

# promise

EMPOWERING TEEN PARENTS TO SUCCEED

Winter 2018/Spring 2019



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## SAVE THE DATE!

 Annual General Meeting and Awards Night  
Wednesday, March 20, 2019

 Promising Futures Fundraising Breakfast  
Thursday, June 6, 2019

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   @TerraCentre

## The little chicken dancer

Two-year-old powwow dancer Albert Apsassin is taking the Internet by storm. The boy danced for the first time at a powwow in Camrose, Alberta at the University of Alberta Augustana Campus on National Aboriginal Day.

Albert joined the intertribal chicken dance and surprised his mom, Martina Desjarlais, with his accurate footwork and timing. Martina filmed his performance and shared the video on Facebook. It now has over two million views.

"It makes me so happy because he's so small, but he's made such a good, healthy impact on people," says Martina. Since that powwow, Albert and Martina have been interviewed by CTV, CBC, Global News and the University of Alberta.

"Over the summer we travelled to powwows and people would approach us and be like, 'Oh is this the little chicken dancer?'"

Martina adds, "People recognize him, and they're so amazed by him. It makes me so proud."

Even more amazing is the fact that Albert is self-taught. He watches other dancers at powwows, and at home he gets Martina to play powwow videos on YouTube and he'll practice along to the music in their living room. He has learned the steps and timing all on his own.

Martina grew up with a strong cultural background, and she's created a similar environment for her two sons by taking them to ceremony, smudging with them every morning and teaching them the Cree language.



Photos: Albert in his regalia at a powwow (top); Albert and Martina dancing together at a powwow (bottom). Photos supplied by Martina Desjarlais.

She recently got Albert the full chicken dance regalia, sewing and beading much of it herself, so that he can participate in more powwows.

Story continued on page 6...

To update your mailing address, please contact us at [terra@terracentre.ca](mailto:terra@terracentre.ca).



Photo: Gracia Hepburn, PHSTP Facilitator (left), with program participant Katherine Belcourt on the U of A campus.

## Helping participants succeed in post-secondary

It's unusual to see a child on a post-secondary campus, but Katherine Belcourt's eight-year-old daughter Emalee often accompanies her at the University of Alberta, where Katherine is completing a Bachelor of Science. Katherine, who is president of the Aboriginal Student Council and is very active in the Indigenous community and politics on campus, brings her daughter to council meetings and other evening and weekend university commitments. Though Emalee's presence is not always welcomed, Katherine has helped educate her peers about being a young parent and the additional responsibilities she shoulders.

University and college campuses haven't traditionally had child-friendly spaces and few offer services and supports specifically for students who are pregnant or parenting. Gracia Hepburn, Post High School Transition Program Facilitator with Terra, is trying to change that. She supports Terra participants as they transition from high school to post-secondary or career training programs, and one element of her work is advocating for young parents so that they feel supported and welcomed on campus.

With funding from EPCOR, Terra established the Post High School Transition Program (PHSTP) in 2016 to bridge a gap in support. Feedback showed that Terra participants and alumni struggled to adjust to post-secondary. PHSTP supports participants across the agency, including young dads.

What makes the adjustment to post-secondary difficult? For those who completed their high school education at Braemar School, graduation means leaving behind a wealth of onsite services such as a family doctor, mental health therapist, childcare, educational support, a trauma-informed environment and a community of teen-parent peers. After leaving Braemar, they must re-establish many or all of those supports in their lives, as they adjust to their new life on campus.

Much of Gracia's role involves one-on-one support with participants, meeting them on campus or in the community and helping them not only with educational issues, but also anything else that's causing instability in their lives, whether it's housing, finances, childcare, food security or healthy relationships. Only when their primary needs are met can students apply their focus in the classroom.

"Gracia has helped me most when my mental health has impacted my success and with organizing my degree and life," says Katherine. "When I meet with Gracia, we talk about how things are going at home, at school and in my extracurriculars. She is mindful that I am a young mother and I see her consideration of that when I share the challenges I'm facing, because it affects the situation in ways that are often overlooked. When we're not talking about life, Gracia mentors me in getting organized and supports me through the struggles of picking classes and planning my degree."

The Post High School Transition Program offers three streams of support. The first is for participants enrolled in post-secondary who require intensive, long-term support.

*Story continued on next page...*

The second is for participants who also require long-term support but who have another Terra staff member who supports them, as well. In this case, Gracia provides educational support while the other staff member supports them with different aspects of life management. The third stream is for high school students at Braemar preparing to graduate who need support exploring their education and career options.

The program has seen many successes and overwhelming demand over its three-year lifespan. One of the program's biggest achievements has been the culture shift among participants at Braemar School.

"If anything, Gracia's work with participants and her presence here at Braemar have sent a clear message to our young moms that post-secondary is within their grasp," says Allison O'Grady, Manager Services for Educational Achievement. "That's an amazing thing because when our program first started, moms thought they had to be in some mythical place. We often heard 'I can't do post-secondary until...,' 'Things aren't good with my partner right now' or 'My housing isn't secure.' So they wouldn't pursue it, waiting for everything to line up."

Allison adds, "Through Gracia's work with participants and the way she talks about post-secondary as a natural, normal thing, many of our moms feel like it's within their reach."

Now, concluding its third and final year of funding, the program is in a tentative place as Terra seeks funding to continue the program. It's clear that the need for this program isn't going anywhere. Now more than ever, post-secondary is a minimum requirement for many careers and it's also necessary to support a family financially. This program positions Terra participants to fully explore their post-secondary and career options and supports them on their journey to achieving their educational goals.

**You can help transform more lives through the power of education by making a contribution today. Join us to raise \$30,000 to continue this important program so more teen parents have a path to post-secondary education. See page 6 or visit us at [terracentre.ca](http://terracentre.ca) to make your gift today.**

**Thank you for helping young parents like Katherine succeed and create brighter futures for themselves and their children.**

## 2017-18 PROGRAM STATS

21

participants received long-term, one-on-one support. They are enrolled in the programs below:

**MacEwan University**

- ARTS & CULTURAL MANAGEMENT DIPLOMA
- BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN BIOLOGY
- BACHELOR OF SOCIAL WORK
- EARLY LEARNING & CHILDCARE DIPLOMA
- OPEN STUDIES

**NAIT**

- OPEN STUDIES
- RESPIRATORY THERAPY DIPLOMA

**NorQuest College**

- LICENSED PRACTICAL NURSE

**University of Alberta**

- BACHELOR OF EDUCATION
- BACHELOR OF NATIVE STUDIES
- BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN PSYCHOLOGY
- OPEN STUDIES

50

Braemar School students join the program each year from March - May as they explore their career and post-secondary options.

## IN-KIND CORNER

# Coming full circle: alumna gives back to Terra



Photo: Volunteers from Old Navy in the Braemar Clothes Closet.

What started as a donation of essential items this summer from the Old Navy South Edmonton Common store has blossomed into more.

Five employees—Gillian F., Gillian L., Hannah, Susanne and Julia—wanted to do more for Terra and took an afternoon to volunteer in our Braemar Clothes Closet. We were thrilled to discover that Julia is a recent Terra alumna who really wants to give back.

The group used their expertise to re-organize the Clothes Closet to look like a retail store and their contributions have made a huge difference!

They have continued to volunteer and assisted with changing over summer clothes to winter recently. Thank you for generously sharing your time and talents with us!

Also, a big thank you to the many new and repeat donors who help us regularly replenish our Clothes Closets with new and gently used in-kind donations! Without you, we would not be able to provide essential items such as baby clothing, diapers, wipes and formula to our young families.

## Team profile

### HOUSING SUPPORT SERVICES

Meet Terra’s Housing Support Services team: Tamarya Blums, Craig Boyle, Ropa Mamutse and Ashley Neumann. They work out of the ‘Terra House’—a residential home converted to a cozy office space, complete with a childcare space, kitchen, living room, garage and backyard—all of which makes a warm, welcoming space for our staff to support participants in the housing program.

The house is located across the street from the Brentwood townhomes where approximately 26 families live, all of whom are enrolled in Terra’s housing program.

The housing team provides individual and group support to help our families learn essential skills like budgeting, meal preparation and how to be good tenants and neighbours. This is a key part of preventing eviction and homelessness.



“Being a new parent myself, I am learning a lot from the families I work with,” says Craig. “The relationships I see and the work that they do...it’s just amazing to see how they mature with their responsibilities.”

Our housing team equips families with the skills and confidence to create healthy, stable homes for their children.



Photos: Braede and Gavin in their store among all of the diapers they collected during their diaper drive for Terra (top); Katt and Braede during their interview (bottom).

## Donor love

Terra participant Katt Donaldson recently interviewed Braede Harris, owner of the LOVEPIZZA restaurants in Edmonton and St. Albert with her husband Gavin Fedorak, to chat about their second annual diaper drive for Terra and their commitment to giving back to the community.

**Katt:** Why did you and your husband decide to support Terra?

**Braede:** When we opened our first restaurant location, our son was only five months old and it was a crazy time. Balancing being new parents, launching a business and staying mentally and physically healthy was challenging but we did it. We had a lot of support along the way from my parents, as they lived in the city and were always willing to watch our son when we needed to be at work.

I have a lot of respect for teen moms and dads. We are so impressed with the community that Terra has built for the young moms, dads and children to grow and flourish. It is an honour to be a small part of all the amazing programs that Terra provides to give these families the support and love that they may not be receiving elsewhere. So much of that starts with being able to provide your child with a clean diaper and comfort.

**Katt:** Giving back to the community is an important part of your business model. Why?

**Braede:** When Gavin and I were doing our business plan and talking about what we wanted our business to look like, giving back was a big part of it. We didn’t just want to be like any other pizza restaurant. We’ve built a community that supports our efforts like our diaper drive. We have loyal customers, catering clients and amazing suppliers who believe in our product and the love behind it.

**LOVEPIZZA has donated a total of over 35,800 diapers to our families. We truly appreciate all that LOVEPIZZA and their community of supporters have done to help our young families.**

## LETTER FROM LEADERSHIP

Greetings,

As we reflect on the past year, we appreciate the many gifts of time, talent and treasure that we received throughout 2018. We truly live in a community that is abundant with good will. Your generosity made a marked difference to over 1,000 moms, dads and children.

Every day we were witness to young parents on their journey to more promising futures—a direct result of your gifts. We saw young families secure safer homes, make great gains in their educational achievements, and most importantly, we saw their children growing and thriving. There are no greater gifts.

Throughout the year, we also grew stronger with a board, staff and volunteer team that delivered the best of themselves every day. They truly know the importance of their work and had an unwavering commitment to Terra's mission.

It is not always easy work considering the complex systems and life events our families often face, but our team was there 100%, extending support with open hands, hearts and minds.

In 2019 we will build on our strengths, expanding early learning and childcare, housing and mental health supports. Last year laid the foundation for advancing these critical services and we are excited about realizing them with a strong circle of support from our partners. We accomplished so much with you by our side over the past year and we look



Photo: (L to R) Board Chair Anne Smith and Executive Director Karen Mottershead.

forward to your continued support in 2019. May all things that bring you joy be yours in the New Year.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signatures of Karen Mottershead and Anne Smith in black ink.

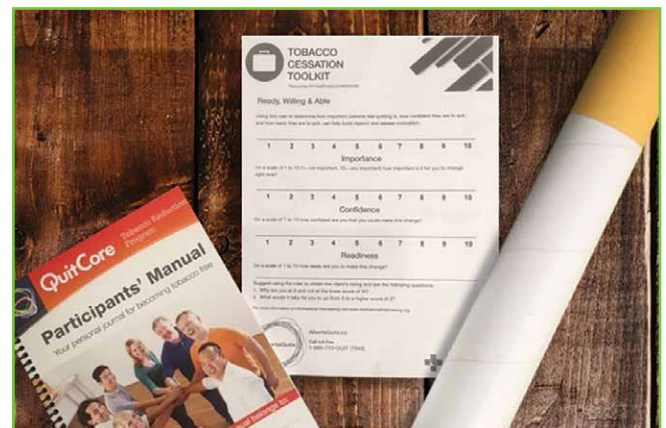
Karen Mottershead  
Executive Director

Anne Smith  
Board Chair

## UPDATES

### Piloting a smoking cessation program for participants

Last summer Terra partnered with tobacco educators from Central Point Pharmacy for the first time to pilot a six-week QuitCore program to help some of our participants quit smoking or reduce their tobacco use. Facilitators Raj Manhas and Azhare Kiwa joined us on Tuesday evenings to offer the group support program onsite for our participants.



QuitCore curriculum is designed by Alberta Health Services and offered by trained facilitators across the province. Program topics included quitting techniques, strategies to deal with withdrawal symptoms, ways a friend or family member can provide support, how to prevent a relapse and tips on stress management, healthy eating and physical activity.

The program was a success and we hope to run it again in the future!

# 2019 Terra Tours

Terra is offering eight Terra Tours at Braemar School in 2019. 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 young 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 class.

**All tours begin at 10:30 a.m. onsite at Braemar School. RSVPs are required at least two days prior to the tour by emailing [terra@terracentre.ca](mailto:terra@terracentre.ca) or calling 780-428-3772.**

### Upcoming tour dates:

- February 21
- March 21
- April 25
- May 23
- June – TBA
- September 19
- October 17
- November 21

# Cover story continued...

Martina completed her high school education at Braemar School, and she willingly shared her culture with teachers and students. With the help of a Terra staff member, she taught other students how to sew their own ribbon skirts. She also helped school staff find different varieties of sage to grow in the garden. Now, enrolled at the University of Alberta, she's studying to become an Aboriginal liaison in schools, with the goal of bringing culture alive and teaching others how to reconcile in a healthy way.

"Learn to love your culture and don't be afraid to teach it to other people," Martina says. "When someone asks about it, teach them, don't belittle them. We're all here to learn."

**Terra also recognizes the importance of creating opportunities for staff and participants to learn more about Indigenous culture. Over the past two years, we have developed and implemented Indigenous programming at all Terra locations. Programming includes our Elder in Residence, weekly smudge ceremonies, quarterly sweat ceremonies, mandatory Indigenous cultural teachings for new staff and a knowledge keepers' group. Over 50% of Terra participants identify as Indigenous, so this cultural programming is key in our work.**

Link to Albert's powwow video: <http://ow.ly/zGVN30mhTS9>.

## TRANSFORM A FAMILY'S LIFE

**Yes! I'd like to ensure young parents have a path to post-secondary education.**

### 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  \$1,000  Other: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Payment Type:  Cheque (payable to Terra Centre for Teen Parents)  Visa  Mastercard  American Express

Credit Card #: \_\_\_\_\_ Expiry Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name (include middle initial for tax receipt): \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ P.C. \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

I prefer to be acknowledged in print materials as \_\_\_\_\_

**OR**  I prefer to remain anonymous.

I am interested in learning about legacy planning and how I can include Terra in my estate plans.

I have already included Terra in my long-term plans.

Any personal information provided on this form will be used for administrative purposes only. An official tax receipt will be issued for all donations \$20 and above. Charitable Reg. #119210417RR001.



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