



By supporting United Way agencies, you help parents like Pauline get the help their kids need.

## How twin toddlers discovered their voices

Like most four-year-olds, Torri and Artha aren't always eager to put on their shoes and jackets when their mom asks them to. The twin sisters stall and protest—if you're a parent, you know the drill. But there is one thing that makes the girls switch to lightning speed. "If I tell them we're going to see Tina, I can't get them in the car fast enough," says the girls' mom, Pauline. "They're her biggest fans." Tina is a child development consultant and program worker at the Macaulay Child Development Centre, a United Way agency in Toronto. The girls first started visiting the centre at 18 months when their pediatrician noticed they were having trouble communicating. "They spoke to each other in their own language, and I thought it was just 'twin talk,'" says Pauline. "But I was told they had speech delays." Their doctor also identified developmental delays in Torri and Artha's social and motor skills, and recommended Pauline look into free programming at a local early-years centre. There, she'd be able to connect with other parents and help the twins socialize.

With few family members close by, Pauline, who had moved to Canada from the Philippines, couldn't help but feel responsible for her daughters' delays.

"You worry that you're not giving enough or you're not teaching them enough; you're not being a good mom to them," she says. With nowhere else to turn, she visited Macaulay.

There, the family met Tina, who helped Pauline get her daughters into a variety of extra support programs aimed at improving social skills, as well as speech and language development. She also connected them with an occupational therapist to boost the twins' motor skills. With these tools in place, the girls began to thrive. Pauline will never forget the first time the twins said their first full sentences: "I was so happy, I started crying. It was a huge step. A full sentence—it was like winning an award."

Both girls are now speaking, playing and socializing happily, and are ready to start kindergarten in the fall. Artha is even reading on her own, and her mom couldn't be prouder.

"Without Tina and Macaulay, and without United Way's funding, we wouldn't have been able to access these important programs," says Pauline. "I'm so thankful for that. I don't know where we'd be today without this support."



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