



Blue sky shows measurable progress of children in care and calls on all parties to focus on the stability and success of the youth in care

November 3, 2014. - St. John's NL - Blue sky Child Youth and Family Care (Blue sky) has been successfully providing staffed residential care homes in Newfoundland and Labrador for over ten years. "Blue sky staff are very well trained and the C.A.R.E. model used at our group homes in Grand Falls-Windsor and elsewhere is internationally proven and working very well," says Anne Whelan, President and CEO of Blue sky. "What is disappointing is the lack of genuine communication from the Town of Grand Falls-Windsor, a key stakeholder in ensuring that these children have every opportunity to establish a productive role in their home community."

The C.A.R.E. model Blue sky uses is very different than models employed by predecessors, which were based on control of privileges or a points system. Instead, we provide trauma-informed care, which requires a patient, positive approach to building relationships. Given what many of our youth have been through, it takes time for them to develop trust. Initially there may be challenges, and we accommodate by following detailed best practices, including calls to the RCMP on issues that could put a child at risk. These best practices also allow for bonds to foster between care workers and residents, ultimately leading to true sustainable rehabilitation, which the C.A.R.E. model is known for. In our minds the real questions to be asked are:

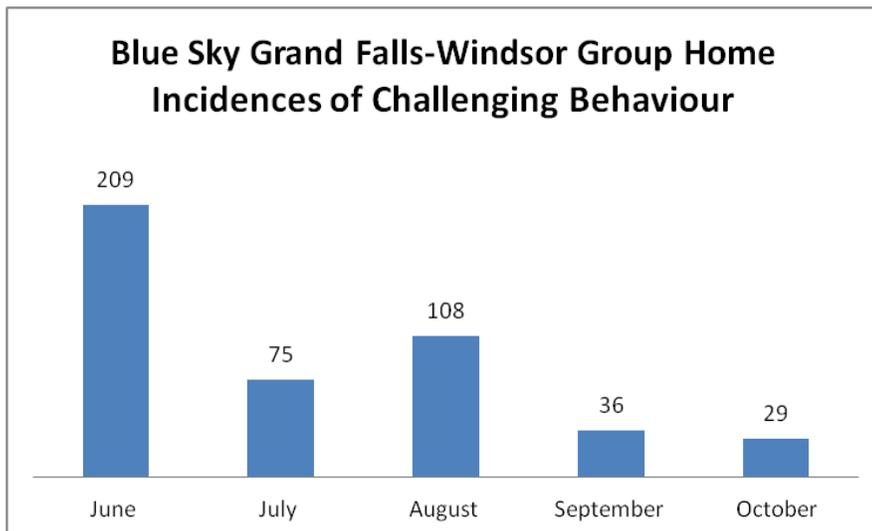
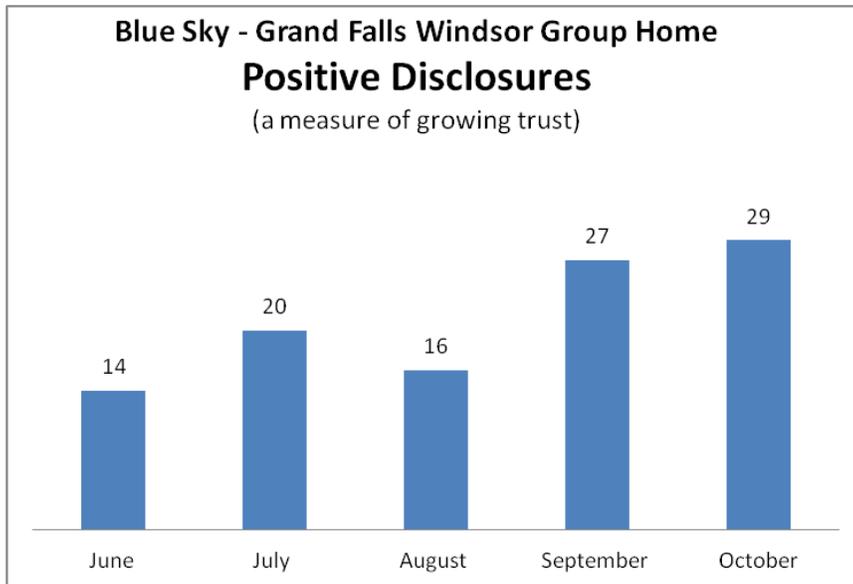
- 1. Are the youth *actually* causing major disturbances in the community of Grand Falls-Windsor?**
- 2. Are the youth making progress with Blue sky?**

Trying to answer these questions by counting calls to the RCMP when 93% of the 81 calls are made by Blue sky out of concern for these children, is not a fair-minded means of evaluating.

With respect to the first question, while we have no specific information on the five calls made by Grand Falls-Windsor residents over the five-month period we have been in operation in that location, we have heard nothing that indicates these calls relate to vandalism or concerns over

personal safety.

With respect to the progress being made by these young people, the improvements are measurable and are observed daily. As part of the C.A.R.E. model, Blue sky staff record over a dozen parameters related to both positive and negative behaviours. These range from challenging incidences such as self-harm and violations of curfew (which are rarely seen by or involve the public), to positive developments such as disclosures of trust. While confidentiality precludes disclosing more specifics, the following bar graphs are accepted means of measuring the progress of our residents.



We can tell you with certainty that progress is never easy. Every single time these children are uprooted, trust is lost and incidences of challenging behaviour increase. We can also state with confidence that although older models may reduce phone calls, they do not work in the best

interest of these children or the public over the long-term. This is not a debate over private or public operations. Whether a company is contracted by government or a public institution, we all as a community have obligations to these children. Fear and rumour mongering is no way to fulfil those obligations. We urge the public, government and media to consider the indicators we have provided here when visiting this issue. We are happy to engage with those looking to find solutions focused on stability and success of the youth in care.

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