



INSIGHTS

Volume 20 • Number 1 • Spring 2012

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

Camp builds lasting memories for youth

By *Alix Richards, Recreation Coord.*

When many of us think back on the summers of our early years, we think back to times spent playing outside and taking advantage of sunny days. For some of us this meant a week out at camp, heading out with our family for a weekend camping trip, visiting the family cabin.

While many of us look back on these days fondly, the reality is that these rich childhood memories of escape and adventure to new places have not been amongst those described by all of today's youth. Fortunately, for Knowles Centre's clients, camp is available!

As the first signs of summer are seen so is the excitement surrounding the opportunity for fun in the months to come. For youth (and staff alike), the summer is a time to unwind and forget about every day stresses. The John G. Stewart Outdoor Education Centre, or Knowles Camp, on Big Whiteshell



Alix Richards, Recreation Coordinator at Knowles Centre



Lake has proven time and time again that even a short time at camp can provide youth with the opportunity to simply be kids.

Time is spent running around the grounds in free play, fishing off the end of the dock, going for a paddle, biking, hiking, collecting bugs, and of course swimming! While much time is invested in enjoying camp itself, the camp offers youth with the opportunity to capitalize on many more activities and the opportunity to instil lifelong memories that are truly endless.

Camp is not only a time to create lasting memories for our youth but also a time where lifelong lessons are learnt and where healthy future interests are developed and supported. Camp is in reality, a form of treatment, and one that strongly compliments other forms of treatment offered at Knowles Centre.

“At camp you can learn new things you’ve never done before. There’s so much freedom to explore the wilderness! It’s a break from city life, a vacation. The campfires were the best, looking out at the sunset, roasting smores and just having fun!” - Megan, from Cottage 1

Despite camp's endless and invaluable benefits, the funds to support our youth's camp experience is one that requires support from a variety of sources. The camp is not funded by the government or other CFS agencies, and it costs almost twice as much to send a child to camp as it does to provide treatment in the city.

Knowles Centre works hard to ensure that sufficient funds are raised to make camp possible for the youth in our care, but we couldn't do it without generous support from our community.



This beautiful carved sign greets camp visitors, courtesy of students from the John G. Stewart School.

SAILing towards success

Knowles Centre and other social service agencies work hard to care for children in the child welfare system, but as these youth reach the age of majority and leave care, many are unprepared for the changes and challenges that lie ahead. Many lack basic independent living skills, or the confidence and ability to make decisions about day-to-day living in the community or about their future life.

Knowles Centre's SAIL (Supported Advancement to Independent Living) Program was created in 2009 to fill this need. The program started out small but played a large and very successful role for clients. The program currently serves almost 20 youth, with a healthy waiting list of clients waiting to begin.

Knowles Centre's SAIL Program helps those living in care of the child welfare system to gain the skills and competencies they need to transition to independent living in the community as prepared young adults. Without this additional help, many former child welfare clients have a higher risk of becoming homeless, being exploited, being involved in drug or alcohol abuse or participating in crime. A recent study* on homelessness revealed that 43% of respondents had been in the care of child

welfare as a child or youth.

The goal of the SAIL Program is to assist youth through their transition, becoming self-sufficient and empowered members of the community; and it is working. The program has had great success, and the referrals to the program keep coming in.

To better meet the needs of the clients, the program will soon be changing. A satellite location off Knowles Centre's main campus will be opening in June. This new location is closer to downtown, and will include a combination of office space and apartments that will be available to SAIL clients while they are participating in the program.

Currently, the vacancy rate in Winnipeg is at a record low, making it extremely difficult and time consuming for people like our SAIL clients to find safe, affordable housing. Securing apartments for our clients can take months of precious time significantly cutting into time that could be spent on further developing life skills. The new SAIL apartments will allow clients to move into an apartment soon after they begin in the program so they can begin applying and further developing their independent living skills.

Once clients have graduated from the SAIL apartments, they will move into an apartment of their very own in the community. The time spent with their support worker will decrease until they are fully independent, but until that time they can rely on assistance with unexpected problems, emotional support and guidance from the caring staff of SAIL.

*The Winnipeg Street Health Report 2011, study was sponsored by Main Street Project and funded by the Government of Canada's Homelessness Partnering Strategy

Key focuses of the SAIL Program:

- Money management and consumer awareness
- Food management
- Personal appearance and hygiene
- Health
- Housekeeping
- Housing
- Transportation
- Education
- Job seeking skills
- Job maintenance skills
- Emergency & Safety Skills
- Knowledge of community resources
- Legal issues
- Pregnancy, parenting & child care
- Interpersonal skills

Caring for the world

Congratulations to Jocelyn Beaudry!

Jocelyn, a student at John G. Stewart School and currently living in one of Knowles Centre's group homes, was chosen from over 15,000 young people who attended a WE Day Concert to take part in a three-week volunteer trip to Kenya beginning in July 2012. Only 15 other Manitoba students were selected for this once-in-a-lifetime op-



portunity.

In Kenya, Jocelyn will help build a school and a medical facility, help transport fresh water, learn Swahili, and spend time with the local children. This life-changing journey is part of the WE Day movement, an initiative of the Free the Children organization, committed to helping youth make a positive dif-

ference locally and globally.

This is an amazing opportunity for Jocelyn, but her journey will not be without challenges. Jocelyn has already been working hard to fundraise for the trip – the costs include transportation, accommodation, food and other essentials such as a passport, medical insurance, specialized clothing, camera, and more. In just a few months, Jocelyn, with the help of staff at John G. Stewart School and community members, met and exceeded her fundraising goal of \$6,000.

Knowles Centre to host conference: *Treating Complex Trauma in Adolescents and Families*

Knowles Centre is happy to present the *Treating Complex Trauma in Adolescents and Families* conference with Dr. Martha Straus May 23, 24 & 25, 2012.

This inspiring conference will provide participants with vital skills for dealing with adolescents and their families by being a part of the latest research and discussion of the issues. It is our hope that this will be the premiere of an annual conference series, bringing new research, techniques and skills to those who work with troubled youth and their families.

The conference has two sessions:

Session One—*Day by Day: Making a Difference in the Lives of Traumatized Children and Adolescents* is May 23. This session is tai-

lored towards youth care workers, parents, foster parents, educational assistants crisis line and support workers.

Session Two—*Adolescents in Crisis: Treating Complex Trauma* is May 24 and 25. This session will be of particular interest to therapists, counselors, psychiatric nurses, social workers, psychologists, teachers, school clinicians and school administrators.

For more information or to register, visit www.knowlescentre.ca.

The conference's keynote presenter, Dr. Martha Straus, is a professor in the Department of Clinical Psychology at Antioch University New England Graduate School in Keene, New Hampshire, and adjunct instructor in psychiatry at Dartmouth

Medical School. She maintains a private practice and consults in the U.S. and Canada to schools, hospitals, community mental health centers, and social service agencies on child, adolescent, and family development, attachment, trauma, and therapy.

Straus is the author of numerous articles and four books including most recently, *Adolescent Girls in Crisis: Intervention and Hope*, and the highly acclaimed *No-Talk Therapy for Children and Adolescents*.

The conference is sponsored by The Winnipeg Foundation, Mental Health (Manitoba Health) and Spiritual Health Care Branch, and Family Services and Housing Child Protection Branch.

John G. Stewart School welcomes a new drum

Students at the John G. Stewart school who are part of the Strong North Wind Eagle group regularly meet at Knowles Centre to learn traditional Aboriginal song and drum music.

Having a second drum located in the school will allow more students to learn the traditional teachings.

"The drum represents the heartbeat of our original mother... Mother Earth. The drum carries the prayers of the people and its sound travels the earth spiritually in the four directions. The drum unlocks memories of gifts that help people live a good life," says Troy Fontaine, Cultural Coordinator at Knowles Centre.

Fontaine also helped in the blessing and feast ceremonies for the drum. The drum was taken into a sweat lodge and a spirit was called forth to enter the drum. Fontaine later learned that it was the spirit of a

north bear (polar bear) that entered the drum.

"Even in the harsh environment of the tundra, the polar bear continues to live in harmony with its surroundings," explains Troy. "The mighty animal always moves forward in search of life and calls on its great courage to overcome the challenges it faces."

To honour the spirit, students will paint the image of a polar bear and paw prints onto the drum. Students are also carving a stand for the drum.

After the Strong North Wind Ea-

gle group has had enough time to practice with the drum, they hope to perform in the near future at ceremonies and at other schools.

The drum was purchased from elder Bill Crompton, with financial assistance from the Aboriginal Academic Achievement Grant.



Left: John G. Stewart School's new drum.
Above: John G Stewart School Principle Kevin Mackay, Bimautaziiwin Cultural Coordinator Troy Fontaine, and elder Bill Crompton.

Four Season's Learning Circle

Knowles Centre's Treatment Foster Care program is currently running a pilot group called **Four Season's Learning Circle**. TFC staff observed that the majority of children in foster care are of Aboriginal heritage, but there is a shortage of Aboriginal foster families.

As a result, the foster children sometimes feel isolated because they may look different and have very different experiences than others in their new family, new school and new community.

Knowles Centre recognizes the importance of helping children to connect with the positive aspects of their own culture and Aboriginal role models. This program allows foster parents and children to participate and learn about Aboriginal culture together, thus fostering a positive experience and relationship building between the children and the adults caring for them.

The program has been very successful and will likely be repeated in the future. It uses community elders and other resources to pass on traditional teachings (such as smudging and natural medicines) and incorporate song, dance and crafts.



Staff News

Youth Care Workers **Scott Friesen, Larry Storey** and **Miranda Meier** have recently left Knowles Centre to pursue alternative opportunities. Their clients and coworkers wish them the best of luck in their future endeavors.

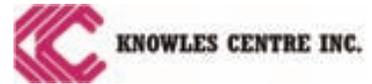
Arnaud Church delivers Easter to children

Once again, the Arnaud Mennonite Church, located in the Interlake region, donated Easter baskets for the children living in the Group Care Program at Knowles Centre.



Members of the congregation put together chocolate, toys and other treats. The baskets are especially welcomed by children who are living away from their families.

Insights is published by:



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Comments, suggestions and inquiries are welcome.

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Invites you to attend the

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Wednesday, June 13, 2012
at 12:00 noon

Richard Gooch Gymnasium
(John G. Stewart School)
2069 Henderson Highway
Winnipeg

Special presentation by students

All guests are invited to stay
for a lunch prepared by the
Culinary Arts students
following the meeting at
Knowles Centre

RSVP by June 8th
(204) 339-1951

or

info@knowlescentre.ca