



## Climbing wall aids autistic kids

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Children with autism can work out their restless urges at a Thornhill climbing facility designed especially for them.

"As any parent of one of these children can tell you, many autistic kids have a unique need for movement, climbing and other sensory input," said Joanne Scott Jackson, fundraising co-ordinator for the Giant Steps autistic children's school, where the feature has been built.

"This centre does what it can to fulfill these needs."

The only one of its kind in the Greater Toronto Area, the KRG Children's Charitable Foundation Climbing Centre was built with a \$50,000 renovation to the Giant Steps gym.

It includes suspended climbing stations, rock climbing and a bouldering wall, among other features.

The walls are covered with murals by artist Lindsay Davies, depicting jungles, mountains and oceans.

Although the centre is open only to students at Giant Steps, Ms Jackson hopes it will eventually be available to other autistic children in the area.

You can check out the facility, at 35 Flowervale Rd. (off Simonston Boulevard, in the Don Mills Road-John Street area), during an open house Monday at 6 p.m. Politicians, 35 staff members and 27 families with autistic children will be there.

Autism is an incurable condition with no known cause. It affects 1 in 165 Canadian children and the number is increasing.

As well as affecting social skills and the ability to make eye contact, autism can cause negative compulsive habits. Children with the disorder often need close supervision.

Check out [www.giantstepstoronto.ca](http://www.giantstepstoronto.ca) for more information on the centre.

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