



KNOWLES CENTRE INC.

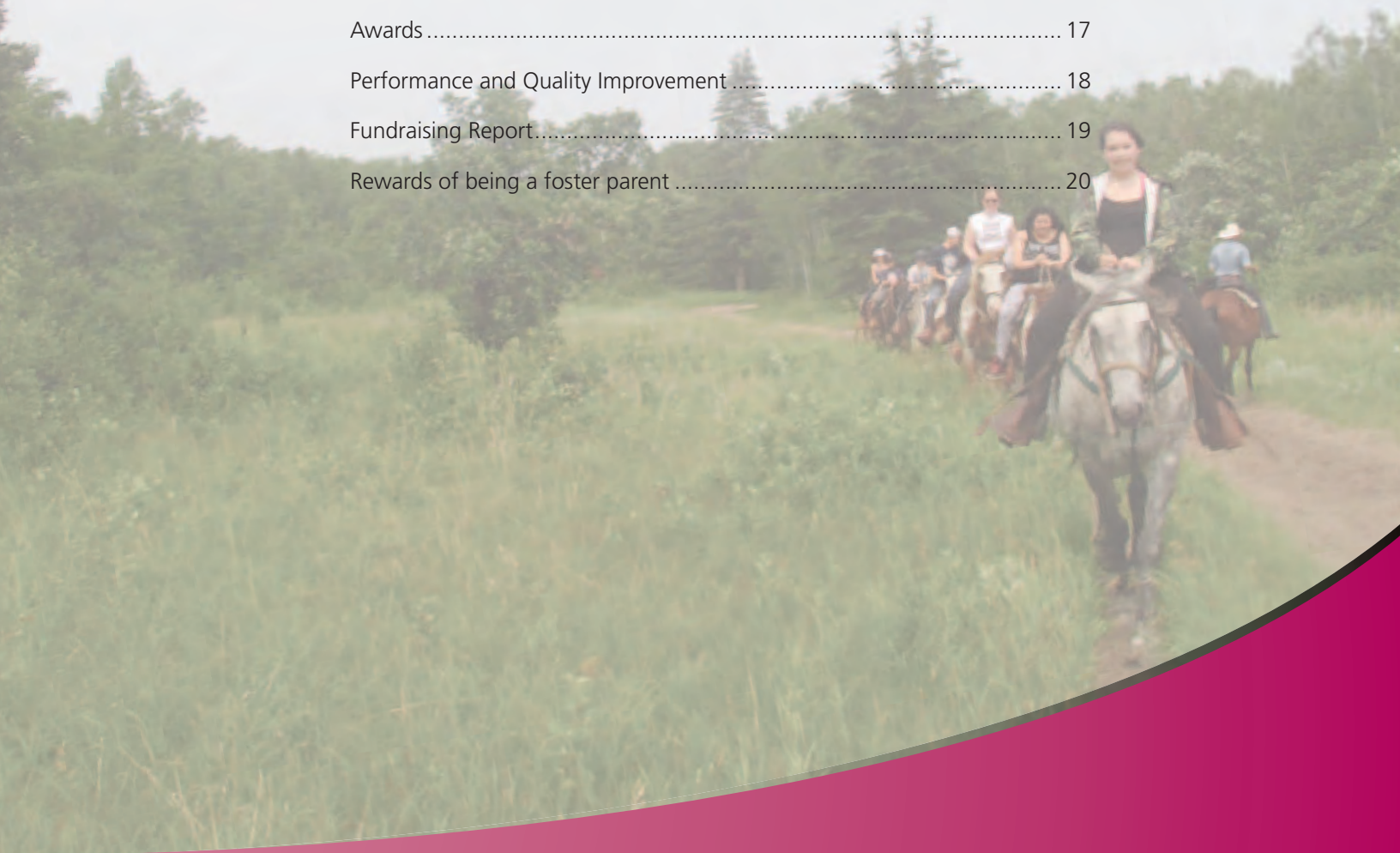
Helping Individuals Find Their Path: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow



**2014 - 2015
Annual Report**

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Who We Are

Knowles Centre is a community-based, non-profit social service agency for children, adolescents and young adults facing difficult times in their lives. It began as a home for boys in 1907 and was incorporated in 1910. It became co-ed in 1981. Today, Knowles Centre provides group care treatment, treatment foster care, independent living, day treatment, and sexual abuse treatment programs plus a range of support services to young people from Manitoba and other communities throughout Canada.

We offer a range of therapeutic and skills-based programs that help young people and their families to address past struggles, to develop healthier relationships and ways of life, and to reach their full potential in the future.

Knowles Centre is governed by an elected Board of Directors made up of dedicated members of the community who contribute their knowledge and insight to making Knowles Centre a welcoming and respected place of healing.

Mission Statement

Helping young people and their families to fulfill their potential.

Vision Statement

To be a recognized leader in the delivery of quality care and skill-based services for at-risk young people and their families.



Value Statements

We believe in:

- The right to a safe, stable, nurturing, and healing environment;
- The right to be treated with dignity and respect;
- The uniqueness and strength of individuals;
- Providing individuals with the skills needed to make positive choices;
- Healthy relationships;
- Meeting the spiritual and cultural needs of individuals;
- The importance of family;
- Assisting individuals to achieve independence in the community;
- Promoting best practices;
- Advocating for individuals.

Philosophical Statement

Knowles Centre is committed to developing collaborative relationships, providing holistic care, responding to unmet needs, and adhering to best practice standards.





President's Message

I don't recall a time when there has been more in the news about the issues facing CFS than the past year. At March 2014, more than 10,600 children and youth were in care. This does not include families with children that were intact but receiving services from the various agencies throughout the Province.

The stories that catapulted these children to the public eye were never positive. We were all horrified by the unthinkable circumstances and senseless deaths of young people at times when they needed protection more than ever.

Sadly, it took such tragedies for the public to begin to understand the serious issues facing too many children in Manitoba. These children are not juvenile delinquents or simply the product of a bad home. They are often burdened by generations of trauma, addictions, violence and racism that have set them on a dangerous path.

It might seem many were destined for hopelessness at the start, but at Knowles Centre we always believe that a better life is possible—just as we have for over 100 years. But that is not to say we are not affected by the challenges facing the broader system.

- Overall, the young people coming to Knowles Centre present multiple challenges, and have more profound issues than we have historically seen.
- We struggle to keep qualified, experienced staff that can provide the most effective care while we stretch our budgets that don't keep up with the true cost of running our programs.
- Youth in our Group Care Program are still tempted by the streets and those who would exploit them, even when we do our best to provide better alternatives.
- We don't believe our job is done when youth turn 18. We are working harder to give these young adults a chance to stay in care so they truly prepare to succeed.

Knowles Centre's priority is the well-being of the young people receiving our services. We are committed to helping the system to improve, as well. Over the past year, Knowles Centre has been part of the task force to eliminate placing children in hotels. We are actively recruiting and training new foster families to work with high-needs and at-risk young people, including sibling groups. And our Group Care Program is working towards restructuring; our plan is to open two new homes, so we can reduce the number of young people living together.

But that does not mean we don't already have success stories. We are pleased to share some of these good news stories in our annual report. Stories that are not celebrated enough!

As President of the Board of Directors, I want to offer my most enthusiastic congratulations to the young people receiving services from Knowles Centre. They show us all the real strength and courage it takes to overcome adversity.

I also want to recognize my fellow board members, the administration and maintenance staff, the program directors, and especially the front line staff. Together, they are the engine driving change, and creating good news, one young person at a time.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Richard Petri'.

Richard Petri
President
Board of Directors



CEO's Message

It has been another busy year at Knowles Centre (KC). I would like to take this opportunity to share some of the highlights with you:

- Although KC's various programs remained the same size, there was significant work done behind the scenes, with the goal of growing and improving our programs going forward.
- KC submitted a proposal to the provincial government to restructure its Group Care Program. Specifically, to reduce the size of the secure units and to create two new community units. The total number of beds would remain unchanged, but would be redistributed among more units. The rationale for this restructuring is that clients' needs are increasing and smaller units are required to meet their needs.
- KC enhanced its recreation program by hiring a Recreation Coordinator (.5 EFT), who started in January 2015. Moreover, recreation students from the University of Manitoba were embedded in each of the group care units.
- KC's Cultural Coordinator Troy Fontaine and therapist Liz Carlson delivered multiple presentations to KC staff and foster parents on the topic of intergenerational trauma and colonialism. KC also enhanced its Cultural Program by: 1) purchasing a shelter for its sweat lodge, which will allow sweats to occur throughout the year; and 2) working toward the hiring of a permanent female cultural advisor.
- KC staff had multiple meetings with the Provincial Hotel Reduction Task Force. In these meetings KC offered to be part of the solution toward reducing the number of kids living in hotels and shelters.
- KC updated its mission and vision statements.
- KC recruited three new board members: Andrea Sherry, Lea-Anne Stagg, and Lisa Rowe.
- One KC client was selected by Free the Children for a trip to Ecuador to work as a volunteer building a school and teaching English. The trip required \$4,000 to be raised, which was achieved.
- KC therapist, Stewart Halper, retired after approximately 34 years at the agency. KC has always been proud of its staff retention rate, which Stewart exemplified.

Despite these accomplishments, there have been challenges at KC during the past year:

- Many important issues for KC required the provincial government's input and took a full year before reaching a resolution (e.g., verbal approval on the restructuring of the Group Care Program, verbal approval on a new per diem for the Independent Living Program, signed approval on a new four-year contract with MGEU).
- School attendance was less than the desired 70% for at-risk youth. This finding is largely attributed to the significant complex needs of the present cohort of clients living at KC.

In closing, I reiterate KC's commitment to grow and improve its programs, and to advocate for its clients and staff.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Burdz".

Dr. Michael Burdz, C. Psych.
Chief Executive Officer

Board of Directors

(Date elected to Board)

Richard Petri
President
(January 25, 2007)

Tom Donston
Vice President
(September 23, 2010)

Jim Hoddinott
Treasurer
(January 27, 2011)

Rik Skelton
Secretary
(May 26, 2011)

Richard Gooch
(January 24, 2012)

Mark Lubosch
(May 15, 1997)

Lisa Rowe
(October 22, 2014)

Andrea Sherry
(September 24, 2014)

Stacey Soldier
(June 28, 2013)

Lea-Anne Stagg
(September 24, 2014)

Council on Accreditation



We are proud to be one of the few agencies in Manitoba accredited by the Council on Accreditation.

Accreditation is an objective and reliable verification that provides confidence and support to our organization's service recipients, Board members, staff, community partners, and funders.

The standards assure Knowles Centre's services are accessible, appropriate, culturally responsive, evidence-based, and outcomes-oriented. In addition, these standards confirm that Knowles Centre's services are provided by a skilled and supported workforce and that all individuals are treated with dignity and respect.

COA reviews and reaccredits the entire organization, not just specific programs. The community we serve can be confident in the credibility, integrity and achievement of our entire organization.

Knowles Centre Staff

(as of March 31, 2014)

Senior Management

Dr. Michael Burdz, C. Psych.
Chief Executive Officer

Grant Obirek
Director of Finance & Administration

Lauren Hershfield
Clinical Director

Andrea McKenzie
Director, Treatment Foster Care

Dave Purpur
Director, Group Care Treatment

Dawn Vandal
Director, Supported Advancement to Independent Living

External Professionals

Dr. H. Casiano, F.R.C.P.C.
Psychiatric Consultant

Administration

Maureen Britton
Senior Administrative Coordinator

Cathy Gamble
Accountant

James Jeon
Accountant

Elfren (Ding) Raquin
Maintenance Coordinator

Marge Richards
Receptionist

Maximo Setosta
Maintenance Worker

Nic Sumbilla
Office/Building Cleaner

Lee Thomas
Maintenance Worker

Sandie Wagner
Human Resources/Payroll Administrator

Group Care Treatment Program

Roger Endaya
Night Grounds

Brad Esslinger
Outreach Worker

Tiffany Waite
Program Assistant

Kelly Yashuk
Kitchen Coordinator

Unit 1

Karin Henry - Unit Supervisor

Youth Care Workers:

Stephanie Bartelette

Randy Carr

Stacey Ford

Celena Roberts

Walter Taras

Alannah (Smith) Tomchuk

Marilyn Penner - Night Staff

Danielle Hollinger - Unit Recreation Programmer

Unit 2

Paul Clarke - Unit Supervisor

Youth Care Workers:

Craig Calancia

Josh Gatta

Cletus Joseph

Steven McDonald

David Sinkwich

Keran Storm

Shelley Thomas

Samantha Warren

Norm Vawryk - Night Staff

Brad Ross - Unit Recreation Programmer

Marshall's Place

Lesley Gosselin - Unit Supervisor

Youth Care Workers:

Chris Anderson
Kirby Bater
Michelle Bazinet
Taura Gentle
Colleen Keating

Tammi Neumann - Night Staff

Respect House

Juana Schoch - Unit Supervisor

Youth Care Workers:

Cynthia Brown
Ray Forest
Rodger Rieu
Tanya Szwed
Chelsea Welch
Ecko Zimmer

Lindsay Cloutier - Night Staff

Group Care Program Therapists

Liz Carlson
Raul Dimaculangan
Joy Koczka

Treatment Foster Care Program

Tiffany Krueger
TFC Coordinator

Tina Case
Program Assistant

Sonja Whitwell
TFC & SAIL Receptionist

Clinical Case Managers:

Tammy Delarosa
Roni Dhaliwal
Marijana Dumbovic
Pam Freeth
Heather O'Neale
Melissa Santos
Nikki Spigelman
Trudi Tinant

Supported Advancement to Independent Living (SAIL) Program

Case Managers:

Dave Feniuk
Hilary Park
Megan Prydun
Kim Sawchuk

Senior Support Worker

Tiffany Rios

SAIL Support Workers:

Courtney Clemons
Melissa Couto
Lisa Hartwell
Lee Mistlebacher
Randi Mistlebacher
Kendall Mulligan
Heather Poll

Building Staff:

Cyril Gbeve
José Menjivar

Overnight Staff:

Johnson Nkansah
Jennie Sarifa

Day Treatment Program

Raul Dimaculangan
Therapist

Joy Koczka
Therapist

Art Shaw
Support Worker

Sexual Abuse Treatment Program

Kristi Venton
Coordinator/Therapist

Biimautaziwin Cultural Program

Troy Fontaine
Cultural Coordinator and Spiritual Advisor

Staff Service Awards

Knowles Centre is pleased to recognize staff who have served the organization for 10 years or more.

Thank you for your dedication and exceptional service through the years.



Lesley Gosselin
15 years



Randy Carr
20 years



Paul Clarke
20 years

Farewell and Good Luck

Roberta Bartolo
Craig Ebbers
Claire Gosselin
Stewart Halper
Judi Heppner
Terry Horsman
Crystal Lutz
Stephanie Olivier
Rhannel Raquin
Marlise Schwartz
Lea Ann Wilson
Darryl Woloshyn

Program Reports

Group Care Treatment Program

The Knowles Centre Group Care Treatment Program serves 32 youth (aged 12 to 17). It offers two, 10-bed, secure units (one male unit and one female unit) on our campus and two, 6-bed, open units (one male unit and one female unit) in the community.

The program is suited to clients who have been affected by neglect, emotional, physical, and/or sexual abuse, impacts of intergenerational trauma and racism, and feelings of hopelessness, which often contribute to emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Over the past year, Knowles Centre welcomed almost 65 young people to the Group Care Treatment Program. Of course, they were not all with us at the same time; we maintain accommodation for only 32 young people in Group Care. Typically, youth are with us for a few months to a few years.

One of the greatest challenges we deal with is creating a stable home life for the youth when there is so much change going on around them, including the steady arrival and departure of other clients in the program. Creating a sense of normalcy to our client's daily lives helps everyone to deal with such change, and also contributes to our clients' treatment and well-being.

Josh Gatta, a youth care worker with our onsite boys' unit, started a league-ready basketball team. All the group care clients—boys and girls—were invited to try out for the team. We have many skilled players at Knowles Centre and all who came out made the team! Practices are held on weeknights in the school gym, and our team has played against other students, teachers and staff from Knowles Centre and John G. Stewart School. The kids have bonded and really support one another. Even more, each player has scored in building his or her self-esteem. No matter the final game score, all the team players are winners!

Another youth care worker, Greg McKinnon, established a musical "Beats" program. He works one-to-one with youth, and occasionally with groups, to teach music theory and appreciation, and to help youth to express their inner rhythm using digital instruments. The hands on nature of the program appeals to the kids, who often come up with crafty melodies and drum patterns, helping create full-fledged instrumentals. Greg enjoys teaching music production, but it's the kids who keep him inspired with their ideas, contributions and positive response. Great sounds come out of the sessions, made even better to a crescendo of self-pride, sense of belonging, and realized talent.

For activities like the basketball team and Beats, we depend on our caring and dedicated staff. To date, over 90 agency staff have taken training on strength-based interaction with clients. This includes four training sessions that utilized curriculum developed in-house by Dave Purpur, Group Care Treatment Director. This training helps staff to look at clients and situations in a different way, and to always find the positive. By focusing on what is working well, we can begin to reduce negative behaviours.

Finally, 56 staff completed the two-day Mental Health First Aid training, also offered in-house by Dave Purpur and Lauren Hershfield, Clinical Director. The MHFA program aims to improve mental health literacy, and provide the skills and knowledge to help staff better manage potential or developing mental health problems in clients, a family member, friend or colleague, or in themselves.



Treatment Foster Care Program

It has been another exciting year in TFC! We continue to provide attachment-based care to over 80 children in our foster and hybrid homes.

We are extremely proud to have developed our own pre-service training for foster parents. It reflects our core values, and incorporates teachings from Gordon Neufeld, Bruce Perry, Gabor Maté, and Charlie Appelstein, to name a few. It was well received by our first group of foster parents, and we are excited to offer it to others going forward.

Circle of Security (COS) groups are also being offered to all our treatment foster parents. These sessions are led by one of our own Clinical Case Managers, a certified COS facilitator. Foster parents and staff alike say the groups are invaluable. Through the COS lens, they are better able to sort out what their foster child needs, and how best to meet these needs. We anticipate that this will contribute toward placement stability and enhanced parent-child relationships.

Foster families enjoyed a variety of treats and entertainment at our annual Family Fun Day in Kildonan Park on a beautiful day last August. One staff fondly recalls a high-risk adolescent happily piggy backing an adoring toddler foster sibling to the event. Others recall much laughter, good food, and positive interactions, amongst a good dose of joyful chaos.

The first boy placed in our program when he was nine years old will be turning 18 this year! After multiple placements, in the double digits, he found a home. He is excited to move up from being a leader-in-training to a volunteer counsellor at Pioneer Camp. He will be continuing in the program under an extension of care to enable him to complete his schooling. His foster mom describes him as just being "the one...the perfect match!"

We are thrilled that we were able to send five children, including two sibling pairs, to Disney World with Dreams Take Flight again this year! The day was incredible. Even one youngster who tends to view the "glass half empty" couldn't find fault with anything, much to his foster parents' surprise.

Many of the young people in our program have recently reached or will soon reach age 18. We are pleased that some will continue with TFC under an extension of care. This enables them to complete their schooling and/or transition into independent living through Knowles Centre's SAIL program.

In closing, an excerpt from a letter by a 12-year-old girl to her foster parents highlights the importance of people who care: "Having a supporting family that you guys created is one of the best gifts I could have asked for. I know that I can be a lot to handle; I can't even handle myself. I guess I just needed the best of the best and that's what God gave me."

Knowles Centre's Treatment Foster Care Program employs an effective model of care that brings together Knowles Centre's professional treatment services with the strength of caring families from the community.

The Program serves both boys and girls of all ages. Children referred to the program have specialized behavioral or emotional needs and may be depressed, acting out, suffer from a psychiatric illness, or a family crisis. They may have trouble forming relationships, or may be struggling to work out past relationships. Where possible, siblings are placed together.



Supported Advancement to Independent Living (SAIL) Program

Knowles Centre's SAIL Program helps youth living in care of the child welfare system to transition to living in the community as young adults.

With guidance from a support worker, clients build on the skills and competencies needed for future independent living. Once on their own, their support worker continues to follow-up and provide guidance as their confidence and abilities grow.

SAIL welcomes young people ages 16 and over who are living in care and have no plans to live at their family home after they reach the age of majority.

Katherine's life was forever changed when she lost her dad suddenly in 2008. At the time, Katherine* was only nine years old. For years, Katherine and her dad faced the world together, struggling at times, but always as a team. Most of all, Katherine knew her dad supported her dream to be an artist and was always proud of her achievements.

Following her dad's passing, Katherine found herself living with a close family friend who was like an aunt to her. Her aunt supported her passion for art and arranged for art classes while in her care. Over time, Katherine began struggling with the rules and expectations set by her aunt. Eventually, Katherine was moved to a foster home, followed by two others.

Katherine found that while adjusting to each move she had to advocate to continue her art classes. Slowly Katherine resumed her painting. Her renewed commitment helped her to define a goal again, and she put herself back on the right track, only to face a new challenge. Katherine would soon be 18, and that meant that she would no longer have a foster home to live in, yet she didn't feel ready to make it on her own.

Instead, Katherine joined the SAIL program when she was 17. Here, she could practice the skills she would need to live independently in the community, but still have the support that most teens need. In summer 2014, she moved into her own apartment. Like most young people, it was a challenge to learn to budget her money and keep up her laundry and housework while maintaining her grades in school, working part-time and participating in a weekly youth group.

On top of it, Katherine attended art classes a few nights a week and on the weekend. Her referring agency helped to meet part of the cost, but couldn't financially support the amount of classes Katherine wanted to take. Katherine's SAIL support worker and case manager saw the value of such a creative outlet. They knew that without art, Katherine was at risk of falling into a negative lifestyle. With SAIL's support and encouragement, Katherine found a part-time job and applied for and received a sponsor to help pay for her other classes.

Today, Katherine has added another dream. She has been accepted to the Canadian Mennonite University beginning in fall 2015. She is aware it will be a struggle, but that's nothing new to her. Plus, she knows her dad is still behind her all the way.

* Name has been changed.



Day Treatment Program

It is a pleasure to meet Seth*. This 18-year-old young man is familiar to staff at Knowles Centre as well as teachers at John G. Stewart School for his hard work in the classroom and the Culinary Arts program. He has earned a reputation for being friendly, helpful, hardworking, and always with a ready-smile. What made a difference for Seth was a different kind of program where the staff believed in him, and helped him believe in himself.

John G. Stewart School was a new kind of experience for Seth. The 30-minute classes meant he was covering all the required subjects, but in a way that matched his learning needs. He says he liked having gym class twice a day—by releasing some of his natural energy, he was able to focus better in the classroom.

Seth also connected with other students. “Even though there are a lot less kids at the school everyone gets along,” he says. “We all come from a similar lifestyle. We’ve all had troubled times.”

Like his peers, Seth struggled to manage his behaviour and emotions. The school’s student support room was a lifesaver for him; it was a place where he could go to cool down when frustrations in the classroom heated up. Art Shaw, a Knowles Centre support worker, often worked with Seth, first to help him calm down, and then to build strategies Seth could use to manage his own feelings.

As well, Seth met with his Knowles Centre therapist on a regular basis to deal with other challenges. His mom joined the sessions at times, too. For Seth, it was good to know that there was always someone he could talk to in private, and to “let it all out” when he needed to.

Beginning in his second year in the Day Treatment Program, Seth moved from traditional classroom learning to the Culinary Arts Program for many of his credits. Here he learned the theory and hands-on application of culinary arts. Academic subjects like math and literacy were threaded through the work and put to practical application, as well. He was also one of the first students to earn credits in the school’s new program for Grade 11 and 12 students.

Last fall, Seth returned to John G. Stewart School to earn some additional credits before moving on to a community school at the term break. He also took part in the Skills Manitoba culinary arts competition in April 2015 where he competed against eight other aspiring chefs. This great experience strengthened his commitment to continue his culinary arts training after he graduates from high school next year, as well as a few other goals. Most of all, he knows the future is open to him.

* Name has been changed.

The Day Treatment program is offered in partnership through Knowles Centre and the River East Transcona School Division. Students attend John G. Stewart School located on the grounds of Knowles Centre in addition to meeting on a regular basis with a Knowles Centre therapist. The program is directed toward adolescents (aged 12 to 17) experiencing emotional and behavioral difficulties in school and the community. Students may be living at home, in foster care, or a group home.



Sexual Abuse Treatment Program

The Sexual Abuse Treatment Program provides treatment services at no cost to clients referred by the four CFS Authorities (i.e., General, Northern, Southern, and Métis) and accepts direct referrals from the community (e.g., Child Guidance Clinic, schools, doctors, clergy, self-referrals, etc.).

The SATP provides treatment services to males and females, aged 4 to 21 years, who have previously made a disclosure of sexual abuse or have a sibling who has made such a disclosure. Non-offending parent(s)/caregiver(s)/guardian(s) may be referred to the program if they are caring for or have cared for a child who has made such a disclosure.

Imagine not having many memories from your childhood. When Jill* began the Sexual Abuse Treatment Program at age 16, she could not recall many of her birthdays or holidays and was only able to provide limited details about her childhood. This is not unusual for someone who has been through the trauma of sexual abuse. Jill was abused by her father from ages 5 until 10. She disclosed the abuse to members of her family, but few believed her. This compounded her pain.

Jill felt isolated and had difficulty trusting herself and other people. She felt the abuse was her fault, and had tried overdosing many times for relief from her feelings. In time, Jill was diagnosed with depression and anxiety, and sought help from the Sexual Abuse Treatment Program.

In therapy, Jill learned that her lost memories were part of dissociation, a coping mechanism she developed to deal with the trauma of abuse. She recalled the feeling of floating above herself, as if watching from the outside and a feeling of total numbness. She also talked about how she often imagined herself in another place or time and losing touch with her surroundings.

Everyone can experience a “normal” range of dissociation. It could be as simple as getting lost in a movie, daydreaming, or driving a common route like as if on auto-pilot. Jill, however, was on the extreme end of the dissociation continuum, so much that it actually placed her at risk for further victimization.

Through therapy, Jill learned to conceptualize what happened to her in a way that is easier to live with. She overcame most of the shame and guilt from the abuse as she realized that it was not her fault. The SATP therapist helped Jill make order out of chaos.

“After coming to a few sessions, I noticed some changes,” says Jill. “I wasn’t depressed anymore and I began to see a change in my attitude and outlook. I don’t think about the trauma as often; but when I do, I am able to understand that it is now in the past. I can go on with my life and look forward to the future. It is amazing what therapy has done for me.”

Jill has been able to maintain a job and attend school. She is no longer dissociating on the extreme end of the dissociation continuum and has been creating many lasting memories.

Jill is not alone. This year, the SATP provided therapy to 16 young people affected by sexual abuse, as well as non-offending parents or guardians who want to reduce the negative impacts of trauma on children and youth and assist in their recovery. Such services help ensure the best possible progress in recovery.

* Name has been changed.



Biimautaziwin Program

It certainly doesn't feel like another year with the young people from Knowles Centre has passed until you start looking back and you realize how time flies when you're fishing on a boat, off the shore or on top of the ice. Time flies when you are hiking trails in the Whiteshell and drinking Labrador tea along the way. A year passes by quickly when you attend ceremonies and gatherings on a monthly basis. Or even when you're singing with a drum, making a story stick, or a small soapstone carving here at Knowles Centre.

Like previous years, many Knowles Centre youth and staff participated in ceremonies and gatherings organized by *The Turtle Lodge* located in Sagkeeng First Nation. The Turtle Lodge is a place for sharing ancient Indigenous knowledge and wisdom for people of all races and nations. This year we took part in the Sun Dance, Ancestor, and Contrary Ceremonies; the Igniting the Fire Gathering; and *Makoose Ka Win / Vision Quest Rites of Passages*. The Turtle Lodge initiated two others this year: *Ogimakamik* – the Leadership Gathering, as well as a monthly Full Moon Ceremony. These ceremonies and gatherings continue to foster youth with an excitement to learn more about their culture, history and traditions. The youth always leave these ceremonies expressing a desire to learn more.

As well, youth and staff took part in the *Manito Abi* Festival of All Nations in September along with the People's Choice Music Awards, an International Pow Wow and a trade fare.

Throughout the year, Mary Maytwayashing worked with the girls in the *Biimautaziwin* Program teaching traditional songs and knowledge, conducting sweat lodge ceremonies and mentoring them in the Full Moon Ceremonies. In February, Mary, along with Lynne Brownlee, a teacher from John G. Stewart School, and three courageous girls performed two songs for a crowd of 900 people at the *Yes I Can Awards* in Winnipeg. Mary is a well-known ceremony leader, knowledge keeper, a mother and grandmother from Dog Creek/Lake Manitoba First Nation in the Interlake.

A special thanks to the Graham C. Lount Family Foundation for their generous donation toward the purchase of a building package from Future Buildings. Once erected, the building will provide a place to hold sweatlodge ceremonies throughout the winter when temperatures are too cold, or during the rainy days of spring, summer and fall.

I would like to take this final opportunity to give thanks to everyone who made these experiences possible. Your efforts to help are appreciated.

Meegwetch!



Knowles Centre believes that Aboriginal youth and their families have an inherent right to practice their culture and traditional healing methods to obtain holistic health and wellness. Through the Biimautaziwin Aboriginal Cultural Program, clients are assisted in their exploration of all aspects of Aboriginal culture so they may develop and maintain self-esteem and self-identity.

The voluntary program is open to all children and youth receiving services from Knowles Centre but was established primarily for the 60 to 70 percent of clients who are of Aboriginal descent. However, everyone is encouraged to participate and benefit from the teachings provided.

Culinary Arts Program

The Culinary Arts program combines education, training and experience to prepare students for future employment in a restaurant kitchen. Students begin working in the protected environment of the Knowles Centre kitchen, and will progress to working in a community setting. In addition to vocational skills, clients will develop personal and employability skills necessary to gain and maintain employment.

The Culinary Arts program is expanding outside the kitchen to the supply and demand side of food production.

With support from a provincial environmental sustainability grant, John G. Stewart students and staff from the Culinary Arts and Outdoor Education programs teamed up to stake out and dig up gardens in a protected courtyard next to the Knowles Centre kitchen. With the addition of wooden planters and fresh soil, the gardens are ready to grow. The Culinary Arts students are already looking forward to picking their first crop of lettuce to be used at the Knowles Centre annual general meeting in June. We anticipate that the garden can be expanded using kitchen compost, and the growing season extended with a greenhouse.

Work in the kitchen continues to grow as well. In preparation for the holiday season, students and staff busily prepared dainties, cabbage rolls, meatballs, and perogies by the hundreds. Many of our students were able to take some home to share with their families, and staff were pleased to purchase treats for their own holiday tables. All of the students have learned the finer things about the trade.

New Culinary Arts instructor Paul Lemire joined the program at the start of the second term. Paul brings a passion for cooking, and years of experience in both commercial kitchens and the classroom. His hands-on teaching and learning methods have resulted in mouth-watering aromas calling everyone to the kitchen for fresh cinnamon buns, great pizza, and endless other tasty sweets and savories. As well, Paul is introducing new menu items that demonstrate that healthy and nutritious food is tasty.

Paul led a team of Culinary Arts students and staff to assist at the RBC Convention Centre in January. Here students helped to prepare the luncheon served to guests at the Hillary Rodham Clinton speaking engagement. It was a great learning opportunity for the students. They saw the importance of planning, coordination, and teamwork to creating a memorable dining experience. But, it was also great exposure for the Culinary Arts program, and for employers to see the capability of our students.

Looking forward, the Culinary Arts Program is planning additional field trips to the RBC Convention Centre and MTS Centre for various events. This not only helps the students to gain more knowledge about the industry, but encourages their own drive to excel.



Awards

Vicki Whitehead Memorial Award

Vicki Whitehead was the Supervisor of Unit 1 and an adamant supporter of Aboriginal cultural programming at Knowles Centre. Sadly, Vicki passed away in February 1997 while an employee. In honour of Vicki's memory, an annual award was established in 1998 to recognize a participant in Knowles Centre's Biimautaziwin Aboriginal Cultural Program who has embraced the spirit of the Aboriginal culture. In 2014/2015, Cheyenne S. is being recognized with the Vicki Whitehead Memorial Award for her commitment to Aboriginal Culture.



The Justice Jim Smith Memorial Award

The Knowles Centre Board of Directors established the Justice Jim Smith Memorial Award in 2001. Jim Smith was not only a long-time member of the Board but a well-respected and caring individual in the community. The award is presented once a year to a graduating Child and Youth Care student at Red River College who has demonstrated a commitment to the profession through volunteering in a school, agency or organization that provides services for at-risk children and youth. The recipient of this year's award was Hayley Symak. The award was presented at the graduating ceremony in May 2015.



Arthur E. Prior Memorial Scholarship Fund

The Board of Directors established the Arthur E. Prior Memorial Scholarship Fund in 1987 to assist former clients of Knowles Centre in pursuit of their continuing education. The endowed fund was created with a bequest from the estate of Arthur E. Prior.

The Arthur E. Prior Scholarship Committee approved four scholarships this past year. Congratulations to Jamye Lovering who is completing the ECE III Management Program at Assiniboine Community College; Dylan Gioncola who is completing Grade 11 and 12 high school; Josh Mulvihill who competed in the Skills Manitoba Provincial Competition; and Sarah LaCroix who is studying Business/Computer Science at the University of Winnipeg.



Public School Awards

High school can be a difficult period for many. It can be even more challenging for a youth in the Day Treatment and Group Care programs and who is transitioning back to a community school from the specialized environment of John G. Stewart School. It can also be very challenging for those in the SAIL program who must balance their studies with managing their own home and possibly working part-time. The Public School Award recognizes those students who take on this responsibility and succeed. Eligible students must attend at least one semester in a community school and earn at least one credit. Recipients are given a plaque and gift card to recognize their accomplishments.

We are pleased to recognize the following recipients of the Public School Award for 2013/2014:

- Ethan C., Day Treatment Program
- Erin F., SAIL Program
- Mikala H., SAIL Program
- Gabbi N., SAIL Program
- Samson P., SAIL Program

Congratulations to all our students!

Performance and Quality Improvement (PQI)

Knowles Centre continues its commitment to Performance and Quality Improvement. Through PQI, we ensure that our programs and services are effective and efficient, and responsive to the ever-changing needs among our various stakeholders.

Knowles Centre's PQI process covers seven sections, and culminates with an annual report that depends on the collective efforts and input of all of our stakeholders. The seven sections that comprise the PQI report are:

- The quarterly case record review assesses the quality of client files.
- The monthly risk management report analyzes reported incidents, accidents, and grievances generated by clients, in order to discern trends and to reduce risk.
- The stakeholder satisfaction surveys are completed annually to solicit opinions about different aspects of Knowles Centre's services, and to identify how Knowles Centre could improve, according to our stakeholders.
- The client outcome measures are analyzed semi-annually (using standardized measures) to assess how effective treatment is in helping clients to improve their functioning and to achieve treatment goals.
- The John G. Stewart School annual report includes an analysis of data collected on attendance, class completion rate, and change in student achievement scores.
- The staff retention rate is analyzed annually.
- The annual audited financial statement shows the fiscal health of the organization.

The 2012-13 PQI report was distributed to Knowles Centre board members and staff. Knowles Centre senior managers continue to work on completing the 2013-14 PQI report, which coincides with the school calendar from September 1, 2013 to August 31, 2014. Completion of this report has been delayed because senior managers had to address other priorities first. However, this report will be ready for distribution in the fall of 2015. Moreover, Knowles Centre continues to gather data for the 2014-15 PQI report. As the above information conveys, the completion of the annual PQI report is a time-consuming task.

Knowles Centre is accredited by the Council on Accreditation (COA), an internationally recognized accrediting organization based in New York City. Performance and quality improvement (PQI) will be a key criterion for future re-accreditation by COA. The purpose of PQI is to demonstrate an organization's effectiveness of treatment and efficiency of resource management. Consequently, Knowles Centre developed and implemented a PQI plan to monitor its attainment of these objectives.

Fundraising Report

Knowles Centre had another exciting year of community support and growth. Our funders and friends have made generous gifts, enabling us to continue to provide a safe and inviting environment for youth recovering from the trauma they have experienced.

While Knowles Centre's core programs are largely supported by the provincial and federal governments (Group Care, Treatment Foster Care and Supported Advancement to Independent Living (SAIL) Programs), the United Way of Winnipeg (Sexual Abuse Treatment Program), and a partnership with the River East Transcona School Division (Day Treatment Program), we depend on the generosity of our community to cover some of these programs' costs and the costs of support services, recreational activities, special projects and infrastructure.

Other exciting initiatives include the Annual Charity Croquet Classic and Knowles Centre's Professional Development Conference Series.

We had a successful conference featuring Dr. Kenneth Hardy in November 2014 that focused trauma recovery from the perspective of foster and adoptive families. Knowles Centre will continue this professional development series with conferences and workshops that aim to help not only our own staff but the larger community as well.

The 2014 Charity Croquet Classic was held August 19 and, as always, was a lot of fun. The Charity Croquet Classic is a family-friendly fundraiser that allows participants of all ages and experience levels to have a great time playing a fun game, network, enjoy a historic venue, and to share a delicious dinner as a wrap up to the day.

On behalf of all our clients and our staff, Knowles Centre sincerely thanks you for your trust, compassion and generosity. With your grants and donations, Knowles Centre is able to go above and beyond for our clients, giving them what they otherwise wouldn't receive, and help them to build a better life and a better future for all of us.



Rewards of being a foster parent

Long-time foster mom CZ recently shared her thoughts on her fostering experience. The names of the children have been changed.

Knowles Centre

From: CZ (Treatment Foster Care Parent)
Sent: Thursday, March 12, 2015 4:34 PM
To: TFC Clinical Case Manager
Subject: Being a foster parent

I've done a lot of reflecting. I'm actually laughing at myself A LOT! I knew fostering wasn't going to be all rainbows, butterflies and puppy dogs! The unknowns are the worst, but everything really just does work out. I'm so lucky to be doing this.

I thought back to the first year Kayla came to live with me. We had a lot of growing. It was really tough. Now it's pretty easy.

Then I thought about James. It's been a bunch of ups and downs but he's come so far as well and it hasn't even been a year. Mostly lots of hidden surprises. Lol

We are all constantly learning, growing, making mistakes and moving along. I have seen such huge transformations with them. I'm amazed at them. They are tough little people, that's for sure. I have every hope for them. I believe in them.

Now that I know them it is pretty easy to navigate their highs and lows. Not sure why any new placements scare me. It's just the unknowns but really once we know them there's always a way to work with them. So can you tell me why I really under estimate myself? Lol

I spoke with Tamara at Central Intake and she has come to the conclusion, from what Paul and I have reported, she feels that I'm what he needs; and the specialized clinic will offer everything we need. Pretty reassuring.

I work with the best agency that is always there for me. The training and contact with others is motivating, confidence building, and supportive. I'm feeling pretty good. Every single foster parent has the exact same hopes, fears, worries, struggles, successes, etc. ... all from the heart.

I think that our home is pretty easy. I mean you put the time and effort in and everything does just fall into place. I am feeling really blessed right now. I think Judi said it best a while ago, your kids may not be the hardest but they are doing so well because they are with you. Really wasn't believing that until now. Other kids may be tougher but I'm patient and have all the time in the world. However my kids are simply the best and I want to enjoy every high and low with them. I just love them, that's it!

Ending my sentimental rant. I just need to believe in myself ... more!

CZ

Stay positive! ♥

