



Dave Smith Centre Mourns the Passing of its Visionary Founder

Ottawa, ON (September 4, 2020) – Staff, volunteers and clients of the Dave Smith Youth Treatment Centre (DSYTC) are reacting with profound sadness to the news of Dave’s passing at the age of 87.

Dave Smith founded the Centre in 1993 out of deep concern for young people aged 13-21 struggling with serious substance use and mental health issues. “If we can turn around one young person’s life,” he often said, “then we just have to do it.”

“We’re all profoundly sad after hearing the news of Dave’s passing,” said Mike Beauchesne, Executive Director of the DSYTC. “Part of what made him so remarkable was his unwavering determination to take action to fix what he saw as severe concerns in the community. The facility that bears his name will serve as a constant reminder of the genuine care and compassion he showed for all of us at the Centre, particularly the youth and families we serve.”

Since 2010, the Centre has operated out of an administrative office in Stittsville and two residential facilities: a 14-bed boys’ campus in Carleton Place, and a 10-bed girls’ site in Carp. Over more than a quarter century, the Dave Smith Youth Treatment Centre has supported more than 17,000 youth and family members with life-saving addiction, mental health treatment and counselling services.

“Dave Smith cared for everybody, but particularly the young people in our community,” added David Kinsman, Chair of the DSYTC Board of Directors. “He was a visionary and established a facility to help kids with alcohol and substance issues decades before the problem was widely recognized. Every life that was turned around at his facility was the source of great joy for him.”

Over the last few years – and even in the final days of his life – Dave and his wife, Darlene, championed a grand vision to bring together the three existing sites into one purpose-built complex that would expand the number of available beds, reduce wait times, and bring all of the dedicated addiction counsellors and healthcare professionals under one roof. The first phase was completed earlier this year.

Clients and staff at the three Centre sites will honour Dave in a variety of ways over the coming days and weeks. A public memorial will be held at a later date when health restrictions permit it.

More information on the Dave Smith Youth Treatment Centre can be found at:
<https://www.davesmithcentre.org/>.

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