



Dignity | Equality | Opportunity

EFry Elizabeth Fry Society
of Greater Vancouver

Spring 2018 Newsletter

Not just horsing around – alternative therapy methods

EFry's Am'ut Aboriginal Youth Program works with Aboriginal teenage girls who are in conflict with the law and want to make positive changes in their lives.



Taking part in Aboriginal cultural activities and values is a key facet of the Am'ut program. To further this goal, as a part of the program clients participate in equine or horse therapy. Each girl learns to take care of and bond with a horse and builds a relationship with the animal.

Participants in the equine therapy sessions work on conflict-resolution, problem-solving, confidence building and team and leadership skills in a culturally appropriate and supportive environment. The program provides a safe space to explore and embrace Aboriginal culture, traditions and practices and helps to decrease participant stress and anxiety by working closely with the animals.

The 'Painted Ponies' sessions help the girls to engage in the program and connect more deeply

with the animals. Horses are painted by hand using natural and safe paints. The girls learn about ceremonies in which First Nations women would paint symbolic markings on horses and say prayers to bless a hunting trip or a long journey. They learn the meanings behind traditional symbols and are encouraged to make their own symbols and prayers that have a personal meaning.



Students host fundraising event for JustKids

Each year, Kwantlen Polytechnic University (KPU) Public Relations students plan, organize and host a fundraising event for a charity of their choice. Their selection for 2018: EFry's JustKids programs for children of incarcerated parents. The students explained what motivated their choice:

"We loved the fact that JustKids was a local charity who worked with kids who face a lot of prejudice. There is a lack of compassion for these kids who didn't do anything wrong. Once we learned more about how JustKids provides these kids with opportunities and experiences they may have never had, we knew we had to get involved."

Held at Surrey City Hall on March 1st, the event

saw over 250 attendees. Guests were entertained by local musicians and participated in games, a raffle, and a silent auction. KPU President, Dr Alan Davis spoke on behalf of the University and JustKids Coordinator, Kirsty Gordon, spoke about the program. Students raised over \$16,000 that will help fund JustKids programming.

We can't say thank you enough to these amazing, hard-working students.



Community support for change

We are so excited to see growing support for EFry's Rosewood Centre that will bring together housing options, health and support services and community resources all under one roof. Proud supporters G&F Financial Group outline what motivated their generous support of the project:

"G&F Financial Group is proud to donate funds to the Elizabeth Fry Society of Greater Vancouver to help with the construction of their Rosewood Health Care Building to create more safe spaces for women and children. Giving vulnerable members of our communities a safe and secure place to call home allows the Society to make a positive and lasting impact in our local communities, and G&F is honoured to be a part of this initiative."



We are pleased to be working with such amazing local partners who are as committed as we are to building stronger communities where everyone has the opportunity to fulfill their potential.

Training for best practices

Effective service is crucial to enabling change in client's lives. To ensure our staff are trained in best practices, we brought everyone together for comprehensive training from leading practitioners in fields related to addiction, gender-responsive services, trauma, strong start child programming, and generational poverty.

We were able to coax Dr Stephanie Covington away from her international consulting on systemic change in corrections, addictions and gender-focused services to provide our staff with two days of training. Dr Covington is well known internationally for her work with the Betty Ford Treatment Centre and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. She shared with our addictions staff practical therapeutic tools and techniques that help women with addictions to develop coping skills, emotional well-being, and move beyond trauma.



Recognized throughout the US, Dr Donna Beegle joined us to discuss how many institutions inadvertently create barriers for the poor that keep them from moving out of poverty. She talked about how poverty can affect and replicate itself over generations, and discussed what is needed to assist people in participating fully in society. She challenged us all to continue to find ways of providing individualized support, to ensure our policies and are in plain language, and to be authentic in our work.



Nationally known throughout Canada, Stephen Epp took time out from teaching at UBC and working with the Vancouver Coastal Health Authority in the



Downtown Eastside to challenge staff to think about the impact of traumatic events in our lives and the lives of those we work with. Stephen explored how we as humans can harness trauma as a force for self-improvement. He challenged staff to focus our work on meaning both for ourselves and our clients to build resilience to, and recover from, trauma.

Lastly, we certified a new group of staff in the Growing Great Kids out of Homelessness (GGK) program. Since starting the program two years ago with a grant from the Children's Aid Foundation we have seen increasing demand from new moms for this strong start program. Eight staff participated in a five-day certification program. Staff learned strategies for engaging parents, family strengthening techniques and nurturing parent's resiliency and problem-solving skills. We owe a big thanks to current moms and babies in the program who participated in the training by offering themselves up for "practice."

The conference was a terrific opportunity for staff from our many worksites to meet and build new friendships.

JustKids Spring Camp



Each year EFry's spring and summer camps help to support children of incarcerated parents and to give them the tools they need to succeed in life.

JustKids Spring Camp was held over the first week of Spring Break this year. The children participated in activities and outings throughout the week all over the Lower Mainland. Activities included bowling, arts & crafts, a trip to the farm and snowshoeing and cultural activities at Grouse Mountain.

JustKids' Camps address the unique needs of a parent in prison and offer them the opportunity to develop new skills and coping mechanisms in a supportive environment with other children facing similar challenges in life. We want to provide them with the chance to forget their worries for a time and show them their true potential.

We've had so much fun with Spring Camp this year, we can hardly wait for JustKids' Blue Sky sleep-away camp later this summer!



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