

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – Central Okanagan

The Central Okanagan Family Hub celebrates its 10,000th visit

December 11, 2018 - The Central Okanagan Family Hub is excited to be celebrating its 10,000th visit! Through a truly community-based collaborative approach, the Family Hub was opened in June 2016 at Pearson Road Elementary School, with the support of United Way CSO, School District #23 and the Ministry of Children and Family Development - Early Years Services.

This successful one stop shop model brings community agencies and their resources together to partner on important holistic services that see our community changing lives for the better. Every day the Family Hub sees families accessing medical and dental care, early years assessments, referrals for child developmental supports, participating in early literacy programs, engaging in play with their children, participating in parent groups, and much more.

The 10,000th visitor was Alba, a regular at the Family Hub. Alba recently moved to Kelowna from Mexico with her husband and two boys aged 2 & 9. While her husband goes to work to support the family, Alba is left alone to raise their boys. This often makes her feel very lonely and isolated. English is not her first language, the community and culture are all new and she knows no one here. Alba found the Family Hub at Pearson Road Elementary School and everything changed for her.

“I was received like family,” says Alba. “The staff are polite and take care of everyone. I feel comfortable all the time.” Alba enjoys the Hub so much that she attends with her 2 year old to play and socialize 4-5 times per week. She has been referred to other programs to meet her family’s needs by Hub staff such as Sponsor a Family and Care Dental for free dental work for her children.

“More importantly than the sheer number of visits, are the stories of gratitude and hope that are shared with Hub staff by the participants,” says School Principal Rob Zoppi. “To see the impact on the families we support is truly moving. This model is helping us build a strong and resilient community for the future.”

The physical space of the Family Hub has been purposely designed to feel like you are in someone's living room. Comfortable places to sit and chat, and toys and activities to keep the children engaged while parents converse with the Hub staff and other parents. The overwhelming success of the Family Hub can be attributed to its focus on cultural safety for all, drop in approach with minimal barriers to access and its non-judgmental interactions.



The Family Hub also has a Parent Learning Room, where Kelowna's child or family-related organizations can run free events or courses. All Family Hub services are free of charge. Regular programs include the well-attended Parent-Child Mother Goose Program, Peetigway, the Breastfeeding Café, The Best of Me, Sunshine Play Group, and Nobody's Perfect Parenting Program.

"The Family Hub is a great example of community working together to improve the outcome of some of our most vulnerable families," says Helen Jackman, Executive Director of United Way CSO. "United Way has been fortunate to provide almost \$300,000 over the last 3 years. Made possible by a significant bequest, this investment has allowed us to prove the model. We'd love to see it expand. It's such a great model, and the families value it so much. We need other community investors to join us and continue the success."

The Family Hub is leading the way in collaborating with service providers who facilitate vital services for young families. The Family Hub model provides a safe environment for families to obtain the support and community referrals. The Hub leadership team continues to build partnerships and is working hard to secure long-term funding which will ensure these vital services continue within our community.

To get involved by donating or providing financial support for the Hub for 2019 and beyond go to www.unitedwaycso.com/donate and tell us you'd like to support the Hub!

A celebration of the 10,000th visit will be held at the Family Hub, Pearson Road Elementary School on December 19th at 9am – 9:30am. We invite you all to come and find out more and celebrate with us!

About the Central Okanagan Family Hub:

The Central Okanagan Family Hub/Province of BC's Early Year's Centre, is a one-stop shop with supports and services for families. It is a welcoming second home for families to connect with each other and to community supports. Through a team effort of community partners and parents working together to create a positive impact through the sharing of time, money, expertise, staff, volunteers, and space. For more info, visit: www.cofh.ca

About KCR - Community Resources:

KCR - Community Resources is a multi-service non-profit organization that has been servicing the community for over 30 years. It fosters diversity, collaboration and resourcefulness by tailoring services to meet community, family and individual needs in the Central Okanagan. KCR Community Resources is the managing partner for the Central Okanagan Family Hub. Visit www.kcr.ca for more info.



About United Way Central & South Okanagan/Similkameen (CSO):

For over 65 years, the United Way CSO has served the region from Lake Country in the North, to Osoyoos and Princeton in the South. Our goal is to create opportunities for a better life for everyone in our communities. We do this by investing time and resources in three focus areas that help children and youth reach their full potential, move people from poverty to possibility and build healthy people and strong communities. For more information, visit unitedwaycso.com or call 1-855-232-1321.

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