



**KNOWLES CENTRE INC.**

Helping Youth Find Their Path: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow

## **MEDIA ANNOUNCEMENT**

April 14, 2009

### **SAIL Program Assists Youth Transition from Child Welfare System to Independent Living**

(WINNIPEG) – Knowles Centre CEO Dr. Michael Burdz announced a new **Supported Advancement to Independent Living (SAIL) Program** to assist youth transition from the child welfare system to living as self-sufficient and empowered young adults in the community.

The SAIL Program pairs youth aged 16 years and over who living in a foster home, group home or treatment centre with a trained Support Worker. Together they will assess the client's strengths, and identify and build on the skills needed for future independent living. The focus is on money management, problem solving and decision making, time management, housing, household management, education and employment, personal care, recreation, and accessing community resources.

Once clients are living on their own, they will continue to have regular in-person contact with their Support Worker. This is a time clients can put their new skills into practice, while continuing to receive coaching and assistance from the Support Worker. Clients may remain in the program until they are 18 years old, or discharged from the care of a CFS agency.

Whenever possible, the SAIL program is delivered in the community, instead of a classroom or institutional setting. Moreover, clients are not given a selection of choices, but explore their own alternatives, and decide what is right for them. This helps clients gain the confidence to become self-sufficient, as well as to develop skills needed to live independently.

Each year, more than 500 young people “age out” of the child welfare system in Manitoba and begin living independently. Yet, many have not acquired the skills necessary to manage adult tasks, and few have the adequate support of family to assist them. (By comparison, 84% of all Manitoba young adults aged 18 – 19 years continue to live with their families; and 53% of young adults aged 20 – 24 still live with their families, according to Statistics Canada.)

Without assistance, youth leaving care are at increased risk of low education, unemployment, poverty, unplanned pregnancies, exploitation, homelessness, mental health issues, criminal activity, and addictions.

SAIL Program development and start-up costs were supported by a grant from The Winnipeg Foundation.

Knowles Centre began in 1907 as a home for boys, and today serves both boys and girls aged birth to 17 years with behavioral and emotional difficulties from Manitoba, northwest Ontario and Nunavut. In addition to the SAIL Program, Knowles Centre provides group care treatment, day treatment, sexual abuse treatment, and treatment foster care programs.

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