

“The Offord Centre is one of the few places around doing both science and clinical work, using a multi-disciplinary approach. You are the model for the future in children’s mental health. You guys really get it.”

Kathleen Merikangas  
National Institute of  
Mental Health  
Washington, D.C.



### Why an Offord Centre for Child Studies?



In March 1923, in an interview with The New York Times, the British mountaineer George Leigh Mallory was asked why he wanted to climb Mount Everest, and replied, ‘Because it’s there’.

I often get asked why a Centre for Child Studies is necessary, and my answer is not dissimilar to Mallory’s: “Because the problems are there”.

Unfortunately, our understanding of children’s emotional and behavioural problems is limited. Most of the research we need to understand these problems has simply never been done. Yet the burden on children, their families and society as a whole is huge.

#### Why does the Offord Centre for Child Studies exist?

- Because children’s mental health problems are very common – 1 in 5 children has a social, emotional or learning problem.
- Because these problems last a long time – 80% of them persist into adulthood – and reduce the life opportunities of those children who are affected.
- Because the knowledge we do have about how to reduce the burden of suffering for these children is not being translated into practical information that people can use on a day-to-day basis to make a difference in kids’ lives.

Tackling these problems requires a multi-disciplinary approach that is only possible in a collaborative setting, a formalized centre where investigators in child psychiatry, psychology, social work, nursing, epidemiology, pediatrics, and other disciplines can pool their expertise in a common search for solutions.

With this kind of strength, it’s no surprise that the Offord Centre has become a world leader in the scientific study of child emotional and behavioural problems and the only centre of its kind in Canada.

Which suggests another answer to the question of why a Centre for Child Studies is necessary: “Because no one else is doing it”.

As we begin our 15th year as a unique research entity, I want to thank you, our donors, who have always believed in the need for our existence. Your generosity has made possible some of the world’s best and most innovative work in the field of healthy child development. With your continued support, we can build promising futures for every child.

**Peter Szatmari, Director, Offord Centre for Child Studies**

### Information You Can Trust – New Web Site Aims to Improve Kids’ Mental Health

The Offord Centre for Child Studies is launching a new web site to help parents and practitioners understand and do a better job of treating kids’ emotional and behavioural problems.

The **Centre of Knowledge on Healthy Child Development** will be a one-stop shop providing up-to-the-minute information on a whole range of children’s mental health problems, including anxiety, depression, attention problems, and behaviour problems such as anger, aggression and bullying.

Offord Centre Director Peter Szatmari says the new web site will be the first in Canada providing access to the best scientific research currently available on healthy child development. “With better knowledge, families and professionals will be able to make better choices that will result in better outcomes for children.”

The new web site, made possible by a grant from CIBC World Markets Children’s Miracle Foundation, will be up and running before the end of January. Go to [www.offordcentre.com](http://www.offordcentre.com) and click on the **Centre of Knowledge on Healthy Child Development** link.

### Children’s Health and Well-Being – What We Don’t Know Can Hurt Them

Scientists and practitioners from Toronto, Hamilton, Halton, Peel and Niagara recently came together for the Offord Centre’s 2nd annual Symposium on Healthy Child Development. Their goal – to strip away the rhetoric and unmask the evidence around children’s mental health.

“Policies, services and interventions must be based on what we know about healthy child development, not on what we think,” said Offord Centre Director Peter Szatmari. “It’s the only way we are going to make a difference in the lives of children.”

The annual symposium was created to bridge the gap between researchers and front-line workers and encourage them to share information and ideas on how to improve the life prospects of children.

For a full report on the 2005 Symposium, including presentations on the latest evidence around child maltreatment, anxiety, autism, and child health in the developing world, go to [www.offordcentre.com](http://www.offordcentre.com).

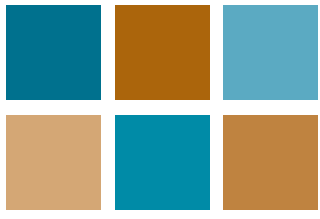
### Riding for Kids

Brian Culbert is a study in contrasts. An Investment Advisor with CIBC Wood Gundy in Toronto, he is also an extreme mountain biker, racking up more than 1,000 kilometres a year over some of the most daunting terrain (think Tour d’Everest!) in competitions around the world.

Every race he rides is dedicated to helping children in need. One of the charities he supports is the Offord Centre for Child Studies, which recently received a \$50,000 CIBC World Markets Children’s Miracle Foundation grant from money raised through Brian’s efforts.

Brian says meeting Dan Offord and learning about the Offord Centre made him realize that social and emotional well-being is critical to a child’s health. “Kids are fragile. We need to support them with programs and policies that are based on the best research we have about what works and what doesn’t.”





## Golf-A-Thon Success a FORE-Gone Conclusion

Perfect weather and a fabulous group of golfers proved a winning combination at our 9th Annual CHIP IN fore CHILDREN Golf-a-Thon, held September 12 at Tyandaga Golf Course in Burlington.

There were many highlights to the day:

- The sunny, 28-degree weather
- Sunni Genesco of K-Lite FM, our enthusiastic MC
- Gary Waleski, an adult with autism, who shared his story about what it was like to grow up “different” and how Dr. Peter Szatmari’s diagnosis changed his life
- Dr. Szatmari’s first time golfing – he’s a convert!
- The impromptu karaoke session that followed dinner
- The \$40,000 cheque presented to the Centre at the end of the day

Remarked Dr. Szatmari: “I have never seen a more passionate, caring, committed group of individuals than the golfers who come out year after year to participate in our Golf-a-Thon. They are what makes this event so special.”

### Thank you to all our golfers



Jim Bethune	Mike Farrauto
Sherry Cecil	Jeff Hayward
Mark Chrysler	Jack Lumsden
Lorna Colli	Caroline Parkin
Paul Cullen	Peter Szatmari
Peter Donnell	Lance Trumble
Ingrid Ellis	David Zalepa

Pictured left to right:  
Caroline Parkin, David Zalepa and David McKinty

Special thanks to RBC Financial generously sponsoring us again this year.

## Join Our Monthly Giving Club – Make a Difference that Lasts Forever!

You don’t have to cycle mountains to make a difference in a child’s future.

Many of our donors find monthly giving through our **Partners for Promising Futures** program an easy and painless way to realize their commitment to helping children at risk.

Pledge a monthly amount you feel comfortable with. Your ongoing support will ensure much-needed funding for:

- Research chairs and professorships
- Pilot studies in new or emerging fields
- Post-graduate fellowships and scholarships
- Communication and public/parent education

Complete the enclosed donor card and become a **Partner for Promising Futures** today!



### *promising futures*

The Offord Centre for Child Studies is pleased to introduce *promising futures*, the first magazine devoted specifically to issues around children’s mental health.

*promising futures* will contain articles on:

- child health and well-being
- how to prevent and reduce emotional and behavioral problems
- keys to better parenting and school success
- and much, much more

Order your free copy online at [www.offordcentre.com](http://www.offordcentre.com) or complete and return the enclosed card.

## Dan Offord Joins Elite Community of Distinction

Dan Offord, world-renowned child psychiatrist and founder of the Offord Centre for Child Studies, has been inducted posthumously into the Community of Distinction, the prestigious hall of fame for individuals whose contributions in their field have brought recognition to McMaster University’s Faculty of Health Sciences.

Dr. Offord was a passionate advocate for children and youth. A professor at McMaster for more than two decades, he held many leadership roles in children’s mental health research and treatment, and established the Faculty of Health Sciences as an international leader in child psychiatry research.

“Dan was an extraordinary pioneer and innovator and his place in the Community of Distinction is well deserved,” said Peter Szatmari, Director of the Offord Centre.



## Spotlight on: Teresa Bennett

**WHO:** A research trainee in McMaster University’s Clinician Investigator program, Teresa is in her fifth year of psychiatry residency and looking forward to a career in psychotherapy working with teens. She has been doing electives and clinical work at the Offord Centre since she was a first-year medical student.

**MENTOR:** Dan Offord – “I had gone into medicine but really didn’t know what to do from there. Nothing was really grabbing my interest. Dan was different. He talked about the importance of coaches and summer camps. I always understood how important my basketball coaches and piano teachers were to my development, so Dan’s message really resonated with me. I thought, ‘Finally, there’s a career in medicine that really fits with what I want to do!’”

**LATEST HONOURS:** 2005 Dan Offord Memorial Award for promising child psychiatrists; best resident research paper at the 2005 Canadian Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry meeting.

**FAVOURITE BOOK:** “I just finished reading *The Kite Runner*, by Khaled Hosseini, a very moving book about friendship and betrayal between two boys of different social and ethnic classes growing up in Afghanistan. It underscored for me how early friendships impact on our adult lives.”

**FAVORITE PASTIME:** “I enjoy spending time with my partner Justin, our brilliant cat Bagheera and family and friends, travelling – abroad and home to Sault Ste. Marie, camping, playing piano and basketball, arguing with my brothers and watching good movies.”

**GREATEST DREAM:** “That all kids have an equal opportunity to fulfil their potential for having happy family lives, satisfying work and community roles.”



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