



Invest In Our Vision

creating a society inclusive of
people with physical disabilities



Who We Are

Ontario March of Dimes is one of the largest charitable rehabilitation organizations in Ontario providing a wide range of services across the province to enhance the independence and community participation of people with physical disabilities.



Did you know?

- People with limiting¹ disabilities make up 16% of the Canadian population; by 2020, it is estimated that 1 in 5 Canadians will have a limiting disability.
- Over 800,000, or 22% of Canadians over 15 have a severe disability.
- Disabilities are most common among seniors.
- Canadians with disabilities have an estimated annual spending power of \$25 billion.
- Seniors and people with disabilities represent 20 – 25% of the Canadian recreation, retail, entertainment, workplace and housing marketplaces in the next 10 years and beyond.

Canadians with disabilities in 1991	Age Group
46%	65 +
27%	55-64
14%	35-54
8%	15-34
7%	children under 15

Source: 1991 Statistics Canada: The Health and Activity Limitation Survey (HALS); Royal Bank 2000 survey. The HALS was conducted again in 2001, but the data is not yet available.

¹ Persons were considered to have a disability if they experienced any restriction or lack of ability, resulting from an impairment to perform an activity in the manner, or within the range considered normal for an able-bodied person. Those who have a technical aid that completely eliminates the limitation are not considered to have a disability.

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Most people take their independence for granted. We assume our lives are our own. But what if the rules were to change? What if the dream of a lifetime were simply to stand upright, walk across a room, or reach out for a loved one? Every year, thousands of Canadians are affected by a physical disability. For some, it is lifelong, yet for others, it happens unexpectedly, creating dramatic changes to their lives in a short time.

Ontario March of Dimes is one of the largest charitable rehabilitation organizations in Ontario providing a wide range of services across the province to enhance the independence and community participation of people with physical disabilities. Our ultimate dream is to create a society inclusive of people with physical disabilities.

The astounding changes the world has seen in the more than 50 years since the triumphant debut of Ontario March of Dimes are nothing compared to those we may expect in the next half-century. Without doubt, medical and technological advances will bring new hope and new solutions for those with physical disabilities. However, we must realistically face our changing demographics, as demand for the programs and services we provide will inevitably increase as our population ages. Current estimates indicate that our consumers will double in number in the next five years alone. What then, of the next 50?

The solutions we now provide are both practical and wide-ranging. We offer a multitude of non-medical services such as day-to-day attendant care, help with structural modifications, or developing entirely new devices to meet unique needs. We provide a portion of the funding for equipment such as walkers, wheelchairs, and communications devices, essential to people with disabilities who are unable to afford these devices on their own.

Our assessment and career counselling services, job placement initiatives and extensive training programs provide the tools people need to pursue challenging and rewarding careers. Our social and recreational activities provide opportunities for participation in summer programs, day-trips and social clubs, enhancing people's self-esteem and independence, while giving their devoted caregivers much-needed respite. Our Northern Medical Clinics provide residents of remote northern Ontario communities with access to medical specialists and treatment that would otherwise not be available locally. We support Canadians experiencing the late effects of polio, characterized by progressive weakness and pain, that negatively impacts health and independence.

Today, our programs and services are vital to the 25,000 people who depend on us for the same freedoms and opportunities that everyone has a right to expect. We can only meet the demands of tomorrow by acting **now**.

Every great achievement begins with a dream – a vision. Ours is to provide Ontarians, however challenging their circumstances, a seamless, universal guarantee of independence. We envision a world from which the fear of physical disability has been eliminated. By sharing our vision with us, we can create a society inclusive of **all** people with physical disabilities.

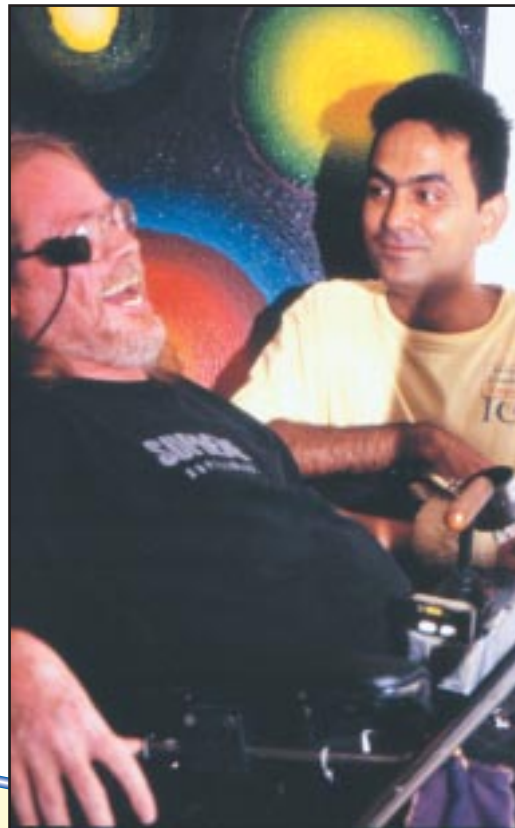


Programs & Services

AccessAbility® Services

AccessAbility® Services provides adults with physical disabilities greater independence through improved individual mobility and better community accessibility.

- **Assistive Devices Program** offers financial assistance for device repair and equipment purchase. Devices include wheelchairs, braces, mobility aids and communication aids for non-speaking adults.
- **Home and Vehicle Modification Program** provides financial assistance to eligible Ontario residents with disabilities who require modifications to their home or vehicle.
- **Recycled Rental Equipment Program** provides short and long-term rentals utilizing high quality, previously owned equipment.
- **DesignAbility®** is a program that creates unique design solutions for adults with physical disabilities. In consultation with consumers, volunteers with technical expertise develop and adapt unique devices that are not commercially available.
- **Barrier-Free Design Consultation** provides consultation, information and advocacy around barrier-free design issues. This service includes maintaining a registry of housing for landlords, and technical support to the Ontario Trillium Foundation's Access Grant Program.
- **Northern Medical Clinics** provide residents of remote northern Ontario communities with access to volunteer medical specialists, who would otherwise not be available locally.



Claude Poirier desperately needed surgery. A back injury sustained over 20 years ago left him in constant pain. "I experienced a lot of leg and back pain which would frequently take me off work," says Claude. "If I so much as sneezed, I'd slip a disc."

As a structural welder, Claude's job is physically demanding. He found the constant disruption to his work schedule unsettling. Each time he required time off, he was quickly replaced, compelled to wait his turn again for work. Claude took painkillers and worked through the pain. But, he couldn't continue that way for long.

Claude's small town of Matheson isn't equipped with the technology and medical expertise to perform the back surgery he direly needed. "We just don't have the necessary facilities here," he says regretfully. "Many of the doctors have lived here for years but haven't been introduced to the newest surgical techniques."

Claude learned about Ontario March of Dimes' Northern Medical Clinics from his family physician. Volunteer doctors from urban centres in southern Ontario, travel to remote northern communities to provide consultation and treatment for people who would have great difficulty accessing this service otherwise. After a consultation with specialist, Dr. Joel Finklestein, Claude's back fusion operation was scheduled.

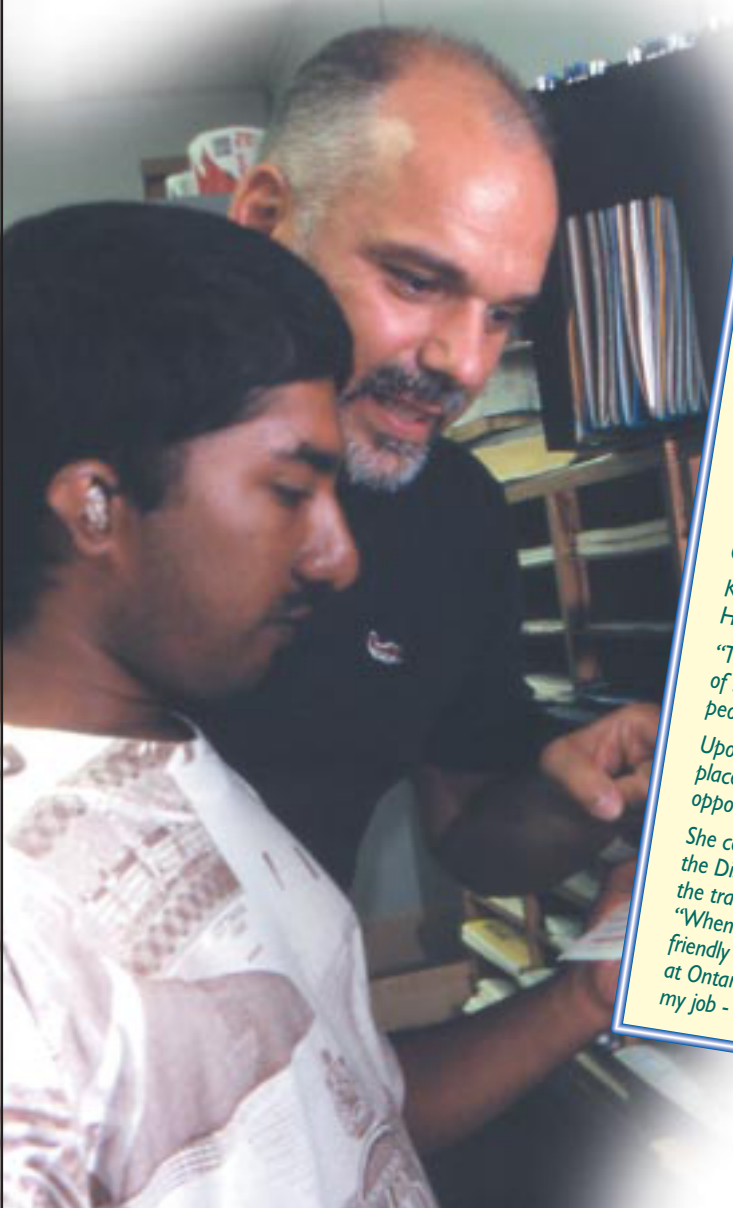
After a period of convalescence, Claude was much improved but still felt some discomfort in his back. Dr. Finklestein recommended follow-up surgery to remove some of the orthopaedic hardware, which was no longer required. This proved successful.

"Without Ontario March of Dimes, I would not have been able to have this operation," adds Claude. "I didn't have the time or money to travel south. This way, the doctor came to me. I am so grateful for this valuable service that Ontario March of Dimes provides. The surgery has changed my life - I am able to walk more freely and I no longer experience chronic pain."

Employment Services

Employment Services assists adults with disabilities to secure and maintain employment. Ontario Disability Support Program, Workplace Safety and Insurance Board, Canada Pension Plan, insurance companies and others contract for services.

- **Assessment Services** identify job goals and the services and activities necessary to achieve them.
- **Return to Work Services** provide coordination of services and various employment supports, usually in cooperation with the consumer's employer.
- **Diskovery® Job Skills Training** provides essential computer skills required in the labour market.
- **Job Placement Services/Supported Employment Services** work with employers and consumers to identify, secure, and maintain employment opportunities.



Unemployed since an accident nine years earlier left her injured and in chronic pain, Kiran Gupta was ready to re-enter the workforce.

"I always wanted to work in an office setting, but I found I just didn't have the skills anymore," says Kiran, "The last time I was employed was in 1992 and I didn't need the extensive computer skills then that I need now. I am 55-years-old and from a different country - I felt like there were so many barriers holding me back."

Kiran realized she would require computer training to compete in today's job market. Her initial classes at the local community college left her dissatisfied. The younger students, whose computer knowledge far exceeded Kiran's, intimidated her and she was unsuccessful.

Kiran heard about Ontario March of Dimes' Diskovery® Job Skills Training program and decided to meet with one of the counsellors. She explained how she was feeling and what she wanted to accomplish.

"People, including my doctor, kept advising me to go on a disability pension," says Kiran. "But money doesn't solve all problems. I felt that having a job would be good for my mental and physical health; it is not only about the paycheque, but also about having a feeling of purpose and accomplishment. Ontario March of Dimes understood my goals. I knew the program was right for me," she adds.

Kiran started her Ontario March of Dimes classes in May 2001. She felt at ease almost immediately. Her courses included Windows, Word, Excel and Simply Accounting.

"The instructors were so patient and answered all my questions," says Kiran. "The Ontario March of Dimes program provided an easier environment to learn in. There were other people like me - people with disabilities, so I didn't feel out of place."

Upon completion of the course, Kiran and the Employment Services team secured her co-op placement with a financial institution. The skills she gained gave her the confidence to explore new opportunities.

She conveyed her experiences when invited to be a guest speaker at a recent commencement of the Diskovery® Job Skills Training class. "Ontario March of Dimes offered me a chance to receive the training I needed and to overcome the challenges that my disability presented," Kiran states.

"When I took classes through the Diskovery® program, it didn't feel anything like school. It was a friendly atmosphere, and we were all one big family. The graduates can feel confident that the staff at Ontario March of Dimes will continue to support them and to believe in them. What I love about my job - is the fact that I was able to succeed."

Recreation and Integration Services

Recreation and Integration Services enhance the quality of life for adults with physical disabilities through recreation, leisure activities, and social integration.

- **Befriending® Program** matches volunteers with adults who have a physical disability to share common interests and activities.
- **Summer and Winter Holiday Programs** provide adults 19 and older with physical disabilities, the opportunity to enjoy leisure and recreation activities at a YMCA accessible conference training facility north of Toronto.
- **Out Trips** are one-day events and excursions, providing opportunities for people with disabilities to socialize in community settings.

Rocco Vigliotto lives at Ontario March of Dimes' Richmond Hill Supportive Housing residence. He loves the independence that this affords him -he can do whatever he wants, whenever he wants. If he needs assistance, an attendant is only a call away. As satisfying as this arrangement is, Rocco craves an escape from everyday routine.

Rocco, who has cerebral palsy, has been a regular participant in Ontario March of Dimes' Summer Holiday Program for 14 years. A strong proponent of the program, Rocco is adamant that it is an essential service for adults with physical disabilities. Rocco believes that it is a right for all adults to enjoy a brief vacation - and those with physical disabilities should be able to do so on fully accessible grounds where their disabilities are not an impediment to having a good time.

Ontario March of Dimes' Summer Holiday Program is located at Geneva Park, an accessible resort near Orillia. During each five-day session, adults with disabilities are able to enjoy many of the things we associate with summer vacations - water sports, relaxing on the beach, campfires, hiking and trips into town. The program attracts people from across the province.

Rocco enjoys the activities he is unable to do in the city or at other inaccessible sites. "I love the water," he says. "My favorite activity is tubing. And at Geneva Park, they have some amazing accessible trails, so I can go on hikes on my own - that's great!"

The program provides full attendant services to those who need it - such as help with dressing in the morning, assistance at meals, and showering. Rocco commends the attendant services, the facilities and the transportation to Geneva Park.

"I love the staff," adds Rocco. "They're professional but also a lot of fun. It's a great place to meet new people. It's like a reunion every year. I get to see staff and vacationers from other years."

Rocco's only complaint? - "I wish it were a bit longer."



Independent Living Services

Independent Living Services enable adults with a physical disability and/or acquired brain injury to live independently in their own homes through a variety of non-medical community-based services.

- **Attendant Services** provide assistance with activities of daily living within the home or community.
- **Acquired Brain Injuries Services (ABI)** enable continued community integration for persons with head injuries. Services for individuals and their families promote development in communication and social skills, and provide counselling and emotional/behavioral support.
- **Outreach Services** provide scheduled assistance with activities of daily living in people's homes.
- **Supportive Housing** provides both scheduled and on-call assistance, 24 hours a day, for adults living in a supportive housing building or complex. Services are also available in school, work or community settings.
- **Respite Services** provide short or longer-term relief for the primary caregiver, while working on the maintenance and development of new skills for the consumer. Service time can range from a few hours to several weeks.
- **Specialized Services** include assisting: the medically fragile; college or university students and staff; the hospitality industry; social and recreation groups; and those who require French language services.

Marie Armitage couldn't enter or exit her apartment building using the front door. Instead, she had to endure the indignity and inconvenience of using the delivery entrance. Once outside, the surrounding sidewalks were often inaccessible for her to manoeuvre.

Since a back fusion in 1996, Marie has had to use an electric wheelchair. Friends from church were unable to drive her anywhere, as her wheelchair was impossible to transport in a car. Marie was housebound and found it increasingly difficult to prepare meals on her own and manage day-to-day household chores.

*When she searched for a building that was **truly** accessible, she learned about a supportive housing unit staffed by Ontario March of Dimes attendants. She applied and was put on a waiting list.*

"Once a fully accessible apartment became available that met my needs, I was so pleased," says Marie. "I moved in, sight unseen! I couldn't believe it. It had everything I needed."

Ontario March of Dimes attendants help Marie get up in the morning, shower, prepare her meals, and clean the apartment, providing scheduled and on-call assistance 24 hours a day.

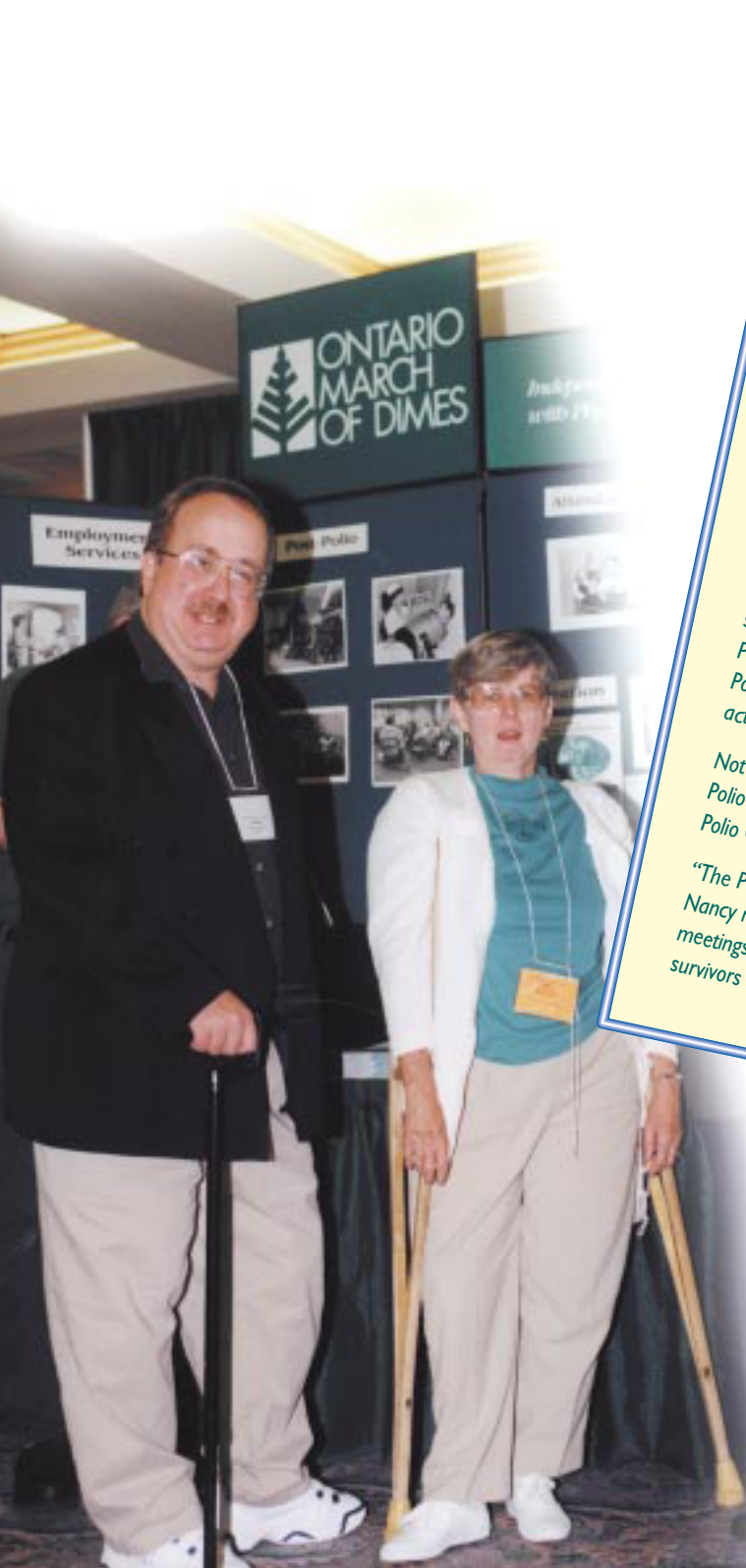
"The staff is very obliging and kind. They take the time to speak with me when I have a concern. And if I go out on my own, I feel secure knowing that I can call the office and they will send someone to help me if my wheelchair breaks down or if I feel ill. It gives me that extra push to go out knowing I've got that kind of support."

Marie's newfound independence has made a significant difference in her life. "I haven't really done anything in 16 years," Marie laments. "Now I have so much to do! Ontario March of Dimes is able to give me the kind of help I need. I have so much freedom now; it seems almost like a dream."



Post Polio Program

The **Post Polio Program** increases awareness of post polio syndrome among polio survivors and healthcare professionals. Services include educational materials, support groups and research.



As a Coordinator of Ontario March of Dimes' Assistive Devices Program during the 1970s, it was Nancy Skinner's job to help adults obtain assistive devices like wheelchairs and walkers. After her first year on the job, Nancy observed a startling pattern – an increasing number of her clientele were people who had polio as children. For years they had been symptom-free and active - with polio only a memory. But now the symptoms were re-emerging.

Nancy began to notice similar symptoms herself. She became fatigued easily and the pain in her back was worsening. She too, had had polio as a child. In 1947 she had become ill with what her parents thought was the flu, but resulted in paralysis in most of her body except her left arm.

Nancy, along with other polio survivors, encouraged Ontario March of Dimes to initiate a Post Polio Program for adults experiencing renewed polio symptoms. Nancy felt that Ontario March of Dimes should be the leader in supporting adults with Post Polio Syndrome (PPS).

"Ontario March of Dimes **was** polio in the years when we were searching for a vaccine," says Nancy. "It is so important that OMOD support polio survivors as we age. The Post Polio Program provides us with medical information and research findings about Post Polio Syndrome. Ontario March of Dimes is really the only organization that has an active interest in this syndrome."

Not only was Nancy instrumental in the formation of Ontario March of Dimes' Post Polio Program, but she has also served as the Honorary President of the London Post Polio Chapter and is currently secretary.

"The Post Polio Program helped me meet other people with Post Polio Syndrome," Nancy notes. "I get the most up-to-date information through mailings, conferences and meetings. And the social aspect cannot be minimized - getting together with fellow polio survivors is an incredible support and it really helps us keep our sense of humour."

Conductive Education®

Conductive Education® is an innovative, learning system that merges elements of education and rehabilitation to assist people with motor disabilities. Participants develop problem-solving skills, body control, mobility and improved communication. Ontario March of Dimes publishes a newsletter, funds Canadians to train in the field, and operates and evaluates Conductive Education® programs for adults and children.

Information & Advocacy

Information Services

include expert references and referral services on topics such as rehabilitation, accessibility and disability issues through newsletters, the Web-based Accessibility Directory www.accessibilitydirectory.ca and the Ontario March of Dimes Web site www.dimes.on.ca.

Government Relations

develops and influences public policy on issues that impact the lives of people with physical disabilities. Ontario March of Dimes continues to promote the principles of independence, integration, equality and choice.

Since a stroke in 1993, Tony Barros' life has been altered dramatically. Unable to work, Tony suffers from double vision, has difficulty reading, and encounters problems with his balance. Conventional therapies helped, but when he reached a plateau, Tony looked for something more. He found it difficult to find enough support and information after his hospital discharge and was compelled to do his own research.

In 1999, while reading the newspaper one day, he stumbled upon a story announcing the launch of a pilot Conductive Education® (CE) program at Ontario March of Dimes. With his curiosity piqued, Tony enrolled for classes.

At the time, Tony's physical condition was weak. He was very unsteady on his feet; his leg would swing out dangerously when he walked. The Conductors (CE instructors) worked with Tony by helping him to bend his knee slightly each time he took a step forward. He began to notice the positive effects. Now, he uses his walker more as a support and safety precaution than an absolute necessity.

"My balance has improved," says Tony. "When there is a long break between CE sessions, I really notice the difference. When I get back to class, the gains I have made return quickly."

The greatest change in Tony's life is his increased self-confidence. He believes the interaction with the other CE class participants and the positive support of the Conductors has been invaluable. "I'm not afraid to try new things on my own now," says Tony. "The Conductors are always accentuating what I **can** do and now I am more active outside my home. I take that positive encouragement with me when I leave the classroom and it really benefits me in my day-to-day life."

Tony has found that the learning method promoted by Conductive Education® is the perfect solution for him. "The Conductors provide me with different ways to achieve my goals," he adds. "Instead of facing large, insurmountable tasks, they break things down for me in smaller steps, building on what I've already accomplished."

"Ontario March of Dimes' Conductive Education® program has inspired confidence in my **abilities**," says Tony. "Unlike other programs, Conductive Education® is ongoing, so I can continue to build upon what I've already learned. It has been so beneficial for me -that's why I keep coming back!"





About Us

Disability	Percentage of Program Expenditures (\$)
Multiple Sclerosis	19.4%
Stroke	11.6%
Para/Quadriplegia	11.4%
Cerebral Palsy	9.5%
Back/Soft tissue	9.3%
Brain Injury	8.5%
Arthritis	7.7%
Parkinson's Disease	4.2%
Muscular Dystrophy	2.8%
All Others*	15.6%

**Bone Disorder, Spina Bifida, Amputation, Polio, Cardio-Vascular, Diabetes*





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