

Jerome D. Diamond Adolescent Centre

2025 IMPACT REPORT

This year, your generosity helped reshape more than just classrooms at the Jerome D. Diamond Adolescent Centre—it helped reshape lives.

Thanks to your support, we transformed unused spaces into vibrant student lounges, introduced new opportunities for student voice and ownership, and deepened the therapeutic relationships that are the heart of our work. These changes created more than comfort—they created calm, safety, and belonging for students navigating complex emotional and academic challenges.

What follows is a reflection of what you made possible: a year of renewed connection, increased engagement, and powerful moments of transformation. Because of you, the JDD continues to be a place where young people feel seen, supported, and capable of moving forward with strength.

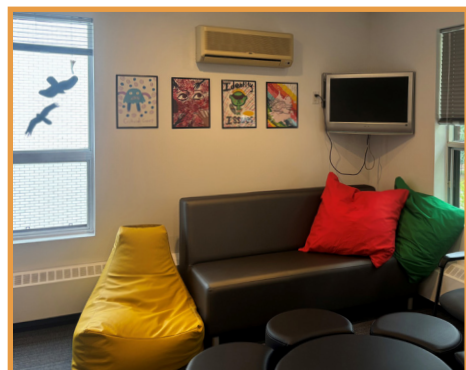
Creating Space: How Your Support Transformed the JDD Lounges

Two newly redesigned student lounges, one serving the high school program and the other the middle school cohort, have brought a renewed sense of energy and calm to daily life at the JDD. What were once a computer lab and a small office are now thoughtfully designed therapeutic spaces where students can relax, connect with peers, and recharge.

Outfitted with adaptive seating, soft lighting, bean bag chairs, and walls decorated with student artwork, each lounge fosters a sense of psychological safety and pride of place. These environments are used for structured breaks, one-on-one therapeutic check-ins, and informal socialization, providing a critical buffer between periods of academic focus and emotional regulation.

Staff have already observed the impact of these spaces in improved student self-regulation, healthier peer dynamics, and increased engagement in programming. The lounges offer a reliable, supportive environment that nurtures connection, learning, and emotional well-being.

Student Voice and Ownership in High School Programming



This year, students had more opportunities than ever to shape their experience at the JDD. In Therapeutic Recreation, they were invited to submit presentations proposing new activities. Several of their ideas, including Cognitive Behavioral Therapy workshops and structured social game time, were implemented successfully.

Art-based learning emerged as a therapeutic anchor. Students explored cognitive behavioural themes like “thinking traps” by creating visual characters that represented emotional distortions like catastrophic thinking or black-and-white thinking. These pieces now adorn the lounge walls, adding colour and emotional insight to the shared environment.

Transitions and Success Stories

William*, a Grade 8 graduate, began the year feeling isolated and uncertain. After initial disengagement and difficult conversations, William and his family made the choice to commit fully to the program. By June, he had transformed into a self-aware, emotionally regulated student who was eager to share his story with his peers.



Staff Spotlight: Lee Thompson on Leadership and Creativity

Lee Thompson, a Child and Youth Worker in the JDD high school division, has long been known for his thoughtful presence and steady leadership. This year, Lee played an instrumental role in reimagining the high school student lounge. Lee's thoughtful planning and deep understanding of student needs helped transform the space into a central part of daily life at the JDD.

Lee also co-led the school's cooking program, which invited students to engage with cultural foods and build skills in teamwork, communication, and self-regulation. From planning recipes to preparing latkes, fresh rolls, and cupcakes, students took ownership of every step. For many, the program became a highlight of their week—an opportunity to feel capable, connected, and proud.

Whether through quiet one-on-one conversations, helping students develop personalized coping strategies, or supporting his colleagues behind the scenes, Lee's presence was a stabilizing force.

Lee is a reminder of how critical trusted adults are in a young person's life. His leadership this year not only helped students thrive but also contributed to a stronger, more resilient school culture.



Transitions and Success Stories

Kylie* joined the JDD in Grade 7 struggling with school attendance and a deep distrust of educational systems. Over time, through consistent therapeutic relationships and structure, Kylie not only reengaged academically but graduated Grade 8 with a classroom award. Her transformation reflected a powerful return to learning—and to hope.



Thank You Donors!

Your kindness and commitment continue to shape what's possible for our students, and we are deeply grateful for your belief in their potential. Together, we are creating an environment where every young person has the chance to feel supported, valued, and capable of success.

Middle School Momentum: Building Routine with Diana G.



Diana was met with a group of students, particularly among the Grade 6 cohort, who craved consistency, reassurance, and emotional connection. She quickly established herself as a calm, grounded presence and became a trusted anchor for students navigating change.

Throughout the term, Diana helped re-establish a strong therapeutic and academic rhythm. Her thoughtful, student-centered approach led to noticeable growth across the cohort. This year featured:

- Daily use of the Zones of Regulation, helping students identify and manage their emotions through a shared therapeutic language
- Chess instruction as a tool to teach social-emotional strategies like patience, perspective-taking, and emotional regulation
- Student-led Therapeutic Recreation including the widely popular idea of a therapy dog day
- High academic engagement driven by hands-on learning, creative classroom routines, and consistent relationship-building

Diana's impact was felt not just in classroom participation but in the emotional climate of the school. Her ability to build trust, maintain structure, and respond to students' evolving needs created a space where children could feel safe, seen, and supported.

