

# Offord

## CENTRE FOR CHILD STUDIES

### Message from the Director

Many people who are reading this message now did not have a chance to know Dr 'Dan' Offord, the namesake of the Offord Centre for Child Studies. Dan was a prominent Canadian child psychiatrist who felt strongly about ensuring a level playing field for all children in Canada. This was a remarkable theme of his life both inside and outside the world of research. Dan spent 47 years as the volunteer camp Director at Christie Lake Kids Camp, a camp aimed at providing children and youth from low-income families in Ottawa a chance to take part in skill-building programs as part of a camp experience. He also played a collegial and mentoring role in the development of academic careers for many more junior learners at McMaster University and elsewhere. Many were saddened when Dan died in 2004.

Prior to taking on the name of the Offord Centre for Child Studies in 2002 in honour of Dan, there was already a 20-year history of research collaboration among a strong, core group of researchers who had come together under Dan's leadership. The 1983 Ontario Child Health Study (OCHS) was an early and landmark study which examined the prevalence of child emotional and behavioural problems in the province, as well as socioeconomic factors influencing child and family mental health and issues related to service use and access. The results of this study drew attention to 'children at risk' beyond the research and were used to advocate for change at the political level.

Today, at the Offord Centre there are 22 faculty from psychiatry, pediatrics, nursing, clinical epidemiology, family medicine, psychology and sociology, about 30 research staff and many learners from varying programs and at varying levels of study. Briefly put, we work to generate new knowledge to improve the mental health of children and youth through scientific research, establishing partnerships and training new researchers. We are a collegial, multidisciplinary group who work on questions related to the broad themes of:

- 1) child mental health and neurodevelopmental disorders;**
- 2) influences on child health and development;**
- 3) treatments, interventions, screening and services;**
- 4) knowledge translation and community connections.**

In the coming months, we are working towards strengthening and promoting the research achievements of the Offord Centre. For example, while we have had a longstanding strength in community-based and epidemiologic research, we are working on increasing research initiatives with connections to clinical programs. We are also working on increasing our digital presence.

Thank you for visiting our website. We welcome your ideas and comments about how to improve the lives of children, youth and families in Canada and more broadly.

**Dr. Ellen Lipman**

*Director, Offord Centre for Child Studies*