

## Enabling Guyanese children with autism to achieve their maximum potential by providing quality educational opportunities.

There are many approaches to autism but the one thing they ALL agree on is the importance of early diagnosis and intervention. For the individual child, early access to appropriate and high quality educational activities should enable a tailor-made programme that has the best chance of being effective in improving that child's skills, moving him or her towards a level of independent living. As a person ages, it is more difficult to correct behaviours and habits which become engrained, and this is particularly true for children on the autism spectrum.

Step by Step's model school located at Bagotstown on the East Bank, is focused solely on meeting the needs of children and families with autism. Our tutors, each working with a maximum of two children, utilize Applied Behavior Analysis to develop programmes which best fit the needs of each individual child in order to help them achieve their fullest potential. ABA is based on decades of research on human behavior and learning, and when applied to children with autism it involves:

- Identifying skills and behaviors that will make meaningful differences.
- Breaking skills down into small steps to make it easier for children to learn.
- Developing very specific procedures for teaching skills.
- Repeatedly teaching targeted skills the same way.
- Measuring and "Analyzing" Children's progress.

Beyond its school programme, the Step by Step Foundation's outreach activities aim to raise awareness of autism as an issue which may affect as many as 1 in 50 children, the incidence rate currently estimated by the CDC.



### April is Autism Awareness Day

The sixth annual World Autism Awareness Day is **April 2, 2013**. Every year, autism organizations around the world celebrate the day with unique fundraising and awareness-raising events. Look out for an infomercial on Step by Step that will be aired on NCN during April.

## MAKING STRIDES

This term has been very rewarding. The school's psychologist, Dr Jim Ellis, visited in February to screen new children and monitor tutors' performance. Overall, he was pleased with the quality of work and the progress the children have made. Dr Ellis also met with parents at a PTA meeting and was able to answer questions and respond to parents concerns. Our fundraising Barbeque, held in February, netted in excess of one million dollars.



Executive Member of the Step by Step Foundation, Deborah Seebarran, receiving a cheque for 1.7M GYD from Michelle Johnson, Marketing & Communications Manager of Republic Bank Guyana Limited.

*Autism has been identified across all ethnic groups and socioeconomic levels, although it has been more frequently diagnosed in boys. Our school cannot meet the needs of all those affected in Guyana, but we believe that it provides a model that can be scaled-up for much greater impact.*

# MEET JOEL ...



Full of energy and lots of rhythm! There's never a dull moment with this 5 year old.

Joel joined the Step by Step group a year ago and he has made tremendous leaps in progress. Initially, Joel was challenged by many of the struggles common to child with autism: he had difficulty communicating, socializing with peers, and adjusting to the changes of a typical school day. Today, Joel is using simple words and pictures to communicate, and he has been playing, dancing and singing with his friends and teachers. Joel's academic skills reflect the dedication of his parents who have been working hand-in-hand with our tutors.



## APRIL ACTIVITIES: "EASTER"

Children and Tutors enjoying a game of musical chairs in the Botanical Gardens.

Each month the school focuses on a theme. The theme for April was appropriately, "Easter." On March 15, we took the children to the gardens for kite flying and fun as part of the Easter celebration.

## NEW STAFF...



We are happy to welcome our new Assistant Tutor, Oretta (L) and Tutor, Sharlyn (R).

# THANK YOU

- St. John's Episcopal Church in Massachusetts, U.S.A. for supplying us with a large selection of new toys, books and teaching materials.
- PAVNIK; Big Frank's; Dr. Hardat Persaud; Team Speed Cricket; Ray's Motor Spares & Auto Sales; Nirva's; Social Media Guyana; Debra & Jerome Khan; Leonard & Natasha; Burns/Simon; Crown Mining; Best Buy Auto Sales; Derek Auto Spares; Oasis; Jus Water; Auto Toy Store; Teacher Colleen; Brydens; Nanda's Boutique; Barti Mattai and many more for your contribution to the Barbeque.

## Thank you Suraiya ...

Dr. Suraiya Ismael who has headed our Executive Committee will be away from us for a year as she heads to a new job and to spend time with her family in Zambia. We want to acknowledge Suraiya's tremendous efforts on behalf of the children and parents of the Step by Step School.

Under her leadership, we have expanded our intake from five to twelve children who are served by five tutors, one trainee and an administrator. Suraiya has worked

tirelessly to ensure that we have the resources to provide our students with the care they deserve. As one parent put it, "we are in a better place now because of her skills, her interest and commitment to the cause."

Good luck Suraiya, we miss you and thank you from the bottom of our hearts. We look forward to continuing to work together, even by long distance, to realize your dream of a Guyana where all children with autism can achieve their full potential and live a happy and productive life free from stigma.



**Students from School of the Nations donate proceeds from Market Day to the Step-by Step School**  
Senior Tutor, Anjalena, receiving a cheque from the students of School of the Nations.

## How can you help?

You can help by ...

- Making a donation
- Committing to a monthly or quarterly donation
- Sponsoring a child from a needy family
- Volunteering your time to help with bus duty or helping with the children during school hours.

If you wish to make a donation, you can give us cash or a cheque (to The Step by Step Foundation), or deposit or transfer the donation into our account in Georgetown:  
Republic Bank, 38-40 Water Street  
**Acct:** *The Step by Step Foundation*  
**Acct. no.:** 651-576-1  
**Swiftcode:** RBGLGYGG

### STEP BY STEP SCHOOL

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