



Closer *to* Home

COMMUNITY SERVICES

Uniting vulnerable children, youth & families

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Dear Friends of Closer To Home,

One of our staff members recently commented that "It is as mutually beneficial to give as it is to receive," in regards to our Adopt-a-Family program. While it is a difficult season for many of our client families, the Adopt-a-Family program gives them hope. And, our donors get to experience the amazing gift of giving. At Closer to Home, there will be many tears shed this holiday season, happy and sad, hopeful and grateful, by clients and by donors. Their stories are heart-warming and emotional. Their spirit is inspiring. Read on. This edition of the Closer to Home newsletter unwraps some of these stories, tells you more about the past year's events and invites you to join us in the spirit of giving. Happy holidays!

Closer to Home Adopt-a-Family Program

One Family's Experience

Closer to Home's Kiwehtata Parenting Program works with Aboriginal families with children ages 0 to 3. Its original goal was to work with parents to help teach effective parenting skills in raising their young children, but it has grown into a program that helps parents reunite with their children from foster care. This shift was needed since Aboriginal children are over-represented in the child welfare system.

I met Sally and Charles in June 2009 at Inn from the Cold, a shelter that Kiwehtata has strong ties with and where Kiwehtata regularly delivers programming. They had been evicted from their residence in a First Nations Community in southern Alberta, and arrived in Calgary with nothing but a suitcase, hoping for a better quality of life.

Sally was pregnant with their first child and expecting in December that year. She and Charles were both very excited about the baby's arrival, and eager to get out of the homeless shelter and find suitable accommodations to prepare for their first child. They voluntarily participated in the program with other parents who were mandated by court to be there.

At the end of the course the family remained in touch with the program. They found a home but had no belongings to fill it. When I showed up at their new place, they had a bed with a few blankets and little else, but were grateful to have a place to call their own. Charles was working full time and Sally was expecting the arrival of a healthy baby, yet they were concerned about how they were going to prepare and provide for their child.

The family reached out to Kiwehtata and I referred them to Adopt-a-Family. They requested baby essentials, from a crib to diapers and clothes and food for themselves. Adopt-a-Family immediately matched this family with a donor. When we showed up at their doorstep with a van-load of everything a baby could possibly need, Charles and Sally were stunned. The only words that could come out of their mouths were 'thank you!' Hands shaking, Sally gave the donor a thank you card but says she knew her

(continued on page 2)

During the 2010 holiday season, Closer to Home, along with various organizations and community members, provided over 200 children and 100 families with gifts and food. Children, youth and families will be thankful for this generosity for years to come.

This year, please help us to once again show every child, youth and family the generosity of the community that supports them.

words could never convey all of the feelings of appreciation and gratefulness for what this donor had given them. This family's life was changed forever because of the generosity of those who 'adopted' a family in need at Christmas.

If you or your organization is interested in contributing to a wonderful holiday season for a family in need, please contact our Adopt-a-Family Program at 403-543-0550 ext 0 or tchapman@closerhome.com



Closer to Home Hosts Annual TFA Conference **Fairmont Banff Springs, Banff, Alberta**

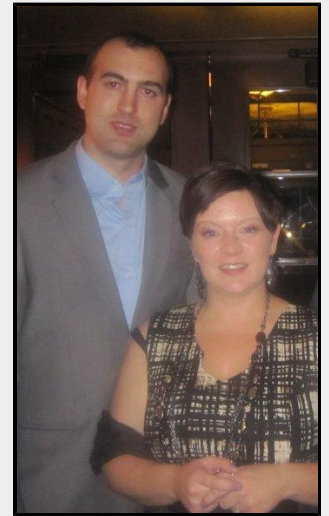
The 34th Annual Teaching-Family Association Conference in Banff provided opportunities to learn, share, network, and celebrate success. Three days of workshops provided attendees with new knowledge, resources and ideas, while individuals from across North America connected with each other to share insights and different ways of thinking.

Closer to Home Community Services staff were especially pleased to share in recognizing the exceptional work of three individuals from Calgary who received international awards.

Lonnie and Elaine Phillips Award **Brandy Burse and Scott Coulthard**

Brandy Burse and Scott Coulthard (Closer to Home Teaching Parents) received the Lonnie and Elaine Phillips Award that recognizes a certified practitioner couple or individual for their outstanding contribution to the Teaching-Family Association as implementers of the Teaching-Family Model.

Brandy and Scott have been Teaching Parents at Closer to Home for almost six years, and in that time have worked with dozens of challenging youth. They've nurtured and gently supported a youth who longed to be home with his family. They've persevered with a young man who raged in anger at them, knowing he grieved for the parent who was absent. They've provided a caring home for a young person who struggled to trust anyone. They've kept their door and hearts open - unconditionally - to the youth who ran away to an exciting but risky lifestyle but who returned to the safety and security of Brandy and Scott's care.



Brandy and Scott welcome parents into the Teaching Home and respectfully teach them how to parent their children again so they can be reunited. Brandy and Scott stay in contact with these families to offer support when needed, never questioning or blaming parents who reach out for their support. They not only support their youth in the community, they support all youth from their community! Scott developed and still coaches a community basketball team for youth with special needs so one of the young people from the Teaching Home could join a team and be successful. Now, many youth in their community benefit from this team.

Brandy and Scott are heroes for so many children and families. The staff and volunteers at Closer to Home Community Services have been privileged to have Brandy and Scott as part of our agency. On behalf of all the many children and families they have made such a difference for, we thank them!



Teaching-Family Association Award for Outstanding Contribution & Achievement in Human Services **Bonnie Johnston**

Bonnie Johnston (CEO, Calgary and Area Child and Family Services Authority) received the Teaching-Family Association Award for Outstanding Contribution & Achievement in Human Services. This award recognizes an individual or organization for exceptional national or international advocacy and support of children and families.

Bonnie Johnston has dedicated her career to serving children and families, first as a nurse and health administrator and now as Chief Executive Officer of the Calgary and Area Child and Family Services Authority (CFSA). **(continued on page 3)**

Bonnie began her career as a nurse in an Aboriginal community in northern Alberta and later served in a variety of health care roles in Edmonton and Calgary. Prior to her current position, Bonnie was the Director of Child and Adolescent Health for the Calgary Health Region. In that role, she was responsible for pediatric inpatient and critical care health services at the Alberta Children's Hospital and pediatric inpatient services at the Peter Lougheed Centre.

As CEO of the Calgary and Area CFSA for the past nine years, Bonnie Johnston's focus has been on partnerships, collaboration and innovation to continuously improve outcomes for vulnerable children, youth and families. She continues to raise the bar for better practice for Calgary's children and continues to shift the culture within her own organization. As part of a provincial wide undertaking, Bonnie has been an inspirational promoter of the Outcome Based Service Delivery model, supporting the use of evidence-based practices and transforming the way Children's Services does business in Calgary and throughout Alberta.

Bonnie has also made her mark in developing new relationships with the nonprofit agency sector. Bonnie involves community agencies in strategic planning, keeps dialogue open and transparent, and provides a supportive atmosphere in which to deal with challenges inherent in any children's service delivery model. Bonnie Johnston's leadership gives us all hope for the future of Alberta's children and families.



Celebrate Children Everyday

Universal Children's Day and World Day for the Prevention of Child Abuse

November 19 and 20 are important days for children everywhere - whether they know it or not! These days have been cited as a time to share awareness, celebrate and remind us how to have fun. In 2001, the Women's World Summit Foundation launched an international coalition to call attention to and take action to prevent child abuse, which resulted in the World Day for the Prevention of Child Abuse on November 19.

In 1954 the United Nations General Assembly recommended that November 20 be Universal Children's Day. November 20 is also the day that the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Declaration of the Rights of the Child (1959). A blue ribbon worn on this day symbolizes Universal Children's Day.

Many cities across the globe have special activities for families to take part in to create awareness or celebrate the joy that is our children. In Calgary, some people celebrate this day by making cupcakes together as a family and sharing the cupcakes and the awareness with local businesses, while others partake in free events throughout the city (events can be found in the Calgary's Child Magazine both in print and on line, www.calgaryschild.com).

During the month of November, look for events that will allow you to gain awareness, share your knowledge, and celebrate the precious children in your life and your community.



Buying Time Program

Helping Families Problem Solve

The Bow Trail Resource Group has been assisting families in Calgary's southwest for more than 10 years. The group is a network of local faith groups and social agencies who respond to poverty issues by addressing basic needs, helping families experience less stress and increased stability during challenging times.

The Buying Time Program, which is funded by the Bow Trail Resource Group and Nikos Enterprises Ltd., helps families who are served with a utility disconnection notice and are unable to make the required payment. The program helps families in need by:

- making a payment towards their outstanding utility bills to prevent disconnection
- referring people to needed resources
- assisting with budgeting and life skills
- helping people problem solve to decrease the likelihood of future crisis situations

Contributions enable the Bow Trail Resource Group to continue assisting families in need. If you would like to help, donations can be made payable to Closer to Home Community Services:

Closer to Home Community Services
3507A – 17 Ave SW, Calgary, AB T3E 0B6




Donor Appreciation

Closer to home would like to recognize our supporters from the last quarter

- 360178 Alberta Ltd
- About Staffing Ltd
- Canadian Pranic Healer's Association of Alberta
- Emmanuel Christian Reformed Church of Calgary
- Erin O'Reilly
- Howie & Eleanor Nakamura
- Janice & Dave Besson
- Jennifer Head
- Karen Olivier
- Kids Up Front Foundation
- Michelle Pont
- Minoush Rafie
- Nikos Enterprises Ltd.
- Richmond Hill Baptist Church
- Scarboro United Church
- Sheila Buckley
- Sisters of Charity of St. Louis
- Geoffrey McMillan
- Vivian Dong

Please make a donation

Yes! Closer to Home can count on my support



www.closertohome.com
Ph: 403-543-0550

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*For credit card donations, we will call you during business hours to verify information

Do you wish to receive further correspondence from us such as our quarterly newsletter, donor recognition, or upcoming events?
 Yes
 No

Donor privacy information: Closer to Home Community Services respects the personal privacy of our donors. We do not sell or share our donor list with other organizations. We use your donor information to support the processing of your gift and for ongoing fundraising activities. As part of our recognition program, we will publish donor names in Closer to Home publications such as our annual report or quarterly newsletters. **If you prefer to remain anonymous, please contact our Fund Development Department at (403) 543-0550 ext 225.** If you do not wish to receive further correspondence from our agency, please check the box provided above.

Please send completed form to:
3507A - 17 Avenue SW, Calgary, AB T3E0B6

Charitable Registration #: 89823 5759 RR0001

Please visit our website at closertohome.com
 Donate to our cause at closertohome.com/donate
 To be removed from our mailing list, email funddevelopment@closertohome.com