



# The Michael Carter Lisnow Respite Center News

Holiday 2006 Edition

## Remembering Sophia



I'm honored Mary and Sharon asked me to write this year's letter. Ours is just one of hundreds of amazing stories created from this magical place.

When our Sophia was born her father, Doug, and I were told she had Down Syndrome. We were devastated. That's hard to admit but important to share. Her brother Christopher saw beyond the disability. To

him Sophia looked like a butterfly, our little butterfly. Still, having a baby with special needs deeply challenges you. Well-meaning family and friends don't know what to say. The outside world can be downright unkind. We spent endless hours going from specialist to specialist. The emotional, physical and financial challenges take their toll. We felt alone.

I heard of the Respite Center from a friend. The moment I read Sharon's letter on the website, tears flowed freely. Her pain was mine. From the first time we entered its doors, Doug and I felt a profound sense of belonging. They understood us in a way others could not. They talked about Sophia's possibilities, not her limitations. Seeing how the other kids, their families and the staff treated each other with dignity opened up a whole new world to us. We were instantly part of this special family. Our lives got simpler. It felt wonderful to have a place where we could drop our little Sophia for just a few precious hours so we could recharge and she could grow.



I would like to tell you our story has a happy ending, but it doesn't. Our Sophia died in my arms suddenly in June. She was just 13 months. Sophia had just learned to sit up and was so proud of herself. She had also learned several signs and could say "Papa". Sophia was a smart, beautiful little girl whose never-ending joy deeply inspired many. During this painful time our Respite Center "angels" were also



there helping us through the heartbreaking grief. As we celebrate the Respite Center's 10 year anniversary, I'm reminded of someone I've never met but who has had a profound influence in my life. Sharon's beautiful son, Michael, who could not see, walk or talk even when he was alive, still continues to deeply touch others when they need it most. Because Michael lived, thousands have hope.

This year has been a difficult one for our family but we take great comfort in knowing our Sophia has also touched others. Every time you see a butterfly, I ask you to remember Sophia and the wonderful work the Respite Center does. As you read the stories in this newsletter and look at the happy faces, know it is your

generosity that allows this amazing miracle to happen. From all of the families, especially ours, a heartfelt THANK YOU!

Wishing you the most wonderful of holidays!  
*Maria Salomão-Schmidt*  
Sophia's Mom

### A special thank you from Mary and Sharon

As we look back on 2006 we are amazed at how we have continued to grow. Your generosity and the dedication of our staff has allowed the Respite Center to surpass what we thought possible when we opened nine years ago. The summer of 2006 will be remembered as the summer that we utilized every inch of space within our home and expanded into many places in our community. This allowed us to serve more families than we ever thought possible. We will never forget the day when we looked around, realized we had over 60 children and adults spending the day with us. Everyone had a place to be and was having fun.

We took advantage of the many opportunities the community offered us this year. A Church in town gave us their gym, the State park offered free kayak lessons, families opened their pools for swimming and local businesses offered additional job sites. Each day throughout the summer, groups went to different places to play and picnic. The Respite Center became the launching pad, each morning, for groups headed into the community to spend the day. Groups headed out with children needing tube feedings, diabetes control, seizures management and the need for one to one supervision did not deter their quest for fun. At the end of each day they returned to the Respite Center tired, happy and ready to go home.

We hope you will take a few moments and read some of the stories your kindness has allowed us to create. Thank you from all of us at the Respite Center.

We wish you a happy holiday.  
With love and appreciation,

*Mary and Sharon*



The Michael Carter Lisnow Respite Center  
112 Main Street  
Hopkinton, MA 01748

Thank You for Your Holiday Donation



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Providing temporary care and jobs for individuals with disabilities

All proceeds to benefit the Respite Center

[www.hopkintonrespite.com](http://www.hopkintonrespite.com)

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## The Respite Scholarship Fund Changes Lives

*The Scholarship Fund Supports the Following Programs*

### Weekend Respite

This program gives families one weekend off per month. For many families this is the first time they have the ability to plan dinners out, a weekend away, time with siblings or just see a movie.

### Monday Overnights

The individuals in this program spend Monday nights at the Respite Center. This gives families two full days of respite every week. Transportation picks the individuals up at home on Monday morning and takes them home Tuesday afternoon.

### After School Care

This program is designed for working parents. Children range in age from 4 to 21. The program centers around recreation and personal care. For many families work had not been an option because they could not find the care their children needed.

### The Daycare Center

Our daycare center serves children from birth to four years. Children in this program have significant disabilities and many have medical issues. During the course of the day children receive the physical, occupational, and developmental therapies they need combined with water play, crafts and fun.

### Adult Day Program

At the age of 22 families face the end to educational services provided by schools. This program runs five full days each week. It concentrates on teaching daily living skills needed for each individual to reach their highest level of independence. Goals encompass cooking skills, social and leisure skills, personal hygiene and recreation.

### Employment Support for Individuals with Disabilities

We have developed eight job sites within the Hopkinton community. We provide job development, training and coaching within these sites for many of the adults in our program. The joy of having a job increases self-confidence, responsibility and the overall feeling of being a part of society.

### Residential Program

The Respite Center has four residential houses that serve as permanent homes for adults in our program. As parents age, finding care for their adult children becomes a critical issue.

### Summer and School Vacation Camps

Camp Respite runs during the summer and on school vacations. It allows children with disabilities to experience camp, just like their peers without disabilities. Wheelchairs, developmental delays, and medical needs do not stop them from participating in music, crafts, stories and recreation.

### Saturday Night Out

The first Saturday night of the month we sponsor "Saturday Night Out." Our most popular outings are pizza followed by bowling, movies, carnivals, and High School sporting events.

# We Love The Respite Center Because...



*Chrissy*

#### THE ADULT DAY COMMUNITY EMPLOYMENT SUPPORTS

I love coming to the Respite Center because I get to do art, cooking, Spanish class and I love to help. I love to take care of Sharon's dog Daisy and go on field trips and I'm really good at bowling. I have so many friends here. They make me happy. Respite is totally awesome!

*Chrissy*

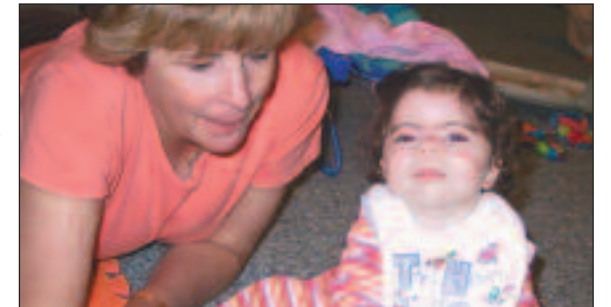


*Samantha*

#### THE DAYCARE CENTER

The Respite Center has been a gift to our family, especially Samantha. She is loved and given wonderful care and she has the opportunity to play with other children. She loves music time! It has given me time to work and take care of things at home. Once in a while I even get some time to myself. The Respite Center has been a blessing and we love everyone there!

*Samantha's Mom*

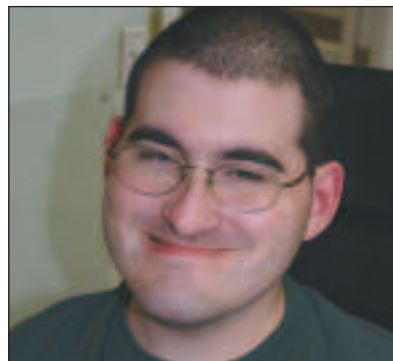


*Caitlin*

#### THE DAYCARE CENTER

Caitlin was diagnosed at birth with a rare syndrome known as Cornelia de Lange Syndrome. As overwhelming as the many doctor's visits, hospital stays and therapies are, our family is truly blessed by the care and support we have found at the Respite Center. Judging by her smiles, we know Caitlin has a wonderful time!

*Caitlin's Mom*



*Slater*

#### THE ADULT DAY PROGRAM

I have known Mary and Sharon for almost twenty years. I thought they were crazy when they told me they wanted to start a Respite Center but I knew if anyone could do it they could. Now it has grown so much and that's really cool to see! The Respite Center is wild and really fun!

*Slater*



*Brendan*

#### THE DAYCARE CENTER

Brendan started coming to the Respite Center when he was a little over a year old. Brendan was born with hydrocephaly which is fluid on his brain. Because of that he has a problem with seizures and had to get a tracheotomy. The Respite Center has given us so much help. The Respite Center gives me a break. Being a single mom is hard enough. Having a disabled child makes it even harder.

*Brendan Mom*



*Kelly*

#### WEEKEND RESPITE PROGRAM SUMMER VACATION CAMP

Our family feels truly fortunate to have the Respite Center in our life. We know Kelly enjoys her overnight visits and she always comes home happy. She loves the activities, especially music and singing. We relax knowing that she is safe, allowing us a night to catch up with other members of the family. Thank you Mary, Sharon and all the respite center staff for the love and care you provide for so many.

*Kelly's Mom*



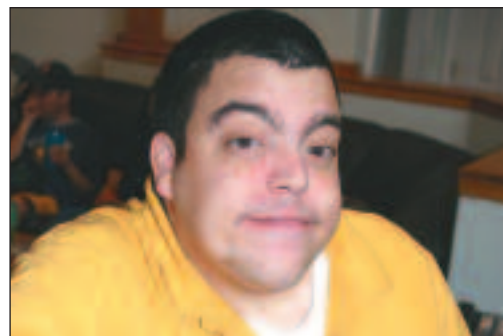
*David*

#### THE ADULT DAY PROGRAM

#### THE RESIDENTIAL PROGRAM

I've been going to the Respite Center for six months. The Respite Center is named for Sharon's son, Michael. I have a job at the cleaners. I like it a lot. I put shirts on hangers and in the order of the alphabet. I like my pay the most and my boss, Doug. The Respite Center is unbelievable!

*David*



*Anthony*

#### THE ADULT DAY PROGRAM

#### THE WEEKEND RESPITE PROGRAM

I love the Respite Center. It's good. I'm new. I stay over. See you in the morning! I have pizza. I like to dance and I am good. Shower in the morning! Sean's my favorite. Respite is awesome.

*Anthony*

## CHELSEA MELTON AND CONNOR KILRAIN SCHOLARSHIP

Each year the Respite Center awards two very special scholarships, The Chelsea Melton Scholarship and The Connor Kilrain Scholarship. The scholarships are named for two children who touched our lives.

Chelsea died at the age of fourteen, in 1997. She will always be remembered for her sweetness. The annual Chelsea Melton Scholarship will be awarded again to Billy DeLorie this year.

Our second memorial scholarship is named in honor of Connor Kilrain. A sweet little boy who died in 1999. Although Connor's life was short he touched and changed the lives of many. Little Brenden will receive Connor's award this year.