

The Hincks- Dellcrest Centre.

Serving Children,
Supporting Families,
Strengthening Communities

RAISE A CHILD'S SMILE

SPRING - SUMMER 2011

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Youth outreach workers change path of young people's lives

Kirk Bowen and Charuka Kirinde in Flemingdon Park, one of the neighbourhoods served by the youth outreach program

Struggles to stay in school. Difficulty finding a job. Trouble at home. Not knowing where to turn. These are just some of the issues that youth deal with today, particularly in neighbourhoods where they may also contend with poverty, crime, and language barriers.

For the past four years, The Hincks-Dellcrest Centre's youth outreach worker program has helped young people aged 12 to 21 in the Flemingdon Park, Victoria Village, and O'Connor neighbourhoods of northeast Toronto. Youth outreach workers Kirk Bowen and Charuka Kirinde connect with youth who may require help staying in school, finding employment or housing, or dealing with other personal or family issues. They reach out to youth wherever they are, in high schools, community centres, libraries, and even the corner convenience store.

"There's a great need for the work we do in the community," says Charuka. "A lot of youth really don't have anywhere to turn. By showing them what services are available and helping them navigate through the system, we can help them further develop and ultimately reach their goals."

In addition to one-on-one work with youth, the youth outreach program partners with other community agencies to run after-school cooking classes, art programs, summer basketball camps, and Black History Month events. A unique program called "My City" gives youth who may have never had the chance to leave their neighbourhood the opportunity to visit downtown Toronto. These programs also provide a forum for Charuka and Kirk to connect casually with young people who may need help but are hesitant to reach out.

"It's a great feeling to see these youth moving forward towards their goals," says Kirk. "When you meet up with someone you've helped and find that they're doing well, that's success." ■

Stories of success ...

Daniel was one of the first kids I began to work with several years ago. He wanted to be a chef but his father saw no value in education and they fought constantly. His father wanted Chris to leave school and take a job moving garbage for recycling. With our help, Daniel finished high school, got a job, found housing with a friend, and is now in post-secondary school training to be a chef. He's pursuing his goals and doing very well. He's even involved as an instructor in some of our cooking classes.*

- Kirk Bowen

My introduction to 12-year-old Luke couldn't have been more memorable. When I arrived at his school to meet with him for the first time, the parking lot was full of police cars and the classroom had been evacuated. In an angry outburst, Luke had vandalized the room, completely destroying everything. I learned that Luke had a history of anger management problems and was in a special behavioural program at his school, which he didn't like. Although Luke was reluctant to connect with me at first, over time we build a good rapport doing informal activities like playing sports, walking around the community, and meeting members of his family. It ultimately helped Luke agree to accept help from mental health professionals. Two years later, Luke is back in the regular school classroom and has made significant improvements. I'm really proud of him.*

- Charuka Kirinde

* Names have been changed

A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT AND CEO **DONNA DUNCAN**

We are pleased to announce that Donna Duncan has been selected by the Board as President and Chief Executive Officer of The Hincks-Dellcrest Centre. Donna took on this role in November 2010 after leading a nine-month transition review as Interim President & CEO.

Donna's appointment represents an important step in advancing change that will create clearer pathways and improved access to services for children and families throughout Toronto. We look forward to working with Donna to ensure that the children and families we serve receive the mental health treatment services and supports they need, when and where they need them.



This is an exciting and important time for The Hincks-Dellcrest Centre.

Following almost a year of comprehensive reviews and consultations launched as part of our transition, a process that involved Centre staff, Board members and external partners, we are now completing a strategic planning process that will renew our

vision, mission, and values as we create an exciting yet achievable plan to guide us into the future.

Collaboration with other children's mental health service providers will be a key component of our future plans as we work with others to improve access by children and families to services and supports. To that end, The Hincks-Dellcrest Centre has entered into two important partnerships: one with Child Development Institute (CDI) and a second with the Department of Psychiatry at Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre.

The Hincks-Dellcrest Centre and Child Development Institute, a Toronto-based organization providing child development, early intervention, and family violence services for children under age 12 and their families, have formally agreed to work together to align services and supports offered for this age group. Through the combined leadership of our Boards and staff, we are embracing this initiative as an opportunity to create a new standard of collaboration within our sector that will serve children and families more effectively than ever before.

Our project with the Department of Psychiatry at Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre serves a very different client need. This initiative seeks to ensure that appropriate care is available for young people with complex mental health needs as they transition into adulthood. Many Canadian families currently travel to the United States, at great emotional and financial expense, to receive care that is unavailable in Canada. The impetus for this project came through the leadership of Donna Green, whose daughter began struggling with mental illness at age 16 and who was ultimately treated in the US. As part of the planning process, we have established a formal steering committee as well as a strong, energized and motivated Family Committee to guide the development of a business case and a model of care. Watch for more details in the next issue of this newsletter.

As we work to advance these important initiatives, and consider how best to use the resources of Hincks-Dellcrest in meeting both current children's mental health needs and future opportunities, our fundraising capacity is becoming increasingly important. Thanks to the generosity of our donors, the Hincks-Dellcrest Foundation has a strong base on which to build. Each and every one of Hincks-Dellcrest's supporters will play a vital role in the realization of the exciting new opportunities ahead that will provide hope, opportunity and possibilities to children and families.

Raise a Child's Smile, The Hincks-Dellcrest Centre's annual gala fundraiser, is coming up on Thursday, May 5th. This will be an opportunity to celebrate the history of Hincks-Dellcrest as we look to the future with clear goals and an unflinching commitment to the children and families that we serve. We look forward to seeing you there! ■



photo by flowphoto.ca

Three hundred guests attended Raise a Child's Smile 2010

RAISE A CHILD'S SMILE 2011:

Night Magic... Thursday, May 5th at the Liberty Grand

Raise a Child's Smile, The Hincks-Dellcrest Foundation's signature event, is now in its 14th year! With a theme of "Night Magic", this year's gala will be magical with entertainment that includes music, acrobatics, and illusions. Spectacular prize draws and unique auctions round out an evening where anything is possible. The event will be hosted by longtime Hincks-Dellcrest supporter Ken Shaw of CTV News Toronto.

This year we will honour The Hincks-Dellcrest Centre's esteemed history, looking back on past supporters and milestones as we celebrate our ongoing commitment to children and families with mental health problems.

Join us on Thursday, May 5th (6:00 p.m.) at the Liberty Grand in downtown Toronto. Expect surprises!



ABOVE: Elementary School Council members with teachers Carole Traister (right) and Kim Silvertown (third from left)

RIGHT: Dr. Sarah Kibblewhite and Dr. Marshall Korenblum use puppets to help explain children's mental health problems to students



“KIDS HELPING KIDS” at Robbins Hebrew Academy

Elementary school students at Robbins Hebrew Academy, located in the Bathurst-Eglinton area of Toronto, have launched a year-long fundraising campaign to support The Hincks-Dellcrest Centre. The decision to help children affected by mental health problems was an easy choice for the students to make, says Carole Traister, the school's Student Council Advisor:

Robbins Hebrew Academy is proud to raise funds for a worthy cause every year. Our only mandate is that the charity should benefit children, since our motto is “kids helping kids”. We received the names of many potential charities to choose from this year.

Mental illness is a very difficult concept for young children to comprehend. Since I wasn't sure they would really understand it, I really didn't think it would be something they would choose to raise funds for.

When I began explaining the work of The Hincks-Dellcrest Centre, kids at first thought I was talking about “people who go around talking to themselves”. But the information sent by Hincks-Dellcrest explained that they help children who feel sadness that won't go away, or nervousness about being bullied, or distress about their parents' divorce.

It was as if a light had been turned on in the room. Immediately the students began to identify with these situations and wanted to share with each other their own personal experiences.

The choice of which charity to support each year is made by our Elementary School Council, made up of students from grades three to five. Out of the many charities presented to our students, 17 out of 18 students voted to fundraise this year for The Hincks-Dellcrest Centre.

Dr. Marshall Korenblum, Hincks-Dellcrest's Psychiatrist-in-Chief, and Dr. Sarah Kibblewhite, Staff Psychologist, visited the school in February. They taught the students more about mental health and even staged a puppet show demonstrating a conversation between a therapist and patient. The response was enthusiastic, with the children asking a multitude of questions and learning much about how mental health problems can affect kids just like them.

Robbins Hebrew Academy has a variety of fundraising activities planned for this year, including board game lunches, a Read-A-Thon, lemonade stands, and a charity soccer game. We thank Robbins Hebrew Academy for their fundraising efforts as they educate the next generation about children's mental health. ■



ONE NIGHT STAND:

Take a Stand for Children's Mental Health

On Friday, May 27th, “the place to be” is also the place to make a difference in the lives of children. Toronto's young professionals will join the party as they support children's mental health at One Night Stand: Take a Stand for Children's Mental Health. Following its successful first year, this event will take place at the new location of Steam Whistle Brewing in downtown Toronto.

Don't miss out! For more information on attending our upcoming fundraisers, or details on how to get involved as a sponsor, please visit www.hincksdellcrest.org or call (416) 924-1164, ext. 3343.

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WHY SEND A CARD....

when you can send a tribute?

Choosing the right gift can be difficult. Celebrate or remember your family and friends with a Hincks-Dellcrest Centre tribute card. Whether for a birthday, wedding, holiday season, or memorial tribute, your donation will honour your loved one while providing support for children and their families.

The Hincks-Dellcrest Centre tribute card lets others share in the reward of supporting children's mental health. To send a card with your personal greeting, contact Annabel Bassin at (416) 924-1164, ext. 3343 or abassin@hincksdellcrest.org.



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