



Ottawa Children's Treatment Centre
Centre de traitement pour enfants d'Ottawa
Founded in 1951 Fondé en 1951

Connections

Creating opportunities today;
maximizing independence tomorrow.

Spring 2014

I love to ...



... DANCE:

Amy and her sister Molly wheelchair dance with Luca «Lazylegz» Patuelli and Sami Elkout, a teacher with The Flava Factory, at the OCTC Recreation Therapy and City of Ottawa's I Love to Dance program.



... PLAY WHEELCHAIR BASKETBALL:
Sam (a coach and a former OCTC client) with Brogan (in front) and Brogan's brother Malcolm, a client at OCTC, tear around the basketball court.

The voice of the parent

by Caroline Stone

More than 20 years ago, Dr. Bill MacIntyre, Medical Director of the Ottawa Children's Treatment Centre at the time, asked me if I knew where and what OCTC was. And so began my journey as a parent advocate.

Since that time, I have watched my daughter grow and blossom, thanks in large part to the quality services she received from OCTC. Later, as an OCTC Board member and the centre's representative to the provincial association of children's treatment centres (CTCs), I met with politicians and bureaucrats on many occasions. I used these opportunities to highlight the critical — and positive — impact that OCTC and other CTCs have on families. I cannot underscore enough how powerful it was to be able to explain at those meetings how OCTC's services changed my family's life and that of my daughter.

**“The most powerful voice that can be made
is the voice of the parent of a special needs child.”**

We are fortunate to have publicly supported services that address the extraordinary needs of children with lifelong challenges. The funding system for CTCs is a lifeline for the 60,000-plus families across the province who depend on it, including the 4,500 families in our region alone — and it warrants continued, regular financial consideration and support.

Despite the challenging economic times of recent years, valuable investments have been made in this sector. These investments are a clear demonstration that government understands the importance of supporting the growth and development of ALL of our children.

Yes, resources are finite. All of us understand this — and that funding choices have to be made. But we also understand that, even amidst a rising demand for services and continual cost pressures, those investments to the children's treatment centre sector that have already been made will rapidly erode if they are not sustained.

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The children who OCTC supports face lifelong challenges. But they can lead fulfilling lives.

As parents, we must ensure that:

- the services that help children and youth of CTCs reach their full potential are sufficiently resourced; and
- when youth transition into the adult system, the supports they require to do so seamlessly are available and accessible to them.

On October 27, 2014, elections are being held across the province of Ontario. OCTC and its provincial association, the Ontario Association of Children's Rehabilitation Services, will be carrying the message to candidates that continuing support is needed for this sector.

But the most powerful voice that can be made is the voice of the parent of a special needs child. The upcoming provincial election is an opportunity for you to voice your opinion directly to those seeking elected office on the need for the services provided by OCTC.

I can assure you, the people seeking office will be listening. •



Our own “field of dreams”

We will have our very own “field of dreams” in Orleans this summer — and kids like Bryce Desrochers, a client at OCTC, couldn't be happier. Thanks to a winning partnership between the Desrochers family, the newly formed Miracle League of Ottawa, the City of Ottawa and the Orleans Rotary Club, children with disabilities will soon be able to play on a customized baseball field. The ball diamond will have a soft rubberized surface and flat, painted bases.

That means that kids like Bryce won't have to worry about their wheelchair catching in the dirt anymore.

The Desrochers family helped launch the fundraising drive that will see the ball diamond — along with an accessible playground — become reality. The fundraising group hopes to raise \$500,000 and the City of Ottawa has agreed to cover the other half through its Community Partnership Major Capital Program. The Miracle League will manage the facility in partnership with the City.

“The Miracle League of Ottawa is excited to collaborate with OCTC for a true community win-win for children with disabilities to enjoy the programs and services that OCTC offers for their rehabilitation and health,” says David Gourlay, founder of Champions for Ottawa Baseball. “The new facility in Orleans will deliver a new opportunity for the kids to enjoy Canada's first full baseball diamond and play structure right here in the nation's capital.”

The accessible ball diamond will provide recreational opportunities for about 4,000 people who have disabilities. •

Bryce Desrochers loves baseball. Here he is (at right) enjoying a Blue Jays game with friend Kellen Shleyer (left).

Youth Transition Fair

The annual Youth Transition Fair provides an opportunity for families of children and youth with both physical and/or developmental disabilities to connect with extended community partners and learn more about their resources and services. This evening event features numerous agencies that can provide information for a successful transition to the adult sector. The event is scheduled annually, in the latter part of October. Look for notices posted on our website, coming this fall! •

Join us for the annual “For the Kids” Charitable Auction

Join us and more than 800 leaders from communities across Eastern Ontario on April 30, 2014, starting at 5:15 p.m. for a fabulous evening at the iconic Ottawa Convention Centre!

The “For the Kids” Charitable Auction supports the OCTC Foundation, which raises funds to benefit over 4,000 children and youth with disabilities served by the Centre.

The success of the auction is based on the support of several caring and generous community partners. Guests will have the opportunity to bid on over 300 silent auction items and to participate in the live auction.

You and your friends will enjoy an elegant cocktail-style buffet dinner. The bidding is fun, the competition friendly and the networking opportunities numerous.

A toolkit for transitioning success

Supporting students and clients as they adapt to ongoing change requires a collaborative sharing of strategies for success.

Transitions can be small: adapting to a new toy, dealing with a change in routine or adjusting to a minor change in a school schedule. They can also be large: entering daycare or kindergarten for the first time or going from elementary school to high school or college.

“Our goal is to build bridges for each child to help them reach their next destination. By sharing our expertise, we know that we are helping that child reach his or her full potential.” – Leslie Walker, OCTC School Principal

Children who have multiple needs, or who are anxious, uncertain or apprehensive about change, require a variety of supports to prepare them for the opportunities that await them — and to ensure that their transition is seamless.

At the OCTC School, our team of educators and therapists — with the input and consent of parents — has developed what we call a comprehensive road map for each student who is moving on to a community school. This toolkit includes important information for the new school:

- therapy and educational strategies;

Corporate tables start at \$1,500, and single tickets are \$150 with a \$90 charitable tax receipt.

To reserve your tickets or tables, or to donate an item or service, please contact Nicole Bernard at the Foundation:

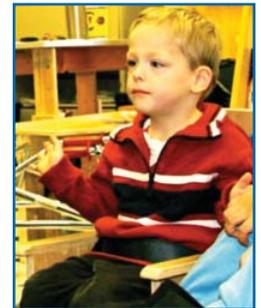
613-738-4337 or nbernard@octc.ca. You can also check out the website at www.octc.ca/foundation/ for more information. •



Tate Gofton showcases a painting created by OCTC School children at the 2013 auction.

- therapy and school reports; and
- photographs of the student using adapted tools and equipment.

Transition is about sharing effective, meaningful strategies with the new school; it’s about understanding what works in a child’s best interest. •



Joshua is sitting in a box chair, prescribed by an occupational therapist and built by our volunteer woodworking team.

Through educational legislation, the Ministry is now requiring more comprehensive transition plans for students with special needs. It is the obligation of school boards to ensure students with special needs have the supports they require using similar formats. The OCTC School’s transition plan is very comprehensive, thanks to the high level of involvement of our students. “Our parents find this tool valuable and so do our receiving schools. It is a road map for all involved parties as it clearly outlines what is necessary for the student to seamlessly enter a new setting,” says Leslie Walker, School Principal. While formats vary from school board to school board, the intent is the same: provide valuable information to help with a seamless transition.



Andrew loved the chance to ham it up with Luca «Lazylegz» Patuelli and Sami Elkout, a teacher with The Flava Factory, at the OCTC Recreation Therapy and City of Ottawa’s I Love to Dance program.

Clinical service update

OCTC regularly reviews its clinical services. Here are a few successful changes implemented since September 2013:

- adopted new referral form
- decreased the time from referral to eligibility review
- doubled the number of Getting Started clinics
- reduced waiting times by assessing and treating children before they have a diagnosis
- introduced 48-hour reminder calls
- put in place a parent self-referral initiative for the Clinic for Augmentative Communication, Behavioural Services, Recreation Therapy and Autism Respite
- adopted a new tool to describe clients’ abilities and determine their therapy needs
- created a new centralized intake process to three programs for clients with autism •

NEW! OCTC’s Social Work Drop-in Clinic

It’s a new service — one that will not only reduce the wait time to see a social worker, but will fill a need for families who could use short-term support/advice but aren’t currently using the services of an OCTC social worker.

“The drop-in clinic provides families of clients who are not currently assigned to a social worker an opportunity to meet face-to-face with a social worker in a timely way to discuss a concern that is time-sensitive or specific,” says social worker Barb Juett. “Many parents do not need ongoing social work support. However, due to the chronic nature of their child’s needs, once in a while they may need to meet with a social worker.”

The family’s concern may relate to sibling relationships, school transitions, navigating the system, advocating for their child, problem-solving a situation or making a difficult decision. Some families may identify a need for more follow-up at their drop-in meeting, in which case a referral to social work counselling services would be discussed. Here are some examples:

- **SITUATION:** A family with a 3-1/2-year-old child hasn’t required counselling. Hence, their social work file is closed. The child is eligible to start junior kindergarten in the fall, and the parents have some questions and concerns about school registration and the transition process. **OUTCOME:**

The drop-in clinic’s social worker gives them information about the registration process and discusses any concerns they might have about this big step.

- **SITUATION:** The parents of a teenage client have not accessed OCTC services in several years. The parents are struggling with their child’s behaviour and are having difficulty coping at home. They are experiencing a high level of stress and frustration, and so is their child. **OUTCOME:** The social worker at the drop-in clinic discusses what supports are available to them and their teenager and offers solution-focused counselling support.
- **SITUATION:** A family is having difficulty making a decision about the next steps for their child. The parents are well connected to community resources and have good supports in place, but are feeling confused about the next steps and the service implications for the different options. They need to make a decision about a program in the next two weeks. **OUTCOME:** The social worker at the drop-in clinic reviews the options, discusses the pros and cons of each, and helps the parents assess what is most important to them and their family.

Hours: The clinic is open every Wednesday from 9 a.m.–3 p.m. on the 2nd floor of the Max Keeping Wing. When you arrive at the clinic, you will be asked to fill out a request-for-service form. •

Go Ben Go!

Ben Delaney, 17, who after losing his leg to bone cancer was referred to OCTC's Recreation Therapy program from the amputee clinic, is one of the newest members of Canada's national sledge hockey team, which participated in the Sochi Paralympic Games in March 2014. After expressing an interest in learning the sport, he was introduced to some of the national team players by OCTC recreation therapist Emily Glossop and soon after joined the community program. That was in 2010. •



Linking OCTC researchers, clinicians and families

Congrats Amita and Tara!

Occupational therapists Amita Furgoch and Tara Previl, who work in the Clinic for Augmentative Communication, are always looking for ways to make it easier for clients with physical disabilities to write. They noticed that some clients stopped using the speech recognition software (SRS) that had been recommended for them, but why? What began as a clinical question evolved into a multi-phase project and collaboration with Dr. Rose Martini and students from the Master's of Occupational Therapy program at the University of Ottawa, including Rebecca Van Schyndel.



Amita Furgoch



Tara Previl

Their findings have affected clinical practice with clients who use SRS by changing how clinicians describe the benefits and limitations of its use. The study has also highlighted that clients need to have access to multiple writing options, including low and high technology-based solutions, so they can choose the method that best fits the writing task at hand.

Amita and Tara's findings are being published in the scientific journal *Disability and Rehabilitation: Assistive Technology*. •

We need your help to develop more research links like the ones that led to Amita and Tara's publication. Research funds for the Clinical Research Grant are used to support bigger projects such as the example above. To inquire about research at OCTC, share your experiences or find out how you can help us fund relevant research, please contact Josée Séguin, Research Manager, at jseguin@octc.ca.

Third-party fundraising events

Every event, big or small, makes a big difference in the lives of our clients. Each year, events are hosted by individuals or organizations who want to make a special contribution to OCTC. In addition to increasing revenues in support of OCTC programs and services, third-party events help raise awareness of the Centre in the local community. The OCTC Foundation thanks the organizers and the participants of the following third-party events:

Rocking on the Rideau, held October 18, 2013, at Lago Bar and Grill, Dow's Lake Pavillion, raised \$15,000 for OCTC (rockingontherideau.com).

Capital Ridge 5th Annual Fundraiser, held January 28, 2014, at the Canadian Tire Centre, raised \$11,540, with Scotiabank onboard to match any monies raised (capital-ridge.com/site/about-us/community/capital-ridge-5th-annual-fundraiser/).

In the fall of 2013, the OCTC Foundation received \$3,500, from the **Hill Charity Golf Classic**. The amount will go towards the purchase of a manual-tilt wheelchair for the Cornwall site. Currently, the site does not have such a wheelchair, which is essential for seating and mobility clients who require a more reclined position for comfort and safety. The wheelchair will be used for client assessment and demonstration, and for short-term loans to clients who may need this equipment while waiting for funding to purchase their own wheelchairs. •



Contact the OCTC Foundation at 613-738-4335 to find out how we can help you make your event a success.

JAG: an important resource for parents

Parents of special needs children and youth find the information sessions planned by parents and offered by the Joint Advisory Group (JAG) incredibly valuable. The latest session offered by group partners OCTC, Ottawa Rotary Home and Roger's House proved to be no different. Held on November 26 from 6–9 p.m., the session's focus was sexuality. The panelists — Kerry-Anne St. Jean, a RN at OCTC; a parent; and Pam Shea, a behavioural consultant at OCTC — covered a range of topics including barriers to healthy sexuality and hygiene in the disabled; the parent's role in sex education; important skills and knowledge; tools to teach; and boundaries. They also suggested reference material for the parents.

“I was in a state of total despair before the session, and I leave with a sense of hope and the knowledge of where I can start.”

About 30 parents attended in-person and five through teleconference. Participants particularly enjoyed the stories that were used by the presenters to give context, the tools and references used, access to specialists, and the hour-long question-and-answer session at the end. •

It's AGM time and you're invited!

Parents, mark your calendars for OCTC's upcoming AGM!

• June 25, 4 p.m., 2211 Thurston Drive

Please RSVP Evelyne Paulauskas:
epaulauskas@octc.ca or 613-688-2126,
ext. 4316.

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Communicating by e-mail: protecting your privacy

The use of e-mail has increased dramatically in recent years — and with it concerns about privacy and security, especially when dealing with sensitive information such as health records. OCTC has implemented a new e-mail policy to mitigate the risks involved in transmitting personal health information. Our new policy — which is in line with provincial legislation, as well as the regulations, codes of ethics and standards of practice of professional colleges — establishes internal procedures for staff. In terms of communicating with clients/families, staff are required to review the policy with clients and to obtain consent prior to communicating by e-mail. Our consent form also lists security tips for communicating by e-mail. •

Sledge hockey and kids

Children from the OCTC School hit the ice on February 13, 2014, with members of the Sledge Hockey of Eastern Ontario (SHEO) team — and had a blast! A partnership between the School, OCTC's Recreation Therapy program and SHEO, the event was designed to increase awareness of the sport's growing popularity among people with disabilities, and get everyone excited about the Paralympics in Sochi.



HOT TOPICS for parents via telehealth

Through the Ontario Telemedicine Network, OCTC is able to provide educational sessions for parents.

The latest “hot topic” — **Toilet training your child** — was live streamed on the Internet via the OTN.

Further hot topics will be coming soon. If you want more information on this session or on future sessions, contact Laura Bradley at lbradley@octc.ca or Pamela Shea at pshea@octc.ca. •