



Connections

Inspiration. Motivation. Celebration.

60TH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE • Fall 2011

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Rick Hansen Helps OCTC Celebrate!

As 2011 winds down, celebration of OCTC's 60 years of service and dedication to our community revved up with the launch of Anniversary Days, a period of focused events with the theme *Inspiration. Motivation. Celebration!*

Planning for Anniversary Days began in June, when OCTC learned it had been selected as a 'Difference Maker' by organizers of the Rick Hansen Relay, which replicates Rick's historic journey across Canada to promote making our nation more inclusive and accessible.

Rick's connection to OCTC goes back to his original Man in Motion Tour 25 years ago, when he made a point of stopping at OCTC to help motivate clients and families.

Focusing on engaging Canadians to take up the challenge and become catalysts for positive change, the 2011 relay features medal bearers who will run, walk, wheel or bike and complete their segments of carrying the official Rick Hansen Medal through a variety of forms of movement for all abilities.

Capitalizing on this unique collaborative opportunity that celebrates different abilities, the official kick-off of OCTC's Anniversary Days began on Oct. 26, when two clients (Celina Salamani and Peter Trajdos) represented OCTC as official medal bearers for two segments of the Rick Hansen Relay.

Staff, clients and families cheered on the medal bearers as they passed along Rick's dream and inspiration of making a difference to communities all across Canada. •

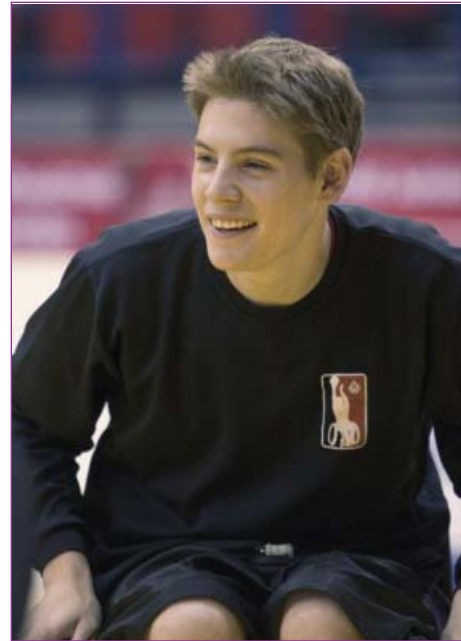


OCTC-Rick Hansen News Conference

Anniversary Days continued on Oct. 27 with a special news conference at the OCTC School, where Rick Hansen joined OCTC staff to speak to the media about the tremendous progress made in seating and mobility for Canadians with physical disabilities since OCTC was founded in 1951 — and even in the last 25 years since Rick’s original tour.

Former clients of OCTC who had met or been inspired by Rick were also on hand for the event, including Corey Smith (pictured here), a member of Canada’s National Wheelchair Basketball Team.

The news conference was part of a larger proactive media relations initiative for 2011–12 to highlight the 60th Anniversary by reaching audiences with varying knowledge of OCTC, and to build on OCTC’s notable history of success in the rehabilitation of our community’s children and youth. •



“The children and youth who I work with are sometimes dismissed by those of us who face far smaller challenges than they do. The kids we work with at OCTC are the kinds of kids that often make others uncomfortable — people look away or hurry by and forget to see the human being who sits in the wheelchair or struggles to control their limbs or their emotions. But, I promise you that if you want to truly understand persistence or the ability to face the prospect of embarrassment, there is no better example than the teenager who has absolutely no function in her legs attempt to transfer independently for the very first time from the floor into her wheelchair.”

– E.G., Recreation Therapist

4-Seasons Mural

Stephanie Brisson, the daughter of an OCTC staff member, donated her artistic talent and vision to create a series of painted murals. The murals show a child wizard growing and changing over the four seasons — a metaphor for the evolution of OCTC and the clients who also learn and grow through their time at OCTC.

Unveiled as part of Anniversary Days, the murals will likely be installed at OCTC’s Smyth campus in the corridor connecting to OCTC’s space within CHEO. •

Commemorative Adapted Storybook

A young man who has overcome his own health challenges has volunteered to write the storyline for a children’s book. The book will depict motivational vignettes and accompany illustrations adapted from the 4-Seasons mural panels. Initiated during Anniversary Days and set for publication in 2012, the book will showcase OCTC’s adapted literacy services to help children with varying abilities and challenges improve their level of literacy. The aim is to launch this book as the first of a series. OCTC clients could provide input to future editions by working with their therapists and teachers to contribute ideas for storylines and visuals. One consideration is to have a new edition produced annually as a legacy of the 60th Anniversary. •

Marquee Event Wraps Up Celebrations

The grand finale of Anniversary Days was the Marquee Event on Nov. 5 at Longfields-Davidson Heights Secondary School in Barrhaven. Past and present OCTC staff, clients and their families were invited to come together to celebrate 60 years of OCTC through an afternoon of song, dance and entertainment.

As they entered the event space, participants were treated to a fair-like environment, featuring buskers, exhibits, refreshments and even a 'walk-around magician,' who performed tricks on the spot! A young OCTC client with a penchant for humour, Jacob-Emmanuel Doyle co-hosted the main program along with popular local radio personality Josie of the Hot 89.9 Morning Hot Tub Crew.

The program included acts highlighting the talents of innovative performers, such as OCTC's own hip hop dance crew and young members of an inclusive community partner dance troupe called Ballerina Dreams (pictured below).

The show was headlined by Luca 'Lazylegz' Patuelli (pictured right), who has overcome a physical disability to have a successful career as a breakdancer and who gained particular notoriety after competing on *So You Think You Can Dance Canada*. Born with Arthrogryposis, a congenital muscle disorder that affects his legs, Luca never let this get in the way of his love of dynamic



movement. He even performed at the Opening Ceremonies of the 2010 Paralympic Games in Vancouver.

Today Luca is a motivational speaker who also heads the ILL-Abilities Crew, consisting of five 'ill-abled' dancers from Canada, the U.S., Chile and Holland. They perform all over the world spreading the message "No Excuses, No Limits!"



One of the highlights of the Marquee Event was Luca engaging in hip-hop 'battles' with OCTC clients in the audience to whom he taught some moves in advance.

Rounding out the event was a rousing performance of the OCTC Anniversary Days version of the song *Seasons of Love*, made famous from the Broadway musical *RENT* and sung by an enthusiastic group of choristers from a local high school.

Here's to another 60 years of success and seasons of love at OCTC! •

60 Years of Excellence

Happy Anniversary from OCTC Staff!



The continued success of OCTC and its incredible value to our community over the last six decades is largely thanks to the incredible dedication, commitment and compassion of OCTC's exceptionally skilled and professional staff. On the occasion of this historic anniversary year, *Connections* asked current staff members to share their views on OCTC.

WHAT MAKES WORKING AT OCTC SO SPECIAL AND DIFFERENT FROM OTHER HEALTH CARE ORGANIZATIONS?

"I am extremely fortunate and blessed to be working with such inspirational children. Their challenges in life make you realize and appreciate good health, mobility and speech. They, the children of OCTC, continually teach me — more than I will ever educate them." – M.F., Speech-Language Pathologist

"The therapeutic milieu at OCTC can't be matched, and our interdisciplinary team works collaboratively with each other and the families to help make their dreams for their child or youth come true. We have some clients who are born with a special need and some who have acquired it. Either way, the families who come to OCTC become part of our family, and we do whatever we can to help." – L.H., Occupational Therapist

"We are not an acute care facility, and the image and feel at all our sites is one of calm, fun and a welcoming environment. I love it when people walk through our doors at Smyth and say, 'Oh wow it is very quiet and calm here. It makes me feel so relaxed! This indicates that we've done our job well. All of our clients should experience that feeling.'" – A.M., Program Administrator

"OCTC staff strive to enhance every element of each child's life to the best of our ability, and to work as part of a team that rows in the same direction is an honour and a privilege. Our families offer us a gift of their children, and never a day goes by without acknowledging our parents, siblings and extended family members for their guidance and support as we develop next steps." – L.W., Principal, OCTC School

"For me, it's the feeling that all staff are working for the good of our clients. I have yet to meet an OCTC staff member who's given me the feeling they're here just to pay the bills. It is this level of professionalism and dedication that keeps me excited about working at OCTC." – E.K., Assistant Coordinator of Technical Services

"We get to work hands-on with our clients and see many amazing changes and accomplishments of children who take their challenges and soar above them." – J.W., OCTC

"OCTC employs many innovative, hard-working and truly caring individuals. Together, we exemplify 'team spirit' and we're like a family, even though we're spread over five sites." – L.V., Administrative Assistant

"I joined OCTC because I wanted the challenge of working with complex clients; 22 years later, I'm still here! It feels good to know my work contributes to clients having opportunities and learning skills they may not otherwise have. Everyone at OCTC is focused on that same goal, and there is tremendous teamwork, enthusiasm and creativity." – S.M., Program Administrator

"At OCTC, giving a child the tools to communicate, move independently and participate in their lives can allow them to grow physically, mentally and spiritually, and reach their potential later in life."
– F.B., Occupational Therapist

"The team spirit at OCTC is amazing. We work with a vulnerable population that needs all of the time and energy that we can give them. I have never before worked in such a positive, supportive environment."
– W.S., Physiotherapist

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR MOST POSITIVE EXPERIENCE AT OCTC?

“It is always the biggest high when you can enable a child to move in a way that they couldn’t previously. One particularly memorable little girl changed quite quickly and went from falling multiple times per day to a point where her mom couldn’t recall the last time that she fell. Even her four-year-old friends noticed and remarked that she was walking differently! It was hugely rewarding to be part of that process.” – W.S., Physiotherapist

“Recently a parent had frustration with another health care organization because he felt that the clinician treated his child as a number, not attending to his special needs. At the end of our OCTC interview, he thanked me and said, ‘I feel that my child is your only client rather than a number or a file.’” – J.J., Psychologist

“If you need a lesson in courage and bravery, you can find no better an instructor than the teen who began the day last summer absolutely terrified by water but overcame his fears and, with a little help from the OCTC Rec. Staff and his friends, got up on the waterski sit-ski and, when back on dry land, declared, ‘This was the best day of my life.’ This was also one of the most significant and moving days of my life too!” – E.G., Recreation Therapist

“Seeing a family completely overwhelmed by challenging behaviours that their child displays learn and be able to change things and have a happy home environment.” – P.S., Behaviour Management Consultant

“My most positive experiences have been seeing children and youth becoming independent and having a voice. I love it when I see a teen come through our doors with a unique dress style, multiple piercings or wild hair and be able to speak for themselves through a device or verbally. It shows they are expressing themselves as an individual.” – E.K., Assistant Coordinator of Technical Services

“There was a time when my six-year-old client was interviewed on TV and the host asked him, ‘What does your OT do for you?’ The child said, ‘She helps me and she gets me special spoons so I can eat better.’ That not only made my day but my career! We do what we do for the children, youth and their families, and we get so much in return from our experiences with them.” – L.H., Occupational Therapist

“I’ve had clients who make me laugh and others who challenge my expertise, but they all make me a better therapist. I love when parents listen, follow my program and see the positive benefits in their child’s life and the life of their family.” – J.E., Behaviour Services

“My most positive experiences have been when I’ve been able to find unique ways for a client to access a computer, when they were previously unable to do so. For the two children who come to mind, aside from talking, physically, there was very little they could do to play independently until computer access was available to them, as they had very minimal control of their upper extremities. Hearing from both the child and the parent about how happy they were and how much of a life-changer being able to play independently on the computer had been, made me feel very touched to be able to do something that made such a difference.” – S.S., Assistive Technology

“The most profound statement ever made to me was: ‘Thank you for showing me how to love my baby.’” – J.W., OCTC

“It is very positive to see a child come with a huge smile on his face because he feels so important and special in that moment. Or, to have a parent call to say thank you, that the training we provided their child’s Educational Assistant meant he could be included in a classroom activity for the first time.” – E.K., Assistant Coordinator, Technical Services

“One of the highlights for me was running the first ever Augmentative & Alternative Methods of Communication Camp. We had five non-speaking teenage boys who communicated using voice output devices, and in two weeks we did everything with them from bowling, to shopping in the market, to making a movie. For one client, it had been like pulling teeth to get him to even turn his device on. By the end of the program, he was reminding his mom every night that she needed to charge the battery so he would have something to talk with the next day. I never knew I could feel so energized after working 12 hours a day every day for a month!” – S.M., Program Administrator •

OCTC & Foundation Launch New Dynamic Website

The 60th Anniversary provided the ideal impetus to review and modernize the way we communicate with our clients, their families and the community we serve. One of the resources most in need of an overhaul was the website at www.octc.ca.

Last spring, a formal Website Audit & Needs Analysis was conducted on behalf of OCTC and the Foundation, resulting in more than 150 recommendations to improve the site for clients, families, staff and health system stakeholders alike.

Set for launch during OCTC's Anniversary Days celebrations, the new website features:

- a more vibrant and engaging look and feel, with pictures of clients, families, staff, volunteers and donors;
- greatly improved site architecture and navigation, allowing visitors to find what they need quickly and easily;
- the latest OCTC news and portals to information specifically for clients, families, partners and researchers;
- expanded descriptions of the full range of OCTC's programs and services, including the new Autism Service;
- sidebars with 'quick links' to essential details such as access, contact, intake and registration information;
- accurate and frequently updated listings of Coming Events, as well as Special Activities & Playgroups;
- one-click access and clearer instructions for using OCTC's popular Online Lending Library; and
- the ability to share OCTC news and information from the site on a variety of social network platforms such as Facebook, YouTube and Twitter — all at the touch of a button.



OCTC's innovative new website also includes an integrated 'microsite' for the Foundation, available with one click off the home page at www.octc.ca or directly by visiting www.octc.ca/foundation. The Foundation microsite features comprehensive information about how donations benefit clients and make a difference in our community, the results of unique fundraising activities and the many ways people can give, including fast and secure online donations.

The new website provides visitors with 'a one-stop shop' for the most accurate information about OCTC and the Foundation you can rely on and share with others, including friends, family and other caregivers. Be sure to check out the site today at www.octc.ca and bookmark it as we will be adding many new features and functionality in Phase 2 of the website expansion, set for early 2012! •

Did you know?

OCTC doesn't receive full funding from the government for all of the services it offers. In fact, OCTC's innovative, 'outside the box' thinking and successes in leading-edge treatment approaches relies on Foundation dollars.

In order to maximize these programs, foster promising treatment methods and bring new services to fruition, please make your donation to the OCTC Foundation by calling 613-738-4335 or visiting www.octc.ca/foundation.

Thank you. Your support WILL have a tangible impact and make a genuine difference in the lives of many local families! •