

Crowning Achievements

Did you know that the 46th Miss Oktoberfest is an alumna of KidsAbility? It's true!

Lindsay Kalbfleisch had a viral infection in her brain when she was 18 months old, which resulted in partial paralysis of her right side. Lindsay's family, referred by their doctor, walked through the doors of KidsAbility to receive both physio and occupational therapies to strengthen her right side. KidsAbility was a part of Lindsay's life from the age of two until she was six. "I felt KidsAbility was a safe, welcoming and empowering place for me to try new things, make mistakes and realize my potential," shares Lindsay.

Throughout her time at KidsAbility, she recalls working with her occupational therapist, Susan, using bingo dabbers by placing them in her weaker hand to dab. "I remember it was very frustrating, but Susan always did her best to make it fun and engaging for me," remarks Lindsay. "I learned to do everything my friends were doing, so I could play alongside them without feeling held back."

The role KidsAbility played for her family was huge — the staff gave them hope and allowed Lindsay's parents to be parents and not therapists. To this day, Lindsay appreciates the diversity of the services offered at KidsAbility. Each child that comes to KidsAbility is celebrated for being unique, and KidsAbility tailors each plan of care to the needs of the child. Knowing this, she encourages parents of children using KidsAbility services to "Believe in the process. You have no idea how far your child will go."

Lindsay holds a Master's degree from the University of Waterloo and is currently the Innovation Manager and Project Coordinator at the Postmedia Innovation Outpost in Downtown Kitchener. She continues to engage in the community through Kitchener-Waterloo Oktoberfest and other not-for-profit organizations.

Lindsay shares she is "confident that KidsAbility will continue to be a prominent organization in the community in years to come."

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Lindsay Kalbfleisch

Alumna and Miss Oktoberfest 2014