



Centre communautaire
Tyndale St-Georges
Community Centre



fall newsletter 2014

Building Our Strengths Together

Fall is upon us, and that means a start to the new school year, and the new year of programming at Tyndale St-Georges. When we talk about education and learning, we often talk about the challenges students face, and the areas where we can improve. It's tempting when we're weaker in one area to keep working and working at it. And perseverance is important. But it can also mean that the strengths that we each hold inside are pushed aside in our attempt to focus on weaknesses. What if we could focus on those strengths in a way that helps us to build the confidence and learning skills we need to take on those challenges?

It's a challenge we've often considered at Tyndale St-Georges. Over the past year, we've been able to put a name to this focus: the Pedagogy of Confidence™. It's a system developed by the National Urban Alliance in the United States that we're excited to implement—and to share—over the coming months. It doesn't change our focus, but helps to reinforce the work we've already been doing.

In this newsletter, we want to introduce you to how we're using the Pedagogy of Confidence, and how it can not only help with learning and building community among participants at Tyndale St-Georges, but also between staff, between parents, at the centre, in the community and even at home! We've got tips from our educators, success stories and some of the challenges that we hope to tackle together!

We also have updates on our upcoming community and fundraising events, news from the Adult Development Department and lots of ways you can get involved to help us build community, friendship and support in Little Burgundy.



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Getting Fit, Social Media & Legal Advice!

Event Preview:
West Island
Sushi Night Benefit
October 15

Wishlist

Early Childhood
Colorful children's umbrellas
Flat-screen TV with USB
Vacuum cleaner



Children, Youth and Families
Small Office Desk with drawers



Adult Development
Rolling office chairs

Volunteer
Dish soap and sponges
Dish towels
Hairnets
Dictionaries
Bescherelles
Pens, paper & notepads



Sushi Night Benefit Dinner Restaurant Sushi Aikawa

55 Brunswick Ave.
Dollard-des-Ormeaux, H9B 1P7
514.684.4333

Wednesday, October 15, 2014
6:30 p.m.



\$80 per person Tax receipt \$ 45
Includes: Sushi and a welcome glass of wine

For tickets & information contact:
Susan Bell at 931-6265 ext. 25 or
susanbell@tyndalestgeorges.com



Travel too much? No time to use all those Aeroplan Miles? **Consider donating them to the Tyndale St-Georges Charitable Pooling Account** to be

used as raffle prizes at our Special Events activities. Contact Susan Bell for full details or go to <http://beyondmiles.aeroplan.com/> to donate the miles directly to Tyndale St-Georges.

Planned Giving

Cash, appreciated securities, charitable lead trusts and retained life estates are all ways to make a planned gift to Tyndale St-Georges. As with any planned gift, donors should consult legal and financial counsel before entering into any agreement. Contact **Susan Bell at 514-931-6165 ext 25** or susanbell@tyndalestgeorges.com

Make a difference

Here are two easy ways to make a difference by supporting Tyndale:

- Clothing Drive Party:** Want to have a few friends over for a good cause? Why not host a clothing drive party? Instead of a hostess/host gift, ask all your guests to bring gently-used work attire which can be donated to our Tyndale Community Store. We specialize in "dress to impress" clothing for job interviews and workplace attire. All funds raised in the store are donated back into Tyndale programs, and you and your friends get to clear out some space in your wardrobes!
- Birthday Fundraiser.** Having a special birthday? Don't want your guests to bring presents, just their presence? Consider asking your friends to donate to Tyndale St-Georges Community Centre in honor of your birthday. If you would like to host a fundraiser, please contact Susan Bell at 514-931-6265 ext 25 to learn how to get started.



Connect with us online!



facebook.com/tyndalecommunity



@TyndaleStGeorge

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Director's Message



At Tyndale St-Georges we are incredibly fortunate to have a great pool of supporters who bring so much to the Centre. A few years ago, we were introduced to the Pedagogy of Confidence through one of our board members. This pedagogy, which focuses on identifying and building upon each person's strengths in order to achieve success, has changed the way we think about our programs and how we work with each other and our participants in order to help each person reach their potential.

One of the first things I noticed about the Pedagogy of Confidence was how easy it was to agree with the educational philosophy that underpins it but how challenging it is to put into practice. We literally have to change the way we interact with our participants and each other. I think of a child who is struggling in writing. It is so tempting to focus on giving them help by directly intervening where we perceive weakness. However, the pedagogy of confidence steers us in another direction. We are called to see the strengths of the child and to leverage those strengths to help build literacy skills. All of a sudden, a love of music or a facility in math become allies in teaching the child how to write. It's very exciting but requires a change of perspective.

I'm proud that our Centre isn't only focused on expanding programs but rather making sure that the programs we have are challenging staff to grow and giving the best to our community.

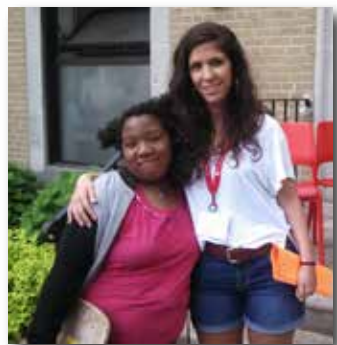
- Jen de Combe, Executive Director

Remembering Brandy Gerro

It was with great sadness and shock that we heard of the passing of Brandy Gerro in early September. As a neighbor, a participant in our programs and a friend, Brandy touched us all with her warmth, care and smile.

It was fitting that so many attended her funeral, and the community memorial at the Coalition Petite Bourgogne. While a sad occasion, it served as a warm reminder of how close Brandy was to so many of us.

She'll be truly missed, but will live on in our hearts and memories.



What's new in the Adult Development Department

On a daily basis, our Adult Development Program meets the needs of some 100 Little Burgundy residents. We've been introducing new programs over the summer and fall that are bringing in even more people!

This summer we encouraged individuals to

participate in an outdoor activity called **Walk, Run, Move**. This complimented our nutrition workshops (in partnership with Équipe mobile en Alimentation).

We've developed a series of **Social Media workshops** to encourage internet savvy. These sessions have been so popular we extended them

throughout the fall.

The **Legal Clinic** has made a comeback and is now a permanent component of the ADP.

For dates, details and more programming, visit www.tyndalestgeorges.com

"There are ten ways to get to the same place"

Last spring, about 60 youth took part in an after school program session. Gathered in our community room, they were asked to form groups of 6 to 8 people and take part in an exercise: Vera, our Education Director at the time, would read them a story that they all knew already. But she'd only read about three-quarters; it would then be up to each group to write-up a sequence of the action, come up with and write an ending, and then present it.

The goal was a group project that everyone could use one of their skills in: listening, comprehension, writing, creativity, oral presentations, among others.

The groups worked away, and each came up with their own ending for the story. One participant got up to present his group's ending. Standing in front of the room, he struggled to read from the paper where they had written their tale. At one point, he decided to put the paper down. From memory, he was able to recite it without struggle at all.

For Ushana, our Families Co-ordinator who was present, it was the clearest example of what they were trying to share that day, and of Tyndale St-Georges' goal overall.

"In other cases, someone would tell him no, he has to read. The fact that he felt comfortable doing that, that we let him do that, that he felt safe," she said. How do we get to that place, though? For Ushana and others at Tyndale St-Georges, it's through listening to participants, empowering them to recognize their strengths and recognizing that there isn't just one way to solve a problem or reach a goal.

Taking an approach that empowers youth isn't new at Tyndale St-Georges, and wouldn't be a radical concept for many educators. What is new—and has been a

focus at the Centre for the past months—is finding a common language and strategy to implement that approach.

We found it last year in the form of the Pedagogy of Confidence, a learning system developed by the National Urban Alliance for Effective Education in the United States. Formed in 1989 at Columbia University's Teachers College, they developed the Pedagogy of Confidence as a way to work with students and teachers to uncover and develop their inner strengths.

The Pedagogy of Confidence, writes the NUA on their website, is "the fearless expectation and support for the high intellectual performance of all students, especially those who are dependent on the school and community for the skills and support needed to attain high achievement."

How do we reach that high achievement? As they put it, we aim for HIP through HOP: High Intellectual Performance through High Operational Practices. While this can seem a little like jargon, the tools are actually straightforward. HIP is the belief that the brain is a muscle that just needs to be exercised in order to develop academic success. HOP consists of the practices like focusing on building relationships, developing the student's voice, and situating learning in students' lives that allow us to flex those muscles.

Like developing our physical muscles, there's not just one way to achieve success: some people run, others play team sports, some go to the gym. Likewise there are many ways people can learn and achieve success.

Part of that is seeing learning opportunities in our daily activities. "It's important for us to teach children to be indepen-



dent, including self-confidence and problem solving," says Maria, director of Early Childhood at Tyndale St-Georges. "We see everything as problem solving: climbing stairs, for example: how do we go from one step to another?"

Building confidence and focusing on the strengths of students—the skills they have already—in order to tackle the areas where they may face challenges is key. "We know each child and their family. We know their strengths and challenges. We use strengths to overcome those challenges. We listen to our kids; they have a voice. There are 10 ways to get to the same place," says Ushana.

It isn't just a technique for youth, either. It's about how we interact as a community: Even between staff and volunteers, we try to focus on how we can use each of our unique strengths to tackle our challenges. We've started to share those ideas with families too, talking with parents about how they can use these techniques at home.

It's still a learning process—one we're looking forward to for the coming months and year. We hope you join us as we focus on our strengths to better tackle the challenges ahead!