

\*\*\* This is not the G2B Monthly Newsletter – It will be out April 20<sup>th</sup>, 2012 \*\*\*

**It is the greatest of all mistakes to do nothing because you can only do little - do what you can. ~Sydney Smith**

Hello from Stephen de Groot!

Please read. Please Share. Please...do what you can – no more.

On Saturday May 12<sup>th</sup>, 2012 [Getting to Better](#), [Life Vest Inside](#), [See Beautiful™](#) and a whole bunch of amazing people from all over the world have joined up to support [VOICES Manitoba's Youth in Care Network](#) and VOICES Free Hug Day. \* See below for locations and helpers.

Free Hug Day was initiated by VOICES and the VOICES Leadership Team to promote the importance of making connections and building caring, supportive relationships with kids who are in care (CFS/Foster Care/Group Care). Free Hug Day is also used to promote the importance of hugs and connections between all people.

I have committed my life's work to supporting the enhancement and enrichment of the lives of youth and former youth from care. Following another suicide of a close friend and young person from care in 2011, I made a commitment to help VOICES reach more people with their important message and vital work.

You can help too!

The Greatest thing about VOICES Free Hug Day is that it is easy, fun and it feels so GOOD! There are many things that one can do that range from simple and easy, to things that take a little more effort. There is something for everybody.

### **Options and How YOU can HELP:**

1. Forward this message to as many people you think may be interested
2. Visit the Voices Free Hug Day page on Facebook (<http://www.facebook.com/VoicesFHD>) and click on "LIKE" - it's like a virtual HUG.
3. Encourage as many people to visit the [Free Hug Day Facebook Page](#) to get involved
4. Upload a picture or video of a smiling face or hugs on the Free Hug Page
5. Give someone a HUG and tell them it is to bring awareness to the importance of making connections with kids and former kids from care (CFS/Foster/Group Care)
6. Join one of the Free Hug Day locations (see below) and give or receive a Hug
7. Host a Free Hug location – it's easy; just make a t-shirt or a sign that says "Free Hugs" and offer hugs from a Park, Sidewalk, School Campus, or anywhere in your community

8. Host a Free Hug Day location in your community and handout informational pamphlets (Let us know and we can send a PDF to you)
9. Learn about the important work of [VOICES Manitoba's Youth in Care Network](#)

### **Support and Inspiration**

If you would like more details on how you or someone else can help or, you are thinking about a Free Hug Day in your community and would like some help, please contact Steve at [degroots@mymts.net](mailto:degroots@mymts.net)

If you would like to know more about VOICES Manitoba's Youth in Care Network and Free Hug Day, see the [VOICES web page](#) or contact Marie Christian at [marie@voices.mb.ca](mailto:marie@voices.mb.ca)

If you would like to follow all of the Free Hug Day developments and action you can check out the [Voices Free Hug Day page](#), or follow my Tweets on Twitter at – <https://twitter.com/#!/GettingtoBetter>

If you would like to feel good or be inspired by Free Hug Day, check out some of the footage from last years VOICES Free Hug Day – <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AIPRmIvX8G4>

If you would like to learn more about the Importance of human connection and touch, the importance of connecting with children and youth in care or, would like some tips on hugging see this article – <http://www.gettingtobetter.ca/newsletter/november-2011/>

If you would like to hear about the importance of Human Contact, Growth and Development and would like to hear from Steve de Groot, Dr. Jean Clinton (Department of Psychiatry and Behavioural Neuroscience at McMaster), Dr. Lydia Criss Mays from Georgia State University and Orly Wabba of Life Vest Inside out of New York, then tune into the System Kidz Radio show on CKUW 95.9 FM (U of W, Winnipeg) on April 24 5 pm – 6 pm central time.

### **Current List of Locations and Helpers – Growing Weekly and Room for More!**

Winnipeg, Manitoba (at the Forks) 11:00 am – 2 pm – Marie Christian and the VOICES Leadership Team

Sydney Australia at the Queen Victoria Building from 10 am – 12 pm - Steve de Groot, Neil Davies and company

New York City at Times Square (47<sup>th</sup> Street and Broadway) – Orly Wabba and company (This is the only location that will occur on May 11<sup>th</sup>, 2012)

Atlanta Georgia at Centennial Olympic Park from 12 – 1 pm - Lydia Criss Mays and company

Hong Kong, China at Time Square (time to be determined) with Tara Alderson and company

London Ontario at the Core Family Health Centre - <http://www.corefamilyhealth.com> (time to be determined) – Andrea Nair and company

Victoria, British Columbia (TBA) with Tracy Morrissey and company

The Kawartha Region, Eastern Ontario (specific locations TBD) with Heather Sago and company

Kingston Ontario (location and time TBD) – Katy Rittwage and company

Frankford/Trenton Ontario (TBA) – Lisa Kellar Young and company

Ottawa Ontario (TBA) – Tania K, Gail Steeds and company

Toronto, Ontario at the Queens Street entrance of Trinity Bellwoods Park between 12 – 2 pm – Alicia Sales and company

Thompson Manitoba (TBA) – Adrian de Groot Sr., Kelly Hause, Katey Kirkwood, Sarah Blair

Flin Flon Manitoba - (TBA) - Tami White

Brandon Manitoba (TBA) – Carissa Rose Taylor, Michael de Groot, Deborah Asham

Altona Manitoba (TBA) – Kelly Skelton and company

Saskatoon Saskatchewan (TBA) – Pam Walby, Winston George Blake

Calgary – awaiting contact (feel free to suggest)

Vancouver – awaiting contact (feel free to suggest)

More locations would be great.