

President/CEO Report

..... A monthly report on Ranch Ehrlo Society's activities

Positive Feedback from COA Site Visit

issue 44, June 2008

*During the course of
any month, there are
a number of activities
which occur that go
unreported to Board
Members, our Senate,
key Stakeholders and
staff. This bi-monthly
newsletter will attempt
to capture some of that
activity and give you a
broader perspective on
Ranch Ehrlo and Ehrlo
Community Services.*

Dr. Geoff Pawson
President/CEO

The Council on Accreditation (COA) peer review team had a whirl-wind visit to the Ranch Ehrlo Society from April 13th to April 16th. The four-member team conducted on-site file reviews at the agency's three campuses, toured various facilities and conducted meetings and one-to-one interviews, with staff, youth, and board members.

During the "Exit Meeting" on April 16th, team-lead Jane Swanson, provided some very positive feedback to staff, youth, and board members in attendance. "The agency demonstrates an excellence in service delivery--folks really care about the kids and the staff is well-informed and well-trained," said Swanson who has participated in over 165 peer reviews. "Client rights are taken very seriously in the agency; when asked, clients knew their rights, felt their rights were respected, and knew where to go if they had concerns."

Justeen Schusteff, another peer reviewer, shared quotes that she collected during her interviews with youth and employees. Youth indicated that "this is the best place ever", "this is my family", "the camping is great—I'd never get to do this if I was at home". Employees indicated that "this is where I was meant to be", "I get tremendous support and the agency encourages professional development", "I couldn't ask for any better support or to work with any better clients".

Ralph Cordes, who was also part of the team, was impressed with the agency's therapeutic crisis intervention (TCI) model. "This is the only agency I've seen that uses the TCI model as intended—it is not an excuse to do a physical restraint, it's all about de-escalation and avoiding a restraint; you not only understand the training, you've enhanced it."

Swanson concluded the meeting by commending the employees who work with the developmentally disabled clients. "I have not seen a program as good as this anywhere; if I had a child with a developmental disability, I would want the child to be at the Ranch Ehrlo Society—the program is a very special model of excellence."

The peer reviewers, who collectively spent 200 hours of volunteer time on the Ranch Ehrlo re-accreditation, indicated that "it is special programs like yours that make all our efforts worthwhile—you must share what you're doing with other".

The agency is currently preparing a response to the Pre-Commission Review Report. The final report and re-accreditation is scheduled for July 2008.

The Ranch Ehrlo Society is the only residential treatment program in Saskatchewan that is accredited by COA.

Restructuring Programs North

With the completion of construction and a successful implementation of programming at Corman Park campus, Deb Parker-Loewen will be assuming new responsibilities in the agency. “Deb was instrumental in getting the Corman Park campus up and running,” said Marion MacIver, executive vice-president. “We will now be using her talents to further strengthen the agency’s treatment programs.”

“Deb was instrumental in getting Corman Park up and running”

Marion MacIver

Parker-Loewen, who has her doctorate in psychology, assumed the position of executive director of special services on June 1st. After a leave-of-absence over the summer, Parker-Loewen will assume her new responsibilities this fall which will include coordination and implementation of the agency’s Performance and

Quality Improvement (PQI) initiatives, supervision of clinical services in programs north, facilitation of value-based practice models, and the provision of staff resources to board committees in the north.

Randy O’Shaughnessy, assumed responsibility as senior director of programs north on June 1st. Vance Heaney becomes director of clinical services for programs north and will be responsible for the clinical team in Corman Park and Buckland/PA. Jason Kotyk started his new position as director of programs for Corman Park on May 1st.

Linda Meyer, formerly vice-president programs south, assumed responsibility for all residential programs in the province; her position as vice-president of programs was also effective June 1st.

Director of Facility Management

Gordon Swystun has been appointed to the new position of director of facility management at the agency. Swystun has a wealth of experience in the areas of business, construction and facility, and security management. Before forming his own executive consulting service, Swystun was at ISM where he served as director of real estate/facilities.

Lifetime Achievement Award

“We believe your contributions ...embody the sentiment and intent of this award.”

Debby Poyess

Deb Parker-Loewen was chosen as the recipient of the 2008 Jillings Lifetime Achievement Award in Psychology presented by the Psychological Society of Saskatchewan (PSS). “We believe your contributions to the Saskatchewan psychological community and the people of the province of Saskatchewan embody the sentiment and intent of this award,” said Debby Boyess, PSS member. The award was presented to Parker-Loewen at a reception held at the Radisson Hotel in Saskatoon.

The 2007 Jillings Lifetime Achievement Award was presented posthumously to Bob Ryan, former vice-president of programs at the Ranch Ehrlo Society. Ryan died on December 1, 2006 after a brief battle with cancer.

Chuck Jillings, for whom the award is named, served as president of the Ranch Ehrlo Society from 1968 to 1970.

Royal Salute

Their Honours the Honourable Dr. Gordon Barnhart and Mrs. Naomi Barnhart were special guests at the inaugural three-mile run for programs north held on May 15th in Corman Park. Along with Their Honours, approximately 90 youth and staff from Corman Park and Buckland campuses participated in the run, including board members Donna Welke and Harvey Lammer.

Their Honours, who were accompanied by their driver and *aide- de- camp*, enjoyed a picnic and helped to distribute prizes after the race. “Your participation was particularly meaningful for our young people who often don’t feel connected to the wider community,” said Dr. Geoff Pawson in thanking Their Honours after the event. “Your visit provided an opportunity for the youth to discuss the role of the monarchy in our political system, and the special role that you play in enhancing it,” he added.

Woman of Distinction

Lisa Brownstone, occupational therapy consultant for the Ranch Ehrlo Society received the YWCA Woman of Distinction award in the Wellness, Recreation and Healthy Living category at a gala evening on May 1st. Brownstone, who has provided occupational therapy services to the agency for the past three years, was recognized for her years of volunteer and consultative services in assisting the community's most vulnerable members.

Brownstone significantly contributed to the creation of Transition House, a shelter for women and children experiencing domestic violence, and to the creation of Career Headways, a holistic program for people with acquired head injury, the first community based program of its type in the province. She has also raised awareness and helped establish new programs for people with fetal alcohol spectrum disorder.

Bringing Back the Experience

The fifth annual multicultural event, held on May 24th was a great success according to April Fike, housemother at Peterson House who helped organize the event. "Even though there were only two awards given out for the presentations, all of the youth that participated should be proud of themselves for doing an awesome job," said Fike. The award for "Best Overall Participation" went to Jewison House for its presentation of Australia. The award for "Best Visual" went to Mitchell House for its presentation on Mexico.

"all of the youth who participated should be proud of themselves for doing an awesome job."

April Fike

The line-up of entertainment included Metis jigging, and Scottish, Chilean, East Indian, and Caribbean dance troupes. A former Ranch youth acted as DJ, introducing the entertainment and making all the announcements. Fike paid a special tribute to the housemothers who prepared wonderful food samples from all the countries represented.

a sense of my Self

Amanda Scandrett, artist-in-residence at the Ranch Ehrlo Society is delighted with the response to the art project, *a sense of my Self*, which was on display at the Alternator Gallery in Kelowna from April 11 to May 16th. The installation included over 100 works by Ranch Ehrlo youth. The youths used objects they either found or created, that they believed described their own distinct spirit and self, and put them in identical glass jars.

"The project challenges people's preconceived ideas about the young people in the Ranch Ehrlo program," said Scandrett. "I wanted to make an art project that really showed that these kids have a lot in them; they are very positive and very vibrant and really want to make a positive difference in the world."

The project came about because Scandrett wanted to symbolize society's need to put everyone in neat, little, easily labelled containers. When explaining the project to the youths, she didn't have to explain the whole labelling concept as it was something that they were too familiar with.

Artists' Statement

"a sense of my Self is an exploration of society's views and ignorance of youth, and especially those of marginalized youth. It deconstructs the underlying notions that youth-at-risk are slow, violent, apathetic, and insensitive. In contrast, the work demonstrates individuality, sensitivity, and sheer vibrancy that all youth are capable and willing to share."

40th Annual Three-mile Race

Over 180 runners, joggers, and walkers participated in the 40th annual three-mile race at the Pilot Butte campus on May 14th. The weather cooperated and a delicious barbeque followed provided by the staff and youth at Appleton House. After the presentation of the awards, the young people enjoyed singing along to music provided by Herb Pollen.

Awards Night in Prince Albert

Over 200 guests attended the second annual Awards Night for programs north held on June 10th at the Prince Albert Exhibition Centre. This year for the first time, students and staff from the Corman Park campus participated as well.

In bringing greetings on behalf of the board, Donna Welke, board chair, welcomed the students, staff, and families. "This evening is the culmination of a great deal of hard work and determination on the part of the young people and the employees at the Ranch," said Welke. "It is an opportunity for the youth of the agency to celebrate their achievements and those of their fellow students."

"It is an opportunity for the youth of the agency to celebrate their achievements and those of their fellow students."

Donna Welke

After a delicious banquet and the awards presentations, the youth from the Buckland campus provided a demonstration on equine-assisted learning (EAL). EAL was introduced at the Buckland campus in May 2008. "EAL is a powerful and effective approach," said Randy O'Shaughnessy, senior director of programs north. "It helps youth to improve their

communication, creative- thinking and problem-solving skills."

In addition to the board chair, a number of other board members were also in attendance.

The New Education CD

The youth at Ranch Ehrlo Society, in collaboration with hip hop performers InfoRed and Merky Waters, held a very successful CD release party at *The Exchange* on Sunday, May 4th. The afternoon, which consisted of community hip hop performances and an open mic, was the culmination of a number of workshops and recording sessions which lead to the creation of the *New Education CD*. Portions of the CD were featured on a CBC radio morning show prior to the event.

Recognizing Youth's Achievements

The 42nd Ranch Ehrlo Society (programs south) Awards Night was held on Friday, June 20th at the Conexus Arts Centre.

More than 700 attended the annual event that involves the presentation of awards to youth for a variety of accomplishments during the year. This year there were a total of 330 nominations and 52 awards presented.

"I'd like to welcome all the family members in attendance and assure you that everyone associated with the Ranch Ehrlo Society shares in the pride of your child's accomplishments," said Donna Welke, board chair in her welcoming remarks. A number of board members, senate members, and Ehrlo Community Services board members were on hand to assist in distributing the awards. The Pow Wow club entertained the crowd, as did the youth from all of the group homes in Regina and at the Pilot Butte campus.

SaskTel once again helped to sponsor the event with a contribution of \$3000.

Openings of Group Homes

The official opening of Fitch House took place on Monday, June 23rd. Located at 1224 Wascana Street, the house was renamed to honour the contributions made by Kent Fitch to the Ranch Ehrlo Society and RES Industries (the predecessor to Ehrlo Community Services). A number of dignitaries were on hand to bring greetings and the formal program was followed by tours and a community barbeque.

The official opening of the new Rever House will take place on Friday, June 27th at 4:00 p.m. Located on the Pilot Butte campus, the naming of the unit recognizes the contribution that Keith Rever has made to the agency over the years including serving as board chair and chair of the Golf Classic committee.

Ehrlo Community Services¹

A Successful Day for Ehrlo Golf Classic and Sport Venture

June 2nd proved to be a great day for golf as the 2008 Ehrlo Golf Classic played out to be one of the most successful events in the 17-year history of the tournament.

This year's Golf Classic hosted a near full-slate of golfers which included a number of familiar faces who have supported the tournament every year as well as several corporate team entries, and a strong showing of support from employees of the Ranch Ehrlo Society.

"The Ehrlo Sport Venture Programs benefited greatly from this year's tournament, receiving nearly \$18,000 in cash sponsorship from local business and corporate sponsors," said Kim Langston, Sport Venture co-ordinator. "I'm grateful to all those who provided support, especially our sponsors and volunteers."

Major sponsors were Bennett Dunlop Ford, WestJet, Capital Automotive Group, Dewdney/Park St. Drugs, Bayer CropScience, The Co-operators, Information Services Corporation, Casino Regina, Affinity Credit Union, and John Hrycak.

This year the tournament also attracted first-time media sponsor Harvard Broadcasting, which contributed a three-week radio campaign valued at over \$6,000. The radio campaign included an interview with Langston on the CKRM morning program to promote the tournament and increase public awareness of the Sport Venture programs.

¹ ECS was established as a non-profit organization in 1995 with a mandate to provide community-based prevention and intervention services.

Congratulations to this year's winning team of Ken Wilhelm, Brent Lunsney, Tony Tighe and Ed Renault.

See you at the 2009 Ehrlo Golf Classic on June 1st!

2008 Ehrlo Basketball Wrap-up

The Ehrlo Basketball League (EBL) finished its fifth season on June 15th with a wrap-up tournament at the University of Regina. Players attended from all three league locations--Thomson School, Albert School, and the Eastview Community Centre. The tournament was a great way to cap-off a fantastic season of basketball.

A special thank-you to the Access Communications Children's Fund for its support as the 2008 league sponsor. A note of thanks also goes out to McDonald's Restaurants which provided a delicious lunch for all of the youth who attended the wrap-up tournament.

After-School Care Program

Ehrlo Counselling Services is currently working with a parent advocacy group in establishing an after-school care program for adolescents and young adults between 15-22 years of age who are impacted by disabilities.

A number of community partners are involved in the project including the YMCA, the Autism Resource Centre, Kinsmen Telemiracle, Wascana Rehabilitation Centre, Cosmopolitan Services, school boards, and Community Living.

Ehrlo Counselling is working closely with the YMCA and parents to assist in staffing this program.

Block-by-Block Housing Project

Monica Rivers, who is on a one-year term with Ehrlo Community Services (funded by the United Way) has been busy making a number of community contacts to garner support and interest

in the Block-by-Block initiative. Rivers, who is working with the Core Community Association along with several other stakeholders including SHC, the City of Regina, and Habitat for Humanity, is co-ordinating this housing renewal initiative.

The project is targeted at the 1900 block of Quebec Street and includes home improvement, block clean-up, and plans for new construction. A strategy is currently being developed to view and inspect properties with the intention of determining their viability for low-income home ownership programs.

To date, a great deal of time has been spent getting to know the residents of that block; three door-knocking sessions, one letter campaign, one flyer delivery, and one neighbourhood block meeting have already taken place. Reception from the residents has been exceptional with a number of families keenly interested and supportive of the project's presence on the block. Emerging issues for home owners in the area include the desire to develop vacant lots, a need for more home ownership versus rentals, and the need for greater display of ownership pride.

In partnership with the Pre-Trades Construction Training Crew, which has been funded for another term, work in the Core Community is currently underway. Ten youth will be building fences, steps, decks, and providing other upgrades to home owners in the community, including the targeted 1900 Quebec block.

Jon Ryan Football Camp

The Jon Ryan Football Camp is scheduled for Monday, July 7th from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. (lunch provided) at the U of R Rams practice field.

This is a super-skills camp, for youth ages 8-15, which offers the unique opportunity to play with an NFL player from Regina as well as members of the University of Regina Rams and the Regina Prairie Thunder. This year, for interested youth, a cheerleading camp will be offered alongside the

football camp with members of the Rams Cheerleading Squad instructing.

For more information, or to register, please contact Barb Ryan at 306-545-9085 or e-mail theyrans@sasktel.net

Ehrlo Soccer League 2008

Next on the slate of programming for Sport Venture is the third season of the Ehrlo Soccer League (ESL), which kicks-off on Sunday, July 6th at the University of Regina (Field 5). Members of the Regina Soccer Association clubs and organizations will be on hand to instruct children ages 8-12 through skills-stations to prepare them for the six-week summer season.

This year the ESL will run in the Core, North Central and Eastview communities. Practices are held once a week for one hour and a wind-up tournament is scheduled for August 10th at the University of Regina.

A big thank-you to Crown Investments Corporation, which has come on board as the league sponsor this year, as well as to McDonald's Restaurants which is the food sponsor, and of course to the volunteers from the four RSA clubs and organizations without whose help the program would not be run.

Monday Night Football League

The Monday Night Football League season is scheduled to begin with a kick-off camp on Monday, August 25th. The league will run every Monday night through to Saturday, October 18th at the Credit Union EventPlex (indoor soccer facility at Ipsco Place). Check www.ehrlo.com/ecs/ for updates closer to league start date.

Thank-you to the Crown Investments Corporation for its 2008 league sponsorship.

Sport Venture Summer Closures

The Sport Venture Library will be closed for holidays from July 10th to 18th (inclusive) and from July 31st to August 5th (inclusive).