

Parallel Paths to a Shared Dream

M Never did Tanya Hendry ever dream growing up that she would be married, drive a car and own a house.

Tanya was born 2 ½ months prematurely making history that year at St. Joseph's in London for being the youngest baby they saved. Diagnosed with cerebral palsy as a toddler, her parents were happy to finally have answers to the questions surrounding Tanya's delayed milestones.

Steve Hendry, just like his wife, was also born 2 ½ months prematurely. Doctors had painted a very bleak picture for his future. His parents were told he would not walk, talk and, truly, not amount to much of anything. Also receiving a diagnosis of cerebral palsy, Steve benefited from a lot of the same services that his wife did including speech, physio and occupational therapies.

"My favourite memory of the Rotary Centre was being among the first in the inaugural pilot project 'Teen Group.' Through that group I worked through anger issues, met others my own age with the same struggles — one of whom I became steadfast friends with and still am today," Steve says.

For Tanya, at one time she had aspired to be an ECE professional and turned to KidsAbility to complete a co-op work placement. She loved seeing the children progress and reach their potential. So much in fact that she continued on as a volunteer for five years. Working in the classroom is among her favourite achievements at KidsAbility.

Although most people assume that Tanya and Steve met at KidsAbility, it was actually through mutual friends that they were introduced. Eventually, they were married in 2003. It would be 10 years later that together they would do something that, at one time, Tanya didn't dream possible: becoming parents as they welcomed daughter McKayla to their family. When Tanya and Steve were young, a future so bright didn't seem possible.

Steve joined the Board of Directors at KidsAbility in 2005, bringing his talents and voice as a past client. He loves

meeting new families at KidsAbility. He tells them: "Never give up — don't walk away from it. Remember: your child's disability does not define him or her."

Tanya works as a home support worker and Steve is in customer service. Together, they are enjoying a full and independent life as they raise their daughter.

Steve is proud to have proved the doctors wrong who, when he was born, all too often used the word "can't". As for Tanya, she states: "I love being that glimmer of hope to never give up when parents today see Steve and I; they want that for their child."



Tanya & Steve Hendry

Alumni and Volunteers