

Bascule Bursary – Durham Family Respite

The term “bascule” is an engineering term for a counter balance which allows for a desirable outcome. It is the pivotal point on “the scales of justice” and also the balancing point of a teeter tooter, or the swing-bridge which clears the way for the passage of boats and traffic, as it switches.

We felt it aptly described the impact we hope this fund could have in “balancing” the lives of people with intellectual disabilities whose experiences are often limited by their income.

The Bascule Bursary started as a small fund which we used to run at Christmas to sponsor a family through that season. Over time we wondered about the merit of such a short lived event for people. The reality is that for many of people with intellectual impairments they can rarely afford the things that make ones’ life rich year round.

We decided to start an internal fund to create a small pot of flexible funds which could be used to assist people to pursue their interests by helping with the costs of registration or supplies. It is our hope that through the pursuit of their interest’s people can be connected to others in positive social networks.

We have seen some wonderful things take place as a result of this opportunity and for the most part our contribution complements other resources and helps move people forward in pursuing their interests and gaining satisfaction from their endeavours.

Over the past 18 months the Bascule Bursary has assisted people in the following ways;

One woman has been learning to paint for several years and had wanted to enter an art show with her work. The bursary was able to help with the cost of matting and framing her paintings. Her work has now been shown at the Pickering Community Centre.

Another woman who has been very interested in creative writing wanted to take courses at Durham College and the bursary has assisted with the registration fee. She took two consecutive courses and now attends illustration classes at the Oshawa Resource Centre where there is no fee. She joined us for our summer series and read two chapters from her latest book to our students and she hopes to have her story published. Their response to creative writing was extremely positive.

Another young woman has caught on to the scrap-booking hobby and has produced some beautiful family journals. She lives in a basement apartment and she shares this interest with the woman upstairs who helps her find economical materials to use in her books. The bursary covered the cost of the course which she enjoyed very much. Now she spends a lot of time with her housemate doing something they both enjoy while sharing materials.

In each of these instances the bursary has added to the enrichment of people’s lives by providing a means in which they can pursue their interests, and be connected in typical ways, to others in their neighbourhood.