



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

Connections

Inspiration. Motivation. Celebration.

Spring 2012

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

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It's a Virtual 'Real' World for OCTC's Youth

What could be more exciting and motivating for a young person than being able to play while controlling his or her environment and moving within an imaginary world that feels and sounds 'real'?

Enter virtual reality!

Virtual games take a youth's body into a 2-D or 3-D virtual world, where the youth can

interact with on-screen images and objects. Not unlike the commercially available 'active' video gaming technologies like Wii, virtual reality systems usually use a motion sensing technology/camera that allows the youth to move more freely.

And it all started a few years ago with a donation and a grant. With this support, OCTC was able to acquire a virtual reality system called the GestureTek Interactive Rehabilitation and Exercise System (or IREX). This therapeutic system is much more adjustable to the needs and requirements of different users than the popular Kinect or Wii systems.

OCTC's first Clinical Research Grant, funded by a TD Financial Group Grant in Medical Excellence, was awarded to Marie Brien, a physiotherapist at the Centre, to study the effects of an intensive, short-duration virtual reality training program on youth with cerebral palsy. Would it improve their balance and mobility?

The research study, which was completed in the summer of 2009, involved having youth take part in an intensive 90-minute virtual reality 'play' for five consecutive days. They played soccer, went snowboarding, raced cars, beat drums and even baited sharks.



cont'd on page 2

After the five days, the youths' balance, gross motor skills, ability to walk for long periods at a time all dramatically improved. Such an improvement meant one important thing — down the road they could take part in activities out in the community, with their peers.

The results of the study were presented at the 2010 annual meeting of the American Academy for Cerebral Palsy and Developmental Medicine, and published in *Pediatric Physical Therapy* in the fall of 2011.

Over the past five years, virtual reality programs have become part of OCTC's physiotherapy and occupational therapy practice for youth with cerebral palsy and acquired brain injuries — and are proving to be a promising rehabilitation tool. •

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This summer, week-long camps are being planned for youth with motor and balance issues. Youth will be put into groups according to their needs and each virtual reality training program will be designed accordingly.
.....

A DONATION from the Harold Crabtree Foundation to the OCTC Foundation was used to purchase an IREX virtual reality system

FUNDING for the research study came to the OCTC Foundation from the TD Financial Group

Making a Wish ... Going on a Jet Plane



Every child should have the right to dream; to hope that tomorrow holds more than just a new barrier; to believe that they can achieve something special in their lives, and to experience, even for just a little while, the carefree joy of just being a kid.

The Sunshine Foundation of Canada helps children living with severe physical disabilities or life-threatening illnesses to realize their most cherished dream — whether it's a trip to Disney, a new bike or a chance to meet their hero. According to the Sunshine Foundation, "For a child whose life often feels out of their own control, the chance to choose their own Sunshine Dream can be tremendously motivating and exciting. Dreams can change a kid's perspective, inspire them, and give them strength."

To date, 23 kids from OCTC have confirmed they will be headed to Disney World by private plane on April 24 — along with 13 staff volunteers.

Watch for more details soon on our website: octc.ca. •



Diane Leduc: This Year's Special Volunteer

April is a special month at OCTC. It's when we honour the special volunteers who support our programs and services throughout the region. In celebration of National Volunteer Week this April, we honoured volunteers who celebrated milestone anniversaries — including Diane Leduc.

For 10 years, Diane has volunteered twice a week in the OCTC School. She helps staff with set-up and assists the children at lunch time.

For Diane, volunteering isn't work. "It's being able to help and to show kindness to others. If we didn't help others, where would we be?" While some of Diane's friends think it must be challenging to work with children with disabilities, she knows that **kids are kids** and she is rewarded by being able to interact with them.

Diane is friendly, cheerful — and a great friend to the children and staff! •

Want to know more about volunteering at OCTC? Call Rachel Stoparczyk, Coordinator Volunteer Resources and Quality, at 613-737-0871, ext. 4300, or drop her an e-mail at rstoparczyk@octc.ca.



Diane with her pal Leon at the OCTC School

April 25, 2012 'For the Kids' Charitable Auction

Join us on April 25 for a fabulous evening at the new Ottawa Convention Centre!

'For the Kids' Charitable Auction supports the Ottawa Children's Treatment Centre Foundation and Autism Ontario – Ottawa Chapter.

You'll be able to bid on over 300 silent auction items, as well as our popular and valuable live auction articles and packages!

We'd love to surpass our fundraising goal of \$240,000. You can help us get there by buying tickets. Each ticket costs \$125 (for an income tax receipt of \$65). Corporate tables (up to 10 people) cost from \$1,250 to \$5,000. Call us at 613-738-4335 to buy your tickets.

Follow-us on Facebook to see the exciting items that will be auctioned that night.

www.facebook.com/octcfoundation



www.octc.ca gets a new image!

We used the occasion of our 60th anniversary to overhaul our website. If you haven't already visited our site, here's what you'll find:

- a "What's New" section on the home page (bottom left corner), where you'll find up-to-date information on OCTC events and programs
- a one-stop shop with the most accurate information about our programs, services and resources
- an integrated microsite for the Foundation, available with one click off the home page (www.octc.ca/foundation)

We'd love your feedback. E-mail us at info@octc.ca or call 1-800-841-8252, ext. 4316.

Join Families Across the Province

Are you interested in joining a network of families linked across the province? Are you interested in what's happening in communities across the province? Would you like to keep up with children's rehabilitation news?

If you answered 'yes,' then a new network of families of children with special needs is just for you!

The Ontario Association of Children's Rehabilitation Services (OACRS) has launched an online community on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube designed to bring families across the province together.

You can find the OACRS network for families online at:

www.facebook.com/oacrs

www.twitter.com/oacrs

www.youtube.com/oacrs



Accreditation Time!

OCTC was visited by surveyors from Accreditation Canada from November 14 to 16, 2011. The "Qmentum" accreditation program allows OCTC to measure the services we provide to families against national standards of excellence, with a focus on the safe delivery of quality health care.

Thank you to the many clients, families, community partners, staff, students, volunteers and board members who participated in this important process by having direct conversations with the survey team. We look forward to sharing the final results in this year's upcoming annual report. •



Paying Tribute to OCTC's 'Diamonds'

All 202 employees at OCTC are 'diamonds.' They provide our clients with hope and opportunities. They are creative and passionate about what they do. Every year, OCTC honours employees who have worked at OCTC for five, 10, 15 years or more. In our 60th anniversary year, 34 employees marking 355 years of cumulative service were recognized. Through our Inspiration Awards other staff were also recognized:

Inspire to Serve Award Nominees - *client/customer service*

Chantal Beauchamp-Drouin & Letty Salahor
Keri Burgess
Helene Cohen
Emily Glossop
Dr. Lucie Roberge
Diane Lavergne
Susan Mendelsohn
Sandy Schafer
The Smyth & Max Keeping reception team — Debbie Avery, Christine Casselman, Gurdeep Dhaliwal, Phany Keo, Tammy Lévesque & Lyse Ranière
Rachel Stoparczyk

Inspire to Improve Award Nominees - *creativity & innovation*

Marjorie Button
Anne Huot, Elaine Kerr & Pauline McGee
Jennifer Jarvis
Rachel Stoparczyk
TechKids & TechTeens planning team — Roselle Adler, Linda Kealey, Elaine Kerr, Brigitte Loughlin, Tara Previl & Anne Wittich

Inspire to Learn Award Nominees - *teaching & learning*

Dianne Height
Dr. Jean Ju
The Literacy Steering Committee — Jocelyn Barden-Underhill, Amita Furgoch, Dr. Jean Ju & Leslie Walker
Pamela Shea
Geneviève Tibi

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The **Literacy Steering Committee** (Leslie Walker, Dr. Jean Ju and Amita Furgoch; missing is Jocelyn Barden-Underhill, with Shirley Rogers on far right) received the Inspire to Learn Award for helping non-speaking children become effective readers and writers, and applying new knowledge for the benefit of OCTC clients and families.



Emily Glossop (left, with Susan Mendelsohn) received the Inspire to Serve Award for helping clients see their abilities and creating amazing opportunities for them, her passionate advocacy on behalf of all people with disabilities, and developing innovative programs at OCTC.



The **TechKids & TechTeens planning team** (Anne Wittich, Elaine Kerr and Linda Kealey, with Shirley Rogers on far left; missing are Roselle Adler, Brigitte Loughlin and Tara Previl) received the Inspire to Improve Award for providing a full-day bilingual summer program for clients who use adapted computers or power mobility aids, and helping clients use their technology to its fullest.



When Camp Is More Than Just a “Camp”

Last summer 27 clients who have physical and/or developmental disabilities, including autism spectrum disorder, attended summer camp for five weeks, thanks to a unique partnership with the YMCA/YWCA and OCTC’s Recreation Therapy service.

“My son felt secure in the camp setting because he knew OCTC staff were there to assist him if needed. He seemed to make good connections during camp.” ~ parent

But the camp wasn’t your ordinary camp. Children living in Orleans went to a program at the Ruddy Family Y facility in their own community — as did children living in central Ottawa (Taggart Family Y facility downtown) and in Dunrobin (Otonabee Y facility). With other children from their community, they participated in swimming, outdoor adventure activities, games, arts and crafts, trips and much more.

“My son has Asperger’s and often falls through the cracks of recreational

programming. The OCTC/Y camp increased his self-esteem and helped to rectify the feelings of isolation that seemed to be increasing.” ~ parent

Recreation Therapy staff from OCTC helped staff from the Y accommodate the children with various disabilities.

For Michelle Desrochers, whose eight-year-old son Bryce attended two weeks of My Camp at the Orleans Y, it was an opportunity “to bridge the gap.” She says, “Being able to attend a community-based recreational program is integral to promoting Bryce’s self-confidence and comfort. We were also able to network with friends and meet others whom he would not have ordinarily met. Bryce came home each night exhausted, and the swimming especially was great for him. Hats off to the organizers of this program, as I believe this should be the way of the future.”

“Our clients were able to work



Michelle Desrochers with her son Bryce and Rick Hansen during the 60th anniversary celebrations.

“Bryce thrives at being included in all activities. His two weeks at camp represented one more way for him to be fully integrated in his own community.” ~ Michelle

on goals around social integration, communication and independence,” says Anne Huot, Director of Client Programs and Information. “It is so important that our clients feel they are a part of their community. Through generous community donations, OCTC’s Foundation has been able to support the Recreation Service, so they can provide this opportunity. It was so successful that we will be continuing this summer.” •

Visit www.octc.ca/foundation to make a donation

Making a Lasting Gift

Making a bequest to the OCTC Foundation represents a lasting gift to children living with multiple physical, developmental and associated behavioural needs. With such a wonderful gift, you can help these children reach their full potential.

There are a few options available. You can:

- donate a specific amount of money to the OCTC Foundation, which will use the monies to meet a variety of OCTC client needs;
- give all or part of the remainder of your estate;
- designate the Foundation as a beneficiary of your life insurance policy (in whole or in part), the remainder of your annuity or your retirement plan; or
- create a testamentary trust to provide one or more beneficiaries with income for life, after which the capital passes to the Foundation.

Tax Benefits

A bequest carries tax benefits with it. It can help to reduce, by means of a tax credit, the income tax payable at the time of the donor’s death and may even eliminate or reduce the tax on capital gains on appreciated property.

Sample Wording of a Bequest: “I give and bequeath (xx dollars or all the rest, residue and remainder of my estate) to the Ottawa Children’s Treatment Centre Foundation, Ottawa, ON for the general purposes of the institution.”

For more information, contact Chantal Dompierre, Executive Director, Ottawa Children’s Treatment Centre Foundation, 613-738-4336; cdompierre@octc.ca. •

www.octc.ca/foundation

Getting a 'Wee' Start

We all know how important it is for children of all abilities to get a good start in life. But often children under 18 months who are referred to us for a developmental assessment and/or therapy wait a long time — six to eight months — before they can access professional services at OCTC.

Enter Wee Start Services, an innovative clinical model implemented by our creative staff in the Early Childhood Program and currently offered at the Smyth site every Tuesday.

In 2008, we piloted the successful Getting Started Services program for children over 18 months, thanks to significant support from QuickStart Early Intervention for Autism. As with Getting Started, Wee Start's objectives include reduction of wait times between referral to OCTC and initial contact; early identification of child and family needs and

strengths; timely referral to therapy services; and early access to community resources.

Here's how Wee Start works:

- Very young children who have been referred to OCTC for a developmental assessment and treatment receive an initial screening.
- This screening helps staff understand the child's needs. Based on this consultation, the child may be directed to therapy services.
- During the visit(s), parents are given strategies they can use at home while they are waiting for therapy to begin for their child.

Once the model is fully developed, staff hope to offer Wee Start at other sites throughout our catchment area. •

Since the service began in mid-January, 22 new clients have been seen within two months of being referred to OCTC.



E-mails & Your Privacy

For convenience, speed and accessibility, e-mail is a popular communication medium. However, there are risks to using e-mail:

- messages can be stored on networks/computers without the sender's or recipient's control, during which third parties can read or modify the content
- messages are not encrypted, making it easy for others to intercept and read
- many providers store messages on their mail servers before they are delivered
- the "Received" field and other information can often identify the sender.

Our privacy policy restricts the amount of personal health information in an e-mail to the essentials. Anything that can identify the client or family is eliminated. We also don't use Hotmail or Yahoo to send e-mails because of the potential for privacy breaches.

Before communicating with OCTC staff through e-mail, consider that your message could be intercepted before it gets to us, and that it's neither secure nor confidential. •

Sources: www.ipc.on.ca/english/Home-Page/
www.coto.org/pdf/COTO_Standards_RecordKeeping_2008.pdf

Congratulations, Kathleen!

In recognition of her work in promoting the needs of the francophone community, our very own Kathleen Stokely, Chief Executive Officer, was named the 2011 Rogers Francophile of the Year (2011), as part of the Bernard Grandmaître Awards. She was singled out for establishing a francophone class for children with physical disabilities and associated complex needs at OCTC. Working in collaboration with the three francophone school boards in Eastern Ontario, Kathleen achieved this feat one week before the start of school. Up until last year, this service was only offered in English. •



Did you know?

The OCTC Foundation's Board of Directors has mapped out a Strategic Plan for the next four years. The centrepiece of the Plan is to create a fundraising program that will grow to \$1 million annually by 2015 in order to increase support to OCTC's programs and services.

In addition to its popular 'For the Kids' Charitable Auction and regular direct mail appeals, the Foundation is focusing on major gifts and planned giving (see page 5) programs, using social media to promote events, maintaining third-party initiatives and using the website to encourage online giving. •