

Your Gift at Work

July 2015

Louise Dean Centre

Record Number of Centre Graduates



Louise Dean Centre Graduation, June 2015

On June 24, 40 young mothers walked the stage as graduates of the Louise Dean Centre (LDC). Like all graduates, the LDC students satisfied the requirements for high school completion in Alberta.

Unlike other grade 12 students, LDC graduates managed their academic responsibilities while caring for a baby: a heavy load for anyone, and especially for a teen. With your generous support, a host of services lightened the load so these courageous young women could follow their dreams for a better life. In addition to the 40 new graduates, another 350 young moms and their babies received service through LDC this school year.

More child care spaces in the Learning Centre and the Strengthening Hope Learner Bursary, along with the steady determination of the young moms we serve, were major factors in the increase in graduates.

"We were scared but our fear was not as strong as our courage. Here is to strong women, may we know them. May we be them. May we raise them." - Louise Dean Centre graduate

Working with Government to Reduce Barriers: Strengthening Hope Learner Bursary

The Strengthening Hope Learner Bursary reduces barriers faced by young mothers accessing financial support for child care and basic needs from the provincial government.

In collaboration with three government ministries and the Terra Centre in Edmonton, the Learner Bursary allows pregnant and parenting teens at both centres to access provincial funding directly from their schools through a simplified process, tailor-made for their unique needs.

EASIER ACCESS

Students make application for funding on-site at LDC.

Before: No streamlined access to funding.



REDUCED WAIT TIMES

LDC distributes funding throughout the year; wait time is usually 72 hours.

Before: The wait time for funding could be as long as 5 months, depending on application date.

MORE SUPPORT AND FLEXIBILITY

Extensive follow-up and ongoing monitoring of funds.

Before: Limited follow-up with students receiving funds.

INCREASED ELIGIBILITY

All pregnant and parenting students 16 years of age and older at LDC are eligible for funding.

Before: Students under 18 were not eligible for funding while pregnant.

Louise Dean Centre Graduation, June 2015

Over the last three years, the Learner Bursary has clearly demonstrated that young women are more likely to attend and complete high school when they have easier access to financial support.

The Learner Bursary has made a significant impact on student attendance:

- **82% of students who received the Learner Bursary attended school regularly, as compared to 52% of students who did not receive funding.**

"Access to funding can be one of the many barriers that prevents pregnant and parenting teens from completing school and I believe that the Learner Bursary potentially provides an innovative solution to increasing access to funding for these students." - Thomas Lukaszuk, Former Minister of Employment and Immigration, 2011

Equipping Graduates with Financial Literacy Skills

Momentum and Catholic Family Service partner together to offer Youth Fair Gains, a comprehensive money management course, to grade 12 students at Louise Dean Centre. A course component, the matched savings program, encourages students to save a portion of their income. Every dollar saved is matched with four dollars by the program. Upon completion of this year-long course, students purchase an asset (approved by the program) with their matched savings such as:

- Post-secondary tuition
- Registered Education Savings Plan (RESP)
- Trades equipment or training

Eight students graduated from Youth Fair Gains in May. Each grad saved \$500, which was matched with \$2000 from the program.



Youth Fair Gains Graduation, May 2015

One graduate shared: "I taught my boyfriend everything I learned at Youth Fair Gains. I don't get manipulated by advertising any more, and my son has an RESP. Budgeting is actually kind of fun when you're saving money!"

Employee Matching Programs Extend the Benefit of Christmas Hampers



Louise Dean Centre Christmas Hampers, December 2014

Last December, 80 young women received a Christmas hamper from community donors. As always, our donors were very generous: we estimate the total value of all hampers to be more than \$80,000!

Christmas hampers reduce the financial burden on young parents at a difficult time of year. Much more than the gifts they receive, however, the hampers become tangible evidence for young parents that someone "out there" believes in them and what they are doing for their family.

Thanks to the donors who submitted tax receipts to their employer's charitable matching program, we received an additional \$20,000! These donations ensure LDC can provide free breakfast, every morning, to every student.

For more information about Christmas Hampers or employee matching contributions, please contact us.

Motherhood Matters Mentoring for Young Moms

Motherhood Matters, formerly Teen Parent Friend, launched in August 2014, after a rigorous program re-design process. This three stage mentoring program helps young mothers feel confident as moms and is designed to follow the natural rhythm of relationship building.

Belong Stage:

Social support networks develop through group mentoring sessions.

Befriend Stage:

One-on-one mentoring grows personal relationships.

Become Stage:

Specialized training helps young mothers become leaders in their own community.



"When I found out I was pregnant I truly thought I was stuck in a dark deep tunnel with no light to guide me through, I felt alone and frightened. Motherhood Matters gave me hope that maybe I wasn't the only one going through this.

I have never been a social sort of individual. Motherhood Matters has changed all that for me. You are within a group of people that truly care what you have to say, how you feel and who you are, to them it does not matter what you did or why you struggle but how your life is now. My confidence has been built to a solid rock.

My baby girl loves this program even though she is so little. If she could speak she would tell you, 'Thanks to Motherhood Matters my mommy has had the strength to become the loving mother she is now.'

My dreams have changed to fit my precious bundle of joy but I will push myself hard to get a stable job within my career and be able to provide her with the best educational necessities so she could succeed."