

**CONTINUITY CARE INC.**

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## Endowment Fund Campaign passes \$1.2 million mark

*"We're thrilled with  
the success so far"*

—Jeoff Chipman  
Vice Chair



*"...so many people  
are either related to  
someone with a dis-  
ability, or they know  
someone who is"*

—Ross Robinson  
Campaign Chair



With 60% of the Campaign Goal achieved, the Continuity Care Endowment Fund Campaign is swinging into high gear for the year-end push. As of August 22, the fund has raised \$1,245,611 of the total Campaign goal of \$2 million. "We're thrilled with the success so far," says Campaign Vice Chair Jeoff Chipman. "The Endowment Fund is critical to the long-term stability of Continuity Care, and the response of donors to the campaign board's hard work has been tremendous." That long-term stability is so crucial because it is tied to Continuity Care's central mission: to help families plan for an intellectually disabled family member's life-long care. "I think donors are responding so strongly," says Campaign Chair Ross Robinson, "because the need in our community is so prevalent." In Manitoba, there are an estimated 12,000 people with an intellectual disability. One in five families reports knowing someone with an intellectual disability. "This is a unique organization that is helping families plan for life transitions," says Robinson. "And as the Baby Boomer parents of adults with intellectual disabilities move into their senior years, the need is only going to increase."

The Endowment Fund Campaign has been established, housed and managed by the Winnipeg Foundation to ensure the long-term security of Continuity Care's core services. With capital of \$2-million and a conservative return rate of 5%, the Fund will provide secure funding for Continuity Care core office functions in perpetuity.

If you would like more information on the Continuity Care Endowment Fund Campaign, call Campaign Coordinator, Jennifer Partridge, at 779-1679.

## The passionate Helen Steinkopf

Helen Steinkopf passed away May 23rd, at the age of 86. She was a passionate and dedicated advocate on behalf of the intellectually challenged over the last fifty-five years. Feisty and fiercely independent, she died exactly the way she would have wanted to: In the middle of a telephone conversation, advocating for one of her most passionate causes, the Continuity Care Endowment Fund capital campaign.

Herself the mother of a daughter with Down syndrome, she worked tirelessly to improve the quality of life of similarly challenged people when they become adults. Mrs. Steinkopf pioneered having these previously institutionalized folks live in group homes and function productively in the community within the limits of their abilities.

Her place in the intellectually disabled community is leg-

endary. An impatient and almost intolerant foe of bureaucracy, she was pragmatic enough to do whatever had to be done to work within programs and systems as necessary and fundamental. But when she perceived that there was a better way than prevailing practices, ever the iconoclast, she wouldn't hesitate to innovate. Her strength of character and commitment easily persuaded others to join her.

At the time of her passing, she was busy with two major causes amongst her many other routine commitments and activities. One was the Continuity Care Endowment Fund capital campaign to provide assured annual income for this significant service organization.. She saw this as a critically important service, desperately needed by its clients, and she recruited many others to share her vision. *Contd. on page 2*

Helen Steinkopf, from page 1

But of even greater concern to her was the announced plan by the provincial government to spend \$40 million to rebuild and upgrade the one hundred year old institution for the intellectually challenged in Portage la Prairie. To her this is a monumentally retrograde step.

It was almost impossible to say “no” to her because she gave twice as much of herself as she asked of others. She was an understated, private, almost shy leader and philanthropist, who supported a multitude of causes with a minimum of publicity or fanfare.

Originally from Chicago, she married Maitland Steinkopf and was the perfect chatelaine to his busy life as business executive,

provincial cabinet minister and community leader, until his untimely passing in 1970. She also took great pride in the activities and accomplishments of each of her six children.

She was generous, caring and concerned for her community, for the State of Israel and for the human condition. She loved travel. She also loved nature, frequently hiking and exploring until a few years ago.

Her enduring legacy is the enhanced quality of the lives of so many intellectually challenged people across the country which would not have happened but for her efforts. Helen Steinkopf left an indelible impression on all who knew her. We are the poorer for her passing.

## An unexpected crisis, an effective solution

*“For the first time, intellectually disabled children are outliving their parents”*

Merv Gunter can tell you the exact moment he first understood the crisis facing the aging parents of an adult with an intellectual disability.

“I was attending a presentation by the Planned Life Advocacy

Network in my home town, with my mother and sisters. We were there because I have an intellectually disabled brother. Quite frankly, our family has always been able to put the supports he needs in place, so that when my mother passes on, it won’t create a crisis of how to care for him.

“But that wasn’t the case for more than 30 other families at this meeting. Most of the parents there had been the sole caregivers for the entire life of their intellectually disabled son or daughter. Nearly all of them were seniors—in their 60’s, 70’s, even 80’s. As I looked around that room that day, at all those parents, I saw the question clearly written on every face. “What will happen when I’m gone?”

The problem, Gunter learned, is largely a result of an improving life expectancy. For the first time, intellectually disabled children are outliving their parents. That’s good news, but it has created a crisis. Because very few families have planned for an intellectually disabled son or daughter in a world without their parents.

“This crisis didn’t come about because of any lack of love or caring. These are parents who have been sacrificing themselves for their child and believing they are doing the best possible job. And they’ve realized very, very late that their child may outlive them and could then end up with no routines, no family support, even nowhere to live.

The good news, says Gunter, is that “we’re not talking about a bricks and mortar solution. It’s a planning solution; it’s an education solution; it’s a connection solution. It’s low-cost, it’s simple, and it’s effective.”

Gunter joined the board of Continuity Care in 1995 and he’s seen the effectiveness of the planning solution.



The Gunters — Merv’s parents and brother

“Families need information. Continuity Care provides workshops on Wills & Estates, the vulnerable person’s act and development of support networks for family members. They need emotional support. So we organize support groups for parents, for senior parents, and for siblings. And most of all, families need planning; so we provide the tools and coaching to help them with a transition plan, a treatment plan, a financial plan—whatever the needs of each family.” (See story, “A seven-year dream about to come true” Pg 4).

“The solution is working,” says Gunter. “And Continuity Care will continue to work to advocate for these family members long after their parents are unable to care for them.”

“That’s why this Endowment Fund is so crucial. By building this Endowment Fund, you are helping these parents build a life for their children. It is critical, that after a life time of dedication, these parents can be confident in knowing that when they are gone, their loved ones will have the support that will enable them to continue living a happy life. They know someone is continuing to care for their children, for the rest of their lives.”

*“ . . . very few families have planned for an intellectually disabled son or daughter in a world without thier parents*

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# A seven year dream about to come true



Karen and her mother Laura

**N**ext spring, Karen Schnellert will move into her own home. It's a dream seven years in the making for Karen and her mother, Laura, and Karen's Support Circle.

A Support Circle is a group of friends invited to become an on-going part of the life of a person with an intellectual disability. "When I went to Continuity Care's Support Circle workshop," says Laura Schnellert, "I knew this was what I had to do for Karen."

With Continuity Care's help, Laura, Karen and Karen's support circle soon decided to work towards Karen's wish "to live in an apartment with friends."

"Over the years, I did everything for Karen," says Schnellert. But the danger in being a "super-caregiver" is that if a parent becomes incapacitated, there may be very few housing choices for a disabled adult, and the waiting lists are long—sometimes years. With assistance from Karen's circle, a housing agency and roommate were established, along with a funding proposal. The agency purchased and aquired funds to renovate a house suited to Karen and her new roommate's tastes and adapted needs.

"Some circle members come when they can manage, and there are about six people who come to every meeting and are really committed to taking a role and being very supportive in Karen's life. When they talk about Karen, they are speaking about her as family."

Schnellert says Continuity Care has been involved at every stage, but their long-term presence is even more crucial. "Government doesn't mandate support for people with disabilities. It could happen that they just pull the supports. I would want Continuity Care to be involved with Karen's circle always, to ensure that the support continues.

"If things weren't going well for Karen and one of the circle members saw it—that her staff wasn't good or if someone suspected Karen was being abused, or the government support is withdrawn—then Continuity Care would come to the circle and plan for advocacy or lobbying or finding a way to replace the supports.

"I see Continuity Care as being crucial to the on-going circle," says Schnellert. "It has to be, because the circle is on-going. Because Karen's life is on-going."

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