



FEBRUARY- MARCH 2012 ALUMNI NEWSLETTER



January 2012 marks the start of GRIT's 30th anniversary!

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GRIT's 30th Anniversary!

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As we look back over the past three decades, we see significant change in our communities; we are reaping the reward of **inspiring inclusive futures!**

GRIT families have embraced the value of inclusion within their families and have been influential in their advocacy and leadership to influence values, practices and policies for inclusion within education, post-secondary experiences, volunteer positions and meaningful employment. For staff, we continue to be honored and privileged to learn and walk along with families on their inclusive journey. ***A celebration indeed!***

Join us as we celebrate and re-unite families and staff, through capturing of our learning journeys in simple ways. Here is how:

- ◆ Join us on Facebook at **The GRIT Program**. Take a few minutes to tell us why **"YOU love GRIT."** Share the impact GRIT has had on you or your family (a sentence or two from the heart would be great). We will also post some of these testimonials in upcoming newsletters.
- ◆ Send photos to create an **"inclusion wall"** at GRIT of our alumni' families' inclusive experiences, (for example: submit 3—photos: GRIT graduation/high school graduation/post secondary accomplishments). Pictures to be a maximum of 5 x 7" each.

For more information, see our website at www.gritprogram.com



Go confidently in the direction of your dreams"

- Henry David Thoreau-

\$30,000 For 30 years

Help Us Reach Our Goal— Our current total is **\$10,926.63!**



PLATINUM SPONSORS

GOOD NEWS STORIES

GRIT SUPPORTERS

We are very fortunate to have wonderful benefactors supporting our day to day work of *Inspiring Inclusive Futures*. Our heartfelt thanks and appreciation to:



The GRIT Program is honored and proud to be the recipients of a fundraiser "*Building a Better Future*" hosted by CPI Construction Ltd. in October 2011.

CPI Construction, a major general contractor in the Edmonton area, is the employer of a father of a 2nd year GRIT child. Our most sincere thanks and appreciation to *Jayson Barclay, Carl Semashkewich, Stan Colville* and the staff at CPI Construction for sharing their community spirit with The GRIT Program. In December CPI Construction presented the GRIT Program with a cheque in the amount of \$17,500.00!!

"Thank you to CPI, not only for your continued support to all children within the special needs community."

Volunteers Still Needed—Check your Calendar!!

If you've been thinking of signing up—Now's the time!

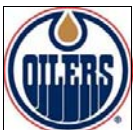
Our list is growing, but more are needed to break our record of

120 volunteers ALL IN ONE WEEK!

MARCH 13 & 14 (Tuesday & Wednesday) - CASINO



MARCH 16 (Friday) - OILERS 50/50



Come meet new friends and have fun while supporting a great cause—GRIT!!

Contact Heather at 780.454.9910 or gritprog@gritprogram.com





Creative Corner—Let's Play!

By Gina Blank & Vicki Traub, Resource Coordinators



Play is one of the most important things that a child will do each day because play is learning. It should be spontaneous and it can happen anywhere and anytime you are with your child. Children need a lot of time to explore and play in a variety of ways in a variety of settings. Remember the most important thing is to have fun!

Sea in a sink



You can fill your sink or bathtub with blue water, shells, pebbles, colored stones, green pipe cleaners for seaweed, sea creatures and boats and any other things your child loves to play with. Explore the concepts of in & out, wet & dry, under & on top. You can sing songs such as "Slippery Fish", or make up your own song like: "The fish in the water

goes splash, splash splash (To the tune of Wheels on the Bus).

Set up a fort

The great thing about a fort is that it can be made anywhere with just about anything; blankets over chairs or couches, a big box that has been cut in two and placed like a tepee over an area, or a pop up tent. Forts are a great place to bring in a flashlight and make shadows, read stories, have a special snack or do all three. Let your child decide where to make the fort and how to put it together, encourage decision making and problem solving (Of course provide help as needed so



Art using salt



On a piece of card stock or construction paper have your child make an outline of something, e.g. a snowman. You can draw the circles on the paper and count "1, 2" or say "small circle, big circle" and then have your child try to squeeze the glue over the outline. Fill in the outline with glue, drawing with glue is great for strengthening hands. If squeezing glue out of a bottle is too difficult for your child try putting some in a container and let them spread it on with a stick. They can add various craft items, buttons, pom poms, to add some detail. Pour or sprinkle salt over the picture, shake off any excess and let it dry. Of course let your child make whatever kind of picture they like which is a great opportunity to ask question about size and shapes they make or encourage them to trace it with their fingers.

Singing and dancing

Music is a great way for kids to be able to express themselves. Provide some props to use when singing, such as, a decorated paper towel tube to use as a microphone, clothes to dress up in or instruments you have on hand or make yourself (a shaker made out of a plastic egg filled with rice). Songs like Blowing Bubbles (To the tune of Fere Jacques) is great for repetition of words and actions.



Words

- Blowing bubbles
- Blowing bubbles
- Blow, Blow, Blow
- Blow, Blow, Blow
- Pop them in the air
- Pop them in the air
- Blow, Blow, Blow

Actions

- Blow bubbles as you sing and give your child a turn to blow the bubbles.
- Make blowing actions with your mouth
- Try to get your child to imitate you
- Try popping the bubbles you blow
- Make "pop, pop" sounds





Website of the Month

By Gina Blank & Vicki Traub, Resource Coordinators



Website: Irresistible Ideas for Play-Based Learning

<http://www.playbasedlearning.com.au/>

Purpose: To provide early childhood educators and parents of young children play-based ideas for activities, crafts, and other projects.

Highlights:

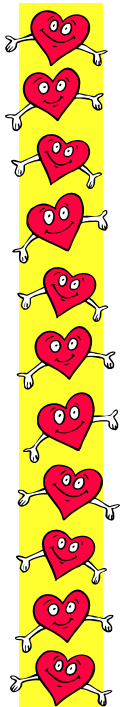
- ☺ Provides ideas across a variety of categories in play and learning (e.g. literacy, dramatic play, arts and crafts, etc.).
- ☺ Showcases other playschools around Australia (and the world) who also have great ideas for play-based learning activities.
- ☺ Links to other blogs and early childhood websites.



Why We Like It: It is obvious that this website fits with our core value of Learning Through Play. The authors present ideas for activities that engage all children and cover a variety of categories, such as literacy, pretend play, outdoor play, and music.

Craft ideas often include the use of natural and recycled materials, like driftwood, fabric scraps, and beads and buttons for mosaics. There is also an emphasis on sensory play, including such things as Sand Playdough, mud pies, and Squishy Paint Bags. As Resource Coordinators, we have already utilized a few ideas in our own playgroup!

The website uses a reader-friendly blog format. There are photos in almost every post, allowing readers to clearly see the creative process going on in various preschool settings.






GO4KIDDS Health Care & Service System Survey

We're looking for parents of Canadian children and youth (age 10-16 years) with severe developmental disabilities, to participate in a survey regarding their needs and access to healthcare and other services.

- There are three different parts to the Survey (30 minutes each) and will comprise questions about you and your family, your child's behaviour, disability and the services he/she received or needs, and your feelings about the rewarding and challenging aspects of parenting a child with disabilities.
- After completing all three parts of the survey, you will be eligible for \$50.00 as a thank you for your time

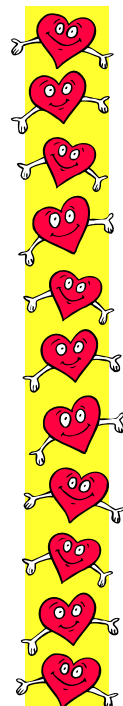
How can you be involved?

- Complete our Health Survey online at www.surveymk.com/s/gohealth1 or by emailing gohealth@yorku.ca
- Spread the word to other parents of children with severe DD who are between 10 and 16 years old
- Visit our website for more information on other opportunities to be involved

Contact Us!
 York University, BSB 220
 4700 Keele Street
 Toronto, Ontario
 Canada M3J 1P3

www.go4kidds.ca
 Phone: 416-736-5662
 Toll free: 1-877-233-4337
gohealth@yorku.ca

www.go4kidds.ca





A FRESH NEW START..

THE NEW YEAR IS A TIME THAT ALWAYS INSPIRES US TO MAKE NEW YEARS RESOLUTIONS AND CAN GIVE US A RENEWED ENERGY TO MAKE SOME POSITIVE CHANGES. HERE ARE SOME TIPS ON HOW WE CAN MAKE SOME SUBTLE INNER CHANGES THAT MAY HELP BALANCE OUR INNER 'SELF' WITH OUR 'OUTER' SELF.

LOVE YOURSELF and others around you without limitations. This is the ultimate focus of all our work, at the very centre of everything, if you can truly love and accept yourself, then your life experience has no limits.



Forgive Everyone and Release the Past

When we hold something un-forgiven inside, we are nurturing anger, hatred and resentment or maybe even guilt. These emotions lock us into the moment and drain mental and life energy. Holding such emotions inside long term will create sickness in the soul and in our body.



START LIVING CONSCIOUSLY Become aware of your actions, your thoughts and words. When you find yourself off principle or taking a negative perspective, stop yourself. Turn it around into something more positive and self nurturing. You will notice the change in the way people react to you because they will have noticed the change in you!



Be Honest with yourself and others

Without the ability to be honest with yourself and with others you will not be able to make progress with your changes. To succeed with change you must be prepared to face your truths and confront the fears that this exposes.



Start seeing the Positive side of everything!

A positive attitude not only boosts our natural immune system for better health but also by thinking positively, we boost our performance in nearly everything we do.



TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR LIFE - Recognize that you alone are responsible for it, no one else. You are where you are today through your choices. By taking responsibility for yourself, you are in a better place to start leading the life that **YOU** want and making choices that will lead you to the life you choose.



Start looking after yourself

To be effective in life, you need to be performing at your very best mentally, physically and spiritually. Acts of self care are acts of self-love and are essential to your wellbeing. Be kind to yourself and treat yourself with love.





Learning Opportunities



Mill Woods Family Resource Centre

Free Family Day Dinner

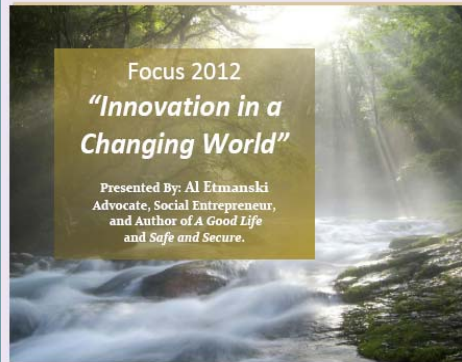
Join friends, neighbours and the Mill Woods Family Resource Centre as we host our annual Family Day Dinner on **Monday February 20th** (Family Day). Enjoy a no-cost, delicious dinner (including vegetarian choices) with games, activities and entertainment for the kids, and door prizes!



Where: Leefield Community Hall (7910 – 36 Avenue)
Time: 5:00 pm – 7:00 pm
Registration is MANDATORY.
Please call 780 413 4521.

A Wonderful Way to Spend Family Day!

For more information about any of our programs call:
780 413 4521 or visit our website at www.mwfrc.org



Focus 2012
"Innovation in a Changing World"

Presented By: Al Etmanski
Advocate, Social Entrepreneur,
and Author of *A Good Life and Safe and Secure.*

"We cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them"
-Albert Einstein

Funded in partnership with:



www.gatewayassociation.ca

the details

venue
Sandman Hotel
17635 Stony Plain Rd
cost:
\$20/person or
\$35/family

register:
780-454-0701 ext. 101
registration@gatewayassociation.ca

misc:
lunch is provided



A Conference for Families
Living with Disabilities
SATURDAY MARCH 10, 2012

9:30am-3:30pm

Al will lead us in an inspiring and practical session designed to reflect and identify, six deep patterns that characterize change-making solutions that we can take with us in order to build inclusive communities, so all people can live, learn, work, love and play as valued and respected members of a community.



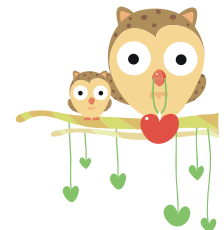
TOGETHER WE
MAKE A DIFFERENCE



The CPAA offers a unique range of services to persons with disabilities to assist their pursuit to play an active role in the communities they wish to join. Our programs are extremely flexible to provide unparalleled individualized services based on the desires and needs of each person.

They provide programs such as yoga, music therapy, computers, art, cooking, and ballet. Please contact them for more information or visit their website:

Toll Free 1-888-477-8030



"Family is the link to our past and the bridge to our future..."

-Alex Haley



HEARTS IN ACTION YEAR ROUND DAY CAMPS

Our Hearts In Action Summer Camps were a great success and we would like to thank all the staff, volunteers, and families that participated throughout the summer. We know that the memories gained will continue to bring smiles of laughter and joy!

Mark your calendar and gear up for our exciting season of camps and activities:

- Winter Respite - December 26 - 30, 2011
- Winter Camp - January 2 - 6, 2012
- Teacher's Convention - March 1 and 2, 2012
- Spring Break Camp - March 26 - 30, 2012
- Summer Day Camps - July 2 - August 17, 2012

Don't forget to call us for PD days/Exam days or other special drop in requests throughout the year!



780.431.8446

or

www.adaptabilities.ca



Learning Opportunities



RDSP Information Sessions

PLAN Edmonton offers a variety of information sessions throughout the year.



Registered Disability Savings Plan

Canada Disability Savings Grant (CDSG): A federal government grant that provides matching contributions of up to 300%. Canada Disability Savings Bond (CDSB): From the federal government, is paid on an annual basis into the RDSPs of low-income families. No contributions are required to be eligible; it was created to assist families who may not have the resources to contribute. A tax-return must be filed to be eligible. Regular information sessions are held throughout the year by PLAN Edmonton. Please call for the date and time of the next session.

Contact information: 780-488-2422 or www.planedmonton.ca



Training in Core Social Skills

Corinne Eckert Child & Adolescent Psychology

Successful Communication (Feb. – April / 2012)

The goal is to enhance the communications skills for students who have difficulty with social interaction.

Emphasis will be on the following:

Conversations, offering and asking for help, asking questions, joining in, including others, expressing emotions and needs in an effective way, and understanding figurative speech.

Positive Peer Interaction (April – June / 2012)

This program is for students who would like to gain greater self-control within themselves in relation to emotions and handling difficult situations.



Emphasis will be on the following:

Dealing with feelings, understanding the feelings of others, recognizing stress signs and causes, self-monitoring stress levels, stress prevention, positive thinking, being assertive, accepting consequences, problem solving and conflict resolution, dealing with teasing, peer pressure and self-control.

Locations:

St. Albert – Leo Nickerson School - Wed. evenings

Edmonton – Glenora Community Hall – Monday evenings

For more information or registration please contact:

Corinne Eckert: ceckert@telus.net or call (780) 454-4634

20th Annual Family Conference

April 13 - 14, 2012 | Fantasyland Hotel | Edmonton, AB

17700 - 87 Avenue | 1-800-RESERVE (737-3783)



Alberta Association for Community Living
serving children and adults with developmental disabilities for over 50 years

Workshops for siblings of children with special needs!

Join us! These workshops will provide opportunities for brothers and sisters of children with special health, mental health and developmental needs to obtain peer support and education within a recreational context.

Sibshops are lively, pedal-to-the-metal celebrations of the many contributions made by brothers and sisters of kids with special needs. Sibshops acknowledge that being the brother or sister of a person with special needs is for some a good thing, others a not-so-good thing and for many somewhere in between. They reflect a belief that brothers and sisters have much to offer one another, if they are given the chance.

Sibshops seek to provide siblings with opportunities for peer support. Because Sibshops are designed (primarily) for school aged children, peer support is provided within a lively, recreational context that emphasizes a kids'-eye-view.

6 - 8 yr olds	Saturday, January 21
1pm - 4pm	Muttart Conservatory (9626 - 96 A St) \$26.75
#432479	
9 - 12 yr olds	Saturday, March 3
11am - 3pm	Terwillegar Recreation Centre (2051 Leger Road) \$32.10
#432478	
13 - 15 yr olds	Saturday, March 17
10am - 2pm	City Arts Centre (10943-84 ave) \$32.10
#432477	



For more info, contact Debi Currie at 780-496-7318

To register call 311 or visit their website:

www.edmonton.ca/ereg

The GRIT Program
14930 - 114 Avenue
Edmonton, AB

Phone: 780-454-9910
Fax: 780-455-1806
E-mail: gritprog@gritprogram.com
Website: www.gritprogram.com



inspiring inclusive futures

The GRIT Program's Mission Statement

To provide a family centered, early education program which will assist the child with special needs to be fully included in family life and community.

To provide the information and support necessary for the successful transition to and full inclusion in a community school.

To promote public education and public awareness in support of inclusion and inclusive communities.

Do you know how far your donations dollars to GRIT can go?

For example.....If you donate \$500 to GRIT, you receive a \$200 tax credit. That means your \$500 donation only costs you \$300! And GRIT can take that \$500 donation and have it matched by the Alberta Government (Culture & Community Spirit) to make \$1000!..... **In other words we turn \$300 into \$1000!!**

Please keep GRIT in mind for your 2011 tax donations by:

- ◆ designating GRIT as your charity of choice through United Way payroll deduction
- ◆ donating online at CanadaHelps.org* For more information, see our website at www.gritprogram.com
- ◆ monthly donating on your Visa or MasterCard
- ◆ GRIT Staff payroll deductions



For more information please call either Sue, ext. 202 or Heather, ext. 200.

All donations to GRIT support the children's growth and learning, and enhancement of GRIT's service to families. Your support is greatly appreciated!

Thank You

GRIT would like to thank the all the people for their kind donations.

