



Grandviews

Grandview Children's Centre Newsletter • Winter 2003

Introducing Our Kids Getting to Know... the "Real" Allyson

I became a part of the Grandview community when I was eleven. I was born in Halifax, Nova Scotia and was adopted when I was two weeks old. By the time I was six months old, I was diagnosed with Cerebral Palsy. Epilepsy presented itself during my mid adolescent years. I love sports and I'm very active. Music is one of my favorite things.

My adoptive parents have both remarried, and my sister and I have a large blended family. They are loving and caring and have supported me through the tough times I experienced growing up. I have had many surgeries related to my physical disability.

I hated the surgeries and all the physiotherapy and hard work that come with being disabled. I was not the easiest person to take to these appointments. However, I learned over time that if I wanted the independence I desperately craved, I would have to push myself very hard.

At Grandview, my therapist was Kathy Moran. She understood the

person inside me, and encouraged me to work. I became interested in Grandview's "Teen Group", and met a lot of fun people who were also struggling with their identity, independence and other issues we deal with. During my high school years I attended the Teen Group in Ajax, where I met the infamous Steve Kirk, the group leader. Some other friends from high school also attended the group, and here we learned many important lessons about life, friends, and our struggle for independence. Soon it was time to say good bye to these friends as I prepared to attend Trent University.

I experienced some difficult times while at Trent; I withdrew and moved back home. I was thrilled when Steve Kirk and the therapists from the Adolescent Program at Grandview contacted me with information about the first ever "Teen Independence Weekend Retreat". The retreat was an excellent experience; I was able to volunteer and share my experience with other participants.

Steve encouraged the formation of a Youth Advisory Council (YAC). The YAC got off to a slow start, and realizing this group could be a valuable communication tool, I encouraged all the teens at Grandview to get involved. We held our first elections a short time later and I was voted "Chair". The YAC has spent considerable time establishing its goals. Our primary, important role is to provide mentorship to the adolescents at Grandview who are transitioning to the Teen Group. We are also addressing the need for transitions to adulthood, with the biggest hurdle being the



Allyson

realization that there are few services for disabled young adults once they leave Grandview. We have established a number of social activities, and are currently planning Halloween and Holiday dance parties.

Over the last couple of years I have undergone a major transformation, which includes weight loss, focusing on fitness, and playing with hair colors and styles and my personal appearance. Presently, I am attending DeVry College of Technology and studying Computer Information Systems. I'm renting a room in Mississauga and use "Transhelp" to get around. I'm enjoying life in Toronto and have become a bit of a groupie touring around seeing some of my favorite bands play.

I've found the path I want to follow and I look forward to finishing my studies and working full time. We'll see where life goes from there...

Allyson Partridge,
"Al"

October, 2003

Our Mission:

"By providing a range of services, Grandview Children's Centre works with families and their kids with special needs to achieve their personal best."

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"Grandviews" is produced quarterly for families and supporters of Grandview Children's Centre and Grandview Children's Foundation

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