

# Passing the Torch

As a baby, Graydon Large seemed very healthy. As time progressed, he began missing milestones. His parents, Deirdre and Peter, took him to the pediatrician since he had difficulty holding his head up, sitting and crawling. Although Graydon didn't have an official diagnosis, he was referred to KidsAbility. Diagnosis or not, Graydon's team of therapists knew exactly what to do to help him to begin to work on realizing his milestones.

"Fortunately for Graydon, he was able to start therapy right away at KidsAbility when he was one and a half years old," says Deirdre. Through physio and occupational therapies, Graydon became stronger and worked his way up to sitting in a wheelchair. Through speech therapy, he learned how to communicate clearly, and through Early Childhood Education, KidsAbility School and programs and camps like Arts Express, Graydon flourished.

"I was in a wheelchair, and I wanted to get out of the wheelchair," Graydon shares. His therapists worked with Graydon on building the skills and strength that he would need to achieve that goal. By Grade 5, Graydon was walking independently and donated his wheelchair — because he didn't need it anymore.

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Deirdre's favourite memory took place during Arts Express camp. "The first year Graydon came out on stage at Arts Express walking by himself is by far my favourite. I was bawling!"

As he grew older, Graydon challenged himself constantly participating in The Downtown MudPuppy Chase (completing the three-kilometre course with a walker) and the Trigator Triathlon (an amazing feat that involves swimming, biking and running). He also went from being a participant at Arts Express to a counsellor. "I loved being a counsellor since I could help out children," Graydon states.

In June 2015, Graydon was named an official torchbearer for the Toronto Pan Am Games. "We were so excited to watch our son Graydon carry the torch," notes Deirdre. "Graydon has come so far, using a wheelchair, walker and now walking independently. We were so proud of him, representing KidsAbility, I was in tears. We hope he inspires others to reach beyond their comfort zone and pursue new adventures."

There was a time when the Large family was going to move to Burlington, but in the end decided to stay. "We had the very best services for Graydon right here at KidsAbility," says Deirdre.



*Graydon Large*

Kids Can't Wait Kitchener-Waterloo Ambassador  
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