

HOPE!

A Message from the President

Hi from Kester's Mom!

After many years I am very pleased that another effort is being made to produce a newsletter for members of our parent support group. The first newsletter was printed in December 2005, by then PRO, Mrs. Lillon Ryan-Dick and the executive.

Many of you know me as Kester's Mom and I am happy to be identified this way. Kester turned my world and our family's world upside down, when it was learned that he had autism. I was a teacher for many years but had never heard the word "autism" when Kester was diagnosed in 1988.

It is a therapeutic experience for me when I can help other parents, especially our new parents. After learning of Kester's diagnosis in the USA, I felt very much alone and did not know another person in Trinidad who had a child with autism. It was support from friends, family members and ASTT that helped myself and other parents to cope with the complex and heartbreaking condition of autism.



Above: Marilyn Moore (kneeling) with the Adult Friday Group and ASTT Staff



Above: President of ASTT, Teresina Sieunarine with son Kester

I thank my husband, Tennyson, for the great support he gave me then and continues to give me, as I continue to receive support from our group and to volunteer.

Many who knew me as a very timid young girl in school, are amazed that I have developed a 'thick skin' in public. I have learned to withstand the comments and stares of others when Kester does not behave as the 'normal' adult. I have accepted his difference and work hard to make others learn about autism and accept persons with autism and other disabilities.

I try not to dwell on the "whys" and see Kester as a unique person with many talents. Our family celebrates the many small victories over his 32 years. We have learned that he loves routines and must prepare him for changes. We take Kester out daily and so many persons in St. Helena Village 'look out' for him. It is important to have neighbourhood awareness.

I hope you will treasure your child with autism but also try to achieve some balance in your life. Yes, you need to take care of yourselves because 'burning out' will not be helpful. Members of our parent support group are willing to assist you and your family.

5 Questions With Marilyn Moore
(Visiting speech therapist)

1. How long have you worked as a speech therapist?

I worked as a speech-language therapist for 28 years in the schools of southwestern Nova Scotia, Canada.

2. What is the most important thing you have learned from your practice?

I've learned to be flexible – to take advantage of those unplanned opportunities – to use 'teachable moments'. The years have taught me the importance of having fun during sessions...to laugh and play.

3. In your free time, what are your top 2 relaxing things to do?

I like to cook with friends, attend exercise class and garden.

4. What is your favorite movie or book of all times?

I like to read murder mysteries..the Bourne Identity is a favourite book and movie.

5. What is the number one tip you can give to parents about speech therapy and their kid?

I think parents need to participate in their child's speech therapy. Parents need to know what is being worked on so they can continue the work at home. Parents are great teachers.

SHINE, SHINE, SHINE

...created by a young man with AUTISM!



Above Photo: Marlon Haddaway with his action figures made from plasticine.

Calendar of Events

April is Autism Awareness Month

- April 2nd World Autism Awareness Day
- April 6th Family Day
- April 25th Movie Night at Autism Place
- April 27th **Autism Awareness Walk**
Queen's Park Savannah POS
- May 23 Movie Night at Autism Place
- May 24th General Meeting
- June 27th Movie Night at Autism Place
- June 28th General Meeting

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

Name: _____

Tel: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Basic \$20.00

Financial \$100.00

Lifetime \$500.00



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