



KNOWLES CENTRE INC.

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

INSIGHTS

Volume 16 • Number 3 • Fall 2008

An inside look at the programs and services of Knowles Centre Inc.

Camp 2008 a success!



A proud fisherman shows off his catch. It was the first fish reeled in during the week he spent at Knowles Centre's camp with other clients from Unit 2. Way to go!

As Knowles Centre's Group Care Program clients returned to school this fall, they carried more than new school supplies with them. Most of the students carried lasting memories created at camp over the summer.

For four weeks in July, each of our four Group Care Treatment Units took their turn at Knowles Centre's camp at Big Whiteshell Lake. It was a terrific week for each group, made even better because most had not been to camp before due to the storm that devastated the area in June 2007. Even the changes that nature had wrought to the surrounding woods could not hamper the fun. *(Read the highlights from camp on beginning on page 4.)*

Thank you to our donors whose generous support helped make camp possible in 2008, including:

- Many individual donors
- The Paterson Foundation
- Kiwanis Club of East Kildonan - Ladies Auxiliary
- Manitoba Community Services Council
- Oak Park High School - Youth in Philanthropy Program Committee
- EH Price
- Wawanesa Insurance
- Winnipeg West Rotary Club for funds to purchase a new pedal boat
- Kiwanis Club of East Kildonan for funds to purchase boat safety equipment

Because of you...

Knowles Centre can offer more to the youth receiving our services because of people like you. Each year, your support helps us meet the costs of programs and services that are not covered by our core funding.

We believe the best way to thank you is by spending your gift in ways that make a meaningful difference to clients. But we also want to let others know how important your support is to us.

The next issue of *Insights* will include a list of all our 2008 donors. The amount of your gift will not be included; nor will we share your information with other agencies. We know that some people would still rather not be recognized in this way. If you would prefer to remain anonymous, please call us at 339-1951 before Nov. 7.

Inside....

- Message from our CEO
- Gerri Wiebe elected Board President
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A season of reflection, a time for growth

Autumn ... what a beautiful time of year! While nature and even poets may look upon the season as a time of reflection, it is also a time for growth and new beginnings at Knowles Centre.

Our Treatment Foster Care Program continues to expand. In early September, 62 individuals, representing 40 families, attended an information session on the program. Twenty-five families are presently participating in a 10-week training session, with another 25 families scheduled to participate in a 10-week training session later in the year.

We are also looking forward to implementing our new independent living program this fall. This program is intended to help clients successfully transition from the child welfare system into independent living. We are especially pleased that The Winnipeg Foundation has made a significant investment in this program by supporting our start-up costs.

Of course, we also have much to look back on with satisfaction from the past months.

Troy Fontaine, our Aboriginal Cultural Coordinator, facilitated a sweat at Knowles Centre for a delegation from Iceland. This has become an annual event and a remarkable way to share the Aboriginal culture with other nations of people.

Our senior management also put in significant efforts over the past months. The team worked diligently on the re-accreditation process with the Council on Accreditation (COA). COA representatives visited Knowles Centre in June and gave us a favorable preliminary report. As part of the process, Knowles Centre clients completed a consumer satisfaction survey. The majority of clients rated our services favorably. We will be investing more time, effort, and resources in the area of Performance and Quality Improvement going forward.

Summer was a busy time for our clients as well. As you will read, many of our youth attended camp this summer ... most for the first time. This would not have been possible without the support of many generous friends to Knowles Centre. Our clients also began to take part in a new year of activities as part of our Aboriginal Cultural Program, supported once again by the Graham C. Lount Family Foundation.

I am pleased to welcome back all our staff and clients who spent time away from Knowles Centre over the summer. I am confident the upcoming year will be busy and meaningful. These are exciting times at Knowles Centre.

Best wishes.



Michael Burdz, Ph. D., C. Psych.



Gerri Wiebe Elected Board President of Knowles Centre



Knowles Centre is pleased to announce that **Gerri Wiebe** was elected President of its Board of Directors effective June 19. Ms

Wiebe has been an active member of the Board since April 2005. During her tenure, she held the positions of 2nd and 1st Vice President, chaired the Personnel Committee, and co-chaired the committee to celebrate the agency's centennial anniversary.

Ms. Wiebe is excited to be heading Knowles Centre's Board during this important period of growth. In the past, she has supported the establishment of the expanding Treatment Foster Care Program. More recently she encouraged the development of the new independent living program which aims to assist young people to successfully transition from the child welfare system to community living.

Ms. Wiebe was called to the bar in June 2004 and currently is an associate with the firm Killeen Chapman, where she serves as a defence lawyer. She has extensive experience

working in community relations for Canada Safeway, Winnipeg's Christmas Cheer Board and Variety-the Children Charity of Manitoba.

Knowles Centre is grateful for the commitment of Ms. Wiebe and the other members of our Board of Directors. Through their dedication of personal and professional expertise and experience, we are able to improve the lives of vulnerable and at-risk children and youth in Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario.

Igniting the Fire 2008: Youth join gathering of all nations

Youth from Knowles Centre reconnected with the spirits of ancestors and gained from wisdom shared by modern day elders at a gathering for all nations earlier this fall.

The youth were participants at the third annual *Igniting the Fire* gathering held from September 2 to 5. The four-day event, open to all First Nations people as well as people of all other races, is a celebration of traditional drums, song, ceremony, teachings, healing, new friends and laughter.



Knowles Centre youth helped set up for Igniting the Fire, a gathering of more than 750 people of all nations. They later gained wisdom from elders such as Kathleen and Robin Green (pictured above).

The gathering was held in Whiteshell Provincial Park, adjacent to the Bannock Point Petroforms site. This sacred place has been long known by Aboriginal people as *Manitou Api*, meaning "Where the Creator Sits" and is the origin of the name of the province of Manitoba. Since time immemorial Aboriginal people have gathered at this site to exchange knowledge and

wisdom, medicines, ceremonies, and prophesy.

Despite three days of rain, the 750 to 800 participants were enthusiastic and involved. The discomforts were worth the knowledge and wisdom of the elders, all agreed.

Each day began with a Sunrise ceremony, followed by breakfast. Afterwards, a panel of elders was chosen daily to address the crowd and share the knowledge and wisdom they have earned throughout their lives. Many of these teachings were passed to them from past generations; other teachings came from their own personal lives. Many funny stories and

jokes were shared in a timely and respectful fashion, often used to lighten the mood after sharing and addressing serious subjects. Healing ceremonies each evening brought the day to an end.

Many Knowles Centre clients were involved in the event set-up, including helping to build the main lodge, hauling *tipees*, poles and supplies to the site. During the gathering, Knowles Centre youth helped with garbage clean-up, fire tending and assisted elders.

The youth took from the gathering a renewed sense of pride, knowledge, wisdom and a feeling of belonging. They were a part of a gathering that was historical and unique.

Contributed by Troy Fontaine, Biimautaziwin Aboriginal Cultural Coordinator.



Highlights from a wonderful year

Week by week during the month of July another group of clients from Knowles Centre's Group Care Treatment Program packed their vans with clothing, outdoor gear, and lots of food and headed to camp at Big Whiteshell Lake. For most of the children, it was their first time at camp, and an opportunity to swim in the lake, paddle a boat, or fish. Most of all, it provided them with a break from dealing with the serious issues that brought them to Knowles Centre and gave them a chance to simply enjoy being kids.

Each of our Treatment Unit Supervisors prepared a report on their group's week at camp. We are pleased to share the highlights with you:



The boys from **Clyde Road** were keen on fishing and swimming, but also took time to visit West Hawk Lake, Rainbow Falls and a museum in Nutimik. A few quiet evenings were spent playing Texas Hold 'Em that had the boys so caught-up that they failed to notice that Art (Support Worker) was dealing from the bottom of the deck a few times! And even though the boys complained about having to go to bed early, they were always fast asleep before too long and up early and rarin' to go the next morning.

Six boys from **Unit 2** proved that four out of six days of rain cannot dampen your spirit if you're committed to a great time! They had fun swimming, boating, biking and spending a day at Falcon Lake. As always, fishing was a highlight. In fact, two boys caught their first fish: one from the dock, and one from the new paddle boat. Our first fisherman (*pictured left*) was so excited, he raced the fish up from the dock to show everyone his catch, then ran back to release the fish back into the water. (Yes the fish lived!) Moments like this make doing everything in the rain all worth while.



The girls from **Respect House** initially had some anxiety about being away from the city and so far away from "everything" but soon learned there is much to see and do at camp. One girl in particular spent hours along the shore line hunting for little critters she didn't know existed before. She was fascinated by turtles, and her mission was to catch one before the week was up but quickly learned that turtles aren't as slow as they are made out to be.

The girls from **Unit 1** were thankful to one client, who almost didn't attend, for making camp fun. The client was AWOL when her Unit left for camp, but luck was

Making memories that last a lifetime

on her side when she was able to reach the Unit Supervisor the next day (who happened to be back in the city for a short time) and was still invited to camp. In the past, this girl seemed to be on the run more than she has been present and had become disconnected from staff and her peers. But she was in her glory at camp. She participated in every activity and encouraged others saying: “Just try it – you’ll have fun – you’ll see.” On the last night at camp, she single-handedly arranged a dance competition which was a highlight for everyone. Camp is a unique opportunity for staff to connect with the kids in a way that they can’t while in the city. This year, while staff strengthened relationships with the girls in our care, we also were able to re-establish a relationship with the one that was on the brink of being lost.



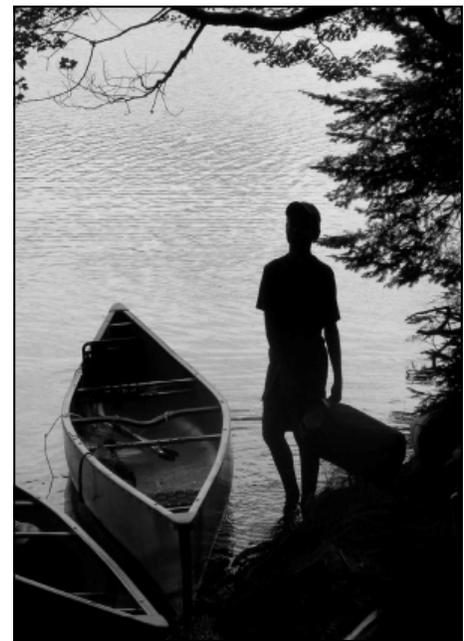
Upon our return to the city we asked the kids what part of camp stood out for them. Some said “canoe wars” (a camp game), others said “the beach” or “bonfires.” But there was an enthusiastic and collective “YEAH” when one of the girls said “everything” was the best.



If only a week at camp was enough to overcome the challenges faced by the clients at Knowles Centre... But, sadly we know this is not so.

Our clients face serious emotional and behavioural difficulties that require on-going and intensive interventions. Through the commitment of our unit supervisors, youth care workers and professional therapists we can begin to make a difference in young lives. With help from our donors, we were able to do even more this summer.

Our clients attended camp with their peers and saw another way, a better way to live. As they fully resume their programs this fall, they will carry the memories from a wonderful summer to remind them where their journey through healing and wellness can lead.



This report was prepared with contributions from:

- Dawn Danylchuk, Supervisor, Unit 1;
- Dave Purpur, Supervisor, Unit 2;
- Marshall Gardner, Supervisor, Clyde Road; and
- Juana Schoch, Supervisor, Respect House.

Foster Parent Profile

Creating Change: The Power of Family

It's truly a pleasure to meet Michael and Triena Doolan. The couple glow with a happiness that comes from inner peace and contentment. Not that theirs is an easy life, but a life they have chosen for themselves and rewards them richly.

Both in their 50s, Michael and Triena are at a time in their lives when many couples are enjoying freedom again since their children have reached their teens. Yet, in January 2008, the Doolans and daughters Katie and Teresa welcomed Danielle*, 7, and Peter, 5, into their hearts and home.

Danielle and Peter are wards of a Manitoba child welfare agency and were placed with the Doolan family, who foster through Knowles Centre's Treatment Foster Care Program. Sadly, serious problems faced by their birth family created emotional and behavioural difficulties for them. Their foster parents Michael and Triena provide a loving, stable home and are part of the professional team that is helping the children to overcome issues they face.

The Doolans are first-time foster parents, but are not new to helping children. "We first considered fostering about 10 years ago, but decided the time was not right for us," explained Michael. During the intervening years, Triena ran a home-based day care and the family provided respite care for other families with foster children. In 2007, the family decided the time was right

and began the involved process to become licensed foster parents.

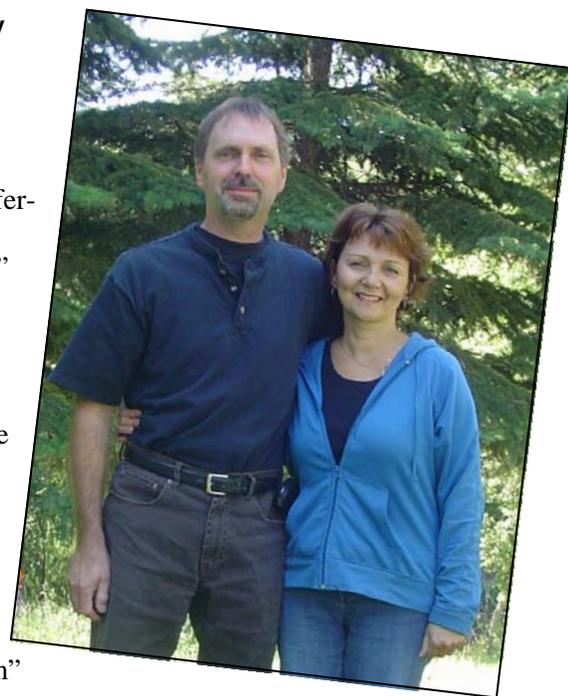
"We knew fostering would be different from respite work, but are experiencing things never expected," they say. "I thought Danielle and Peter would become like our own children quickly, but it hasn't worked out that way," says Michael. "Their personalities were influenced by their birth family and a previous foster family and they have very different needs than our daughters."

Still, Danielle and Peter chose to call their new foster parents "mom" and "dad" on their own. Michael says it was as if the children wanted to define their role by designating the parents in their new foster family.

The children are developing well in the positive environment of the Doolan home. Peter, a joyful boy, is developing a deep interest in music. He is learning to play guitar like Michael and shows real talent on the drums. As well, he likes to sing as Katie and Teresa play piano.

Danielle has taken longer to find her place. "At first she didn't play," says Triena. "She has so much energy that she often couldn't focus on one activity for any length of time." With lots of patience and ongoing therapy, Danielle has improved and now enjoys art, finishes 100-piece puzzles, builds with Lego and takes part in activities like other seven-year-old girls.

Michael and Triena cherish the improvements, but say change has come slower than they anticipated because of the children's special needs. "We have had to re-think our own expectations and learn to deal



Above: Michael and Triena Doolan

with parenting issues we haven't dealt with before," says Triena. As an example, she says: "I've learned not to worry about what other people think when one of the children has a tantrum in public."

Fostering can be frustrating, but also very satisfying they say. The children are proud to introduce their mom and dad to their friends and are quick to give hugs and kisses. The Doolans also receive tremendous support from Katie and Teresa and their extended family, and most importantly, from each other. As well, they have developed a network of communication and support with the school, therapists and Tiffany Krueger, their clinical case manager from Knowles Centre.

It is a greater challenge than they imagined but say they have found strengths within themselves and their daughters they didn't know they had. "After this, we know we can do anything," they say.

** Names of children have been changed.*



Camp ideal setting for drug & alcohol awareness workshop

School may have been out for the summer and the kids were having fun at camp, but they were also learning some very important lessons.

From August 25 to 29, five clients from Knowles Centre's Group Care Treatment Program took part in an in-depth awareness and prevention workshop at the agency's camp at Big Whiteshell Lake. The goal of the camp and workshops was to prevent and/or reduce drug and alcohol use by the clients.

The workshop used material adapted from an existing Addictions Foundation Manitoba program and focused on education and awareness, effects and consequences, refusal skills, dealing with peer pressure, coping skills, and alternative activities.

Being at camp meant that girls could try some fun and healthy alternatives to drugs and alcohol, such as swimming, hiking, and enjoying the outdoors immediately before and after the twice-daily sessions. In fact, all sessions were meant to be fun and engaging. Coordinators Lauren Hershfield and Dawn Danylchuk combined learning with games such as "Drug Jeopardy" which featured

the dangers as game topics, and "Balloon Stomp" which focused the consequences of use and addiction. Other games, videos, discussions, arts and crafts, and group exercises were also part of the workshop.

Staff and clients alike agreed the week was a success. The girls were motivated to take part in the program and all left with a better understanding of the risks of drug and alcohol use. And although it has only been a few weeks since their return, staff are noticing positive changes in the behaviours of some of the participants.

In the past, the program was offered over a 10-week period and based out of Knowles Centre's Winnipeg facility. The intense camp setting was much more effective, say Dawn and Lauren. The girls were drawn to the opportunity to spend a second week at camp (many had attended earlier in the summer), and were far from negative peer pressure, access to

drugs and alcohol, and other distractions of city living.

Knowles Centre hopes to expand the program in the future by offering workshops to additional at-risk clients from Knowles Centre as well as other agencies and schools.

Special thanks to Youth Care Workers Jennifer Norenburg, Larry Storey and Sonya Dubois who brought their knowledge and expertise to the successful workshop and camp.

Knowles Centre also recognizes AFM Outreach Workers Steve Campbell for leading a session during the week and Christine Schoefel for helping us to adapt AFM's program for our clientele.

LeeAnne Sinclair receives Jim Smith Award (photo correction)

Knowles Centre regrets that we were provided with the incorrect picture of **LeeAnne Sinclair**, recipient of the 2008 Jim Smith Memorial Award, for our summer newsletter. The correct picture appears at right.

LeeAnne is a recent graduate of Red River College's Child and Youth Care Diploma Program and was recognized for excellence in academics and community volunteerism by a student.



Supporting Future Social Service Professionals

Knowles Centre welcomed two social work students from the University of Manitoba who are completing field placements in our programs. Through this partnership, we help enable future social service professionals to gain the knowledge, skill, and attitude required in their careers.

Knowles Centre also is pleased that **Lynne Buckle, B.H.Ecol.**, is joining the Treatment Foster Care Program full-time from September to November. Lynne is working toward her M.S.W. degree and is interested in a future career in foster care. At Knowles Centre, Lynne will take on the role of a clinical case manager under the close supervision of Tiffany Krueger and other clinical case managers from the Treatment Foster Care Program Team. She also has 10 years experience working with Winnipeg Child & Family Services.

Jennifer Ross, a BSW student, will be shadowing therapist Raul Di-maculangan two days a week until April 2009. Under Raul's supervision, Jennifer will attend group care unit meetings, case conferences, consultation meetings with Knowles Centre's consulting psychiatrist, and observe therapy sessions, with the consent of clients and their guardians. In time, Jennifer may have the opportunity to provide individual therapy with clients. Jennifer brings experience as a family support worker to her placement and is eager to learn more about Knowles Centre and its programs as she works toward a career in social services.



Insights is published by:

Knowles Centre Inc.
2065 Henderson Highway
Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada
R2G 1P7

Telephone: (204) 339-1951
Fax: (204) 334-4173
Email: info@knowlescentre.ca
Web: www.knowlescentre.ca

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*Comments, suggestions and
inquiries are welcome.*

Staff News

Sandra Franz, M.M.F.T., joined Knowles Centre as a clinical therapist in the Group Care Treatment Program in August. She will serve as a consultant to staff in Unit 1 as well as meet with clients and their families from both Unit 1 and Respect House. Sandra brings with her 30-years experience working with youth and families through the City of Winnipeg's Community Services, and maintains a private practice in family therapy. Sandra is pleased to be at Knowles Centre and is already enjoying working closely with the staff and clients.

Recreation Coordinator **Brian Johnson** left Knowles Centre in July to pursue other career interests. As a member of the Group Care Treat-

ment Team for over eight years, he was instrumental in shaping the outdoor recreation program, coordinating annual camps as well as encouraging clients to pursue new interests, especially sports. Brian will be missed by his co-workers and clients alike.

Congratulations to Unit 1 Youth Care Worker **Christine Gale** on her marriage to John Samborski on August 23. Christine and John were wed in a small ceremony that took place at Knowles Centre's camp at Big Whiteshell Lake. Christine has been a full-time staff member in Unit 1 since 1999 and has worked as a relief staff since 1996.