

'Conductive education works'

MOVEMENT CENTRE HOPES TO SPREAD AWARENESS OF PROGRAM

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For over 20 years, the Movement Centre of Manitoba has been practising conductive education with their clients.



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(From left) Movement Centre of Manitoba executive director Olivia Doerksen, client Mason and lead conductor Chris Martin. The Movement Centre, which practices conductive education with their clients, will be taking part in national conductive education awareness day on Feb. 21.

You can see when someone has gained something they can use in their life.

"Conductive education works," executive director Olivia Doerksen said. "It can help people gain independence and live a better quality of life."

Since taking on the role of executive director last year, Doerksen has seen first-hand what the effect the centre — which is located at 1646 Henderson Hwy. — has had, and not just on clients.

"My mom has multiple sclerosis, and she's been attending the centre," Doerksen said, adding that her mother has been wheelchair bound for the past six years. "I haven't looked my mother in the eye, standing up, for six years. Now she can stand for up to five minutes at a time. I didn't think that was possible, but here she is, rehabilitating at 60 years old. Movement is so important."

"It's a fun and functional way to learn movements that will be applicable to someone's everyday life," added Chris Martin, lead conductor at the Movement Centre.

Martin started working at the centre as an assistant 10 years ago. He quickly decided that he wanted to make the work his career, so he went to England to receive training for three years. For the past six years, he's been a conductor.

"It's tangible," he said. "We're not just doing exercises for physical benefit, but reteaching movements that people can functionally use. You can see when someone has gained something they can use in their life."

Clients at the Movement Centre range in age, from infants to the elderly.

"Programs geared to physical and cognitive disabilities," Doerksen explained. "But we've been able to help people from all walks of life."

The Movement Centre works with approximately 100 clients annually, many of those on a long term basis.

"We're all human," Doerksen said. "We have to put on our socks in the morning, and even that, that's part of our program. We help them find a way to dress themselves, to adapt their routine to help their families and caregivers. Gaining that confidence is so powerful."

On Feb. 21, the Movement Centre will be observing national conductive education awareness day, in hopes of spreading the message about the work they do at their facility.

"We are 100 per cent supported by the private sector and donations," Doerksen said. "It's incredible. Our community has literally supported us for 20 years, and we've helped thousands of people."

Doerksen added that currently, the centre is in the midst of evaluating whether there is an opportunity to expand their services. To facilitate training of further conductors, Martin will be travelling to the UK this spring for further training, in order to be able to offer training to future conductors here in Winnipeg.

For more information on conductive education and the Movement Centre of Manitoba, visit movementcentre.ca

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