ADVANCING A NEW MODEL TO MEET THE MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS OF YOUNG CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Kitchener: Carizon Family and Community Services is consistently looking to improve its services and best utilize our resources to deliver mental health services to young children and families. Over the past several years, Carizon has been collaborating with children’s mental health service professionals to explore initiatives to ensure that our children, youth and families have optimum mental health supports. Aligned with the Moving on Mental Health provincial strategy, we’ve been investigating systemic change to improve access, service and support. We’ve consulted with Lutherwood, our community service partner. We’ve listened to staff, community leaders, parents, guardians and other community service partners. We’ve also done our homework, reviewing years of research and literature to determine how best to meet the needs of children and families struggling with mental health issues.

After listening to many stories and exploring local, national and global trends, Carizon has concluded that our residential system for children 12 and under would benefit from the design of a new model. Parents of young children are seeking support and treatment within their own homes and communities, and at the same time, we’ve been experiencing a steady decline in the requests for residential treatment for children in this demographic.

As a result, Carizon is moving forward with a new model that will see Carizon transition out of residential treatment for children 12 and under and replace this with a flexible menu of services that includes day treatment, enhanced in-home supports and respite care. The plan is to close Carizon’s residential program in June 2017. Carizon staff are devoted to the children in the residential program and will ensure that the children and their families receive the supports they need throughout the transition.

“As we develop this new model over the course of the coming year, we will continue to seek the expertise of our various stakeholders including the Ministry, our Lead Agency Advisory Council, community partners, parents, our knowledgeable children’s mental health staff, and of course, the children and families we serve,” says Carizon CEO Tracy Elop. “We are fortunate to have powerful partnerships in the community that are willing to work together to help children and families receive support, realize hope and achieve wellness.”
“We are listening and inspired by what we are hearing from parents and professionals alike,” adds Carizon Board President, Holly Harkins-Manning. “Young children should be sleeping in their own beds whenever possible. Collaboratively, we will work with our community to achieve this end and to deliver mental health services that are responsive, evidence based and impactful.”

ABOUT CARIZON:

Carizon is a source of hope for our community. When children, youth, adults, couples or families face life’s challenges, Carizon programs and services provide the care and compassion to help them achieve wellness. Carizon specializes in children’s mental health, youth engagement and development, family violence services, individual and family counselling, parental support and education, credit counselling, workplace resilience, settlement support and community wellness.

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