

MARY CENTRE NEWSLETTER

CHRISTMAS AT HOME FOR GORD, DOUG AND TED!

Are there really angels in heaven? Of course! And the story you are about to read also proves there are angels here on earth.



It's a story about three brothers – Ted, Gord and Doug -- who lost their mother last June. The brothers, who are developmentally disabled, had always been cared for by their mother. Who would look after them now? Would they be separated? Would they be forced to leave the only home they had ever known?

Many of us at Mary Centre knew two of the brothers through Toronto's world renowned Famous People Players. Gord and Ted had been performers for many years. Gord is still active with the company. We think of the Famous People Players as family. So the brothers' struggle to stay in their home together became our struggle.

Fast forward through months of hard work to December. Through a solid team effort involving nearly everyone at Mary Centre, Famous People Players and many friends, the brothers were now receiving the support they needed to stay together at home. But this would be their first Christmas without their loving mother.

Angela Pearce, Mary Centre's principal support worker reported that the gentlemen *"weren't too enthusiastic about Christmas as their mother passed away in the Spring and there were no decorations to make it look like Christmas"*

Enter a small army of volunteers led by Janet. She began with telephone calls to fellow workers and friends asking them if they had an ornament that wasn't going on their tree to consider donating it to the family. Before long, numerous commitments for tree decorations as well as money to buy gifts were received. Happily, a tree was also donated.

With her friend Marg in tow, Janet visited the brothers to set up the tree and decorate the house. Soon a nativity scene was set up, the tree was decorated, a string of lights hung in the window and on the mantle. It was beginning to look like Christmas!



Gord, Janet, Ted, Angela and Doug by the Tree

After purchasing lights and Christmas gifts, Janet had about \$80 left to fill stockings. She decided to shop at Shoppers Drug Mart for the stocking stuffers. She recruited another friend, Brenda to help with the shopping.

Early Saturday morning, Janet met Brenda at the Coxwell and Danforth Shoppers. Brenda had been there a while. Her cart was already full of personal and work-related shopping. *"Janet, read the sign. 15,000 Optimum points for every \$200.00 you spend and for every 34,000 in total points you receive \$75.00 in free stuff."* Both women had accumulated points from past shopping. They decided to donate those points to a good cause.

The manager, Mike Haney, personally scouted the basement storeroom searching for bargain gifts. It took three hours, \$80 and Optimum points galore to fill four carts with everything you could possibly buy from Shoppers for Gord, Ted & Doug's Christmas.

"Never in my life have I ever spent three hours in Shoppers" said Janet. "By the time we had left we had purchased three times \$80.00. We ran out of ideas! Then we had fun trying to get what we bought into one car."



Gord Opening His Gift and Friends Watching

The stockings now had to be stuffed and the presents wrapped. Janet now recruited her friend Diana and her daughter, Bailey as chief wrappers. It looked just like the commercial where the wife comes home laden down with shopping bags from Shoppers and the husband has visions about Christmas morning opening packages of toilet paper, tooth paste, soap and towels. Bailey did a fabulous job of wrapping everything perfectly -- just like in the commercial!

A Christmas party was held at Gord, Ted & Doug's home. Mary Centre executives, staff, volunteers, and board members attended. Pizza was ordered. Guess what? It was late so it was free! Another sure sign of angel interference.

Spontaneously, Gord asked everyone to join hands. He then led a prayer and talked directly to his mother. He said not to worry they were still together and happy thanks to all these friends. *"Thank God for Mary Centre" said Gord.*

PEEL, COMMUNITY SUPPORT PROGRAM

Luisa is a prime example of the individuals served through the Community Support Program, which is run in Peel. Luisa has been part of the program for over a year and shows the same enthusiasm and determination today that she did the first day of meeting.

Luisa lives with her guardians in Brampton. She goes to Norpak daily, taking great pride in her work. This sense of pride is carried into her sessions with the Community Support Program. Luisa calls her worker her "teacher" and is always ready to sit down and get to work, with paper and pencil in hand, at their meeting time.

Luisa has been working diligently at math, money skills and reading. Though she's quite soft-spoken, she's not afraid to speak up when she needs to. If she's had enough for the day, she'll ask her worker to finish things off. When the session ends, she always asks for "homework" to work on throughout the week.

Luisa very much looks forward to her Monday afternoon sessions with her "teacher". It is time just for her, where she has some amount of control and she gets some positive feedback and a chance to just talk to someone about herself



The Crystal of Appreciation for their participation in the Famous People Players' Fundraising Event is presented to Peter Stange of Boston Consulting by Dominic Conforti, Executive Director of Mary Centre.

Mark Your Calendar!

November 11 & 12, 2004

7th Annual Gala

June 8, 2004

Famous People Players Dinner Theatre

5th Annual Golf Tournament

Silver Lakes Golf & Country Club

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

6TH ANNUAL FAMOUS PEOPLE PLAYERS EVENT

Mary Centre's 6th Annual Dinner Theatre Event on November 13th and 14th was a financial and artistic success! Again this year, we partnered with the Famous People Players who provided a wonderful performance to appreciative audiences both evenings. A silent auction and, for the first time, a live auction added to the excitement. Gloria Martin of 680 News and ex-Leaf Jim McKenny of CITY TV served as Guest Hosts and, in so doing, helped to profile the mission of Mary Centre.



Famous People Player Troupe Member , Debra, and Marion Patterson of Mary Centre

Bidding was fast and furious at the auctions both evenings which is no surprise as who would not jump at the opportunity to enjoy dinner and a Leaf's game at the Air Canada Centre hosted by Wendel Clark or courtside Raptors' tickets or an overnight stay in Niagara-on-the-Lake with dinner and tickets to the Shaw Festival (just to name three). Thanks to the auction proceeds, our corporate sponsors and our dinner theatre guests, this year's event broke all records in terms of dollars raised. These funds will be put to great use in support of our Parish Outreach, Respite Care and Integrated Seniors programs.

Our thanks to all who supported this year's event. In particular, we greatly appreciate the contribution of Scotiabank Group, which served as a Platinum Sponsor for the second straight year. It is the generosity of the corporate community and a number of individual benefactors which enables Mary Centre to truly fulfill our mission to *enhance the lives of people with a developmental disability.*

LET'S PLAY GOLF, TUESDAY, JUNE 8TH, 2004 AT SILVER LAKES !

We are in the process of organizing our 5th Annual Golf Tournament Again this year it will be held at Silver Lakes Golf and Country Club on Tuesday, June 8th. We hope to surpass last year's success, a full house and many friends of Mary Centre in attendance. "**Stanley's Mug**" was presented to the winners, John Chrobak, John McKimm, Bobby Richardson and David Robertson by his wife, Nora Wiczorek. Who will be the lucky recipients this year?

Come out and help Mary Centre keep up its commitment to the community by helping raise money that is needed to achieve this ongoing battle. ***We look forward to seeing our faithful supporters and a few new faces this year!*** If you would like to register or donate to the cause please contact Marion Patterson at (416) 630-5533 or e-mail mpatterson@marycentre.com.



Carol, Chris, Irene, Marion and Denyse having fun volunteering at Golf Tournament 2003



Paul Drohan, Rob Grandy, Frank Penny & Frank Pegolo

COSMO BRINGS JOY VIA PET THERAPY!

On February 4, 2004, the MCSP Group (Meet/Connect/ Support/Participate) had a very special visitor, a 7 year old golden retriever, named "Cosmo". He came for a visit as part of our pet therapy program.



Cosmo greeted all participants – clients, staff and guests. He was so friendly and loveable that he put everyone at ease and brought a smile to every face. His owner, Tracey Berman, (Mary Centre's Respite Manager) gave him commands and he did several tricks for us. We learned in this sessions that pets can relieve stress, lower blood pressure and alleviate depression in those persons who care for them. The members who attended this group today, shared about pets in their lives, but today, Cosmo was the Star of the Show! Thank you, Tracey and Cosmo, for this wonderful experience!

Mary Centre Newsletter

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