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# ISAND

Integrated Services for Autism & Neurodevelopmental Disorders

## ISAND'S READY FOR SCHOOL! PROGRAM

ISAND is piloting a new preschool program to develop children's school readiness skills. The **Ready for School!** Program is an extension of our early Intervention program and will allow children to learn different classroom routines, communication, social and early academic skills while fostering independence.



Teaching occurs within a Naturalistic Developmental Behavioural Intervention (NDBI) framework, which allows children to explore and learn within natural settings. Utilizing customized support, each child is guided to learning opportunities that focus on shared control, communication, social engagement and academic skills. In the preschool setting, students will be supported by two clinicians with up to five students. The daily schedule will promote children's ability to move between class routines and participate in small-group activities, while encouraging socialization and communication among the children.

The **Ready for School! Program** is for children who will be starting preschool or Junior Kindergarten who need learning support within a small group setting. This program would also be appropriate for children who may benefit from additional support in a school or day care setting.

The **Ready for School! Program** utilizes the following ISAND clinicians: Behaviour Therapists, Clinical Supervisors and Occupational Therapists.

The **Ready for School! Program** believes the following approaches, transcribed from the Ontario Kindergarten Curriculum (2016), are essential to building a positive learning environment:

### Responsive Relationships:

positive interactions between teacher & student

### Learning Through Exploration, Play, and Inquiry:

daily practice of skills needed for the future

### Environment as Third Teacher:

physical space, but also social environment, sensory influences

### Instructional Documentation:

*"make thinking and learning visible"*

Therapists will determine individualized learning expectations through observation and assessment, including the Early-Start Denver Model (ESDM) checklist which allows them to create developmentally appropriate goals that focus on children's communication, social and group participation skills, play, pre-academic skills, personal independence, and motor skills. Student progress will be assessed at regular intervals throughout the term. Parents will receive daily written communication from therapists and will receive a report summarizing their child's progress at the end of term.

This pilot program is taking place at ISAND, 3 days per week from Jan. 13th to May 1st, 2020. Every session is 3 hours, running from 1- 4 p.m.

This program will mimic the daily structure of a preschool class to include activities such as:

- Class Meeting / Circle Time
- Small-group, Play-based learning activities
- Arts & Crafts & Story Time
- Music & Movement
- Play Centres & Snack
- Gym & Gross Motor Games

If you are interested to learn more about future sessions of the program, please contact June Weekes, Coordinator of Clinical Programs, (416) 224-5959 ext. 307 or email her at: [june.weekes@isand.ca](mailto:june.weekes@isand.ca).

With a bit of a twist on a Beatles song, we want to welcome the new faces of ISAND since the last edition (Summer 2019) of our Newsletter. However first, we would like to recognize and thank those who left our organization.

# GOODBYE

## OLGA MARTINEZ

Olga started her career with ISAND as a Clinical Receptionist in September 2017. By September 2018, Olga completed her certification and moved into the role of Early Intervention Behaviour Therapist. A gifted Behaviour Therapist, Olga helped many children in the Early Intervention Program to reach their goals. Unfortunately for ISAND, Olga re-located to Switzerland in July 2019 and decided not to commute.

## RHONA COGAN

One of our Clinical Front Desk Assistants, Rhona was only with us for a short time however, we greatly appreciated her contributions. Rhona greeted everyone, answered calls and e-mails in a friendly, and helpful manner. Rhona consistently looked for ways to improve the services we provide and the internal processes we use. Rhona took a position in the for-profit world and is excelling in her role.

## PHIL ALBA

When asked about Phil's contributions to ISAND, the consensus amongst the team is that no one was really sure what his job description was; he was a jack-of-all-trades. Phil had a real passion for ISAND and those associated with the agency. As noted by more than one clinician, the work that Phil did to support the ISAND team was "outstanding". If Phil didn't know the answer to any question, he would take the time to find it out while never making the person asking the question feel as though he was being inconvenienced – even if it was the thousandth question of the day! Phil, thanks for your contributions and best of luck in your next venture.

## TIFFANY FUNG

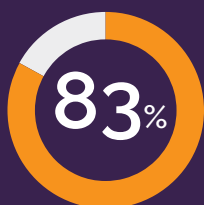
Working in the Early Intervention In-Home program, Tiffany was a talented Behaviour Therapist always working to help children reach and exceed their goals. Her interactions with children in the program were very intense and created a strong bond between therapist, client and their family. Tiffany will be missed by her colleagues and the families she worked so closely with. We wish her well in her new role with a local school board.

## DAVID GRAY

David first came to ISAND as a consultant, to review the operations of the organization. It quickly became apparent that he was hooked! David's enthusiasm for the people and the work that was being done at ISAND was obvious to the Board and everyone connected with the agency, and as result, David was asked to take on the role as "Interim" Executive Director. He agreed to help out for "a short time" and stayed on for more than four years. David's passion, hard work, and dedication helped to cement policies and business practices that are the operational backbone of ISAND. Not only was he successful in shaping the operations, his skills in marketing and fundraising helped raise the profile and funds to assist families in accessing therapy at ISAND. David has rejoined the for-profit world and, by all accounts, has made that transition seamlessly. David, thanks for the vision and leadership you provided to everyone at ISAND.

## DID YOU KNOW?

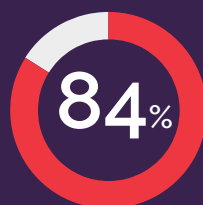
ISAND distributed an electronic survey to families in May of 2019. When the survey closed, 191 responses were received. Highlights include:



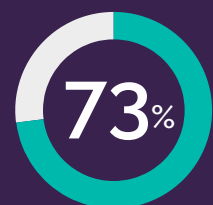
of respondents were likely or very likely to recommend ISAND



were satisfied or very satisfied with the relationship with clinicians



were satisfied or very satisfied with overall service



were satisfied or very satisfied with range of services

# HELLO

## **BOB BUTELLA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Bob has over 30 years of experience in developmental services and joined the ISAND team for the opportunity to support the mission and to work with an energetic and reputable group of clinicians. Bob is a Founding Board member of Guelph Giants (Special Ice Hockey International), and Founding Member of Facilitation Wellington Dufferin. He has held a number of leadership roles in provincial initiatives in the Developmental services sector. Bob has taught in apprenticeship programs at Fanshawe, Conestoga, and Sheridan Colleges.

## **MAIJA GULENS CLINICAL DIRECTOR**

Maija brings 18 years of clinical experience as a speech-language pathologist at Children's Hospital Colorado with experience teaching and coordinating social programs. She has training in Early Start Denver Model (ESDM), Social Communication Emotional Regulation & Transactional Supports (SCERTS) model. Specializing in Augmentative & Alternative Communication (AAC), social skills group programs, motor speech disorders, autism spectrum disorders and parent training. Maija has served as a presenter at several local, national, and international conferences and has been a guest lecturer at CU at Boulder.

## **ALYSSA JOHNNSTON OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST**

A recent recipient of a Master of Science degree in Occupational Therapy (Queen's University), Alyssa brings a varied background of experiences. She has several years' experience teaching dance, and coaching soccer and swimming to high-school students with ASD. Most recently Alyssa has worked with younger children including providing one-to-one support in a classroom. Alyssa is always ready with a smile and eager to work with other team members to provide a fully integrated therapeutic experience.

## **BONNIE KWONG EARLY INTERVENTION BEHAVIOUR THERAPIST**

Bonnie brings over 5 years of working with those on the autism spectrum to the ISAND team and has loved using naturalistic approaches that help kids be the most successful. Bonnie has completed ESDM training, and specializes in serving children and youth with autism and dual diagnosis as well as life-skills training and behaviour therapy. Bonnie is a ball of positive energy and a gifted therapist.

## **UMMA HABIBA MANAGER OF FINANCE & ADMIN.**

Umma brings over 10 years of experience in the areas of accounting, foreign mission, public, private, and not-for-profit organizations to her role at ISAND. Umma specializes in meeting tight deadlines and has a commitment to delivering results, continuous process improvement, and professional excellence. She was excited to join ISAND for our value of embracing uniqueness and our friendly and inviting team. Umma typically answers questions with a smile and brings delicious dishes to pot luck get-togethers.

## **NASTASSIA GOTTESMAN CLINICAL FRONT DESK ASSISTANT**

Nastassia started working with ISAND in October. With over 5 years of health administration experience, she was excited for the opportunity to learn and grow within a company that makes such a difference in the autism community. Nastassia has worked in a wide range of health care clinics including rehabilitation, endocrinology, and fertility and has been a top employee in a past position.



## **Autism AWARENESS Day**

Every year on April 2 we mark World Autism Awareness Day. This annual awareness day was established in 2008 by the United Nations General Assembly to highlight the need to improve the quality of life of those with autism so they can live full and meaningful lives as an integral part of society. Every day at ISAND we celebrate the uniqueness of every child, youth and young adult that we serve, together with their families. We recognize that each person has gifts, abilities and strengths that contribute to the vibrancy and diversity of our communities. In addition to celebration, World Autism Awareness Day shines a spotlight on the hurdles that families living with autism face each day. Every year the ISAND team assists hundreds of individuals and families in many different ways, continually striving to find the most effective ways to support them. We are grateful for this privilege and are honoured by the trust that families place in us.

## 2 April 2020



# NEW CLINICAL PROGRAM 'FEELING SOCIAL'

## Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy & Social Cognition Training for Socially Anxious Individuals with ASD

To be successful in social interactions, one needs to consider other people's point of view, regulate one's own emotions, and be aware of the thoughts and intentions of others.

Feeling Social is a new group program developed by ISAND Clinicians designed for children and adolescents with ASD who struggle with managing their emotions and knowing what to do in social situations. This 12-week group program combines Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) and Social Thinking© treatment concepts for up to four participants. Family involvement in the process is critical to the success of the program; goal setting, weekly participation, and with pre and post program surveys, are ways in which the family is involved.

Participants will learn to face social situations rather than avoid them, and will be provided

with increased opportunities to practice and enhance their social understanding. This small, focused group format allows participants who are socially anxious to try out their new skills in a supportive environment, and through home practice assignments, they will be better equipped to use these skills outside the group – in their everyday lives. The development of positive coping strategies and problem solving tools will provide participants with a strong foundation upon which to face future challenges.

Feeling Social was successfully piloted in the fall of 2019 with participants who had received CBT and were being introduced to the Getting Social Program. ISAND is making plans to offer another new session of Feeling Social in the near future.



Have you heard the news? Thanks to a generous grant from **GoodLife Kids Foundation**, ISAND will be offering free\* Yoga classes to people living on the autism spectrum within the GTA. This is the only program of its kind focused on the needs of those with autism!

Over six-weeks, we will offer a one-hour session per week to three distinct groups:



**Adults**  
18+ years



**Youth**  
12-17 years



**Children**  
7-12 years  
*Accompanied by a parent*

The sessions will be held off-site at Jaya Yoga Studio beginning in March and will run

throughout the rest of 2020. The Yoga sessions will be led by ISAND's Yoga and Rhythmic Movement Therapist (*Tatjana Smrekar*) and may also involve one of ISAND's Occupational Therapists (*Alyssa Johnston*) in a co-lead role.

General benefits of Yoga for people living on the autism spectrum, include:

- Increased body awareness which promotes a positive sense of self;
- Increased strength for mobility, stability & motor coordination;
- Reduced feelings of anxiety, tension, agitation & stress
- Inner tranquility brought about by breathing exercises
- Increased self-regulation
- Improved sleep patterns
- Improved concentration, social communication & self-confidence

Keep an eye on our website for registration information!

*\*GoodLife Kids Foundation will pay full cost for the first 2 six-week blocks, and up to 50% for further six-week blocks.*

## DID YOU KNOW?



Early intervention programs for children with autism affords the best opportunity to support healthy development and deliver benefits across the lifespan.

# COURTS & Cocktails

## FUNDRAISER GALA



COURTS  
Cocktails  
HEAPS ESTRIN  
REAL ESTATE TEAM

Hosts Robyn & Dave Way welcomed more than 150 guests to the **2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Courts & Cocktails Gala** on the 1<sup>st</sup> of November 2019 at the Toronto Lawn Tennis Club **in support of ISAND, Autism Dog Services and Special Olympics**. Guests enjoyed an evening of tennis, cocktails, wine tasting, silent auction, mingling, and dancing to the music of **"Fool Hearts"**.

We would like to sincerely thank Robyn, Dave, sponsor Heaps Estrin Real Estate Team, the generous donors who provided silent auction prizes, and the enthusiastic team of ISAND greeters, ticket takers, and silent auction cashiers for organizing this event which **raised almost \$55,000**. ISAND is fortunate to receive **\$30,000** from the night to help support our services and programs. We couldn't be more pleased; thank you all!

ISAND



## 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual iCapital Cook-off for Autism

An Event In Support of ISAND

Friday, May 1, 2020

6:30 PM - 11:30 PM EDT

Cirillo's Culinary Academy

4894 Dundas Street West, Toronto, ON M9A 1B5

**Tickets:** \$200 / person or \$2000 / table of 10

<https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/icapital-cook-off-for-autism-tickets-93134625171>



## DID YOU KNOW?

ISAND's Clinical team has expertise across 9 disciplines including:

Developmental Paediatrics | Clinical Psychology | Social Work  
Behavioural Therapy | Speech & Language Therapy | Occupational Therapy  
Education | Nutrition | Yoga & Rhythmic Movement

ISAND's unique approach draws on expertise from as many disciplines as are needed. Our multi-disciplinary methodology, coupled with our naturalistic approaches, provides for a high degree of success.

# List of Donors 2019/2020

We would like to thank the following individuals, organizations & corporations for their generous support of ISAND.

**Together they have helped more than 500 families by providing more than \$100,000 so far this fiscal year.**

J. Arbuck  
S. Balkovec  
A. Ball  
A. Bellissimo  
The Benevity Community Impact Fund  
B. Butella  
V. Cafazzo  
S. Carr  
L. Clements  
R. Dann  
C. Fischer  
M. Greenberg  
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E. Mangina  
U. Martini  
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S. Nixon  
B. Priede  
Rosen Sunshine LLP  
E. Rzaeki  
C. Shekfrake  
Silver Apple Foundation Inc.  
M. Sourkes  
P. Stabins  
Steele Foundation  
G. Turner  
C. Waugh  
D. Weiss  
P. Young  
P. Zita

# INTERNATIONAL PEACE AWARDS



Based on the teachings of Mahatma Gandhi, the International Peace Awards aim to promote Peace, Harmony & Community Services around the world. On December 2, 2019, the International Peace Awards were presented at an Interfaith awards ceremony held at the Moonlight Banquet Centre in Mississauga. They were presented by the Gandhian Institute for Development of Support Services (GIDSS) and financially supported by the Government of Canada (*Heritage Canada*).

More than 700 Canadian & international non-profit organizations were nominated for awards across 25 categories. Of the 125 finalists, ISAND was a finalist in three categories:

**Mental Health  
Disability Empowerment  
Children's Rights**

Award winners were determined by a panel of jurors representing:

**Researchers  
Academics  
Business Executives  
Activists  
Advocates**

To view video details about award winners, click on the following link:  
**[InternationalPeaceAwards.com](https://www.internationalpeaceawards.com)**

# ISAND offers unique integrated approach to care

Do you know a child or young person who may benefit from ISAND services and programs? Our clinical team of professionals includes developmental pediatricians, psychologists and clinicians from a variety of disciplines.

They work together as a team to provide a comprehensive range of services to ensure families receive fully coordinated, integrated and continuous care.

Our professional services and programs include:

- Behaviour (*Consultation, Assessment & Therapy*)
- Counselling & Support (*Individual & Family*)
- Diet & Nutrition
- Developmental Medical Care
- Early Intervention (*ESDM / NDBI*)
- Education Consultation
- Occupational Therapy (*Consultation, Assessment & Intervention*)
- Parent Education & Parent Coaching
- Psychology (*Consultation, Diagnostic & Psychoeducational Assessment*)
- Psychology (*Cognitive Based Therapy & Mindfulness Based Therapies*)
- Social Programs
- Speech-Language Therapy (*Consultation, Assessment, Intervention & AAC Support*)
- Therapeutic Yoga & Rhythmic Movement Training

We embrace the uniqueness of everyone. To learn more please call **(416) 224-5959** or visit us at [www.isand.ca](http://www.isand.ca)



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& Neurodevelopmental Disorders

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