

# NOTES AND NEWS

**December, 2015**

*An update from the Scottish Rite Charitable Foundation Learning Centres for Children - Halifax* Vol. 9 No. 8

## **Family**

"Call it a clan, call it a network, call it a tribe, call it a family: Whatever you call it, whoever you are, you need one." Jane Howard

I've been incredibly blessed by the gift of family in my life. My Dad was the youngest of thirteen children and the bonds of love, loyalty and support from that extended family are legendary!

My definition of family has expanded over the years to include those we have claimed as family: precious friends with whom we share common values, rich memories and special affection.

Our Learning Centre community is very much a family and I wanted to wrap up 2015 by reflecting on all that this means.

Our immediate family has grown to new proportions this fall. We now have 36 volunteer tutors working with 50 children. The size and scope of our weekly schedule means that our tutors haven't even all met one another - but they are connected by an incredible bond. Supporting this work are another 20 incredibly dedicated desk volunteers who provide the hospitality and oversight during the hours the Centre is in operation.

The scope of our family expands to include 50 'alumni' families, a waiting list that grows weekly, our Board of Directors, the Scottish Rite Valley of Halifax, The Scottish Rite Charitable Foundation of Canada, and seven other Learning Centres across this country. And, still, that's not all of you... I'm not sure where we could hold a Family Reunion that would accommodate us all!

We have been supported in our growth in many ways over the years. Of significant note has been the sustaining sponsorship of **Dartmouth Masonic Properties Foundation**, under the leadership of Ivan Truen and Eric Lavers. This organization will officially conclude its work this week and we will surely miss them. In addition to the financial support that has come from this organization, Ivan and Eric have both served on our Board and volunteered countless hours behind our reception desk, connecting with our family in a very personal way.

"We must take care of our families wherever we find them." Elizabeth Gilbert

Last month's "Parenting from Head to Toe" workshop was one way that we reached out to take care of our family. It was an amazing day with over 60 participants, dynamic and expert leadership, and many practical strategies

for the special challenges faced for parents of children with learning differences. As a number of parents wrote in their evaluations, a highlight of the day was "being with other who share similar challenges and knowing you are not alone". Before the day had ended, both presenters and participants were talking about 'next time' - and there will be a next time!

Special thanks go to The **Gordon Foundation for Children and Youth** who provided support for this event through a grant from their "Speakers Program".

There's nothing like a good project to pull families together and we have had one going these last few weeks. On Saturday we wrapped up our, now annual, Silent Auction. This fundraising initiative displayed some interesting traits and talents among members of our family! Is there a competitive gene? It was delightful to see both children and adults rushing in to check on their bids! In addition to items that had been purchased and dropped off for auction, we were gifted by the talents of some of our family members. These folks offered baking, artwork, handcrafts and professional services to the mix. This year, we experimented with an on-line component to the auction as well and had a small selection of items that were only available that way. It was an easy and fun way to reach beyond our walls and I'm sure it will be repeated!

Huge thanks to all who supported this project, either through their donations or their bids. We raised over \$3000.00 in a very short time and with lots of laughter along the way.

Things are winding down at the Centre this week and we will be closing after our sessions on Saturday.

As we enter this special season, I wish you peace, joy, wonder and anticipation.

May your holiday time be blessed by special times with those you call family,

### CENTRE CALENDAR.

**December 12:** Last Sessions for 2015  
**10:00 - 11:00 AM Saturday Sessions with Waiting List Children** Join Centre Alumni, Heather, Josh and Anthony for some cookie decorating, fun and games.

**January 4, 2016:** Centre Reopens

**January 16:** 9:00 - 3:30 Tutor Training

**January 28:** 11:00 AM Board Meeting

**February 20:** 9:00 - 3:30 Tutor Training

**Our Family Resource Library is another way that we strive to take care of our families. Please check your shelves, baskets and bags for books that may belong here and help us keep them in circulation! Books may be dropped in our mail slot if no one is here when you come**

### Contact Us

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