

promise

EMPOWERING TEEN PARENTS TO SUCCEED

July 2017



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Looking ahead after graduation



*Braemar School 2017 graduation ceremony.
Photo credit: Candace Elliott.*

This year, 43 students participated in the Braemar School graduation held on June 9 at Concordia University of Edmonton. After graduation, young moms move onto the next phase of their lives — entering post-secondary studies or the work force. Leaving the supportive environment at Braemar School can be challenging and Terra helps bridge this gap through a partnership with EPCOR.

In the summer of 2016, Terra introduced the Post High School Transition program to assist students who require support after graduation. The Post High School Transition Facilitator, Gracia Hepburn, assists students through school-specific tasks such as applying for student loans, creating a post-secondary schedule, understanding class expectations and navigating the physical spaces of their school.

"The program has made me feel like I'm not walking into a world unknown to me," says Jenny Hingley, a Braemar graduate who is beginning her Bachelor of Science at MacEwan University in the fall. "It's preparing me for my next step in life and giving me the confidence I need."

Students involved in the Post High School Transition program also receive support with mental health, finding appropriate childcare and securing safe housing. Participants feel more confident, have increased financial, relational and emotional stability and have wider personal and community networks.

We're grateful to EPCOR for this grant that allows us to give young parents the support they need to reach their long-term goals and provide for their families.

Young parents share their stories at Promising Futures

On Wednesday, May 3, 2017, nearly 300 guests attended our 13th annual Promising Futures fundraising breakfast in Edmonton. Among many generous guests and donors, we were honoured to have former Prime Minister Kim Campbell in attendance.

The event allowed community members and supporters to see how our work impacts young parents and to hear some of our participants' stories first-hand. Mike Moze and Rita Heemeryk, current Terra participants, spoke about the support they've received from Terra.

Mike was in Grade 10 when his son Treyson was born. He's involved in our Young Dads program and says of his outreach worker, "Derek is like the big brother who's been there, done that, and can share stories to save me the same troubles." At the event, Mike also performed a rap song that he wrote about his son (see lyrics below).

Rita, 17, turned to Terra when she found out she was pregnant with Xavier. She credits Terra with being the reason she and Xavier aren't homeless. Rita accessed Terra's emergency housing for two months and she and Xavier recently moved into a subsidized housing unit provided by the Terra Brentwood Housing Program.

Like Mike and Rita, each Terra participant has a different story and unique needs. We're grateful that because of our donors' generosity, we were able to raise over \$89,000 to continue developing resources and programs to help participants become strong and successful members of the community.

Couldn't attend but want to help? Make your gift by completing the form on the back of this newsletter or online at terracentre.ca.



Terra participants and their children at Promising Futures 2017. Photo credit: Candace Elliott.

BETTER LIFE

By: Mike Moze, father of Treyson



Everyday I sit and wonder
How I keep from going under
I just look at my son I don't make moves that are
a blunder
So I hear that thunder; when I get mad
Glad I never met my dad

I will give my son things I never had
So I sit in this pad; in this building
Just sitting, chilling, reminiscing about
my feelings
Seeing my son as a child; as he's napping I
smile.

How can something this amazing happen?
He's part of the reason I keep rapping
My heart is in control and I am the captain
Of my own whip; managed to flip the scripts
I will take you on a trip on this magic, swirling
ship
And if you can't see that sh*t
Then I can understand why your hand can't firmly

hold a grip
Of the handles and life's roller coaster
Battling emotions that are boiling over
Going over every hurdle, every obstacle
Feeling so unstoppable

I dream of a better life
Each night, till the break of light
I smile through the bitter strife
Only one day to a better life...
For you and me
One day for a better life. A better life.

Photo credit: Rob Hislop

LETTER FROM LEADERSHIP



Greetings,

Over the past six months we have been busy building blocks and identifying actions to support our new Strategic Plan which will carry us forward to 2021.

Through participant surveys and stakeholder consultations, we know that Terra is doing a great job in supporting young parents to achieve their promising futures but we know we can strengthen our core services.

We are very pleased that Elsie Paul accepted our invitation to serve as Elder in Residence. Half the population that Terra serves are Indigenous. Elsie's presence will help

our staff and young parents learn about and participate in their culture. We know that for many of our young families, connecting to their culture creates a path to more positive lifestyles.

Recently, with funds from Alberta Health Services, Terra hired a full-time Mental Health Therapist to primarily serve students at Braemar School. We have conducted assessments using the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) questionnaire, which examines an individual's exposure to toxic stress during the first 18 years of life. Through these assessments, we have come to know that on average the young parents we serve at Braemar School have been exposed to 3.66 traumatic experiences in their lives; a score of over 3.0 is clinically relevant. Approximately 47% feel under stress, depressed or hopeless, which impacts their ability

to parent and care for their children. Given the Family Centre's expertise in delivering mental health services, Terra has partnered with them to provide the professional clinical support and supervision our staff requires in this role.

Partnerships in building community solutions is powerful and complex work. For the past four years, Terra, alongside the Prince Rupert Community League and Alberta Thai Association, worked on a dream to pursue and build a community hub in the Prince Rupert community. As partners, after much thought and reflection, we made the difficult decision not to continue this journey due to feedback from the community. This was the right decision for all of us. As an agency, we remain passionate about both building community and collaboration in meeting the needs of Edmontonians. Terra holds strong to our vision to

build a community hub to create a home and place of belonging for young parents — a place where the greater community can also gather, engage and build new relationships.

We have learned a great deal about community engagement, development work, values-based decision-making and partnerships. This insight will strengthen us in our future endeavors as we continue to work toward realizing our vision.

Our sincere thanks to the many hundreds of donors and supporters who make invaluable contributions of time, talent and resources. Each gift makes a difference!

Sincerely,

Karen Mottershead
Executive
Director, Terra
Centre

Erik Holmlund
Chair, Terra
Centre Board of
Directors

UPDATES

ELDER IN RESIDENCE



Elder Elsie Paul, founder of Kokom Kisewatisowin Society — a group of grandmothers reclaiming traditional Indigenous ways — is well-known in our community and actively volunteers, consults and sits on a number of committees and boards. Now she's sharing her knowledge and wisdom at Terra, through our Elder in Residence program.

On Mondays, Elsie leads a morning smudge at Braemar School and then spends time at the Child and Family Support Centre. While visiting the children, she provides a comforting, grandmotherly presence, telling stories, drumming and singing.

"The most important thing we can do is to watch our little ones. We can learn how to live by modelling their actions," says Elsie. "They teach us patience, determination and honesty — we need to reclaim the gifts that are given to each of us as children by the Creator." Parents and grandparents are there to guide and advise children only when they begin to be influenced by others, Elsie explains, and parents and children are spiritually interconnected.

Elsie will offer our staff and participants parenting workshops that teach the traditional childrearing practices and help us integrate Indigenous teachings into Terra programming. We welcome her experience and teachings!

IN-KIND CORNER

"Whenever I need help with diapers or baby clothes, it's very helpful having that support from Terra when you don't have the money for it."
— Anonymous participant, 2017 Terra Talk Back Survey

Clothing update: As of July 1, 2017, Terra will only accept baby and children's clothing up to age six. Clothing must be clean and new or gently used. We will no longer be able to accept teen or adult clothing due to storage limitations.

Have questions or items to donate? Please contact Colleen Dombrosky at 780-428-3772 ext. 234 or cdombrosky@terracentre.ca prior to dropping off in-kind donations at Terra or beginning a donation drive. Large unscheduled drop-offs may be turned away due to extremely limited storage space.

Thank you for thinking of our young families!



Did you know?

- According to a recent survey, 89% of participants who access our Clothes Closets are looking for baby essentials (clothing, diapers, formula, wipes).
- Our two Clothes Closets are completely volunteer-staffed and made possible through generous support from the community.



Katelyn Bladen

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATOR

Katelyn is an Early Childhood Educator at the Child and Family Support Centre at Braemar School. She works with 14 - 20 month-old children in the Cedar Room, providing children with meaningful and developmentally-appropriate learning experiences.

What does a typical day look like for you in the Cedar Room?

We start our day by preparing the environment for the children's arrival. We consider the learning and care needs of each child in the playroom. Drop-off is first thing in the morning until 10 a.m. It's actually my favourite part of the day because the moms come in and you have a lot of opportunities for discussion and building relationships with the parents and children. Then we begin our activities — we might explore the community, dig in the sand or garden, paint, play with recycled-material toys or visit the seniors at Ottewell Place. The children nap after lunch, and then the day is almost over.

What's most inspirational about your work?

The parents and their drive — their drive to finish high school and make better lives for themselves. I love talking to them about their plans and hopes for their

children. It's really awesome to see how deeply young parents think about their children. Every decision is so thought-out and intentional.

What sets this childcare facility apart from others in the city?

We are fortunate to have been involved as a pilot site for the research and development of Alberta's Early Learning and Childcare Curriculum Framework. We've been working on it for about four years now. It's not mandatory but we're working through the curriculum to determine how we'll use it and apply it to our work with children. It helps make sense of what children are doing in their play and in relationships. We're also so much more about relationship building and it's unique in the sense that we have such a deep relationship with the moms. They're on site and they spend so much time in the childcare rooms.

What have you learned working with young parents?

They're thoughtful and they work really hard at creating a life and a future for themselves and their children. We did a project where we talked about what they named their children and why. Some of their stories and the meaning behind the names they chose was so profound. When I asked my own mom, she had no reasonable explanation. I've learned how much they care and they have a drive to accomplish anything they set their minds to.

What have you learned about children?

Their minds are incredible and they're so capable. Even small infants are part of our community. They matter. They have their own ideas, thoughts and feelings. They have an amazing capacity to learn, care and be persistent, capable and compassionate.

What's a time you felt most proud in your role?

One of the moms that I work with was valedictorian this year at the Braemar School graduation. It was pretty exciting. She's come so far since the beginning of the year. She's got childcare lined up and she's going to university. Every time they meet those milestones, it's so exciting. And they're so happy to come and share it with us!

“Even small infants are part of our community. They matter. They have their own ideas, thoughts and feelings,” says Katelyn.

Donor Spotlight: DynaLIFE

Terra was selected as DynaLIFE Medical Labs' Charity of Choice for 2017-18! We are thrilled and proud to partner with Alberta's largest privately owned clinical laboratory and one of Alberta's Top 70 Employers. In addition to a very generous corporate gift of \$20,000, DynaLIFE staff helped raise funds and in-kind donations for Terra through several initiatives this year, including a Valentine's Day Bake Sale and a “safe summer fun” drive for sunscreen and other sun essentials.

We look forward to building a strong relationship with DynaLIFE and collaborating on other upcoming initiatives. With DynaLIFE's help, we hope to increase awareness and support for our services for teen parent families in our community.

Thank you for your commitment to making our community a better place, DynaLIFE!



Thank you!

AGM: celebrating 2016

Terra held its 46th AGM on March 22, 2017, at the Chateau Louis. Community members, volunteers and staff members gathered to reflect on the year.

Youth Leadership Ambassadors led the event and did a terrific job emceeing, speaking and presenting awards.

Special guests included the Honourable Marlin Schmidt, Minister of Advanced Education, City Councillor Bev Esslinger and MLAs Nicole Goehring and David Shepherd. We are truly fortunate for the support of so many wonderful friends in the community.

Last but not least, we acknowledged the contributions of our dedicated board members, donors and volunteers.

Terra's annual community report is now available. View it online at www.terracentre.ca/publications/ or call 780-428-3772 to be mailed a hard copy.



*Terra participants at the 2016 AGM.
Photo credits: Naomi Littlewood.*

2016 volunteer and community award recipients:

Kristy Harcourt - Pride Centre
of Edmonton
NEW FRIENDS AWARD
Edmonton's Food Bank
HEART AND HANDS
AWARD

John and Avery Stobbe -
A Family that Cares
HEART OF THE
COMMUNITY AWARD
Jacqueline Biron
MANY HANDS AWARD

Delaine Utas
PROGRAM SUPPORT
AWARD
Ben Coppens
CHILD AND FAMILY
SUPPORT CENTRE AWARD



UPDATES

2017 TERRA TOURS

Terra is offering several more Terra Tours at Braemar School this year. These free tours are a great way for the public to learn more about the programs and services we offer young parents.

Highlights of our guided tours include meeting a teen mom, hearing the difference Terra has made to her family and visiting Terra's award-winning Child and Family Support Centre where

children are cared for while their moms attend school to complete their high school education.

Upcoming Tour Dates:

- September 21, 2017
- October 12, 2017
- November 22, 2017

All tours begin at 10:30 a.m. on site at Braemar School. RSVPs are required at least two days prior to the tour by emailing terra@terracentre.ca or calling 780-428-3772.

UPDATES

PHOTOVOICE EXHIBIT



For the past several months, our Successful Families program has been working with researchers from the University of Alberta's Community-University Partnership for the Study of Children, Youth and Families. Researchers Bethan Kingsley and Melissa Tremblay led weekly photovoice meetings at Brentwood House. Brentwood House is a supported, affordable housing partnership provided by Brentwood Community Development and Terra Centre.

At the photovoice meetings, Bethan and Melissa asked participants to take photos that represented their experiences with the Successful Families program and as young parents.



On May 30, the research project culminated with a photovoice exhibit open to community members and supporters. The photographs were framed and hung around Brentwood House. The exhibit began with an open house where attendees could mingle, tour the house and look at the photos. Alex and Martina, both participants in the Successful Families program, spoke to attendees about being young parents and about the research project.

Many of the photos reflect the sense of community, friendship, pride, stability and independence that the young parents feel living in Brentwood Homes.



Photos: (left) Photovoice open house, (middle) attendees taking in the photographs displayed around Brentwood House, (right) Successful Families participants Martina and Alex speaking about their experience with the project.

One participant says, "This picture represents the friends I have made with other moms and their children. As a result of these friendships and connections, I feel a part of the community."

The event was a great way for the community to learn about our affordable housing program partnership and to hear directly from some young parents.

NOTE: We may display the photovoice exhibit around the city, so stay tuned to our social media channels for an update!

For more information about Successful Families, contact Gary Benthem, Manager Housing Support, at 780-474-4966 or gbenthem@terracentre.ca.

☐ **Yes! I want to help teen parents and their children achieve promising futures!**

Enclosed is my gift of:

☐ Monthly gift of \$_____ for _____ years (For direct debit enclose void cheque **or** complete credit card info below.)

One time gift: ☐ \$50 ☐ \$100 ☐ \$150 ☐ \$200 ☐ \$500 ☐ Other: \$ _____

Payment Type: ☐ Cheque ☐ Visa ☐ Mastercard ☐ American Express

Credit Card #: _____ Exp. Date: _____

Name: _____ Signature: _____

Address: _____ Phone: _____

City: _____ P.C. _____ Email: _____

☐ I/We prefer to be acknowledged in print materials as _____

OR

☐ I/We prefer to remain anonymous

Any personal information provided on this form will be used for administrative purposes only. An official tax receipt will be issued for all donations. Charitable Reg. # 119210417RR001.



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