Youville Centre *News*

Fall / Winter 2013

Sophie Hardy, Youville Centre Graduate from the class of 1992 shone brightly on the runway in a dazzling dress from Shepherd's Fashions.

PHOTO CREDIT: Gregory Kolz

Youville Centre Graduates Shine at Shepherd's Ooh 'n Ahh Fashion Show & Auction

On Tuesday, October 22nd, 2013, over 400 guests gathered at the Ottawa Conference and Event Centre to enjoy an evening of fashion, food and fundraising in support of Youville Centre's young mothers and their children. Raising just over $50,000; the Ooh 'n Ahh Fashion Show and Auction combined a fashion show, raffle and door prizes, silent and live auctions, and special presentations. Hosted by Marlene Shepherd of Shepherd's Fashions, the evening began with a welcome from Youville Centre's Executive Director, Cindy Simpson, followed by a passionate, courageous speech by Clarissa Arthur. Clarissa, Youville Centre's Child Development Program Coordinator, has a unique perspective to bring to our clients as a former Youville Centre student herself, having graduated in 1996. This was demonstrated during her speech that evening when Clarissa stated:

"Having Youville Centre in my life has been like being given a gift. Everyday I can say I walk with purpose. The students have told me that seeing my graduation picture on the wall and hearing my story is an inspiration, but this is not only my story; it can be theirs too."

After Clarissa's speech, Marlene and her colleague Sam Poole put on a fabulous fashion show, highlighting a wide range of clothing styles for all ages, shapes and sizes. As a special fashion show finale, six Youville Centre alumnae proudly walked the runway in beautiful evening wear provided by Shepherd's Fashions, with hair and makeup by The Loft/Le Spa. It was a moment to remember for Youville Centre graduates Sophie, Amanda, Tammy, Chloe, Nicole and Clarissa as they shone on the runway. Clarissa was joined by her son Dyon and her daughter Tyannah.

The evening wrapped up with a Live Auction expertly hosted by Leanne Cusack and Michael O'Byrne, followed by the raffle prize draw which resulted in seven lucky guests going home with unbelievable gift baskets.

Thank you to everyone who attended this amazing event, and to all who contributed to make it a success!

Please take a look at the special insert in this newsletter that recognizes the wonderful sponsors who generously donated their time, goods and services to this event.

Youville Centre Alumnae Models, L to R: Chloe Holm-Andrew, Nicole Summers, Amanda Edoo, Clarissa Arthur, Tammy Charette and Sophie Hardy.

PHOTO CREDIT: Melanie Shields Photography

Bayshore Shopping Centre Gives Oprah-Inspired Gift to Youville Centre

Last April, in advance of "An Evening With Oprah" at Scotiabank Place (now Canadian Tire Centre), Bayshore Shopping Centre made it possible for Youville Centre to make a request to Oprah's production company. As a result of our letter, Oprah herself generously donated 50 free tickets to us for her keynote event which took place on Wednesday, April 10th, 2013. Due to her generosity, Youville Centre students and some accompanying staff members were fortunate to have the once in a lifetime opportunity to hear Oprah speak her words of wisdom, live and on stage in our home city of Ottawa!

The day before the event, our contacts at Bayshore Shopping Centre called us to inform us that two of our young moms would have the opportunity to meet Oprah in the V.I.P. reception! Two of our graduates' names were drawn from a hat, and when they were informed, the happy tears started to flow, as meeting Oprah was never something our young moms ever thought would happen in their wildest dreams. Many of our students have been through similar experiences that Oprah herself has lived, so this amazing event meant so much more than the opportunity to meet a 'celebrity'.

Executive Director Cindy Simpson (L) introduced Angie Russell (Bayshore Shopping Centre, Ivanhoe Cambridge) to Oceanna, one of our infants in the Daffodil program.

On the heels of this inspiring event, we received yet another call from Bayshore Shopping Centre. At the event there had been a contest to win a $10,000 shopping spree at Bayshore, and no one had claimed the winning ticket. Given this circumstance, the Bayshore team met and discussed their options, and they made the extremely generous and charitable decision to gift the $10,000 shopping spree to Youville Centre!

Our team was absolutely overwhelmed by this news and it strengthened even further our belief that our Ottawa community is filled with kind and generous individuals. After a meeting with our entire multi-disciplinary team, our staff set out on a shopping spree for items such as: toys and supplies for our childcare rooms, fitness clothing and shoes for our Phys. Ed program, television monitors to display information and photos in our centre, and other crucial audio-visual equipment to help our 21st Century learners, and a multitude of other materials to support our innovative programming.

Our utmost gratitude goes to Bayshore Shopping Centre and Ivanhoe Cambridge for their generosity in providing us with an Oprah experience to remember, and essential resources to augment our programs. Special thanks to Angie Russell and her team. One of our students said it best when she expressed her gratitude:

"I want to thank you very much for giving me this opportunity to see Oprah. I think this was such a great opportunity and it really did change my outlook on life. I wish every young mother could have shared this experience with me, but I am lucky that I was so fortunate to see her. Thank you so much, I cannot express my gratitude enough!"

Youville Students Brittany, Kristin and Julie, seen here in their 'Roar'-themed attire, enjoyed performing with their fellow classmates at the celebration.

United Way Project s.t.e.p. Agencies Celebrate their Successes and Receive Award

On Thursday, November 7th, Youville Centre joined with the Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health, Operation Come Home and the Eastern Ontario Youth Justice Agency to receive a $25,000 award from Eva's Initiatives with The Sprott Foundation and Virgin Unite. Eva's Initiatives is based in Toronto and they work toward preventing, reducing and ending youth homelessness. All four agencies are some of the partners involved in an initiative called Project s.t.e.p. (support, treatment, education, prevention). Project s.t.e.p. addresses youth addiction in Ottawa, and it is championed by community leaders such as Mauril Belanger, MP for Ottawa–Vanier, and Senator Vern White. It is the belief of all Project s.t.e.p. partners that by working to treat and prevent youth addiction, youth homelessness will also be addressed.

Facilitated by United Way Ottawa, the event on November 7th was held at the Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health, and it allowed each agency to graciously accept the shared award in person. The event was made special by art on display created by clients of the Eastern Ontario Youth Justice Agency (EOYJA), and performances from clients served by the other partner agencies: a poem was read by a youth served by Operation Come Home, clients and staff from Wabano performed Aboriginal songs and drumming, and Youville Centre's young moms sang and danced to 'Roar' by Katy Perry. This song was chosen for its themes of empowerment and self–advocacy, and our clients dressed in animal print to fully express the concept. Youville's young mothers put on a confident and powerful performance, and staff surprised the other guests by joining into the dance part of the way through, much like a 'flash mob'. It was a wonderful show of solidarity from our students, who understood fully that the award would go towards continuing to provide addiction counselling to Youville Centre and the other three partner agencies.

Introduced at this event was a compelling report, compiled by Measured Outcomes, called 'Breaking the Cycle, Building Hope', that analysed surveys completed by youth and staff at the four agencies. Among other successes, it reported that 70 percent of youth surveyed from the above agencies had reduced or stopped their substance use with the implementation of the Project s.t.e.p. program. At Youville Centre, the counselling we are able to provide due to support from United Way Ottawa and Project s.t.e.p. allows our clients to work towards stabilizing their lives so that they can thrive as a parent and in the classroom. We would like to express our thanks to Eva's Initiatives, The Sprott Foundation and Virgin Unite for selecting the Project s.t.e.p. partners for this award.

We Couldn't Have Done it Without You

The generous support of our community makes a variety of programs and services possible at Youville Centre. Thank you to the following individuals and organizations for contributing to our work with two generations:

TELUS Community Affairs – Employee Contributions

Hassa Mirchandani and Bytown Travel Ltd. – 18th Annual Golf Classic

Donations in Memory of Bob Couchman

Peter Harris

Jessica Aldred

The Imperial Oil Foundation courtesy of Mr. Donald Eldon

Aurelia Mauro

To Donate:

Yes, I/We wish to support The Youville Centre, an innovative centre that motivates, educates and nurtures young mothers and their children.

Name _____

Address _____

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I/We wish to contribute $ _____

per month, commencing _____ .

I/We wish to contribute $ _____

at this time.

Payment to be made by:

____Cheque ____Visa ____MC ____Amex

Card# _____

Expiry (mm/yy) _____

Signature _____

We also accept donations online at www.youvillecentre.org

L to R: Michelle Torunski, Megan Wallace, Shannon Gorman, Stephanie McGregor, Lisa Larter, Jennifer Clark

Mentorship Program Launches

On Wednesday, October 9th, Youville Centre's Mentorship Program officially launched with its first Lunch 'n Learn. The theme for this event was 'Inspiration' and a special lunch was provided for the students courtesy of the Mentorship Program Task Force. The Task Force is comprised of:

Megan Wallace, Youville Centre Board Chair;
Sarah Feldberg, Director, Youville Centre Board;
Jennifer Clark and **Michelle Torunski**, both Youville Centre alumnae and current employees at St. Joe's Women's Centre; and
Shannon Gorman, National Director, Community Affairs at TELUS.

Shannon was one of the inspirational guest speakers who helped launch the Mentorship Program at this Lunch 'n Learn, along with local entrepreneur **Lisa Larter** (The Lisa Larter Group) and non–profit professional **Stephanie McGregor** (The Dave Smith Youth Treatment Centre Foundation). All three women shared their personal stories of struggle and success, and left our students with a hopeful message. Shannon's messsage for Youville's young moms summed up the event nicely:

"Go where your dreams take you. Success is yours – Youville is your first big step!"

Youville's young moms were quite inspired by our guests, as one of our students expressed: "They are such strong women to come and share their empowering stories in hopes of influencing our pathways. Their stories were powerful and they moved many of the moms and Youville staff to tears. These women helped me to realize that all is possible and there is no reason to settle for less when you can always achieve more. Youville Lunch 'n Learns are extremely inspiring and I can't wait to experience more!" ~ Shauna, age 18

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Charitable Registration #11884 8456 RR0001

Hours: Monday – Friday 8:30am – 4:30pm

An innovative centre that motivates, educates and nurtures young mothers and their children to become self–sufficient, contributing members of society.