

Ontario March of Dimes Goes “Cruising”

Recreation & Integration Services and Acquired Brain Injury Services partner to take participants on their first-ever accessible cruise.

March 27, 2006 – Ontario – Two programs of Ontario March of Dimes are partnering to take consumers on a fully-accessible cruise, with the assistance of James Glasbergen, Director of Accessible Travel for Frederick Travel.

Ontario March of Dimes’ Recreation and Integration Services helps to enhance the quality of life for people with physical disabilities through recreation, activities, friendship opportunities and social integration. Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) Services enable continued community integration for people dealing with the effects of head injuries. The accessible cruise seemed a perfect blending of the two programs.

Requests from consumers to Susan Jones, Manager of ABI Services asking for a holiday program that would meet their specialized requirements led to the planning of this innovative cruise package. The cruise will travel for seven days around the Eastern Caribbean and participants will be able to partake in several excursions off the ship.

There will be eleven participants on the cruise, nine of whom have acquired brain injuries. Two participants are a couple whose husband has a brain injury in addition to physical disabilities. The pair has been unable to travel independently. The cruise allows them to travel together for the first time since his accident. One consumer’s family pooled together their resources to pay for her to take the cruise. Said one participant to Donna Mackay, Provincial Manager of Recreation and Integration Services, “Ontario March of Dimes has given me a gift.”

Susan remarks that, “Many of our consumers will not or cannot take holidays due to the concern that their needs won’t be properly met. This cruise will allow them to relax and fully enjoy their holiday knowing that they will be completely safe and comfortable”.

Recreation and Integration Services will be offering the cruise in addition to its Summer and Winter Holiday programs that take place in Geneva Park, Orillia. This cruise will be a test program, with the hope that other kinds of trips will be offered to consumers on an annual basis. Donna says of the cruise, “Many of our consumers live in isolation, and require constant attendant care. This cruise will allow our participants to experience the kind of travel so many of us take for granted”.

The trip will be departing Friday, March 31st, 2006 returning Saturday, April 8th.

For more information about Frederick Travel please contact 1-800-578-8958 or visit the website at www.worldonwheelz.com.

For more information on Acquired Brain Injury Services please call 1-800-263-3463 or e-mail il@dimes.on.ca.

For more information on the Recreation and Integration Program, please call 416-425-3463, ext. 298, or e-mail recreation@dimes.on.ca.

Ontario March of Dimes is the largest charitable rehabilitation organization in Ontario, providing a wide variety of programs and services to almost 37,000 people annually in 70 communities across the province.

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