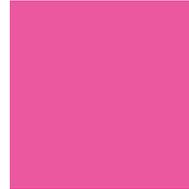




inside reach

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newsletter
2021



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Thank you to DONORS!

We've been feeling the love from dedicated supporters who have been there through the pandemic.....*more page 6*

inside reach

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Message from the President



At this time last year, we were welcoming in a new year and a new decade. Little did we know that just a couple of months later we would be in the midst of a worldwide pandemic. We had to change in so many ways. We do not leave home without a mask,

have meetings by Zoom and stay home more than ever.

Some of our REACH programs are now delivered virtually while others are still able to be presented in homes with the full use of PPE (Personal Protective Equipment). The work of so many has made this possible. But I am always reminded that behind every one of our children and youth there is a family. Our programs are centered around the support of families.

In the times of COVID-19, the family is ever more important. It does not matter how you define a family, single parent, joint family, or nuclear family, or many other ways, the relationships within it are so important. The family is the unit that cares and accepts all its members. REACH is an organization that builds its programs on the values of support within the family. REACH is an all encompassing "family".

A family is strengthened by love, loyalty and the skills and knowledge shared by its members. Families shape children through socialization, and developing skills such as language skills, motor skills, cognitive skills, and emotional skills.

Not all children develop at the same rate and not all families have the skills to work with their children. The larger family of REACH is here to support your family.

Our programs help families develop skills in so many ways. Our Speech and Language Pathologists have the education and experience to work with the child but also work with the families to reinforce concepts. Our counselling program offers ideas for emotional support that both parent and child can work on together. Our Behavior Interventionists work on so many skills in a fun and creative way.

REACH also facilitates Parent Support Groups, some of which are able to continue during COVID-19. Our Punjabi Parent Support Group is serving parents in the South Asian community. Pindi Mann, a REACH volunteer is facilitating this new group. Please check our website for the wide variety of Support groups offered.]

The growth in our children, would not be possible without the continued support of the contributions of many of our sponsors and donors. They realize that even during trying times, the lives of developing children cannot wait, and we value their continued support.

On behalf of the REACH Society Board of Directors,

Phyllis With, President

2020/2021 Board of Directors

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Like, follow, look and watch. There are lots of ways to connect to Reach. Visit us at www.reachdevelopment.org to link to all of our social media.

REACH Counselling Program Expands

DELTA, BC (Feb 24 2021)

REACH counselling has been able to expand to help more families. Mental Health has been affected in an unprecedented way by the coronavirus pandemic. COVID-19 has exacerbated pre-existing anxiety in children and youth with needs. Examples would be worries about going into the community, losing friends or catching the virus. Challenging behaviours experienced by children with developmental disabilities have also increased due to stress caused by the pandemic. This has created many referrals as parental ability to cope is being severely tested.

To address these needs, Reach Child and Youth Development Society (REACH) Counsellor Yvonne McKenna welcomes Miriam Elfert and Kelly MacGregor to the counselling program. "So happy to have a team", says McKenna, "We can shorten the waitlist for service as well as collaborate together." This expansion is made possible by support from United Way of the Lower Mainland COVID-19 Emergency Community Support Fund funded by the Government of Canada; by support from Envision Community Endowment Fund and by supporters of REACH Holiday Appeal 2020.

Miriam and Kelly bring many years of experience with families who have children with autism and



REACH Counsellors Yvonne McKenna, Miriam Elfert & Kelly MacGregor

extensive knowledge of supports available. Using the skills learned from other programs in a mental health capacity is working well for both. Counselling sessions are offered largely by phone or video at this time. As well as being safer, an advantage of virtual delivery is that families who may not have a car do not have to travel to receive service. Some in-person service delivery is offered based on need. REACH Counselling program serves Delta, Surrey and Langley.

Infant Development Program - Help Before 3 is Key!



REACH Infant Development Program is accepting referrals and working through various means to connect with newly referred families during the pandemic.

Do you have concerns or questions regarding your baby or toddler's development? The early years are a critical time for children's brain development, thus a very important period for intervention if there are developmental concerns. The Infant Development Program serves families with children from newborn to age three and works with families to develop strategies to encourage development within a family's everyday routines and activities.

If you or someone you know has questions, please contact the IDP Coordinator, Leora Shipley, at 604-946-6622, ext. 303 or leoras@reachchild.org or visit www.reachchild.org to make a referral.

Holiday Hampers 2020

REACH received an incredible amount of support for families in need this Christmas and as a result were able to build amazing Christmas Hampers full of toys and food for 25 families!! Development Manager Kristin Bibbs coordinated these donations from:

- Home Depot Strawberry Hills provided Home Depot buckets with Christmas light strands and warm Christmas blankets for each family. Additionally, the staff donated toys and non-perishable food that filled 4 huge tubs and two boxes! And the help didn't stop there, a \$3,000 grant from Home Depot also allowed gift cards to be added to the seasonal giving!
- The City of Delta took on 11 families wish lists to purchase toys or items like clothes and shoes that were requested by the parents.
- Lehigh Cement staff filled 4 boxes with toys and non-perishable good. Lehigh Cement also donated \$1,000 as part of this seasonal gift.
- BC Fresh donated 10lbs of potatoes, 3lbs of carrots, 3lbs of onions, shallots and squash for each of the 25 families. In addition, BC Fresh provided \$6,000 to purchase 6 iPads for virtual service provision!



Executive Director Renie D'Aquila with holiday hamper contents

Punjabi Speaking Parent Support

Reach Child and Youth Development Society (REACH) is offering an on line support group for Punjabi speaking parents of children with special needs. This group will be held on the last Thursday of each month from 11:00 am until 12:30 pm via Zoom for COVID-19 safety reasons. The Punjabi Speaking Parents Support and Information Group will give parents an opportunity to learn about resources and funding, share concerns, connect with other parents and support one another in a safe, caring, and non-judgmental environment. Parent and caregiver discussion will be facilitated by Pindi Mann who says, "I look forward to meeting everyone and listening to and sharing the challenges and joys of parenting." Please contact Pindi at pindim@reachchild.org for more information and registration. This is a free support group.



Lunar New Year Celebrations at Preschool



Dealing with family stress during the pandemic

We all feel stress at various times. Often we think only adults get stressed due to work, personal commitments and relationships. Stress not only affects adults but also children of all ages experience it as well. Especially during COVID-19, we feel how the effects of the pandemic are impacting us individually and as a family. Kelty Mental Health is a part of BC Children's Hospital. Kelty Mental Health has several resources on how to manage stress as a family. Here are some of their suggestions from their website:

1. Start with a quick 'scan' of your family environment – Are you rushing around from one activity to the next? Does your home space put you at ease? Is there time for rest and time for play?
2. Be a role model: Give yourself permission to focus on your own self-care and practice a healthy
3. Stick to routines: Family routines can often leave everyone feeling more relaxed, organized and in control.
4. Get active: Motion is a family stress-fighter! Physical activity not only relieves emotional intensity but also reduces the negative effects of stress on your body.
5. Build in breaks and buffer zones: See if you can simplify your schedule. Discuss the pros and cons of stopping one activity by asking your child which activity interests them the most.
6. Eat Healthy: Our bodies are much better able to cope with stress when fueled with good nutrition.
7. Sleep Well: Set up a regular family bedtime routine to set the stage for a better night's sleep.
8. Stay Connected: Prioritize fun time together and time to connect with your child regularly to relax and talk.
9. Make family fun outside a priority: Spending time as a family outdoors can do wonders for reducing stress.
10. Create a cozy down spot: Pick a quiet space for your child's down time. This can be a special place where your child can go to unwind.
(Resource: <https://keltymentalhealth.ca/creating-lower-stress-home>)

Pink Shirt Day at Preschool



2021/2022 REACH Preschool registration is open to the public as of March 1st. COVID-19 safety measures include plexiglass barriers, cleaning protocols and increased time outside on the giant adventure playgrounds available at both North and South Delta locations.

Contact Preschool Manager Susie Gall at susieg@reachchild.org or 604-946-6622 ext 308 about spaces in both preschools. Preschool South website <https://reachdevelopment.org/programs/reach-developmental-preschool-south-delta/> and Preschool North website <https://reachdevelopment.org/programs/reach-developmental-preschool-north-delta/> for more information

REACH Charitable Foundation update

Kristin Bibbs, REACH Development Manager

What a year 2020 was for all. Recognizing that it impacted everyone in some way, we hope this finds you and your loved ones safe and healthy.

At REACH we feel so fortunate to have finished the year with our programs operational, services in place and most importantly, children and families receiving the support they need during these exceptionally challenging times.

At the onset of COVID-19, all in-person programs and services were halted due to the immediate restrictions implemented by the Provincial government. REACH staff immediately began to work hard to maintain contact with our vulnerable families to assist with children's challenging behaviours and work with parents to develop strategies to continue their child's Individualized Education Plan (IEP) within their homes. Our team developed an integrated approach to remain connected and offer telehealth virtual services to provide direct support to our families. This approach includes three levels of intervention: 1) Parent Support Training; 2) Behaviour Reduction; and 3) Skill Building. For parents with a child with neurodiversity or extra needs, these times have been even more stressful and challenging so it is vital that we remained, and continue to remain, connected to offer them support and tools to manage day to day.

All of our programs require materials to accompany the children's IEP's. These include tools for communication, skills development, behaviour modelling, reduction and/or acquisition, and sensory processing. Additionally, our staff use iPads to deliver remote services to observe sessions and coach families. Staff need one iPad and each family needs two: one for observation and one for them to use to teach the child. As a result of COVID-19 and the sudden shift to virtual services, material and equipment needs multiplied immediately causing our costs to increase drastically.

Compounding the concern of meeting this increase in expenses was the immediate cancellation of all in-person fundraising events that our communities have grown to love, attend and support on an annual basis. Our Foundation Board of Directors, Events Committee members and Communications Director worked tirelessly to pivot our fundraising strategies to include virtual events. 2020 featured our 8th annual REACH for the Stars virtual gala and inaugural REACH for Beauty: Online Art Auction for Autism as well as the new, COVID friendly event, Cruising for Clues: A Car Rally Scavenger hunt conducted with individual bubbles in the safety of their own vehicles.

We could not be more appreciative of the gala and event sponsors, donors and guests who did not hesitate to continue their annual support or join for the first time in light of the times and novelty of these events. It is because of your dedication and support that each event was a huge success, contributing to REACH's capacity to survive and



ABA Therapy child in session with donor funded iPad

thrive through the pandemic.

Thanks to the overwhelming support that we received from our community, sponsors, donors and supporters as well as federal, provincial and foundation-based COVID-19 relief grants, we were able to provide these materials to families so that they could continue interventions in their homes to ensure that children continued to build on their skills and progress was not lost or reversed due to a lack of services.

In addition, we were blown away by the outpouring of support that we received from multi-year program sponsors such as Global Container Terminals, FortisBC and Tsawwassen Shuttles who not only maintained their sponsorship commitments but helped to ensure that critical programs continued virtually or safely in-person through the donation of PPE and safe transportation.

Event partners contacted us to see how they may assist in light of the cancellation of in-person events. Businesses reached out to provide equipment, communication devices, PPE, food and necessities to ensure the safety and well-being of REACH staff, children and families.

The incredible support that REACH received throughout 2020 enabled us to adapt quickly and maintain resiliency to provide support programs and services that are critical in ensuring that our children continue to have every opportunity that they need and deserve to reach their potential throughout these challenging times.

Now in 2021, we are happy to share that our therapies have resumed in-person services wherever possible, our preschools have been open since September 2020 with all the necessary safety policies and procedures in place, and our children continue to be supported on their path to optimal development.

We are so grateful for the support received by all through this most challenging time.

Sibshops Monthly Meetings made possible by FortisBC

Reach Child and Youth Development Society (REACH) runs a group sponsored by FortisBC called Sibshops where siblings of children with a developmental diagnosis find support. With FortisBC sponsorship, the group is now able to meet monthly instead of annually. "We are so grateful to FortisBC for their 3 year commitment to sponsor this expanded Sibshops program" says REACH Development Manager Kristin Bibbs.

Lexi Meier is a 17 year old who attended Sibshops annual sessions for the past five years, first as sibling of her neurodiverse brother Nate



Nate and Lexi Meier

and then returned as a program mentor. "Sibshops gave me what I needed to establish a strong relationship with my brother", she says. Lexi believes in the way Sibshops teaches kids with siblings who have a diagnosis that it's okay to ask for help and builds resilience. She reports that the participants trust that the new virtual Sibshops is a safe place to share and learn new and creative ways to cope within their family. Lexi was inspired to create her high school capstone project to introduce neurodiversity and reduce stigma in the classroom from her experiences with Sibshops.

Tsawwassen Rotary Club Supports REACH



Although we are currently able to provide in-person services when possible, many families still require virtual services as the pandemic persists. A \$6,300 donation received from Tsawwassen Rotary has enabled REACH to purchase additional iPads to ensure families continue to receive the critical support they need to foster their child's optimal development at home.

Tsawwassen Ladner Kinsmen Club Support REACH



Kinsmen Andy Pinch and Ian Sandham presented a \$2,000 cheque to Renie D'Aquila and Kristin Bibbs.

Environmental Focus

Karen Field, REACH PBS Consultant



Did you know that disposable masks are having a negative impact on our environment? When these masks are not disposed of properly they pollute our land and our water which can have negative affects on the wildlife living in these waters. And when they are disposed of in our garbage they fill up our landfills. A better option is to purchase a few reusable masks that can be washed and worn again and again. Three layered cloth masks are ideal to stop the spread of COVID-19. So as we will all be wearing masks for some time to come, let's have some fun with it. Find masks in your favourite colours or ones that show off your personality.

REACH 2021 Jewelry Draw in time for Mother's Day

We are thrilled to announce a brand new raffle at REACH! Fine GlobalDiamondBrokers custom created this pendant in 18K white gold. eatur- ing the word 'reach'.

Worth \$5000, this is a unique, one of a kind pendant and includes the 18K gold chain. Diamonds are embedded in the word 'REACH', messaging consistent with reaching for the stars. It is a signature piece that embodies strength and growth.

Pendant raffle prices are 1 for \$25; 3 for \$50 and 10 for \$100. 50/50 Raffle will be offered in conjunction. 50/50 ticket prices are 1 for \$5; 3 for \$10; 10 for \$25; 40 for \$50 and 100 for \$100. The prize will be drawn on May 8th . Stay tuned for ticket information on our website!



Announcing 4th Annual Taste of Reach-April 23, 2021



This year, Tasty Indian Bistro North Delta is offering a sumptuous 3 course dinner in a drive-through format instead of an in person event. The 4th Annual Taste of Reach will provide 2 appetizes, 2 curries (meat or vegetarian) , naan, rice, with an accompanying bottle of wine plus dessert. Wine sponsors are Mark Anthony Wine & Spirits, The Drinks List and Charton Hobbs. Dessert for two is made possible by Just Cakes BC's generous sponsorship.

Huge thanks to Tasty Indian Bistro for sponsoring dinner and the event! \$150 tickets are available on Eventbrite and each ticket provides two complete dinners. Pick up time slots upon purchase will be 4:30,5:30,6:30 and 7:30 pm. Visit <https://tasteofreach.eventbrite.ca> to buy tickets.

Visit our website to access on-line information:

<https://www.reachchild.org/virtual-resources/>