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GREAT NEWS!

The United Way Gets Behind GHS

We are thrilled to announce that over the next two years the United Way of Greater Victoria (UWGV) will provide GHS with \$300,000 in funding to help us move ahead with key elements of our strategic plan.

The main part of the funding – \$140,000 per year for the next two years – will be used for the expansion of programs for older adults. This will include support for hiring, staff training and development, and the creation of programs and materials for family and caregiver support.

An additional \$20,000 is being provided in 2012 to help with our facilities planning, specifically for an expert study on how we can make better use of our building.

We thank the United Way for its support and for the recognition it gives to the needs of adults with developmental disabilities. We look forward to working with them as a community partner over the coming years.



United Way
Greater Victoria
Funded Program

Starting on March 5

The Garth Homer Society will launch a morning respite program on a pilot basis.

The program is designed to provide support to families and caregivers who need a little more time and flexibility early in the day, and will be especially helpful for those who need to be at work early or who have occasional early commitments.

Read the full story on page 2 or visit www.garthhomer.com for more information and updates



for more information visit our website

www.garthhomer.com

Message from the Chair

Since our founding in 1973, the Garth Homer Society has been a pioneer in helping those with special life challenges. Through innovation, caring, and a sense of community, it has built remarkable programs that help to meet the complex, diverse, and constantly changing needs facing individuals and families living with developmental disabilities.

We must, however, continue to evolve and innovate. In the past 12 months, the organization has tackled some extraordinary issues. Funding models, government policies, client demographics, and the economic climate are all shifting rapidly. GHS staff and management have risen to the challenges and continue to do so. I know that the GHS Board of Directors, members, fami-

lies, and caregivers are proud of their efforts and the outstanding results they have achieved.

The society stands on a strong platform from which to move forward. Our existing programs – for example, our Employment Services program for clients of working age and our Pathways program for aging clients – remain strong and are poised to

grow to meet emerging demands. At the same time, the Board is looking to the staff and management for fresh approaches and new programming ideas that will create opportunities to provide services and support for an expanded roster of clients of all ages.

Our strategic plan requires us to grow and to become even more effective in creating programs that meet both client and family needs, and also help to make the organization more sustainable. We are fortunate to have the experience, expertise, and commitment in the organization to meet these demands. Externally, we have the steadfast support of government and community agencies that see our work as essential.

As we build momentum to achieve real and enduring quality in the lives of the individuals we serve, on behalf of the Board of Directors I thank our staff,



supporters, donors, the Garth Homer Foundation, and the many dedicated individuals and institutions with whom we work.

Bruce Homer

Bruce Homer

How much does it cost?

The cost per person for each morning session is \$15, payable at the time of booking. Pre-bookings will receive a 10 per cent discount, as long as they are booked by the 22nd of the month prior to the month of the bookings. Payment can be made by Visa, MasterCard, debit, or cheque. Credit card payments by phone are accepted.

How are bookings made?

Bookings and payments can be made through the GHS reception office, by calling 250-475-2270, or emailing ghsinquiries@garthhomersociety.org. To guarantee a spot, pre-booking is recommended. Drop-in bookings are accepted until 3:00 pm on the day prior to the booking, and will depend on availability. Cancellations of pre-booked sessions are accepted with two weeks' notice. Transportation of the client to and from the program is the responsibility of the family or caregiver.

If you have any questions about the program, please call Colina Titus at 250-475-2270.

Personalized Supports Initiative

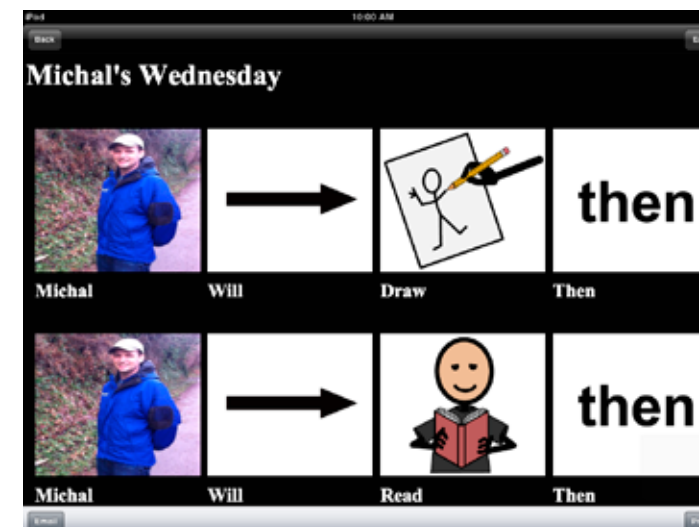
On January 31, 2010, a regulatory change for CLBC eligibility criteria took effect making a distinct new group of adults eligible to receive supports from CLBC. CLBC introduced the Personalized Supports Initiative (PSI) to provide services and supports which are separate from the CLBC services for individuals with developmental disabilities, and focuses on adults who have both significant limitations in adaptive functioning and either a diagnosis of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) or Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

Garth Homer has been approved by CLBC to become a service provider for PSI. This is a new departure for GHS that will help to expand our service offerings for younger clients. We hope to begin working with CLBC in the new fiscal year to begin offering PSI services.

iPads in DREAMS and Artworks

Apple's iPad can open doors for people with developmental disabilities that go beyond simply interacting with technology. A wealth of applications are available directly from Apple's App Store that are designed specifically for people with autism, Down Syndrome, and other disabilities. These apps can open up worlds for our clients.

GHS is helping our clients enter these new worlds by introducing iPads into two programs – DREAMS and ArtWorks. For example,



A screenshot of Michal's scheduling app on the iPad

there is an app called iCommunicate that will allow a staff member to design a customized visual schedule complete with audio and visual feedback, communication boards, daily schedules, flash cards, and choice cards. If a staff member needs, for example, to add a new picture of a volunteer, he or she would simply take a picture with the iPad and add it into the updated schedule.

Rob Baker, our team coordinator in the DREAMS program, notes that “for those with autism, the iPad represents a leap forward in how they can communicate and interact with others. Physical picture boards are static and unchanging, often with generic pictures that may be difficult for clients to link to real-world activities. The highly customizable nature of the iPad, from pictures to voices and beyond, could help clients express themselves and communicate with staff and other clients on a whole new level.”

We are only just beginning to learn how we can use new technology to make a difference for our clients. Stay tuned for the exciting developments that are sure to come.



Michal Rajkowski uses the iPad in DREAMS

PROGRAM NEWS

Introducing Our Morning Respite Program

On March 5 GHS launched a morning respite program on a pilot basis. The program is designed to provide support to families and caregivers who need a little more time and flexibility early in the day, and will be especially helpful for those who need to be at work early or who have occasional early commitments. The program will run as a pilot for four months. If it is successful and there is sustained interest in it from families and caregivers, it will be continued.

The program will be available on weekday mornings from 7:30 to 9:00 a.m. at the Garth Homer Centre, 813 Darwin Ave. Two staff members will be on duty at all times, providing support for a maximum of ten clients per session. Under supervision, clients will have access to a microwave, kettle, tea, drinking water, sink, refrigerator, and washrooms. Mealtime support will be provided for those who bring a breakfast. Activity materials will also be available, and staff will accommodate client interests whenever possible.

Our program staff are trained in first aid, CPR, medication administration, and are committed to excellence in service. For the term of the pilot, the program will only be available to those who do not require 1:1 support or significant support for behavioural issues.

continued

STARR Christmas Hampers a Huge Success

This Christmas was a very special one in our STARR program as we celebrated the success of our 15th annual Christmas Hamper Delivery. The STARR room was transformed into Santa's Workshop! Clients and staff worked like busy elves – shopping, sorting, wrapping, tagging and decorating, and putting together gift and food hampers for three families living at the Cridge Centre. This year we were very fortunate to meet two of the families who received our hampers. Seeing the joy on the faces of these families was heart warming. The experience of giving put into perspective the true meaning of Christmas for us!

Our hampers would not have been such a success without the help and support of GHS staff and clients throughout the year with our fundraising events (pizza and hot dog days). A special thanks to Brenda and the CAT program for collecting the empty pop cans during STARR's fundraising events, recycling the cans at the Bottle Depot and then donating the \$200 collected to the hamper program!

Thank you to all who donated throughout the year by purchasing 50/50 tickets and to Tara for continuing the coordination! As many donors prefer to be anonymous, no names are listed here, but we are very grateful to everyone who graciously donated money and helped us obtain the gifts on our gift board. Thank you all so very much!



STARR clients pose with hamper gifts

IN THE MIX

Facility Study Under Way

With support from the United Way, CLBC, and the Garth Homer Foundation, GHS has engaged CitySpaces Consulting to help us assess the state of our facility and to plan for the future. The Garth Homer Centre opened on May 15, 1977, and will celebrate its 35th anniversary this year.

Originally built to accommodate sheltered workshops, the facility has been reconfigured often over the years as client needs and programs changed. Today, the facility functions more as a supportive centre for independence and inclusion than a full-time home for programs, and is often very quiet during the day, as clients spend more and more of their time in employment and community-based activities.

However, after 35 years the building is not in good repair,

and now we need to figure out how to keep it going for the next 35. The study will be in two parts. The first part is a "utilization analysis" that will help us understand how we can make better use of space to accommodate the growing demand for services and the changing patterns and types of service delivery. The second part is an engineering study to help us assess the condition of the building and the kinds of repairs and alterations that will be needed to keep the facility both safe and functional.

We expect a report from CitySpaces in April or May. On the basis of findings and recommendations CitySpaces makes, we will develop a capital maintenance and redevelopment plan.

Advisory Committee on Ageing

Mitchell Temkin, CEO of GHS, has been asked to serve on CLBC's new Advisory Committee on Ageing, for a two-year term. The broad mandate of the committee is to guide CLBC in developing and implementing a strategy to support ageing individuals with developmental disabilities, and their ageing family members and/or caregivers. The appointment reflects the leadership role

on geriatric issues that GHS has taken with the completion of its report on ageing and developmental disabilities. The report, for which the Koerner Foundation generously funded the research and development, was completed in 2010 and helps identify the issues developmental disabilities agencies face as their clients age.

FUNDRAISING UPDATES

GHS Remembered in Estate

Last August, we were informed that GHS was named a beneficiary of a portion of the estate of Mr. Roger Reid, including a share of a house. Two other charities are also named in his will. We do not yet know what the value of the legacy will be, but we are nonetheless grateful to Mr. Reid for thinking of GHS and the needs of people with developmental disabilities.

The Knights of Pythias Support the CRC!

In September, GHS received an impromptu visit from Mr. Ray Cutts, Chancellor Commander of the Victoria Branch of the Knights of Pythias. After a short tour of the facility, Mr. Cutts decided that his organization would make GHS a recipient of its Christmas giving. At the Knights of Pythias seasonal dinner in November, GHS CEO Mitchell Temkin received a cheque for \$1,000 in support of the Computer Resource Centre. Our thanks go out to Mr. Cutts and his fellow members for their timely, thoughtful, and most welcome gift.



Ron Macketuk from Pathways checking the weather in the Computer Resource Centre.

Opus Arts Supplies Supports Artworks



Artworks Coordinators Bonnie Laird and Suzanne Bessette, on the left and right, receive a cheque from Colleen Stusek of Opus Art Supplies

Every year, Opus Art Supplies raises funds for the local community through its Christmas Donation Drive, in which the company matches customer donations with purchase credits for recipient charities. This year, staff at the Victoria branch of Opus (512 Herald Street – www.opusartsupplies.com) elected to raise money for the ArtWorks program at GHS. The Christmas drive raised a total of \$3,657.01 from Opus customers. The same amount has been credited to the ArtWorks account at Opus, for a total gift of \$7,314.02. Thanks!

Fall and Christmas Campaigns

A total of \$11,460.00 has been raised through our fall and Christmas mail campaigns. A heartfelt thanks to all the generous folks who stepped up to help with their gifts.

IN THE MIX

Snow Days and Closures

Recently, the Garth Homer Centre had to close because of a snowstorm. We know that closing creates difficulties for clients and their families, so we got to thinking about how we can communicate better in the event of a closure so that everybody knows what is going on.

First, here is how a closure comes about. We do not make any decision on closing because of weather until at least 6:30 a.m. of the same day. By then, the local news usually has information on whether schools will be open and whether public transportation and HandyD-ART will be running. Generally, the Garth Homer Centre will be closed if the schools are closed, if the buses are not running, or if HandyDART is not running. We try to make any decision on closure as quickly as possible after 6:30 a.m.

Once we have decided to close, two things happen. First, we start calling people through the GHS community phone tree so that staff, families, and caregivers get the news as soon as possible. We will continue to do this, and to do it as quickly as we possibly can. We also inform local radio stations and other information outlets.

Second, we post a closure notice on the news section of the homepage of the GHS website. From now on, we will be using the web posting to provide ongoing updates throughout the closure day. If a closure of more than one day is likely, the news will be posted on the website as early as possible. When the centre is closed, go to the GHS homepage at www.garthhomer.com for the latest updates.

The Garth Homer Foundation

Those of you who donated to the recent fall and Christmas mail campaigns will have noticed that you were asked to direct your gift to the Garth Homer Foundation, not GHS. The foundation is an independent organization whose primary goal is, to the greatest extent possible, to promote and fund the aims, goals, and interests of GHS. More and more, the foundation will be conducting the fundraising for the society and distributing all donated funds to it as designated by donors. The foundation also builds, administers, and distributes the proceeds of an endowment that has just reached \$100,000.

One interesting item of recent foundation news is the establishment of the Butchart Gardens Wishing Well Fund. Each year, the Fund receives a donation of the coins thrown into the wishing pond at Butchart Gardens. The foundation will also be designating the proceeds from this year's Radical Reels event to the Butchart Gardens Wishing Well Fund. It is reserved for the purchase of technology for clients and will support efforts such as the new experiments with iPads in DREAMS and ArtWorks. Thanks to the great folks at Butchart Gardens for making this possible.

I would also like to thank all the other donors who have generously supported the foundation over the last year, one of our most successful to date, and look forward to their support into the future.

Thanks
Judith Scott
Chair, Garth Homer Foundation



To contact the Garth Homer Foundation:
web www.garthhomerfoundation.org
email admin@garthhomerfoundation.org
phone 250-812-7896

Message from the CEO

It has been more than six hectic and engrossing months now since I took on the senior management role at the Garth Homer Society (GHS) with a mandate to implement a new strategy and increase sustainability. As you can see from this newsletter, there is a lot going on, and I can assure you that this is just the beginning. There will be much more to report in the months ahead, and GHS will be communicating regularly to keep everyone up to date. Check the latest news on our homepage at www.garthhomer.com

As you all know by now, the provincial government has committed to increasing funds for developmental disabilities and reforming the operations of CLBC. Although the \$40 million committed does not match what is needed as estimated by the British Columbia Association of Community Living, it is a good and welcome start that should have considerable impact in the coming year. GHS has been in close touch with CLBC about our plans, and staff there are very supportive of them. We expect to be working collaboratively with CLBC as our changes unfold.

Two main issues will occupy our attention in the coming fiscal year.

The first is program expansion, and not just in geriatrics as some people have supposed. Yes, the number of older clients is growing fast. We anticipate that nine people currently in other programs will be moving into Pathways in the next 12 to 18 months, and that half of these will have dementia. The pressure to grow geriatric services is very real and immediate. But we must expand across all our services, not just in geriatrics.

Because of the way our funding works, we cannot adequately

support the always increasing cost of our facility unless we serve more people. Nor will we be able to maintain all our current programs unless we replace the clients who are leaving them because of age. To this end, we are engaged in an important discussion with CLBC on how we can increase our numbers in the coming year. We hope the new funding will help.

The second big issue is figuring out how to make better use of the facility so that we actually can serve more people without compromising existing services. As you will read below, as a first step we are undertaking a utilization and engineering study of the building. The United Way, the Garth Homer Foundation, and CLBC are supporting this important project, and CitySpaces Consulting is doing the analysis. We expect to have a report in hand by April, and to have a plan for moving ahead soon after.

The coming months will be busy ones. Through everything, of course, we must continue to deliver our much needed services. What has impressed and gratified me above all since coming on board, is the



commitment and excellence of GHS staff and management. I cannot overstate how impressed I have been with what they do every day. So I have no doubt that they will manage perfectly well as things begin to change in the months ahead.

Please contact me directly at mtemkin@garthhomersociety.org if you would like to make any comments or suggestions. I welcome your input.



Mitchell Temkin

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

DELOITTE

We are very appreciative of the generous volunteers from Deloitte that came to Garth Homer Centre on September 23 last year and spent their day painting a new programming area. GHS was picked as a volunteer site as part of Deloitte's Impact Day – the day that Deloitte employees across Canada volunteer to help a nonprofit organization. Again, many thanks from the clients and employees at GHS.

TRINITY CHRISTIAN CHURCH AND PACIFIC PAINT AND WALLPAPER

Visitors to the Garth Home Centre will have noticed a big change as they walk in the door – the auditorium, lobby, and reception area have been rejuvenated. The green is gone, and there is a new emphasis on warm neutral tones. New flooring that enables clients to navigate more easily with wheelchairs and walkers. We are grateful to our tenant, Trinity Christian Church, for providing most of the funding

for the facelift. And we must also acknowledge the generous contribution of Pacific Paint and Wallpaper for its donation of paint. Thanks folks!

YOUNG CONSTRUCTION LEADERS

Over the past several months, the Young Construction Leaders Network (YCLN) – a group of construction professionals under the age of 40 – have contributed more than \$30,000

worth of time and materials to make life better for clients at the Garth Homer Centre. With government support for our facility shrinking, their contribution is most welcome. They have constructed storage cabinets, repaired soffits, installed garden benches, resurfaced the balcony, and refilled the sinking asphalt at the front of the building. Their support has been indispensable. So a big thumbs-up and heartfelt thanks to all the folks at YCLN.

EVENTS

RADICAL REELS

Every year, the Banff Mountain Film and Book Festival presents the wildly popular Radical Reels night – a presentation of the best high-adrenaline films entered into the Banff Mountain Film and Book Festival competition. On March 16, the showing will be held in our auditorium at 813 Darwin Avenue. All proceeds from the event will be donated to GHS. The doors open at 6:30 p.m. and the show starts at 7:00 p.m. Tickets are available at www.beafan.com.

ArtWorks Exhibitions

TRANSPORTATION

March 1–April 14

ArtWorks artists Josefina Mena, Tanya Steinhausen, Greg Robertson, David Whiting, and Ashley Haggensen are participating in “Transportation,” a juried exhibition of Project Ability in Glasgow, Scotland. Canadian artists



from Indefinite Arts in Calgary and Nina Haggerty Centre for the Arts in Edmonton are also participating. The exhibition is of drawings, paintings, and prints depicting literal and fantastical interpretations of transportation.

SAANICH ARTISTS 2012 EXHIBITION

April 4–16

An exhibition of selected studio tour artists will be at the Gallery Café at Cedar Hill Recreation Centre. Four ArtWorks participants will exhibit with other Saanich artists.

SAANICH OPEN STUDIO TOUR

May 24–June 22

May is the month to visit artists in their home studios and discover incredible treasures. GHS ArtWorks

artists will be demonstrating their talents at the GHS Jennie Butchart Studio and exhibiting their work in the Karin Koerner Gallery. Whether you are a devoted studio fan or a newbie, we hope you find something that really amazes you. For information and studio locations, check the GoBC website, www.gobc.ca. The Saanich Open Studio event is on May 24, from 1:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

GAZING INTO THE CRYSTAL BALL

April 12

On Thursday, April 12, GHS and Second Wave are co-sponsoring a presentation in our auditorium by Prof. Michael Prince of the University of Victoria. Second Wave is a community advocacy group focused on promising practices in transition and services for young adults. The presentation is titled “Gazing into the Crystal Ball: Policy Challenges and Opportunities in Community Living.” Please join us on April 12, 7-9 p.m.



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