



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.

Fall 2013

Ontario invests in children and youth with special needs

"This investment in rehabilitation services will have an impact across the province. ... We welcome the government's continued commitment to building an Ontario in which all children and youth have the best opportunity to reach their potential." – *Jennifer Inkpen, Acting CEO, Ontario Association of Children's Rehabilitation Services*

"While we are grateful for the Ministry's additional funding for our core activities, we cannot underestimate how we also depend on support from the community for us to go beyond delivering basic care. This community support allows us to enrich the experience of our clients and the quality of life of their families." – *Chantal Dompierre, Executive Director, OCTC Foundation*

Nolan Fobert, seen with his parents, Erin and Adam, is a client at OCTC. He had four open heart surgeries before he was four years old. The Foberts were at OCTC for the announcement on August 13 and spoke about how Nolan was able to thrive and succeed with the help of OCTC and in spite of his complex needs.

On August 13, 2013, OCTC received some very welcome news. During a visit to our Smyth site, Teresa Piruzza, Minister of Children and Youth Services, announced that the provincial government will provide additional funding for Ontario's Children's Treatment Centres to help reduce wait times. Of the \$5 million investment, OCTC's portion will amount to \$226,250.

At OCTC, where approximately 500 children are on wait lists, this extra funding means we will be able to serve an additional 157 clients in 2013–14 who require physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech-language therapy, social work and recreation therapy. In 2014–15, we will be able to serve another 154 clients.

The government also announced an additional \$5 million investment to strengthen autism services, which will enable more children with autism to receive Intensive Behavioural Intervention therapy. IBI therapy helps to decrease challenging behaviours, increase appropriate behaviours and promote development.

At the announcement at OCTC, Minister Piruzza said the money will help between 900 and 1,300 more children throughout the province receive support. "We're working toward anything we can do to reduce wait times. Today's investment is part of our larger vision for those families and to help their children and youth get timely, effective services." •



Students create art with two wheels

An Internet video of a young boy creating artwork with his wheelchair inspired OCTC teacher Carole Brunet to give the School's students the opportunity to do the same — and raise money for the OCTC Foundation.

With the enthusiastic support of the OCTC School staff, Carole and fellow teacher Kristen Crawford managed the labour-intensive project.

The project was supported by Wallack's Nepean store employee Beulah McLellan, an artist and grandmother of a child with special needs.

"I felt an immediate connection to Carole and her work," says Beulah, who helped the School obtain the donation of paint and canvases from the art supply store and volunteered her time and expertise.

To create the paintings, one colour of paint was placed on plastic sheeting taped to the floor. A canvas was turned upside down on the paint and re-covered with plastic. The students in their wheelchairs rolled over the canvases to create imprints. After the paint dried, the process was repeated with a different colour. The results were brightly coloured abstract designs, of which the children were exceptionally proud, says Beulah.

Some of the students spun their chairs under their own power and others were pushed, which meant that everyone in wheelchairs was able to participate. Once all the colours were applied, Beulah re-stretched the canvases back on their frames.

Carole is especially pleased with the teamwork that made this project such a success, from the setting up of the canvases before classes to getting on stage to help sell the paintings at the auction.

The students created eight paintings and raised more than \$7,000 at the OCTC Foundation's annual "For the Kids" Charitable Auction.

The School has been an integral part of OCTC since its inception in 1951. The School's philosophy "is to see the child first and not the disability," says Principal Leslie Walker. Wheelchair art engaged the students and gave them a sense of accomplishment while having fun and being creative. •

This story is an edited version of a story written by Heather Jamieson that appeared in Artnews.



OCTC School students (left to right) Zacharie, Leon and Henry are assisted by teacher Lyn Cleofas as they prepare to move their wheelchairs across canvases lying atop paint to create unique and colourful artwork.

JAG an important resource for parents

JAG (Joint Advisory Group) provides educational sessions for parents of special needs children and youth. Organized jointly by OCTC, Roger's House and Ottawa Rotary Home in 2012, JAG has come to mean so much more for the parents who attend its sessions. The speakers of the first two sessions on respite and transition took the time to speak to the parents one-on-one at the end of each session.

For both Jennifer Walker, chair of JAG, and Louise Samuel, a parent representative, JAG has demonstrated in a very real way that the parents of special needs children are not alone.

"JAG offers a format for the three organizations to reach out to clients and a way for families to

connect," says Jennifer, whose son Griffin, 9, has spastic quad cerebral palsy and is a client of all three organizations. "The education sessions have allowed families to discuss issues common to us in a personal way."

As the mother of a 16-year-old girl with multiple disabilities, Louise says JAG has taught her and her husband, Greg, that they aren't the only couple with a handicapped child. "We have found that other people are going through the same thing, and that we're doing fine." •

NEXT ISSUE: Look for an update on the group's most recent information session on "Hygiene and Sexuality."

“For the Kids” Charitable Auction nets \$228,000 for OCTC clients

The 16th annual OCTC Foundation “For the Kids” Charitable Auction, held April 30 at the Ottawa Convention Centre, raised \$228,000. The profits help to fund programs, services, equipment purchases and research that benefit the clients of OCTC, primarily children and youth living in Ottawa, the Eastern Counties and Renfrew County.

In attendance were OCTC clients and their parents, including Charlene MacPherson and her daughter Mya. “Walking through the OCTC doors is the most heartfelt and warm experience a parent can feel. It’s like a family,” Ms. MacPherson said in her address to the crowd. Vicki Njui and son Robyn also talked about OCTC’s impact on their lives: “They make us look at our kids’ abilities, not their disabilities.” Campbell’s family, Joanna and Bertran Labonté, praised OCTC as being a “big part of the team.”

More than 650 people bid on some 300 prizes at the silent and live auctions, including wheelchair art and paintings created by OCTC clients. Many prominent Ottawa businesses donated gifts, and about 80 volunteers worked tirelessly to make the event an amazing experience for everyone. •

SAVE THE DATE!
Next year’s auction takes place
April 30, 2014.



Top: Charlie, who created this wonderful piece of wheelchair art, is pictured here with OCTC School teachers Penny Collins (left) and Kristen Crawford (standing). Above: The paintings that were auctioned off.

Mei-Mei and Maddie: two young philanthropists

Mei-Mei: For her 10th birthday party, Mei-Mei, daughter of Anna Tosto, an OCTC Foundation Board member, asked guests to bring donations for the Foundation in lieu of presents. She raised \$425, which can buy any number of things such as four adapted educational toys.



Mei-Mei Martin (left) and friend Sara Anderson.

Maddie: Maddie, 9, wanted to do something special for her little brother Nicholas, who is a client at OCTC, and other children with special needs. With the help of friends Ella and Anna Kiara, she set up a lemonade stand in front of her home and at the local community pool. She raised \$30 to buy toys for the children at OCTC. •



Maddie (left) with her friend Ella.

OCTC's Recreation Therapy programs

Our Recreation Therapy programs benefit OCTC clients between the ages of 6 and 18 who have a primary diagnosis of a developmental or physical disability. In a group setting, clients learn to play various sports, fulfill leisure pursuits, engage in creative activities and challenge themselves — all while practising social, communication, mobility and life skills in a safe, supportive environment.

Depending on their disabilities, we may require a high staff-to-client ratio, adaptive equipment or specialized transportation.

Objectives

- Increase participation and exposure to a range of recreation options
- Enhance independence and self-esteem
- Increase socialization and communication skills
- Optimize peer interaction
- Develop important life skills (e.g., cooking, transportation, money management)
- Explore the use of adaptive equipment
- Provide a safe, supportive environment in which to learn

Outcomes

- Clients will show improvement on the specific goals identified for them.
- Clients will have a safe and positive experience. •



Oscar is delighted to be at the very top of the “Vertical Playground” at Camp Otonabee.

Recreational programming

TRAILBLAZERS — sport-based recreation (adapted or not adapted), social activities, artistic pursuits and web-based pastimes

GIVE IT A GO — adapted sports (e.g., water-skiing, cross-country skiing, sledge hockey, wheelchair basketball, horseback riding)

TEEN NIGHTS — monthly social outing or activity, in Ottawa and Cornwall

RUN! WHEEL! JUMP! THROW! — fundamental movement skills (running, jumping, throwing) adapted to include youth with physical disabilities

YMCA-YWCA SUMMER INTEGRATION — summer day camps, offered in partnership with the YMCA-YWCA, at three YMCA-YWCA Ottawa-based sites and supported by the Recreation Therapy team

Volunteer of the Year takes commitment to OCTC teens seriously

If Recreation Therapy volunteer Alissa Fox doesn't make it to an event at which she is expected, she has a good reason. Such was the case when she didn't attend the spring 2012 year-end teen dance. She was having a baby.

Alissa's reliability and consistency with programs such as the Teen Club led to her being recognized as OCTC's 2013 Volunteer of the Year, established in 1991 in memory of former OCTC volunteer Robert McGibbon. “Alissa is a strong volunteer who works in a role where she often needs to make judgement calls,” says recreation therapist Ashley Kenny. “She is also a great mentor to new volunteers.” With the humility typical of the best volunteers, Alissa downplays her more than six-year contribution. “I feel like I do so little,” she says.

The Teen Club — close to Alissa's heart — provides a safe, supportive, fun environment for teens aged 13 to 18 with either a physical or developmental disability, or a diagnosis on the autism spectrum. The program is based on a belief in the importance of participants being able to develop the skills required to be active in recreation and leisure in their community. “For many teens, it is one of the only times they get to go out socially and interact with others their age,” says Ashley.

Alissa is looking forward to January and renewing her relationship with the OCTC teens who have come to mean so much to her — and to celebrating her son Ethan's second birthday on June 12. •



With a little HOPE

HOPE is a volunteer-driven, not-for-profit events management organization that raises funds for community-based charities. Inspired by Terry Fox's run across Canada, in 1981 a group of friends in Ottawa founded HOPE to make a difference in their community. HOPE's flagship Volleyball SummerFest event combines recreational volleyball with live rock entertainment.

Each year, more than 25,000 players and spectators flock to Mooney's Bay Beach to help HOPE donate over \$3.5 million in support of more than 110 local charities since it started.

This year, one of the six chosen charities was the OCTC Foundation — and on November 21, we will be receiving \$25,000. This money will be used for our Recreation Therapy programs. •



Fifty volunteers came out to help the OCTC Foundation at HOPE Volleyball SummerFest.

Top left is Colleen Rose; bottom left are Cynthia Jean-Jacques and Christine Ladouceur.



A gift from the Bill Neville estate

The Bill Neville estate has generously donated \$10,000 to the OCTC Foundation. "Mr. Neville, who died on March 13 at the age of 77, served on the board of the Foundation," says Chantal Dompierre, Executive Director of the OCTC



Foundation since 2010. "On behalf of the children and youth with disabilities who will benefit, we thank his family's generosity." As well as serving on the board of the OCTC Foundation, Bill Neville was on the National Advisory Council of the Crohn's and Colitis Foundation, and was vice-president of the Canadian Diabetes Association.

MAKING A BEQUEST

By making a bequest to the OCTC Foundation and other planned gifts, you can make an important difference in enriching our clients' experience. Your gift is your opportunity to support the OCTC Foundation now and long after you have gone. •

To make a bequest, contact the Foundation at 613-738-4336; www.octc.ca/foundation.

From Project Clear Skies to the OCTC Preschool kitchen

Thanks to a connection with the Ottawa International Airport Authority's charitable giving program, Project Clear Skies, we are able to make much-needed renovations to the kitchen. The \$6,000 gift from Project Clear Skies is being used to provide a functional, safe and hygienic kitchen corner for the medically fragile children who attend the Preschool, as well as the out-of-home respite and summer programs. •

Raise-a-Reader benefits OCTC

Over the past 10 years, funding from the Ottawa Citizen Literacy Foundation through its annual Raise-a-Reader campaign has helped the OCTC Foundation buy interactive items to improve literacy, including SMART Boards, interactive tablets, phonics readers and iTunes cards. •

IN BRIEF

New on www.octc.ca

There's a new section on our website called **Looking Ahead: Transitions from Infancy to Adulthood**. The question-and-answer format is designed to help clients and families find out about health, social and educational services in their region, and is categorized under six life transitions:



- Referral to Wee Start / Getting Started Services
- Wee Start; Getting Started Services to Interventions and Supports
- OCTC Services to Child Care / Preschool
- Early Childhood to School
- Youth to Adolescence
- Adolescence to Adulthood

You can find this information by clicking on the top banner "Looking Ahead" or by accessing either the Family or Youth sections. •

Medical records now centralized through CHEO

As of this past July, the physicians who see your child at OCTC will be creating their medical reports through a centralized service at CHEO. This centralized system is more efficient and less time-consuming. When you receive your child's medical record, you will notice it looks different. This is because of the centralized system that we are now using through CHEO. The top heading reads the "Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario" and the sub-heading indicates your child was seen at OCTC. Your child is still a client of OCTC and the report is maintained in the OCTC clinical record. •

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

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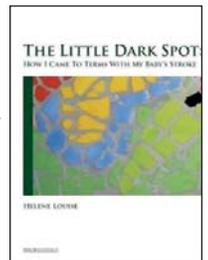
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WIMS: "Walking In My Shoes" update

Since October 2009, under the volunteer leadership of former OCTC staff member Janet Robinson, WIMS ("Walking In My Shoes") has offered parents and guardians of children with developmental delays and disabilities a support network, a venue for group activities and a resource for information. As of January 2014, WIMS will be coordinated by Citizen Advocacy, a well-established and highly regarded agency that supports individuals of all ages and disabilities. "This is a positive connection for all WIMS members," says Janet. "The voice of WIMS members will be added to the voices of many others, and will ensure long-term sustainability." Janet will continue to facilitate WIMS meetings along with a Citizen Advocacy staff member. •

Inspiring others through words

Helene Louise (Hagelstrom) is the mother of two children, one of whom suffered a stroke when she was a baby. At the time, Helene drew on the resources of OCTC to help her child. The emotional isolation that Helene felt at the time inspired her to write about her personal journey.



Called *The Little Dark Spot: How I Came to Terms with My Baby's Stroke*, the book is available through Amazon or by visiting www.michabooks.ca. •

ANIMALS + KIDS = FUN!



Top: Campbell is thrilled to pet one of Little Ray's reptiles.

Right: Thomas rides with a furry friend from the Humane Society.