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February 2018

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# Girls on the Spectrum

Orleans United Church, 1111 Orleans Blvd.

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Hello and welcome to the first Girls on the Spectrum Newsletter! The goal of the Newsletter is to share with parents and friends upcoming events and news related to the Drop-in and to the Parent's Support Group.

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## Funding!

### **Awesome Foundation – Ottawa Chapter**

We were so excited to find out that Girls on the Spectrum was Awesome Ottawa's January 2018 award recipient! The Drop-in received \$1000 to help support programming and to purchase items for the group.

The Awesome Foundation is a global foundation that "supports awesome projects through micro-grants"

Thank you to the Foundation for thinking we are AWESOME!

### **Autism Ontario – Potential Program**

We would also like to say a big Thank You to Autism Ontario and the Potential Program for the grant of \$581 received for programming in January, February and March 2018. This funding has been put towards soft blankets and pillows, craft supplies and visits from Expérience Unik Pet Therapy.

The Potential Program helps to support children with ASD and their families through funding community programming.

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## Upcoming Events

### **February 18**

Pajama day – bring your stuffy!

Making puffy paint

### **February 25**

Pet Therapy visit with Expérience Unik

Free consults available with registered psychotherapist Melanie Robarts

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## Expérience Unik

Does your daughter love animals? Expérience Unik will be visiting the Girls on the Spectrum Drop-in on a monthly basis for pet therapy visits. We will have Guinea Pigs visiting on February 25<sup>th</sup>!





### Girls on the Spectrum Parent Support Group

The Girls on the Spectrum Parent Support Group held its first parent's meeting on January 11<sup>th</sup>, 2018. The Group will be meeting on the second Thursday of the month. The next meeting will take place on Thursday, March 8<sup>th</sup>, from 7 – 9 p.m. at ABC Pediatric Therapies on St. Joseph Blvd in Orleans. Coffee, tea and treats will be served. Hope to see you there!

### Free Psychotherapy Consults

Melanie Robarts, registered psychotherapist, will be available on a monthly basis at Girls on the Spectrum to provide free consultations to parents who would like them. Private space will be provided for the consultations. Melanie will visit the group again on Sunday, February 25<sup>th</sup>.

<https://www.robartscounselling.com/>

### Book of the Month

*I am an Aspie Girl: A Book for Young Girls with Autism Spectrum Conditions* by Danuta Bulhak-Paterson

This is a wonderful story about a girl named Lizzie who has Asperger's Syndrome. The story is told from her point of view and provides many opportunities for discussion with your daughter about some of the things she may be experiencing. The book is available to borrow from the Girls on the Spectrum library. Other books about raising a daughter on the Autism Spectrum are also available to borrow at the Drop-in or at the Parent's group.

Girls on the Spectrum Ottawa Drop-in was started in October 2017 by Suzanne Allen after realizing that opportunities specifically for girls with Autism Spectrum Disorder are limited. A place with unstructured play, where girls can be themselves and parents can relax in a non-judgmental setting was needed.

With the help of Orleans United Church, the Drop-in was started and since October 2017, more than 20 girls ranging in ages from 4 to 13 have visited the program. Every Sunday, an average of 6-8 girls attends. Activities have ranged from arts and crafts, to pet therapy visits and role playing toys and games.

The drop-in has also expanded its space to a second room – a "Quiet room" where girls who need some quiet can go to play or rest. A parent support group for parents with girls on the spectrum has also started and takes place on the second Thursday of the month at ABC Pediatric Therapies on St. Joseph Boulevard in Orleans.

Suzanne Allen is a Mom to 3 great kids. She is married to Mark and works full time for the federal government with the New Horizons for Seniors Program. Her daughter Miriam was diagnosed with ASD in May 2017. Suzanne graduated from the University of Guelph with a degree in Family and Social relations. She received a post-graduate diploma in Recreation Leadership from Humber College and is currently working on the Autism and Behavioural Sciences Post-Graduate Certificate at Algonquin College. In her spare time she loves camping and spending time in the great outdoors!

