

Dads Matter

I like to think that I am connected with my children; however I never really understood what it meant and how to effectively do it till we grew our family.

I became a stay at home dad when the eldest was 3 and middle was 1. I always wanted to be a large part of their lives so this was my chance. Like a lot of today's stay at home dads, we can't look to the previous generation for advice. Actually, when I looked around I didn't see anyone like me to turn to for ideas and support (this is an evil word for men, we can do it on our own, but deep down it's always nice to know you are not the only one!). So as a man I figured I would have to do it myself, I believed in me. I reverted back to being a kid. Days consisted of playing and getting down to the kid's level. What I quickly learned was that everything is new to them and needs explaining. Life became a game of asking: "What is new today? How can I explain it in an easy to understand way? How can I make it fun?" We picked up and inspected snails and worms, we planted and grew a garden and we walked everywhere. I was known as the dad that walked everywhere in the neighborhood, regardless of the weather. When the kids were afraid of thunderstorms we played AC/DC loud on the stereo and danced on the porch to Thunderstruck!

As I evolved as a dad, I realized staying connected meant having an open mind and looking for ideas wherever I could. So I discovered our local OEY, St. Mary's Family Learning Centre at Giles and Marentette. Here I discovered a group of dedicated, caring and encouraging individuals. By participating in parenting classes I learned the subtle differences between parenting as a mom and parenting as a dad and I learned that we were both equally committed to parenting our kids the best way we could. Sure we did things differently, but above all the children were number one. I learned that parents learn from other parents whether they were family or not, because someone has been there and done that at one time or another.

One of the neat and unexpected side effects of being a connected dad is the societal implications. Having been an involved dad and having a thirst for knowledge on dads issues, I was eventually approached by staff at St. Mary's about facilitating a dads group for dads. I am proud to say that this group has been meeting for over 3 years, talking about parenting issues from a dad's view, by dads. We just recently had our second 1 day Dads Matter Conference, where we had several speakers talking about dad's issues and of course food (anything worth attending offers free food).

Dads are important in the lives of their children! Staying connected means listening and responding at their level. Try it, its fun. The benefits for yourself, spouse/partner, other family members and society as a whole make it worth your effort.

Doug Krystia is the father of 3 children, almost 9 (girl), 7 (boy) and 4 (boy). I was a stay at home dad for 5 years and have just reentered the workforce in the past year. Staying at home was a conscious decision, as was going back to work. My training is what I would call baptism by fire.

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St. Mary's Family Learning Centre

ANNUAL REPORT~ 2010



St. Mary's Family Learning Centre is a progressive family-centred organization providing integrated support, learning and early identification/intervention services to advance the healthy development of families and their children (birth to six years) in Windsor-Essex County.



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Fedaa Beiti	Jessica Hancock	Phil Paolini
Ashleigh Blain	Carol Hebert	Priti Patel
Kelly Boomer	Mike Hebert	Lauren Perduk
Sharon Brunini	Sara Hillis	Shannon Porcellini
Erica Cacciavillani	Jimmy Hillis	Paige Ramsay
Whitney Camlis	Georgie Horvath	Val Reid
Doreen Chaulk	Andrew Jackson	Bill Reid
Allan Connors	Henry Johnson	Olaoluwa Sotire
Gary Cooper	Laurene Komar	Victoria St. Antoine
Natalie Coutts	Doug Krystia	Samantha Suntries
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Ilena DeMenech	Krista Loughhead	Martha Tinning
Jacqueline Dennis	Judy Lund	Benjamin Umeokwochi
Kristy Estabalaya	Lisa Malek	Brent Walker
Andrew Francescone	Joanna Markiewicz	Sarah Waugh
Sandy Friesen	Lisa Martin	

If we have forgotten anyone ~ we apologize!

Volunteers ~ The heart of it all...

Hours in 2010 - 2,726 hours

Approximate value of Volunteer Hours: \$ 32,712

Actual Value: Priceless



Volunteers... Celebrating People in Action!!

All of our volunteers at St. Mary's Family Learning Centre generously give their time, energy and considerable talents to make the programs at our Centre so special! On December 7, 2010 we held a Volunteer Appreciation Night at the Mill Pub in Olde Sandwich to thank the volunteers for being part of our team. Special thanks to owners Bill and Aggie Sarafianos for their kindness and hospitality. Bill and Aggie attended the Centre 25 years ago with their daughters Elizabeth and Stephanie and they have remained supporters ever since! We were so pleased that over 55 staff and volunteers attended the event. Certificates of appreciation were awarded to Sharon Brunini, Pam Barnett, Allan Connors, Sandy Friesen, Martha Tinning and Mike Hebert in recognition of their long-term commitment and support to families with young children at the Centre. The evening was a great success!!

We simply could not operate the Centre without the commitment of all our wonderful and amazing volunteers!! We appreciate their time and effort in making St. Mary's Family Learning Centre the extraordinary place it is!!

Financial Contributors

Our sincere thanks to all of the individuals, organizations and volunteers for their assistance and support.

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St. Mary's Anglican Church
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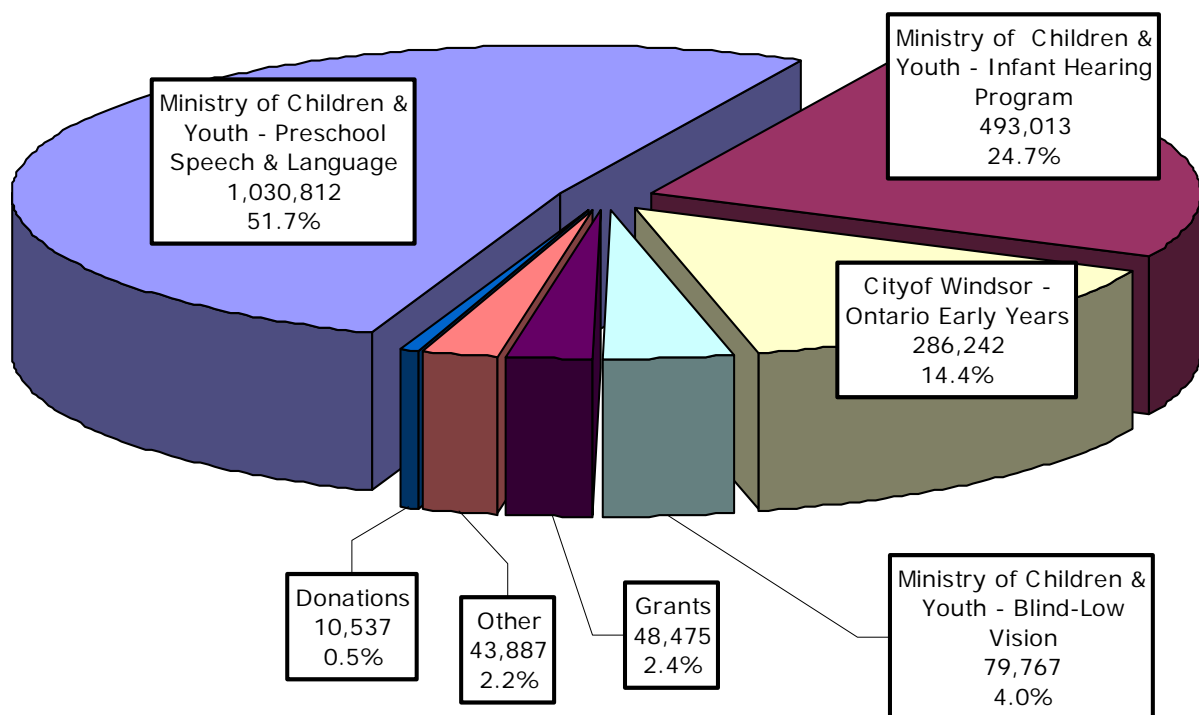
SILVER SPONSORS

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Caboto Club ~ Charity Pasta Night
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Harmony Mens Group of Windsor
Boyd Automotive of Windsor
Janisse Bros. - Marcotte Funeral Home
Kinsmen Club of Windsor
Royal Canadian Legion Branch #188

Other Supporters:

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Travis Loughhead

Sources of Funding



Thanks to: City of Windsor Children's Services, Pathway to Potential Poverty Reduction Strategy, Unity For Autism, the Ministry of Children and Youth Services, Individual and Community Donations

I really enjoy coming here... how can I help the centre?

The Centre is a non-profit, charitable organization and receives funding from the City of Windsor and the provincial government to provide Ontario Early Years services, Preschool Speech and Language services, the Infant Hearing Program and the Blind-Low Vision Program.

However, in order to meet the challenge of offering all of the programs that we know families want and need, it is necessary to ask for funding from the community.

If you would like to help the Centre financially, you will be given a tax receipt in addition to our sincere thanks. Call us or talk to a staff member.

From the President...

Krista Loughead

Another year has passed and 2010 has been exciting, as always, at St. Mary's Family Learning Centre. Innovative programs such as the Early Signs Project, funded by Unity for Autism, has not only provided early assessment for children as young as 15 months old, but has become a catalyst for area service providers to come together to strengthen existing programs for children with Autism.

Thanks to Doug Krystia and the Dad's Group for all their hard work in order to present our second annual Dads Matter Conference. We continued our commitment to supporting dads by offering a six week parenting course which was full to capacity.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to two outgoing Board members, Sharon Brunini and Judy Lund; your critical thinking, dedication and creativity will be deeply missed. Thankfully, Sharon will continue volunteering at the centre and Judy is only an email away when we need her! The commitment of our board members (past and present) is a true sign of the integrity and uniqueness of St. Mary's Family Learning Centre.

It is our Executive Director, Linda Edwards, the staff in the Talk 2 Me Program, Infant Hearing, Blind Low Vision, and Ontario Early Years Centre and our volunteers who make St. Mary's Family Learning Centre the progressive, inclusive and community-oriented centre that it has been for over 30 years. Families at St. Mary's Family Learning Centre are given support that is specific to their individual needs. Thank you for your continued excellence and exceptional attention to detail.

To ensure St. Mary's Family Learning Centre continues to be a leader in family-centred, early childhood learning, we need the support of families. Please share your experiences at St. Mary's Family Learning Centre with other families and your local politicians. Let's make sure that the wonderful experiences we have at St. Mary's Family Learning Centre are passed on to other families for years to come!

2010 Dads Matter Conference



Again, another successful conference! On Saturday, April 24, 2010, we held our Second Annual Dads Matter Conference at the CAW Local 195 hall which proved to be the perfect venue for yet another great event. Thanks to all of the participants, staff, volunteers and presenters who made this day possible!

Special thanks to the Windsor community who donated prizes and food.



Ontario Early Years

Parent Visits: 6,738 Children Visits: 8,093 Parents Attending Workshops: 936

Parenting Courses Include:

How to Talk So Kids Can Learn
How To Talk So Kids Will Listen
Children's Sexual Health
Parenting Matters
Parent Interaction Group
COPEing With Toddler Behaviour
10 Steps To Positive Discipline
Siblings Without Rivalry
Nobody's Perfect

Family Child Care Programs:

Be Back Soon
Child care during courses

Early Learning Activities for

Parents and Children:

Play & Parenting Drop-In Sessions
Growing Up!
Going to School Program

Me and My Dad Programs:

Dads Group
Dads Matter Conference Committee
Dads Matter Conference
Dads and Discipline Course

Post Natal Programs:

B.A.B.Y. Group
(Bright Active Babies and You)

Emergent Literacy and Numeracy Programs:

Readers Are Leaders
ESSO Math

Resource Library:

Parenting Books & Videos

Community Partnerships:

Children First
Book of My Own Program
City of Windsor Children's Services
Windsor & Essex County Supervisor's Network
Windsor Essex Public Health Unit
Windsor Public Library
St. Clair College Early Childhood Education Program
Ontario Early Years Centres
Youth and Family Resource Network of Essex County
Pathway to Potential
Child Abuse Prevention Committee of the Windsor-Essex Children's Aid Society
Positive Parenting and Employment Skills Group

For more information see our website at:
www.smflc.ca



Talk 2 Me

Infant Hearing & Blind-Low Vision Program

Children served by Talk 2 Me in 2010: 1,556

Children screened by Infant Hearing Program in 2010: 5,113

Children served by Blind-Low Vision in 2010: 34

Talk 2 Me is a system of community partners who provide preschool speech and language and infant hearing, blind-low vision and early intervention services. These services are offered at the main site (St. Mary's Family Learning Centre) as well as other early years centres, child care programs, hospitals and in home.

Partners:

John McGivney Children's Centre
Leamington District Memorial Hospital
Chatham Kent Health Alliance
Canadian Hearing Society
CNIB
University of Windsor

Chatham-Kent Health Unit

Children First
Windsor Regional Hospital
Children's Treatment Centre of Chatham-Kent
Windsor Essex Catholic District School Board
Summit Centre
City of Windsor

Our thanks to the following programs for providing satellite offices:

Lakeshore OEY Centre, Emeryville
St. Pius School, Tecumseh
Sacred Heart School, LaSalle
Talbot Trail OEY Centre
St. Bernard School, Amherstburg

Mill Street OEY Centre, Leamington
Storybook Early Learning Centre, Essex
St. Alexander School
Ska:na Family Learning Centre
Great Beginnings

Talk 2 Me offers speech and language services to preschool children which include parent consultation, assessment and referral, individual and group therapy, parent education [**Toddler Talk, It Takes Two To Talk, Target Word and More Than Words**]. We also increase public awareness by attending community resource fairs and public parent/child activities and events.

Talk 2 Me also provides an early childhood education program called **Learning Language and Loving It**. Teacher Talk workshops are also offered to ECE staff members.

Infant Hearing Program ~ Windsor Regional Hospital, Leamington District Memorial Hospital and Chatham Kent Health Alliance are the key partners for this program. IHP provides newborn hearing screening, high risk monitoring, audiology services, family support and communication development services.

Blind-Low Vision Early Intervention Program ~ Our Early Childhood Vision Consultant (from CNIB) provides services for families in their home and community settings. Consultation to Early Learning and Child Care Centres is also provided.

