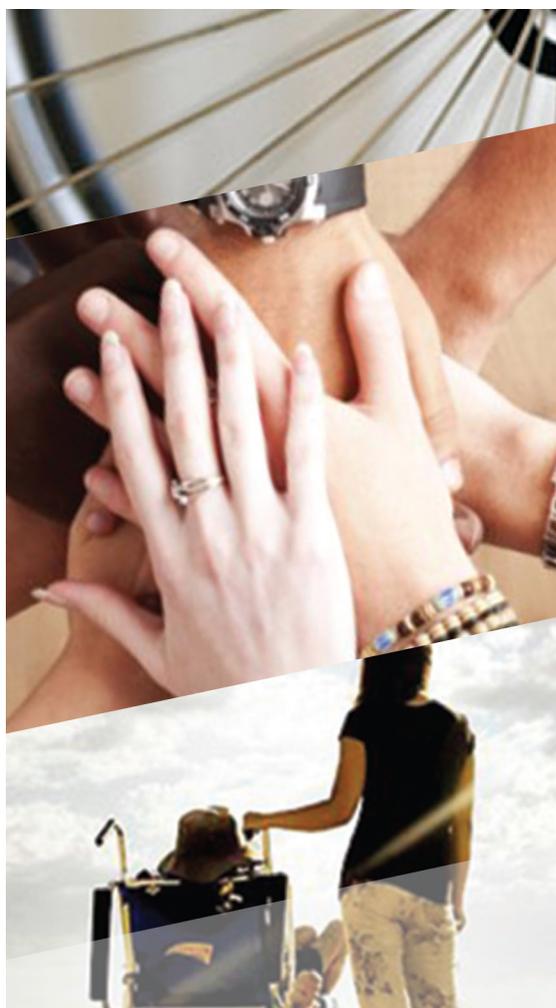


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MARCH OF DIMES CANADA LA MARCHÉ DES DIX SOUS DU CANADA



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## Arts &amp; Entertainment

## Documentary film takes a look inside I Can Dream Theatre



Michele Matthews, Merrill Matthews, Ada Masciarelli, and Tricia Bartley at the premiere of *The Making of a Dream*.

By Wendy Singer

Merrill Matthews wasn't planning on making a full-length documentary about I Can Dream Theatre (ICDT). As Social Media Manager of ICDT, he simply planned on attending some rehearsals and filming snippets to use as promotional material for this special needs theatre group's 2015 show, *The Tale of MacBeth(ish)*.

After only one rehearsal, he realized that there was a much greater story to be told. He was hooked, and without any more thought, his first documentary was in the making.

*The Making of a Dream* features footage of rehearsals from January up until the dress rehearsals in early November 2015, along with intimate discussions with the directors Ada Masciarelli, Michele Matthews, and Tricia Bartley, the musicians and volunteers, board members, fans, and of course, the cast.

While filming on a whole was a rewarding experience for Matthews, he was most moved by the group interviews he conducted with the cast. "I already knew how awesome they were. That being said, I can't even find words to describe these sessions," shared Matthews. "There was so much love for the group and for each other. They expressed how much the group means to them, and what it has done for them."

Matthews, who studied film while achieving his Bachelor of Fine Arts at Concordia University, became completely immersed in the process of making this film and ensuring that the pure essence of each person's story, and ICDT itself, were revealed. He is applauded for creating a magnificent, touching film that educates about the abilities and viewpoints of people with special needs, while demonstrating what a committed community can create and accomplish when they work together.

The documentary was screened at the Guzzo Theatre in Saint-Laurent in April 2016 to tremendous reviews. Two groups of people attended the screening: those that were already fans and supporters, and those that had no idea what ICDT was all about. The first group appreciated the deeper look into the group, admiring the depth of heart demonstrated by the cast, crew and volunteers that was beyond their imagination. The second group were consistently and completely amazed.

The most rewarding comment Matthews received after the screening was from someone who knew very little about ICDT. "She came to me and said thank you for educating me tonight. That's what I'm going for," Matthews expressed, humbly.

"There is so much negativity in the press. This film was my way of putting something positive out into the universe," adds

## Outta Here reached into hearts



The cast of Summit School's 'Outta Here' take their final bow at Concordia University's D.B. Clarke Theatre. (Photo courtesy of Summit School)

Summit School students inspired their audience with their fabulous year-end show titled 'Outta Here', an original musical. Notorious for their beautiful and moving shows, this collaborative endeavor highlighted the very special relationship between students and staff. Under the direction of Jesse Heffring and Dara Murphy, and co-directed by Elizabeth Lanzer, it took a village of staff, students and volunteers five months of hard work to bring *Outta Here* to the stage.

The production took us on a theatrical tour of Montreal, with students embarking on an excursion to the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. As they veer off their path for a little adventure, they share their thoughts, hopes and dreams. They address difficult situations as they arise, and respond with resilience.

Students sang, danced, and acted to perfection, all culminating in an unforgettable experience. The set was laced with artwork that students created, which was later auctioned off.



The cast of I Can Dream Theatre while filming their discussion with Merrill Matthews for his documentary film 'The Making of a Dream'. (Photo credit, Katherine Meyendorf)

Matthews. "We are connecting, changing minds, showing that there's more than one side to the story, and shifting people's thinking about the special needs community."

Matthews submitted *The Making of a Dream* to the Picture This Film Festival, which features films about disability culture and/or films on any subject that was produced, directed and/or written by people with disabilities. To Matthew's delight, the film has been accepted, and will be judged by a jury

in early 2017 as a contender for an award or even a special screening in March 2017. The Picture This Film Festival takes place in March in Calgary, Alberta.

For tickets for 'Remembering the Titanic: A Musical Dramedy', taking place on November 11 and 12, 2016, visit [www.icandreamtheatre.com](http://www.icandreamtheatre.com). For information about *The Making of a Dream*, contact Merrill at [ryliepylifilms@gmail.com](mailto:ryliepylifilms@gmail.com).



## Sports with Daniel Smajovits



## Mackay Centre School students win at Défi Sportif Altergo



*Mackay Centre School students receive their certificates and medals from a Défi Sportif Altergo representative at an award ceremony at the school.*

**C**ongratulations to all students that participated in the 2016 Défi Sportif Altergo. We attended an award ceremony at the Mackay Centre School where these outstanding athletes were acknowledged for their accomplishments. They were in good company, with Défi representatives, school staff, volunteers, parents, and students in attendance to cheer the athletes on long after the races were over. Also in attendance was WalterGo, the Défi mascot, who granted photo opportunities to all students.

Each year over a seven-day period, the Défi welcomes some 5,000 athletes, both elite and amateur with varying disabilities,

from approximately 20 countries, to compete in 14 different sports at six different sites across the island of Montreal and on the South Shore. The event brings together 3,800 students from 83 organizations from across the province of Quebec.

The Mackay Centre School's Défi 2016 team included 51 students from Grade 3 and up that competed in the categories of rhythmic gymnastics, swimming, athletics (high school track and field and power wheelchair obstacle course), and ball hockey. All participating athletes received a certificate, a round of applause and cheers. Thirty-nine students received medals, which are furnished with Braille on one side to accommodate the visually impaired.

Mackay Centre School physical education teacher Bob Simpson thanked a lengthy list of staff and volunteers, from coaches to administrators, including principal Patrizia Ciccarelli and vice-principal Denise Maroun, for the role they played in preparing the students for this year's Défi.

Simpson thanked Wade and Brenda Wilson from The Mike Reid Softball Tournament for their efforts. All proceeds raised by their fundraising events cover the cost of transportation to and from recreational events. "Without their support, this would not be possible," said Simpson, as he awarded them with Team Mackay t-shirts.

To see more photos of our athletes, visit <http://www.inspirationsnews.com/gallery.html>.



*Mackay Centre School students receive their certificates and medals at an award ceremony at the school. With WalterGo, the Défi Sportif's mascot.*



## Team Canada shines at the Rio Paralympic Games



*David Eng of Wheelchair Basketball is named the opening ceremonies flag bearer at the Paralympic Village at the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games. (Photo by Matthew Murnaghan/Canadian Paralympic Committee)*

**T**he games began on September 7 and run until September 18. Keep your DVR set so you don't miss any of the exciting action! CBC live streams the events at <http://www.cbc.ca/sports/paralympics/watch-online>, and broadcasts daily shows at midnight, three shows on Saturdays, and two shows on Sunday.

What to look out for?

- All of our Quebec stars, including Montreal's own David Eng as Team Canada's flag bearer. Check out the Sports column in our Spring/Summer 2016 edition for some great profiles of our local athletes.
- The first ever Canadian para-triathlon squad that includes four international medal-winning Canucks from across the country – and they're ready to make history.
- Paralympic Games medals now have a new multi-sensory design, and Braille inscriptions. Each medal has a tiny device tucked inside it that, when shaken, makes a unique noise, depending on whether it is gold, silver or bronze. This feature allows visually impaired athletes to identify the medal's hue.



*Marco Dispaltra and Alison Levine at a media summit at Mattamy Athletic Centre (Maple Leaf Gardens). Sixteen of Canada's best para-athletes were on hand to demonstrate their sports and speak to the media. (Photo Copyright Dan Galbraith/Details Group)*

Along with this exciting design for accessibility, the medals have our earth's future in mind as well. The materials used for the medals, ribbons, and cases are sustainably sourced and partially recycled.

*Watch our Facebook and Twitter feeds for updates on our Canadian stars!*



# Study delves into behaviour and brain correlation of human sound processing

By Rakhee Chowdhury, Kevin Jamey and Esther Germain (on behalf of the Auditory Brain and Cognitive Development Laboratory)

The mission of the Auditory Brain and Cognitive Development (ABCD) Lab is to better understand the behavioural and brain correlates of human sound processing (such as music and speech) in both typical and atypical development.

A new study led by Dr. Megha Sharda uses both brain imaging and behavioural measures to investigate the impact of music intervention on children with autism spectrum disorder. The researchers will be working in collaboration with Westmount Music Therapy. Over a period of 12 weeks, they will provide individual sessions of music or creative arts intervention at no cost. To assess the effectiveness of the therapy, participating children aged six to 12 will be tested both before and after the intervention on a range of behavioral and brain imaging measures.

On April 9, 2016, an information session for families interested in participating in

the study was held at the Westmount Music Therapy. Several information and activities booths were set up, welcoming families to ask questions and interact with the creative arts and music therapists, volunteers, and members of the research team. Families took a tour of the premises while their children played with a variety of musical instruments and participated in arts and crafts with the creative arts staff. With the help of a mock Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) scanner, parents and children were also given the opportunity to get familiar with this routine brain imaging procedure.

The research team of the ABCD Lab also handed out a document of resources available to families of children with special needs, such as support organizations, respite services, and special education.

Having received delightful reviews from attendees, the team is encouraged to conduct

more such open house events for families interested in participating in research. In the meantime, they are still recruiting and are happy to provide more information to families interested in participating. Please feel free to contact [musicbrainresearch@gmail.com](mailto:musicbrainresearch@gmail.com) for further information.

Rakhee Chowdhury is a M.Sc. Candidate in Psychology Research at the University of Montreal. This article was written in collaboration with Kevin Jamey and Esther Germain, MS Candidates in Psychology Research at Université de Montréal.



The ABCD research team with Westmount Music Therapy's creative arts and music therapists, project collaborators, and volunteers. (Photo courtesy of Hyde Lab)

Dr. Sharda is a postdoctoral fellow working with Dr. Krista Hyde at the Auditory Brain and Cognitive Development (ABCD) Laboratory at the Université de Montréal. Dr. Aparna Nadig of the School of Communication Sciences and Disorders at McGill University's Faculty of Medicine.



MARCH OF DIMES CANADA



LA MARCHÉ DES DIX SOUS DU CANADA



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Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists  
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March of Dimes Canada is giving away e-tablets (iPad) to help people with disabilities who live in Montreal.

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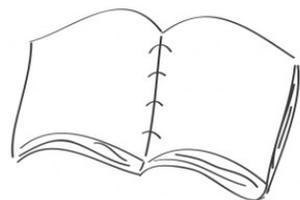
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## www.marchofdimes.ca/AMTI

Ne ratez pas cette occasion! Les demandes doivent nous parvenir d'ici le 4 novembre 2016

Don't Miss Out! Applications must be received by November 4, 2016



## Notebook EXPRESS

By Wendy Singer



Welcome back to school! Wishing you all a fresh start to the 2016-17 school year. We're gearing up for another year packed with information about our vibrant community. Here are some highlights from the end of the past school year.

On May 9, **Josef Schovanec** spoke at the CHU Sainte-Justine's 4th International Symposium on Autism Spectrum Disorders. A French mathematician and philosopher, Schovanec is a graduate of the Institute of Political Science in Paris.

While speaking about living with autism, Schovanec easily engaged his audience with his unique insight into what it's like to "come from the country of Autistan", making specific reference to the 99 percent of the population who suffer from "non-autism". Schovanec playfully introduced the "Institute for the study of the neurologically typical", where neurotypical syndrome is studied, and shared points on the advantages of having autism. He presented a unique perspective and compelling argument on the pros of autism. He speaks 10 languages and is the author of *One Screw Loose*.



Nick Katalifos, Josef Schovanec, Andre Pereira, and Seuin Thomas Henderson at CHU Sainte-Justine's 4th International Symposium on Autism Spectrum Disorder.

The symposium brought together Canadian and international experts and leaders to discuss the theme From Genes to Interventions, highlighting the latest advances in the field of autism and the evidence-based interventions advocated in the province of Quebec. Schovanec's community lecture, hosted by **Patricia Paquin**, was held at Montreal's City Hall prior to a cocktail dinatoire, and was presented in collaboration with Giant Steps School.

The fifth edition of Agence Ometz' annual fundraising gala A Chance to Shine was a great success, raising \$460,000 to help the community's most vulnerable children and youth. Held on June 8 at Place des Arts, 1,150 guests enjoyed a stunning performance of *Traces* by the internationally acclaimed Les 7 doigts de la main. Two Montreal dance troupes Juste Danse and the Tyler Anne School of Dance provided special performances, delighting the gala's younger audience members.

The generous and dedicated patronage of **Véronique** and **Herbert Black** for the fifth consecutive year allow 100 percent of the proceeds from the gala to assist Ometz in helping families and youth at risk. "My time working for Ometz allowed me to experience first-hand how when individuals and families are given the right support, it creates possibilities and gives them a chance to shine," shared event chair **Randy Brandman Farber**, who has worked for Ometz as a counsellor and case management professional.



Gail Small (CEO of Ometz) and Randy Brandman Farber (Chair of A Chance to Shine Gala). (Photo credit: PBL Photography)

The Miriam Foundation's sixth annual Art Auction for Autism, held on June 7, 2016, at Parisian Laundry, raised over \$100,000. Over 150 people came out to support the Foundation's early intervention services. Some of the evening's highlights included the sale of a painting by **John Little** entitled Goelettes St-Joseph de la Rive for \$10,500 and the sale of a painting especially painted for the occasion by **Gilles Labranche** entitled Pine x. St. Laurent Blvd for \$2,200. The evening's proceeds will help support early intervention services for children diagnosed with autism.



Jeannette Hoffman-Zaffir (committee chair), Franky Yanofsky (committee chair), Carol Tryansky (committee chair), Deborah Malin (committee member), Judy Wolfe (committee chair). (Photo courtesy of The Miriam Foundation)

The Mackay Centre School's amazing Leaders on Wheels have hit the jackpot with their delectable brownies and sauces. For their third consecutive year, this group of students devoted their energy to raising funds for kids in need. This year they raised \$2,000 which they donated to the Healthy Kids Fund at the Montreal Children's Hospital.

The Leaders were innovative, producing Wheels on Fire, Wheels to Asia, and Sweet Wheels sauces to suit all tastes. They prepared the sauces and brownies at Westmount High School – their satellite school. Sales went extremely well. They raised a total of \$2,000!

The Leaders on Wheels gathered at the P.K. Subban Atrium at the MCH on June 8 to present their cheque to the MCH Foundation. "We are grateful for the help of the

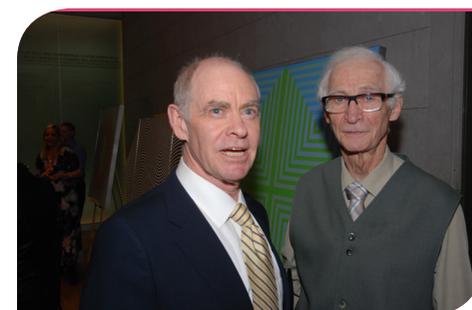


The Leaders on Wheels of The Mackay Centre School present a cheque in the amount of \$2,000 to the MCH Foundation.

Leaders on Wheels in raising funds. The money will go a long way to meeting the needs of the kids in the hospital," said **Tatiana Aparicio**, coordinator of Community Giving at the MCH. These students are true leaders in every sense of the word. Bravo!

The Arthritis Society announced the passing of donor and friend **George Ellis Russell** on May 8, 2016. Russell donated the works of art he produced over his lifetime (over 400 pieces) to the Arthritis Society for the benefit of childhood arthritis programs and services. Art dealer **Alan Klinkhoff** pointed out that Russell "dedicated his artistic career to teaching, to the benefit of decades of students, a very noble contribution, foregoing the potential for public recognition and great financial reward."

The Arthritis Society honoured Russell's artistic legacy as well as his generous gesture by naming their annual Juvenile Arthritis Family Day on September 11, 2016. The George Russell Family Day. This event is one that Russell supported from the beginning. The day brings together families dealing with arthritis, as well as doctors, nurses, volunteers, staff and anyone touched by the disease.



George Russell (right) received great reviews from renowned gallery owner Alan Klinkhoff (left) who said: "... this is the finest artist I have never heard of in my market place!" (Photo credit, TAS)

All proceeds from the day go to one of Russell's favourite causes, The Arthritis Society's Kids on the Move Camp. The camp benefitted from the George Russell Gala that took place on August 18th, 2016, at L'Ambroisie in Montreal.

If you have tidbits to share, connect with us at [wendyinspirations@gmail.com](mailto:wendyinspirations@gmail.com), or on Facebook or Twitter.



## Headlines from the EMSB

### John Grant science fair showcased mythical creatures of all kinds

Last year's annual science fair at John Grant High School explored the topic of Mythical Creatures: Fact or fiction, air, water, health, and technology. The 40 exhibitors were tasked to choose a topic that was relevant to them. Topics included uncovering the truth about zombies, vampires, why the sky is a light shade of blue, hoverboards, paranormal activity, constellations, loggerhead turtles, and more.

Under the direction of science teacher Tatiana Lednow, students focused on researching and preparing their project displays and oral explanations.

Of the many highlights was student Jason's megalodon, meaning "big tooth", the prehistoric shark that was the largest that ever lived. In addition to his informative table display and oral presentation, he and Ms. Lednow created a life-size replica of the



Teacher Tatiana Lednow with student Jason in the mock megalodon mouth that they constructed for the John Grant science fair.

megalodon's 11 x 9-foot mouth. His papier mâché model hung in the centre of the school gym for all to see. Photo opportunities inside the mouth were offered to visitors.

### Breakthrough is a hit!

John Grant High School teacher Marie Francis invited recording artist and producer David Hodges to the school. Over a two-day period, Hodges guided several of the students in producing an original song titled Breakthrough. These novice recording artists have special needs such as selective mutism, speech impediments, and literacy difficulties. Together, they created a touching, highly catchy song that provides insight into their thoughts and lives while inspiring the public to reach for their dreams. It's a must-listen!

The lyrics demonstrate the students' eagerness to teach what they have learnt on their journeys. Their words include: "We've all been searching for a light in our souls. Cause we all feel alone." The chorus is highly encouraging: "We've got to break through. Don't let it change you. It may hurt sometimes. Ya, but we'll learn to fly. So just hold onto your dreams. Don't you fall to your knees. Let your light become your saving grace. Cause everyday we can change."

To read more, visit our blog at <http://inspi->



John Grant students created the original hit song Breakthrough. (Photo courtesy of John Grant High School)

[rationsnewsmtl.blogspot.ca/2016/05/john-grant-students-record-hit-song.html](http://inspirationsnewsmtl.blogspot.ca/2016/05/john-grant-students-record-hit-song.html).

Watch the video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ijkbFSXjvCQ>. Or go to YouTube and search for Breakthrough by John Grant students.

### L.I.N.K.S. students recognized in the OSEntrepreneure Challenge

The OSEntrepreneure Challenge (known until recently as the Quebec Entrepreneurship Contest) is a major entrepreneurship contest that has been taking place at the local, regional, and provincial levels for the past 18 years.

L.I.N.K.S. teacher Nikolaos Vlahopoulos' class participated in a Cultural Mosaic Entrepreneurship Project. Students researched their family history and background to acquire information about their own cultural language, customs, traditions, religion, foods, flag, sports, and popular pastimes. They mounted images and short descriptive texts onto large, colourful poster boards which were displayed within the school.

The project proved to be an excellent exercise in extrapolating and summarizing pertinent information, which can be an intimidating task for the students. It indirectly targeted bullying by exploring, promoting, and sharing all cultures in a positive manner.

Anna Condo's class made bilingual Christmas cards and donated them to the ALS Society, which in turn used them to thank their volunteers. The project included researching ALS and learning about how the illness affects people of all ages across Canada. Condo's class continues to make cards for the ALS Society. "The project helped raise



Samples of cards made for the ALS Society by L.I.N.K.S. students. (Photo courtesy of Anna Condo)



L.I.N.K.S. student Jessica Teixeira-Pinto makes cards for the ALS Society as part of her class' OSEntrepreneure Challenge. (Photo courtesy of Anna Condo)

awareness for a devastating illness. I was very proud of my students for showing such compassion," shared Condo.

To read more, visit [http://www.emsb.qc.ca/emsb\\_en/media\\_en/onepressrelease.asp?id=3895](http://www.emsb.qc.ca/emsb_en/media_en/onepressrelease.asp?id=3895).



L.I.N.K.S. Cycle 1 students work on their cultural mosaic for the OSEntrepreneure Challenge. (Photo courtesy of Nikolaos Vlahopoulos)



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# Questions to ask your child's teacher

By Sandra Weir and Laura Caprini

As teachers and mothers, we know parent-teacher interviews are challenging for all concerned, especially when students are struggling. We respectfully suggest a few questions, to make your next experience both pleasant and informative.

## General Questions:

### 1. How, specifically, is my child having difficulty?

If your child is having trouble, you need to know why (do they need assistance to focus during lessons, to understand, to stay on task?).

### 2. What strategies are successful in assisting my child?

In elementary school, for example, directing children's attention to reference items around the classroom is a common strategy. Such items could include multiplication tables, or word walls for spelling. Knowing which strategies are in place allows you to encourage your child to access the necessary references and help, with the terms they will use in school.

## About Resource help (where applicable):

### 3. How much time does my child spend with the Resource teacher, and why?

Resource teachers schedule regular times to work on basic skills and review with children who are having trouble in class. Your child may also receive in-class assistance from the Resource teacher. You should find out where your child requires the most help and whether additional services are recommended.

### 4. Does homework include incomplete class work?

You should be told if your child is having a hard time finishing their work in class and whether this is due to difficulty with focus, comprehension, or both. If your child doesn't seem to understand the material, let the teacher know. Many children are shy about admitting they need help. You and the teacher should be on the same page, which will ensure your child will take the initiative in future.

### 5. How much time should be spent on homework?

Assure the teacher your child will work steadily for the required period. Many teachers recommend setting a timer in order to help a child stay on task. If the teacher does not offer a time limit, you could respectfully suggest one of 10 to 15 minutes per grade level, per evening.

At the end of the interview, be sure you set a date for a follow-up by phone or in person, in about a month's time. Ultimately, the goal is to leave the interview feeling that you have formed a supportive partnership with your child's teacher(s). This teamwork is essential to your child's confidence and success as a learner...and to your own peace of mind.

*Laura Caprini and Sandra Weir each have over 20 years of teaching experience at the elementary level. They are co-owners of Hudson Literacy Clinic.*



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## Adapted Travel by Mike Cohen

By Mike Cohen



### BROADWAY SHOWS ARE ACCESSIBLE:

There are many reasons to go to New York City, but the extraordinary selection of Broadway productions heads the list. On our most recent trip, we got to see four spectacular musicals: *Hamilton*, *Waitress*, *The School of Rock* and *The Color Purple*. The three of these theatres are wheelchair accessible.

*Hamilton* is without a doubt the biggest theatrical juggernaut to hit Broadway. It was recently nominated for a record-breaking 16 Tony Awards, winning 11, including Best Musical at the awards ceremony in June. The cast album, which includes an amalgamation of many current musical styles, hit number one on iTunes and was ranked the second best album of 2015 by [Billboard.com](http://Billboard.com). Tickets are already sold out until May 2017 at the Richard Rogers Theatre at 226 West 46th Street, with an open-ended run beginning in Chicago in the fall. The national tour is set to begin in San Francisco next March.

When will the show be coming closer to home? Reports are that David Mirvish is in discussions to create an all-Canadian cast edition of *Hamilton* and park it in one of his Toronto theatres, but no timeline has been discussed at the present moment. To quote lyrics commonly sung throughout the show, “look around at how lucky we are to be alive right now”. For more information, log on to <http://www.hamiltonbroadway.com>.

*Waitress* is a musical based on the 2007 cult Indie movie starring Keri Russell, showing at the Brooks Atkinson Theatre (256 West 47th Street, between Broadway and Eighth Avenue). The storyline revolves around Jenna (Mueller), a waitress and expert pie maker stuck in a small town and a loveless marriage. Faced with an unexpected pregnancy, she fears she may have to abandon the

dream of opening her own pie shop forever...until a baking contest in a nearby county and the town’s handsome new doctor offer her a tempting recipe for happiness. Supported by her quirky crew of fellow waitresses and loyal customers, she summons the secret ingredient she’s been missing all along – courage.

Producers have announced a national tour of the show will kick off at Cleveland’s Playhouse Square in October 2017. No word on whether any of the stops will be in Canada. For information, log on to [www.waitressthemusical.com](http://www.waitressthemusical.com).

I did not know quite what to expect from *School of Rock - The Musical* at Broadway’s Winter Garden Theatre (1634 Broadway). Based on the smash hit 2003 film of the same title, it features an original score by Andrew Lloyd Webber, lyrics by Glenn Slater, a book by Julian Fellowes and direction by Laurence Connor. Alex Brightman and Sierra Boggess lead the cast as “Dewey Finn” and uptight principal, “Rosalie Mullins.”

Let me just say right from the start that I loved every moment of this production. In fact, it is better than I could have possibly imagined. Most of the performers in this show are young kids and as the voice of Andrew Lloyd Webber himself tells us before the curtains go up, they really are playing their own music live. It was nominated for four Tony Awards. The storyline involves Dewey Finn, a failed, wannabe rock star who decides to earn a few extra bucks by posing as a substitute teacher at a prestigious prep school. There he turns a class of straight-A students into a guitar-shredding, bass-slapping, mind-blowing rock band. While teaching these pint-sized prodigies what it means to truly rock, Dewey falls for the school’s beautiful, but uptight headmistress, helping her rediscover the wild child within. For in-

formation, visit [www.schoolofrockthemusical.com](http://www.schoolofrockthemusical.com).

Accessible seating is available for *Hamilton*, *Waitress* and *School of Rock*. Wheelchair locations are available in the orchestra section of the theatres (pending availability). You may purchase one wheelchair and three companion seats per order if available. For guests with limited mobility, there are seats available with movable/folding armrests. All seats in the orchestra section are accessible without using any stairs. For guests with sight or hearing impairments, accessible seats are available in the orchestra sections. For more details on accessible seating policies you can contact the box office directly by calling (212) 719-4099.

It is hard for me to believe that I saw the motion picture *The Color Purple* more than 30 years ago, starring Oprah Winfrey and Whoopi Goldberg. When I heard that it had been revived, following a successful run almost a decade ago as a Broadway musical, I knew I just had to add it to my list. You can see it at the Bernard B. Jacobs Theatre at 242 West 45th Avenue.

At the 2016 Tony Awards, *The Color Purple* won for Best Revival of a Musical while Cynthia Erivo, took home Best Actress in a Musical honours for playing the iconic role of Celie. By the show’s end, when Erivo sings the show’s most famous number “I’m Here”, telling us that “I believe I have inside of me everything that I need to live a bountiful

life,” audience members can’t help but tear up with joy.

The Bernard Jacobs Theatre is not completely wheelchair accessible. Some accessible seating is located in the Orchestra section. There are no steps to the designate wheelchair seating locations.

Once on the Mezzanine or Balcony level, there are approximately two steps per row. For information on performances for the Hearing Impaired and Deaf call: (212) 221-0013. In addition, for performances for the partially sighted and blind call HAI (Hospital Audiences Inc.) at (212) 575-7663, Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm (EST). For Assistive Listening System, call: (212) 582-7678 to reserve in advance. For information visit [www.colorpurple.com](http://www.colorpurple.com).

**WHERE TO STAY:** There is no greater gift when it comes to accommodations in New York City than finding a place near Times Square. Last year we discovered the historic Algonquin Hotel ([www.algonquinhotel.com](http://www.algonquinhotel.com)). On our most recent trip, a rare summer visit for our family, we were fortunate enough to secure reservations again. Located in the heart of Midtown Manhattan, this jewel of historic New York hotels commands the center of 44th Street, just a block and a half away from Times Square.

Each of the 181 rooms and 25 suites features a comfortable well-lit work desk, as well as complimentary Wi-Fi. Always one step ahead of everyone else, the hotel was the first to offer accom-



Alex Brightman in *The School of Rock*.



*One of the beautiful bedrooms at The Algonquin.*

modations to actors and single women travellers. We stayed in a very comfortable one bedroom Noel Coward Suite, named for the legendary playwright, composer, actor, singer and director. There are framed Playbill covers from Coward's productions in the room.

The layout was ideally suited for us. There is a nice sized entrance, with the master bedroom to the right, a large bathroom straight ahead and the living room with a pullout couch to the left. But that is not all. The latter is also a mini library, with shelves of books to choose from. You can also download the special Folio app, which will provide access to a wide variety of ebooks you can read as long as you remain on the premises.

Delighting thirsty revelers when it opened at the demise of the Prohibition in 1933, The Blue Bar has moved – both physically and eruditely – through decades of Times Square hotel bar trends. There is also The Round Table Restaurant and the casual Lobby Lounge.

The Algonquin, its bar and restaurant, have easy access for wheelchairs from the street. There is valet parking. The hotel has six ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) rooms and one ADA suite. There are two elevators. Staff are very helpful and friendly.

**DINING OUT:** For dinner one night we made our first visit to the fabulous Del Frisco's Double Eagle Steak House ([www.delfriscos.com](http://www.delfriscos.com)). This is an ener-

getic, luxurious three-story restaurant, located at 1221 Avenue of the Americas. To say we were impressed is an understatement.

Del Frisco's was established more than 20 years ago. The cornerstone of the menu is aged USDA Prime Beef. They serve only the best hand-cut steaks, chops and freshest seafood, including Australian cold water lobster tails while using the freshest ingredients to create mouthwatering appetizers, flavorful side dishes and irresistible desserts. The sommeliers are on hand to guide you through their very extensive wine list while the bartenders will lift your spirits with hand-shaken martinis and hand-crafted cocktails. We lucked out, with sommelier Kristin Beckler and our waiter Tim. Kristin mixed and matched our selections of wine impeccably with the items Tim recommended. Did we really need to read the menu? Perhaps not, for we put our trust in Tim and the experience exceeded our wildest expectations.

We started off with their signature VIP cocktail, Svedka Clementine Vodka infused with fresh Hawaiian pineapple. Then came the appetizers. We shared another one of the house specialties, the crab cake with Cajun lobster sauce, shrimp cocktail and a Caprese salad – a simple Italian salad, made of sliced fresh mozzarella, tomatoes, and green basil, seasoned with salt and olive oil. It closely resembles the colours of the Italian flag: red, white and green.

When it came to main appetizers, we also decided to share. Since Del Frisco's

is known for its fantastic steaks, that is what we wanted to sample. Tim recommended the bone in filet and the bone in prime rib eye. As sides, he suggested we try the Cauliflower and Brie au gratin and the Lobster Mac and cheese.

The main entrance and floor is wheelchair accessible. You can call (212) 575-5129 for reservations.

One dining establishment that had never been on my radar screen before was Patsy's Italian Restaurant (<http://www.patsys.com>). Well it sure is now! Located at 235 West 56th Street, just a few short blocks from Times Square, this legendary Midtown Manhattan spot had been known for years as Frank Sinatra's restaurant of choice and has become a favorite with countless stars including Al Pacino, Alec Baldwin and George Clooney, to name a few.

Founded in 1944 by Pasquale "Patsy" Scognamiglio, Patsy's has been in its current and only theater district location (in the building next to the original site) since 1954. In almost 70 years of existence, Patsy's Italian Restaurant has had only three chefs; the late Patsy himself, his son Joe Scognamiglio, who has been at the establishment since the tender age of seven, and Joe's son Sal Scognamiglio, who has been manning the kitchen for the past 29 years.

I was dining alone on this evening, as other members of the family enjoyed a show nearby. My server Tony gave me time to review the appetizing menu and

then helped with some recommendations. I started off with orders of fried calamari and fried zucchini. The former was served with yummy marinara sauce on the side while the latter was prepared in the form of French Fries – crispy and delicious. I followed that off with a magnificent chopped salad, one of the best I can remember having in years. For the main course there were so many options. Tony assured me I could not go wrong with the spaghetti and meatballs and he was correct. The meatballs cut like butter and melted in my mouth. By this time I literally had to take a break in order to regain enough of an appetite to sample some of the mouthwatering homemade desserts that passed by my table on a large cart. When I had a hard time choosing, Tony made it easy. He provided me with the equivalent of one piece of cake in three different variations: chocolate mousse, cannoli and Napoleon (custard, whipped cream and puff pastry). I was glad that I had a nine-block walk to meet up with my family, for I needed some exercise after this very special dining experience.

For more information call (212) 247-3491, e-mail [anne@patsys.com](mailto:anne@patsys.com) or log on to [www.patsys.com](http://www.patsys.com) where you can view the entire menu. While the entrance and main level is wheelchair accessible, you cannot get to the washroom if you are wheelchair bound.

*Mike Cohen can be reached at [info@mikecohen.ca](mailto:info@mikecohen.ca). See his travel advice column at [www.sandboxworld.com/travel](http://www.sandboxworld.com/travel).*



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