



Investing in youth mental health 'extremely important', New partnership will improve access to west end services

Posted Mar 29, 2012 By Jessica Cunha

EMC News - The Western Ottawa Community Resource Centre (WOCRC) and the Youth Services Bureau of Ottawa (YSB) announced a new partnership to improve access to mental health services in the west Ottawa community on Wednesday, March 21.

Two YSB counsellors will remain on site full-time at the Kanata resource centre to help youth dealing with mental health issues.

"Investing in their mental health is extremely important," said Joanne Lowe, executive director of the YSB, adding people are more likely to seek help "when services are easy to access."

According to statistics from the WOCRC, one in five children in Ontario has a mental health problem - which translates into about 36,000 youth in Ottawa.

Cathy Jordan, executive director of the WOCRC said she's thrilled the two organizations are able to combine forces.

"It's a partnership we've always truly valued," she said. "We have so much to celebrate.

"I think we're going to do big and wonderful things."

FUNDS RAISED

During the partnership announcement, A.Y. Jackson Secondary School student Stephanie Wheeler presented a cheque for \$5,000 to the YSB.

Stephanie was a friend of Jamie Hubleby, Kanata South Coun. Allan Hubleby's son, who lost his life to suicide last year.

After the tragic event, Stephanie wanted to raise awareness about youth mental health and funds for the YSB to help other teens who may be struggling. She sold rainbow bracelets with the word 'acceptance' stamped across them.

"The message of acceptance is getting across," she said. "I couldn't be any happier."

Stephanie said she plans to continue to raise funds through the sale of the bracelets for the YSB.

As well, Reach Up, a local advocacy group for youth suicide prevention and mental health, handed a cheque for \$13,500 to the WOCRC.

Reach Up held a hockey tournament and gala celebration last month to raise funds for the resource centre.

"It made sense to partner with the WOCRC...They care for our young people," said Michael Dixon, co-chair of Reach Up. "There is help out there for them, all they have to do is Reach Up."

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Jessica Cunha, Metroland
A.Y. Jackson Secondary School student Stephanie Wheeler, left, presents a cheque for \$5,000 to Joanne Lowe, executive director of the YSB on March 21.

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