



Media Release

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For immediate release

November 17, 2010

Halton Our Kids Network Celebrates Success in Supporting Children and Youth

BURLINGTON – More than 80 supporters of Our Kids Network (OKN) gathered on Wednesday, November 17 to celebrate accomplishments and look at building on that success for the future, at a Retrospective held at Geraldo’s in LaSalle Park.

“We started as a few enthusiastic people who wanted to make a difference in children’s lives by making sure that services are seamless and easy to access. By the late nineties, we’d grown to a full-fledged working committee with representation from almost every major children’s service organization in Halton. Our focus in those days was early child development. In the last six years, we’ve expanded our mandate to include the school years (to age 18), children with special needs, mental health and conducting research,” said Mary Beth Jonz, chairperson of the OKN Early Years Committee. Ms. Jonz is one of the founding members of Our Kids Network and Director of Children’s Services with Halton Region.

Highlights of the Retrospective:

Partnership

In 2004, **Halton Children’s Aid; Halton Region; Halton Police Services; Halton District School Board; Halton Catholic District School Board; Reach Out Centre for Kids (ROCK)** signed a “Protocol Agreement”, formalizing their commitment to Our Kids Network. They are known as the “**Protocol Partners**” and provide financial support, infrastructure, guidance and human resources to support the work of OKN.

Neighbourhoods

OKN put a top priority on making services and supports accessible by establishing **neighbourhood-based “hubs”**. They provide space and resources for families, schools and the community to work together to support children and youth. Numerous individuals from participating agencies and the “Protocol Partners” plan and support other initiatives and projects that provide positive opportunities, safe environments and easy access to **services specific to the needs in a community**.

More...

Research

Our Kids Network has become recognized as a **national leader in using research** to strengthen services and supports, improving life for families and children. The 2008 Our Kids Network Report Card introduced the **“Halton 7 – the seven indicators of a high quality of life**, specific to Halton Region, and necessary for the positive development of children and youth. They are used to measure the progress of OKN's work.

At a working session earlier in the day, supporters discussed directions for the next three years and drafted plans based on common objectives. “After looking back on the amazing accomplishments of Our Kids Network since 2004, we’re now poised to move on to the next chapter in our story. There are plans to continue to plan and integrate services to support children, youth and families, add protocol partners and share our knowledge with professionals and families,” says Nancy MacGillivray, chair of Our Kids Network and executive director of Halton Children’s Aid.

Our Kids Network is a Halton-wide partnership of organizations and agencies serving children and youth. Guided by research, this network plans and integrates services and supports so all Halton kids have every opportunity to thrive.

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Learn more at www.ourkidsnetwork.ca