



**Annual Report 2010**

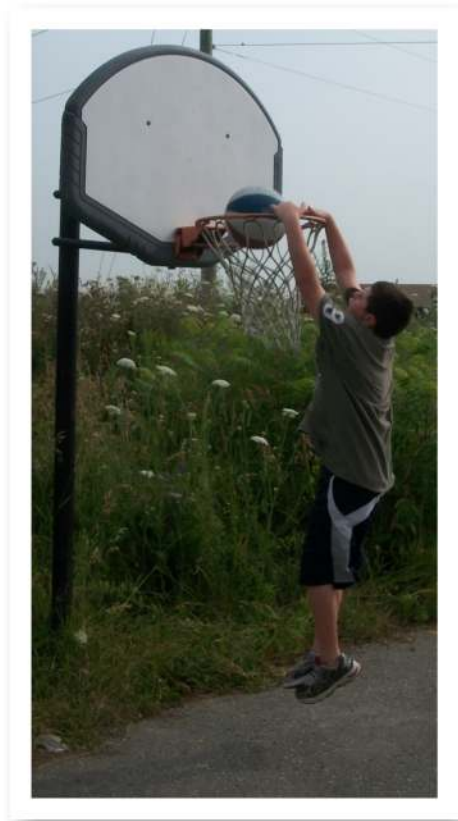


*“The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams.”*

Eleanor Roosevelt

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## Message from the Chair



As I'm writing, there are glimpses of spring after a long winter. It feels like we're ready. Similarly, we are in a stage of renewal and regeneration at Precious Minds and we, as a board, are excited about this. After some time of transition and redefinition as an organization, pieces are coming together and things are moving into place for Precious Minds to launch into a new era of providing care, support and hope for families in North Durham Region.

In 2010, we were extremely pleased to welcome Karen Shepherd as our new Executive Director. Karen brings a wealth of experience as a business leader and understands the realities of parenting a child with special needs. For 18 years, Karen has navigated emotion, information, resources, programs and services for her daughter to thrive and flourish. Karen's resilient spirit, her vast knowledge and experience, and her compassion for families bring a wonderful depth to her presence and leadership at Precious Minds.

Throughout 2010, the Board took time to explore, evaluate, research, and dialogue about real needs for families and how Precious Minds can revitalize our efforts within our niche areas. This process has rekindled our passion to come around families as whole units, identifying and addressing needs for parents, children and youth with barriers to learning, and their siblings. The Board's work has led to the development of an updated strategic plan that maps out our areas of focus and priorities that will gain attention and momentum over the next five years as an organization.

The beautiful thing about renewal is that it does not replace something, but grows out of what already is to enhance, augment, and rejuvenate. As you will see in this report, we have much to celebrate as an organization; and as we continue to think and plan for the future, we believe there is also much to anticipate. Thanks for partnering with us to make all this possible.

Sharon Simmonds

*"It takes a community  
to raise a child"*  
African Proverb

## Message from the Executive Director

To know Precious Minds is to love Precious Minds

I had been past the building on Highway 12 a handful of times during the last eight years and often wondered what this place was. The name intrigued me...Precious Minds.

What could be happening inside a place with such a captivating name? Probably a place set up for gifted children, who are being helped to aspire to greatness. This is exactly what Precious Minds is -- it is a place for children whose greatness is yet to be uncovered. It exists for them and their families.

I have had the unique opportunity to join the existing Precious Minds team and experience firsthand the impact that a small group of dedicated people can have on families who are navigating life for their children who have barriers to learning. As a mother of four daughters, one who has autism, I know this journey and believe that it is better travelled in tandem.

Created out of love and need, Precious Minds continues out of love and need. Thanks to Pat, Jan, Sandy, Sharon, Charlotte and Barry for bringing their unique gifting to the families we embrace. And thanks to you, our friends and families, Board of Directors, corporate sponsors and agencies who give us the fuel to forge ahead!

Karen Shepherd

*In April 2011, at the time of printing the Annual Report, we received word from Executive Director, Karen Shepherd, that she would be resigning for personal reasons. We thank Karen for her wonderful contribution to Precious Minds in the past year and wish her much success in the future.*



### Board of Directors 2010

Sharon Simmonds, Chair

Bonnie Noble

Elisabeth Graham

Stephanie Weddel

Jodie Winnitoy

Julie Fotheringham

Rita Van Halteren-Stammis

### Founders

Sharon Simmonds

Bonnie Noble

Stephanie Weddel

Elisabeth Graham

### Staff

Karen Shepherd, Executive Director

Sharon Butchart, Community Coordinator

Sandy Ianuzzo, Family Support – Children & Youth

Jan Grisdale, Family Support – Parents & Resources

Pat Kerry, Administration and Accounting

Charlotte Truter, Marketing & Communications

Barry Grisdale, Facility Maintenance

# The Year in Review

## Celebrating New Partnerships in 2010!



The summer of 2010 brought exciting news that Precious Minds Support Services received funding to expand our existing backyard recreation space. Plans are in motion for the implementation of a vision to support the changing physiological, social, emotional and nutritional needs of our growing youth-age population. The Precious Minds team is thrilled with our expanded capacity to impact our older youth with a "Fitness Circuit" and "Sensory Adapted Fitness Zone". We are grateful to the Province of Ontario - Ministry of Health Promotion and Sport, and Autism Speaks Canada for their partnerships to realize this vision. Construction and installation will begin in 2011. Visit our website for further details.

*"Believe you can  
and you're halfway there."*

Theodore Roosevelt

## Financial Assistance

Precious Minds offers financial assistance to families to help with the costs of assessments, specialized equipment, therapies and tutoring. Our objective is to contribute to the healthy development of each child and relieve related financial stress on families. In the last 11 years Precious Minds was able to provide over \$210,000 including \$11,000 in 2010 alone.

## Precious Christmas

Thank you for the overwhelming response to our Precious Christmas program. You helped to raise over \$ 11,000. Precious Christmas is a wonderful way of gift giving that directly impacts families in our community who have children with barriers to learning. The funds raised provide camp sponsorships to children, a rare night out for parents, new resources for our library, a special afternoon of fun for siblings of children with special needs and a much needed and requested Sibling Support Program. Thank you for providing the gift of hope this past Christmas!



# Celebrate

## FAMILY SUPPORT - Child & Youth Programming

**Tutoring 1-2-1** – This is the second year for this unique academic support designed for elementary students needing assistance in the areas of literacy and math. Precious Minds facilitated individualized tutoring for 14 students through arrangements with Vos' Independent Community Room in Port Perry and the Uxbridge Public Library. We partnered with five qualified teachers for the purpose of isolating the specific areas of weakness, developing a 'session focus' and summarizing 'steps forward' at the close of the program. Families value the individualized approach, the goal of measureable outcomes and the program's affordability. We are grateful for the sponsorship of this program through the IBM Retirees Fund.

**Brock Connection** - Largely due to our partnership with Nipissing University's Concurrent Education program and fifth year North Durham student, Janene Stevenson, Precious Minds forged support relationships with Beaverton Public School, McCaskill's Mills Public School and the Brock Public Library - Beaverton branch from January to March. Our team provided classroom support at the intermediate level at Beaverton PS which was a great opportunity to cultivate relationships with administration, teachers and students. At McCaskill's Mills PS, Precious Minds facilitated an after-school literacy club led with the able assistance of two senior students from Brock High, Vanessa Koot and Ashley Sabourin. On Tuesday afternoons, we provided a 'Friends 'n Book Buddies' reading program for students K to Gr. 3 out of the Beaverton Library. Special thanks to the Fisher's Independent for their gift card to enrich our times with healthy snacks.

**Lego Friendship Project** - This popular support offering designed to support kids with Asperger's, autism and learning disabilities ran twice in 2010 under the leadership of Jared Wilson and enthusiastic high school student volunteers. It is simply amazing how Lego, food, kids and 'big friends' can add up to a celebration of creativity, each other's strengths and abilities and increased comfort being 'social'! Our deep thanks to Uxbridge Baptist Church for use of their facility.

**Break Away** – This is one of the Centre's longest standing support programs for families with kids and youth affected by developmental disabilities. On a consistent basis, eight kids participated in these structured respite afternoons, affording parents and siblings the opportunity to 'break away' too. The theme-based program has involved many caregivers and we are grateful for their steady commitment, creative planning and compassionate hands and feet. Regardless of the disability represented (autism, global delays, various syndromes and physical impairments), it is our privilege to facilitate FUN, lend much needed support and be players in this journey of hope. March Break Mini Camp, designed along similar lines was offered to families for three full days over the school break and we had nine campers.

**Blaze Summer Camp** – This full day, summer season initiative supported 41 families in 2010. Quoting our camp consultant, Cindy Waugh, "At the Blaze Summer Camp, programme goals focus on supporting the ongoing growth of each camper in the areas of social and life skills, personal responsibility for fitness and healthy nutrition and the enhancement of play and leisure skills. In a safe, supportive, and barrier free environment, children and youth with disabilities are able to experience the joys of learning new skills and playing among friends in a camp atmosphere. Children and youth with special needs are provided with opportunities that the typically developing takes for granted." We reflect with deep satisfaction on

an excellent student staff, outstanding volunteers, and new program ventures – like our flock of laying hens in an accessible coop and our own mini produce market extended to families through partnership with Cooper's CSA farm.

**Teens Advance** – A relatively new initiative of the Centre, we are encouraged to understand that its goals are bridging a support gap for teens identified with high-functioning autism, Asperger's syndrome and learning disabilities. Teens Advance is a weekly program organized to support youth transitioning to young adulthood, particularly in the areas of social skills, more independent living and practicing responsibility to personal fitness and healthy nutrition choices. Group leaders provided guidance in using Facebook, being interviewed, personal hygiene habits, respecting others and shopping within a budget.

**Fitness Zone – SWIM** Since its inception in 2008, this swim program which is designed to address physical activity needs, water safety, skill development and the need for community social opportunity has been full to capacity each session. It is an inspiring picture of how partnerships are powerful to positively impact the lives of community members. We continue to be thankful for the Township of Uxbridge – Uxpool facility, numerous high school student volunteers, our swim instructor, Beth McClelland (affiliate of Holland Bloorview) and our parents.

Reflecting on this past year, we want to express our heartfelt thanks to the local media for communicating the needs, program highlights and spirit of Precious Minds so consistently.

To wrap up, we're all about FAMILY SUPPORT – for parents, caregivers, siblings and children and youth who experience barriers to learning. It has been so fulfilling to partner with Jan Grisdale (Parent Support) to meet many new families, understand more accurately how complex life really is for families with disabilities and to be part of a bigger picture that desires to network for CARE, SUPPORT and HOPE for North Durham and beyond.

Delighted to celebrate your great kids,  
Sandy Ianuzzo



## Family Support

Parents – I was inspired by a presenter recently who spoke of how raising a child with a disability isn't done in isolation. It affects the whole family. He likened it to a whole family being on a waterbed. When something happens to one person everyone in the family feels the effect. That is so true. Family Support at Precious Minds is set up to help the whole family, from the child with special needs, to their siblings and the parents.

In my role of support to families where one or more child has a disability, I come alongside parents to help them find resources that are needed. I am able to connect families with existing organizations that offer programs that meet their child's needs, advocate for them and who can offer financial assistance. I work in tandem with my cohort, Sandy, in Family Support providing programs for our families in the north that meet their unique needs.

Raising a child with special needs is exhausting work with its own special rewards. Parents at all stages of that journey need a listening ear, someone who hears their hearts' desire for their child, for their family. As the parent of 2 children with special needs I understand that journey and attempt to be that person for our families. Listening, caring and affirming along the way.

Through time spent in groups and one-to-one meetings, springs ideas for parent evening workshops, new programs for siblings and children and times where parents can share with each other what they have learned through a service, program or assessment. This past year has seen some new methods of connecting with parents and I am affirmed in new ways of reaching out.

What has continued?

- Parent Share has continued with its renewed emphasis on the amazing resources that our parents have to offer to other parents. This included sharing about their personal experiences with using a specific method or what they learned from attending a conference. Parents have also been kept up to date on what is happening in the two boards of education through information sessions.
- Lemonade on the Lawn moved into its third year – giving an opportunity for parents to connect with each other at the end of camp. It was great to see parents connecting in this way and it gave parents the opportunity to share contact information in order to set up play dates for their kids.
- Evening Workshops continued with new and repeated topics as we responded to the needs of parents. Sessions included the new Registered Disability Savings Plan, Taxes, Kerry's Place Funding and How to be an Effective Advocate
- Autism – Durham continues to hold their monthly parent group (CHAT- North) at our facility
- Resource Donations - We are celebrating our seventh year of book donations through the generosity of the Rotary Club of Uxbridge. This support allows us to obtain books in a timely manner to meet the immediate needs of our families - what a valuable resource to our parents and others who are in need of these resources. We have also received donations over the year from church groups and book clubs that have allowed us to purchase video resources for our families as well.
- The Family BBQ celebrated its fourth year and best attendance ever featuring our Dad's barbecuing
- The Train Trip on the York-Durham Heritage train saw 133 adults and children enjoying a summer morning on a train.

What is new?

- New groups have formed to meet specific needs of families. We have facilitated a few get-togethers of parents with children who have Down Syndrome hoping to form a group in North Durham.
- We have had a series of get-togethers of parents whose children are making the transition to high school. These began as information meetings bringing in speakers to give valuable information for a successful transition. This group continues to meet to share stories of successes and challenges.
- I have had the opportunity to welcome parent volunteers who are living very full lives but wish to help us achieve our goals of reaching out to all families in the north of Durham. What a great resource they are to us in planning and doing some of the exciting and not so exciting aspects of our work here.

Finally, as I reflect back on this year I am amazed at how our parents are rallying to the unique challenges that they face on a daily basis. I have spent countless hours one on one with parents and see their deep love for their child and their strong desires to be the very best they can be for them. I am reminded of the quote by Lori Borgman

"You've developed the strength of a draft horse while holding onto the delicacy of a daffodil ... you are the parent, advocate and protector of a child with a disability."

This sums up our parents' lives quite well.

Jan Grisdale



# Belief

# Renewal

## Donors List

We are grateful for the support we receive from you our donors, grantors, community supporters, fundraising supporters and our amazing volunteers. Through the combined support we receive from all of you we are able to provide care, hope and support to many families in North Durham. Our door is always open for you to come to the Centre for a visit or even better attend one of our programs and see the kids in action! Thank you for believing in Precious Minds!

### Capital Grantors

George Lunan Foundation  
Mariann Trust  
Rotary Club Port Perry  
Sunderland Lions Club  
Susie Sorabji Chapter I.O.D.E.  
Uxbridge & District Lions

### Grantors

Baagwating Community Association  
CIBC  
Georgina Foundation  
Government of Canada - Canada Summer Jobs  
Government of Ontario - Ministry of Health  
Promotion and Sport  
IBM  
Intact Foundation  
J.P. Bickell Foundation  
Loblaw Inc  
RBC Foundation  
SEP (Province of Ontario)  
The Forzani Group Ltd.  
The Toskan Casale Foundation  
Toronto Hydro Electric System  
Township of Scugog  
United Way - Ajax-Pickering-Uxbridge  
Unity for Autism  
Unity Speaks Canada  
Veridian Connections

### General Donors

Allen, Mabel  
Arbolino, Antonita  
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Evans, Robert & Mary  
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Graham, Peter & Elisabeth  
Grasser, Mary  
Grisdale, Barry & Jan  
Hendriks, Ben  
Hine-Pires, Brenda  
Hoggard, Keith & Carol  
Howe, Bill & Barb  
Ilanuzzo, Erik & Sandy  
Irvén, Trish & Bob  
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Martin, Mary S.  
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Simmonds, Robert  
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Stammis, Norm & Rita  
Stover, Robert & Nancy  
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United Way of Greater Toronto  
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United Way Oshawa-Whitby-Clarington  
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Vieira, Lynn  
Wade, Ruth  
Wagner, Sandy & Ron  
Warr, Amy

Warr, Richard & Mary-Lynn  
Weddel, Glenn & Steph  
Weddel, Phil & Pam  
Wilson, George & Dorothy  
Wineberg, Judith  
Winnitoy, Jodie & Brent  
Wolfe, Nancy  
Wootton, Teena & Tyler  
Zielonko, Nick

### Community Donors

Andrews Wireless  
Boston Pizza  
Buxton Accounting Services  
Cooper's CSA Farm  
Diamond Dusters  
DKLVW Holdings-Snap Fitness  
Dufferin Aggregates  
Durham District School Board  
Durham Region Heavy Contractors Assoc.  
Forsythe Farms  
Gorgon Foundation  
Greenbank United Church Women  
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Heaman Communications  
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McDonalds, Uxbridge & Port Perry  
Oakwood & District Lions Club  
Port Perry United Church  
Quaker Village Public School  
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Ron Noble Insurance  
Rotary Club of Uxbridge  
Roxy Kids in Action  
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St. Paul's Leaksdale Church  
Sunderland Lions Club  
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Uxbridge Adult Hockey  
Uxbridge Baptist Church  
Uxbridge Black Hawks Sports Inc.  
Uxbridge Chamber Choir  
Uxbridge Nurseries Limited  
Uxbridge Secondary School  
VOS Independant Grocers

# Belief

## 2010 Golf Tournament Supporters

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Chefero, Ernie  
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Giordano, Jim  
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Maintenance  
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Holborn, Richard  
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Richardson, Scott  
Roger, Doug  
Ron Noble Insurance Ltd.  
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Rutledge, Scott  
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Bacon, Laura  
Bacon, Stephanie  
Bacon, Tiffany  
Bandstra, Trix  
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Butchart, Daniel  
Camazzola, Anna  
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French, Dylan  
Gebhardt, Katharine  
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Genova, Jutta  
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Goldberg, Sophie  
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Griddale, Jan  
Opoku, Kristy  
Grove, J  
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Hines, Tylor  
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Hoggard, Keith



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 Ianuzzo, Ethan  
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 Kerry, Pat  
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 Kiely, Siobhan  
 Kooger, Arian  
 Koot, Vanessa  
 La Rue, Mackenzie  
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 Matthys, Nicole  
 May, Bruce  
 May, Caleb  
 McConney, Natalie  
 McFetridge, Darlene  
 McKay, Anjie  
 McTaggart, Allee  
 Miller, Chris  
 Miller, Jordan  
 Mills, Steve  
 Mitchell, Kerry  
 Moore, Jeff  
 Morgan, Crystal  
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 Noakes, Ken & Laurie  
 Noakes, Ryan  
 Noble, Bonnie  
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 Pavely, Rachel  
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 Sabourin, Ashley  
 Scott, Nicole  
 Sheridan, Karly  
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 Simmonds, Krista  
 Simmonds, Sharon  
 Smith, Brittney  
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 Stevens, Julia  
 Stevens, Nick  
 Stevenson, Janene

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 Struvé Mike  
 Sule, Carley  
 Szederkenyi, Nicki  
 Tiller, Ashley  
 Tiller, Bill  
 Treadgold, Carolyn  
 Trentadue, Lesley  
 Truter family  
 Vakharia, Aneis  
 Vakharia, Jasmine  
 Valkenburg, Henry  
 Valkenburg, Tina  
 Van Halteren-Stammis, Rita  
 Vieira, Lynn  
 Vincent, Shona  
 Waugh, Cindy  
 Whiteman, Katie  
 Wilkinson, Sue  
 Wilson, Emily  
 Wilson, Lisa  
 Wilson, PJ  
 Wilson, Sara  
 Winnitoy, Jodie  
 Yates, Dylan



# Celebrate



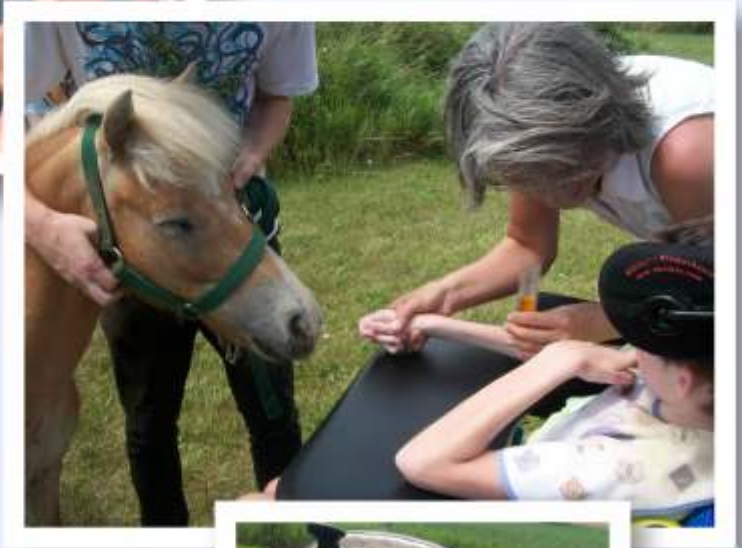


*"A good head and a  
good heart are always a  
formidable combination."*

Nelson Mandela



# Belief



*“Celebrate the happiness that friends  
are always giving, make every day  
a holiday and celebrate just living!”*

Amanda Bradley

**Precious Minds Support Services**

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Email: [admin@preciousminds.com](mailto:admin@preciousminds.com)

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

Providing support to families with children who have barriers to learning.

Charitable org. no: 86747 6319 RR0001