

Growing Guelph: Stronger Together



Jordan's Story

Some people just have that special something that makes them stand out. In the case of 15-year-old Jordan of Guelph, it can be defined in one word: heart.

Oddly enough, it was Jordan's actual heart that put her life at risk. At the young age of two, she suffered a heart infection, heart failure, a blood clot and a stroke. With her indomitable spirit, though, she survived – but the stroke took its toll and her right side was paralyzed.

After Jordan was released from the hospital, her parents, Rebecca and Tony, were uncertain what the future might hold. Then the family walked in the doors of KidsAbility and their lives have never been the same.

"We were looking for help and that's exactly what we got here," says Tony. "The staff were positive, energetic and looking to drive Jordan in the right direction. They didn't do just the easy things with her. They challenged her – in a fun and entertaining way."

With the help of occupational therapy, physiotherapy, social work, therapeutic recreation and augmentative communication services, Jordan made significant gains while developing greater use of her right side.

"The staff were so nice and they created a special community," recalls Jordan. "They taught me how to climb stairs, to stand properly, to walk safely – and to never stop believing."

As Rebecca notes, "KidsAbility staff were like family. They gave us hope, provided us with opportunities and made all of us – even our son, Caleb – feel like we were an integral part of Jordan's journey with KidsAbility. They were always there to help us and to give us what we needed. If you met Jordan, you'd see that she's a very positive person who never stops trying – something they helped instill in her."

That "never quit" attitude served Jordan well as a member of the Guelph Marlins Aquatic Club. At a recent meet, she posted a remarkable time in the 50-metre butterfly that met the required national standards. Consequently, she received an invitation to compete at the CAN AM Para-Swimming Open in the United States!

Today, Jordan enjoys horseback riding and all the unique opportunities that life has to offer. She is an avid reader who loves the Harry Potter series. In fact, finding inspiration from J. K. Rowling, Jordan has begun writing her own fantasy book – no doubt with a main character who exhibits the one quality she displays in great abundance: heart.

There are many children like Jordan in Guelph-Wellington. Whether a child has autism, Down syndrome, cerebral palsy, muscular dystrophy, spina bifida, speech impairments, or other development delays or physical disabilities, KidsAbility is here to help.



About KidsAbility

Founded by Rotarians in 1957, KidsAbility is a recognized leader in Waterloo Region and Guelph-Wellington in expert pediatric rehabilitation for children and youth. We are one of 21 Children’s Treatment Centres in Ontario, and are accountable to the Ontario Ministry of Children & Youth Services.

Children and youth benefit from therapy and support services at sites in Guelph, Fergus, Mount Forest, Cambridge, Kitchener and Waterloo.

Our services include occupational therapy, physiotherapy, speech and language therapy, autism specific therapies, social work, recreation therapy and more.

KidsAbility in Guelph

KidsAbility has worked with children and youth with special needs in Guelph since 1999. For service delivery and programs, we work closely with a wide range of community partners in Guelph including local family physicians and pediatricians, St. Joseph’s Health Centre, Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health, Community Mental Health Association, Wee Talk Preschool Speech and Language Services, University of Guelph, Waterloo Wellington LHIN, International Institute for Critical Studies, County of Wellington, City of Guelph, Limitless Guelph and Energize Guelph, Groves Memorial Community Hospital, Ontario Early Years Centres, Wellington Catholic District School Board, Upper Grand District School Board Special Education Advisory Committee, Licenced Child Cares, and Summer Day Camps.

Currently our programs are offered in two locations in Guelph – the autism program is provided at 340 Woodlawn Road West and additional core programs at the West End Community Centre at 21 Imperial Road South. Last year, KidsAbility served 623 children and youth at these sites. The demand for service continues to outgrow the available space. As we’ve grown and evolved, a number of challenges with the existing sites in Guelph have been identified.

With increasing referrals to our programs, we simply don’t have enough space in our existing facilities. We have limited ability to provide group therapy sessions and there is no designated space for speciality programs such as the seating and mobility clinic. The autism program operates in a separate location, and families needing additional services must travel between sites.

As well, there is an increased emphasis on older children in rehabilitation service delivery, and the existing facilities were not designed with older aged youth in mind.

What’s the Solution?

KidsAbility has centralized hubs in Kitchener, Waterloo and, most recently, Cambridge. The centralized hub model has proven to enable seamless care close to home for children and families in these communities. We have now turned our attention to Guelph.



While we will continue to operate satellite sites in Fergus and Mount Forest, we are moving all our Guelph services under one roof. Children will receive their therapy in one warm and welcoming inclusive location, in their own community.

KidsAbility has leased space at 503 Imperial Road North. The new facility will be 13,123 square feet, an increase of over 3,000 square feet over existing facilities. Construction will begin in fall 2017, with an anticipated move-in date of spring 2018.

There are many benefits of an integrated hub for our Guelph families, staff, volunteers and community partners.

A centralized hub will provide natural opportunities for staff and volunteers to collaborate, share ideas and innovate. Families will not have to travel between locations for services. We will be able to partner and share space with other community organizations enabling a wider range of programming in the Guelph community.

Treatment with more than one therapist will be provided in larger rooms designed for this purpose, allowing for a better experience by the child. Hallways will be spacious and will easily accommodate walkers and wheelchairs. There will be designated space for clinicians such as our developmental pediatrician.

Youth facilities will be age appropriate and welcoming for youth older than age 6. We will be able to add additional youth programs including the popular Firefly social skills programs. New facilities specific for tweens and teens will help meet the demand for therapy services for this growing demographic.

Other features of the specially designed integrated facility include:

- » 17 therapy rooms
- » A new Youth Centre, kitchen and multi-purpose space for tweens and teens
- » A full Resource Centre, which will be available to the Guelph general community
- » A family lounge for private, quiet activities for families
- » A designated space for a seating and mobility clinic
- » A fully accessible playground
- » Ample free parking and the site is on a bus route
- » An additional 6,900 square feet of space is available for future growth
- » Canadian and nature-based themes for the decor

As Denise Watson, Guelph resident and Director of Programs for KidsAbility, states, “The new Guelph Hub is being designed to reflect Guelph’s unique needs, community partnerships and best practice in the care of children with special needs.”

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What Will It Cost?

The renovation of the new Guelph KidsAbility Hub will cost approximately \$1.2 million including construction costs, architect fees and equipment.

KidsAbility is pursuing funding opportunities from a variety of sources, and KidsAbility Foundation has committed to funding up to \$700,000 for the project through fundraising and existing internally restricted endowments.

The Role of Philanthropy

The financial support of the Guelph community is critical to complete the project. All funds raised through this campaign will be used exclusively for the Guelph KidsAbility Hub.

There are many ways you can help:

- » Make a cash donation or multi-year pledge.
- » Consider a gift of securities.
- » Speak to us about a leadership gift. We will be pleased to offer you a naming opportunity in the new Guelph Hub to honour your support.

Check out our website www.kidsability.ca or give us a call at 519-886-8886 ext. 1350. We're happy to discuss how your gift can enhance the lives of local children with special needs.

Potential Realized

This is an exciting time for KidsAbility and the Guelph-Wellington community. According to Linda Kenny, CEO of KidsAbility, "We are proud to serve families and children with special needs in the growing Guelph community, and look forward to this new inclusive and fully integrated facility."

The Guelph community is known for its heart. Your support of this project, and for children like Jordan, will ensure that children and youth with special needs reach their full potential.

We hope you will help!

For more information please contact Charmaine Brown at 519.886.8886 ext.1350 or email cbrown@kidsability.ca.