



30 YEARS of
IMPACT

Because of you, wishes come true

Positive Parenting Programme

*Final report for the Suzan Stehlik
Charitable Trust*

JUNE 2024

FINAL REPORT



Project Summary



Parents play a crucial role in a child's life, being their primary source of nutrition, protection, care, and love.

For those facing the significant challenges of caring for sick and injured children, the emotional and practical burdens are substantial, requiring customised resources and a supportive community. This is where structured parenting support, like the Positive Parenting Programme, becomes indispensable.

The Positive Parenting Programme has made remarkable strides over the past six months, focusing on enabling the Hospital's Social Work Department to establish and sustain these evidence-based parenting support groups. The Red Cross War Memorial Children's Hospital (RCWMCH) remains steadfast in its commitment to the program's sustainability and continued success, ensuring it makes a lasting impact on the lives of families at the Hospital.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the Suzan Stehlik Charitable Trust for its unwavering support and commitment to the well-being of children and families at the hospital. Your generosity has been instrumental in fostering positive change and transforming the lives of many families, offering them hope, resilience, and a sense of community during challenging times.



Parent Story



Rachel* is a demure, soft-spoken mom of 2 who has been attending the Positive Parenting sessions that are offered at the Red Cross War Memorial Children's Hospital.

At first, she seems hesitant to talk but soon opens up and shares her journey with us.

"After I gave birth to my last son, I have been coming in and out of hospitals with him because he has an illness."

Since her son was diagnosed with cystic fibrosis, Rachel tells us that she had to stop working to care for her baby. Cystic fibrosis is a genetic disorder that affects the lungs and digestive system. There is no cure, and treatment and management is lifelong focused on controlling symptoms and preventing complications. Her first child did not experience any health issues. The mom's anguish is evident when she tells us about her youngest son. "He is a strong boy, but he is hurting and struggles to understand what is happening to him. It is hard to look at him sometimes. I wish God would give his pain to me instead."

With no support from her own family, Rachel is grateful for the assistance she gets from her in-laws and the parenting support groups.

"My mother passed away when I was young, and my grandmother doesn't even talk to me. Since I was born, she never accepted me as her granddaughter. For a long time in my life, I was alone. Even when my husband and I got married, I always felt afraid I would lose everything.

Rachel shares that it feels freeing to be able to talk about her feelings and experiences with other mothers and hear that everyone has problems and fears. "I did not think before that I could talk to my husband or his family about how I am feeling because I thought I would drive them against me. I thought it was a weakness and I did not want to burden them. I did not grow up with a mother and I did not know. I feel safer knowing that I can talk about feeling scared for my son, about feeling angry that he is like this, and that it does not mean that I do not love him. My child needs his mother, and I will be there for him."

Rachel and her son have a long road ahead of dealing with his condition, and it will include many more hospital visits. She knows now, however, that there will be a supportive community ready to receive Rachel with open arms.

Project Impact



Reach and Engagement

Parents voluntarily attend these groups, resulting in high levels of attendance and participation. Since the inception of the project in July 2022, 154 parent group sessions have been held, reaching a total of 593 parents. Initially, the program focused on the oncology, trauma, burns, and surgery wards. Recognising the diverse needs of the community, the project expanded in 2023 to include two additional groups specifically for parents of renal and endocrine patients.

Positive Feedback

Feedback from parents indicates their appreciation and positive experiences, highlighting the significant impact on their coping mechanisms during their children's hospitalisation. The consistent and engaged attendance underscores the necessity and effectiveness of these support groups. Parents have shared that the groups have provided them with valuable coping mechanisms for daily challenges, helped them realise they are not alone in their struggles, emphasised the importance of honesty with their children, and underscored the significance of expressing emotions for both themselves and their children. These sentiments highlight the profound impact of the program, fostering open dialogue and mutual support within the parenting community.

Capacity Building

Sr. Hoogenvorst has played a crucial role in mentoring the Social Work team, equipping them with the skills and confidence to independently facilitate these groups. The Social Workers are already facilitating these groups independently, ensuring sustainability and ongoing support for the families.



“During one of the trauma groups, two fathers were able to relate in their struggle as men to share emotions. Their mutual support of one another enabled them to express difficult feelings in a containing space. They in turn left the group and we heard them sharing their group experience to encourage and support other parents in the ward who had not been able to attend.”

Reflection from the facilitating Social Worker

Sustainability and Future Plans



A significant achievement of this initiative is the effective mentorship provided by Sr. Hoogenvorst, which has empowered social workers to take on primary facilitation roles for the parent groups. This transition not only enhances the capabilities of the Social Work Department but also ensures the long-term sustainability of the parent support groups.

Looking ahead, the RCWMCH is committed to maintaining the six parent groups, led by trained Hospital Social Workers. The structure and support provided by the program will continue to offer parents the resources and community they need to navigate the challenges of caring for sick and injured children.

"The freedom to speak what I'm feeling"

"Having people giving a listening ear without judging me"

"Grateful for a group that allowed me to open up"

"To share with other people it makes me feel free"



Financial Report



	TOTAL BUDGET	EXPENDITURE 2022	EXPENDITURE 2023	EXPENDITURE 2024 (JAN-MAY)	TOTAL EXPENDITURE
GROUPS AND SUPERVISION	R186 500	R86 336	R83 689	R44 504	R214 529
TRANSPORT AND REFRESHMENTS	R50 000	R6 000	R10 500	R4 000	R20 500
MENTORSHIP TO HEAD AND DEPUTY HEAD OF SOCIAL WORK	R6 000	R4 000	-	-	R4 000
R1 100 000	R242 500	R96 336	R94 189	R48 504	R239 029

Thank You!

Our heartfelt appreciation to the Suzan Stehlik Charitable Trust for supporting the Positive Parenting Project

