

An Extra Dash of Love

Letters Celebrating Down Syndrome

letters, poems, and artwork submitted to the
Greater Moncton Down Syndrome Society

with a forward by Natalie MacMaster

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Her promposal was one event that will never be forgotten. She was beautiful at her prom and so happy!!

She has taught us to love unconditionally, never judge people, be yourself, and that being different does not restrict you and a smile can bring out the best in people.

Thank you, Abby, for being you and teaching us to be better people.

We can't wait to see what adventures are to come!

We love you.

Dad, Mom, Keirsten and Jack xo

My son Finn is a miracle. He and his sister Lily are twins, born after a long struggle with unexplained infertility. They have made my husband and I parents; a dream we had all but given up on. This is our family. We are so very proud and would not change a thing.

When I was pregnant, we found out that 'twin b', had a hole in his heart as well as a few other markers for Down syndrome. We were devastated. We knew very little about Down syndrome, but worse than that was the thought that he might require open-heart surgery after delivery, and even more terrifying, we might not even make it that far. As the pregnancy progressed, our situation improved. The hole in Finn's heart seemed to be closing, to the point that it appeared to be a minor hole that would likely close up on its own. To confirm the Down syndrome diagnosis within 99%, we were offered and accepted a blood test. We met with a genetics counsellor to learn more about the diagnosis. I believe this helped to prepare us mentally and emotionally. We were ready to share the news with our family and closest friends.

My fear was that a baby with Down syndrome might not be accepted. How wrong I was. The reaction, as we shared the news, was of support and unconditional love for our son who hadn't even been born yet.

It took me a little longer to accept wholeheartedly. I was in shock at first, and I think I was in denial to a certain extent right up until Finn was born. And then I met him. He was perfect. He was so tiny and vulnerable and just wanting to be loved and cared for. Like any baby. Finn is perfectly Finn. He is my easy-going, rough-and-tumble, little ray of sunshine. He gets impatient when he is tired. He likes to twirl his beautiful dark hair before dozing off to sleep. Finn has brought us joy every day of his three and a half years. His smile and laughter truly light up the room and draw people to him. Strangers have commented on how his smile has brightened their day. Finn is indiscriminately friendly, waving hello to anyone whose eye he catches.

Finn is like most boys in that he loves cars and trucks, playing in the sand or dirt and loves to throw, roll and kick balls. He's a natural athlete. Finn does need a little extra help with certain aspects of his development, and, fortunately, there is lots of help out there. Since Finn was a baby, we have been working with speech-language, occupational, and physio therapists. They are amazing professionals and have provided us and Finn with exceptional support.

What I love about my son Finn:

- ♥ His openness and sweet, loving nature.
- ♥ How he studies the wheels under his toy car as it moves.
- ♥ How he brings me little pieces of paper/stickers that he finds to put in the garbage.
- ♥ How he brings Lily her boots and coat when it's time to go. He likes to keep her on task.
- ♥ How he loves to help out with laundry by sorting the clothes or putting them into washer or dryer.
- ♥ The positive impact he has on Lily. I like to think that she will grow up with more compassion and kindness towards others.
- ♥ His easy, contagious laughter.
- ♥ His coyness.
- ♥ His smile.
- ♥ The way he greets a loved one after a short absence: he comes running with arms outstretched, exclaiming loudly like you are the most important person in the world.
- ♥ His determination.
- ♥ The tenderness he has towards his sister.
- ♥ How at 8 months old, he had open heart surgery and recovered like a champ.
- ♥ The pride I feel at his successes.
- ♥ Witnessing the joy he brings to others.
- ♥ That he made me a mother. That I am his mother.

I still worry about how the world will accept him when he gets older and he isn't as cute (did I mention that he is adorable?), but he is surrounded by a family and community that loves and supports him. Finn has already made the world around him a little kinder, maybe that's the most important step.

Tammy, mother of Finn—Shediac Bridge, NB



Bonjour,

Je m'appelle Charlie. Mon frère s'appelle Louie. Il a le syndrome de down. Louie est special a moi par ce que il me donne de la joie. Je me sens heureuse quand je suis avec lui. Il est joyeux comme Noel. Louie aussi est drôle. Je l'aime beaucoup. Il a un beau gros sourire. Il nous fais des bisous et de beau gros calin. Je t'aime de tous mon coeur.

Charlie, la soeur de Louie-Moncton, NB

Hi, my name is Jamie, and I have a stepsister with Down syndrome.

My stepsister Martine has been in my life for as long as I can remember. She is one of the most energetic, lively, and fun people I've ever met. She is always laughing and remembers everyone by name in our small community. She never forgets a face. Over the years, I've learned a lot from her, especially how to love unapologetically, to laugh out loud, and to live in the present moment. In a world where everyone is looking to fit in and find their purpose in life, loving and making people smile is hers.

Jamie, Martine's sister-Moncton

Hello! It was thrilling to see the segment on CTV Live at 5 about the book you will create for new parents of babies with Down syndrome. We hope there will be more books available as awareness of the awesomeness of living with Down syndrome or having a child or sibling with Down syndrome grows.

Here are some of my contributions as I am a better person as a result of my sister, Holly, being in my life for 55 years!

Dale Evans, wife of Roy Rogers wrote the song and a book, "Angel Unaware!", as if from their daughter Robin, who was born with Down syndrome in a time when the medical care could not respond. Although Robin lived only two short years, her life was powerful through the love of her parents. Today, new parents are supported with not only life saving care, but the amazing support and friendship from many teams, other parents, and the community as large. Our medical care now enables Down syndrome babies born with complications to have early surgeries. They are "angels unaware", here on earth as they bless all those they come to know!

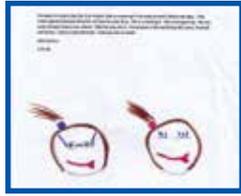
My best teacher "in life", has been my sister, Holly! Although non-verbal, she taught me to love unconditionally, to accept all others, to be patient, and most importantly, Holly taught us to celebrate life, to squeal with delight, and to always keep laughing and hugging. We celebrate Holly everyday!

When the time was right, Holly made her move to a group home. She continued to be surrounded by great love and awesomeness! Our family just got larger, thanks to her buddies and staff we came to know through our visits for the next eighteen years. As a result, Holly spread her love around to more people and received that same love in return. Group homes are one of the greatest places to visit as they are full of happiness, laughter and love.

Holly had a radiating squeal that warmed up the room at the group home, especially when her siblings arrived to visit her. Talk about a welcome reunion, as we would hug, laugh and wait for another squeal of delight.

Mary, Holly's sister-Dartmouth, NS

Dear Carly:



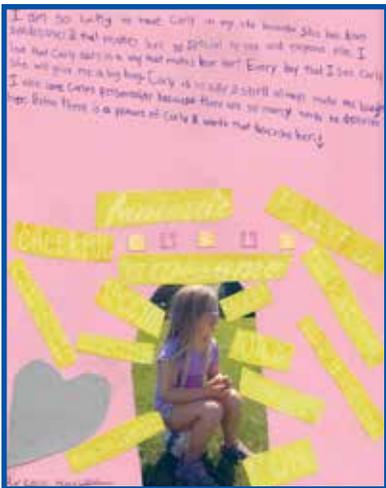
She's happy for who she is, and I like that, and she's a good, I mean really good swimmer, and she listens. She's a big part of the world. She's NICE!!! She's joyful. She gives hard hugs, but seriously, she gives hard hugs.

Fun. She is so strong, she is so strong, she lifts me sometimes. She is so incredible, and I want her to know that she is.

When she plays outside, she includes everyone, even people she doesn't even know or seen in her life. And that's what I like about her. Pretty good at everything to me. Maybe a short amount of people think she's not and maybe a lot of people think she is.

And I have two more things for those who are actually going to read this. We're to celebrate Down syndrome in our community and our country so whoever is reading this, please share this with people that you know, but seriously, please share this note with the community and you can even take a picture on facebook or even twitter.

Share this with everyone you know. What we're trying to say that we're trying to respect people that have Down syndrome. And please try to share this with people you know like your friends and family cause this note is going to doctors, hospitals, stores. The final time, please share this.



I am very excited for participating in the HUGE! Project for Down syndrome. I have a friend named Carly who has Down syndrome. Carly loves and she's very good at swimming. Carly is a really, really good friend. I hope that this project is amazing!

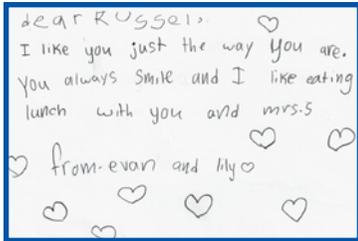
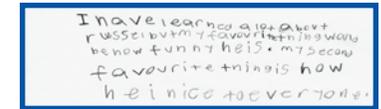
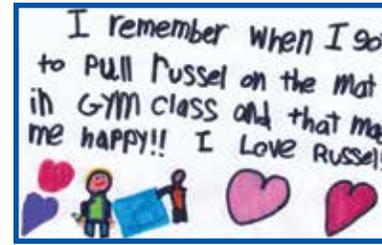
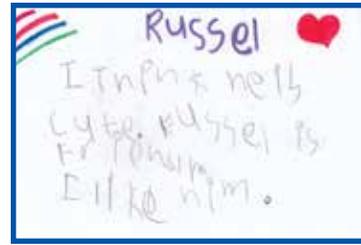
When I was in kindergarten, I met Carly. As soon as I saw Carly, I knew that she was unique. She has beautiful blond hair, pretty blue glasses and a perfect smile. She loves to make me chuckle. Carly makes funny faces to make me laugh. She is very kind. She always includes others when she plays games. Carly is determined. When Carly gets her mind set on something, there is no changing it. She is hard working and never gives up. I am lucky to have Carly in my life.

Carly is a good friend to me because she includes everyone. Carly is a sweet girl. I like to play with Carly. We'll play tag.

Carly is a wonderful person. She has known me since kindergarten. She has a big big heart. She would never want to change who she is! She is very good at swimming, climbing, and playing tag. I hope she loves who she is and what she is made for.

Even though Carly has Down syndrome, she still is a nice and funny friend!





Dear Russel:

Our submissions are all about our wonderful classmate and friend Russel. Russel is 9 years old.

Kate, Russel's teacher-Moncton



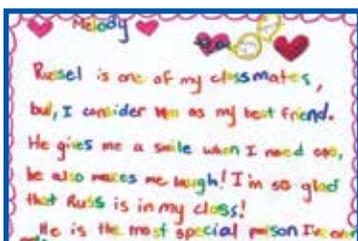
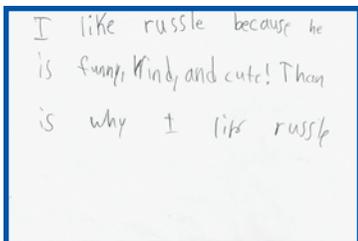
Russel comes to school every morning with a smile on his face. He genuinely has a love for learning.

Russ loves to play with his toys and share with his friends. He'll give a high five to people he meets.

Russel loves to cuddle and can bring a smile to anyone's face. When Russel is excited it makes everyone excited.

Russel loves to swim. He is the nicest person I have ever met. I have known Russ since Grade K.

I remember when I got to pull Russel on the mat in gym class and that made me happy!! I love Russel!



Russel makes me happy because he is always happy. When I's sad he make me happy.

Russel is my best friend. He always shares with everyone and always smiles.

This is someone who has Down syndrome and her name is Jorden.

Russel is so funny. Once I was having a off day but then when Russel came over to me and picked up finger and started playing with it that made me happy and he was happy. Me putting on Russel's shoes.

Russel is the 16th person that I know that has Down syndrome. People with Down syndrome are really cool. You can learn some things about Down syndrome.

Russel

Always happy → makes me smile
Gives you a smile
Funny \ "Ha Ha Ha Ha"

Russel makes my day because he is careful about his friend.

One day at school I was so glum and then in the next hour or so, Russel gave me a high five and that made my day happier, and he is just the cutest thing in the whole school!

Always happy → makes me 😊

