



Options Newsletter



Spring 2011 — Issue 3

In November, Options Community Network Facilitators hosted an event with two short films and a discussion. Almost forty people came out for the entertainment and inspiration. People from both films were there to share some of the wisdom they have learned along the way and to answer questions. They also talked about the impact their films have been having.

The wonderful thing about both films is the positive and real picture they paint about life and disability, in people's own words. The films show what good things can happen when you follow your interests, develop your talents, and find other people who are willing to learn and grow right along with you.



Toronto Harbour

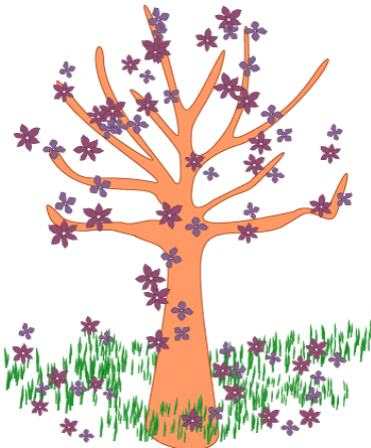
Just Because

'Just Because' by Aaron Kellett and his mom Paula Kaston is about their adventures in drumming and beyond, as they travel to Tobago for the Muhtadi International Drumming Festival! This is a dream Aaron had since he joined Muhtadi & The World Drummers group over 3 years before (now a performer with them for 5yrs). It is a lot of fun mixed with hard work and dedication. Music really does bring people together!

Though the film is about so much more, along the way Aaron shares some insights about what it means to be autistic. One of the things he says is "just because someone has autism it doesn't mean they should be held back."

They also interviewed Muhtadi and some of the other drummers about what they have learned from Aaron, and the specific and important ways he has enriched his community by doing what he loves.

Aaron is currently working on another film project called Spark. It is about life after high school and what Aaron is doing now to try and get more of the education he says he missed out on because of being misjudged. He enrolled in a Grade 12 English night class, found an amazing tutor, and is now filming the process to see where things will go. He currently works for parks and rec. at a job that he loves, but only once a week, and will be starting to work in a café too. He is also planning to join a dodge ball league.



The Options Newsletter is for sharing! Through sharing ideas, stories and resources we explore what community means and what it can become. We feature the experiences and expressions of people connected to our work, and aim to share information about things that are happening, and ways to become involved. We also want to hear from you what kinds of opportunities, events, workshops, articles etc. that you would like to see more of. So, please ENJOY & PASS IT ON!

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"We have not come into the world to be numbered: we have been created for a purpose, for great things, to love and be loved."~ anonymous



Tying Your Own Shoes

This is a National Film Board documentary created by four adult artists who worked with film maker Shira Avni. The title is a response to the doctor who told parents at the birth of their child that this is something she would never be able to do, as a person with down's syndrome. As the film shows very clearly, the list of accomplishments reaches so much farther than that!

Art by Katherine, in Tying Your Own Shoes

Whether it be the beautiful animation of their own drawings, stories from their busy lives, discussions about work, relationships, dreams, and shared insights about family, history and community, each individual brings their talent and sense of humour to the screen with beautiful pride and skill. Petra Tolley and some of her friends at Common Ground Co-Operative have completed filming for a new project, 'Petra's Poem' and this work in progress is something to look forward to.

We thank everyone who brought their presence and helped to make the evening such a success. It was a wonderful opportunity for people to meet each other and share ideas. We look forward to organizing similar community events in the future. See the back of this newsletter to add your ideas, suggestions or to get

Even though it can be hard to try new things, I learn by doing these things... and its fun!

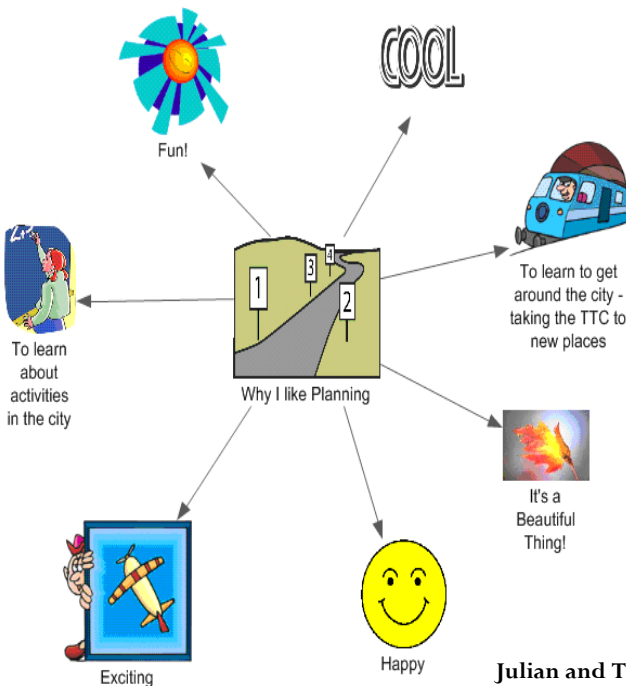
~Julian

Planning & Life, with JULIAN

Julian and Tracy (Person Directed Planning Facilitator with Options) got together to talk about his experiences with planning. He has a lot of talent and interests he brings to the creative process! With the important people in his life who encourage and support him, the opportunities for him to choose *what* he wants to be doing and *how* have connected him with some really fantastic people and places and opportunities to learn what he wants to know and as he says: "build his own garden of LIFE".

Julian: Planning is good. I've learned a lot from planning. We've talked about different events and programs in the city, such as learning programs at the Y and Frontier College, computer courses at the library, music lessons through my local community centre, and a drama program at a neighbourhood and community health centre. Even though it can be hard to try new things, I learn by doing these things....and its fun! I have been making new friends who are really nice. I am working towards a paid job in an office and hopefully I will get that in the future. By setting steps I plan to reach my goals, I've given many ideas and have gone to my community to ask people to help.

Julian and Tracy created this image together to show what Julian likes about planning.



"True bravery is having the courage to take responsibility for your life, the strength to make changes, and the wisdom to let others own their own lives." ~ anonymous

Recently, Leah [Options Community Network Facilitator] met up with Julian to chat about how things are going. He is especially excited about what he has been doing these days. Julian said, “I love everything about Frontier College. How I learned to get there, learning about budgeting, my friends and everything. I love facebook and learning about computers.” He brings out his theatrical talents at an inclusive drama group through Arts for All. He said “I like it a lot, it’s a class for everybody. I have made new friends there and some of my other friends have even joined too.”

Julian and Jesse at the open mic



Performing at his 25th birthday

Julian loves the comedy show “Who’s Line is it Anyway”. So in true improv style he made up a hoedown song about going to and working at the YMCA:

I work at the ‘Y’ every Thursday. There is something I do all the time its called the weight lifting game. It’s so much fun! It’s really cool! It’s the best thing! I do the workout I can tell you oh boy really this is really a riot. Sometimes I think this is the best thing I have ever done! Ever Done! When I work out I feel so sore after, but my body feels really great. I’ve met so many people, I feel like the coolest guy around town, around town!

Also, Julian wanted to tell you about Jesse, his very musical friend, who tells lots of jokes. They have known each other for a long time. Jesse helped Julian learn how to play guitar, and they often hangout and make music. They have even taken their act on the road,

performing at an open mic that happens at a local restaurant doing songs like: *What a Wonderful World, Rock Around the Clock and See You Later Alligator* .

A big THANK YOU to Julian for sharing about his life in the big city!

Pat Worth (1955-2004) was a People First organizer, public speaker, and social change agent who advocated for real work, real homes and real pay for all people. He also worked at Options as a Self-Advocate Mentor / Network Facilitator. He thought, wrote, and spoke alot about his own and other people’s freedom, as you can see in these quotes from him (more links to his writing on page 5):

Freedom



Pat Worth

“Exploring Freedom is about exploring all the great gifts that people bring to each other.”

“The most powerful sound of freedom is when people reach inside themselves and think about what they have to offer to someone that will embrace them into their lives.”

“Freedom is not worth having, if it does not include the freedom to make mistakes.” ~ Mahatma Ghandi

Anna Fasulo: “I am proud of myself, I am an artist”

These photos were recently displayed for the public at a library as part of a photo voice project. We spoke with Anna a few months after the show, to hear what she had to say about the experience, the pictures themselves and the importance of her artwork:

“My sister came with me to see them. She was happy and I had tears. I was surprised and happy to see my pictures up there, and to be able to share them with people. I also saw other people’s pictures and thought it was nice to see different pictures. When I think back now I am so happy I did something for myself. It’s nice what I did and makes me feel good that I took these and the things that I do in my life.”



My Cat Flash

“I took this photo in my apartment. Cats are part of my life. They keep me company. When I lost my first cat I cried for 3 days cuz it was really hard to lose my favourite pet. I like animals. The cat’s always beside me. Flash is his name.”

“I took this photo at the graveyard of my mum and dad. I loved them very much. When we were young my mum used to always go places with me. She was such a hard worker, never resting, always on the go go go, and one beautiful woman. My dad was a special man, he had a hard life too, and I guess it was his time. Me and him got along. He drove me places when I was younger. He drove me to work. Sometimes he would get upset and say “what am I a taxi driver!” I loved him a lot. We did stuff together. We had dinner together. I used to go visit him twice a week in the nursing home. He was always happy to see me, and he had that big smile. I love him and he’s in peace. I like going there once a month to the graves and spend about half an hour there and talk to them. I talk to them, and have little tears in my eyes. I still think of them now. I have a picture of them on my wall. They will always be in my heart.”

“May the rain wash away my worries, may the breeze blow new strength into my being, may I walk gently through the world and know its beauty all the days of my life.” ~ anonymous

“I think this was a nice souvenir of something she had there. She has a nice house and puts things around so I took a picture of that and she liked it.”



My Sister’s Window



My Mom and Dad’s Grave

Self-Advocate Hang Out

Every second Saturday of the month, from 1:30 to 3:30 at the Jewish Community Center (near Spadina Station), Self-Advocates from all over Toronto gather to support one another and organize around the issues that are most important to them, including the changes they want to see happen both in services and the broad community, and to provide direction to the DSTO.

On March 12th the group held a full day retreat, where they were able to spend more time working out what they want to do and how to do it. The day wrapped up with a screening of the documentary 'Offense Taken: A Community Responds to the 'R' Word' about the hurtfulness and history of language and showing the process that one community went through to challenge this.

Self-Advocates then led and supported each other through an activity to 'shred the 'r' word' and highlight the wealth of talent among the group and the positive ways they want to be known for who they really are and not the labels that others have stuck on them.

For more information, contact: Anne-Marie Nowina (416)415-5000 x3002; anowina@griffin-centre.org

Stuff to Check Out!



For more about the films from pages 1 & 2:

Tying Your Own Shoes: <http://films.nfb.ca/tying-your-own-shoes/>

Just Because: kastonmedia@gmail.com



Artwork by Laurie Woloshyn

Next Hang Outs:

May 14, June 11, July 9, August 13, September 10

Miles Nadal Jewish Community Center,
2nd Floor, 750 Spadina Ave.

Wheelchair accessible

Youth Credo: From the Youth Self-Determination Youth Summit
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wrNy_2ljVdo

For the young at heart, nothing wrong with getting this stuck in your head!
"What I am..." <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cyVzjoj96vs>

More about Offense Taken: <http://www.selfadvocacy.org/offensetaken/>

Writing by Pat Worth: <http://www.inclusion.com/respatworth.html>
<http://www.familyserVICetoronto.org/programs/options/patstory.html>





What would you like to see more of? Respond as you will by phone, mail, e-mail or on our website!

- Community events bringing people together. Who? What? Where? Why? When?
- Films and discussions. What topics? Have any good films to recommend?
- Educational workshops. About what? For who? i.e.- Support workers, families, broad community...
*What times of day and days of the week would this work best for you?
- Information about building community? Other topics or areas of interest?
- Good community based resources to connect with? ▫ Community Mapping?
- Opportunities to connect with other families and/or individuals? About what?
- Is there a community organization, place or group of people that you are inspired and welcomed by? Tell us more! ▫ Ideas for future newsletters? ▫ Want to get involved?



Get in touch!

What do YOU do for FUN?!?!?

leahdo@familyservicetoronto.org

(416)971-6326 x.222

www.familyservicetoronto.org/programs/options/newsletter.html

Family Service Toronto—
Options Program
700 Lawrence Ave. West
Suite 498
Toronto, ON, M6A 3B4

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WORDSEARCH

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drumming

exercise

find free events

fix things

friends

fun

go to the movies

go to the park

harbourfront

internet

learn new things

library

make things

music

photography

read books

sewing

shopping

sports

sports games

swim

talk to people

ttc

travel

volunteer

word search

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