

Your Gift at Work

July 2016

Louise Dean Centre

Healthy Moms + Healthy Dads + Healthy Babies = Strong Families

Early parenthood can throw the strong family equation off balance. Domestic violence, mental health issues, and poverty are more common among young parents and threaten the well-being of the family. At Louise Dean Centre, **75%** of young parents experience mental health issues, **46%** have experienced relationship violence, and nearly all (**96%**) live below the poverty line.

As a supporter of the Unlocking Potential (UP) Foundation, you know the vulnerability that exists for young parents. And you also know that if they get the right supports at the right time, they are more likely to build a safe, stable and nurturing environment for their children. Your support means we can act early to rebalance the equation and break the cycle of vulnerability for the next generation.

After all, the easiest and least expensive problem to solve is the one we've kept from occurring in the first place.



Graduates of the Fathers Moving Forward Program – June 2016

250 families received service from Louise Dean Centre in the 2015-2016 school year.

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Wrap-around is a term we take seriously. Wrap-around means **we** – staff, donors, partners, and volunteers – do the heavy lifting to make services accessible and barrier-free, so young parents can focus on keeping their lives on track and raising healthy children.

Wrap-around support gives young parents the opportunity to:

- Learn basic living skills – like how to budget and maintain a home
- Learn parenting skills – like how to encourage healthy child development
- Learn healthy relationship skills – like how to fight fair and negotiate boundaries
- Strengthen their natural support system – their partners, parents and friends
- Meet regularly with a social worker to address and manage mental health issues
- Collaborate with and learn from the early childhood educators who care for their children
- Access academic support so they can complete their high school education

“Every support system at Louise Dean Centre has made me able to achieve all my desired goals. I have the confidence to move forward and be successful – both as a student and a mom.” – Participant mother

We’ve expanded our thinking about wrap-around to intentionally include young fathers – and you’ve been behind us all the way! We got the ball rolling this year with **12** young fathers who enthusiastically participated in programming, walking their talk about how much they want to be a part of their children’s lives.



Celebrating “Being a Dad” Graduation – June 2016

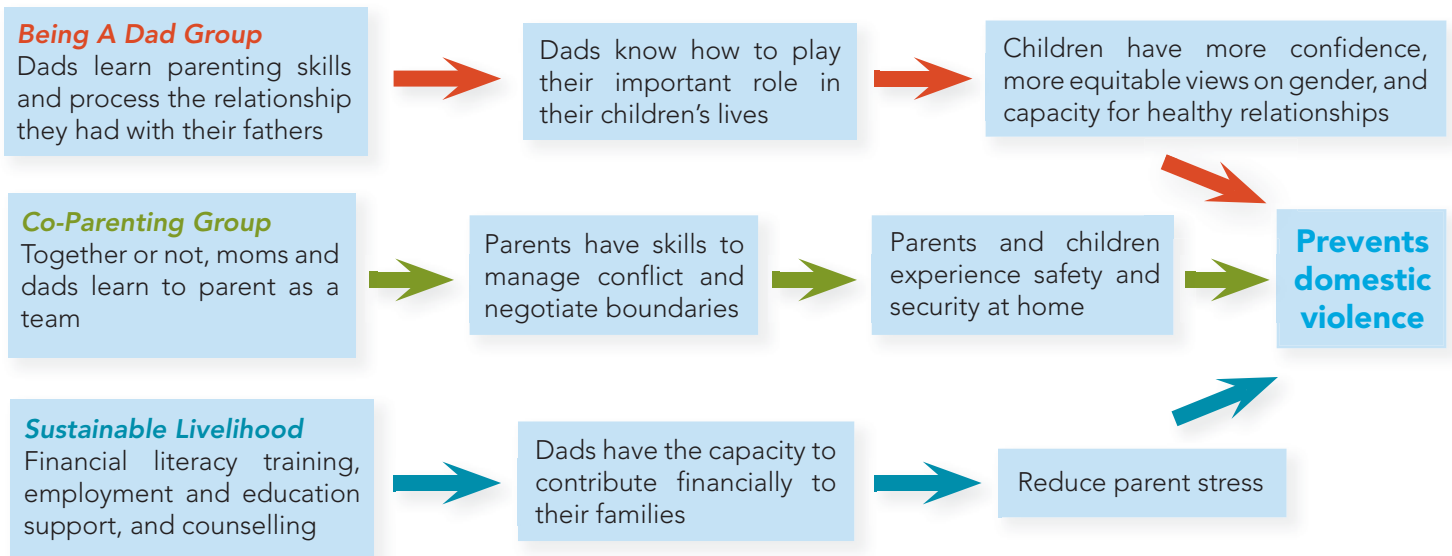
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Domestic Violence Prevention at Louise Dean Centre

Domestic violence is a complex problem that requires a multi-pronged response. If we work with only mothers or only fathers, we risk the positive gains they make at Louise Dean Centre being temporary. So we strengthen the quality of relationships between young moms and dads, because personal healing is sustainable when relationships heal too.

Parents are the most important and influential people in a child's life. If parents have healthy relationships, their children are more likely to have healthy relationships. The reverse is also true: children who are exposed to domestic violence experience toxic stress, which is harmful to their healthy development and future success.

Here's how we're working the equation of domestic violence prevention through the new **Fathers Moving Forward Program**:



For more on the research behind positive father involvement, visit our partner Shift: The Project to End Domestic Violence at www.preventdomesticviolence.ca



Co-Parenting Graduation – May 2016



Dads and Kids Play Night – June 2016

"Dads and Kids Play Night was the first time I ever got to take my son somewhere alone. I feel more like a dad."
– Participant father

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Mental Health and Poverty Reduction at Louise Dean Centre

Poverty and mental health issues are mutually destabilizing. Together, they can keep young parents and their children trapped in a cycle of vulnerability.

The financial supports offered at Louise Dean Centre – like affordable child care and the Strengthening Hope Learner Bursary (accessible government subsidies) – work when young people are stable and healthy enough to get to school regularly. Emotional support – like individual and group counselling – is most effective when young people aren't worried about how they'll pay their rent. Graduating high school is a ticket out of poverty, and your donations make available the integrated services that get young moms to graduation.

Youth Fair Gains is one example of combining strategies for success. Young parents receive financial literacy training (basic living skill), are encouraged to save monthly, and have their savings matched 4:1 (financial support). They learn how emotions affect spending (mental health). When they complete the program, young parents can withdraw their savings to purchase an approved asset, like post-secondary tuition, work equipment, or an RESP for their babies (future sustainable livelihood).



New Graduates of Youth Fair Gains – May 2016

"My social worker helped me work through my anxiety. When I worry about decision making, she gets me to talk through it so I can decide for myself and learn from the experience." – Participant mother

Louise Dean Centre by the Numbers 2016

- 250** families served
- 41** young women graduated from Louise Dean School
- 74%** of graduates have post-secondary plans
- 109** moms received financial support through the Strengthening Hope Learner Bursary
- 90** moms went to class while their babies were cared for on-site
- 80** young families received gifts through the Santa Sleigh Program
- 15** young moms and **3** young dads completed the Youth Fair Gains Program

Becoming a parent early doesn't have to limit a young person's potential, but it will if they can't access the wrap-around services that help them navigate the fast track to adulthood. Thank you for standing up for young parents and their infinite potential. You play an irreplaceable role in making the strong families equation add up.

For more information, contact:

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 **UNLOCKING POTENTIAL**
Building Community Through Innovation