

Ellen Degeneres... What?

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Yup, there is a connection between Ellen Degeneres and our Annual OADE Conference and that connection is Robert Pio Hajjar. For those of you who were not able to attend the conference, Robert was our keynote speaker. In true Ellen Degeneres, fashion he came out dancing... and he has some moves! But that's not where it ended. Of all the accomplishments that Robert has achieved, his goal is to be on the Ellen Degeneres Show!

Robert is only 32. He is the founding director of IDEAL-WAY and is a motivational speaker who has spoken to people all across Canada and the U.S.. He holds a record in 25m freestyle swimming, plays hockey, golf and baseball... oh ya... and by the way, he has Down syndrome.

Robert reminds us that that "... many people go through life not knowing what they are meant to do." In Robert's case, that's simply not true. He knew he wanted to help people with disabilities be the best they can be, assist them in overcoming barriers like poverty and "positively re-educating mainstream society" as his website says. He knew that he wanted to be a leader and he knows that, in his words, "when people give love, encouragement and opportunity anything is possible."

So check out the good work that IDEAL-WAY does on their website www.IDEAL-WAY.ca. See if you can get involved.... and let's all tune in when Robert achieves his goal of getting on the Ellen Degeneres Show!

54th Anniversary OADE Conference

London, Ontario

April 8-9, 2011

***On-line registration at www.oade.ca
begins in January 2011.***

From the President...

Wow! What a great time in Lindsay this year at the Annual Conference hosted by the Trillium Lakelands District School Board. Thank you to Connie Friar and her organizing committee for an excellent job! The keynote address was unique and inspiring, the workshops were of excellent quality and relevant to our daily work. There were plenty of publishers displaying their wares and the entertainment was second to none. After a very emotional presentation of the Fred Sople Humanitarian Award given posthumously to Melinda McKeigan, the trip to the Cat & Fiddle for fellowship and a little casino action seemed to be just the thing that everyone needed. The fact that the Habs won their game against Washington that night made it even better!

The theme of this year's Annual Conference- Re-think, Re-acquaint and Re-juvenate- ties into another issue facing OADE, and that is membership. Without membership, OADE cannot exist. If OADE were to die from lack of membership, educators in developmental education would lose the one annual conference held in this province that is directed specifically at those of us who teach students with developmental disabilities. How often have you come away from a board sponsored P.D. activity saying, "That sure did not relate to what I do". At our OADE Annual Conference, we are speaking the same language.

It may appear that I am preaching to the choir since this newsletter goes to members. However, I am asking you as a member to take a more active role in your association in two ways. First, I would like you to e-mail me at brucfitz@fc.amdsb.ca to tell me why you are a member and support OADE. Secondly, I challenge every member to "talk up" O.ADE among your colleagues and try to recruit one or two new educators to join our ranks before the end of June this school year.

Most of us are pretty good at advocating for our students. I am asking you to use those same skills to advocate on behalf of ourselves, the educators of those students. We are working with only roughly 1% of the overall student population in Ontario. We will be gobbled up by the big machine with very little chance of our unique professional development needs being met if we don't advocate for ourselves. Would you rather be a passive observer in this process or an active participant? Talk up OADE among your colleagues and send me an e-mail.

On a cheerier note, July and August are just around the corner. I hope each and every one of you will take the time to do what you need to Re-think, Re-acquaint and Re-juvenate this summer! Enjoy as you carry out this important work!

Bruce Fitzgerald

OADE Salutes this Year's Winner of the Fred Sople Humanitarian Award—Melinda McKeigan

This was the nomination that was submitted to consider Melinda McKeigan as a candidate to receive the Fred Sople Humanitarian Award. I'm sure you'll see why she was the ideal choice.

My name is John Bianco, and I am on the planning committee for the 2010 OADE conference to be held in Lindsay Ontario this year. I am pleased to put forward Melinda McKeigan as a posthumous nomination for the Fred Sople Humanitarian Award. Melinda McKeigan was a true champion for people with a developmental disability, we lost her in August of 2009 of a tragic and sudden brain aneurism.

To give some background on Melinda is a lengthy but treasured story. I want to share some firsthand highlights of what I saw and learned from this wonderful person. First I had the opportunity to forge an incredible relationship with her and her family when I had the good fortune to have one of her four foster children in the Practical Academics and Life Skills (PALS) class that I teach, for grade 7 and 8. Derek is a person who is heavily affected by autism and a developmental disability, but through open communication with Melinda and all the service people

supporting Derek, we formed a strong bond that carried over two years. This bond went even further to a point where my family provides respite relief to Derek’s family. Melinda became part of my extended family and my family became a part of hers. All four of the children that Melinda and Pete adopted and have made part of their family, live with developmental disabilities and have extremely high needs. However, through all the tough times Melinda was a voice, an ear and a big heart for all.



Presentation of Fred Solpet Award by OADE President Bruce Fitzgerald to long time friend of Melinda, Carolyn Cote.

Melinda saw a need for people with developmental disabilities to have day programming that continued once folks finished high school. She found a way to develop a day program for adults with developmental disabilities called ‘Connexions’. The business is still thriving today.

Melinda, with family and a professional staff, opened the doors to many people with developmental disabilities. They provide quality opportunities for people to get together socially and recreationally. I often meet the clients from ‘Connexions’ when I take my PALS class on our weekly bowling outing. I have to tell you that the staff and clients Melinda brought together are closer to a family than a group of clients. They celebrate birthdays and holidays in a huge

way. Melinda was famous for her ‘July Luau’ where clients, family and an entire neighborhood would convene at Pete and Melinda’s home. They would host games, food and activities that involved everyone! That is how Melinda was always giving to everyone and was the voice for those that needed it.

When I became a part of our Lindsay OADE conference committee, I had planed to nominate Melinda McKeigan for the Fred Sople Humanitarian Award. It would have been wonderful for her to be there to accept this gracious award and be recognized for her dedication to help improve the lives of people. Even though we have lost her, I still am putting forward her name for a nomination for this award because she is still with us, in our hearts and in this community. She has left, and continues to leave her mark, helping all those around us. I know that I have the support of the entire Lindsay OADE conference planning committee in putting forward this nomination. We know it will be cherished by those who accept it on Melinda’s behalf and it would also be an incredible lasting memory for the 2010 OADE conference held in our local area.

~John Bianco



L to R: John Bianco (nominator) ,Janice Strong (friend of Melinda) ,Carolyn Cote (friend of Melinda).

Someone I Would Like You to Meet...Me!

***Carol Jones-Transition Teacher for Students with Special Learning Needs
Dufferin Peel Catholic District School Board***

I did want to take up a little room telling you a little about myself and my job... thanks for indulging me!

1. Please tell us a little about yourself and your family.

I have three lovely children and a wonderful husband and we live in Brampton ON. The kids are all unique. The oldest loves to read and engage youth in reading. Soon she will finish her Master of Library and Information Science. The middle one is our hockey star, who when his friend and opponent lost his goalie stick, my son picked it up and returned it to him instead of taking advantage of a friend in the net. The youngest is our “centre of attention”. He loves to perform and I’m sure he is soon to be the class clown as he enters grade one next year... my husband can take those phone calls! My husband is my true partner who supports my time away from our family as I bring information to parents in evening sessions that I set up... he often reminds me that Mother’s Day is everyday for me.... and he is right.... don’t tell him I said that!

2. Tell us about your role as a Transition Teacher for students with Special Learning Needs.

I have been a high school teacher for fourteen years. Although I did teach the odd mainstream course like English and Religion, my constant has always been in our board’s Planning for Independence Programs. About three years ago our board created this position and I immediately applied for it. I was lucky enough to get the position and this is my third year in the role at the Dufferin Peel Catholic District School Board and I love it! I have a unique opportunity to connect with families, students, community partners and teachers as families plan for life after high school. That planning might be through information nights where we invite service providers to give information about their agencies, or individual transition meetings to identify concrete goals and put a plan in place to help students achieve their goals. Planning might also be working through some programming changes or just making sure all the pieces of the puzzle are coming together.

3. How did you get involved with OADE?

My friend Barb, who is the treasurer for OADE, brought the organization to my attention. Although I had heard of OADE, I really thought it was a big organization which didn’t necessarily require my support. Man was I wrong! I have learned that OADE is truly a grassroots organization run by educators, families and community partners for educators, families and community partners. I was hooked! How could I not want to be a part of an organization that was dedicated to my line of teaching? It is so hard to find a group that focuses on the teaching experience specifically in the education of students with developmental disabilities.

4. From your perspective, what is the best way for parents, teachers and educational assistants to support and enhance transition planning for adult life for our students?

It is so important for educators and families to connect. We need to encourage families to dream, not just settle for the status quo. When a child is born with a developmental disability, some families go into “managing mode” instead of “dreaming mode”. It is the dream that will make things happen and give educators a frame work to inform their programming for that individual. It’s not so much about what is out there after high school, but about what the family, with the support of the school and community partners, can create!

5. What three personal qualities are important for someone working in the field of developmental education?

Creativity. We all know that you have to have a BIG toolkit of ideas. Often the first eleven things you try will not work as well as you had hoped... but that 12th thing just might! Acknowledge that one does not have all the answers. I find as educators, we are a “jack of all trades, master of none.”

That might be hard for an educator to admit. We might have multiple degrees, years of experience and might also be parents ourselves, so why don't we always know how to solve all the challenges we are faced with?

Let it go...ask around...come up with a plan... see if it works!

Patience. Patience with our students is a given, but we need to have patience with ourselves and other members of our teams. I find we all work towards the same goals as identified by our students and their families. We might all have a different way to help our students get there. Have patience to see how all those ways fit into the plan for the student.

6. What are your hopes and dreams for the future, as it relates to the field of developmental education?

I hope that we continue to encourage conversations with each other—conversations between educators, between Ministries and between families. Our students can't lose if we all support them together!

Disability Travel Card

The **Disability Travel Card**[™] provides identification to a person with a permanent disability, which will allow an adult attendant, traveling with the person with a disability, to travel at no cost.

Reduced fares will be granted to the person with a permanent disability, unable to travel alone, (regardless of age) and accompanied by an adult attendant, if such person with a disability has received authorization from Easter Seals Canada or one of its designated affiliated members.

Families can find out more at:

www.easterseals.ca/english/category/programs/the-disability-travel-card

(information taken directly from website above)

Bocce in Peel

The Region of Peel Secondary School Athletic Association (ROPSSAA) has introduced Bocce Ball as a trial sport at the high school level. The best part is that each school team of four must have two students with a developmental disability and two students who are neuro-typically developing. The “trial” was held last month and what a success! There were 30 teams that met in an tournament style competition. On-lookers were impressed by the talent and teamwork that each team demonstrated and the competitors gained some insights into each other.

All indications show that there will be an increase in the number of teams next year!

The next step is to make a motion at the Region of Peel Secondary School Athletic Association annual meeting that Bocce be added to the other official ROPSSAA sports.

Bocce... Try it!



C.I.C.E. Durham College

Community Integration through Co-operative Education at Durham College

Historically for students with intellectual disabilities or other significant learning challenges, a post-secondary education may have seemed like a distant possibility. Enter the Community Integration through Co-operative Education (CICE) program! Currently operating in four colleges across the province (Humber, Sault, Lambton and Durham), this two-year, four-semester modified program is designed especially for students diagnosed with disabilities such as Asperger's syndrome, Down syndrome, cerebral palsy or epilepsy. Thanks to the CICE program, students have the opportunity to participate in college classrooms and college life attending college with their siblings or peers.

The unique CICE program provides students with an opportunity to access many program areas across the college (based on seat availability), giving them a chance to experience college life and enhance their academic skills by taking regular college classes which have been modified to suit their individual abilities. Each CICE student receives academic support including curriculum modification, note taking, tutoring and other related supports as needed.

Students study three academic courses each semester with a modified curriculum in a selected area of concentration, as well as core programming common to all CICE students. An integral part of the CICE program is the field placement experience, enabling students to develop vocational abilities related to their area of concentration. Common Durham College programs accessed by CICE students include Early Childhood Education, Fitness & Health Promotion, Office Administration, Police Foundations, Child and Youth Work, Culinary Skills, Personal Support Worker and General Arts & Science. The skills and theories learned in these academic classes are further developed in related field placement experiences in various employment sectors.

Students who have been successful in their course work and field placements graduate with an Ontario College Certificate in CICE. Upon successful completion, they are equipped with a personal portfolio highlighting the courses they have taken and some of their college academic and vocational achievements; a great resource to take to future interviews to share with possible employers.

In addition to furthering academic and vocational skills, the gains in independence, self-esteem and confidence are another illustrious benefit. Not sure if you can do it? Perhaps you can take some advice from Stephen, a recent CICE graduate; "Go ahead and follow it through! Your work at high school will determine how well you do at college. You have to try hard and be responsible, but if you do, you will be successful!"

For more information about the CICE program including entrance requirements, please visit www.durhamcollege.ca or call Angie Wood (Program Liaison) at 905-721-2000 ext 2495 or email at angela.wood@durhamcollege.ca

Angie Wood
CICE Program Liaison/Learning Facilitator

Giggles

Accept that some days you're the pigeon, and some days you're the statue.

Always keep your words soft and sweet, just in case you have to eat them.

If you can't beat your computer at chess, try kickboxing.

Never buy a car you can't push.

The early worm gets eaten by the bird, so sleep late.

If you think nobody cares if you're alive, try missing a couple of car payments.

The odds of the toast falling jelly-side down are directly proportionate to the value of the carpet per square yard.

Taken from <http://www.thatwasfunny.com/words-of-wisdom/420>

Some feedback from the 2010 Conference:

"Great to have a Ministry representative there and to be able to voice our concerns."

"The session that I attended was very relevant."

"Good variety, I wish I could have attended more!"

"Great presentation on functional assessment."

"One of the best presentations I've ever attended."

"Wonderful!" "I would attend again!" "Excellent!"

OADE Statement of Purpose

The Ontario Association for Developmental Education believes:

- that the ultimate purpose of education is to help students achieve a satisfying quality of life, a sense of self-esteem and personal competence, in their own community
- that educational and community supports must be provided to meet the individual and unique needs of every student
- that every District School Board make a full spectrum of programs and services available to every student
- that the efforts, expertise and commitment of professionals working with each student must be valued and enhanced

OADE PROVINCIAL EXECUTIVE

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OADE "Let's Celebrate!" Certificates


OADE presents this certificate to graduating students or to students who have accomplished a personal goal or achievement.

To order certificates, send the name of your student(s) to Herb Goodhoofd at the OADE Provincial Office in Milton, at herbgood@gmail.com.

IF YOU WORK IN DEVELOPMENTAL EDUCATION, OADE IS YOUR ORGANIZATION!

Register on-line at www.oade.ca and mail your \$30 membership fee ("OADE Membership") to:

OADE Provincial Office
c/o E.C. Drury High School
215 Ontario Street South
Milton, Ontario L9T 4N5



Join OADE
today!