

# SEBASTIEN'S Single Plan of Care



Children's  
Treatment Network

**Sebastien's eyes light up** when he sees his schoolmates and teachers. Although he can't communicate with words, sounds of his delight and excitement resonate through the classroom at John McCrae Public School in Markham. Making sure that he continues to experience the joy and stimulation of classroom life is a goal that's shared by his parents and all the professionals working with Sebastien.



*Sebastien and his mom Anne share a smooch before class.*

This affectionate 10-year-old is battling Hunter Syndrome, a genetic, degenerative disease that causes severe physical, developmental and communication challenges. Sebastien needs assistance and specialized equipment to walk, sit or stand. He also requires physiotherapy, occupational therapy and speech therapy to help keep him physically active and improve his ability to communicate.

"Sebastien's quality of life means everything to us," says his mom Anne Cairns. "Being in school supports him to learn and do more things that make a huge difference in his life. As his disease progresses, we want him to benefit from everything school life has to offer and make sure he is comfortable, happy and safe. Our team is helping him do that by incorporating the therapies and supports he needs into his day-to-day classroom activities and learning program."

## **Sebastien's Team**

Sebastien's 14-member team includes his parents, his therapists and all of the professionals working with him at school, at home and in the community, including his



*Sebastien hams it up with some of his team. (From left to right) Anita Nunn, PT/OT Support Services, his mom Anne Cairns, Erica Brooks, his teacher, Wendy Rice, Educational Assistant and Elena Zannella-Latino, Health Assistant.*

teacher and the school principal. They are using the Network's Single Plan of Care approach to intensify the collaboration that's already taking place. Together, they've created an integrated program for Sebastien that unites and focuses everyone's efforts - at home and at school.

They work closely together to achieve the goals they set at their first Single Plan of Care planning meeting held this past January. A service coordinator with extensive experience using the Single Plan of Care approach and tools mentors the team. She helped them shape the family's visions, set goals and is an ongoing resource for heightening their ability to work together.

## **A Parent's Perspective**

Anne says that their first planning meeting was amazing. "We've always had great therapists and wonderful support at school. But the big difference now is how everyone is communicating with each other. We're all on the same page. There's a clear plan for how we will keep Sebastien physically active and increase his ability to communicate and participate more in his daily life. Everyone is working together to build on each other's efforts. It's so consistent now. His therapies, special equipment and treatment approaches are being mirrored at home and at school."



*Anita Nunn, PT/OT Support Services (right) shows Educational Assistant Wendy Rice how to transfer Sebastien out of his chair and support him to walk across the classroom to his next activity.*

*His daily program includes standing and walking at least twice a day to help increase his range of motion.*

Anne says the most exciting thing is how Sebastien's team is always finding more ways to help him communicate and learn – and they are looking to the future. For example, his mobility is declining and it's very important to get him out of his wheelchair as much as possible at school. In addition to changing his position several times a day, stretching, and using a special classroom chair and adapted bike, the school is looking at putting a railing in the classroom to help him walk around more.



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Sebastien's hearing is compromised and that affects his ability to participate in class. So the team is looking at hearing aids and a communication device that will link his teacher directly to his hearing aid.

"With his school and his therapists all working together, it feels like there is much more support. That makes a big difference for us – and for Sebastien. I can't wait for June, when we will have our second team meeting to review Sebastien's progress and focus on new goals to keep him moving forward."

## PERSPECTIVES FROM PROFESSIONALS

### The Gift Of Learning

"What does a teacher, a speech pathologist, a physiotherapist and a hearing itinerant teacher have in common? Everything," says Erica Brooks, Sebastien's teacher. "I'm inspired by how much I'm learning from everyone on Sebastien's team. And I'm excited about how easily our different areas of expertise connect together to help move him forward. I'm learning how to use physiotherapy to support his ability to learn. And how we can improve his hearing to boost his ability to communicate and participate. The experience I'm gaining about how to create a balanced learning program and work therapy strategies into his school day is knowledge I'll use through my whole teaching life to help students like Sebastien succeed."



*A budding romance? Sebastien holds hands with classmate Harleen while teacher Erica Brooks boots up the SMARTBOARD for a lesson.*

*The SMARTBOARD is an interactive educational tool that uses a large screen, lights and bright colours to help keep Sebastien and Harleen focused and engaged on the lesson material.*

### The Power Of Teamwork

Health Assistant Elena Zannella-Latino attends to Sebastien's personal care needs at school. She makes sure he's comfortable and safe, particularly when he's working on his

mobility and physical function. As a registered practical nurse, she's seen the impact teamwork makes on patient care in a hospital setting. She believes that using the Single Plan of Care approach brings those same kinds of benefits to his classroom. "We all compare notes on what's working for Sebastien at home and at school. I learn a lot from everyone's assessments of what they see he is capable of doing. We communicate about the actions we're taking and problem solve together. Everyone is eager to make suggestions that help me resolve challenges for Sebastien as they arise. I'm delighted to see this team approach being taken in the school system because I believe it is the only way to truly support a student with special needs."

### Seamless Support

As the team's Physiotherapy/Occupational Therapy Support Services consultant, Anita Nunn makes sure that Sebastien has the special supports and equipment he needs at school. She also works closely with all the classroom staff to ensure everyone can safely transfer him from his wheelchair and help him stand, walk and use his bike and classroom chair.



*Sebastien takes off on his adapted bike, with Health Assistant Elena Zannella-Latino bringing up the rear! This is one of Sebastien's favourite daily therapy activities.*

*The bike helps him stretch and strengthen his muscles and maintain leg movement. It also allows him to participate in the kind of vigorous physical activity that is part of every student's curriculum. Come summer, he'll be riding his bike outside with some of his schoolmates.*

"With the Single Plan of Care approach, we're able to integrate the therapies that help Sebastien achieve his treatment goals into his learning plan. That's something I've never experienced before. It's so satisfying to brainstorm with his entire team to see how we can get maximum impact for Sebastien, at school and at home. This is a wonderful approach for kids who have very complex needs. There is no competition between education needs, physical needs or communication needs. Everything is integrated and seamless."



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## Getting A Team Up And Running

Working with Sebastien is Anita's first experience with a Single Plan of Care. She says although there was a learning curve that took a little time, the process was easy to learn. She also feels the additional time spent on team meetings and communication adds incredible value – to Sebastien, to his parents and to all the professionals working on the team. Judy Andersen, a service coordinator who coaches Sebastien's team, has worked on dozens of Single Plans of Care. She says Anita's observations are shared by many of the professionals she's worked with.

According to Judy, initiating the Single Plan of Care takes no more than three hours. Time is spent bringing the team of professionals together so everyone can understand each other's roles and become familiar with the way people need to interact and collaborate together. She says the hour spent in the Single Plan of Care planning meeting, with the child's parents participating, is when the big payoff starts. "In my experience, the goals and activities you develop together create a more integrated plan that actually focuses

everyone's efforts. As a result, each minute you spend with that child and family has maximum impact on achieving the family's goals."

Judy also states that the shared electronic record is an invaluable tool that allows professional team members to track movement toward goals and communicate without actually having to contact each person on the team. Although not everyone has access to the electronic record yet, Judy says that those that do are up and running after one training session. "It takes me about 10 minutes to enter a clinical note. And that 10 minutes helps everyone on the team stay up-to-the-minute on progress that's been made."

*Sebastien's mom Anne sums up her experience with the Single Plan of Care approach this way, "It's the best way to get communication going and get everyone lined up behind the goals we've set together. We're so thankful and grateful for Sebastien's team. I don't know where we'd be without all these incredible people looking at what's next for Sebastien."*

### SEBASTIEN'S TEAM

1. Anne and Alex Cairns, Sebastien's Parents
2. Judy Andersen, Service Coordinator/Team Coach, YRDSB/CTN Service Coordinator
3. Erica Brooks, Teacher, YRDSB
4. Sandi Cole, Student Services Coordinator, YRDSB
5. Penny Diamantopoulos, Case Manager, Central CCAC
6. Teri Rubinoff, Special Education Consultant, YRDSB
7. Lori Hall, School Principal, YRDSB
8. Elena Zannella-Latino, Health Assistant, YRDSB
9. Ann Lovett, Teacher of the Deaf, Student Services, YRDSB
10. Zahra Mawji, Occupational Therapist, YRDSB/CTN OT services
11. Anita Nunn, PT/OT Support Services, YRDSB
12. Vanessa Pellow, Physiotherapist, YRDSB/CTN PT services
13. Erin Robb, Speech-Language Pathologist, YRDSB
14. Andrea Visconti, Speech-Language Pathologist, YRDSB/CTN ACCS Services

YRDSB: York Region District School Board  
CCAC: Community Care Access Centre  
CTN: Children's Treatment Network

PT/OT: Physiotherapy/Occupational Therapy  
ACCS: Augmentative Communication Consultation Services



*Teacher Erica Brooks leads Sebastien and his gal-pal Harleen in a rousing version of the "Speckled Frog" hand puppet sing-a-long.*

*Sebastien is a student at John McCrae Public School in Markham who has complex needs. His parents and his team of professionals are using the Network's Single Plan of Care approach to heighten their ability to work together and provide Sebastien with a comprehensive, coordinated plan that supports him at school, at home, and at play.*

*There are currently hundreds of parents and professionals across the Network using this integrated team approach. The experience gained from working with each child and family helps us to learn more about how to integrate services and increase collaboration. We get more insight on how best to address challenges and improve the process and tools so more families can benefit from a single plan of care.*

**For more information about Children's Treatment Network or the Single Plan of Care approach visit [www.ctn-simcoeyork.ca](http://www.ctn-simcoeyork.ca)**