

A Home Away from Home

One of Dan Rocha's favourite events each spring is the annual Kids Can't Wait Radiothon making him a familiar face year after year. Dan is a long-time advocate for KidsAbility since his days as a client — a place that became a "home away from home" throughout his childhood.

Dan was born with brittle bone condition osteogenesis imperfecta, meaning his bones could break very easily. To date he has had more than 100 breaks. Therapists taught his family safe ways to position and transfer him from one place to another; Dan especially liked going swimming each week with his class.

"I always felt comfortable, respected, and wasn't at all judged," says Dan, who credits KidsAbility with helping him to come out of his shell and become the self-described social butterfly that he is today. One person who was instrumental in giving him the confidence to go out into the world and do great things was his junior kindergarten teacher, with whom he still shares a close friendship.

"They simply changed my life," says Dan. "My biggest wish is that all children going through the doors of KidsAbility have the opportunity to experience a similar opportunity to better their life like I did."

The one thing Dan likes to tell new clients is: "You can do it!" It's that attitude that has served Dan well. He has dreamed of having his own radio show for as long as he can remember and is actively pursuing his dreams.

When not dreaming about being on the radio, he continues to take an active role in the community: Dan is the director of Public Relations at the Kitchener Portuguese Club, has opened his own business as a DJ for hire, volunteers as a youth group leader at his church and is active on social media as a tireless advocate for local businesses and organizations.

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Dan Rocha

Alumnus and Volunteer