

August 2013

Dear Friends of the Child Witness Centre,

It has been an exciting year so far at the Child Witness Centre and I am thrilled to be sharing some of this with you. If you are receiving this update it's because you have been a friend to the agency over the years and we wanted to let you know what we've been up to. Please also feel free to pass this onto anyone who you feel would be interested in the work that we do.

### **New This Year! Support our "Non Event".**



**Give 111:** As first time homeowners we have initiated a new fundraising initiative! We are asking 111 people to give \$111 to the work we do at 111 Duke St. E. We think it's a modest request to support our impactful work. Join the Give 111 club! To donate, call the agency to pay by credit card; or donate online through Canada Helps at [www.childwitness.com](http://www.childwitness.com).

### **Additional Key Highlights so far this year include:**

**Long awaited move into our new 'home':** With the support of the Kitchener Conestoga Rotary Club, Bryant Canada and 1st Service Heating and Cooling and some key volunteer renovators and staff, the agency moved to 111 Duke St. East on January 26, 2013. We are now located kitty corner from the brand new Waterloo Region Courthouse. We are very pleased with the state of the art facilities for children and youth to testify in the new courthouse! If you were unable to attend our May open house and would like to see our new child friendly space, please feel free to drop in or contact either myself or Sherry at [admin@childwitness.com](mailto:admin@childwitness.com)

**A HUGE thank you to the Kitchener Conestoga Rotary Club:** The Club held their weekly lunch meeting at the Child Witness Centre on May 31st. This was our chance to show them what we had done with the \$265,000 Dream Home proceeds that they had so graciously given to the Child Witness Centre for our own 'dream' home and to have an official ribbon cutting ceremony.



**Rebranding:** We have a new logo as you will see at the top of the first page. The colours are brighter and our tag line talks about how we carry out our work with care and compassion. The swirl depicts the journey from darkness to hope which we share with the children and youth that we support. We have created a new brochure for the agency and with support from the Steele Family Fund in Cambridge we hope to unveil our new website in the Fall.

**New Executive Director:** In February we said goodbye to Jack Reynolds after 10 years of leadership. Anyone who met Jack can appreciate how well the agency developed with his insight, enthusiasm, dogged determination and hard, hard work. As the new Executive Director I am incredibly grateful for his efforts on behalf of the children and youth that we support!

**Child Advocacy Centre Needs Assessment and Feasibility Study:** This project was initiated by the Board with funding from the Federal Justice Department. The purpose of a Child Advocacy Centre is to provide a seamless, coordinated and collaborative response to children and youth who are victims of or witnesses of crime and involved with the judicial process. The research was conducted by Social Innovation Research Group at WLU and more than 50 people in 21 agencies were interviewed in addition to a comprehensive literature review and site visits to 5 Child Advocacy Centres. A Steering Committee of leaders from Waterloo Region Police, F&CS, the Office of the Crown Attorney and the Child Witness Centre will now develop the next steps in assessing and moving forward. To read the research report, you can find it on our website at [www.childwitness.com](http://www.childwitness.com).

**2013 Pancake Luncheon:** What a difference a location makes! For the first time ever our annual Pancake Luncheon was held at the Waterloo Inn and Conference Hotel. It was a huge success allowing us to make connections with more than 370 people who attended, which was an increase of 150 people. Proceeds from the lunch were close to \$3500, our best ever! Thank you to all of you who came and supported us. We hope to see you again next year.

**Youth Symposium:** Our annual Grade Eight Youth Symposium in Guelph and Kitchener continues to be oversubscribed and was very well received by the 3200 students and teachers who heard enthusiastic and inspiring messages from a host of speakers about how they can make a difference, be leaders, and learn the tools to cope with the everyday stresses of being a teenage in this ever changing social climate.

**Child Witness Program:** We exist to provide court preparation, court accompaniment, support and advocacy for child and youth victims and witnesses of crime throughout the judicial process. As of the end of June, we have had 183 new referrals in 2013 and have supported 370 children and youth at various stages in the court process so far this year. More than 95% involve abuse or violence and in over 86% of the cases the accused is known to the victim or witness.

While we all wish that a program such as ours didn't have to exist, the feedback that we regularly receive from our clients clearly demonstrates that our support is necessary and very important to them. Your support in turn is very important also as it allows us to continue to support children and youth and their families. If you know of an organization that currently runs a fundraising event and is looking for a great cause to share their proceeds with, please let us know.

Thank you for being a friend of the Child Witness Centre, and please feel free to pass on any questions, thoughts or ideas to me at [laura.muirhead@childwitness.com](mailto:laura.muirhead@childwitness.com).

On behalf of the Board, Staff and Children and Youth that we support,

Laura Muirhead, Executive Director