

Thresholds, Episode Four - Life in the Day of Me

Dolly Menna-Dack: Hi I'm Dolly, the clinical bioethicist and the youth engagement strategy lead at Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital. You're listening to *Thresholds*, a new Koffler Digital podcast produced by Maya Bedward, in collaboration with members of Holland Bloorview's Youth Advisory Council. Presented in five parts, each episode of *Thresholds* explores the experiences of these youth with disabilities as they transition into the adult world. In this episode, we'll be listening to Bianca in her piece entitled "Life in the Day of Me."

(pause, music and piano keys play)

Bianca Salvo: When I was born the doctors told my parents that I would never walk but my parents refused to believe that so they took me to Budapest, Hungary in 1991 for therapy and it was called Conductive Education and it was at the Peto Institute. (Station bell rings, a woman with an accent says *Hello, welcome to Budapest*)

I got this therapy in Budapest and they showed me how to crawl, sit and walk. I remember a time where I came home one day from therapy and my grandmother, she rolled up the carpets (carpet being rolled up) while I was at therapy and she cleaned the whole floors and when I got home she said, "come here, kneel down on his floor, I'm going to show you how to crawl." (short pause, music continues) And I was like, "what you're going to show me?" And she was like, "Yeah, I'm just going to show you how to crawl. Just come kneel on the floor and we're going to crawl together." So, we crawled and slowly and slowly I learned how to crawl, and it was partly because of her partly because of the conductors but eventually, when I ended my therapy in Budapest I eventually learned how to walk independently. I was in Budapest for six years.

(music, piano tempo continues, fades, intense music enters, the sound of kids playing and birds chirping outside)

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Most of the time friends didn't come naturally to me, I was homeschooled in Budapest and I didn't really have a childhood so when I came back to My regular school in Canada I didn't really have a lot of friends and it was really, really difficult for me to make friends. (kids outside and music with piano keys) In 2001, when I came back to Canada, I found out about the same therapy at March of Dimes in Toronto and I did that for about five years and then my therapist at the time came up to me and said to me, "listen you should start public speaking about your experience," and I said, "okay." (upbeat piano music)

So, I spoke at the Fairmont Royal York Hotel. (people clapping and cheering) I spoke on Rogers TV, I was on the Drew Marshall Radio Show in Oakville and while I was at the Fairmont Hotel while I was speaking I've met people from The Young and The Restless and I met a guy his name is RJ Mit which has cerebral palsy also. He's on my really favourite show I love which is called Switched at Birth and Breaking Bad and we bonded over our experience. Talking into a microphone is really like, it's just what I want to do for the rest of my life. I love it. (pause, the music fades in and out, upbeat keys begin) When the therapist at March of Dimes came to me and said, "listen you should do public speaking about your experience." I wanted to do it because I wanted to prove the doctors wrong and especially and I like proving people wrong and I like being like I can do this. I just say what's on my mind and I'm very blunt about it (laughs). I want people to understand the struggle living with a disability, especially cerebral palsy and I also want them to understand that people with any type of disability can do what they put their minds to and can understand things just in a different way.

Dolly: Thank you for listening to *Thresholds*, this podcast is created by Koffler Digital. Produced by Maya Bedward. Ben Wood is our recording engineer. Music and sound design by Laura Dickens. I'm Dolly Menna-Dack, clinical bioethicist and the youth engagement strategy lead at Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital. You can learn more about this project at koffler.digital/thresholds