

NEWS RELEASE

Friday November 7, 2008

Community Agency Honours Jim and Heidi Balsillie

Two of Waterloo Region's most generous philanthropists will be lauded Wednesday when K-W Counselling Services names a new wing in their honour during a celebration of the agency's remarkable growth.

Jim and Heidi Balsillie will speak at the celebration lunch that will recognize the enormous contributions of the Balsillie Family over the past years to all aspects of the agency's growth.

"We cherish our family time and the fun we have together," says Heidi Balsillie. "No matter how busy we are, we know that as parents, we make our greatest difference at home. That's why we support K-W Counselling Services (KWCS). After all, the quality of positive family relationships is our community's greatest social achievement."

As co-CEO of Research In Motion — maker of the wildly successful BlackBerry wireless device — Jim Balsillie knows the pressures of balancing work and family life. "We believe the most important job description a person can have is 'Parent,'" he says. "But the challenges and responsibilities of jobs can be awesome at times, which is why the work of KWCS is so vital. Their prevention programs and counselling services help ensure no child or parent is left behind."

Known for their lavish support of community programs, the Balsillies are strong supporters of KWCS. They've contributed enormously to the agency's capital campaign, annual operational costs and served for many years on the Board of Directors as Honorary Fundraising Campaign Chairs. Most recently they supported the redevelopment of the K-W Counselling Services' website.

Last year, KWCS served almost 19,000 people who were seen for individual, couple and family therapy. Counsellors addressed issues such as parenting, emotional difficulties, mental health or behavioural issues, and relationship concerns including abuse, domestic violence, and the management of stress and anger.

Reflecting its commitment to diversity, KWCS offers a variety of services to diverse communities including multicultural groups and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender,

questioning youth and their families. Last year KWCS' *Parenting With Passion* program helped 13,000 participants in more than 100 groups that were offered in 30 different languages. Another 800 children benefited from *S.T.E.A.M. (Skills and Tools for Emotion Awareness and Management)*, a school-based program that helps kids manage their feelings.

In 2007, KWCS also opened a Walk-In Counselling Clinic offering fast, effective and affordable help without the need to call ahead or make an appointment. More than 2,200 people have used the service which gives each visitor a clear, concrete plan for addressing their concerns.

“Helping children and their parents is a wise investment that pays huge dividends in the community,” says KWCS Executive Director Leslie Josling. “We’re grateful to Heidi and Jim Balsillie and our other dedicated donors whose vision, compassion and generosity make it possible for us to do the work we’re so passionate about.”

CONTACT INFORMATION

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EVENT AGENDA FOR WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 12TH

12:00 — 12:30	Lunch
12:30 — 12:45	Brief remarks, wing naming ceremony, plaque unveiling
12:45—1:00	Presentation by Jim and Heidi Balsillie
1:00 — 1:30	Meet and Greet
1:30— 2:00	Tour of new wing (optional)