



Amigo News

VOLUME 2 ISSUE 4

DECEMBER 2007

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- Forum 2
- Review cont'd
- I'm Possible 2
- cont'd
- Amigos on Film 3
- Amigos in the News 3
- Thanks to our sponsors 4
- Contact Us 4

Nothing's Impossible!

On Saturday November 24, over 200 attendees came out to participate in the first ever **Community Inclusion Forum** presented by Heads Up for Inclusion and the Amigos Project.

The foyer of Fleming College was packed with enthusiastic students, youth and adults.

The morning began with a warm welcome from Lucinda Hage, founder of Heads Up for Inclusion. Lucinda described the intent of the forum—to showcase what is possible when youth with intellectual disabilities are given the resources they require. Lucinda invited

everyone to stay after the official program and visit the various booths which she described as living examples of 'what's possible.'



Over 200 attendees at the Community Inclusion Forum

Keynote speakers **Jacob Rodenburg**, Executive Director of Camp Kawartha, and **Liz Loftus**, parent of Connor, diagnosed with

Autism, shared with us the story of how Liz's dream to have her son Connor attend Camp Kawartha became a reality. Jacob shared his belief that camp is a chance to celebrate and honour differences. "The more diversity we accept, the more accepting we become." ...Continued



Jacob Rodenburg, Executive Director, Camp Kawartha

I'm Possible!

An exciting and interactive session began immediately after the general session of the Forum.

Attendees spent time visiting with over 20 groups and individuals showcasing how being included in the

community leads to meaningful relationships, win-win workplaces, independent living and business opportunities.

In between the visiting, there were 3 special presentations.

...continued



Nothing's Impossible

...continued



The Dream Players entertaining the crowd at the Forum

“The disability is not who the person is — it is simply a small part of who they are.”

*Liz Loftus,
Keynote Speaker,
Community
Inclusion Forum*

Today, ten or more special needs campers attend Camp Kawartha each year. This means, in Jacob's words, “that there's joy and laughter” throughout the camp. Jacob shared a story about Ian, a camper with Autism whose presence at Camp has allowed other campers to imagine themselves in his shoes, begin to show empathy, and learn to celebrate differences.

Liz Loftus explained that the key to the success of integrating campers was to have well paid, dedicated supporters for the special needs campers. Another important element was the counselors. Liz said that they “fostered inclusion and respect” and this made all the difference.

Counselors have said that if there's a week without special needs campers, “it

just doesn't feel the same without them”.

Liz closed her remarks by emphasizing that autism is only a small part of who Connor is. Likewise for any person with a disability, it is important for their parents, teachers, friends and family to remember that their disability is not who they are, but simply one part of who they are.

I'm Possible!

...continued

Meaningful Employment, Paul Tiller and Roger Stanley of Parks Canada

Roger and Paul shared how the past 5 summers have been beneficial on both sides—Paul's presentation

the group how the boaters and the staff notice an unmistakable lift in their mood when Paul is on shift.

PCVS Amigos—T'was the Night Before Christmas

PCVS put an entertaining and musical twist on the familiar classic—this was enjoyed by all. Special thanks to Ray Henderson of Arbour Theatre for working with the Amigos to bring this together.

Dream Players

The group played a medley of the Beatles and Christmas tunes and got everyone's toes tapping. An inspiring performance of heart and soul. Thank you Dream Players!

Christian Harvey led the group in a drumming circle to close the morning.

A Special Thank You Goes Out To All Showcase Participants:

- Andy's Designs
- Ben Prins Poetry
- Best Buddies
- Camp Kawartha
- Dream Players
- Reach for the Rainbow
- Circle of Support
- Parks Canada
- Passport Mentoring
- People First
- Phoenix Alternative Learning Centre
- Special Olympics
- TAS Art & Designs
- Voices of Youth



Special Olympics Medalists Stephanie Smith (far left) & Lisa Butler (far right)

highlighted how he learned what it takes to be a Canal man, and has contributed to the safe passage of thousands of boaters along the Trent System. Roger told

Amigos Captured on Film

The Forum marked the official debut of **The Amigos Story**, a documentary produced by award-winning filmmakers **Tony Buell and Jeremy Kelly**. The film captures the magic of Amigos. The kids are expressing what their friendship means and how they spend their time together.

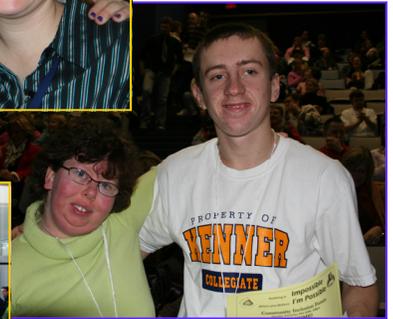
Founder Lucinda Hage is interviewed and explains how Heads Up for Inclusion was born. The

film features local musicians performing original songs written especially for Amigos.

The film is being used to help fundraise for the Amigos

Project and to educate people about the benefits of inclusion.

Copies are available for \$20 and can be ordered by emailing : headsup@sympatico.ca.



Amigos & friends hanging out at the Forum. For more photos visit: www.firstharvest.ca/gallery.html

Amigos in the News



It has been a season for the Amigos project to be seen and heard. Newspaper articles in the **Peterborough Examiner, Peterborough This Week**, and a taping of **The Extra Mile** which will air on **CHEX TV** on the 6:00 pm news on Tuesday December 11. Keep your eyes and ears open—Amigos will continue to look for ways to spread the word that “*nothing is impossible if you believe I’m possible.*”



Heads Up for Inclusion promotes **connections** in our community leading to the development of **relationships**, so people with intellectual disabilities can lead **meaningful lives**.

Heads Up for Inclusion and the Amigos Project

Lucinda Hage, Founder

Tel: 705-745-2318

Email: headsup@sympatico.ca

www.headsupforinclusion.ca

Strengthen our community by investing in youth leaders.

Sponsorships are available in varying financial and commitment levels. Donations welcome in any amount. Tax receipts provided for donations of \$20 or more.

Amigos are building friendships, growing leaders and changing attitudes.



Thank you Saturn of Peterborough!

We were thrilled to receive our first corporate sponsorship this month—from our very own **Saturn** Dealership in Peterborough.

Ray Richardson, General Manager, has generously chosen the “Sponsor an Amigos School” option from our sponsorship menu. Sponsorship funds go toward carrying out the Amigos activities throughout the year. Such expenses include the Amigos Coordinator who works with students, parents and teachers to ensure everyone is kept abreast of policies and news pertaining to the project. It also helps fund special events like the Christmas gathering and the

summer barbeque.

We thank everyone at Saturn of Peterborough and look forward to meeting you at our upcoming events.

Watch for your sponsorship plaque to appear in the halls of your school!



Saturn—Official Sponsors of the Amigos Project at Thomas A. Stewart Secondary School

OTHER SPECIAL THANKS...

We also would like to thank Jane Myers at **Moving Media** for donating air time on 6 boards throughout Peterborough. Thanks also to the Memorial Centre and Riverview Park & Zoo for displaying our event on their signs. We sure let people know about the Forum!

Starbucks Drive Thru on Landsdowne, **Loblaws** at Landsdowne Place, **Rocky Ridge**, and **Pepsi-GTQ (Quaker)** were kind to supply coffee, water, muffins and healthy snacks for the Forum. We appreciate it!