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Meta Foundation Journal



2008 Dragon Boat Festival

The Toronto International Dragon Boat Festival began in Canada in 1986 and has become an annual event. It is one of the largest Dragon Boat Festivals outside of Asia.

Dragon Boat Racing began over 2000 years ago in China to commemorate the death of Qu Yuan, a poet/philosopher who challenged a corrupt regime and in protest jumped into the Mei Lo River and drowned. This annual event of Dragon Boat Racing is important to the Chinese community and it is celebrated in forty (40) countries around the world.

On June 22, eight teams from different organizations consisting of people with developmental disabilities, support staff, and volunteers competed in the Annual Dragon Boat Race off the shores of Centre Island. There were approximately 20 people in each boat, with 18 paddlers, a drummer and a steer person.



continued on page 4

Counting and being appreciative for all life's blessings

Mimma Regina, Executive Director



When you're asked to be thankful, what does that mean to you? I'm not referring to showing politeness for life's small demonstrations of kindness like someone letting you into a lane when driving. I'm

talking about feeling truly thankful for the indisputable blessings in life that resonate with importance and touch you to the core.

Why is it of such importance to feel thankful? Life is complicated and often messy but appreciating what life offers puts everything – our fears, worries, frustrations, and disappointments – in perspective. Being conscious of this importance of thankfulness keeps the focus on the multitude of greatness and wonder that enriches our lives.

Appreciating and reminding ourselves of the blessings in our lives has an extraordinary impact. All of us know people who consistently complain and are miserable about how their lives are playing out. It takes a lot of energy to be around such individuals and maintain relationships with them because they seem to focus only on how they're taken advantage of or how they always seem to get a raw deal.

Quite the opposite, we also know others who possess vitality and a 'can-do' attitude about their lives. They value aspects of what life brings to them and are able to list many components of their existence that bring pure joy and inspiration to them and those around them. For these individuals, life is a journey that often presents them with wonder, awe, and fulfillment.

This is not to say that life will be perfect. Yet, striving for perfection is an integral part of our genetic makeup. Just when we've accomplished something marvelous in our lives suddenly a new challenge presents itself.

However, the secret to happiness is taking stock in a spiritual sense of what we've attained and energizing ourselves to climb the next hill. As surely as there'll be another sunrise, there'll also be one more mountain. Looking back at the hills and valleys already traversed and being thankful for those experiences means you understand that they've shaped the person you are today.

What to make then of life's glitches and bumps along the way? In simplistic terms, we need to count our blessings because even though we may not have achieved all that we want, we should at least be thankful for where we are because now we have a clear idea of what we don't want. The road ahead looks clearer as we start to work toward our objectives.

I conclude with the following poem, whose author is unknown, as a reminder to be appreciative for life's blessings when tempted to look at the glass as half-empty rather than half-full:

Count your blessings instead of your crosses; count your gains instead of your losses.

Count your joys instead of your woes; count your friends instead of your foes.

Count your smiles instead of your tears; count your courage instead of your fears.

Count your full years instead of your lean; count all the kind deeds instead of the mean.

Count your health instead of wealth.

Enjoy this issue of the Journal.

Upcoming Events

Drama Performance
Oct 2/08 @ 7pm
Bathurst Playhouse Theatre

Harvest Moon
Nov 2/08
The Terrace

Client Christmas Party
Nov 29/08
Montecassino

A Celebration OF LIFE



It is with sweet sorrow that we said farewell in July to our friend, Rochelle.

Rochelle came to the Meta Centre in March 2000 after spending most of her life in an institutional setting. She graced us with her presence and spent her remaining years in peace and moments of harmony.

The Meta Centre provided Rochelle with loving and caring environments. Rochelle attended the Toronto day program where she interacted with many new friends and had newfound opportunities to interact and participate in her community. She particularly enjoyed the holistic and sensory therapies from the day program. She loved her Estee Lauder products and the finest in bath wear for those with a taste for true splendour.

Rochelle is lovingly remembered sitting on a chair with her legs folded while beaming with joy. Rochelle would push people away from her personal space when she was in a bad mood but smile, laugh, clap her hands and let individuals know she was okay for some personal attention.

Rochelle led a happy and contented life at the Meta Centre. She was much loved by staff and other participants. We are grateful for the special and enjoyable moments that we were privileged to share and shall cherish those moments forever.

Rochelle was able to inspire the compassionate, selfless and unconditional love in all who were fortunate to cross her path. This remains a monumental achievement for any human being; this ultimately was her purpose in life, inspiring us with love and joy.

The Rabbi who spoke at her burial captured her true essence. He felt that people with special needs have less spiritual work to complete than others. This purity of soul enables them to return quickly to their Creator when they depart this earth.

Thank you, Rochelle and farewell from your friends at the Meta Centre.

Study Aims to Look at Experiences of People with Special Needs and Healthcare Experiences

Individuals with intellectual disabilities make up 1-3 percent of the population in Canada and they often have mental health problems. Access to appropriate healthcare is limited both by their disability and the lack of suitably trained health care providers.

A team of researchers and clinicians, headed by **Yona Lunsky**, from Toronto and the Kingston area are working together on a Canadian Institute for Health Research funded grant to study **which** individuals with an intellectual disability experience crises; **why** some go to the emergency room when others do not; **how** hospital staff decide who gets admitted, who gets sent home and why; and **what** it is like for a person with a disability and their caregiver to visit a hospital when they are in crisis.

More than 30 community agencies (including the Meta Centre) from Toronto, Peel regions and Kingston are completing the data collection forms for the study. Information is being collected for individuals with an intellectual disability, who are 16 years and older, including individuals with autism spectrum disorders, who may be using services such as the youth program, day treatment, residential services, outpatient services and especially those individuals living with families.

This project should help empower people with intellectual disabilities when using hospital services and also serve as a guide to educate families and front line hospital workers about how best to use emergency services. Findings from the project should also inform policy on how to treat this most vulnerable population so that their mental health needs can be appropriately met in the future.

Postdoctoral candidate **Jonathan Weiss**, is leading another aspect of this study. His work, also funded by CIHR, focuses on interviewing families of individuals with intellectual disabilities who have experienced a crisis to learn more about how families could be better served in the future.

With questions call Christine Jaskulski at 416-535-8501 extension 7816.



Anti-Bullying Support Group

In February 2008, Social Work Services offered the first anti-bullying support group for five Toronto day program participants. The group ran for eight weeks and was facilitated by Grace Douglin and Amanda Franklin.

Weekly sessions offered group members the opportunity to work through a number of bullying-related issues such as: self-esteem, conflict resolution and anger management. The format of the group was psycho-educational, however the members courageously shared their own stories and advice, learning as much from one another as from the support material. At the completion of the group, the clients were each given a certificate to honour their participation and effort in the group.

continued from page 1

Meta Centre participants from the Richmond Hill, Vaughan and Toronto Day Programs competed in the Dragon Boat Race. The team, Meta Magnificence, paddled fiercely into fourth place. The group was awarded medallions and a plaque. A celebration on the island followed with a pizza lunch. It was an exciting and memorable event that promoted physical activity, team spirit and the thrill of competition.



Thank You Detective Crone!

By: Karen Lunam

Meta Centre welcomed Detective Sue Crone from 32 Division in April. Detective Crone spoke to more than one hundred staff over three sessions on how Toronto Police Service handle abuse allegations. This included how they investigate, as well as interview techniques for both the alleged accused and the victim.

This training was to compliment Meta Centre's training on "Recognizing Abuse." Staff found the information to be very useful and beneficial.

Here We Grow Again!



Health and Safety at Meta Centre

By: Sandra Connors, Coordinator Human Resources

This year May was observed as Health and Safety month. During the month Meta Centre took the opportunity to promote safety awareness within the Agency.

From May 5 to May 11, 2008 Health and Safety week was observed. While Health and Safety is always a priority, Meta Centre's Health and Safety Committee promoted this week and encouraged participation amongst all the employees. This was the second year that Meta Centre has actively participated in this promotion and awareness.

A poster contest was held whereby the employees of each location designed and developed a poster representing a specific health and safety theme. This year the theme focus was "Slips and Falls," "Personal Protective Equipment," and "Lifts and Transfers". All entries were unique and demonstrated employee ingenuity and creativity. It was a difficult decision to choose the winners; the top three rated by the judges were from Toronto Day Program (HS Member Marlene Pollack), Steeles Group Home (HS Member Sharon McKenzie),

Newlin Group Home (HS Member Lola Adedayo) Toronto Saturday Program (HS Member Marlene Pollack). Prizes were awarded to all winners. This year we also provided an opportunity for staff to enjoy a massage. Meta Centre had a massage therapist come to different site locations and staff were able to pre-register for a massage, a great stress release! This went over very well and was enjoyed by all who participated. As well, each week a Health and Safety tip was distributed to all employees. The Health and Safety Committee would at this time acknowledge the support of the Executive Director, Mimma Regina as well as the Directors. Their support is vital to a continuation of a strong Health and Safety work culture at Meta Centre.

and a tie for third place Vaughan Day Program (HS Member Mary Lou Millar) and Choiceland Group Home (HS member Monica Adams). There was also a Health and Safety Quiz Contest which tested participant's knowledge of the Health and Safety Policy. In order to win the participants had to have the correct answers to all questions. The top three winners



were Steeles Group Home (HS Member Sharon McKenzie), Newlin Group Home (HS Member Lola Adedayo) Toronto Saturday Program (HS Member Marlene Pollack). Prizes were awarded to all winners.

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Stepping Forward

By: Aleeya Raza

In October 2007, the Richmond Hill Day Program made a large transition to a bigger, brighter, and better unit. Mind you, the new building was only next door, the space was a welcomed change by both staff and clients. The grand opening meant the expansion and accommodation of new classrooms, equipment and increased services to meet the overwhelming

demand in the York Region area.

To date, the new centre has incorporated a brand new movement therapy room which included brand new exercise equipment. In addition, our sensory development room has been renovated to meet the sensory needs of our clients. The space still maintains its fun, friendly, and family-like atmosphere, all while providing challenging and stimulating opportunities to enhance learning. Our front and back doors are equipped with wheelchair ramps and an automated door leading into the reception area. With the new facility we are now able to provide employment opportunities to our qualified and trained clients in reception duties.

Staff worked extra hard to prepare the new centre in the likeness of our current and future consumer needs. Our doors are always open and we look forward to sharing our services with new-comers, parents and staff in our upcoming open house. Join us and experience what we have to offer at the new Meta Richmond Hill. See you there!



CLIENT VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION

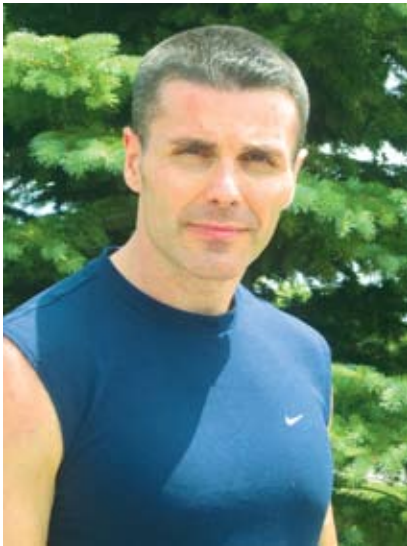
By: Karen Lunam

During the month of June, Volunteer Appreciation was held at each of the day programs to celebrate our clients who volunteer. Many of our clients are out in the community giving back, whether it is at the food bank or delivering meals on wheels. During these appreciation events over one hundred certificates were given out to the clients thanking them for their hard work and dedication.

STRIDE RIGHT: Do's and Don'ts to Improve Your Walk Workout

by Marco Alla, Certified Personal Trainer

Owner, Inter-Fit Fitness Centre and PROTRAINER Personal Training Services



Here are some tips to help alleviate the aches and pains you may encounter when you walk, which may be attributed to an imbalance in your step.

Shoulder Pain or tightness may result if you are not swinging your arms enough, which constricts blood flow and makes your shoulders tense. The solution is to pump your arms forward and back

in a 15-20 degree arc. Allow your shoulders to move forward and back just a little.

Swollen Hands, a possible cause is a fluid build up from hanging your arms at your sides. To prevent this, as you walk, reach your left arm to the sky for a few seconds while you tuck your right elbow to your side, bending it to touch your right shoulder and repeat with your right arm. Try and do this 5 to 10 times with each arm when needed.

Front of Hip Pain may be caused by you leaning back, collapsing into your hips, locking your knees, weak hip flexor or abdominal muscles. The solution is to bring your weight to the front of your feet. Practice what I call the "pendulum swing" with your arms while pretending to "kick sand" while you are walking. To strengthen the hip flexor while you walk, raise your knees for a few minutes as if you are marching.

Shin Splints may be caused by excessive rolling your feet in or out; or that your feet are turning out too much. To prevent this, one should replace worn shoes with ones that have good arch support and

even heels. When you walk, land on the centre of your heel (not the outer edges), keeping a "heel-toe" rhythm. To strengthen your shins, walk on your heels a few minutes a day.

Back of the Knee Pain may be caused by locking your knees when you are walking. The solution is to keep your weight forward, and soften your knees. A couple of minutes a day, walk like Groucho Marx, bending a few inches at the knees.

Do's and Don'ts for INDOOR WALKING

If snow and ice have driven you indoors, here are some suggestions to make your transition to a treadmill easier:

- ➔ To start, plant your feet on the side rails, and grip the handrails. To avoid motor strain, don't step on the belt until the speed reaches about 1.5 km per hour.
- ➔ When you're comfortable, let go of the handrails. Holding on can result in poor walking form.
- ➔ For a smooth stride, take slightly longer steps than usual, since the belt is pulling your feet back.
- ➔ Listen to your feet. If you hear a loud thumping, you're landing flat footed. Try landing on your heel and rolling through the ball of your foot to your toes.
- ➔ To avoid hunching your back on an incline, lean forward from your ankles and don't bend at your waist.

So until next time, I'm Marco Alla reminding you that, "An Active Lifestyle Is A Healthy Lifestyle."

PLEASE NOTE OUR PRIVACY POLICY:

We do not sell, trade or otherwise share our mailing lists. We hope that you found the attached information helpful. However, if at any time you wish to be removed from this or another mailing list simply contact us by phone at 416-736-0199 or via e-mail at rsandland@metacentre.ca.

Please allow 15 business days to allow us to update our records accordingly.

The Journal

If you have something you'd like to see in the newsletter or want to submit an item, you can let any of these individuals know.

Publisher: Mimma Regina
Editor: Tullio Orlando
Co-editor: Karen Lunam

We thank all those who contributed to this issue.

If you would like to have an article, picture or drawing considered for inclusion, please contact Tullio Orlando @ 736-0199 (ext. 313) or Karen Lunam @ 736-0199 (ext. 334).

A Fond Farewell

On May 13, 2008 Sandro Ingangaro, a former volunteer and current staff member suddenly passed away. As this was the first loss of a staff member his death has affected us all.

Good Morning,

We are gathered so that we can honour our friend and colleague Sandro

Ingangaro. We have chosen a Japanese Maple tree as a living monument to remember Sandro because it is said to represent "no ordinary person, someone who's ambitious, proud and self-confident."

We want this moment to be special. Please think about what Sandro meant to you while we prepare for the planting. During this time Rob will play one of Sandro's favourite tunes called "Nothing Else Matters" by Metallica.

Beneath the tree an inscribed garden stone will be placed. On it is our pledge

to Sandro's memory. It reads:

You will never be forgotten,

We pledge to you today,

A place within our hearts,

Is where you'll always stay.

While the tree is being planted you may take one of the river stones that will be distributed. The stone is symbolic of our love and memory for Sandro. These will forever endure just like the stones of the Earth.

After the tree is planted please place your stone in the garden bed. When your stone is placed in the garden bed you are also letting go of the sadness of Sandro's death and replacing it with the joy of his memory.

