



Closer to Home

COMMUNITY SERVICES

Uniting vulnerable children, youth & families

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Dear Friends of Closer to Home,

As we transition from winter to spring, we look forward to upcoming and important events including International Women's Day on March 8th and the 6th Annual Hockey Day in Calgary event (put on by Forward Level Marketing) on March 9th. In this newsletter, you will also read about an exceptional group of donors and a profile of two amazing Teaching Parents who have quickly become part of the Closer to Home family.

Donor Profile - McQuiston Executive Wealth Group By Rohan Somers

The McQuiston Executive Wealth Group of RBC Dominion Securities Inc have been participants in the Closer to Home Adopt-a-Family program for the past two years and have found their experience to be both rewarding and a positive impact in the community.

Consisting of Andrew McQuiston, Chelsea Anderson and Robert Krasilowez, the McQuiston team has focused their sponsorship initiatives on helping families in their community. Already being contributors to other community service and charitable organizations in Calgary, the McQuiston group decided the Adopt-a-Family program would provide a good outlet through which to help their community, while maintaining the groups' overall philanthropic philosophy.



"It was in keeping with what we were trying to do, which was to support families, but more importantly, children." says Andrew McQuiston.

For the past two years the group has received their adoptive family's wishlist, complete with the first names, ages and genders of each family member. From there, the group would split up and go shopping to acquire their portion of the list. Andrew has involved his own children in the past as well, getting their assistance buying toys and other gifts.

The group has also extended their participation in the program to their clients, to whom they send a card during the holidays providing a breakdown of the contributions made on their behalf, a change from sending the clients small individual gifts. "It's easy for us to go and buy gifts for a client like a little bottle of wine or a cheese basket or something like that," says McQuiston "But I think it's nicer to be able to get a card saying that rather than a gift, a donation is being made."

The group says they enjoy participating in the program and the fact that their contributions are helping kids and their families during the holiday season. Both the McQuiston Group and their clients have been responsive to the group's participation in the program, and say they will continue to adopt a family every year.



Hockey Day in Calgary You Can't Lockout Tradition

The NHL lockout may have postponed this growing event, however, like any good tradition, it continues on.

Last year's event, with the generosity of individuals and sponsors, resulted in \$2,300 raised for Closer to Home and we are aiming for new heights this year.

The event takes place on Saturday, March 9, 2013 at 5:00 pm at Ceili's Irish Pub, 351 - 4 Avenue SW Calgary.

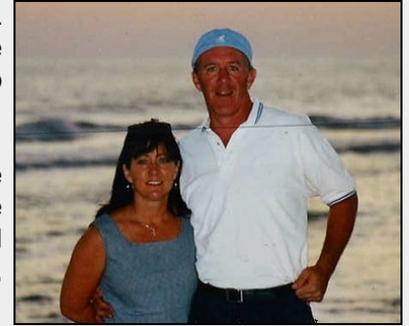
Tickets are \$30 and include an entry for door prizes, a drink and an HDIC event gift.

This event is fast approaching so please reserve your tickets today! Call 403-543-0550 or visit our website for details at www.closetohome.com

Staff Profile - Jim & Koral Evans, Teaching Parents

By Rohan Somers

Jim and Koral Evans have been involved in the child care field for almost 15 years. Originally from the United States, Jim from Nebraska and Koral from Colorado, the couple came to Calgary in March 2012 to serve as Teaching Parents at the Closer to Home Achievement Place 2 community teaching home.



The pair says it was the feeling of making a difference in the lives of children and the rewards of forging relationships that brought them to Calgary and back to a direct care role as Teaching Parents. “We really missed working with the children directly, and were ready for an adventure,” says Jim. “Our eldest daughter had just left the home, and so we were ready for a change and this opportunity presented itself.”

The couple began their experience as Teaching Parents in 1991 in Omaha, Nebraska, working with the Boys Town organization. From there they moved to Mississippi as Teaching Parents and eventually supervisors to Teaching Parents. In Illinois in 2005, Koral served as the supervisor of four homes in the area while Jim became a training coordinator for Teaching Parents. A brief hiatus working in the private sector led Jim and Koral to find they missed the sense of fulfillment and gratification that came with being a positive influence in the lives of children, and the rewards of building a relationship is what they say keeps them coming back.

“I needed to know I was making a difference,” says Koral of working in direct care. “Because it is directly correlated with the kids and they open up more when you have that relationship with them.”

Since arriving last March, Jim and Koral say it’s been a good experience and they have enjoyed their time north of the border. “It has been awesome,” says Koral “Closer to Home has offered so much support, Calgarians are very friendly and the kids are great. We’re looking at becoming residents and then becoming Canadians because we love it here so much.”

One of the major draws for Jim and Koral to work with Closer to Home was the organization’s use of the Teaching-Family Model, something the couple says they won’t work without. The pair has been using the Model since becoming Teaching Parents in 1991 and say they strongly believe in its effectiveness in creating positive results.

“The reason we like the Teaching-Family Model is because we’ve seen it make so many positive changes in the lives of most children we’ve worked with,” says Jim. Koral notes that their use of the Model has helped shape some of the children they’ve worked with in the past into good parents themselves. Jim and Koral stay in contact with many of the children they have served as Teaching Parents to in the past, including one, now a mother, who named her daughter after Koral because of the impact she made in her life.

Jim and Koral’s interest in helping out those in need comes from their upbringing, where they credit their parents with instilling the kind of caring and desire to help others that led them to become Teaching Parents. They try to instill the same values in the children they care for now.

“I think Koral and I were both brought up to try and make wherever we are at a little better than when we got there,” says Jim.

The job of a Teaching Parent is not an occupation, but a lifestyle, says Jim, due to the way the kids and parents become a part of each other’s lives. “We found out fairly quickly that we enjoyed the lifestyle,” says Jim “We liked being together, we liked going through the struggles with the kids and seeing them come out better people at the end. I think that’s what drew us to the occupation.”

The couple describes the challenge of being Teaching Parents, where they must deal with daily struggles, as a rewarding experience where they get to witness the slow but steady transformation of a child and encourage positive social interactions that can change the child’s outlook.

“We teach them skills so that their experiences in life are different,” says Jim “Because when they start to use the social skills we’re teaching them, the world treats them differently than it has in the past.”

Jim and Koral plan to continue as Teaching Parents in the Calgary teaching home, building relationships with the children they care for and being a part of their lives for as long as the children want them to be.



International Women's Day - A Promise is a Promise

By Tina Chapman

Women have made great strides over the last century in the pursuit of equality and human rights for women all over the world. They are our mothers, grandmothers, aunts, sisters, daughters, wives and friends. They are also our role models, mentors, teachers, heroines and leading ladies. On March 8 let the women in your life know how incredible they are.

International Women's Day is globally observed every year on March 8 and in many countries is a national holiday. Its origin dates back to the early 1900's and coincided with the women's movement to end gender discrimination, including better working conditions and wages as well as the right to vote, work and hold public office. Since then, tremendous progress has been made all around the globe for women's rights movements. March 8 has not only become a day to celebrate the positive impact women have had on society over the last 100 years, but also to encourage the success of future endeavours and awareness of injustices for women everywhere.

Every year the United Nations (UN) promotes a different theme for International Women's Day. The official UN theme for 2013 is **A Promise is a Promise: Time for Action to End Violence Against Women**. The theme is a call to action for countries around the world to make good on their commitment to prevent and protect their female citizens from experiencing violence in their daily lives. While there has been significant progress in the war on violence against women, there is still a long way to go.

*"Important steps have been taken globally and regionally to end violence against women.
More than 125 countries have specific laws that penalize domestic violence.*

Still, 603 million women live in countries where it is not considered a crime. Much more needs to be done.

*Every girl and woman should be able to live safely and free of violence.
Violence against women must never be accepted, never excused, never tolerated."*
(UN Women: www.unwomen.org/news-events/in-focus/csw57/#issue)

The UN hopes that through awareness of the issue and commitment from more of the world's leaders, we can take steps towards ending violence for good.

Closer to Home has many women-centred programs that can be accessed through our West Central Resource Centre (WCRC) including Women's Group, which provides an opportunity for women to socialize with other women and get involved in activities such as sewing, cooking and much more. A Sheriff King Domestic Violence Outreach Worker is also available through the WCRC for women who have or are experiencing domestic violence in their lives. Please call the West Central Resource Centre @ 403-543-0555 to set up an appointment.

Closer to Home is a partner in the Domestic Conflict Response Team (DCRT), a pilot project collaboration with HomeFront, Calgary Police Service, Calgary and Area Child and Family Services Authority and local shelters. The project is designed to reduce the recurrence of domestic violence by supporting the families involved and providing them with the tools to successfully end the cycle of abuse and violence in their lives. To learn more about the project, visit the HomeFront website at <http://homefrontcalgary.com/get-help/our-programs/domestic-conflict-response-team>.

If you or someone you know is experiencing violence, the following resources are available in Calgary for assistance:

- HomeFront - <http://homefrontcalgary.com>
- YWCA Sheriff King Home - <http://community.ywcaofcalgary.com/Page.aspx?pid=330>
- Awo Taan Healing Lodge - www.awotaan.org
- Brenda Strafford Centre - www.straffordfoundation.org
- Calgary Women's Emergency Shelter - www.calgarywomensshelter.com
- Discovery House Family Violence Prevention Society - www.discoveryhouse.ca
- Peer Support Services for Abused Women - www.pssaw.org
- Youville Women's Residence - www.youville.net



Donor Appreciation

Closer to Home would like to recognize our supporters from the last quarter
(October 1, 2012 - December 31, 2012)

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- Andrew McQuiston
- Andrew Shymka
- Ashlie MacDonald
- ATB Financial
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