London’s family support and crisis centre

Annual Report Summer 2006
Donation by Brian Finch – Pontiac, Buick, GMC Ltd.

The Merrymount Children’s Centre has had a long and valued relationship with the Finch family and this past spring their generosity came to the fore again. They donated a new van to the Centre and unveiled it at our Forest City National Merrymount Golf Spectacular.

This amazing van will enable us to take the children on many community outings and activities. We value our continued relationship with the Finch family and thank them for their thoughtfulness to Merrymount and the children.

Merrymount Children’s Centre Embarks On An Ambitious Research Study

An Economic Evaluation of Service Utilization and Outcomes For Families and Children At Risk: Over the next 3 years Merrymount will be conducting an extensive research study that will determine if the provision of services and supports to families identified as “at risk” (but not in need of Child Welfare protection) produces both positive outcomes for these families and an economic benefit to our community. Established standardized scales will be used to measure outcomes. The measurement of social service and income support use will be used to measure the net societal benefit. This information will be netted against the total cost of assisting these families. Pre and Post testing and the use of a control group will be used in this study.

The research team will include Dr. Paul Whitehead, Dr. Gina Browne, Graham Clyne and staff from Merrymount, which will include, Laura Dunlop-Dibbs, Helen Sleaford, Teresa Liwosz, Lynne Collins and Virginia Rutledge.

Donors to date include, the Provincial Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth Mental Health, RBC Foundation, The Sisters of St. Joseph’s and The Ministry of Community and Social Services. We are looking forward to the challenges that lay ahead on this endeavor.

Renovations Are Complete

When we began working with our architect on a new design for the second floor, the challenge was to create an environment that would be a tool for the child, staff and program development, a design that would enhance the program and the effectiveness of all the activities that take place on the second floor.

The second floor already accommodated our infant care program and our residential program for all ages up to 12. It also was the only available area of the building to provide space to meet the growing need for interactive parent coaching and education. Keeping in mind the multiple uses of the second floor and the mixed age grouping we had to consider many different kinds of spaces, from intimate spaces for infants and their care-givers, to group activity areas that promote socialization for school aged children.

Having the right kind of space peaks interests, and it provides an atmosphere that encourages families, children and staff to become involved in the programming, the physical environment and each other. It was also important that the area provide a feeling of security, because it is one of the keys to the formation of a healthy sense of self. The renovation needed to be a tool for areas that can be of multi-purpose as well as bedrooms that provide a sense of autonomy.

Now that the renovations are complete and we are settling into the new space, we are very happy with the transformation. It is our hope that the second floor will meet all of our goals of encouraging active engagement, extended play and pro social interactions as well as bring a sense of comfort, peacefulness and ease for the children who are spending time away from their own homes.

Merrymount Enhances Its Relationship with Elgin County

Over this past year, Merrymount has extended its delivery of programs and services to the families of Elgin in St. Thomas and Elgin County. In 2001, Merrymount began providing Supervised Access to the county. This past year we have strengthened our relationship with Family and Children’s Services by providing hands-on parenting in the homes of some of the families they are involved with. Our All Kid’s Belong program has been invited into Elgin County to support the inclusion of children with physical, emotional, developmental and behavioral challenges in community childcare programs, nursery schools, Ontario Early Years Centres, and before and after school programs. Merrymount has worked very closely to support the work of Wraparound in Elgin and is also sitting as an active member of the Coordinating Council Child and Youth In Elgin. We are pleased with our new relationships and look forward to our continued work with the families and services of Elgin.
Report From The Chair and Executive Director

Our AGM is always a time of reflection, much satisfaction and some frustration. At our last Strategic Planning Day, a few years ago, we reviewed our mission, our vision, and our values. During that time the tag line, “London’s Family Support and Crisis Centre,” was created to convey quickly who we are and what we do. It was a time of excitement and the anticipation of a future of supporting the families of London. This Fall, we will once again participate in a Strategic Planning Exercise and will once again clarify the outcomes that we wish to achieve, select the broad strategies that will enable our organization to achieve these outcomes, and identify ways to measure our progress. We have heard from our families and our community partners that they want us to continue what we are already doing. We have spent much of this past year reviewing our programs and have come to realize that our part in the continuum of services can and does make a difference. We thank our dedicated staff, management team, and community partners for supporting the work with the families within our community. Our doors will continue to be open to the families in our community needing our services. Our doors will continue to be open to our community partners seeking our support. Our doors will continue to be open to the creativity of our staff and volunteers. We hope that many of you will help us this Fall to reaffirm our place in the community so that those, entering or exiting our doors, will continue to say that Merrymount has made a difference in their lives.

Ailene Wittstein and Marcie Grail

Service Statistics
Fiscal Year April 1, 2005-March 31, 2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Number of Children</th>
<th>Number of Families/Adults</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overnight Care</td>
<td>1723</td>
<td>1032</td>
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<tr>
<td>Family Support and Crisis Care</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Resource Centre</td>
<td>7879</td>
<td>5217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young Parents In School (Clarke Rd)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Stage Preschool</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>19</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ontario Early Years Centre</td>
<td>2809</td>
<td>1977</td>
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<tr>
<td>All Kids Belong (Jan1/05-Dec.1/05)</td>
<td>410</td>
<td>406</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total:</strong></td>
<td><strong>13,095</strong></td>
<td><strong>8834</strong></td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supervised Access</th>
<th>Visits</th>
<th>Exchanges</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>London/Middlesex</td>
<td>750</td>
<td>1071</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elgin</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>119</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oxford</td>
<td>316</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total:</strong></td>
<td><strong>1302</strong></td>
<td><strong>1260</strong></td>
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Note: 3364 family consultations were completed.
Merrymount Foundation Inc.
Board of Directors
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Marcie Grail
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Mission
Merrymount is a caring organization committed to providing support and crisis care for children and families. We deliver responsive and innovative services and programs to strengthen children and their families in times of transition.

Vision
Merrymount will be a recognized and respected leader in the field.