

MARY CENTRE NEWSLETTER

Toronto Residents Throw a Christmas Party

What a party! Everyone who attended the T.O. residents Christmas celebration had a whale of a time. Family, friends, volunteers, Mary Centre's staff, along with Board members and Dominic, (our Executive Director), who also brought family members, not to forget Carmen from Fallingbrook Presbyterian Church, who is special to Margaret (Leyton), all had a really good time.



The Entertainer, Liz Tilden, stole the show. She got everyone involved, by asking for volunteers to participate in Christmas games, from dressing up as a Christmas Tree, to a "Clacker" competition. She also handed out a bunch of little gifts to all those present.

The highlight of the evening was the appearance of that jolly old man dressed in Red & White chanting Ho Ho Ho, with jingling bells.



Each resident received a gift, and they eagerly tore their packages open right away, their faces all lit up.

Dominic took the opportunity to proudly honour some of Mary Centre's Toronto staff for years of service with certificates of appreciation, pins or crystal ornaments. Once again Manu (Whitecap staff)'s son, Rajit, out did himself with his catering skills, helped by Manu and husband. Everything was delicious and in abundance. Not to forget Coleen (Leyton staff) and her two children who decorated the hall with festive garlands and bows. Most of all, thanks to Denise for all her hard work, William for taking all the great pictures, and everyone else who volunteered their time; they all helped to make the whole evening so magical for everyone.

by Darlene & Carol.

"Celebrating Developmental Challenges"

THE RESPITE CARE PROGRAM

Respite refers to short term, temporary care provided to individuals with disabilities in order that their families can take a break from the daily routine of care giving. This program offers support, guidance, care and supervision to individuals according to their individual needs.

This program is funded by the Ministry of Community and Social services through the Special Services at Home funding and is renewable every year to help individuals and their families to pay for the Respite Care cost. All programs are fee for service based and the Special Services at Home funding can be used to pay for the services.

The Respite Program offers individuals and their families unique choices in level of support by providing:

Respite Family Relief Provider – The Respite Family Relief Provider provides one on one support, based on the individual and the family's needs, both at home and in the community. The worker provides the individual an opportunity for skill development and gets them involved in the community by participating in social and recreational activities. We have highly competent and reliable staff on our team who are well trained and supervised.

Out of Home Residential Respite – The Out

of Home Residential Respite is provided at St. Bernard's for short term care depending on the individual and family's need. St. Bernard's offers 5 residential beds to the community all year round and is completely paid for by funds received from the Banyan Tree Foundation. We offer March Break and summer activities while individuals are utilizing the program during these times. The staff at St Bernard's assists individuals in skill development and the opportunity to participate in social and recreational activities.



This program is definitely a growing program and families are desperately looking for respite. There are numerous benefits to individuals and the families. Respite provides a break in the daily routine and helps parents avoid burnout, stress and fatigue. Respite care not only provides caregivers a break, but also gives the individual a change in his or her daily routine. It can provide opportunities to build new relationships and to move towards independence.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

May 15, 2007

8th Annual Fundraising Golf Tournament
Glencairn Golf Club, Milton

April 19, 2007

Volunteer Appreciation Dinner
Columbus Centre

November 8, 2007

10th Annual Fundraiser
Famous People Players Dinner Theatre

For information contact Marion Patterson at (416) 630-5533 or mpatterson@marycentre.com

Transforming the Developmental Disabilities Sector

Challenges Facing the Sector

Working to support people within communities rather than isolated institutional environments has added an increased level of complexity to the work of agencies in recent years. This has been compounded by changing needs and escalating demand for services that has stretched the sector well beyond its capacity. The status quo is not sustainable. A convergence of financial, service and individual-related issues have combined to create the current pressures facing the sector. Past strategies used to balance budgets have eroded any flexibility service providers had to accommodate the complex service needs of the aging population and the changing support requirements of young adults. Current pressures include:

- Insufficient residential supports for individuals whose parents have become too old to care for them.
- Individuals with high needs wait several years for day and residential programs, placing unrelenting stress on families and communities.
- Low wages impact the ability of service providers to recruit and retain qualified staff.
- The changing profile of individuals (aging individuals and those with multiple disabilities) results in the need for more complex support services which exceed the level currently available.
- Only individuals and families in acute crisis are able to access residential support and the support available is often inadequate and temporary.

Moving Forward

Successfully launching the transformation of the developmental disability sector is a bold initiative. To transform the sector, \$200 million in base funding for 2007/08 is needed for ongoing service and system enhancements. It is essential that the sector have sufficient resources to address urgent pressures, stabilize and strengthen the capacity of providers, while increasing individualized supports.

The system of supports for people with developmental disabilities has reached a turning point. The current mode of operation cannot be sustained. Change is required. Families, service providers and Ministry staff, working together, will build a more responsive and sustainable system of supports for people with developmental disabilities. We are asking families, individuals and staff of service providers to contact their local member of Provincial government and express their views.

Silver Anniversary as a Volunteer

Marriet Grootenboer has spent the last 25 years volunteering with the disabled. She describes the experience as “a lot of fun and a great learning opportunity as well.”

Twice a week, Marriet picks up Jenny and Brenda from Mary Centre’s Aberdeen location and drives them to the Friendship Club in Brampton. There they enjoy two hours of crafts, fellowship-building activities and non-denominational discussions of God and His love for all His creation.

Sessions like this take place in a network of Friendship Clubs across North America. The club attracts “people of different Churches, different backgrounds and primarily of different disabilities,” says Marriet. “They are just as important to God as everyone else.”

All of the 40 attendees at the Brampton Friendship Club are either blind, have Down’s Syndrome or are otherwise mentally and/or physically-challenged. There are 16 volunteers who conduct the activities and provide the religious instruction.

Marriet joined the Friendship Club as a teen volunteer and is now the Coordinator for the Brampton group. She became involved with Mary Centre because “it was near where I lived. I was so impressed with the way the Home was run. So much better than the facilities some of our other attendees live in.”

What is the most rewarding aspect of her volunteer work?
“Teaching those who have no faith or religious experience about God and Jesus.”

—by *Cheryl Xavier*

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If you would like more information about Mary Centre and/or you would like to make a donation, clip out this and we will provide you with a Charitable Tax Deductible Donation.

- I would like more information about the agency
- I would like information on becoming a volunteer
- I enclose a cheque in the amount of: _____ or charge to my Credit Card
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“Celebrating Developmental Challenges”