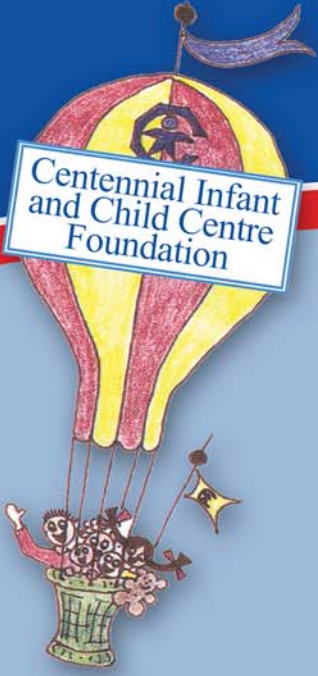


Centennial Infant and Child Centre Foundation

• Cherishing Children for over 40 years •

Special 40th Anniversary Edition: Celebrating Centennial's Year-Long Birthday Bash!

Celebrating the past...present...and... "beginning the next 40 years" of service to the children and families in our communities



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Spring/Summer 2008

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Toward the next 40 years

Centennial enjoyed a fantastic 40th Anniversary Year, raising a record-breaking number of donations. And the excitement continues to grow for the future. As Centennial begins another 40 years of dedicated community service, there appears to be inspired movement forward. "We are continuing to build funds and our goal is to have confidence in our ability to sustain all the initiatives of the Centre," says Foundation Chair and President, Laura Wallace.



Centennial Infant & Child Centre 40th Birthday

A new committee is born

In line with establishing a long-term strategic plan, the Foundation is pleased to announce the formation of a fundraising committee, co-chaired by long-time volunteer and Board member, Jeff Arnold, and past President and Director of

the Foundation, Bill Smith. Other members include Marsha Brooks, Gord Grunwell and Julie Toskan-Casale. "The committee is going to establish long term goals and plans to enhance the Foundation's fundraising abilities and to provide stable and long term funding to the centre," explains Wallace. Initiated at the beginning of the year, the fundraising committee has already met several times, drafting its mandate, goals and strategic plan toward Centennial's future.

The Foundation is grateful for all the wonderful donors who have helped Centennial pursue its mission and establish a formidable reputation in the communities we serve. But challenges remain. In order to maintain our essential programs, expand our services and meet our future goals, additional funding and support is necessary. Toward another 40 years of superior service, Centennial continues to need your help.

Celebrate our "new" third party event

The Foundation is also thrilled to announce that Centennial has been chosen by RBC Royal Bank as the sponsored charity in its 11th Annual Commercial Financial Services, Greater Toronto Region Charity Golf Tourna-

Foundation Chair and President, Laura Wallace.



ment this June. “We’re excited to have been selected by such a prestigious organization,” Wallace says. “They had many charities to choose from so it’s a true testament to the important work we do at Centennial that we were selected.”

Here comes Wonderland

Other exciting event news includes the RBC Family and Friends Day at Canada’s Wonderland. A portion of the proceeds from each ticket sold will go towards The Yellow Bus Foundation and its recipient charities, including Centennial. “We’re happy we were able to participate and are hopeful that friends and family of Centennial have taken this opportunity to participate, not only to support YBF—a major donor of Centennial—but to support other worthy not-for-profits who did take part in this exciting day,” expresses Wallace.



Operations update

Renovations at the front of the building will finally be coming to a close this Spring. With a new ramp, heated steps and a bright Centennial sign adorning our facilities, Centennial families will be thrilled with the improvements. Special thanks go to Kim Clarke who oversaw the project and to all our staff who had to put up with the ongoing disruption, particularly Pam McNamara, our office administrator, at the front desk.

Keep your eyes open for an upcoming announcement of our grand unveiling and reopening ceremony!

A handwritten signature in cursive that reads 'Laura Wallace'.

Chair and President
Centennial Infant and Child Centre Foundation

What a Campaign!

Celebrate good times

In January 2007, we initiated a year-long 40th Anniversary Celebration of Centennial’s dedicated service to children with special needs in the Greater Toronto area. With so many of you lending a helping hand and joining us at our exciting celebratory events, attendance was high and spirits even higher. Without a doubt, the year-long party was a rousing success.

“Beginning the next 40 years” edition of the news publication...

extends a very special thank you to:

Contributors:

Laura Wallace, Barb Hannah, Kim Clarke,
Helen Smith, Amanda Williams, Chris and Kim Draper, Bill Smith, Kim Carrigan,
Tim Watson, Majida Shaikh, Judy Campbell, Judy Finlay, Alexandra Landsberg,
Isabel Blackstock-Berinstein and her parents, Sarah Blackstock & Juana Berinstein

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To Our Supporters:

A very special THANK YOU to ALL of our Foundation
Corporate Sponsors, Individual Donors,
and Event Sponsors for your continued support!

Most successful campaign yet

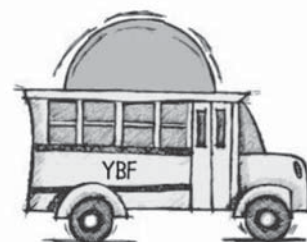
In fact, thanks to all our great and generous friends, Centennial’s 40th Anniversary campaign raised more than \$65,000—the largest amount ever in its fundraising history. It was also estimated to have drawn the largest number of individual donors of any previous campaign. We are really pleased with the celebration of our 40th anniversary and are looking forward to building on the success of our annual campaign,” says Foundation Chair and President, Laura Wallace.

Fundraising efforts continue

Moving forward, the Foundation is maintaining its focus on four significant areas of concern that continue to need your financial support: the Pat Littlejohn Endowment Fund, the Preschool Transportation Program, our vital Therapy Services and Specialized Equipment for Centennial programs. With government funds severely limited in recent times and with the demand for Centennial services ever-growing, our fundraising needs have never been greater than they are today.

Our Donors: In recognition

It’s been another generous year thanks to some invaluable donors. Centennial is particularly grateful for the funds donated by two organizations whose assistance will help CICC Foundation take some significant steps forward.



The Yellow Bus Foundation

The bus just keeps on rolling

The Yellow Bus Foundation has come through again—this time with a cheque of \$40,000, representing proceeds from their 100 Hole Golf Marathon held last Fall. Supporting Canadian children facing life-threatening or chronic illnesses and enriching the lives of disadvantaged youth, YBF has been making a huge difference in the lives of many since its inception two years ago. Particularly focused on grassroots charities with a hands-on approach, the Yellow Bus Foundation has already distributed over \$550,000 and the Foundation aims to raise \$450,000 in 2008.

Transporting Centennial further

The donation to Centennial will certainly be put to good use, helping alleviate the shortfall due to ever-increasing transportation costs. As many already know, the availability of transportation is often integral to efficient programming at Centennial, keeping seats filled and children and their parents happy.

YBF has assisted Centennial before, donating \$60,000 to the Centre last year and a total of \$105,000 since the start of the partnership. And Centennial is more than delighted to have been chosen once again as a YBF recipient. As for the Foundation, they are equally pleased with the continuing charitable relationship. “We’ve developed a synergistic partnership with Centennial,” explains Foundation Manager, Kim Carrigan. “And it’s a wonderful thing that, together, we can help more children.”

A partner in need

So, despite an increase in applications this year, YBF was so impressed with the proposal presented to their board by Foundation Chair and President, Laura Wallace, and Director of Business Development & Operations, Gord Grunwell, that a grant was awarded. “It speaks volumes that we have selected them again this year because we’re growing as a foundation and it’s getting more competitive,” Carrigan says. “But we see the important work that they are doing and the real need for transportation.” Apparently, the support Centennial has shown for YBF—particularly with three of Centennial’s parents and Executive Director, Barb Hannah, having participated in their golf marathon—also played a part in their decision to partner with Centennial. And with participation sure to continue at this year’s golf event, hopefully, so will the partnership.

United we stand

And then there was the kind-hearted donation in the amount of \$10,000 from Toronto-based Unity for Autism. The foundation is dedicated to assisting organizations trying to meet the growing demand for services for children with autism. In the past four years, they raised close to one million dollars for over 25 organizations with specific programs that enhance the development and well-being of individuals with autism.

Centennial’s friend in Bill

The donation to Centennial came with the help of past Foundation President and Director Bill Smith. With a continued interest in smaller charities focused on helping children faced with challenges, Bill was asked to join the Unity for Autism Board. And he was glad to. Then, as a thank you to the directors, a grant was allocated by Unity for Autism on condition that it be directed to an organization involved with helping children with autism. Bill didn’t have to ponder too long before passing it onto Centennial. “This being about autism it fit very nicely because, as you know, Centennial deals with a number of children with autism,” he explains.



Specialized care for an ever-growing issue

Unquestionably, that \$10,000 will go far. In fact, with an increase in the number of children at Centennial suspected of having autism or already diagnosed with it, the funds couldn’t come at a more opportune time. “The Centennial staff and families would all benefit from further training and consultation on how to develop individualized programs that meet the needs of the children we support with autism,” says Executive Director, Barb Hannah.

The donation will allow Centennial the services of a speech/language pathologist and educational consultant specialized in the area of skills development for children with autism. The invaluable support offered by this professional, would enable staff and caregivers to increase their skill level and confidence, helping children struggling with this complex disorder maximize their full potential.

And, with Unity For Autism always looking to develop relationships with organizations devoted to autistic children, who knows, perhaps another long-term, synergistic partnership is in the works.

Notes from the Executive Director

Spring is in full bloom and another year at CICC is winding down. For those children and families leaving Centennial, we wish you all the best as you move on to new adventures beyond 1580 Yonge Street.

As mentioned in our previous news publication, eight members of the CICC community developed a three-year strategic plan

in the Fall of 2007. Much of this plan was based on feedback we received from staff, volunteers, families and board members about our strengths, needs, uniqueness and possible future directions.

The survey results were critical in providing the stepping stones for our three-year Strategic Plan. This plan has now been approved by the Centre Board of Directors, and endorsed in principal by the Foundation Board of Directors.

A number of priority areas will require more funding. This is a challenging task for the Centre and Foundation since government funding for our programs is not keeping in step with our needs. Now, more than ever, the Centre and Foundation are committed to working closely together to ensure we have stable, multi-year funding to meet our goals. To further this objective, the Foundation has developed a long-term plan to increase its fundraising capacity and help safeguard Centennial's vision.



Barb Hannah
CICC Executive Director

I am pleased to report that some of the goals in the plan have already been implemented or are underway. Our specialized services such as Occupational Therapy, Physio Therapy, and Speech will be maintained for the coming year, a summer pilot program involving both parents and children will take place this July, enhanced volunteer training and recruitment is in progress, and a cost of living increase was given to all staff in April.

We are excited about what the future holds for Centennial. For over 40 years, CICC has been a supportive, high quality centre for children with special needs and their families. We intend to ensure that legacy continues.

Barb Hannah,
Executive Director

Strategic Planning: A Vision for the Future

Time for reflection

Last year a group of ten Centennial members, representing its varied constituents—staff, board members and volunteers—underwent a comprehensive month-long strategic planning process. With an eye to the future, the goal of the process was to set the direction of CICC, focus decision-making and establish goals and priorities. “We wanted to honour our past, examine our strengths and weaknesses, look at what we’re good at and then build on that,” explains Helen Smith, a Centennial volun-

teer for over 20 years and a current board member. And to all those involved, the process was invaluable.

Some important considerations

Part of the strategic planning procedure included a good, hard look at the results of a survey completed by Centennial parents, staff and volunteers last spring. With questions addressing Centennial's assets and limitations, its uniqueness and any suggested changes, the survey covered it all.

In addition to survey results, other factors were considered in formulating a vision for Centennial moving forward, including, government funding, system pressures, changes in medical care and technology as well as community trends in the field of early intervention.

A plan of action

And now, with the process complete, Centennial has a clearly defined three-year plan for the future comprising a few significant objectives.

- ◆ Expansion of the Early Intervention program. Currently serving close to 400 families in the community, the program faces an ever-growing waitlist. Being able to increase the number of families who benefit from this invaluable service is, therefore, an important priority for Centennial.
- ◆ Establish summer programs. These additional programs, slated for 2009, will ensure the building doesn't sit empty during the summer and will provide another option for children waiting to get into the school. As Barb Hannah, Executive Director, offers, “There's a long waitlist for the Centre so it would be great to offer them this alternative.”
- ◆ Increase family education and support. The plan is to develop individual workshops and community programs.
- ◆ Focus on volunteerism. Through recruitment efforts and volunteer education, Centennial hopes to maintain its strong base of committed volunteers, the hardworking folks who help give the Centre its exceptional reputation.
- ◆ Conduct a formal review of the premises. The plan includes a commitment to evaluate the most effective, optimum use of the building, taking into account a variety of structural issues parents and volunteers mentioned in the surveys. The plan is to put together a panel of experts and have a proper review of the facility to work out a long-term plan on how to use the space in a better way.
- ◆ Address staff compensation. Centennial has already begun its efforts at ensuring compensation and benefit plans are maintained at a competitive level.
- ◆ Maintain Occupational, Speech and Language Therapy services. Keeping these precious services as a core part of

the Early Intervention program is an important priority at Centennial.

- ◆ Establish stable multi-year funding. “We rely on government funding for the largest part of our budget but we don’t know what the government will give us or how many families will need subsidies from year to year,” Hannah explains. Steady funds can help alleviate some of those concerns, she adds.

Leaders of tomorrow

The new approach also envisions Centennial becoming much more of a leader and advocate in the community for children with special needs. As Smith explains, the staff and volunteers here are exceptional and we’d like to see ourselves out there more, sharing our skills and knowledge and reaching more families.”

With its multifaceted vision, the strategic plan will help Centennial achieve its potential, take courageous steps forward while still honouring its history and keeping its mission forcefully intact. A good start indeed.

A World of Difference

Amanda Williams was first introduced to Centennial when she brought her infant son, Nathan, to its drop-in program. Soon thereafter, along came Paula Sheldon and the Centre’s renowned EI program. Though initially hesitant about the prospect of giving up full control over her son’s care, Williams quickly overcame her concerns, impressed as she was by Sheldon’s extraordinary skills and devotion. “Paula was just a gift, an angel,” declares Williams today. “She totally exceeded my expectations.”



Amanda and Nathan Williams

Going above and beyond

In fact, Sheldon’s dedication was absolute, often taking time out of an already packed schedule to attend meetings with Nathan’s developmental pediatrician and provide other means of support where they were needed most. As for Williams, she’s been enamoured and overtaken with emotion ever since. “I don’t know what I would have done without her. She was just a huge support,” this mother gushes. Already a strong believer in the philosophy of “the earlier the better”, Williams and her

husband’s beliefs were confirmed after witnessing the benefits of Centennial’s early interventionist approach. “We wanted Nathan to hit the ground running once he entered school and Centennial played a major role in that,” says Amanda.

Involved fully and completely

And her appreciation extends to Centennial as a whole, its programming, its superior staff, and volunteers. All of it. Williams is a true believer. “I wish there was some way to shout it from the rooftops what these people actually do,” she exclaims. “They go so far above and beyond the call of duty that it’s truly remarkable.” In fact, it is that total, absolute confidence in CICC that has led Williams to get involved in every program the Centre had to offer Nathan and herself. After the drop-in program, and early intervention, Nathan got accepted into the preschool, with this his final year. Then, this upcoming September, the love-affair will continue when Nathan attends the newly established kindergarten program for two years.

Like night and day

And why not? The child is currently thriving. “Nathan is a completely different child from when he first started at Centennial, it’s like night and day,” beams Amanda. In truth, Nathan’s experience in the preschool has been nothing short of phenomenal, thanks in large part to his current preschool teacher, Sue Thatcher. Having volunteered with Nathan before taking on the role of teacher, the two have established a close bond during their years together. And Amanda couldn’t be more thrilled. “Sue is so attuned to Nathan,” she says, “she can read him like a book and he responds to her; she truly understands him.”

Part of what she understands, it seems, is Nathan’s need to be challenged in order to move forward. “One of the reasons for the success is that his program changes as he changes,” explains Amanda. “So, for every milestone he accomplishes, Sue is there is to say ‘yeah I know you’ve got that mastered, let’s make it more challenging’.” As for Thatcher, watching Nathan grow, evolve and develop has been very rewarding. “He’s really come so far,” affirms Thatcher. “And he’s just such a wonderful kid and they are such a lovely family to work with; we have such great communication,” she adds.

Giving back to her second family

To demonstrate her gratitude for the bevy of services and dedicated staff she’s encountered, Williams has decided to give back. “Centennial has become a family and have given so much to us, in terms of support, emotional support, that I wanted to do as much as I could for them.” Her volunteering activities have run the gamut, from working on the 40th Anniversary Fundraising Committee, the Women’s Golf Committee, to becoming a parent representative on the Board.

She’s also had the opportunity of joining the early interventionists on their family visits, hopeful she can encourage more

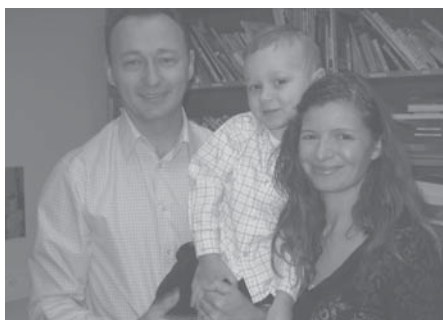
people to open up and tell their story or, simply, to provide an additional ear. “It’s different talking to someone who’s been there and understands exactly what you’re going through,” she says. And her volunteerism has had tremendous benefits for all involved. “At the end of the day, it makes me a better parent for Nathan because I’m doing stuff I enjoy.” It also allows Amanda the much-needed, and deserved break, a chance to re-energize so she can return with renewed strength to care for her son. “And if I’m happy, he’s happy and vice versa.”

A Fitting Tribute

On February 22, 2008, Centennial staff and family held a ceremony dedicating the Snoezelen Room in memory of one its biggest fans, Jessica Draper. A highly motivating, multi-sensory space, the Snoezelen Room, known for its infusion of tranquility and calm, is designed to provide stimulation of the primary senses through exploration and relaxation. Boasting a cozy, lighted ball pool, a bubble tube, fibre optic strands, a vibrating heated massage mat and an aroma box, among its other amenities, it certainly seems the room is doing its job.

A comforting space

And to Jessica Draper the room was a blessed sanctuary. It enveloped her in its warmth, embraced her with its soft touch, soothed her tight muscles and suffused her with a sense of calm. It made her content. So when her parents, Chris and Kim Draper, were asked whether some of the money they had designated for CICC could go toward maintaining that special room, the answer was a resounding yes. “I immediately thought it would be a good fit for Jessica because it was something she enjoyed and it has the potential for having a lot of different types of equipment so we knew that they could certainly use donations for it,” explains Kim.



The Draper family

A good fit

The Drapers were equally certain when designating Centennial their general recipient of choice for donations made in Jessica’s name. The choice seemed logical. “We couldn’t think of a better recipient,” says Kim. “Centennial was so helpful to Jessica and to us as a family.” In particular, Kim remembers the priceless dedication of teacher Jessie Kimmel who came to their home in her previous role as an early interventionist. It was by virtue of her suggestion, moreover, that the Drapers became acquainted with Centennial’s preschool and put their name on

the coveted waiting list.

The school’s ratio of volunteers to students was imperative to their daughter’s development, Kim explains. “And the school was very careful in choosing volunteers who could bring out the children’s interactions; they were amazing,” she recalls fondly. But above and beyond all else, Jessica’s interaction with Jessie Kimmel was a special one. “I think she especially enjoyed being with her teacher, they had a real bond.”

Ongoing support

Centennial also played a big role helping the family find a proper junior kindergarten program (Centennial hadn’t yet introduced their own). From making recommendations to schools on their behalf, to joining the Drapers in their interviews, the support was invaluable. “We just really liked how helpful Centennial was to us as a family and immediately helpful to Jessica,” says Kim.

Forever in our hearts

And now Jessica and the Draper family, with their generous designation of donated funds, are helping Centennial. Their assistance will help the school maintain and improve its much-needed services. And it will help supply the resources necessary to keep a room, adored by so many, in good working order. A room forever imbued with the memories of a beautiful child, cherished by all who’ve made her acquaintance. And with a plaque bearing her name, that room will forever be honoured by a girl named Jessica.

Volunteering at any Age

A long-term relationship

Though only 25 years old, Tim Watson is an old-timer when it comes to Centennial. After all, he’s been passing through its doors nearly all his life. The relationship began when, as an integrated student, Tim’s mother brought him to the Centre to attend the preschool program. Though he doesn’t recall much from those two years, one simple memory remains vivid: “I remember that it was in a church base-



Tim Watson and Carter

ment,” he says with a laugh. Over the years, Tim would give of his time doing various odds jobs, whether folding newsletters, stuffing envelopes or helping out with the golf tournaments.

Like mother like son

And then a couple of years ago this full-time student of law at Osgoode Hall in Toronto decided to take on the bigger commitment of volunteering one-on-one every other week, with a student at the preschool. He shares the duties with his mother, a long time Centennial friend and volunteer and current acting Chair of the Centre's Board of Directors, both caring for the same child over the past year. And according to the young volunteer, the experience has been a satisfying one. "I really enjoyed watching him develop this year and seeing the types of things he's able to accomplish so far." Working with a child who manifests a highly intelligent disposition certainly keeps Tim on his toes—and impressed with each and every step along the way. "He's fun to be around because there's a lot going on and it's a challenge to get it out of him," he says.

No shortage of praise

Though refusing to take any credit for those progressive steps forward, this self-deprecating university student has a lot of praise for the other volunteers and the staff he works with. "I think the level of support is incredible," he says of the assistance he's been offered since coming to the class. As for the success of the program, he credits a lot of that to its unique offerings. "I certainly think the school is doing something significant," explains Tim, adding, "clearly the program works and a large part of that is the fact that there's always a volunteer working one-on-one with a child."

And the tradition continues...

And with each passing week, Tim grows increasingly comfortable in his volunteer shoes. "When you've been there and worked with the same child for a while, it becomes exponentially easier to understand what's going on and what their needs are," he explains. As for whether this university student will continue to follow in the footsteps of his veteran mother, he certainly hopes to—assuming his new life on Bay street will allow it. One thing's for sure: Tim has caught the Centennial bug. Discussing the bond he's developed with the preschool child he's been volunteering with, his voice resonates with pride. "The other teachers say he's excited when I'm there; which is really nice," he says. "And for a lot of the volunteers that's the reason we enjoy coming back."

A Placement to Remember

A hopeful opportunity

Majida Shaikh had heard a lot about Centennial. And, so, she was hardly able to contain her excitement upon securing a much sought-after placement here. As a student of the Resource Consultant Certificate in the Early Childhood Education program at Centennial College, Majida, needed to find an internship that would give her an opportunity to expand

her practical knowledge and provide her future career with inspired direction. And she just knew she'd find it at Centennial. After all, working full-time as a program facilitator at an Ontario Early Years Centre, Majida had often interacted with Centennial's early interventionists who spoke of the centre and its services with high praise. Moreover, Majida's good friend, whose child was currently enrolled as a student at Centennial, was also a huge fan.

A packed three-week venture

So, with her top choice in mind, applications were sent, fingers were tightly crossed and, lo and behold, Majida was given the opportunity she had hoped for. Weeks later, the placement long complete, the tributes and enthusiasm continue unabated. "It's an amazing place to work because they let you grow there; they give you opportunities to grow," she exclaims. "You don't get that kind of environment every place you work."

And while Majida's educational plan only required her to take on a select number of tasks, this overachieving student accomplished many, many more. Her responsibilities ranged from shadowing the early interventionists on their home visits to watching the occupational therapist and physical therapist at work and from spending time in the preschool and kindergarten classes, to observing a resource teacher, attending staff meetings and doing daily paperwork.



Majida Shaikh with an ECE student

Encouraging commitments

It seems Majida's three-week stint was chockfull of challenging opportunities. "I always say I got a real package deal," she enthuses. And the more she took on, the more comfortable she felt in her role. "I didn't feel like a student, I even forgot for a time that I was one. I felt like one of the staff," she exclaims, adding, "And Kim (Clarke) would encourage me so much; I just felt like part of the team. It was amazing."

And now to the future

Now having resumed her full-time role at the Ontario Early Years Centre, this mother of two hopes to stay in touch with the Centre that provided her with three weeks of non-stop practical instruction. A placement she credits for giving her an experience she will forever remember and an opportunity that has renewed her commitment to her chosen field of practice. Majida expresses her deep gratitude to the staff and everyone involved at Centennial—with the hope to see them again some time soon.

Staff Announcements/Retirements

It's a girl!

We are excited to announce the expansion of our Centennial family. On February 23, 2008 at 1:51 PM, Early Intervention Coordinator, Mandeep Grewal-Barton gave birth to a beautiful and healthy baby girl. Jaeda Grewal-Barton came into the world one month early, weighing six pounds seven ounces. Congratulations to the overjoyed parents and their families.

And introducing two new staff...

On the heels of Mandeep's departure, we welcome Beverley Davis, the newest addition to Centennial and the Early Intervention program. Though she only started at the end of March, Davis is already fully immersed in her new role. And she couldn't be more excited to be here. "Before I came, I heard great things about Centennial, that there were nice people and it was a great place to work. And it's all true," she beams.

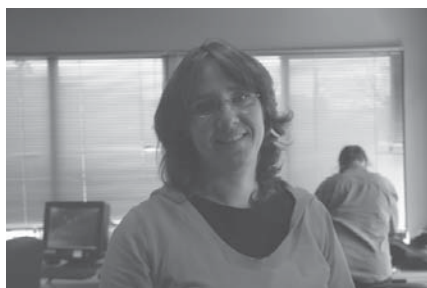
With over 20 years of experience working with young children, more than 10 of which were focused on special needs, Davis feels right at home at Centennial. And, having an opportunity that allows her to spend some days in the office and others traveling to home visits is the perfect balance, she says. Beverley is especially thrilled to be working so extensively with families one-on-one. "It's new for me and I really enjoy it," she says. Welcome to Centennial Beverley. We couldn't be more thrilled to have you aboard.



Beverley Davis

In January, Margaret Malina, joined our Child Care Consultation Program and became our second full-time Special Needs Resource Consultant.

Margaret will be responsible for ensuring the successful inclusion of children with special needs into 10 child care programs in the west end of Toronto. Lucy Patterson, our other Consultant, currently supports 10 child care centres in North Toronto



Margaret Malinda

Margaret came to us from St. Michael's and All Angels Child Care Centre where she was a Resource Teacher for over 12 years. The transfer of this position to Centennial is part of an overall re-structuring

by Toronto Children's Services, the funder of the Every Child Belongs Consultation program. Moving to a new organization was a significant change for Margaret but she offered the following about her arrival:

"I joined the CICC team in January 2008. Prior to coming to CICC, I already had positive feedback about the agency. It is only five months since I've been here but I already feel at home and feel welcomed by all staff. Barb Hannah, in spite of her busy schedule, always finds time to stop by and check if all my concerns are looked after.

We are excited to have Margaret as part of the Centennial team. She brings with her many years of experience in the early intervention field and demonstrates a high level of commitment to children with special needs, and the child care centres that support them.

And we bid adieu...

Barb Swanson, who retired from CICC three years ago, decided to return to the classroom in the fall of 2006. Now, after much consideration, Barb has decided to "re-retire" and, it seems that, once again, she will be sorely missed.

"Barb has given so much to Centennial for so many years. Her devotion to the children is clearly evident as is her infectious enthusiasm when interacting with the kids" comments Barb Hannah, Executive Director.

A tremendous teacher, Barb's ceaseless energy and dedication has brought her many fans. And it's no surprise why. "She is full of ideas, always thinking about the children, thinking of the classroom, how to set up the environment," says preschool teacher Lisa Fantauzzi. "In the short time I have gotten to know Barb, I have seen how she has touched the lives of so many children and families."



Barb Swanson

Though she only had the pleasure of working with Barb for one year, Lisa says the experience will impact her for many years to come. "Her guidance, leadership and fountain of knowledge, have been beyond helpful to me," she offers. "I know I will be a better teacher for having known her." Thank you Barb for your many years of commitment to Centennial. We wish you all the best in the years to come.

Centennial Events

- ◆ Our annual Volunteer Workshop was held on Wednesday, April 30th from noon to 2 p.m. at Christ Church Deer Park. After a catered lunch, volunteers heard presentations from four invaluable members of Centennial. See the story on the volunteer training session 2008 in this publication for more details.
- ◆ Thanks to everyone who purchased tickets to RBC Family & Friends Day at Canada’s Wonderland on Saturday, May 3rd.

From each ticket sold, \$2.00 was donated to The Yellow Bus Foundation. Recipient charities included: Autism Ontario, Centennial Infant & Child Centre Foundation, The Jennifer Ashleigh Children’s Charity, The Make-a-Wish Foundation and Regent Park/Duke of York Children’s Foundation.

RBC is pleased to advise that close to \$30,000 was raised for this charity. Absolutely incredible!

Unfortunately, the weather was not as incredible. As a result, all RBC Day Tickets for May 3rd were re-validated and could be used for another visit on or before June 30th, 2008 at no additional charge.

We wish to express our appreciation to RBC and Canada’s Wonderland for their generosity in support of their designated charities for this event. We look forward to continuing this charitable partnership in the future.

- ◆ On May 14th, we held our annual Volunteer Appreciation Party. For the second year in a row, the event was hosted by Robert and Maureen Leon, parents of Joshua Leon, a Centennial pre-school student. The affair was catered with delicious appetizers and mouth-watering desserts. Parents, members of both Centennial boards, and Centennial staff were in attendance. And awards were presented to long-time Centennial volunteers.
- ◆ We hope you joined us at Centennial’s 13th Annual Golf Classic at the National Pines Golf Club in Innisfil, Ontario on June 2, 2008.
- ◆ Tee up for Centennial’s Annual Women’s Golf Tournament on September 16th at Nobleton Lakes Golf Club. Details are posted on the CICC website
- ◆ Parent Fall Fundraiser: Parents, if you are interested in helping organize a fall fundraising event for Centennial, please contact Amanda Williams at 416-698-2906 or amandakwilliams@rogers.com

The Foundation is pleased to announce that Centennial was chosen by RBC Royal Bank as the sponsored charity for the 11th Annual Commercial Financial Services, Greater Toronto Region, Royal Bank Charity Golf Tournament in early June. And, RBC has informed us that more than \$18,000 was raised for Centennial!

A Parent Says Thank You

On May 14th, Centennial honoured their volunteers at a special Volunteers Appreciation Party held at the Bob and Maureen Leon Family

Home. One of the many guests paying tribute that night was Alexandra Landsberg, mother of Samuel, a first-year student in Centennial’s preschool program. Her admiration and appreciation for the volunteers



Alexandra & Samuel Landsberg

resonated deeply in the speech she delivered on behalf of all the parents at CICC. “You are the most loving, caring, nurturing, devoted, dedicated and hard-working group of people,” she said. “You touch our lives in a way that only you can do and we are extremely blessed and grateful to have you be a part of our children’s lives and our lives.”

A place of hope

Recounting the many challenges she and other parents faced



Volunteers Appreciation Party

trying to find the care and attention their children needed, Landsberg spoke of their subsequent elation upon being accepted into the school. “Centennial is a magical place, a special place, a one of a kind

place. It is a place of hope and strength,” she exclaimed, adding, “It is a place where our precious children, both with special needs and without, flourish and grow beyond our wildest dreams, doing things that we hoped and prayed they would one day be capable of, but never thinking that that day would come

so soon.” Then, turning to the honourees in the room Landsberg stated emphatically, “and the reason that our children flourish is due in large part to you, the extraordinary volunteers who everyday give 110%.”

And thanks to that special commitment by this group of cherished volunteers and the one-to-one support Centennial programs provide, parents can start each day with a sigh of relief and a prayer of thanks. “Knowing that our children are in such good hands for those few hours everyday allows us the opportunity to recharge our batteries and be the best parents that we can be,” said Landsberg. “We give thanks everyday that our children are able to attend Centennial and feel confident knowing that our children are under your watchful eyes.”



Alexandra Landsberg

In appreciation - always

Landsberg concluded her delivery with heartfelt emotion and words of everlasting hope and gratitude.

“We appreciate you for donating your time to our children, for your kindness, compassion, selflessness and for the unbelievable love you give our children,” she said. “And our message to you, our volunteers, is that we don’t ever take you for granted.”



Bernie Riley, Jacqueline St Martin, Robin Riley, Alexandra Landsberg & Andrew Hood (Vols.)

Volunteer Training Session 2008

On Wednesday April 30th, 2008, 50 of Centennial’s volunteers gathered at the Deer Park Anglican Church for Centennial’s annual volunteer training day. A part of the volunteer “curriculum” for several years now, the two-hour session, followed by a catered lunch, allows some of the Centre’s most valued assets an opportunity to be informed, educated and to receive another form of support and gratitude for their hard work.

Did you know?

The session was divided into four parts. First, there was a pre-

sentation by Barb Hannah on the vital Early Intervention program at Centennial. “We wanted to share information with the volunteers on all the wonderful programs at the Centre,” says Kim Clarke, Centre Operations Manager. Though a significant component of the Centre’s offerings, much of the Early Intervention programming takes place outside the four walls of Centennial, leaving many without any firsthand knowledge of the service. Educating volunteers on EI helps establish a comprehensive understanding for all the elements that make Centennial a venerable institution with a glowing reputation. And with a large number of new volunteers joining the CICC roster this year, an instruction of this kind is especially important in that it provides them with a solid orientation, welcoming them aboard.



Ellen Brackstone (Vol.) with Julia Oppel

Planning, vision and goals

Next up was Board Member Helen Smith who gave a presentation on the five-year strategic plan recently devised by a 10-member team at Centennial. Laura Wallace, Foundation Chair and President, followed with a



June Rom-Roginski (Vol.) with Alasdair McKenzie-Beauchamp

quick overview of the foundation’s activities, fundraising opportunities and future goals for the Foundation. And, according to Clarke, the response to the informative presentations was very positive. “They appreciated being included in the information and were very interested in what’s going on,” she says, adding, “A lot of them are major donors too so, knowing how their funds are being spent, is equally important.”



Taffi Ross (Vol.) with Carter Hunt

Strategy session

The last session was led by Clarke herself on the topic of posi-

tive behaviour strategies. “There were some requests for assistance around understanding the children’s behaviour and how to support them in the classroom in a positive way,” she explains. So, with a particular focus on two areas—the influence of communication difficulties on behaviour and how volunteers can try and shape more positive behaviour—Clarke provided specific examples of behavioural issues and strategies that volunteers can adopt to help overcome those challenges.



Candy Keillor (Vol.) with Nathan Williams



Gay McNeil (Vol.) with Katie Mejia

The hope is that the discussion, along with the Q & A session that followed and the practical suggestions offered, will help the volunteers—especially those new to the school—gain confidence

and perform their roles as effectively as possible. “The feedback was great, with volunteers saying it was very helpful,” confirms Clarke. In fact, when the session was complete, many approached Clarke for notes on the session, determined to test the strategies on their own, putting their newly acquired education into practice. No doubt, armed with a newfound education and a support base like no other, Centennial’s volunteers will continue to make CICC proud.

An education in conscience, tolerance and advocacy

Isabel Blackstock-Berinstein lives in a world of diversity. It’s a place filled with people of differing background and divergent needs. And while she acknowledges that some individuals have more significant needs than others, everyone, in her opinion, has something they need help with. Ever mindful of those distinctive needs, Isabel remains consistently focused on accommodation, ensuring those needs are met or mitigated as best as possible. No, Isabel is not a social worker, politician or member of a public policy think tank. She’s a three-and-a-half year old integrated student enrolled in Centennial’s preschool program. And that program, say her parents, has been as invaluable for its social education as for its academic one.

Similar in our differences

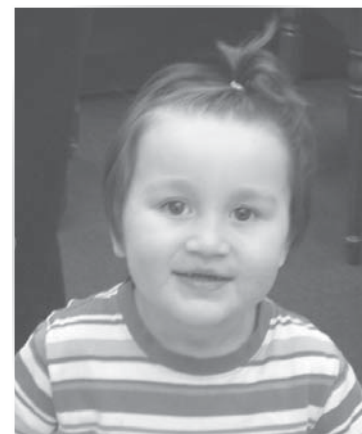
“She actually experiences the world with an appreciation for the diversity of people,” says her mother Sarah. “Differences and accommodation become the norm because there’s recognition that even though she doesn’t have a disability, she has other needs that need to be accommodated.” Meanwhile, her mother adds, there’s this expectation at Centennial that everyone is going to contribute to the accommodation process due to an overriding sense of community and shared communal responsibility born from the absolute dedication of every teacher and volunteer at the school.

Be my volunteer

And Centennial, particularly its incredible volunteers, has had such a significant impact on establishing Isabel’s norm for accommodation and acceptance that the preschooler often embodies the role of volunteer when she plays with her 8 month-old baby sister. “She sometimes acts as Nica’s volunteer, offering her encouragement and assistance as she tries to master new skills such as rolling over,” says Sarah. But that’s not all. The concept of volunteer has influenced how Isabel relates to other people as well. “When she gets frustrated with adults, feeling she’s not getting the help she needs from them, she’ll try to explain “look I need you to be my volunteer” which means I need you to help me with this,” Sarah explains.

Advocacy for all

In the same vein, Isabel has learned to look out for others too, to be an advocate for those more vulnerable and in need of assistance. “Because she has such a significant exposure at Centennial, when she’s out and about, she notices where accommodation hasn’t been made,” says Sarah. For example, she’ll point out that her local playground may be a difficult outing for those in wheelchairs. But,



Isabel Blackstock-Berinstein

ever the sensitive soul and thanks to her early socialization, Isabel is not content to simply point out the discrepancies. She then takes on the role of problem solver and the responsibility for accommodation. Perhaps they can build a ramp, she’d say. Or install an elevator.

Perhaps so. But one thing’s for sure. With its overriding message of diversity and inclusion, Centennial is inspiring children like Isabel to take responsibility for others, to advocate on their behalf and to ‘volunteer’ when needed. And that education is priceless says her mother. “Those lessons in friendship, community and citizenship can never be understated.”

Centennial Infant
and Child Centre
Foundation

• Cherishing Children for over 40 years •

“Beginning the Next 40 Years” In-Action at the Centre

