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## Foundation Goals

The objectives of the Canadian National Autism Foundation are charitable. The Canadian National Autism Foundation has been formed to provide funding for:

- \* Educating the general public and professionals;
- \* Providing information and resources to families of children with autism;
- \* Providing funding for Canadian based research and development; and
- \* Promoting national autism awareness

## Mission Statement

The Canadian National Autism Foundation promotes the positive improvement and quality of life for people with autism in Canada.



## Ongoing Fundraisers

Autism is a puzzle, help us solve the puzzle and support research by supporting our Autism Pin Fundraiser. Pins are only \$3.00 and can be purchased by calling our head office. They would make a wonderful and attractive addition to any gift, while at the same time promoting autism awareness!

## Upcoming CNAF Events

*5<sup>th</sup> Annual Silent Auction & Brunch*  
*Sunday, June 5, 2005*

*Chandelier Place, Stoney Creek, ON*

*For Tickets or to donate a prize*  
*Call Tina at 905-643-7183*

## Upcoming CNAF Events

*2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Golf Tournament*  
*Friday, August 12, 2005*

*Chippewa Golf Club*  
*Binbrook, ON*

*Registration \$100.00 per person*  
*Look for more information coming soon!*

## Ask the Experts

The experts for this issue are siblings of individuals with autism. We often wonder how siblings really feel about having a brother or sister with autism, so we asked them. Below are the questions they were asked and their candid responses to them.

### **Experts**

Alicia\* (10 years old) and Wanda\* (14 years old) are the sisters of Bobby\* (16.5 years old).

(\*names changed to protect privacy of the family)

Tasha (12 years old), twin sister of Nathan (12 years old)

#### **Question: What do you really like to do?**

Alicia ~ I like to play hockey, soccer, and basketball.

Wanda ~ I like to watch movies and TV, and painting.

Tasha ~ Rollerblading, hiking, biking, football, soccer, basketball, you know the usual outside hobbies. I'm practically outside with my friends, and always have some activities to do. The activities mentioned are only some of what I enjoy doing, but these would have to be my favourite.

#### **Question: What does your brother really like to do?**

Alicia ~ My brother likes to be chased by his sisters, watch movies and eat.

Wanda ~ My brother likes to watch movies and eat.

Tasha ~ My brother enjoys watching television and most often movies. Thomas the Tank Engine and Barney would be most preferable to him. Most of the time if you ask him to come outside to play catch or go biking, most likely he would.

#### **Question: What kinds of things do you do with your brother?**

Alicia ~ I like to chase Bobby, and watch movies with him.

Wanda ~ We like to watch TV together.

Tasha ~ My brother and I mostly play outside with each other. Most of the time my friends will come over and kick around a ball or bike around. Sometimes my brother will ask me to draw a picture from a book or from tv., then after I finish he'll go back and copy my picture on his own.

#### **Question: What do you find the most difficult about having a brother with autism?**

Alicia ~ I find the most difficult this is the noise he makes.

Wanda ~ The most difficult is that he can get really annoying with his actions.

Tasha ~ Well, the worst thing would probably just be the noise, or outbursts that happen often. But really you just have to have patience or ignore it.

#### **Question: What do you find the best about having a brother with autism?**

Alicia ~ The best thing about Bobby is that he is energetic, and I am energetic and I love to play with him a lot.

Wanda ~ The best thing is that you learn new things by having someone with a disability in the family.

Tasha ~ I'm not really sure, my bro's a regular person and the thing I really like is how he gets along, and how he laughs. He can be pretty funny at some times too.

#### **Question: What does Autism mean to you?**

Alicia ~ Autism means to me somebody who cannot think and learn like everyone else, but to me he is a normal person.

Wanda ~ To me autism means giving people a chance even though he is different.

Tasha ~ Autism has no meaning to me. I guess it's just a disability that some kids have. My brother is extremely talented to have gotten where he is now.

Submit questions to our experts via email at [cnaf\\_autism@hotmail.com](mailto:cnaf_autism@hotmail.com), by phone at 950-643-7183, by fax at 905-643-0969, or via mail at 1227 Barton Street East, PO Box 47577, Hamilton, ON L8H 2V0

The Canadian National Autism Foundation will attempt to have all questions answered in a timely manner, and to ensure that names are kept confidential. Not all questions posed will be published in a particular issue. The Canadian National Autism Foundation is not responsible for the responses given by the expert to questions posed through this outlet, and we encourage you to consult with other experts for additional advice and information.

## Interesting Information

### **Mom's Diary of her Twin's Development: A Resource for Autism Research**

When Tina Fougere first started documenting her pregnancy and the subsequent birth, and lives of her twins, she never would have expected that this information would be used to look at when the earliest signs of autism appear.

Nathan and Tasha, now 12, are twins. They are both in a regular grade 7 class in a public school, and are involved in extra-curricular activities; Nathan in swimming, and Tasha in basketball. They sound like average kids, don't they? Well they are, except for the fact that Nathan has autism. Diagnosed at the age of 3, Nathan has many of the challenges that children with autism are faced with; his ability to communicate is limited, he does not interact socially with peers or adults as his sister does, and he can engage in self-injurious behaviour when frustrated. When Nathan was 1, mom; Tina realized that there was something "wrong" with Nathan, as she had his twin to make comparisons to, however, she and her husband were bounced from doctor to doctor, until Nathan was finally diagnosed with Borderline PDD (Borderline Pervasive Developmental Disorder) 2 years later.

Nathan has struggled at school, at home and in the community, and he has gained many of his own coping mechanisms, such as regurgitating movie dialogue verbatim, screaming, and refusing to comply with requests. While these are frustrating for his parents, his teachers, and his family, Nathan is able to cope in his world in this way, and he has also made many gains in his ability to communicate, interactions with others, and in his academics due to their persistence.

The future of autism is no longer bleak, with stories, and research such as this, we will continue to see changes in the way in which our children are accepted and understood; as contributing members of society!

**"Twin Autism Study" by M.D. Rutherford, PhD**

#### **Journal Abstract**

This report describes the development of an infant who was later diagnosed with autism, and a direct comparison of his development to that of his twin, from a prenatal period through the age of four years by examining personal journals, medical and educational records kept by the mother of the twins. Examination of these journals revealed several differences in development between the twins, some as early as six months of age. In the first year of life, the infants already differed in language development, social development, sleep patterns, and sensitivity to pain. This rare opportunity to view early autistic development gives direction to developmental theories of autism and clinically useful cues to early signs of autism.

To view the whole research study, go to

<http://www.science.mcmaster.ca/psychology/rutherford/index.html> and click on request reprints and ask for the Twin Autism Study.

## How to Contact Us

### ***Mailing Address***

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### ***Website Address***

[www.cnaf.net](http://www.cnaf.net)

## How You Can Help

As a charitable organization, the Canadian National Autism Foundation strives to raise funds to achieve our goals and it is with the support of generous organizations, companies and people that we are able to put together fundraising events such as those we have had in the past in order to raise the funding needed.

At this time we are looking for financial support, and this can come in various forms:

- Sponsorship of portions of our events
- Donations of prizes for our events
- Purchase of tickets to our events
- Financial contributions directly towards our goals (i.e. research)

## In our Upcoming Issue

**Ask the Expert** about ... we want to hear from you. Who would you like to hear from, and what questions have you always wanted to ask. Email us your questions, and we will find an expert to answer them.

**Interesting Information** ... socio-sexual health for individuals with autism.

### Disclaimer

The Canadian National Autism Foundation (CNAF) does not support, endorse or recommend any method, treatment, product, program or person for people suffering with autism spectrum disorders. The goal of our site and our responses to your questions is to provide accurate and up-to-date information about autism spectrum disorders. We believe everyone has the right to access all of the information available to them, allowing them to make their own individual choice.