



KNOWLES CENTRE INC.

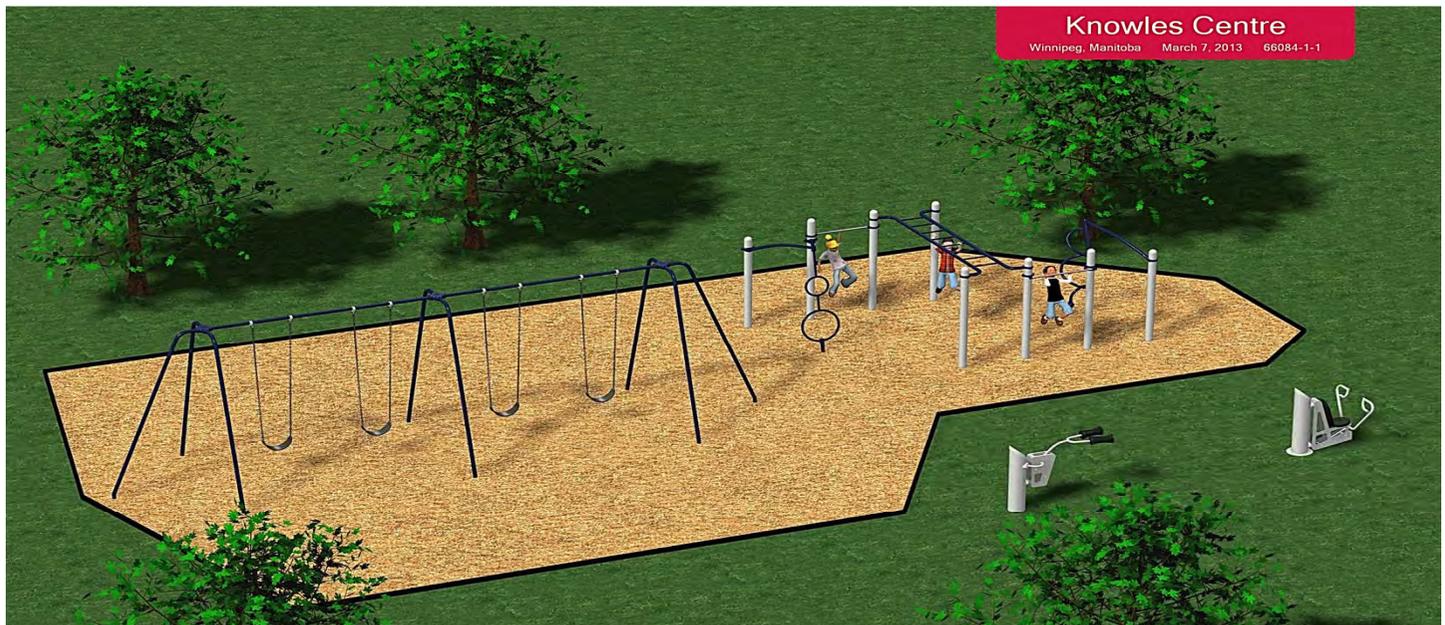
Helping Youth Find Their Path: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow

INSIGHTS

Volume 21 • Number 1 • Spring 2013

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

Play and Outdoor Fitness Equipment New Tools to Help Clients



Knowles Centre is fundraising for a new youth-oriented playground and outdoor fitness area. Play areas are known to improve self-esteem, and physical and mental wellbeing. This new play and fitness area will have a big impact on the health of our clients and will be another tool for treatment and recovery.

The fact that school playgrounds throughout Winnipeg and Canada proudly display state-of-the-art play structures is no coincidence. In fact, the common school-playground duo is the result of the efforts of a highly motivated group from the late 1880s consisting of mostly mothers and educators who advocated for a safe and supervised area for play for the young people of their communities.

The origins of this group stems from the recognition that play is a highly beneficial pastime for children and young people. Play spaces are known to improve self-esteem, mental and physical wellbeing and provide a time when young people can use their imaginations and be creative. Play is also a time when life lessons such as friendship making, the value of social organization and rules, and team building

are learned. Of equal importance is the fact that play is a time when young people can engage in active pursuits at their own pace, of their own choosing, and ultimately get exercise.

For Knowles Centre clients who have experienced many hardships and been largely underserved, play is an important time where they can just be kids again. A playground would add an element of fun to our grounds, improve clients' fitness and provide a safe place where youth can congregate and play for the sake of playing. This concept is supported in the information from a recent training seminar offered to Knowles Centre staff. Charlie Appelstein, a professional in the area of youth care, group care and strength-based treatment supported the idea, suggesting that play is yet another tool for develop-

ment which can be used to foster invaluable skills in the youth whom we serve.

In recent months, a project has been initiated by Alix Richards, Recreation Coordinator from Unit 1, to create a youth-oriented play and outdoor fitness structure on Knowles Centre grounds. Planning for the play and fitness area began by asking Knowles Centre youth what they would like. Some of their ideas include a swing set, circuit-style work-out equipment, and monkey bars. Knowles Centre has also consulted with experts in play in planning this project. As we move forward, the four-season play area is expected to include items on the youths' wish list.

As the funding we receive to provide treatment does not cover important extras

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like a playground, we must reach out to our friends to help us with this project. Knowles Centre has been very fortunate in the past and thanks to various supporters and funders many projects have been actualized and many clients have benefitted.

“Meeting the cost for the play and fitness area is the focus of our 2013 fundraising annual campaign,” says Craig Ebbers, Development Coordinator.

We look forward to keeping you updated on future developments and hope that you remember that this campaign is about playground equipment but even more it is about another way we can improve the lives of young people who depend on us.



Contributed by
Alix Richards,
Recreation Coordinator, Unit 2.

A Chili Lunch for Students



Staff and students at John G. Stewart School enjoyed their third annual Polar Bear lunch on February 27. A warm and delicious lunch of bison chili, garlic toast, muffins and cookies was all prepared by the Culinary Arts students. The annual event helps to show the students that almost anything is possible when they are determined to succeed. Plus the day added some good fun and spirit to a long, cold winter!

Staff Training

No Such Thing as a Bad Kid

Knowles Centre welcomed Charlie Appelstein, MSW, for two, 1-day staff training sessions in February. The New Hampshire-based trainer is recognized as an expert in youth care across Canada as well as the U.S.

The session, *No Such Thing as a Bad Kid: Key Strength-Based Principles and Techniques for Understanding and Responding to Troubled Children and Youth*, is based on Mr. Appelstein's 35 years' experience as a youth care worker and program director,



as well as research of other child development experts. He delivered his sessions with wonderful humour that both held the audience's attention and recognized the unpredictability and often unexpected rewards of working with high-risk youth.

Mr. Appelstein focused on the impact of the attitudes and actions of service providers on the young people in care. The way we think about young people in care, affects our behavior toward them, which affects the child's behaviours

and internal thoughts and feelings, he says.

For example, a youth in care might be described as attention seeking based on his behavior, which often turns others away. Mr. Appelstein challenged all to see the positive side of this behaviour. “Here's a young person that didn't get the kind of attention needed growing up and is reaching out. Thankfully this child believes enough in himself to know he deserves attention!” The role of caregivers, says Appelstein, is to reframe the negative behaviour into a positive, and then help the youth to channel it in a positive way.

Staff also gained insight into a variety of simple, low- or no-cost activities and techniques in which staff can help clients to build their self-esteem, such as games, incentives, positive predicting, working with families, and positive self-talk rhymes.

Seventy-five staff from Knowles Centre and John G. Stewart School attended training over the two days.

Treatment Foster Care

Strengthening Families

Jessie*, 19, lost her own mom six years ago, and her dad has seldom been around. Yet even before her mom's struggles with mental health issues and later cancer, Jessie and her siblings often had only each other. At times, it seemed like a young teen's dream to live as she wanted without anyone telling her what to do, but more often it was a nightmare feeling so alone.

When Jessie learned two years ago that she was to become a mother herself, she was determined to give her own child a different life, but she knew she needed help.

She began by enrolling in a residential program for young mothers, but was not ready to make it on her own after her son Curtis* was born and their time in the mother-baby program was completed.

She and Curtis moved to a foster home with a foster mother who often cared for little ones, but the placement broke down soon after.

Knowles Centre's Treatment Foster Care program placed Jessie and Curtis with Kelly, a kind-hearted and experi-

enced foster mom. Kelly had a knack for engaging youth and always found a place for them in her heart, as well as her home. But she also knew that love was not enough—building a good relationship was key to helping Jessie be her best.

The challenge, says Kelly, was being a role model that Jessie desperately needed, but not becoming a mother to Curtis. Support from the TFC program was crucial. TFC Clinical Case Manager Nikki Spigelman helped identify other community resources for Jessie, arranged training for Kelly, and, perhaps most importantly, was there to listen to them both.

Together, Nikki and Kelly supported Jessie's decision to take part in a community counselling program. Here she is addressing the issues from her own childhood that might otherwise stand in the way of her becoming the kind of parent she wants to be.

Over time, Jessie is finding her stride as a young mother and is developing a healthy bond with her fast-growing son. As well, Jessie has found the confidence to



enroll in a vocational high-school program and will soon graduate with the skills to begin a career in the health-care sector.

Balancing motherhood and school is not easy, but with the support and encouragement from TFC and foster mother Kelly, Jessie is determined to succeed for herself and Curtis.

* Some names have been changed.

Treatment Foster Parent Training

The Art and Science of Transplanting Children



In February and March 2013, Nikki Spigelman of Knowles Centre's Treatment Foster Care program, presented *The Art and Science of Transplanting Children*, an eight-session course developed by Dr. Gordon Neufeld, an internationally recognized Canadian developmental psychologist.

This is the second annual training opportunity provided by TFC for foster parents focusing on Dr. Neufeld's Attachment Theory.

Attachment Theory describes the important way in which a child's relationship with a consistent caregiver helps to set the foundation that will guide his or her perceptions, emotions, thoughts, behaviors and expectations in later relationships, as well as respond to life experiences.

This year's training aimed to help foster parents to nurture attachment and improve the outcomes of foster children placed in their homes. Participants explored their own thoughts and attitudes about caring for an unrelated child, as well as the impact of the placement on the child's development.

Nikki explains that nature helps to create a ready-made bond between parents and their natural children through the senses and an innate nurturing instinct. Creating an attachment between foster parent and foster child often takes pur-

poseful thought and action.

Nikki uses a gardening metaphor to describe the process of helping a child to attach with his or her new family. "It is important not to damage the existing roots of a plant you are introducing to a new garden," she explains. "But, by creating a nurturing environment and providing the much-needed water and sunlight, you help the young plant to develop new roots that will support vibrant growth."

Foster parents want to see children do well, but sometimes the children get 'stuck' because of past issues, Nikki adds. This can contribute to foster parents becoming stuck as well in using more traditional parenting strategies that do not tend to be as successful with foster children. Training helps foster parents to recognize when something is impeding attachment—thus hindering the child's development—and to find other attachment-based ways to help the family bloom.

Put the FUN back in fundraising!

Knowles Centre Charity Croquet Classic



Knowles Centre is proud to host the Charity Croquet Classic. This year's fun and family-friendly fundraiser takes place August 20, 2013 at the historic and beautiful Fort Gibraltar. The first round opens at 3 p.m.

Faster, more fun, and easier than a golf tournament, the Charity Croquet Classic is a great opportunity to give back to our community while having a great time, networking and avoiding those sticky wickets!

Registration is only \$125 per person, or \$350 per team of four. Everyone receives a first-class dinner and a great thank-you gift. Plus, tax-deductible receipts will be issued for a portion of the fee.

Proceeds from this fundraising event will help to ensure that Knowles Centre can continue to provide a safe and caring environment to our clients as they work towards healing and creating a better life.

Space is limited! Register now to reserve your spot. For more information, contact Craig at 204-339-1951 (Ext 160) or cebbers@knowlescentre.org.

Special thanks to Greg Thompson of Thompson Wealth Management Solutions, part of RBC Dominion Securities, who created the Croquet Classic and has gifted this special event to Knowles Centre.

The Board of Directors
of



KNOWLES CENTRE INC.

Invites you to attend the

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Tuesday, June 18, 2013
at 12:00 noon

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

Special presentation by students

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

RSVP by June 14th
(204) 339-1951
or
info@knowlescentre.org

Staff News

The past few months has marked a time of change for several Knowles Centre employees who are embarking on new educational opportunities, or advancing in their careers. Best wishes to **Gail DeChateauvert** (Group Care), **Ben Gammon** (Group Care), **Justin Hicoek** (Group Care), **Alisha Ducharme** (SAIL), **Chelsea Bamendine** (SAIL), **Samantha Tracey** (SAIL), and **Pasquale Pingatore** (Maintenance) as they take on new and rewarding endeavors.

Congratulations to **Keran Storm** who has been selected as Supervisor of Knowles Centre's new Level V community-based group home. Keran has been with the agency for more than 20 years and served in a variety of positions including

administration, on-site and community-based youth care worker. Keran is looking forward to the challenge of providing the care and nurturing in a smaller unit to better meet the needs of our clients.

Congratulations to **Melissa Santos**, B.S.W., who will be taking on a full case load within the Treatment Foster Care program. For the past two years, Melissa has served as the Respite/Support Case Manager for the program. Previously, Melissa completed her university practicum with the program.

Congratulations to **Dave Sinkwich**, Unit 2 Youth Care Worker, on the arrival of his son Dexter on February 3. Our best wishes go out to the new family!

Insights is published by:



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Comments, suggestions and
inquiries are welcome.