

Aisling Discoveries News

Upcoming events:

- Children's Mental Health Week: May 4th -10th 2008
- Agency's 10th Anniversary Celebration and Annual General Meeting: June 18th 2008

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Bringing specialized mental health services to child welfare

Over the past several years Aisling Discoveries has been striving to improve services to meet the needs of families who are involved with the child welfare system. We have developed specialized services for these families based on research findings and through program evaluation. We have been fortunate to obtain funding from the Ministry of Children and Youth Services as well as from the United Way Toronto to develop and implement these programs. This newsletter is dedicated to our skilled and caring staff who have worked so diligently to deliver these programs in various locations across the city of Toronto, addressing the unique needs of families involved in child welfare. The programs include: *Beyond the Basics*; *Step-By-Step*; *Dads' Connection* and *Priority Access*.



Children's Aid Society, Jewish Family and Child Services and Native Child and Family Services, who have helped to create and implement these specialized programs.

Betty Kashima
Executive Director

We value our partnership with Toronto's child welfare agencies – Children's Aid Society of Toronto, Catholic

10 years of service to our community

The year 2008 marks the 10th anniversary of Aisling Discoveries Child and Family Centre. Bringing together a rich history of service from Discoveries Child and Family Centre and Aisling Centre for Children and Families, a joint committee of the two east Toronto agencies created the new agency in 1998. Their vision was to create a stronger, unified

voice for young children and their families and sustainable services that would meet the needs of a diverse and changing community. We are proud of our work during the past ten years, in fulfilling that vision. We will be sharing our accomplishments in a celebration with our community partners in June 2008. We hope you will join us.

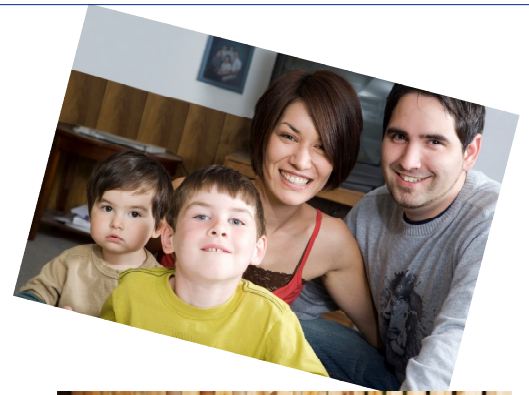


Aisling Discoveries
Child and Family Centre

Beyond the Basics

The program provides valuable support to parents and caregivers who are required or recommended by the child welfare system to attend parent education classes. Their child may be living at home or in the care of the Society. Aisling Discoveries has developed this group in collaboration with the Children's Aid Society of Toronto and Agincourt Community Services. *Beyond the Basics* has demonstrated its effectiveness through research supported by the federal Centre of Excellence for Child Welfare. The aim of this service is to help parents gain

knowledge of child development, discipline techniques and child safety. For those families whose children are in the care of the child welfare system, we help them develop skills for the transition to have their children return home. The group works with parents whose children are under the age of 6. Funding is provided from the United Way's Success By 6 program in collaboration with Agincourt Community Services.



Step-By-Step

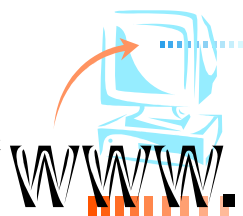
This group serves parents with a child over the age of 6 who may be required by child welfare or the court to attend a parenting group. The program focuses on helping parents develop the knowledge, skills and strategies necessary to deal with common behaviour management situations

and respond more effectively to their child's needs. Their child may be living at home or in the care of a child welfare agency. *Step-By-Step* also helps parents and child welfare workers to strengthen their working partnerships.

"As a CAS worker I am amazed that such a group is in place to help parents work more effectively with CAS."

Centre launches new web site

We are excited to announce the launch of our new web site to communicate with parents, supporters, community partners, funders, and prospective and current students, volunteers and employees.



We are committed to providing helpful information for parents through a series entitled "Ideas for Parents". Over the next few months we will be providing this series in multiple languages to meet the needs of our diverse com-

munity in Toronto.

We welcome your ideas to improve our web site, so please visit us at www.aislingdiscoveries.on.ca and send your comments to hcorreia@aislingdiscoveries.on.ca.

Dads' Connection

Kids are affected by what they see and hear. Children who witness family violence may learn that fighting is a way to solve problems. This group is designed to help men learn and practice skills that enable them to become better fathers. Fathers who are referred to the group have physically or emotionally abused their children's mother and have access and regular contact with their children.

"It helped in giving me many ideas to improve the relationship with my child and to understand my child."

Fathers who attend *Dads' Connection* learn to understand how their violent behaviour may affect their children.

Evaluation results have shown very positive feedback from dads who have attended the program. Referrals are made to the program by child welfare workers.



"I realize that it's not fair to the kids to witness arguments or tension between mom and dad in the house."

Priority Access

The use of physical force is not an acceptable method of managing children's behaviour. *Priority Access* is a program that helps families find ways to stop the use of physical force as a means of discipline. Families learn to work together to find ways to decrease their stress and solve problems that occur in daily life. This service is a structured, evidence-based program that serves children 6-12 years of age and their families, living across the City of Toronto.

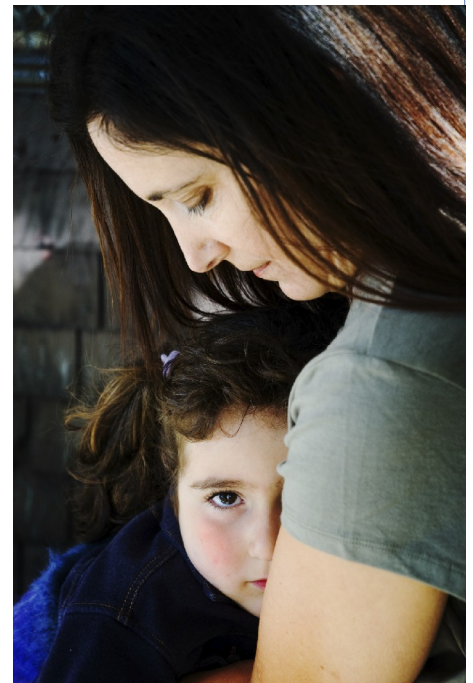
The child welfare agency carries out an investigation to assess the level of risk before making a referral to this program. A service plan is then jointly completed by the child

"My mom doesn't hit me anymore".

"Our worker provided vital information and insight.....into our issues."

welfare worker, the worker from Aisling Discoveries and the family.

Priority Access uses cognitive behaviour therapy to explore and change the feelings and behaviour of both children and parents. The focus of the program is to develop positive family relationships between parents and their children.



Thanks to our Donors

We appreciate the support of individuals, businesses and other organizations shown here, whose generosity has helped us make a difference in the lives of children and families in our community. Donations received from January 2007 to December 2007 are listed below.

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Aisling Discoveries
Child and Family Centre

Our Mission

To provide responsive services in partnership with families and communities to strengthen the social and emotional well-being of children and promote their healthy development.

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Your comments are
welcome; please call
Helen Correia at ext.
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Thank you to our supporters who bought holiday season greeting cards or other items during the last year, and to those who attended our events.

We are grateful for financial support from the Ministry of Children and Youth Services, the City of Toronto, Public Health Agency of Canada, the United Way Toronto, the Ministry of the Attorney General, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada and The Provincial Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth Mental Health at CHEO. We also appreciate the financial support of Aisling Discoveries Child and Family Foundation.

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