

## DISNEY DREAM FOR KIDS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

IA Rita Benefield in Bells Corners has helped grant 12 dreams for children with severe disabilities or terminal illnesses since founding the Ottawa chapter of the Sunshine Foundation three years ago. The dreams have varied from a ride on a Harley 3-wheeler for a teen with cerebral palsy to being in the audience of “American Idol” for a teen with spina bifida. Recently, Sunshine Foundation invited Rita and her fellow board members (and DS colleagues) Clementine Van Veen and Christos Koutsavakis to volunteer on a Dream Lift to Disney World. At the pre-trip info session for the parents of the 78 children going on the trip, DS played host and Branch Manager Cyrille Aubin dressed as the Sunshine Foundation’s mascot bear. As for the memorable Disney trip, Rita says, “50% of the kids were in wheelchairs, being carried on and off the rides, but having the time of their lives.”



Photo: Bells Corners volunteers (back row) Tom Caldwell, Clementine Van Veen (3<sup>rd</sup> from left), Christos Koutsavakis and Lee Geerts (5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> from left); (middle row) Rita Benefield, Corinne Farndale, Julie Fortin (4<sup>th</sup> from left); (front row) Cyrille Aubin (without the bear costume), Lorrie Williams (3<sup>rd</sup> from left), Aaron Milliken (2<sup>nd</sup> from right).