



KNOWLES CENTRE INC.

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

INSIGHTS

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

Day Treatment Program marks 30th anniversary



Photos clockwise from top left: Therapist Joy Koczka, students, Clinical Director Lauren Hershfield, Chef Jeff and student, Therapist Stewart Halper (left) and Support Worker Art Shaw.

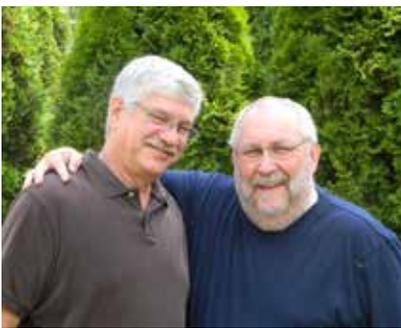
resolve issues.

Previously, many young people had to move to a group living program to get the intense academic and behavioural supports that the Day Treatment Program offers, recalls therapist Stewart Halper. Instead, the Program has successfully helped hundreds of young people to stabilize so they can remain at home with their families.

The Program is open to both boys and girls ages 12 to 17. However, boys are predominantly enrolled because the issues they face are typically more disruptive to their community schools. Many students struggle with ADHD, undiagnosed or untreated mental health issues, or social issues that cannot be adequately dealt with in community schools.

When students act out in physical or threatening ways in a community school, they tend to become socially isolated or even expelled for several days, which makes things worse, observes Art Shaw, a support worker with the program. At John G. Stewart School, students who become overwhelmed can visit the resource room. Here Art and other support staff help students to calm down, re-focus on their schoolwork, and get back to the classroom.

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In the early days of the Day Treatment Program, a female student was upset with a truant officer ... really upset. The screaming girl climbed onto the officer's van and kicked at the windshield. Witnessing the incident, the school principal turned to the Knowles Centre therapist and with dry wit remarked, "Well, this isn't in the manual."

Certainly, this was unusual even for the Day Treatment Program, but staff were quick to calm the girl and settle the situation. Almost every day since, the staff and students have overcome challenges not typically seen in community schools.

This year marks the 30th anniversary of the Day Treatment Program, established by Knowles Centre and the River East Transcona School Division to provide services to young people

from the Division's catchment area who are struggling in school due to emotional or behavioural challenges.

Students attend RETSD's John G. Stewart School located on Knowles Centre grounds and meet regularly with a Knowles Centre therapist. This unique partnership is based on a shared commitment to helping students and their families, and a philosophy that every day is another chance to start anew.

This means the school environment is different; classrooms have fewer students, and classes are only 30 minutes, one teacher covers almost all subjects so he or she can support individualized learning, twice daily gym class, and a predictable school day. As well, Knowles Centre therapists support students to find their own strengths and better strategies to

A heartfelt message of appreciation

A young woman from the Group Care Treatment Program gave her thanks to the staff of our on-site group care unit as she was preparing to move to Respect House, our girls' group care unit in the community. She asked us to share her letter so everyone could know how grateful she is for the support she received.

Thank you for all the support I was given too especially when I needed that. I was never more than welcomed in a place. I'm glad I gave it a chance to have trust in other people. I never trusted anyone or anywhere. I was always jumping into places where I don't belong and never wanted but here. At first when I moved in I was so shy; now I'm talkative. Couldn't believe it!

After 8 months, I made a lot of good relationships and friendships. Made a lot of memories. Sad to go but it is time I have to move on.

Camp provides a break from city life

The boys from Unit 2 and Marshall's Place enjoyed camp twice this summer. In total, seven boys had a chance for a wilderness experience at Knowles Centre's camp at Big Whiteshell Lake.

For many, a highlight was watching Unit Supervisor Paul Clarke cringe at baiting his fishing hook with worms. Thankfully, two clients from Northern Manitoba were only too happy to help out. For these youth, a week in the woods gives them a chance to display their outdoor skills in ways they can't in the city.

For all campers, the time away provides an opportunity for them to escape the negative temptations that are too easy to find in the city. Activities like biking, hiking, fishing, canoeing, swimming, roasting marshmallows, and visits to other beaches are infinitely more appealing and fun, says Paul.

Most of all, he says, camp gives kids a chance to get away from many of the issues they face. Staff get to see kids in a different way—laughing, joking and just being kids like they should be.



The experience was not lost on the girls, either. MH liked everything to do with the water: fishing from the dock or boat, jumping into the lake from the rock, and hanging out at the beach and making new friends.

NK agrees there is so much fun stuff to do at camp. "You don't have to worry about being bored," she says. "There's so much stuff to do." NK added that taking a spin in the paddle boats with staff is a great way to bond.



All of you were there for me through my good and worse times and I am thankful. Even when I lost my uncle, my friend, and my grandpa—especially on my grandpa's first memorial day and my brother's memorial day—it was the hardest but I made it through thanks to you guys.

I have a lot to say but I just can't remember what to say, that sucks. I'll miss every each of the staff. You guys may sometimes piss me off to the max but sill you guys make me laugh like crazy. I learned how to manage my anger also. Sometimes I miss going "MIA" every week, but then it wasn't worth it at all. I just thought of it, it's not worth it ...

Okay, that's all.

I am who I am as of now because you taught me how to use my manners and how to manage my diabetes. Most of all, how to control everything.

Just want to thank you all.

Bye now.



Day Treatment Program

Different kind of program makes a difference

It is a pleasure to meet Seth*. This 17-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. Few might have described him this way when he first joined the Day Treatment Program in 2010.

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.

For parts of his second and third years, Seth moved from traditional classroom learning to the Culinary Arts Program. Here he learned the theory and hands-on application of culinary arts under the direction of teacher/chef Jeff. Academic subjects like math and literacy were threaded through the work and put to practical application, as well.

In his fourth year, Seth returned to the classroom to earn credits in the school’s new program for Grade 11 and 12 students. In the fall, he will return to John G. Stewart School to earn some additional credits before finishing his high school education in a community school.

Seth is already thinking about his future. He has been enjoying his summer landscaping job, which resulted from his positive effort in the Work Experience Program and may continue in that work, but knows he also has the skills to work in a restaurant. Most of all, he knows the future is open to him.

* Name has been changed.



Group care home renamed Marshall's Place

Knowles Centre held a celebration on June 11 to rename its boys' community group care unit as “Marshall's Place” in remembrance of the home's long-time supervisor who passed away in December.

In addition, the agency announced the creation of the Marshall Gardner Music Scholarship. Throughout his 34-year career, Marshall shared his love of music with the youth, many of who developed their own passion for singing and playing guitar. The first scholarship is expected to be awarded in June 2015.

Photo (l. to r.): CEO Michael Burdz, Carol Gardner, and Group Care Director Dave Purpur display a plaque commemorating the name change.



Continued from page 1

Refreshingly, students are more understanding of each other because all have been through similar situations. For many, it is the first time they feel like they belong.

Students typically attend John G. Stewart School for two to three years, enough time for students and their families to begin to address problems, to develop healthy coping strategies, and to mature and find a better outlook.

Still, success can look different for each student. For many, it is getting back on track academically and emotionally, and transitioning back to a community school or vocational training. Others complete Grade 10 and become eligible to apply to enter an apprenticeship program, if not immediately, sometime in the future.

While the core of the program has

not changed much since 1984, new opportunities have been opened up to students over time. Some of the current favorites include a five-day camping trip to the Whiteshell each spring, a one-day ski trip each winter, involvement in the Free the Children WE Day activities, Biimautaziwin cultural programming, earning credits through the Culinary Arts program, and the new Work Experience program.

And most recently, John G. Stewart School expanded to offer Grade 11 and some Grade 12 high school credits so more students can continue to benefit from the positive atmosphere of the program.

Patience is key for both staff and students, says Stewart. Change doesn't happen overnight, but when it does come, it reminds us all that there is always potential for a positive future.

Staff News

Treatment Foster Care has seen a lot of staff activity in the past few months. Staff offered their best wishes to Booth College social work students **Matthew Gooch** and **Jessie-Lee Beyak** who completed their work practicum with the program in May.

Birgit Dotzlaw and **Marianne Carroll** each joined us for a portion of the summer in term positions as receptionist.

Judi Heppner, a clinical case manager with the program, left in July to manage a community-based housing and supports program for people with mental health concerns.

Roni Dhaliwal, MSW, joined TFC in August for a one-year term as a clinical case manager. Roni brings experience working with a mobile crisis unit, front line social worker and foster care clinician, and special investigator with the Children's Advocate.

SAIL welcomed three new staff. **Dave Feniuk** has joined the program

as a case manager in March, **Kendall Mulligan** joined us as a support worker in June, and **Megan Prydun** joined us in August as a case manager. All three bring past experience and enthusiasm for working with youth.

Congratulations to **Sheldon Hol-**



gate, recipient of the 2014 Justice Jim Smith Memorial Award, a scholarship sponsored by Knowles Centre and awarded to an outstanding student in

the Child and Youth Care program at Red River College. While the award is open to all students in the program, we are especially pleased that Sheldon has been working with Knowles Centre as a relief youth care worker in our Group Care Treatment Program for the past year.

Knowles Centre conference features Dr. Kenneth Hardy

Knowles Centre will host a professional development conference featuring Dr. Kenneth Hardy on Nov. 6 and 7, 2014.

Dr. Hardy is an internationally recognized clinician, author, educator, and consultant specializing in family therapy with oppressed and traumatized populations.

His presentation will focus on trauma recovery in foster and adoptive families, and the clinical demands for therapists and other human services professionals working with children in these settings.

For more information, contact us at www.knowlescentre.org or call (204) 339-1951.



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Comments, suggestions and inquiries are welcome.