

A History Of Caring Clowning in Canada

Website address: www.sickkids.ca/therapeuticclownprogram

In 1986 Karen Ridd, 'Robo', a freelance children's entertainer, began Canada's first therapeutic clown program as a staff hospital clown and child life specialist at the Winnipeg Health Sciences Centre. She demonstrated how Robo, a silent but wonderfully expressive clown, could use gentle play and humour to minimize the stresses of hospitalization for children.

Joan Barrington, inspired by Karen's work, presented a proposal to the Director of Child Life at The Hospital for Sick Children (SickKids) in Toronto for a similar program. In 1993, Joan created 'Bunky' and with Karen launched a therapeutic clown program at Canada's largest paediatric care centre. After their inaugural year, Karen returned to Winnipeg. Joan continued at SickKids, not only as Bunky but as fundraiser and coordinator of all aspects of the therapeutic clown practice. Joan has expanded The Therapeutic Clown Program at SickKids to include seven part time and one occasional therapeutic clown, covering each in-patient floor and the hospital's outpatient clinics. The Therapeutic Clown Program at SickKids hosts workshops in the practice of therapeutic clowning and serves as a model and mentoring centre for programs and therapeutic clowns across Canada and around the world.

In 1989, David Langdon, Hubert, stepped into Robo's big shoes to continue her special work at the Winnipeg Health Sciences Centre.

In 1994, Paul Hooson, 'Doc Willikers', began a therapeutic clown program with the assistance of the Child Life staff at the British Columbia Children's Hospital. 'Doc' also works with adults and the geriatric population.

In 1994, Bud Salloum, and George McEwan, two Shrine clowns, co-founded the Edmonton Caring Clowns. Although George has since died, and Bud is retired, the Edmonton Caring Clowns share their 'sunshine' at hospitals and care centres in the greater Edmonton area. (Updated by K. Baxter)

In 1999, Joan Willey brought the Caring Clown idea from Edmonton to the Okanagan valley. Today the Kalamalka Caring Clowns, the Caring Clowns of Central Okanagan and Jest for Caring Clowns service the Okanagan.

In 1999, Joan Barrington and Mary Hirst launched Therapeutic Clowns Canada (TCC), a not-for-profit foundation created to bring therapeutic clowning to paediatric facilities across Canada. The foundation creates awareness about therapeutic clowning in Canada and makes available funding, training and support for new programs. TCC has launched programs at The Credit Valley Hospital, Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario (CHEO), Alberta's Children's Hospital (ACH) and London Health Science Centre (LHSC). Today, Ruth Cull is 'Molly Penny' at CHEO, Cheryl Ann Oberg practices with 'Twinkles' at ACH, and Ken Sperling is 'Ollie Pale' at LHSC.

In 2002, Olivier-Hugues Terreault launched Dr. Clown in Montreal, with a clinic of therapeutic clowns visiting hospitals and senior residences. Dr. Clown's therapeutic clowns work in pairs to brighten the days of patients and residents of long-term facilities.

In 2004, The Therapeutic Clown Program at SickKids' Camilla Gryski, received the Today's Parent For Kid's Sake Award for her work as "Posy" on SickKids' Haematology Oncology Unit. Posy has since retired. Longwoods Publishing presented Karen Ridd with the First Therapeutic Clown Achievement Award in Canada.

Joan Barrington was crowned Canada's Lady of Therapeutic Clowning in the first issue of Healthcare Quarterly 2005. In 2005, Joan was honoured with the Robo Award, recognizing her achievements and contributions to therapeutic clowning.

CARING CLOWN DATA FOR CANADA

(British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec)

First Draft July 2008

Compiled by Karen Baxter, rt_newton@yahoo.ca

BRITISH COLUMBIA

CARING CLOWNS OF CENTRAL OKANAGAN

3687 Yorkton Rd.

Westbank British Columbia V4T 2T7

Contact: Lee Kiddell "Sparkles" at jkiddell@shaw.ca or 1-250-707-0110

These therapeutic clowns visit health care facilities in the Central Okanagan, one day/week. Their training consists of a one day workshop which includes Makeup/Costuming/Skits/Hospital Hygiene. The workshop has been pared down from 2.5 days because of time constraints for volunteers who work full-time. They meet the second Tuesday of every month for follow-up educational sessions.

(Facility addresses to follow)

KALAMALKA CARING CLOWNS

Founder: Carole Fawcett

Email: flower1@shaw.ca

Telephone: 1-250-549-2034/Cell: 1-250-549-2034

These therapeutic clowns service the Vernon British Columbia area. Their training consists of a 25 hour workshop, and includes the following topics:

The Psychology of Humour/Listening Skills/Definition of Stress And How It Effects the Body/Clown Etiquette in a Hospital/Pantomime and Puppetry/Make-up and Costuming. All trained clowns must attend a hospital orientation after their clowning workshop. Their mandate is to bring happiness, joy and love wherever they go. (Facility addresses to follow)

JEST FOR CARING (SALMON ARM BRITISH COLUMBIA)

Unable to locate any data beyond the fact that training is the same as the Kalamalka Caring Clowns.

BRITISH COLUMBIA CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

Served by: 'Doc Willikers' aka Paul Hooson

4480 Oak Street

Vancouver British Columbia V6H 3V4

Contact: 1-604-875-2345

SUNNY HILL HEALTH CENTRE FOR CHILDREN

Served by: 'Doc Willikers' aka Paul Hooson
3644 Slocan Street
Vancouver British Columbia V5M 3E8
Contact: 1-604-875-2345

CANUCK PLACE CHILDREN'S HOSPICE (address unknown)

This facility provides palliative and respite care services for sick children in British Columbia and is located in Vancouver.

Served by: 'Doc Willikers' aka Paul Hooson

ALBERTA

ALBERTA CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

Served by: Chery Ann Oberg (Calgary Caring Clowns). She, and a colleague of hers, are the only paid therapeutic clowns in Alberta.

2888 Shaganappi Trail N.W.

Calgary Alberta

Contact: Cheryl Oberg @ 1-403-203-0075 or email: missloosie@shaw.ca

Cheryl provides the Calgary Caring Clowns with extensive training. Email her directly to request her training materials.

FOOTHILLS MEDICAL CENTRE

Served by: Calgary Caring Clowns (contact Cheryl Oberg)

1403-29 St. N.W.

Calgary Alberta

TOM BAKER CANCER CENTRE

Served by: Calgary Caring Clowns (contact Cheryl Oberg)

1331-29 St. N. W.

Calgary AB T2N 4N2

HOSPICE CALGARY

Served by: Calgary Caring Clowns (contact Cheryl Oberg)

900-8334 Ave. S.W.

Calgary AB T2P 3T5

YWCA SHERIFF KING HOUSE

Served by: Calgary Caring Clowns (contact Cheryl Oberg)

This 38 bed/21 stay emergency shelter is for women and children fleeing domestic violence.

Shelter Info Line: 1-403-266-4111

MISERICORDIA HOSPITAL

Served by: Edmonton Caring Clowns, contact Will Schaffrick @

willelsie@interbaun.com

16940-87 Avenue

Edmonton AB T5R 4H5

Facility Contact: bshim@cha.ab.ca

Phone No: 1-780-735-2753

The Edmonton Caring Clowns host an initial one day workshop for new clowns. Topics include: History of the Caring Clowns/What Is Therapeutic Clowning?/Developing Your Clown Character/Costuming and Makeup/The Clown Autobiography/Intro to Clowning Skills (ballooning, juggling, magic)/ Props and Patter/ Rules & Regulations of Hospital and Care Centre Clowning/Mentoring and Discussion of Visitations. New clowns shadow Edmonton Caring Clowns for a minimum of three facility visits, but are encouraged to shadow as long as desired. All must participate in their perspective facility orientations. Bi-weekly training workshops are held for all clowns from September to May. Members are also encouraged to attend conventions, and Clown Camp Wisconsin.

STURGEON HOSPITAL

Served by: Edmonton Caring Clowns, contact Bill Harrison @ 1-780-456-1612

201 Boudreau Road

St. Albert AB T6B 2G7

Facility Contact: bkirchen@cha.ab.ca

Phone No: 1-780-418-7375

GREY NUNS HOSPITAL

Served by: Edmonton Caring Clowns, contact Harold Eldridge at 1-780-461-2852

3015 62 St.

Edmonton AB T6L 5X8

Facility Contact: Isonley@cha.ab.ca

Phone No: 1-780-735-7281

CAPITAL CARE STRATHCONA

Served by: Edmonton Caring Clowns, contact Karen Baxter @ rt_newton@yahoo.ca

12 Brower Drive

Sherwood Park AB T8H 1V3

Facility Contact: yvonnemcnicholl@capitalcare.net

Phone No: 1-780-417-4329

STRATHCONA ALZHEIMER CARE CENTRE

Served by: Edmonton Caring Clowns, contact Karen Baxter @ rt_newton@yahoo.ca
12 Brower Drive
Sherwood Park AB T8H 1V3
Facility Contact: yvonnemcnicholl@capitalcare.net
Phone No: 1-780-417-4329

RED DEER -CARING KLOWN VISITATION PROGRAM

Laine Dahms, aka Squeaky the Clown, is a Volunteer Resource Co-ordinator with the David Thompson Health Region. She started the Caring Clown Visitation Program in 2002. Their training includes makeup, clown etiquette, costume design, and communication skills. They 'visit people and make them smile.' The clowns visit health care facilities in a dozen local communities including Red Deer, Sundrie, Olds, Three Hills, Innisfail, Stettler, Lacombe, Ponoka, Rimbey, Bentley, Rocky Mt. House, and Hanna. Although Laine's contact is listed as 1-403-843-7823, it appears to be a fax number.

SASKATCHEWAN

QUEEN CITY CARING CLOWNS was founded by Jayne Clendening aka 'Calamity Jane' in 2002. They are located in Regina Saskatchewan. Jayne's contact info is 1-306-585-2222, email: clendening@accesscomm.ca. I am awaiting a response from Jayne.

MANITOBA

WINNIPEG HEALTH SCIENCES CENTRE

Served by David Langdon (Therapeutic clown)
820 Sherbrook Street
Winnipeg Manitoba
Facility Contact: 1-204-787-3661

ONTARIO

TIMMINS AND DISTRICT HOSPITAL

Served by Judy Higgins aka Sunflower, the Caring Clown
700 Ross Avenue East
Timmins Ontario P4N 8P2
Facility Contact: 1-705-267-2131

Judy has been visiting Timmins and District Hospital since 2000, on a weekly basis. She is a graduate of Clown Camp Wisconsin 2000.

CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL OF WESTERN ONTARIO

Served by Kenneth Sperling aka Ollie Pale

800 Commissioners Road East

London Ontario N6A 4G5

Facility Contact: 1-519-685-8484

Direct General Inquiries to: Children's Care Program, Rm. C3-401, Victoria Hospital.

Kenneth has been clowning at the Children's Hospital since 2004 and is available every Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday.

CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL OF EASTERN ONTARIO

Served by Ruth Coll aka Mollypenny

401 Smyth Road

Ottawa Ontario K1H 8L1

Facility Contact: 1-613-737-7600

BRIDGEPOINT HEALTH HOSPITAL

Served by Beth Clelland aka Violet

14 St. Mathews Road

Toronto Ontario M4M 2B5

Facility Contact: 1-416-461-8252

THE HOSPITAL FOR SICK KIDS

Served by the Therapeutic Clowns at Sick Kids

555 University Avenue

Room 4293, Black Wing

Toronto Ontario M5G 1X8

Program Contact: Susan Riddell, 1-416-813-6629 or email susan.riddell@sickkids.ca

The therapeutic clown program at Sick Kids offers a very extensive training program for their clowns...one of the best in the country! Please visit their website at www.sickkids.ca/therapeuticclownprogram

BRANTFORD GENERAL HOSPITAL

Served by the 'A Lotta Laffs' Care Clown Unit (all members of Brant Clown Alley)

The clowns visit once a week, and serve under the direction of Carol 'Lucy Goosey' Royle.

200 Terrace Hill Street

Brantford Ontario N3R 1G9

Volunteer Co-ordinator: Debbie Kew, 1-519-752-7871

WINDSOR REGIONAL HOSPITAL

Served by Clown Doctors from 'Fools For Health'
1995 Lens Avenue
Windsor Ontario N8W 1L9
Facility Contact: 1-519-254-5577

ROYAL OAK LONG TERM CARE CENTRE

Served by Clown Doctors from 'Fools For Health'
1750 Division Road North
Kingsville Ontario N9Y 4G7
Facility Contact: 1-519-733-9303

LEAMINGTON DISTRICT MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

Served by Clown Doctors from 'Fools For Health'
194 Talbot S.W.
Leamington Ontario N8H 1N9
Facility Contact: 1-519-326-2373

HOTEL DIEU GRACE HOSPITAL

Served by Clown Doctors from 'Fools For Health'
1030 Ouellette Ave.
Windsor Ontario N9A 1E1
Facility Contact: 1-519-973-4444

RICHMOND TERRACE LONG TERM CARE CENTRE

Served by Clown Doctors from 'Fools For Health'
89 Rankin Ave.
Amherstburg Ontario N9V 1E7
Facility Contact: 1-519-736-5571

'Fools For Health' is a registered charity and is associated with the University of Windsor. The concept behind the 'clown doctor' approach is based on cutting edge academic research being conducted in Canada and abroad. It offers a very extensive training program for its 'clown doctors' (caring clowns) and has a comprehensive website at www.foolsforhealth.ca

The 'clown doctors' are highly skilled performance artists hired by 'Fools For Health.' They are trained to work as clowns in a health care setting and are an integral part of the health team. They wear a white lab coat, a red nose, no theatrical makeup and are called 'doctor' (ex: Dr. Haven't A Clue) to help the institutional garment and the staff appear more friendly and less intimidating...especially for children.

Dr. Bernie Warren, a professor at the University of Windsor, who founded 'Fools For Health' in 2001 can be contacted thro' the website or at merv123@uwindsor.ca.

QUEBEC

JEWISH GENERAL HOSPITAL

Served by members of the Dr. Clown program

3755 Cote-Sainte-Catherine Rd.

Montreal Quebec H3T 1E2

Program Contact: Melissa Holland, program director, programs@drclown.ca

Phone: 1-514-845-7628 Fax: 1-514-845-3933, Email: info@drclown.ca

CENTRE DE READAPTION MARIE ENFANT (Rehab Centre for Children)

(Sainte Justine Hospital)

Served by members of the Dr. Clown program

5200 Rue Belanger

Montreal Quebec H1T 1A0

Program Contact: Sylvain Grenier, 1-514-374-1710, Ext: 8230,

Email: grenier.sylvain@sympatico.ca

This program started in September 2002, with the financial help of the Starlight Children's Foundation of Canada. There are two main units at the Centre, rehab, and long term care.

The clowns provide a relaxing and amusing break for these long term/rehab patients. Physiotherapists and occupational therapists sometimes ask clowns to accompany a child to a treatment session. The clown is made aware of the goal of treatment, and devises a game for achieving the goal. They also provide company for children in isolation.

In long term care, children are physically and mentally disabled. The clowns take part in numerous exercises in sensory stimulation.

MONTREAL CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

Served by members of the Dr. Clown program

2300 Tupper St.

Montreal Quebec H3H 1P3

Program Contact: Marie-France Haineault, Child Life Specialist, 1-514-412-4400

Ext. 22570. Email: marie-france.haineault@muhc.mcgill.ca

Dr. Clown offers a very extensive training program. Please visit their website at www.drclown.ca for a comprehensive overview.