

## **OKP it's a capital idea**

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**Minister of Children and Youth Services Deb Matthews, Guest MC Charlotte Mogan and Minister of Revenue Monique Smith help launce OKP capital campaign Thursday.**

The board and staff of One Kids Place (OKP) with assistance from Minister of Revenue Monique Smith and Minister of Children and Youth Services Deb Matthews and guest MC Charlotte Mogan launched their capital campaign that will help further integrate children's services in the area.

Minister Smith says that although today's launch good news she can't scratch OKP off her to do list just yet.

"This one isn't done yet, we still have lots of work to do and we want to get shovels in the ground, but certainly today was a big step forward and raising awareness in the fundraising campaigns is very important."

"When this building is finally built we will have 43,000 square feet of space in order to serve the needs of kids with special needs in our community and that's been unprecedented."

"Right now the temporary space is obviously very cramped we need more space, we've got lots of kids to serve and I think the Rotary Club coming on board and McDonalds coming on board really shows community commitment to the project and I think it's going to be a really exciting asset for the community to have to grow for all of our kids," she adds.

Minister Matthews agrees that today's news is exciting not only because it addresses the needs of children with special needs, but also because it pulled a community of people together to work in a same direction to pull the project off. She also admits she was surprised to learn that the rest of the world is just now adopting this model.

"I was very surprised you know, we tend to take for granted those things that we know about, then it's only by hearing about what's going on in other places that you realise how lucky we are," she explains.

"But that's right we have people coming from all other parts of the world to study our Children Treatment Centre model as a dream for them in their homes, so Ontario is the leader in this kind of comprehensive support for kids with special needs."

The Mogan Family is no stranger to One Kids Place as mom, Dr Mary Grise a Paediatrician in the Bay, works with the centre and values OKP's team work approach.

"Already even before we got the new facility the professionals involved at One Kids Place have played a key role in helping us to look after the children that we do in our practice as paediatricians," she explains.

"We've developed a clinic for example that's a multi-disciplinary clinic where we all see and assess children together and they (OKP) showed such an interest in that and supported that that we were able to get that going, and in a lot of places that is difficult to have different professionals being able to come together and do that kind of work together, so already here ... we have that initiative, but what having Children's Treatment Centre will allow us to expand on that."

Grise says initially the clinic was to address children under the age 6, but with everyone together and in the new facilities she anticipates providing assessments and care for a much broader range of children and also for a broader range of difficulties.

“So there will be expanded clinics, more services and this integrated way of providing these assessments and providing care is really the way that health care is moving particularly for children ... and really the way it should be going. So that is what is exciting for me is that expanded ability to work with other professionals together in a team kind of way.”

“I think for parents it saves a lot of time, sometimes for professionals it’s easier to just provide your own narrow service, but then for parents it becomes terribly not only inefficient, but it makes the parents responsible for keeping track of all of the information and often putting things together that different people have told them,” she explains.

“Whereas, when you’re meeting with a whole group of people then you can get all those questions and things worked out at the same time, and if a parent has a question after they leave ... they’re calling back to one number instead of them having to track down different people ... it’s communication that’s huge as far as that kind of an approach goes and having everybody work together and that’s another real benefit to having everybody in the same building,” she adds.

Although the centre has an impact on Grise’s professional life, it plays a much larger role for her and her family as they know firsthand the importance of the programs as daughter Lily benefits from the services.

“For making decisions about Lily or just being involved in her therapy when you’re dealing with many different services it can get very confusing as to who is providing what. We’ve always found people very willing to meet with us and things of that nature, but again you are still dealing with different agencies with different rules and different waiting times,” she explains.

“And all of those kinds of things are difficult for anybody to understand ... even those of us who work in this area ... much less parents who are just coming into this.”

Grise says on the hand parents just have the simple challenge of being a parent to a child with special needs, but as they go through the hoops of care they end up taking on another role of case manager and sorting out all the information coming at them all at once.

“So as a parent, for example when we are making decisions for Lily going to school next year ... about where she would go to school and what kind of support she is going to need there, that was a huge decision and to be able to get that input from all of the people we’re working with here, coordinating that we were able to do it,” she says.

“But it will be much easier once there is a Children’s Treatment Centre. One example of expanded service is that they’re going to have a transition classroom and they have an

agreement with the Near North District School Board, so again helping us in one of those big transitions that our daughter will go through in going from preschool services to getting into school ... so it would make that whole transition much easier as well.”

But in a few simple words it was Grise’s daughter, Charlotte Mogan, who summed up what OKP will mean to everyone in the area, “It will help them be the people they want to be.”

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