



North Durham Region

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

# NEWS UPDATE — SUMMER 2000

**Providing Support**  
Parents Support Groups

**Linking Resources**  
Resource Conferences

**Raising Awareness**  
Summer Day Camp

**Financial Assistance**  
Emily's Story



## Linking Resources

### Spring Resource Conference

Over 70 parents and professionals gathered at Sunderland Public School for the first Precious Minds Resource Conference in May. Everyone appreciated Kristy and Josh Grisdale's personal accounts of living with hidden and visible disabilities. Parents described their stories and attitudes as "inspiring" and were reminded of the importance of intentional advocacy for their children.

Participants at the conference had the opportunity to attend two workshops of their choice, visit information booths, and network with others. The Precious Minds team would like to thank all who attended the day and for the parents and professionals who facilitated workshops. We acknowledge our generous sponsors who enabled us to provide this event at a low cost for our participants.

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|--|---|
| Subway, Uxbridge                         | Kisko Products, Markham                 |
| Canadian Tire, Uxbridge                  | A Perfect Touch Floral Shop, Uxbridge   |
| Settlement House, Port Perry             | Blue Heron Book Store, Uxbridge         |
| Luke's Country Store, Port Perry         | MacLean's Paint and Wallpaper, Uxbridge |
| Shopper's Drug Mart, Port Perry-Uxbridge |   |

### Announcing the Fall Resource Conference

**Saturday, September 30<sup>th</sup> at Windreach Farm, Ashburn**

A day filled with activities to suit the entire family!

- Adult elective workshops
- Children's program
- Picnic lunch
- Hayride (accessible)
- Playground activities (accessible)
- Petting zoo
- Barn tour
- Farm museum
- Nature trails
- Apple picking

Everyone is invited to attend this fun and informative day. You can come yourself or bring the whole family to this fully accessible natural environment to enjoy a day of learning and leisure.

Registration Fee: \$10 per adult - \$5 per child

Refreshments will be provided. Everyone is responsible to bring a picnic lunch. **Registration information will be sent in August.**



## Financial Support

### Emily's Story

Almost-five-year-old Emily is the daughter of Terry and Anita Sinclair from Uxbridge. When Emily was two-and-a-half, her parents arranged an appointment at Grandview Rehabilitation and Treatment Centre in Oshawa for an assessment. Leading up to this point, the Sinclair's began to have some concerns about Emily—she would not turn to look when she was called, she was flapping her hands, and the few words she was able to speak began to disappear. Anita recalls these signs as very gradual and subtle. Following the testing, Emily was diagnosed with PDD—Pervasive Developmental Disorder—part of the autistic spectrum disorders. Terry and Anita experienced a gamut of emotions from denial to depression to anger. It was a time of grief as they faced the realization that their vision of Emily's future had been drastically altered with this diagnosis.

Terry and Anita, both special education teachers, came to a point of acceptance about Emily's challenges and began to look for anything, and everything, to help. They credit their meeting with Peter and Elisabeth Graham (parents of Zachary who is also diagnosed with PDD) as a critical factor in their understanding and knowledge about what they needed to do for Emily. They believe that this networking with other parents in a similar situation provided them with support and saved them two years of floundering in the search process.

The Sinclair's traveled to Washington for consultation with Dr. Greenspan, child psychiatrist and inventor of the Floor Time method, to design a specific program for Emily's development. Currently, Terry and Anita employ a team of three workers who implement a combination of floor time, sensory integration, and direct instruction in Emily's 14 hour per week therapy.

Terry and Anita integrate other therapies and interventions such as cranial sacral therapy and naturopathic treatment. They have also discovered therapy at the Listening Centre in Toronto to have a major impact on Emily's development. Precious Minds was able to provide financial assistance for Emily to obtain this listening training with sound stimulation.



*Emily loves animals and the great outdoors.*

Anita writes:

*Thank you for all your help. Emily was so happy to be returning to the Centre she ran (laughing) all the way from the car lot to the Centre. She couldn't wait to get the headphones on...it's like she was craving the filtered music!*

We are thrilled that the financial assistance from Precious Minds for Emily's visit to the Listening Centre is accentuated by the Centre's donation policy. One-third of our donation amount will also be applied as a credit to Emily's next session at the Centre. What a great way for our financial supporters' contributions to be maximized!

There are many challenges for families with children who have barriers to learning. For the Sinclair's, the monthly expenditures to enhance Emily's development total \$2000. They made the decision that Anita would stay at home with Emily and, as a result, have recently moved to downsize. They feel the impact of Emily's sleeping disorder, a common problem for children with special needs. For a large portion of every night, Emily is awake and requires the presence of someone to get back to sleep. However, Terry and Anita are encouraged with the progress Emily is making—she is trying to use language, her sensory issues are improved, she is now touching and holding, and her spontaneous imitation is surprising them. If things go as planned, Emily will begin Senior Kindergarten with an educational assistant in September.

*Special thanks to Terry and Anita for sharing Emily's story. They are available and willing to speak with parents in similar situations. Their phone number is 905-852-5011.*

***Thank you to our financial supporters. Children like Emily are greatly benefiting from your generosity.***



## Providing Support

### Parent Support Group

The Precious Minds Support Group has held three monthly meetings in Uxbridge. Special guests and agency representatives discuss relevant topics to inform and encourage parents. These relaxed meetings provide opportunities for people to share concerns and ideas with one another.

The support group will not meet during the summer months, but we look forward to joining together again in September. There is the possibility that we will expand with groups in Port Perry and/or Cannington. If you are interested in meeting in either of these locations, please leave a message for Elisabeth by calling the Precious Minds phone # 905-852-2145.

Reserve the third Thursday of September for the Uxbridge meeting and watch for more details in the Fall Update.



## Summer Opportunity

### Day Camp in Brock Township

The Brock Youth Centre is offering summer day camp programs for children ages 4 - 12 at the following locations:

- Sunderland** Weeks of July 10-14 & July 17-21
- Cannington** Weeks of July 24-28 & July 31-August 4
- Beaverton** Weeks of August 7-11 & August 14-18

Precious Minds is pleased to partner with the Youth Centre by providing support for counselors to work specifically with children who have special needs. The children will be assisted to take part in all aspects of the camp program.

### The Precious Minds Team

Sharon Simmonds, Elisabeth Graham, Bonnie Noble, Stephanie Weddel, Laurie Noakes

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