



Thank you for being part of our *Caring Community Working Together for Children and Youth* at Peel Children's Centre.

As we mark **Children's Mental Health Week** (May 1–8), we ask you to join us in renewing our efforts to reduce the stigma that can be associated with mental health difficulties. Families, friends, mental health professionals, community partners, politicians, media, volunteers, funders, donors and businesses – we all have a role to play. Together, we can speak up. Together, we can break the silence.

This newsletter features a **primer on child and youth mental health** for Children's Mental Health Week. Read on as well for information about **spring events** at Peel Children's Centre (PCC) and about our remarkable **volunteers and donors**. Their commitment and generosity enable us to provide a continuum of high-quality mental health services to more than 3,500 children, youth and their families each year.

## Children's Mental Health Week 2011

Children's Mental Health Week is an annual campaign to raise public awareness of the signs of mental health difficulties, the importance of early treatment, and the services that are available to help children, youth and their families who are experiencing difficulties with feelings, behaviour or relationships.



### What is a mental health difficulty?

Mental health difficulties are struggles with feelings, behaviour or relationships that seriously affect daily functioning at home, at school, or in the community.

1 in 5 kids – that's 60,000 young people in Peel – have a diagnosable mental health difficulty. The most common mental health difficulties in children and teenagers are behaviour disorders (e.g. defiance, bullying), anxiety disorders, Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder, depression, and eating disorders.

### Signs of a mental health difficulty

Many children and youth exhibit these characteristics and behaviours from time to time during normal development:

- getting significantly lower marks in school
- avoiding friends and family
- having frequent outbursts of anger
- losing her/his appetite
- having difficulty sleeping
- rebelling against authority
- drinking and/or using drugs
- not doing things he/she used to enjoy
- damaging property
- worrying constantly



- experiencing frequent mood swings
- not concerned with her/his appearance
- obsessed with her/his weight
- lacking energy or motivation
- hitting or bullying other children
- attempting to injure himself/herself.

However, if these characteristics or behaviours are **intense, long-lasting, inappropriate for the child's age, or interfering with the child's life**, they may be signs of a **mental health difficulty**.

If your child has mental health difficulties, it is important to get help as soon as possible. Left untreated, kids in distress can turn to drugs and alcohol, become suicidal, drop out of school, become violent, or withdraw into silence and isolation. The good news is that treatment works, leading to better outcomes and happier lives.

## How do I get help?

**Mental Health Services for Children and Youth (Centralized Intake)** is one number to call for mental health services for children and youth who live in Brampton, Caledon or Mississauga. If you are a parent, service provider, or youth over age 12, you can call **905-451-4655** for help.

When you call, an intake worker will schedule a brief telephone interview to figure out which service is best suited to your needs. You may be referred to one of these children's mental health agencies: Associated Youth Services of Peel; Nexus Youth Services; Peel Children's Centre; or Trillium Health Centre - Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services. If another community service could better meet your needs, the intake worker will connect you with the appropriate agency.

Peel Children's Centre also operates a **Crisis Response Service**. If you are a child/youth under age 18, or the child's parent or caregiver, you can call **416-410-8615** to get help **24 hours a day, 365 days a year**.

There are no charges for our children's mental health services. While there are wait lists for some programs, Peel Children's Centre will help while you are waiting with short-term counselling, group programs, our Crisis Response Service, and services at Ontario Early Years Centres.

Any child, regardless of age or circumstance, can develop a mental health difficulty. Should this happen, please call us. Mental health treatment gives kids and families hope for a bright future.

## Spring events at PCC

### 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Cosmic Bowl

Join Peel Children's Centre for our 7th Annual Cosmic Bowl event on **Thursday, June 2** at Classic Bowl in Mississauga. You'll enjoy a fun-filled evening of bowling, prizes, balloon pops and treats, while providing generous financial support to children, youth and families with mental health challenges. With a





high repeat attendance rate of more than 250 bowlers annually, this is one of our most beloved signature events.

You can be a part of this lively event in a number of ways:

- Be a sponsor or donor – showcase your company, product or brand at this high-energy event, attended by 250 young professionals, families and leaders from the business and legal communities.
- Register a team of 4 or 5 members from your company, family, neighbours or friends. Cosmic Bowl is a great social night out, with excellent prizes and a positive team-building experience!
- Make an in-kind donation to the “loot bags” for our participants (approximately 250 loot bags are distributed at the event) and/or donate an item as an incentive prize, or for our balloon pop.

Register today by contacting our Development Department at 905-795-3500 ext. 2298.

Each year everyone who bowls, pledges, sponsors and participates, raves about what a great event this is! We hope you will join us this year. Thanks to more bowlers, more pledges and more generous sponsors than ever, \$40,000 was raised last year. This year, help us mark 25 years of being there for children with serious emotional difficulties. Together, we make a positive difference in the lives of children, youth and families in our community!

## Annual General Meeting and Community Celebration

Peel Children's Centre and our partner agency, Nexus Youth Services, invite you to attend our Annual General Meeting:

- Tuesday, June 21, 2011
- Mississauga Convention Centre, 75 Derry Rd West, Mississauga, ON
- 6:00 pm Annual General Meeting
- 6:30 pm Celebration of Youth
- 7:15 pm Light Refreshments
- RSVP: [rsvp@peelcc.org](mailto:rsvp@peelcc.org) or 905-795-3500 ext. 2635

Our community celebration brings together not only Peel Children's Centre and Nexus Youth Services, but also Associated Youth Services of Peel, Catholic Family Services Peel-Dufferin, Peel Children's Aid, and Rapport Youth & Family Services, which are also holding their annual meetings. Join us for an uplifting evening that features inspiring stories of collaboration, resilience and success.

## Volunteers and donors: bringing Hope to children, youth and families

More than 100 specially trained volunteers and 700 donors generously support Peel Children's Centre each year. Their contributions enable us to extend significantly the services we can provide for children, youth and families who are experiencing mental health difficulties.



## Volunteers: Passion. Action. Impact.

From tutors and mentors to drivers, childcare providers and fundraising assistants, volunteers are critical to the success of our services at Peel Children's Centre. We were honoured to recognize our volunteers during Canada's National Volunteer Week from April 10 to 16, 2011. This year's campaign – built on the theme, *Volunteers: Passion. Action. Impact.* – celebrated volunteers as Canada's superheroes.

PCC's very own superhero began his volunteer journey just over a year ago. Kevin, a 25-year-old university student, became a mentor in hopes of gaining field-related experience. What he didn't know when he embarked on his journey was that he would not only gain practical experience, but also make a profound difference in someone's life and make a new friend.

Kevin has played an integral role in the mentorship program since being matched with 13-year-old Chris. As Chris' mentor, Kevin's role was to participate in fun and engaging activities, while helping Chris to improve his attitude towards school. Kevin's determination, tenacity, compassion and creativity led to a wonderful success story about the power of hope.

It was apparent that Chris' literacy skills needed to be developed, but Kevin met much resistance due to Chris' negative experiences in the classroom. When Chris continued to express his frustration by refusing to read aloud or share his written work, it became apparent to Kevin that he needed to find creative ways to engage Chris and motivate him to read.

Kevin used Xbox game manuals, performed charades to demonstrate new words – also providing comic relief! – and signed out books of interest at the library. Progress remained slow, but Kevin was determined to make a difference.

One day, Kevin noticed that Chris was carrying around a book. It occurred to Kevin that this book might work as a learning tool. When asked about the characters in the book, Chris became extremely animated and talked easily and freely about the story line. While earlier sessions had not been very successful, Kevin left this one feeling motivated and hopeful.

When Kevin arrived home, he realized that he had forgotten his cell phone at Chris' house. He returned to find the family's annual Super Bowl party underway. When Kevin went upstairs to get his phone, he was surprised but mostly overjoyed to find Chris reading his book on the couch. When asked why he wasn't downstairs enjoying the party, Chris replied, "I can't wait to see what happens at the end of this chapter."

The next time they met, Chris was already on chapter three.

A heartfelt thank-you to Kevin and to every volunteer who has made a positive contribution, no matter how big or small, to the lives of the children, youth and families at Peel Children's Centre.





## Leadership Gift from RBC Supports Group Services

Peel Children's Centre is delighted to receive a further \$40,000 leadership gift in 2011 as part of RBC's Children's Mental Health Project. This RBC initiative supports community-based and hospital programs that reduce stigma, provide early intervention, and increase public awareness about children's mental health issues.

This is the ninth year that RBC Foundation has supported programs at PCC, with overall support totalling \$200,000. RBC's 2011 grant will again help to fund our broad range of treatment, parenting and special-purpose Group Services. In 2010/11, more than 400 children or youth benefited from Groups at PCC.

Group Services will again offer a series of Parenting Workshops this summer. Visit our website ([peelcc.org/about/publications](http://peelcc.org/about/publications)) to download the brochure, or request printed brochures using our website form ([peelcc.org/feedback](http://peelcc.org/feedback)). Register for these workshops by calling Mental Health Services for Children and Youth (Centralized Intake) at 905-451-4655.

We extend our sincere thanks to RBC and to all the generous donors who support PCC's services for children, youth and their families who are experiencing serious mental health difficulties.

## Join Our Caring Community

### Our Services

Learn more about PCC's high-quality services for children, youth and their families by visiting [peelcc.org](http://peelcc.org). To access services, call **Mental Health Services for Children and Youth (Centralized Intake)** at **905-451-4655**. If your child, youth or family is experiencing a mental health crisis, call our **24/7 Crisis Response Service** at **416-410-8615**.

### Volunteer

Do you want to gain valuable and rewarding experience? Volunteer options at PCC include mentor, tutor, childcare, respite, driver, and fundraising support. Volunteer Coordinators provide orientation, specialized training, and ongoing support. Call **905-795-3500**, or visit [peelcc.org/volunteer](http://peelcc.org/volunteer). Make a difference in the life of a child!

### Donate

Make your donation today to help us bring Hope to children and youth who are struggling with mental health difficulties. Thanks to your generosity, we are there to support children, youth and families when they need us the most. Call **905-795-3500, ext. 2298**, or donate securely through [peelcc.org/donate](http://peelcc.org/donate). Thank you for your support!