



KNOWLES CENTRE INC.

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

INSIGHTS

Volume 24 • Number 2 • Spring 2016

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

Knowles Centre restructures Group Care Program to better assist clients

Change is underway at Knowles Centre. The Group Care Treatment Program, which has grown from our past as a home for boys, is again evolving to provide even better care for the young people needing the most help.

Over the last several decades, the program has accommodated up to 32 youth, including both boys and girls. Running treatment units with 10 high-needs youth has not allowed for enough of the kind of attention and care our youth so desperately require.

Knowles Centre has reduced the number of spaces within our Group Care program from 32 to 28. This is being done by reducing our two 10-bed group care units to six beds each, which will provide a more stable environment for the youth. As well, the agency is opening a new four-bed unit in the nearby community. One of our existing community units is laid out in a way that we can convert it to a co-ed facility, which will create flexibility as we deal with the varying number of male and female referrals. Finally, we have created four stabilization beds for any of our current youth to utilize when needed; these beds are located within our semi-secure units on site.



Group Care Director Dave Purper (centre) and youth care workers Walter Taras (left) and Randy Carr say having fewer clients in units will improve care.

This is an exciting change that will create a better environment for both youth and staff.

Restructuring our Group Care beds has been a long-term goal of Group Care Director Dave Purpur and Clinical Director Lauren Hershfield. “The time and effort put forth by numerous staff at our Centre has paid off; staff flexibility during this restructuring has been an integral part of this goal coming to fruition,” comments Dave.

Many of the young people we work with have had traumatic or turbulent histories. Creating a calm home-like environment, and encouraging strong, trusting relationships with staff are critical to client wellness. What builds strength in a program is the ability to be flexible and change with the times. This change is another step in that direction.

The Board of Directors of



KNOWLES CENTRE INC.

Invites you to attend our

Annual General Meeting

Wednesday, June 15, 2016 at 12:00 noon

Richard Gooch Auditorium @ John G. Stewart School
2069 Henderson Highway, Winnipeg, MB

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

RSVP by June 10th to (204) 339-1951 or info@knowlescentre.org

Culinary Arts student a success at Skills Manitoba competition

Knowles Centre and John G. Stewart School's Culinary Arts program was well represented at the Skills Manitoba Competition. Congratulation to student "SY" for his outstanding work at the annual event held at Red River College on April 14. He prepared a mouth-watering meal of roast pork tenderloin with peppercorn sauce, dauphinoise potatoes, batonnet carrots, sautéed spinach, and fish chowder. "SY" was one of only eleven students in the exclusive cooking competition between Manitoba high school students.

In the preceding months, "SY" worked hard to prepare, committing his recipe to memory, honing his knife skills, and perfecting his technique with speed and precision. He practiced numerous times with the different components that he would need to complete the recipes. Several staff had the opportunity and pleasure to sample his items along the way. The staff were impressed with his culinary efforts and supported him on his culinary adventure. This work paid off for "SY"—he was able to complete his meal in 3-and-a-half hours

allowed by the competition. Even the culinary judges gathered around his station and commented on how proficient he was with his knife skills.

"SY" has been a regular and valuable student in the Culinary Arts program for over a year, contributing to all aspects of the kitchen operations, from cooking for his peers and events, to washing up afterward. "SY" can be relied on getting the job done!

Knowles Centre staff and friends were happy to show their support to "SY" in advance of the Skills Manitoba Competition. Almost 50 staff and guests came out for a fundraising steak lunch prepared by the kitchen. The day earned enough to buy "SY" a knife set, as required by the competition, plus extra to help other students to buy needed equipment in the future.

Culinary Arts student a success at skills competition "SY" is looking forward to the end of the school year and is hoping to put his new learned skills to good use in other projects this summer.



Students at the Skills Manitoba Competition produce tempting professional-quality meals.

Rotary Club and other friends support much-needed facelift to Family Suite



Being away from home can be hard, especially if you are miles and miles away from your family. Each year, many of the young people who come to Knowles Centre for treatment have traveled from remote areas and northern communities, leaving behind their closest relatives for months at a time.

Sustaining family connections is one of the most important aspects of successful treatment. When possible, clients are helped to maintain contact with their family by telephone, letters, and visits home for special occasions and some holidays.

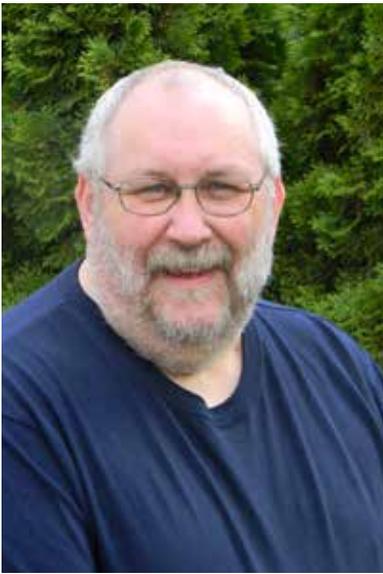
For some families, the expense of travelling to Winnipeg to visit children means little is left over for accommodations. Twenty years ago, Knowles Centre created a guest suite available at no charge to families of children in our programs. Since then, the suite has welcomed thousands of visitors.

This year, with a generous grant from the Rotary Club of Fort Garry, Knowles Centre was able to renovate the suite so many more families can share time together until their child can come home for good.

Special thanks also go to the team of volunteers from National Leasing who joined us in April to paint the room as part of the United Way's Day of Caring. As well, Palliser Furniture donated a shopping credit that allowed up to purchase furniture that completed the room beautifully.

Staff members Sonja Whitwell and Ginette Poirier led the project coordination and design, and our talented maintenance team took care of the flooring and needed repairs.

Art Shaw retiring after 34-years and earns national recognition



Art Shaw, Knowles Centre's Day Treatment Support Worker, is retiring in June after 34 years. For young people who have faced a turbulent past, having a welcoming, patient and trustworthy adult in their lives is a key part of wellness. Art will be missed by the students as much as his co-workers. Art asked to share his own thoughts on his career as he prepares to move onto a new part of his life:

My first day at Knowles Centre back in June 1982 was actually the weekend midnight shift in a group care unit. I had no idea that it would turn into a 34-year career. Looking back, I've met an amazing group of staff and kids. The staff at Knowles and John G. Stewart School are a dedicated group who try every day to give kids hope and make their lives better. As well, the kids I've worked with have taught me so

much; some have been through horrific events in their lives and still show a resilience that is awe-inspiring.

One of my most memorable experiences was more than 20 years ago after I moved to the Day Treatment Program. One student came to us partway through the year from a group home. He was really struggling, there was lots of verbal abuse and anger, and he was miserable all the time. Later, after he began visiting with his father, his entire attitude changed, he had softened. I then understood that he needed to get that one part of his life fixed, and when it was, he was able to show the side of him that was being blocked. He had a great smile and sense of humour, and was so much fun to be around. Since then, whenever I have worked with angry kids, I wonder what is the one part of their lives that needs to be fixed.

I understand that change doesn't happen overnight. One of the things I'll miss the most is seeing the change that comes from working with students over a longer period of time. A lot of the kids I work with are easily overwhelmed and lack the skills to cope in a manner that's appropriate for school. Once they learn some of those skills, it is great to see them handling situations that six months ago was causing them to lash out.



Congratulations Art!

Art Shaw was awarded the 2016 National Child and Youth Care Award by the Council of Canadian Child and Youth Care Associations (CCCYCA).

The award recognizes Child and Youth Care Practitioners who have demonstrated outstanding skills, knowledge, advocacy on behalf of clients and dedication to the profession, and holds recipients as role models to inspire others towards outstanding practice and to promote greater public awareness of the important work done by child and youth care practitioners.

Art's name was put forward for consideration by the Child and Youth Care Workers Association of Manitoba (CYCWAM), who awarded Art as youth care worker of the year in Manitoba for 2016.

The list of Art's contributions is almost limitless. He has taken the lead on professional development, anti-bullying campaigns, connecting families, and always being there for students.

For more information on Art's recognition, visit cyccanada.ca.

PUT THE FUN BACK IN FUNDRAISING!

Join the 2016 Knowles Centre Charity Croquet Classic

on Thursday, September 15 at the historic Fort Gibraltar

Enjoy an afternoon of croquet, a great dinner, and tons of FUN!

SPACE IS LIMITED. REGISTER NOW TO RESERVE YOUR SPOT.

Registration is only \$350 for a team of 4

Contact us at 204-339-4692 or croquet@knowlescentre.org



Sponsored by:



Ray Forest (aka Mr. Personality) retires after 28 years

Ray Forest has made it to “greener pastures” as he would say, a well-deserved time off after 28 years of service as a youth care worker at Knowles Centre. “I don’t believe there’s anyone here who hasn’t heard of Ray, or *Mr. Personality* as he likes to call himself,” laughs Juana Schoch, Ray’s supervisor. “I have to admit his unique style has made for a very colorful work relationship with all the staff who have had the pleasure of working with *Mr. Wonderful*, another self-given moniker.”

The girls at Respect House preferred their own name for Ray—*Poppa Ray*—a title he clearly earned through his caring, fatherly approach with the girls, adds Juana. For example, Ray’s made-to-order breakfasts were one of the many ways he ensured that each girl was made to feel special. Not to be outdone by himself, his famous ribs were a house-favorite that earned approval from more than just the girls.

Aside from his culinary skills, Ray was an entertainer made famous by his numerous one-liners and jokes. Juana recalls, “It didn’t matter whether

you heard the joke a few times, they never lost the value for Ray who gladly repeated them for you year after year. They usually started something like this: ‘Hey! Did you hear about the duck that went to a bar and asked the bartender...?’ Or the cow? Or the chicken? Or the bus driver? or another of the countless protagonists who asked the bartender,” says Juana. “Although Ray’s delivery and punch line weren’t always on cue, his heart and passion for his work with our youth have always been on the mark.”

Whether it was cooking, jokes, painting the girls’ nails, or whatever else had to be done, Ray did his best to make sure the girls could find something to enjoy, even when other parts of their lives could be so difficult.

Staff gathered at Marshall’s Place in March to celebrate all Ray’s contributions, to share fond memories, and to bid farewell to Ray. He will certainly be missed.

Congratulations on your retirement, Ray!



Ray Forest, centre, receives a warm send off by his co-workers at his retirement in March.

Staff News

Youth care workers **Dave Sinkwich** (Unit 2) and **Stacey Ford** (Unit 1) each left in March. Both Dave and Stacy had been with Knowles Centre for several years and made a difference in the lives of the young people in our care over this time. We wish them both the best in their future endeavors.

Nic Sumbilla left Knowles Centre in March after more than four years. Nic served as a building cleaner, who quietly carried out his duties with efficiency and care.

Recreation Coordinator **Alix Richards** left Knowles Centre in May. In her six-and-a-half years at the agency, Alix formed a special bond with the youth, always encouraging them to have fun, love themselves, and be the best they could be. Alix will be deeply missed by staff and youth alike.

Knowles Centre bid goodbye to **Heather O’Neale**, a clinical case manager in our Treatment Foster Care Pro-

gram in May. During her two-plus years with the agency, Heather often worked with the foster parents and teenagers, helping them through the challenges with a high degree of professionalism.

The SAIL program welcomed **Hannah Guthrie**, BFA (Hons.) in March as a support worker. Hannah brings a diversity of experience in working with people in all settings, and has shown herself to be a natural at engaging young people to find their strengths.

Jojo Punongbayan joined Knowles Centre in April as clearer in part of our maintenance team. Jojo has already made himself welcome with his ready smile and kindness shared with staff.

Congratulations to SAIL support workers **Melissa Couto** on the birth of her son Jayce Zachary Levigne, and **Courtney Clemons** on the birth of her son Elijah Kenneth Rae. Both boys were born in April. Everyone is doing well!

Insights is published by:



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Comments, suggestions and inquiries are welcome.