Dylan is a “Hero” in the Day Treatment Program

Like all students who move to a new school, Dylan began his year at John G. Stewart School with apprehension and some curiosity. Yet, by the end of the year, his principal Kevin Mackay, teacher Melissa, and Knowles Centre therapist Wahlea Croxen all agreed Dylan had an amazing year.

Like many others, Dylan struggled with emotional and behavioural issues that made it difficult for him to attend his neighbourhood school. Through the Day Treatment Program, offered in partnership with Knowles Centre, Dylan received counselling and focused attention and guidance for his education.

Over the year, teacher Melissa built a solid student-teacher relationship with all her students. For Dylan, this would be his first positive school experience, which opened up the chance for him to develop friendships with his peers.

Dylan is grateful for the opportunity to be successful at school, at home and in the community. As well, Melissa

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New lending library gives additional support to foster families

At Knowles Centre, foster families are an integral part of the team of professionals who help children and youth facing challenges in life. As part of the Treatment Foster Care (TFC) program’s ongoing support, it established an in-house lending library that provides additional resources for foster families registered with Knowles Centre.

The TFC library includes books and other material suitable for children, teens, and foster parents. Currently, the lending library includes more than 60 specially selected resources. Two of the favorites include:

Murphy’s Three Homes, by Jan Levinson Gilman, is about a pup trying to understand his sad and angry feelings as he is taken from his family and placed in a new home, and then another, and another. Through Murphy, children are better able to understand they are not to blame for their situation, and to understand and cope with their own feelings.

The Time Timer helps children judge how much time is left, even if they can’t tell time. As the red dial gradually disappears, children can easily “see” how much time is left to play, until bedtime, etc. The timer is ideal for children with FASD, ADHD, dyslexia, etc. who may struggle with abstract concepts like time.

In addition, TFC developed a recommended reading list of books available through the Winnipeg Public Library. Please visit www.knowles-centre.ca for a list of TFC library material and recommended reading material, or contact Judi Heppner, TFC Clinical Case Manager, at 339-4692 for more information.
Knowles Centre AGM celebrates success

Knowles Centre held its 2011 annual general meeting on June 15, marking a year of growth and development, and a time of healing and wellness for our clients.

We were especially pleased that our Culinary Arts students were able to prepare and serve lunch to our guests (pictured right). This marked a culmination of a great first year for this new program offered in partnership with John G. Stewart School.

Campaign Chair R.W. (Bob) Cunningham announced our “Creating Spaces, Changing Lives” Capital Campaign has exceeded its goal for our capital program. Another cause for celebration!

In addition, the Vicki Whitehead Award and five Public School awards were presented to clients. Five employees were recognized for long service, including: Lesley Gosselin (10 years), Grant Obirek (10 years), Randy Carr (15 years), Kirby Bater (15 years), and Juana Schoch (25 years).

Finally, the staff of Cottage 1 (girls’, onsite unit) were recognized for their extraordinary effort working with clients following the fire that damaged the unit in February 2011. The staff went “above and beyond” for the 2-1/2 months that the girls stayed in a hotel while repairs were underway.

A copy of Knowles Centre’s annual report is available online at www.knowlescentre.ca.

Compliments to our chefs!

Congratulations to the amazing culinary arts team, led by Chef Jeff, for an outstanding first year. As the apprentices learned the art of cooking and presenting meals they also learned the importance of teamwork and communication. Watching this transformation has been so inspiring that many other students have requested to join the Culinary Arts Program in the Fall.

The confidence of the team was evident in the professional interactions between themselves and the customers. Pleasant smiles and friendly service became second nature to the students.

Chef Jeff was more than a teacher. He became a mentor, guide and trusted adult as the students transformed into their new roles. By the last term, the four students who had begun as strangers were now walking in unison with Chef Jeff, celebrating their transition to true chefs!

Contributed by Wahlea Croxen, Clinical Therapist.

Celebrating Aboriginal Day 2011

John G. Stewart School and Knowles Centre once again celebrated Aboriginal Day in a big way.

On the eve of Aboriginal Day, some students took part in a traditional sweat lodge ceremony, signifying rebirth and renewal.

The Asham Stompers kicked off Aboriginal Day with an invigorating performance of traditional and updated Red River jig dancing for an audience of toe-tapping, clapping students and staff from John G. Stewart School and Knowles Centre. The Manitoba-based, internationally acclaimed group is led by curling entrepreneur Arnold Asham, who also spoke briefly to the audience about overcoming an impoverished background to make a better life for himself.

Later, students and staff gathered for a sacred fire and a performance by the Strong North Wind Eagle Singers, and then gathered for a feast in thanks and celebration of the gifts we receive from Mother Earth.

In the afternoon, the Strong North Wind Eagle Singers helped other students learn to drum in the teepee set up in front of the school. While inside the school, students took part in making Aboriginal crafts or playing traditional games.
Anger program promotes self control

This spring, youth from the Group Care Treatment Program participated in six-week Anger Management sessions. Raul Dimaculangan, Paul Clarke, and Troy Fontaine facilitated the series for males; and Wahlea Croxen and Karin Henry facilitated the series for the female participants.

The program is designed to help participants learn to stop violence by helping them to understand that their behavior is something very much within their control. And it is within their abilities to choose exactly how they want to behave. Through discussion and role play, participants learn, develop and practice various skills and strategies to challenge and change their angry or violent behaviors.

Participants provided positive feedback showing they learned coping strategies that will contribute to their personal health and wellness plans. The female youth also requested a repeat of the program, and twice weekly sessions. They also asked for an Advance Anger Management session.

Contributed by Wahlea Croxen, Clinical Therapist.

Campaign reaches fundraising goal for capital projects; endowment still grows

The Creating Space, Changing Lives campaign has surpassed its goal of raising a quarter million dollars to create space for the Treatment Foster Care and Supported Advancement to Independent Living Programs at Knowles Centre.

Campaign Chair Bob Cunningham made the announcement in conjunction with the recent annual general meeting.

While the Campaign has reached its goal, we will continue to raise money for an endowment fund, which will help to cover future expansion projects and programs.

Thank you for your generous gifts and your support!

Knowles Centre to host Professional Development Series:

Treating Complex Trauma in Adolescents and Families

Knowles Centre will host its first professional development conference in Winnipeg this November. It will feature internationally acclaimed Dr. Martha Straus, a specialist in at-risk children, youth and families.

Treating Complex Trauma in Adolescents and Families will be held November 16, 17 &18, 2011, and presented in two sessions:

Session 1, Day by Day: Making a Difference in the Lives of Traumatized Children and Adolescents, will focus on an A-Z list of 26 proven intervention strategies, as well as what doesn’t work. This session will be of interest to youth care workers, parents, foster parents, educational assistants, crisis line and support workers.

Session 2, Adolescents in Crisis: Treating Complex Trauma will be presented over two days, and will be of interest to therapists, counselors, psych nurses, social workers, psychologists, teachers, school clinicians and school administrators.

All participants can expect to develop vital skills in dealing with adolescents and their families and take part in the latest research and discussion of the issues.

Knowles Centre hopes this will be the first of a series of annual conferences that bring new research, as well as techniques and skills to those who work with troubled youth and their families.

For more information visit www.knowlescentre.ca and click on the conference link or call Craig Ebbers at 339-1951.
Staff support Youth Care Worker rally

Pictured above: On June 3, youth care workers held a rally at the Manitoba Legislature to bring awareness to the need for improved wages. A mix of frontline workers, management and educators attended, including over 20 staff from Knowles Centre.

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Day Treatment Program

praises Dylan for his positive influence in the classroom by role modelling, mentoring and supporting his classmates. Even Kevin refers to Dylan as a “hero” based on the feedback and observations of Dylan encouraging his peers to make better choices in gym class, during lessons or on school grounds.

Dylan’s achievements during the 2010-11 school year represents the goals and objectives of the Day Treatment Program to assist students to make monumental positive changes in their behaviour and in their education pursuits. Congratulations Dylan on a great year!

Contributed by Wahlea Croxen, Clinical Therapist, Knowles Centre.

Staff News

Elizabeth (Liz) Carlson, MSW and currently a Ph.D. candidate in Social Work at U of M, joined Knowles Centre in June. Liz brings many years experience working with youth and children in a variety of settings. She will be working half time with the Group Care Treatment Program.

Melissa Santos, BA, BSW, joined the Treatment Foster Care Program in May as the Respite/Support Case Manager, a new position in the agency. Over the past year, Melissa completed her field practicum towards her Social Work degree at Knowles Centre. She is pleased to be supporting foster children and foster families as a regular TFC staff member now.

Carol May Watson left Knowles Centre in April. Carol dedicated over 15 years as a Youth Care Worker, first a relief/contract worker on grounds and then for 12 years at Respect House. As well, she often represented her co-workers at many Child & Youth Association of Manitoba events and conferences. All wish Carol the best in her future endeavors.

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