



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

Connections

Inspiration. Motivation. Celebration.

Fall 2012

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Connections is the official newsletter of the Ottawa Children's Treatment Centre (OCTC)

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PEERS: Teaching Teens How to Make Friends ... and Be Open to Their World

During the teenage years, youth build on their social skills. They learn more about themselves and how to get along with their peers. They form new friendships, take part in sports and other group activities ... and deal with gossip and rumours. But if you're a teen with autism, it's difficult to have an ordinary conversation with someone, to know how to react in a situation, and even how to make friends. Charles-Antoine Blais, 15, is one of those teens. He has Asperger's, a highly functioning form of autism. As his mom Marie Lemaire says, "He doesn't look or act that much different most of the time." But like most autistic people, he has difficulty making and keeping friends, and grasping abstract ideas.

The Program for the Education and Enrichment of Relational Skills (PEERS) addresses these challenges. Launched in January 2012 and delivered by CHEO-OCTC Applied Behavioural Analysis services and supports, in collaboration with an OCTC behavioural consultant and a social worker, the 14-week program was offered in French at DeLasalle High School. For two hours a week, parents gathered in one classroom to learn about the theme of the week and which activities their teens were engaged in. In another classroom, the teens practised how to join in a conversation, choose appropriate friends, use humour correctly, deal with teasing and gossip; and handle disagreements.

The program has benefited Charles-Antoine in so many ways, says Marie, who started a francophone teen Aspergers parent support group (for more information on this group, visit www.octc.ca). "He is more open to the world and shows more interest in news and events. We had guests recently, who were surprised to see how interested he was in what they were saying. He really is making more connections."

For Marie and other parents in the autism community, this is a terrific start. The next step, she says, is "to help our teens manage their anxiety." •



Six of the eight PEERS graduates receive their certificates of participation (two participants were absent).

GoldCare is Here!

Let's Stay Connected with Current Contact Information

OCTC and 11 other children's treatment centres in Ontario have now launched GoldCare. This centralized client information system is designed to reduce paper, provide a consistent process for making clinical assessments and developing documentation and care plans, enable more efficient client and staff scheduling and reporting, and be a depository for electronic health records.

About 200 OCTC staff have been trained on the system since we launched it on July 9.

To serve you better, please help us keep your contact information up to date by informing an OCTC staff member. Changes to your information can be easily updated in GoldCare. We are also interested in having your most current e-mail address on file, so we can let you easily know about upcoming events or updates to our website information.

Thank you for your patience as we learn to use the new system. •

Taking Risks — and Living Life to the Fullest

At a recent fundraising event in support of the Easter Seals, an organization dedicated to helping children, youth and young adults with physical disabilities achieve their full potential and future independence, a father-and-son duo well known to OCTC participated in a drop zone experience — scaling down the wall of a downtown hotel. Dressed in true comic superhero costumes, Jacob-Emmanuel Doyle, a 2012 recipient of the Ontario Association of Children's Rehabilitation Services' scholarship, along with his dad, Louis Doyle, a member of the OCTC School Authority, showed how living life to the fullest can be achieved in exciting new ways. •

Breaking down barriers one challenge at a time — and demonstrating courage in the every day.



Jacob-Emmanuel (right) with his dad, Louis, at Drop Zone.

TELUS and the School Technology in the Classroom Program

The students at OCTC School benefit from a highly intensive program that provides opportunities for success. Many of our students require significant technological modifications that help them be self-sufficient and independent learners. These include computer enhancements that allow for head switch access, touch screen access and voice-activated access.

Our program required funds to enhance our current, but outdated, technological resources. Thanks to the generosity of the OCTC Foundation's donors, we were able to build state-of-the-art technology classrooms that will allow for a more enriched learning environment.

All five classrooms have been equipped with Smartboard technology over the last two years. Now, thanks to a \$15,000 recent gift from the TELUS Ottawa Community Board, we have been able to purchase MAC computers as well as iPad, iPod touch, wireless keyboards, WIFI installation, etc. — enabling our students to be fully engaged in the 21st century. Thank you TELUS! •

"Creating opportunities today, maximizing independence tomorrow — and learning without limits!"

The TELUS Ottawa Community Board allocates funding to projects in Ottawa that focus on youth and showcase social and/or technological innovation. The 2012 donation budget is \$400,000. (Since its inception, the Board has donated \$3.3 million to 204 projects.)

WHAT'S NEW on our website

OCTC is pleased to showcase a number of videos on our website. A picture is worth a thousand words. We hope that these additions help us share our stories in new ways with you.



If you invest in me, I will grow up to be independent; be part of the community; have a voice. Hear the children in *Invest in Me*, a video created by the Ontario Association of Children's Rehabilitation Services.

The video *Quickstart* describes the partnership between Quickstart, Early Intervention for Autism and OCTC's Getting Started service.

There's also a waterskiing video. Thanks to the Harry Ward Foundation, Harry Foster Foundation, Community Foundation of Ottawa, RBC Foundation and HOPE Volleyball Summerfest, *Give It a Go* took place again this summer.

Check out these and other videos at www.octc.ca. •

“FOR THE KIDS” Raises \$232,000

The theme of the 15th annual “For the Kids” charitable auction, held on April 25 at the Ottawa Convention Centre, was **Every Kid is a Shining Star**. The children certainly did shine bright at this event, organized by the OCTC Foundation (OCTCF). Held to raise funds for OCTC and Autism Ontario-Ottawa Chapter, this year’s event was hosted by media personality J.J. Clarke. A huge success, it brought in over \$232,000.

While guests penciled in their highest bids, they enjoyed wine and hors-d’oeuvres. A buffet dinner with all the fixings was served and guests seated themselves at their designated tables, eagerly awaiting the night’s inspiring entertainment — a show put on by the children of OCTC, Merivale High School and John Young Elementary School. Theatrical producer Jim McNabb and students from Merivale put on a moving rendition from the musical *FAME*, followed by students from John Young treating the audience to their interpretation of the “Evolution of Dance.” From classic Madonna to modern hits like LMFAO’s “Party Rock Anthem,” they covered it all. Then, the groups of children joined hands to belt out the final stanza from Journey’s “Don’t Stop Believing” — a moving ending to an already incredible show. The evening’s excitement continued with a live auction directed by veteran auctioneer Dave Smith. Buyers outbid each other for items such as vacation packages, sporting and entertainment events, and television sets.

Auction Committee Chair Steve Shapiro reminded everyone that this amazing event is largely thanks to the many sponsors: “Without them, we wouldn’t be able to provide the services we do. It’s thanks to Minto, the Ottawa Convention Centre, TD Bank and 1310 News — the largest contributors to the event — and others that all of this is possible.” OCTCF’s then chair, Regis Trudel, added: “Each year I look forward to this event. After all, the purpose of this evening is to help the kids.” •



Paulina Finak, Speech-Language Pathologist and Clinical Coordinator at OCTC, OCTC client Peter Trajdos, guests Larry O’Brien and Colleen McBride, and Bonnie Grandy, Administrator, Early Childhood Program at OCTC, enjoy the auction.

Joint Family Advisory Group Meets for First Time

by Maria Contreras

Families gathered with staff and managers from OCTC, Roger’s House and Ottawa Rotary Home on October 19 from 5–8 p.m. to launch the Joint Family Advisory Group (JAG). Chairing the meeting was Maria Contreras, a Masters of Health Administration student.

The group has been set up to look at ways to encourage family networking opportunities and to organize a series of educational sessions on topics of interest to clients/parents who are served by all three agencies. Topic suggestions included: transitioning to adult services, personal care and hygiene, sexuality, and managing external caregivers in the home.

At this meeting, the group outlined priorities for 2012–13 and developed a preliminary action plan. The next meeting takes place in early December, and the first educational session is tentatively scheduled for February 2013.

Families of the three agencies can receive more information on JAG and stay up to date by contacting the following staff members for each agency: Sharon Lefroy, OCTC, 613-737-0871, ext. 2649; Nora Ulliyot, Roger’s House, 613-523-6300, ext. 607; and Sarah Picard, Ottawa Rotary Home, 613-236-3200. •

It’s a 98.4% — and Accreditation with Commendation!

The “Qmentum” accreditation program allows OCTC to measure the services we provide to families against national standards of excellence, focusing on safe delivery of quality health care. In November 2011, surveyors from Accreditation Canada visited several OCTC sites. They completed an extensive review of our programs and services, and met with staff, volunteers, families and community partners. We are pleased to report that OCTC was found in compliance — with 98.4 per cent of 380 applicable standards and has now been awarded “Accreditation with Commendation” through to November 2014. •



Our Little Man Campbell: A Boy with Great Potential

Campbell is a boy beyond his years, who has endured and overcome so many obstacles in his short life of 40 months. Born prematurely at 24 weeks, he weighed only 1.5 pounds. Campbell was immediately connected to machines in the neo-natal intensive care unit at Kingston General Hospital, where he stayed until he was stable enough to be transported to CHEO. He had 13 surgeries in six months and fought constantly to stay alive.

Joanna, Campbell's mother, says, "Those six months were a nightmare, but sadly, we have not awoken from this dream. After five surgeries to try to save his eyes, we were told that Campbell is blind, then a month later, that he is also deaf. Our world crumbled, but with each blow, we tried to find the positives and vowed to do everything we could to make his life a happy and fulfilled one."

After Campbell came home, his parents wondered how they would care for this little person with all

these complications, who has since been diagnosed with cerebral palsy. Then, they met Johanne at OCTC's Intake Services: "I knew we would not be alone, and could make it through the next stage of our son's journey with the support we needed," says Joanna. For over a year, Campbell has been at OCTC's preschool, where he moves around with the aid of a rifton walker. He is part of the Tender Tots respite program, where he looks forward to the two Saturdays a month that he gets to go to his "party," and this past summer he took part in the Preschool Summer Program, where his favourite thing was playing dress-up at the Children's Museum!

"We look to OCTC for so much guidance and support. I love spending time in the toy library, and look forward to our home visits from Chantal of the Blind Low Vision Program. All the staff at OCTC care about our little man Campbell and strive to improve his quality of life every day. For that we are thankful beyond words," says Joanna. •



OUR FUNDING PRIORITIES

The Preschool Summer Program

Through the Preschool Summer Program, children between the ages of three and five (all clients of OCTC) get an opportunity to take part in recreation and leisure activities — to explore and experience new environments and activities — free of the demands and expectations of therapy.

The program is offered to three different groups:

- to children whose primary diagnosis is that of a physical disability (Kids in Motion);
- to children whose primary diagnosis is that of a developmental disability (Busy Bodies); and
- to children who are diagnosed on the autistic spectrum (Little Explorers).

The children visit such venues as the Museum of Civilization, National Art Gallery, Experimental Farm and Brewers Park, and take part in indoor activities. These can include art, sensory time, group games and special visits from the local humane society, a music therapist, Ray's Reptiles and the like.

iPads for Children with Cortical Visual Impairment

Cortical visual impairment (CVI) is a neurological disorder that results in unique visual responses to people and the environment, although it does not necessarily preclude the ability to respond to and

benefit from educational materials. When students with these visual/behavioural characteristics are shown to have loss of acuity or judged by their performance to be visually impaired, they are considered to have CVI.

The leading cause of visual impairment, CVI is caused by children surviving from an injury to the brain at a younger gestational age or with complications in utero, at birth or afterwards.

In recent years, more information, assessment tools and approaches to working with children with CVI have unfolded. One such tool is the iPad, which Early Childhood Vision Consultants would like to use during home visits with the children and their families. The consultants will focus on increasing the children's visual attention, with the goal to have the children to respond visually to the iPad's applications and, over time, increase the amount of vision they use.

The iPad's built-in software comes with a screen reader (text to speech), screen magnification, adjustable colour contrast and an application for dexterity challenges. •

OCTC depends on the generosity of donors to be able to offer the Preschool Summer Program and buy specialized equipment such as iPads. To donate, please call the OCTC Foundation at 613-738-4335 or complete the donation form at www.octc.ca/foundation/donate.php.

Racing Up a Storm at OCTC's 2nd Annual Trike and Bike Rally

Imagine peddling or dashing across a room on a bike or a trike — with permission! Then imagine the thrill of the race if you have physical limitations but you get a chance to ride — and even race a little — on a specially adapted trike or bike.

We all know that cycling is an activity that everyone can enjoy. On the afternoon of June 16, 18 families, including 14 children between the ages of 2 and 12 who are clients of OCTC, got together to enjoy cycling in a local arena. The goals of OCTC's second annual Trike and Bike Rally were simple: celebrate and develop cycling skills, promote safe cycling, and provide a fun activity for clients and their family and friends.

“Loved it!”

With the help of OCTC physiotherapists, recreation therapists and volunteers from OCTC, the children, their siblings and other members of their families had a fun afternoon. Using specially adapted bikes provided by a number of local suppliers of adapted equipment, the children learned how to mount and dismount, cycle in a

straight line, steer and stop. From the OCTC staff and physiotherapy assistants, the families learned about cycling adaptations and were provided with skill development ideas. Handouts were available on such topics as what to look for when purchasing a bicycle, strategies to develop cycling skills, safety information about cycling and the proper use of helmets.

“Thank you for a great afternoon”

The rally also provided an opportunity for participants to network and share cycling stories. One father came to the rally with his children specifically to share his experience with the “gyro” wheel, which helps children make the transition from a three-wheel to a two-wheeled bicycle.

“You're doing this again next year right?”

All in all, the 2012 Trike and Bike Rally was a tremendous success! Parents had an opportunity to fill out a questionnaire at the end; vendors, volunteers and staff were asked for their feedback through semi-structured interviews. We will be sharing



Leon Lis (top) and Zachary Hart (above) were absolutely thrilled to take part in the Trike and Bike Rally.

our experience in a poster presentation at the 2012 OACRS conference in Toronto. •

It's Been Five Years!

Five years ago, on July 12, 2007, OCTC was recognized as a designated bilingual organization, under the *French Language Services Act* — demonstrating a commitment to provide quality services to clients and their families in the language of their choice. These services include client reports, forms and documents; general information distributed at sites and posted on the website; telephone reception for each site, off-site locations and reception areas; the newsletter and annual report; and signage. As well, Intake Services identifies those clients who are French-speaking, and OCTC recruits and hires employees who can provide services in French (these employees wear bilingual identification badges and use bilingual voice mail messages and e-mail signatures). We have a Translation/Revision Policy and Procedure, French-speaking representatives on the Board and a French Language Services Committee. You can provide feedback by contacting the Program Administrator of the service in question; dropping off your comments in writing at any OCTC site; mailing your comments to: Client & Community Feedback, Ottawa Children's Treatment Centre, 395 Smyth Rd, Ottawa, ON K1H 8L2; or sending an e-mail to clientfeedback@octc.ca. •



Planning a Gift Today ... for the Future: Planned Giving

Through our Planned Giving Program, you can plan your charitable gift to provide the greatest benefit to you, your family and OCTC. You may choose to make your gift during your lifetime or through your estate. Should you choose to make a donation through your estate, you will benefit from the same tax advantages and the ability to tailor the gift according to your personal and financial circumstances, but your donation will be made from assets, not current income, and your planned gift will be distributed in the future.

For more information, contact Chantal Dompierre, Executive Director, OCTC Foundation, at 613-738-4336 or by e-mail at cdompierre@octc.ca.

PROFILE OF A DONOR: The OCTC Foundation recently received a gift from the estate of Ruth Hamilton (1915–2011).



She and her first husband, Al, had a daughter, who died at three months of age. Then, in 1946, Al was killed on an air training flight. Ruth became a parliamentary secretary on Parliament Hill. There, she met and then married William Hamilton, who became PostMaster General of Canada under Prime Minister Diefenbaker from 1957 to 1962. Mr. Hamilton was born with congenital defects and in his later years, after the couple had moved to Vancouver, he required regular kidney dialysis. Ruth became a widow once again, in 1989, and in 1994, returned to Ottawa.

Ruth was a generous benefactor, and over the years made significant contributions to Simon Fraser University and the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario. She was an active community volunteer, supporting those with physical disabilities, both in Vancouver and Ottawa. •

www.octc.ca/foundation

OUR HEALTH & SAFETY CORNER

Cold and Flu Season is Here: Protect Yourself and Your Family

Autumn is in full swing — and with this comes the cold and flu season. You and your family can stay healthy and prevent the spread of the flu virus by:

Getting a flu shot

Getting the flu shot every year is one of the most effective ways to prevent catching and spreading the flu virus. Dr. Macklin, OCTC's Medical Director of Medical Services, recommends that all children, especially those at high risk, receive the flu vaccine each year. (High risk conditions include respiratory ailments, lung and heart problems, asthma, kidney disease, diabetes, anemia, hemoglobinopathy, cancer.)

Washing your hands

Wash your hands often with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds to help remove bacteria and viruses. Wash before and after eating, after you have been in a public place, after using the washroom, after coughing and sneezing, and after touching surfaces that may have been contaminated. An alcohol-based hand sanitizer is also effective in killing viruses.



Coughing and sneezing into your arm, not your hand

If you use a tissue, then dispose of it as soon as possible and wash your hands.



Keeping shared surface areas clean and disinfected

Doorknobs, light switches, telephones, keyboards and other surfaces can become contaminated with all kinds of bacteria and viruses. Regular cleaning and disinfecting with normal household disinfectants can help. Viruses can live on hard surfaces for up to 48 hours.

Staying home if you or your child is sick

If you think your child has the flu, please stay home and do not come to OCTC. Call us to cancel your appointment and reschedule it when your child's symptoms are gone. •

For more information about flu clinics in your area, contact your local Public Health Unit. You can also check out these websites:

www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/influenza/pdf/ui-eg-eng.pdf

www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/influenza/pdf/lang/english_flu_prevention_factsheet.pdf

www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/influenza/pdf/FluPoster_English2010.pdf

http://immunize.cpha.ca/uploads/posters/flu2012/flu_brochure_2012_e.pdf

http://immunize.cpha.ca/uploads/posters/general/2012/isitacold_2012_e.pdf

A safe and healthy work environment for everyone