

## Corey's family faces challenges together

MY SON COREY WAS BORN WITH SPINA BIFIDA AND HYDROCEPHALUS ON MAY 25, 1995 IN OTTAWA. HE HAD SURGERY THE DAY AFTER HE WAS BORN; IT WAS THE LONGEST WAIT EVER.

The Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) was his home for nearly the entire first month of his life. Then went home with a VON home care nurse - he had open skin on his back from being in the same position for so long! I became a single parent to Corey when he was 11 months old. We lived in a big house in Plantagenet, Ontario. Several months later, we moved in with my parents. I found the Spina Bifida & Hydrocephalus Association in Ottawa, went in for the AGM, met lots of people and started helping out. When Corey was little he had numerous surgeries; a total of 12 so far. Hopefully, that will be it for some time.

In 1997, I moved to Ottawa. Corey was 3 years old. He attended preschool at Ottawa Children's Treatment Centre (OCTC). He went three times a week and loved it. He got to play games and do arts and crafts. The centre also provided physio and occupational therapy. Over the next couple of years, he moved on to school in a regular setting. That didn't work out too well but he had to wait until the following year to return to OCTC for their school program. At that point, I started working again. I opened up a daycare in my home. Once Corey started school full time, I went back to work at the french College "La Cite Collegiale". Corey now goes to Centennial Public School and is integrated in 2 classrooms. He also attends an after school program. He is with children who are mobile. He goes swimming and watches the big kids play hockey on the ice. In the summer, he goes to Merrywood Camp in Perth for 10 days. He loves going canoeing and would love to try kayaking.

I am working full time now in the French public school board with children who have learning disabilities. I also helped Corey's baseball team, the East Nepean Eagles, a team for children with disabilities. I did that for



Front: Corey, Cameron; Middle: Taylor and Connie Regimbald.  
Back: Scott.

3 years. That was fun! This year, I'm hoping to start a new baseball team for children with disabilities. It wasn't easy being single for 8 years and doing what two parents would normally do. I was lifting Corey in and out of the vehicle every time we went somewhere but we wanted to live a normal life and have fun like everyone else. We are trying to raise enough money to modify our van to make it easier to go places with Corey. Now I met someone. Scott proposed in July 2004 and we are getting married September 24, 2005. Corey has gained a sister, Taylor 12 and a brother, Cameron 9, and I won't have to do it alone anymore.

*Connie Regimbald has been a member since Corey was a baby. She has been a very active volunteer in the Ottawa Region. In her words, "I started selling the TGIF Lottery Calendar. In my first year I sold almost 250! I was helping out with the [SB&H] library and putting a cookbook together along with other volunteers. The*

first fundraising I helped out with was a successful Golf Tournament. With the help of the students of Algonquin College, we held an in-line skating event. Then there was a bowling tournament and I also organized Christmas gift-wrapping sessions at Billing Bridge Mall for 3 years. It was great! I miss it! ”

Connie is the SB&H volunteer regional contact for the Ottawa area. She is interested in getting our members involved in social and fund raising activities. There has already been a Taster's Club and a Pool Party Social in Ottawa.

## Do you want to MAKE A DIFFERENCE in Special Education?

SB&H is looking for SEAC (Special Education Advisory Committee) Representatives, to speak for students with spina bifida and/or hydrocephalus, in most school boards across Ontario!

In the words of retiring rep. Kathi Plug from the Niagara Catholic District School Board,

*"I have been with SEAC since 1988 and have seen so many positive and progressive changes...This whole experience has made me a stronger person."*

For information about SEAC and how to become a part of shaping Special Education in Ontario, please visit [www.seaclearning.ca](http://www.seaclearning.ca)

## Family connection leads to business opportunity

*"Live your life and forget your age."* Norman Vincent Peale

*"Age is something that doesn't matter, unless you are cheese."* Billie Burke

*"The way we treat our children in the dawn of their lives, and the way we treat our elderly in the twilight of their lives, is the measure of the quality of a nation."* Hubert Humphrey

*"It is not how old you are, but how you are old."* Marie Dressler

There will never be a shortage of famous quotes telling people how to live their lives. Some quotes are inspiring. Some are challenging. And some, though well intentioned, sound trite in the face of real life circumstances.

Now, more than ever, our senior citizens and people with disabilities are encouraged to live life to the fullest. This is a wonderful sentiment but sometimes life has a way of derailing our best laid plans. Take Irene B.

At age 78, Irene decided it was time to move out of the home she'd lovingly maintained for over 50 years. It was hard to leave but harder still, to stay and navigate stairs, do the cleaning and get in and out of the bathtub because of her painful arthritis.

Like others in her situation, Irene and her family picked a new home based on Irene's changing needs. Her new condo was wheelchair accessible and had modified kitchen appliances. Both these features made it easier for Irene to use her walker, but there was one place that was still off-limits. The bathtub. Changing her address didn't make Irene's arthritis go away. Getting in and out of the bathtub was not only dangerous, it was impossible. So even in her new home, she was forced to give herself exhausting sponge baths instead of a nice hot shower or bath.

Then Irene's grandson, Ronny Wiskin, got involved. Ronny, and his business partner, David Wiseman, have been in the home renovation business for over 15 years. In their work together, they'd seen seniors struggling to maintain their independence in the face of physical barriers. Together, David and Ronny had been thinking



about how their renovation expertise, combined with sensitivity to the needs of seniors, might break down some of those barriers. Irene's bathtub dilemma was the perfect place to start.

Before tackling Irene's bathroom, Ronny and David joined forces with another like-minded soul, Susie Levitsky. Susie is an Occupational Therapist and Universal Design specialist. Like Ronny and David, she not only had an interest in helping seniors and people with disabilities manage their home environment, she also had a solid grounding in both the physical needs of an aging population and the design savvy to offer David and Ronny some construction ideas. As a team, they were well placed to help Irene feel truly at home in her new house.



Ronny and David wanted Irene to be able to walk straight into the shower without stepping over a ledge. At the same time, they needed to make sure that it was safe and 'slip-free.' After much research and experimentation, they developed the *EuroMax Shower* which is ledge free, slip resistant and the first of its kind. After successfully installing it for Irene she told Ronny

and David, "I now take showers just for fun." That's an inspirational quote someone can actually live by.

Ronny and David aren't stopping there. Along with the *EuroMax Shower*, they are also actively developing solutions to the everyday physical barriers challenging anyone with a mobility disability. After solving her bathtub dilemma, they got to work on tackling Irene's impossibly heavy front door. Trying to push open a heavy door while also steering a walker, wheelchair or scooter would challenge the fittest of us. So, David and

Ronny installed *The Gentleman Door Opener*, a Canadian made remote controlled door opener that opens and closes the door at the push of a button.

By the time David, Ronny and Susie finished making Irene's house a home she could truly use, they decided to expand their horizons. Together, they formed RELIABLE INDEPENDENT LIVING SERVICES. As a research, development and installation team, this trio is dedicated to assessing the personal needs of every client and bringing practical solutions to life.

What they've discovered along the way is the kernel of wisdom buried deep inside one of the most inspiring stories of all time- "The Little Engine that Could." Because, really, that story isn't just about willpower or the desire to go up a steep hill. It's about having an actual track to climb. A track that works, a shower that's safe and a door that opens.

For more information on RELIABLE INDEPENDENT LIVING SERVICES, please call 416-502-9200 or visit [www.reliableliving.com](http://www.reliableliving.com).

**This is your newsletter!**

**Please send any  
information you might like  
to share and help keep  
everyone informed!**

**Contact us at 416-214-1056  
or toll-free 800-387-1575  
or e-mail [skean@sbhao.on.ca](mailto:skean@sbhao.on.ca)**



# Community events & updates

## Join us for the SB&H Annual General Meeting Living Well, Being Well!

Saturday October 1, 2005

From 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

at the Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB)

1929 Bayview Avenue (Bayview & Eglinton)

Toronto, Ontario

### Program Highlights

- David Lepofsky, co-chair of the ODA Committee will outline the new Accessibility for Ontarians with Disability's Act, 2005 (AODA).
- Dr. Sender Herschorn, Chief of Urology at Sunnybrook Health Science Centre will discuss the latest information on urological health.

### Last Thursday of Every Month - SB&H Adult Hydrocephalus Support Group *GTA*

Contact Steve Kean at 416-214-1056 or e-mail [skean@sbhao.on.ca](mailto:skean@sbhao.on.ca) to participate or get more information.

### First Friday of Every Month - SB&H Taster's Clubs

**Toronto** - Contact Steve Kean at 416-214-1056 or e-mail [skean@sbhao.on.ca](mailto:skean@sbhao.on.ca).

**Huron County** - Contact Lisa Harper by e-mail at [lharper@smallbusinesshuron.ca](mailto:lharper@smallbusinesshuron.ca).

**Sunday August 7, 2005** - Potluck lunch at The Bayfield Town Hall at 12:00 p.m.

**Friday September 2, 2005** - The Blyth Inn, Blyth 6:30 p.m.

**Essex-Kent Counties** - Contact Call either Jill at 519-971-4711 or Patti at 519-567-6483

**Friday August 19, 2005** - Red Lobster, 65755 Tecumseh Rd. E.

**Wednesday September 21, 2005** - Pizza Hut, 3140 Dougall Huron Church Rd. (Gateway Plaza)

**Ottawa** - Contact Michaela Jones at 613-384-2632

**Thursday July 28 at 7 p.m.** - Montana's Cookhouse, 1711 Merivale Rd, Nepean

### August 13, 2005 - A FREE family event *Kingston*

at the Kingston Family YMCA, 100 Wright Crescent, from 7:30-8:30pm. If the weather is fine, there will be refreshments outside afterwards. RSVP Michaela Jones 613-384-2632

### October 5, 2005 - SB&H Parents' Gathering at KidsAbility *Waterloo*

T.A. Conference Room, 7-8:30 p.m.

If you have any questions or would like to hear more, please feel free to contact Sandra Metzger (parent) at 519-669-5289 or Rob Guay at 519-886-8886 ext. 208

### For Adults With Disabilities in and around Kingston

**August 26, 2005** - the Independant Living Centre is having a dinner club that will meet at their centre 298 Concession St. from 11:00-1:00pm for a Summer Hot Dog BBQ. Cost is \$5.

**September 7, 2005** - meet at Swiss Chalet 1288 Bath Rd 5-7pm.

**October 4, 2005** - meet at Moxie's Bar and Grill Cataraqui Town Centre 5-7pm.

To reserve a place for any or all of these events contact Laura Smith at ILC 542 8353.

### ERINOAK MENTORSHIP PROGRAM *GTA*

Erinoak mentors are clients and graduates 16 years and up who have been trained to offer support and encouragement to each other and to all Erinoak clients. If you would like to become a mentor or would like have support from a mentor, please contact Carl Bonura at 905-828-3265 or Christine Stapleford at 905-491-4393.

**Visit the SB&H website at [www.sbhao.on.ca](http://www.sbhao.on.ca) and click *What's Going On?* to find out about the latest events in your community!**

## Current Bulletin



## Regional News&Notes

SB&H • 555 Richmond St.W. • P.O. Box 103, Suite 1006 • Toronto, On • M5V 3B1 • Phone: 416-214-1056 or 800-387-1575

Fax: 416-214-1446 • E-mail: [provincial@sbhao.on.ca](mailto:provincial@sbhao.on.ca) • Website: [www.sbhao.on.ca](http://www.sbhao.on.ca)

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