



Centennial
Infant and
Child Centre
Foundation

FALL 2021

We're back!



building futures changing lives strengthening families



Somewhere Over the Rainbow

Krishna's story

When my husband and I settled in Canada, we dreamed of a new life and of starting a family. We didn't know that life had a pandemic and a premature baby in store for us!

During pregnancy, I started feeling labour pains at 31 weeks and I thought to myself "it's too soon!". Our son Krishna was on his way ahead of schedule, so we rushed to St. Michael's Hospital. We were so excited to meet our son and afraid of what such an early birth would mean.

Soon after he was born, Krishna was given a bunch of tests and ultrasounds. He was eventually diagnosed with Cerebral Palsy (CP). My husband and I were so in love with Krishna, and we were devastated about the diagnosis. We didn't know what our future as a family would hold. During our two months in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, we found our strength and prepared ourselves to support our son in any way we could.



The staff at St. Michael's recognized that we needed support from the community when we arrived home, so they referred us to Centennial's Early Intervention Program.

As a first-time mother, I was already nervous about bringing home a new-born. Add to that Krishna's extra needs and having a child during the pandemic, my husband and I were overwhelmed!

RAINBOW – continues on next page

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Rainbow – *continued...*

We had planned to bring extended family over from India to help us settle our new family, but Covid-19 put a stop to that plan.

We soon met Anna, our Early Childhood Interventionist through video calls. Anna talked to us about Krishna's development and gave us practical strategies to work on with Krishna that fit into our daily routines. She introduced us to Lori, an Occupational Therapist with Centennial. They made sure we were connected to all the services that would support Krishna in the community, like referring us to physiotherapy and speech therapy. They became a part of our lives, and they encouraged us every step of the way.



For a long time, we couldn't meet Anna and Lori in person due to Covid-19, but video calls were the next best thing. Even just talking to a screen, we felt comfortable enough to share all our questions, doubts, and insecurities.

When it was safe, we met Anna and Lori in parks near our home, we were so happy they could meet Krishna in person. With their support, we learned about CP and how to advocate for Krishna and our family. After some time, we thought, *we can do this!*

With their guidance, we learned about Krishna's ever-changing physical and developmental needs and how to support him, so he gets the best start to life. They gave us exercises and activities that covered everything from mealtimes to increasing eye contact. As a family we worked hard at home, following through with recommendations. Anna and Lori made us feel like we were part of a team, all striving for the best for my son. I even looked for virtual workshops to continue my own learning to support Krishna.

Krishna has shown us all how incredible he is! He's making sounds, looking at people, reaching for toys and is crawling all over our home. Krishna loves music and dances by swaying back and forth to his favourite song 'Somewhere Over the Rainbow'.

We are so grateful we had Early Intervention; it made a difference in our lives. Although we couldn't have our family here with us, we found a different kind of support in our Early Intervention team that we didn't even know we needed! Krishna is doing well and will be attending Silver Creek Pre-School in September, and I feel like I have direction. We know we can handle whatever comes our way. Thanks Centennial!

Join the **KidsClub**
and keep Centennial's
kids connected.

Warm welcome to Belinda Chun

Belinda Chun joins The Centennial Infant and Child Centre Foundation this September as our new Chief Development Officer. As a member of the leadership team, Belinda will work closely with the Foundation and Centre Board of Directors to oversee and create a refreshed development strategy. Belinda's priority will be to guide the Foundation in strengthening our ties with our long-term supporters and engaging with new individuals to support the growing need for programs and services provided by the Centre. The Foundation thanks Debra Bond-Gorr for her contribution to Centennial over the past six years, most significantly the launch of the Powering Potential campaign. We wish her well in her retirement.

With over 19 years of philanthropic and business development experience, including in the healthcare industry, Belinda possesses a comprehensive understanding of the complexity of giving vehicles: major gifts, corporate giving, governments, foundations and is certified in planned giving through the Canadian Association of Planned Gifts.

Before joining the Centennial Infant and Child Centre Foundation, Belinda led teams to support their growth and complete significant campaigns at The University Health Network – Toronto General & Western Hospital, The Royal Ontario Museum, and the Ontario College of Art and Design.



I'm excited and proud to join The Centennial Infant and Child Centre Foundation, working with incredible professionals that are invested in helping children with developmental disabilities reach their full potential. I am looking forward to engaging with all our supporters to learn about their stories and to engage with the public about the tremendous life-changing work of Centennial on the lives of those supported by the Centre. I strongly believe in collaboration and creating dialogues with our donors – who are not just our supporters but our ambassadors and champions.



Belinda further believes that in the philanthropic environment in which we operate, funds matter, of course, but funds alone are not enough. It's the intention behind the gift that define those who make them.

Here's how your monthly donation helps:

\$10/month = Provides Program Supplies

\$25/month = Virtual Program Development

\$50/month = Family Assistance Fund

Preschool begins!

Teachers, therapists, and staff are geared up and thrilled to be back for another year at CICC preschool. After weeks of busy preparation, the 2021-2022 school year began September 7. Soon, new and returning children were settled in and down to business playing, learning, and growing together. We were especially grateful to be able to invite our fabulous volunteer team back! They met the COVID-related changes to the program (even the PPE) with flexibility and humor, which is exactly what we'd expect from Centennial's amazing volunteers.



\$150,000 Resilient Communities Fund Grant

Ontario
Trillium Foundation



Fondation Trillium
de l'Ontario

An agency of the Government of Ontario
Un organisme du gouvernement de l'Ontario

Thank you OTF!

The Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF) Resilient Communities Fund is addressing the diverse needs of organizations like the Centennial Infant and Child Centre to support recovery and resiliency in the aftermath of COVID-19.

Centennial's Kids and their families are truly grateful for the \$150,000 grant that OTF has invested to support our programs and services.

Centennial Infant and Child Centre Foundation celebrates OTF's commitment to support the capacity of non-profit organizations and build healthy and vibrant communities across Ontario.

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us!

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When a community
bands together, it
creates a powerful
positive force.

The Centennial Infant and Child Centre Foundation recognizes that each of our colleagues, partners, and volunteers are rallying each day to carry out crucial roles to keep everyone safe and healthy in the face of the extraordinary challenges of the pandemic. **Thank you for your generosity, and thank you to all our colleagues, partners, and volunteers!**



Thank you to all donors for your generous support!



the campaign for centennial kids

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