

## 'Dreams come true' at Five Counties Children's Centre

**Treatments at Five Counties' Children's Centre literally made Debbie Truax's dream come true.**

Abella Lynde was almost two and was not yet walking. The little girl with Down Syndrome was getting therapies for her fine motor skills and speech when her mother dreamt that she took her first steps with the use of a walker.



"The next day, she had an appointment at Five Counties and we left with a walker. The next day after that, she was walking," Debbie recalls with a smile.

"I love going to Five Counties. I'm always stressed before but I always leave feeling positive. It helps my heart," she adds as she rests her hands on her chest.

When Abella, now 6, started her therapies, her fine motor skills were weak and she struggled with daily routines. These days, she brims with confidence as she walks, expresses herself more clearly and enjoys her Grade 1 studies at Keith Wightman Public School in Peterborough.

"Abella walks with her head held so high," her mother says. "Her improvements have affected her in such a positive way."

When Abella was born at Peterborough Regional Health Centre, Debbie went into denial as she worried about how the outside world would accept her baby girl. Now, she is an advocate for the abilities of all children. Last year, she bought colourful T-shirts for the teachers at her children's school to mark National Down Syndrome Day on March 21. They reciprocated by doing activities in her class – like writing while wearing socks on their hands – to make students more empathetic.

At Five Counties Children's Centre, Debbie found encouragement and guidance as she learned how to raise a child with Down Syndrome.



"It was an eye-opening interaction for our whole family and helped guide us in ways to help Abella," she says.

"Five Counties is always very understanding. They always have creative ways to have set goals to work on, which helped me out as a parent who was very new to all this. The staff always dedicate themselves to ensure you feel safe and understood."

Abella continues to get help with her speech since not everyone can make out her words. That leaves her mother speaking for her at times. They are very close as you can see from the array of photos posted on Truax's social media feeds.

"She makes me laugh every day," Debbie says.