

Life Skills & Wellness  
Institute

We dedicate this issue in memory of Gershon Niles

## Bloorview KIDS REHAB

### What is Mentorship?

" Our Mentorship Program consists of open minded people (youth) helping and supporting others in related situations.

By working together as a team we listen, talk, and use creative problem solving in order to gain a better quality of life for ourselves and others, by learning and having fun together."

Mentor Training 1998

### The Mentor

Mentoring offers youth the opportunity to develop skills that will enhance their ability to live independently. Through a 10-week training, clients and former clients of Bloorview Kids Rehab, learn how to make decisions and advocate for themselves. Mentors develop awareness that leads to increased confidence and self-esteem. They learn more about themselves and improve such skills as communication, problem solving and self-advocacy.

**A Mentee** is someone who is 8 years or older and would benefit from the experience of a Mentor.



My Name is Danielle Svec. I am the Mentorship Program Leader here at Bloorview Kids Rehab. I am always looking for ways to improve our Mentorship Program. If you would like more information please give me a call and I would be happy to help you.

I can be reached at:

416-425-6220 x 3204

Email: [dsvvec@bloorview.ca](mailto:dsvvec@bloorview.ca)

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### Mentors at a Glance:

- Participate in Mentor Training Sessions
- May have a Mentee one on one
- Meet on a Monthly basis to support each other
- Participate in panel presentation
- Assist with events and special projects
- Develop a yearly newsletter

Through the years we trained over fifty Mentors. We currently have twenty one Mentors and more to come.





*Sharing experiences  
and offering  
support.*

*"I became a Mentor  
because I felt that  
when I was younger it  
would have been nice  
to have someone that  
I could speak with  
and relate to that  
also had a disability."*

## REMEMBERING GERSHON NILES:

By **Greg Contaxis** and **Justin Novoa**

I knew Gershon for fifteen years, we played hockey together. He was a very quiet individual, but he showed me how to act at hockey.

Gershon was always there for me. He was willing to talk to me about anything. I appreciate his encouragement and support.

I feel that one of his best qualities was his soft-spoken nature and his way of communicating with people like me. Gershon may have left us from here on Earth, but his spirit lives on within us.

I will miss him. He was like a brother to me!!

I knew Gershon for a year and a half. We lived in the same apartment as roommates and shared living accommodations.

Gershon was a very helpful and supportive friend who would always be there for me and didn't mind listening to me.

Gershon had a good sense of humor, was fond of the internet, liked to be on M.S.N. and playing computer games. He also enjoyed playing Hockey.

Thank you for the memories Gershon, We will miss you!!



## MENTOR PROFILE:

### My Experiences as a Mentor

My name is Tara Gersonde and I have been a part of the Mentorship Program since October 2005. Along with having two Mentees, the Mentorship Program has given me a lot of opportunities. The reason that I became a Mentor was because I felt that when I was younger it would have been nice to have someone that I could speak with and relate to that also had a disability. I also really wanted to give back to Bloorview.

One of the experiences that the Mentorship Program offered me was being able to sit on a panel and answer questions for medical students about my experiences with other medical professionals. One of the other experiences I had was to help contribute to the development of a transitional booklet for those individuals that would be leaving Bloorview. I also attended a focus group for York Region Transit.

We looked at an informational package that was designed to help those with disabilities use conventional transit. One of the most important things that the Mentorship Program has helped me do was meet a lot of different people throughout the centre, and I was able to secure a job in the Leader in Training Program for the summer. As a result, the Mentorship Program has given me many opportunities that I may not have otherwise had and has been a positive experience.



## RELATIONSHIP PROFILE:

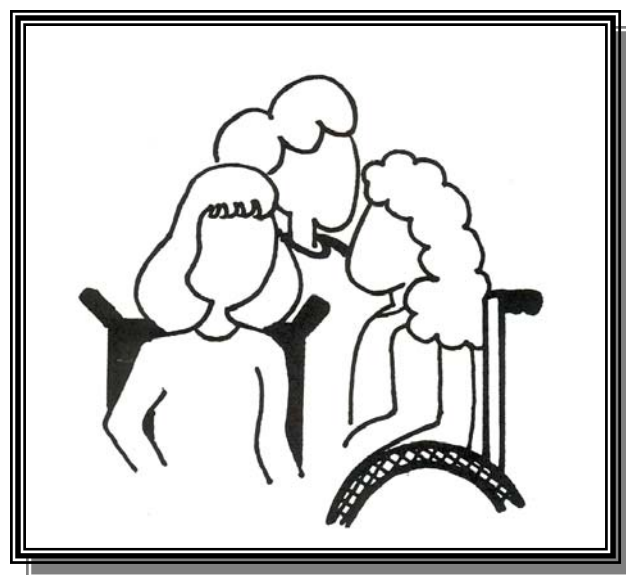
By: Cynthia Berringer

My name is Cynthia Berringer and I have been a part of the Mentorship Program at Bloorview Kids Rehab for four years. I have recently been paired up with a young girl who is a fair bit younger than I am, but we seem to get along well. She likes talking to me on the telephone. We talk about a lot of different things; school, enjoyable activities, favorite television shows and much more. Thus far, this match up has proven to be a very enjoyable experience for me.

## MENTOR MEET AND GREET DAY

By: Crystal Chin

The Mentorship Program held its first *Mentorship Meet and Greet Day* on Saturday April 21, 2007. The purpose of the event was to let all the Mentees get to know each other and meet the other Mentors and Mentees. It turned out to be a fun afternoon of games, snacks, and mingling. The afternoon kicked off with an interesting game of guess who: where each of the participants had a sticker of a "celebrity" on their back and the individual had to go around the room asking others questions and guess which celebrity they had on their back. Next came the "find someone who" game. Everyone was given a sheet of questions and they had to find a person in the room that matches that question, next came everyone's favorite activity "snack time". The rest of the time was spent on socializing. Overall the event had a total turnout of 10 Mentees and 12 Mentors with Dolly Menna-Dack (Chair of the Youth Advisory Council) as our camera person. Despite the crowdedness of the conference room the whole event was a great success.





## INTRODUCING FACEBOOK Improved Messaging System By Christina M, Racippo

Facebook is a free website that one can go, to connect to a world of generations, meaning they can get in touch with "friends" from way back...meaning nursery/preschool. you have to do to register go to [www.facebook.ca](http://www.facebook.ca) for free. To contact someone, type in the name(s) of people or the person, or organization or facility that you knew them from in the search box, and VOILA! You have people that you may or may not know show up on the next screen, in which you are able to instant message at your own dispense and discretion. If they (the person) responds to your original message, you are able to keep in touch and start to connect with this person again. It truly is an amazing system.

There are pros and cons depending on which way you look at it, the negative aspects are that you don't know who is viewing your private information and pictures, because virtually anyone can see them as long as they are your "friends". But this aspect turns into a positive one because you must give that person access to your profile first. You are able to control who you send what to, but be careful with messages, because once they are your "friends", they can view what you send to anyone of your other friends on the network, and they may take offense reading it from another angle, or worse. Friends are considered to be the people who are from the same community as yourself, such as if they went to the same school, place of employment, etc...

Some other things you can do on Facebook are:

- ❑ Develop their own multimedia systems/albums of digital pictures from personal trips, gatherings, or outings, (etc...) as long as they have a digital camera, If you get a message from someone whom you don't know, or recognize, you have the choice to delete or refuse a response depending on your comfort level.
- ❑ Join groups where you share interests such as for a league, team or hobby. Just type in what you are looking for, and the system may come up with options, again, depending on who knows about the system. In fact, you can also develop your own organization, invite your friends, or people you know who have access to email and share this common interest. Our Mentors also have a page on Facebook, to find out more about us visit Facebook and type in Bloorview Mentors in the search box. Try it out today. Who knows whom you'll meet!



## LEADER IN TRAINING PROGRAM

By Mychal Reeves

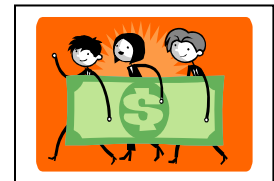


This was the first year that Bloorview Kids Rehab held The L.I.T. Program. (Leader in Training) for three weeks. Capital One sponsored this program. The purpose of the program was to give people with disabilities useful work experiences. As a L.I.T. Trainee we had the opportunity to job shadow different Recreation Therapists that specialize in various programs. I worked with the S.O.D.R. Team. We had special activities to meet the client's needs.

I applied for the L.I.T. Program because I knew when looking for a job they ask and look for any work experience. I wanted to see what it was like to work and have responsibility of holding a job. For example getting ready, being on time for a job.

Some of my responsibilities included;

- Help my supervisor carry out the activities for the clients.
- Work one on one with clients that needed extra attention
- Helped plan and implement a Special Event Activity
- Learned how to modify activities so that everyone can participate



I learned that planning for activities for Special Event day is hard because Bloorview has a lot of clients with different disabilities and it is hard to meet the needs of everyone, and accommodate their learning styles as well.

I learned that this type of job requires me to take on a leading role and step out of my comfort zone. For example being active and working with children. I also learned how to be part of a team and relate with my co-workers, being polite and not a snob.

This is an exciting program that introduces you to the world of work. Gives you a chance to get some feedback so you will know what to do and what not to do when you start working.

We also had the opportunity of having a Career Mentor that came in once a week to share their experience working with a disability. Mentors gave us suggestions about how to adapt your workload to meet your needs. Having a Mentor and hearing from panelist gave us all encouragement and insight about the world of work.

For further information about the Leader in Training Program please contact:

Robyn Sanford at [rsanford@bloorview.ca](mailto:rsanford@bloorview.ca) or 416-425-6220 x6406

**Our current Mentors and the year they were trained:**

Cynthia Berringer 2002

Nicole Boswell 2005

Crystal Chin 2005

Zachary Cohen 2000

Greg Contaxis 1998

Alissa Cuthbert 2002

Fiona Davidson 1998

Alex Han 2006 (volunteer)

Sarah Evans 2000

Tara Gersonde 2005

Kimberley Hussey 2005

Andre Khorramshahi 2005

James Lawton 2005

Melissa MacIntosh 2005

Amanda Maltais 2006

Kaley McLean 2002

Justin Novoa 2005

Alexis Palmiere 2006

Christina Racippo 2005

Mychal Reeves 2006

Franci Sanna 1998

Tessa Wall-Bergen 2006

Gershon Niles 2005-2007



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