



**KNOWLES CENTRE INC.**

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

# INSIGHTS

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

Perspectives in caring

## Training contributes to cultural competency



Many young people who arrive at Knowles Centre for treatment come from families that have faced years of grief, trauma, addictions, violence, poverty, and racism. It is not difficult to see that the troubles that plague the families also affect the wellness of the children.

While the clients at Knowles Centre today were born in the years after the closing of residential schools in Manitoba, the negative experiences of family members who attended the schools created lasting negative consequences that span generations, a phenomenon termed intergenerational trauma. As an example, residential schools deprived young students of a nurturing environment, which stunted their ability to nurture future generations. The schools also worked to

instill shame into the students based on their culture, an injury from which many have not yet healed.

Further, the effects of colonialism, the expansion and imposition of one group of people over another group, contributes to the oppression, and unresolved grief and pain felt by many indigenous people.

Knowles Centre has committed to better understanding the impact of intergenerational trauma and colonialism on the young people it serves. A three-part training series, developed and delivered by employees Liz Carlson (*above, left*), a group care therapist, and Troy Fontaine, (*above, right*) cultural coordinator, is being offered to all staff at the agency.

The first daylong session provides a blunt and revealing presentation of the experiences faced by indigenous people

over the past 500 years. From this, it becomes clearer how the gross disruption to a culture affects the way traditions and values are passed on to future generations. While many staff come away feeling uneasy, they also have a better understanding of the issues affecting clients, says Liz.

The second session examines strategies for addressing the effects of colonization and the importance of healing as part of the decolonization process. While participants are often eager to start creating change, it is important for them to more fully understand and reflect on the information before moving forward, say Liz and Troy. To this end, exploring ways of integrating this new knowledge into care and treatment does not take place until the third session.

The training series is being offered to all employees at Knowles Centre, and has been very well received. Already, there is evidence that staff are looking at the issues faced by clients with a new perspective, and opening themselves to be more compassionate in their interactions.

This is an exciting undertaking for Knowles Centre, Liz believes. She adds that Knowles Centre may be a front-runner among youth treatment centres for offering the three in-depth training sessions on colonialism and intergenerational trauma over a total of two full days to each staff member.

## Knowles Centre achieves reaccreditation in 2013

Knowles Centre is proud to announce it has been re-accredited by the Council on Accreditation (COA).

COA accreditation affirms that an organization meets the highest national standards of best practice and establishes the organization's credibility as effective and professionally sound. In addition, it provides assurance to all of our stakeholders that Knowles Centre is delivering needed, high-quality services in our community, conducting its operations successfully, and managing its funds effectively.

Knowles Centre voluntarily undertakes the accreditation process every four

years. COA accreditation is not an end in and of itself. Rather, it is a process by which our organization can consistently strive for and achieve new levels of excellence.

Knowles Centre is the only treatment facility in Manitoba accredited by COA, and has maintained accreditation since 1988.

A commitment to ongoing performance and quality improvement (PQI) is an important component of the accreditation process. Knowles Centre publishes its PQI report on its website. The report can be found at [www.knowlescentre.org](http://www.knowlescentre.org) in the 'About Us' section.



*Knowles Centre CEO Michael Burdz (left) and Board president Richard Petri.*

## Community support valued at Knowles Centre

### Another year of putting the FUN in Fundraiser!

Knowles Centre held its annual fundraising event known as the Charity Croquet Classic on August 20, 2013. Participants enjoyed an afternoon of fun croquet and a delicious meal at Fort Gibraltar. Together, with support from our sponsors, we raised approximately \$6,000 for infrastructure projects. Special thanks to our great sponsors:



### A Day of Caring

Knowles Centre was the lucky recipient of a Day of Caring, organized by the United Way of Winnipeg. Staff from The Canadian Grain Commission and Acklands-Grainger Inc. volunteered their time to Knowles Centre to help with a number of physically demanding projects. Their donation of time and care is greatly appreciated.

### Ready for an emergency

With the help of the Jewish Foundation of Manitoba and the Kiwanis Club of Winnipeg Foundation, Knowles Centre purchased and installed five automated external defibrillators (AEDs) in our group care units and administration building.

AEDs are used to restart a heart that is beating irregularly, and increase the chance of survival for a person in cardiac distress. Although we hope these devices will never be needed, they may save a life.



## Sexual Abuse Treatment Program

# Helping young people find their voice

Childhood sexual abuse knows no boundaries. Victims are from all cultural, racial, and religious backgrounds and economic groups. It happens to both boys and girls of all ages. Estimates are that as many as one in three people (and up to half of all females) will be sexually assaulted at some time in their life. Regardless of the data, sexual abuse is highly under-reported.

Most often, sexual abuse is committed by someone known to and trusted by the child. This brings with it a great sense of confusion, betrayal, and often guilt. Abusers often threaten, lie to, or reward their victims, adding another layer to the emotional trauma.

Knowles Centre's Sexual Abuse Treatment Program provides a variety of treatment services for those affected by sexual abuse. Such early intervention helps ensure the best possible progress in recovery. Children and adolescents receiving treatment display a wide range of symptoms, such as low

self-esteem, guilt, self-blame, family problems, depression, suicidal ideation, self-harming behaviors, and difficulties with sexuality. Certainly, the effects of abuse can be devastating, but they don't have to be permanent. It is possible to heal. It is even possible to thrive, like former client Amy\*.

Amy was 10 years old when her parents divorced. The next few years were difficult because she rarely saw her mother who worked two jobs to make ends meet. When Amy was 14, her mother began dating Ryan\*, who soon moved in with the family. Ryan took a serious interest in Amy, taking her to movies, buying her new clothes, or just listening to her talk. Ryan seemed to provide her with the attention she missed for so many years.

Soon, Ryan's behaviour toward Amy began to change. He became much more physical, putting his arm around her, stroking her hair, and kissing her on the lips at bedtime. He began entering Amy's bedroom and the bathroom without knocking, and checking on her in the middle of the night. During these visits, he would caress her shoulders, arms, and legs. After several visits, he began to touch her breasts and genitals, telling her how much he loved her and enjoyed being her father. He warned her that she should not tell anyone about their time together because others would not understand their 'special relationship.'

One night, Ryan attempted to have sexual intercourse with Amy, leaving her distraught and confused. Later, when a school guidance counselor noticed that Amy seemed unusually quiet, she asked if she was all right. Amy broke down in tears and told everything that happened.

The police were contacted and Ryan was arrested. Still, Amy's mother did not believe Ryan could do such things, and called Amy a liar and a home wrecker. With such an unhealthy home life, Amy was placed in a foster home. Troubled, she became depressed, often ran away, abused drugs and alcohol, and hurt herself. Twice she was hospitalized following suicide attempts. Finally, after her second hospitalization, she began therapy at Knowles Centre's Sexual Abuse Treatment Program.

With the guidance of the SATP therapist, Amy developed new, healthy coping strategies to deal with her hurt, and worked through much of her shame, fear, and guilt. With help, she saw the abuse was not her fault. This opened up the possibility for her to love herself again.

"I could not have imagined the positive impact these sessions would have on me," she said. "It has been a life changing experience." With this, Amy began to mend some of the relationships that were torn apart when she first came forward, including with her mother.



Being abused was an uncontrollable event in Amy's life that she is not afraid to speak about anymore. Once she was believed, she found her strength and her voice. "I remained strong even when it seemed hopeless and never doubted what I knew to be the truth. What does not kill you makes you stronger," she said.

*Knowles Centre's Sexual Abuse Treatment Program provides counselling services for young people ages 4 to 21 and their families who have experienced trauma related to sexual abuse. Services include individual, family and group counseling, play therapy, and psychiatric consultation. Clients may be referred by a Manitoba CFS agency, school or community resource, or clients may refer themselves. Funding is provided by the United Way of Winnipeg, so there is no cost to clients. Knowles Centre's sexual abuse treatment coordinator/therapist is also available for speaking engagements related to the program and topics related to sexual abuse.*

*\* Names have been changed.*

*Contributed by Kristi Venton, SATP Co-ordinator and Therapist*

## Knowles Centre supports United Way in 2013

Knowles Centre staff and foster parents helped raise a remarkable \$10,732 for the United Way of Winnipeg in 2013.

Staff made generous donations through payroll deduction, plus hosted a fundraising auction.

Special thanks to local businesses and friends of Knowles Centre for donating great auction prizes.

The United Way of Winnipeg funds Knowles Centre's Sexual Abuse Treatment Program so that services can be offered at no-charge to clients.

Each year, the SATP program works with approximately 20 young people and family members affected by sexual abuse.

# Recognizing signs of abuse

Young people often tell us that something is upsetting them without using words. There may be many reasons for changes in their behavior, but if caring adults notice a combination of warning signs it may be time to speak with the child or to call for help or advice.

- Acting out in an inappropriate sexual way with toys or objects
- Nightmares, sleeping problems
- Becoming withdrawn or very clingy
- Becoming unusually secretive
- Sudden unexplained personality changes, mood swings
- Regressing to younger behaviors, e.g., bedwetting
- Unaccountable fear of particular places or people
- Outbursts of anger
- Changes in eating habits
- New adult words for body parts and no obvious source
- Talk of a new, older friend and unexplained money or gifts
- Self-mutilation (cutting or burning) in adolescents
- Physical signs, such as unexplained soreness or bruises around genitals or mouth, sexually transmitted infections, pregnancy
- Running away

## Students unearth history at Knowles Centre

Knowles Centre students literally unearthed a bit of the agency's history as part of the creative arts program at John G. Stewart School. Along with Rob, an educational assistant at the school, the students were scanning the Knowles grounds near its property line near Dan Young Bay and Headmaster Row with a metal detector.

This time, however, the familiar beep didn't lead them to an old nail or extinct penny, but a sterling silver

plate which commemorated Lt. Commander J.R.K. Millen, a supporter of the former Knowles School for Boys and an instru-

mental founder of the formation of the Navy League Cadet Corps in Canada.

While the gift to which the plate was affixed has likely been reclaimed by the soil, Mr. Millen's commitment to the former lasted for decades, in which youth were active members of the Navy League Cadet Corps. The Winnipeg-based cadet corp still bears Mr. Millen's name.



# *With our heartfelt thanks...*

The holiday season brings with it an opportunity to exchange warm wishes and share good fortune. We often do this by exchanging cards, small gifts, or a few extra kind words. This year, many friends of Knowles Centre have made a generous gift to the young people receiving treatment at Knowles Centre. On behalf of the Board of Directors, the staff, and especially the clients at Knowles Centre, we offer the following individuals and organizations our sincere appreciation, and we wish you all happy holidays.

3M Canada Inc.  
ASAP Tree & Stump Ltd  
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Asper Foundation  
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Peter Baumstark  
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City of Winnipeg Community Development & Recreation Services  
Paul Clarke  
R.W. (Bob) and Irene Cunningham  
D & D Sewer and Water  
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The Winnipeg Foundation  
Larry Wozney  
Kent and Janice Zagozewski  
Cathleen Zajaros

Plus many more anonymous donors

## Knowles Centre hosts Dr. Gabor Maté at January Conference

Knowles Centre is presenting Gabor Maté at the Compassion Fatigue and the Myth of Normal conference January 30 and 31, 2014 at Canad Inns Club Regent Casino Hotel, Winnipeg.

The conference will cover compassion fatigue, burn-out, depression, anxiety and addictions in our society. The conference will provide valuable knowledge and ideas for anyone working with youth in care or in the fields of mental health, social service or education.

Dr. Gabor Maté, M.D. is highly sought after for his expertise on a range of topics, from addiction and attention deficit disorder (ADD) to mind-body wellness, adolescent mental health, and parenting. A renowned thinker and public speaker, he addresses audiences all over North America, including professional and academic groups like nurses' organizations, psychiatry departments, and corporate conventions. As a writer and speaker, he is widely known for the power, insight, clarity, candour, compassion, humor, and warmth of his presentations.

Additional information on the conference is available at [www.knowlescentre.org](http://www.knowlescentre.org) or call (204) 339-1951.



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## Staff News

Over the past several months, Knowles Centre continued to grow and evolve. Following are the many staff changes that took place:

Knowles Centre welcomed back **Lauren Hershfield**, clinical director, from maternity leave in September. Thanks to **Stewart Halper**, clinical therapist, who ably filled in during Lauren's absence.

**Sofia Lisogorsky**, a clinical therapist serving clients with the Group Care and Day Treatment programs, left Knowles Centre in November 2013 after more than four years of service. We wish Sofia all the best as she advances in her career.

**Ding Raquin** officially took on the role of Maintenance Supervisor in Spring 2013. Ding has been a part of a team that addresses the ongoing maintenance needs for almost six years. Also in Spring, **Terry Horsman** joined the Maintenance team. Terry brings years of valuable and varied experience to the position.

In the Treatment Foster Care Program,

**Tina Case** took on the role of Program Assistant, responsible for overseeing the administration of the respite program in May 2013. TFC also welcomed **Sonja Whitwell** to the program in May as Receptionist.

Several new front-line staff have joined Knowles Centre. Perhaps more than most, these individuals provide a positive impact on the youth people they work with. We welcomed new Group Care youth care workers **Lindsay Cloutier** and **Christine Delveaux**. As well, Knowles Centre welcomes new SAIL support workers **Courtney Clemons**, **Claire Gosselin**, **Lisa Hartwell**, **Crystal Lutz**, **Lee Mistelbacher**, and **Stephanie Olivier**.

Finally, **Peter Nawrot** joined SAIL as a Case Manager with the program in November. Knowles Centre offers best wishes to those who left to embark on new career or educational opportunities, including **Stephanie Davidson**, **Jill Hildebrand**, **Stephen Hryniuk**, **Mylene Inocenio**, and **Jason McLean**.

Insights is published by:



Knowles Centre Inc.  
2065 Henderson Highway  
Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada  
R2G 1P7

Telephone: (204) 339-1951

Fax: (204) 334-4173

Email: [info@knowlescentre.org](mailto:info@knowlescentre.org)

Web: [www.knowlescentre.org](http://www.knowlescentre.org)

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