

July 2010

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 meta centre

# Meta Foundation Journal

## MY FIRST TWO MONTHS AT META

By: **Steven Harrison, Executive Director**

Assuming the role of the new executive director at Meta has been a privilege and a challenge. Meta is filled with staff who have dedicated their lives to the effort of making a difference in the lives of our clients and their families. I have looked in wonderment at staff that have spent 20 and more years working at Meta. Moreover, the enthusiasm that everyone brings to the workplace, the energy, and the compassion to work with our clients. It is truly awe inspiring, and it is upon this positive and supportive spirit that I draw energy to do the same.

Realizing the Meta dream will take a continued tireless devotion. Building upon successes of the past, and forging ahead into the future with all the challenges and changes that lay ahead, will be a task I share with the Board and staff of Meta. New legislative requirements, City by-law changes, and financial restrictions will mean a creative path will need to be developed and followed. I know we are up for the challenge, and will be working with staff and families alike on this. One of the structures being developed at this time is an expansion of the parent council from the Meta East area into the Toronto and York Region areas. Building upon the success of the parent council in the East, I will also be working with staff to develop an overarching Advocacy Committee to support the common advocacy needs and issues faced by the Agency on behalf of those we serve.

During my first month at Meta I have visited the residences and day program sites throughout the GTA, and I will make this a regular event. Keeping in touch with staff and the community of people we serve is important to success. I have



**Meta Centre's new Executive Director  
Steven Harrison**

already begun the process by meeting with the Co-ordinators at Meta: one-on-one, and with a purpose of hearing from them the challenges and opportunities they see before us in the months and years ahead.

I look forward to the next chapter of service delivery for our clients, and as I think back upon my work in Ontario and around the world, to the fear and apprehension that can be brought on by concepts of change and the simple ideas of doing things differently, I am reminded of the following: "Until you implement a decision, it is not really a decision at all." The months ahead will require decisions to be made and followed through upon. The focus of these decisions will be two-fold: on the needs of the clients and the needs of the staff. Meta has been successful because of its staff and the services that are provided to our collective clients. Through everything I do at Meta, the focus will remain consistent and geared towards nothing short of excellence.

*continued on page 2*

"I like coming to the Meta Centre Day program because I see people that I like. I like doing work like painting boxes. I like reading books and hearing stories. Sometimes we go to stores with Stephanie."  
Leslie W.

## My First Two Months at Meta

*continued from page 1*

As a leader I am constantly looking to the future, what is about to happen in the next weeks and months is already established by the time it happens. The Developmental Disabilities Act was over 35 years ago, and in need of a massive overhaul, which has occurred with the proclamation of the Services and Supports to Promote the Social Inclusion of Persons with Developmental Disabilities Act, 2008 on July 1, 2010.

The world as it has been known at Meta is about to change—starting now and coming full circle by April 2011. New measures of performance and accountability will be brought upon the Agency, inspections, quality

assurance measures, governance expectations and structures, the formation of Application Entities, and many other elements are covered under this new legislation. The phase in period for the legislation is relatively short—being completely phased in by April 1, 2011.

That said, I am already looking to the Spring of 2011 and what it will mean for us, and how to best put all of the pieces in place proactively to ensure we are prepared for the new normal in the delivery of services in the sector. I will be able to provide better insight into this by the Winter of 2011 edition of the Journal. On that note, I wish you all a safe and enjoyable summer.

## Message From the President of Meta Centre Board of Directors

**By: Jim Johnston**

The Board's key priority over the last few months has been the recruitment and selection of our new Executive Director. The process involved engaging a consultant to assist us, and creating a committee of the Board to focus on the task. We interviewed and considered a number of very qualified candidates from across the province, and we were delighted that Steven Harrison accepted our offer. I hope you will all have the chance to meet him in the near future.

The Board will now continue to focus on our other priorities such as managing growth while ensuring that the quality of service remains excellent, effectively supporting our clients who are aging, maintaining effective governance and financial control, and preparing for the changes to government processes for application and funding for services. I wish you all a safe and enjoyable summer.

## Special Olympics International Invitation Bocce Competition

By: Sylvie Rzadkowski

The Meta Monarchs and the Meta Flames had the amazing opportunity to compete in the First Special Olympics International Invitational Bocce Competition. This incredible event took place at the Seneca College King Campus from May 6th to May 9th, 2010.

Three different countries competed in this event: Canada, the United States and Italy, with a total of 16 teams. Four bocce courts were specially built in order for this event to take place at Seneca Campus.

Both of the Meta teams played exceptionally well and won several games during the tournament. There were eight pools in this tournament. Although we did not win in the finals, the Meta Flames placed

first in Pool F (Pool 6) and the Meta Monarchs placed fourth in Pool H (Pool 8). The athletes learned about team work and they really displayed this throughout the tournament, both with each other and their competitors.

The entire event was incredible. The athletes stated that the opening and closing ceremonies were amazing and they had a blast at the athletes' banquet and dance. They would all love to participate in the next International Bocce Tournament.

This event was hosted by Special Olympics and over \$80,000 was fundraised to make this event a success. Congratulations to all of our athletes and a special thanks to Asma and Jerome for being great coaches.

### Our Athletes:

Meta Monarchs (Toronto Region)

Chris N.

Albert G.

John M.

Valentino D.

Asma Ajmal (Coach)

Meta Flames (Vaughan Region)

Robert B.

Tony I.

Johnny P.

Frankie D.

Jerome Young (Coach)



## Holiday Inn Express Vaughan Car Wash



Holiday Inn Express Vaughan staff wash vehicles on behalf of the Meta Foundation.

On Saturday June 5, 2010 the team at the Holiday Express Vaughan came together for a great cause: the Second Annual Meta Foundation Car Wash. Approximately, ten hotel employees participated. Family, friends, guests and contacts were invited to participate. Going into the day, weather was a concern as it was supposed to rain. Mother Nature co-operated long enough for the team to be able to wash a total of 35 cars. The event started at 11am and ended just after 2pm. Collectively the hotel raised \$718.

It makes me happy coming to the program. I take my meds at home, so I don't need any during the day program. I wrote a lot in my journal about what I did on the weekend. In the Beauty Basic class we do nails and hair and makeup. I dance in drama class."

Lucky

## Rope Training

By: Marko Alla

Ever wish there was a cheap, all-inclusive sporting activity that was really easy on the joints, simple to learn, calorie-consuming and time effective? Well, back track a few years and you may just find the perfect workout for you.

For most of us, jumping rope involves memories of young children, happily hopping to some light-hearted tune. No longer is jumping rope considered kid's stuff. Professional and recreational athletes alike are discovering that jumping rope is an excellent cardiovascular conditioning tool as well as an effective way to burn fat, improve sports performance and tone muscles.

### TIPS ON GETTING STARTED:

- **Make sure your rope is the correct length.** When you stand in the centre, the handles should reach your armpits.
- **Find a rope you like.** Segmented, beaded, leather, or plastic rope options are available.
- **Wear good shoes.** Cross trainers are typically recommended.
- **Jump on wooden floors rubber tiling or carpeted surfaces** to minimize the impact on your joints.
- **Keep your shoulders relaxed** and your elbows close to your body, turn the rope with just your wrists and forearms rather than using your entire arm.
- **Jump only 1-2 inches off the floor.** Your vertical leap should be no more than a few inches at most.

### WORKOUT FOR ALL LEVELS:

*10 Minute Beginners Program.* After a light warm-up, begin with 1-2 minutes of rope turns (swing the rope from side to side), getting the feel of it, learning how it moves and testing its weight. Bounce on your toes softly to test your timing. Then jump through the rope for 30 seconds. Continue this pattern



for about 10 minutes, increasing your in-rope time from 30 seconds to 1 minute as you improve. Cool down and stretch.

*30 Minute Interval Program for Intermediate Level.* Warm up with the 10 minute Beginners workout, then begin your intervals. This involves a 30 second increase in intensity followed by a 30 second active rest period. For example, do 30 seconds of fast jumping or, as an alternative, jump as slowly as possible for 30 seconds. Then return to normal jumping speed for 30 seconds of recovery. Perform 5-10 intervals on one workout session. Finish off with a few minutes of plain rope jumping, going through some of the basic jumps and trying some footwork patterns, finishing off with rope turns. Cool down and stretch.

Until next time, I'm Marco Alla reminding you that "An Active Lifestyle is a Healthy Lifestyle".

**Marco Alla**

**Certified Personal Trainer.**

Owner of Inter-Fit Fitness Centre and **PROTRAINER** Personal Training Services. Marco can be reached at [protrainer@rogers.com](mailto:protrainer@rogers.com)

## Oh What a Night!

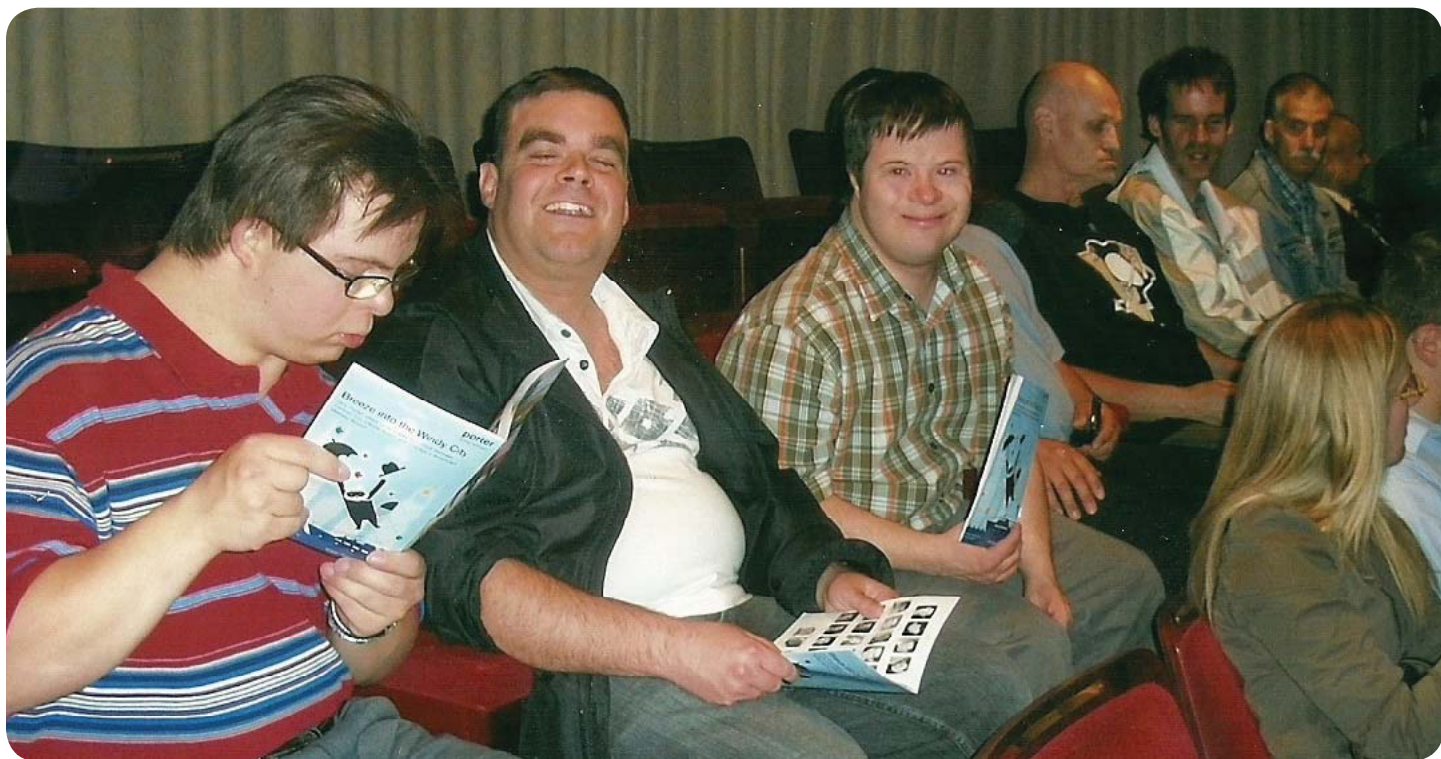
During the months of March through May 2010, groups of participants from all the Meta Centre Day Program sites went to see the theatrical performance of *Jersey Boys* at the Toronto Centre for the Arts.

*Jersey Boys* is a musical phenomenon based on the story of Frankie Valli and The Four Seasons. It portrays how the group became one of the biggest American

pop music sensations of all time.

The show featured hits, such as, "Sherry", "Big Girls Don't Cry", "Oh What a Night" and many more!

The participants and staff had a blast singing along and dancing in their seats. It was an event to remember!



From left to right: Domenic G., Jamie M., and Tristan N. (from the Richmond Hill Day Program) viewing their programs during intermission.

## Celebration of Health and Safety Week 2010

**By: Sandra Connors—Joint Health and Safety Committee**

During the week of May 24th - 28th 2010 Meta Centre observed Health and Safety week. A number of activities were organized including on-site massage sessions which were open to all employees.

All locations were invited to participate in a video contest. The focus of the video could be any health and safety topic. The first place winners were the team from the Toronto Day Program, second place went to the team at Vaughan Day Program and third place to the team at Morning Side Day Program.

In the poster contest category, first place went to the

team at the Richmond Hill Day Program.

In our health and safety knowledge lotto draw we had five winners. The winners were Rita Shewprasad, Mary Lou Millar, Carla Aveiro, Rob Passaro and Thuy Luong.

The joint Health and Safety Committee wish to extend a thank you to Executive Director, Mr. Steven Harrison and all the Senior Management team for their support in our continued effort to promote a safe work environment for all Meta Centre clients and employees.

## Kick off to the 2010 Winter Olympics

### LET THE GAMES BEGIN !

It is with great excitement that the Meta Centre, in collaboration with the City of Vaughan, organized and hosted an Olympic Torch Relay to kick off the 2010 Vancouver Winter Games. The event took place on Thursday, February 11th on the grounds surrounding the Vellore Village Community Centre in Vaughan.

The event involved participants from Meta Centre's five Day Programs across the GTA and York Region and invitations were also sent out to other community agencies such as Vita Community Living Services, Alternatives and Vaughan in Action, as well as students from St. Jean de Brebeuf Secondary School. There was a tremendous turnout of approximately 150 people.

The event began with a special guest, Lori Dupuis, from the Canadian Women's National Olympic Hockey Team, who attended the event wearing her 2002 Olympic Gold Medal. It was definitely a treat to be able to see a gold medal up close.

Before the relay began, all participants stood inside the Community Centre to hear and sing O Canada. Representatives from the various programs were then assigned a route around the block surrounding the Community Centre and St. Jean de Brebeuf Secondary School. The groups ran their assigned route while the actual Olympic Torch was passed from group to group and client to client. It was quite an exciting time and passersby in the neighbourhood also joined in on the festivities by honking their horns and waving their Canadian flags.

Once the relay was done, all participants re-entered the Community Centre and the official Vancouver Winter Olympics song "I Believe" was played for all to hear.

A pizza lunch was then provided by the City of Vaughan and following lunch, all participants were gathered in the foyer for a festive dance.

It was a great time and wonderful to see all programs of the Meta Centre come together along with other social service agencies.

" I used to work in a laundry. Then, I wasn't happy there, so I started to go to the day program. It is very good and nice. I really like getting lunch on Wednesdays. Tonya is a good cook. I go to drama and visit the other program. I do yoga too."

**Delphino**



## Dragon Boat Races

By: Karen Lunam

On a gorgeous Sunday, June 20th, several clients and staff set off early in the morning for a day on Centre Island. The occasion, Dragon Boat Races! The group was full of enthusiasm, and I'll tell you, it was contagious. For me, as a first timer, you couldn't help but get caught up in the excitement of the day! There seemed to be a lot of waiting around on the island but it was the perfect day weather wise, and we were able to watch some of the other races, walk around the island, and enjoy a BBQ lunch.



About three quarters of an hour before race time the anticipation started to rise. The team was getting ready, lifejackets had to be fitted, positions had to be taken and of course, team pictures had to be taken. Meta had members from all five of our day programs and our Saturday programs participating on the boat as well as staff members supporting them. Staff, parents and friends were also there to cheer them on, and scream we did!



The teamwork displayed by all on the boat was wonderful! And, to watch everyone go on stage to receive their medals was a great sight! Way to go Meta Magnificent!

## Dental Presentation

By: Asma Ajmal

In October 2009, a group of dental hygiene students from A Plus Institute presented information on good oral health at the Toronto Day Program. Topics included how to keep the teeth clean for good health and how to maintain a healthy smile. The instructors used visual aids, discussions and simple teaching material to teach the session. The session began with discussing the structure of teeth, the different types of the teeth and their functions. Participants attention was captured through colored posters. The presenters raised questions about plaque and explained what it was. It was explained that plaque is a sticky, colorless film of micro-organism formed

on the surface of a teeth as well as other areas of the oval cavity. Bacteria releases toxins and irritate the tissues so the gum becomes swollen, reddish and bleed easily. A daily hygiene procedures including tooth brushing and flossing are effective means of control of plaque. Instructors explained proper tooth brushing techniques. Participants had the opportunity to practice on artificial model teeth. They were also shown how to floss.

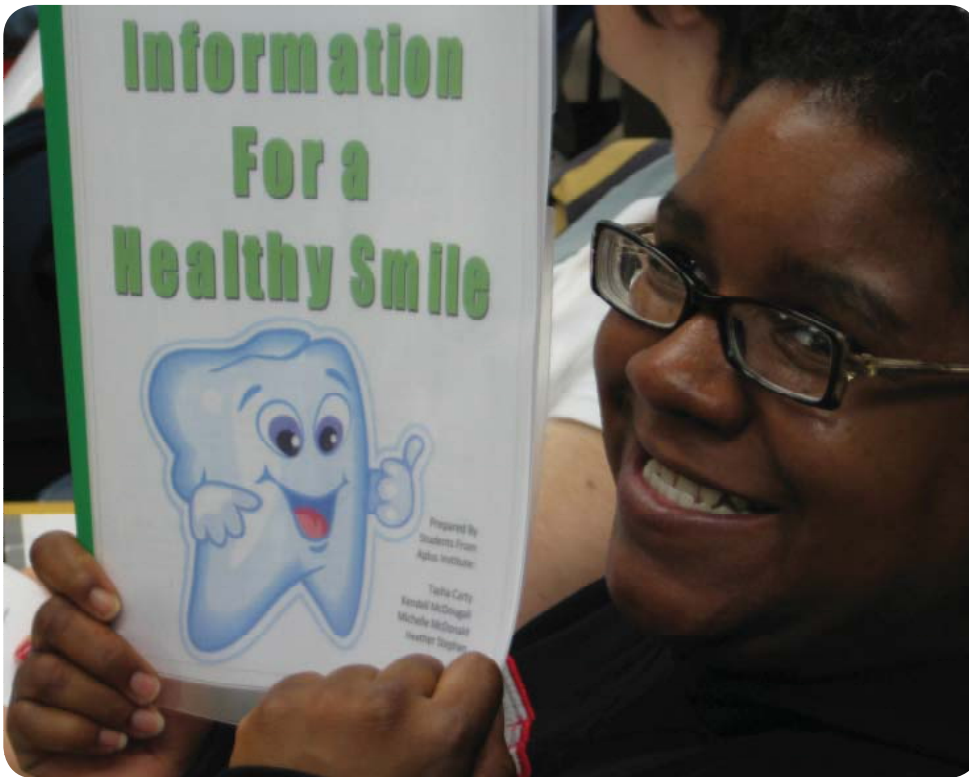
Another topic of discussion included "healthy foods for a healthy smile".

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## Dental Presentation

By: Asma Ajmal

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It was explained that some food is not good for teeth like cookies, candies, cakes, crackers, potatoes, french-fries etc. Anyone can make healthy choices of eating moderate food like firm fruits apples, pears and vegetables.

Guidelines for healthy teeth or checklist:

- **Brush your teeth twice a day with fluoride tooth paste and use mouth wash.**
- **Clean between your teeth with dental floss once a day.**
- **Do not eat after brushing your teeth at bed time.**
- **Visit your dentist for regular cleaning and checkup.**
- **Rinse with water after eating if you are not able to floss or brush properly.**

Detailed handouts were distributed and everyone got one free tooth brush. Everyone participated well by responding to questions and getting involved in demonstrations.

# Pedestrian Skills and Public Transit Safety Workshop

By: Gladys Igharo

Participants in the Toronto Day Program participated in a Pedestrian Skills workshop in June. Gladys Igharo, Day Program Instructor and Community Liaison Officer, Bill Steed from 32 Division discussed safe behaviours while in the community. Areas of discussion included:

- **Safe road education**
- **Minimizing the use of personal devices at road crossings**
- **Individual and group behaviours while on public transit**

Participants were encouraged to demonstrate safe behaviours and pedestrian skills to reduce pedestrian-motor vehicle collisions and reach their destination safely by not talking to strangers, being alert and access help in case of an emergency. Participants enjoyed the workshop and willingly shared their experiences as pedestrians and transit commuters.



Toronto Day Program Instructor, Gladys Igharo and Community Liaison Officer, Bill Steed.



Community Liaison Officer, Bill Steed of Toronto Police Service and Pedestrian Safety Workshop participants.

## What a Wonderful Experience!

By: Carol Mummenhoff (Volunteer)

"I like coming to see the staff and friends because they care about me. Sometimes I type on the computer. I cook lunch on Fridays and go grocery shopping. I do Meals on Wheels too."

**Leslie W.**

Two years ago, after my husband passed away, I was looking to make a new meaningful addition to my life and was considering various places to volunteer. Being a retired primary teacher, I wanted to make use of my skills and experience, but wanted a change from working with young children.

One day, after doing some banking in my neighbourhood, I spied a group crossing Kingston Road, headed on an excursion. I had an Oprah "Light Bulb Moment"! I knew immediately that these were the people with whom I wished to work. After retiring, I thoroughly enjoyed supply teaching in the Multi-Exceptionality class at my old school. I chased down the leader of the excursion and made my inquiries. I headed to the Scarborough Meta Centre Day Program promptly and began the process of becoming a volunteer. This appeared to be the ideal fit.

I have never looked back and have been volunteering weekly ever

since. Stephanie, the Meta Centre worker and I make a great team. Using my teaching background, we work on numerous creative writing activities, combined with visual arts and crafts. Chatting, listening, sharing life experiences and lots of hugs are some of the social benefits of my visits.

I look forward to Wednesday mornings and I believe that the clients do as well. Each day, I am greeted with warmth and joyful smiles. My grandchildren also enjoy visiting the day program when at Grammy's house. Recently, after one of these visits, my eight year old granddaughter commented, "You know, we really are all mostly the same, even though there might be something different about us."

I wanted to give back to the community, but thanks to the clients, who have become my new and dear friends, my life has been so greatly enriched since joining the Meta Centre as a volunteer.

### ***I like coming to the Meta Centre Day Program because:***

*"I like coming to do my work like cutting and pasting. I like doing arts and crafts a lot. I like going for walks and seeing pretty things like flowers. I talk to my friends at lunch."*

*Janice A.*

## The Army Of Love



Farley Flex shared his message to all in attendance.

The Army of Love theatrical performance held on June 29, 2010 demonstrated that we all share and embrace our humanity. “Change can be created” was the message of the show. To do so, we all need to walk a mile in another’s shoes. The performance encouraged the audience to walk softly, openly, willingly and whole heartedly in their shoes—and the response was magnificent. The evening was performed by our participants and staff of our Morningside and Scarborough Day Programs. Our special guest of the evening was Farley Flex best known as a judge on *Canadian Idol*. He opened with an inspirational message of the importance of community unity and embracing the notion of creating an even playing field.

## Day Program Trip to the Bowmanville Zoo

By: Jennifer MacDonald, Katie Bissinger

On July 13th, 2010 Jennifer & Katie and six of our clients departed from 371 Old Kingston Road and headed east towards the quaint little town of Bowmanville. The town of Bowmanville is home to the oldest privately owned zoo; it spans 42 acres and was established in 1919! Several of the residents of the zoo are celebrities! Such as jaguars from Peter Benchley’s *Amazon*, camels from *The Thirteenth Warrior* starring Antonio Banderas, tigers from *Animorphs*, and lions from *The Ghost and the Darkness*.

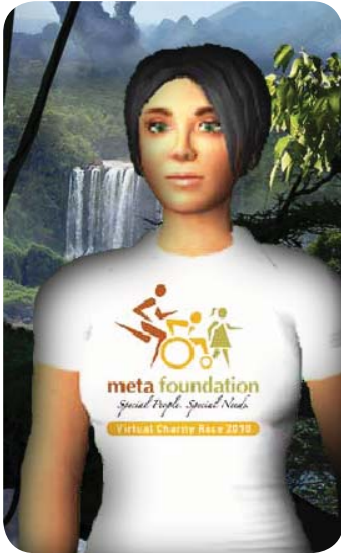
We arrived shortly after opening and were immediately greeted by three loud Macaws, who mimicked Terry’s “Hello” and laughter! Scott was a bit apprehensive at first but quickly warmed to their greetings. We ventured further in and were confronted by enthusiastic goats, their kids, llamas, chickens and roosters. The animals were energetic beyond belief! Terry thought it was so adorable when a small kid began nibbling on her Capri pant cuff.....that is until he let go and she realized it was a bit *damp!*

After viewing elephants, lions, and lots of other large mammals we left the park for a picnic lunch at the beach. It was so relaxing to relive our morning with each other while listening to the waves roll in. Scott and Janice decided the water was too irresistible to wait any longer and had to dip their toes in.



Time passed all too quickly and it was time to head back to Scarborough. Terry, Scott, Elizabeth, Janelle, Janice H, and Holly were excited to get back and tell their peers of their adventures in Bowmanville!

## Meta Foundation Launches Unique Virtual Race Event



We are excited to provide you with a unique opportunity to be involved in the first ever not-for-profit fund-raising virtual race in Canada!

While we are unable to host our annual Family Walk and Run along Zenway Blvd. this year due to traffic closure restrictions, the virtual race provides an innovative alternative until we return next year at a new location!

### What is a virtual race?

Inspired by the hit movie Avatar, Meta Foundation has created this unique event that will take place in a virtual world (on your computer). You will view Avatars "competing" in a race to raise money for Meta

Centre and help adults and children with special needs. For a minimum donation of \$25.00, you will get one race entry for a chance to win one of twenty prizes including the grand prize of a trip to the St. Kitts Marriott and the Royal Beach Casino! The odds of winning are much better than any lottery, and the more you donate, the more chances you have to win.

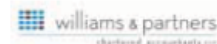
### Great prizes you can win:

- One trip for two to the St. Kitts Marriott and the Royal Beach Casino including airfare (black-out periods apply. Does not include food, gratuities or taxes).
- Other Caribbean and Florida Marriott stays
- Taylor-Made golf clubs
- Red and White Gordie Howe signed sweater
- Espresso machines

For more great prizes visit our website at [www.metafoundation.ca](http://www.metafoundation.ca)

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to give a special thanks  
to our sponsors:

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### The Journal

**Publisher: Steven Harrison. Editor: Tullio Orlando.**  
**Co-editors: Karen Lunam and summer intern Diana Orlando.**

**We thank all those who contributed to this issue.**

If you have something you'd like to see in the newsletter or want to submit an article, picture or drawing, please contact Tullio Orlando @ 736-0199 (ext. 313) or Karen Lunam @ 736-0199 (ext. 334).