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Kids with autism to run like the wind

Toronto's first track & field competition for children with autism

TORONTO, June 15, 2011 – On June 18th Sarah Campbell will be cheering her heart out when her son, Rory, takes part in the 400 meter dash at the Trailblazers Track and Field Championships hosted by Geneva Centre for Autism. She will be smiling with pride and joy to see her son and many other children with autism take part in a track and field event where taking part and being just another kid is all that it takes to win.

On a sunny spring day in 2009, Sarah discovered Rory, then 10, was taking great interest in his sister's success in school track and field competitions. Having explored many programming options in the city for Rory, Sarah discovered that there were no organized sport competitions in Toronto that accommodated the special needs of children living with autism.

Determined to provide this important life opportunity for her son, Sarah spoke to the professionals at Geneva Centre for Autism. The Centre's staff immediately acknowledged a sporting event would be a welcome learning tool for children with autism and began working with Sarah. Sarah says "I envisioned a stadium full of children and teens with autism, running like champions and winning medals".

There is a widespread misconception that children with autism are incapable of participating in sports. Though Autism Spectrum Disorder does impair social and communication skills and can have a negative impact on gross motor coordination and sensory limitations, successful participation in sport is possible. While certain team sports such as hockey, soccer and baseball can be challenging, individual sports such as track & field and swimming can be a terrific outlet to experience the joy of sports, learn vital life sustaining skills and establish important relationships.

Rachel Truant from Geneva Centre for Autism says "We wanted to open a door to the life-affirming journey of challenge, hope and triumph of competitive sport. We wanted to create an ability friendly sport competition that will spark our children to be all they can be".

The Trailblazers Track and Field Championships will take place on Saturday afternoon, June 18th at Varsity Stadium, University of Toronto.

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Media Release



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About Geneva Centre for Autism

Geneva Centre for Autism is a Canadian and international leader in the development and delivery of training, support and clinical intervention services, for individuals with an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and their families. We are there every step of the way to support individuals with an ASD to reach their full potential.

For more information on Geneva Centre for Autism visit: www.autism.net

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