

Angie Deeks – Krista Sepp Nomination – Mentoring Award

February 28, 2013

I am writing this letter on behalf of Sascha Ackland, Amy Rayner, and myself as the nominators of Angie Deeks for the Krista Sepp “Mentor Award” 2013. Angie started her career at Vanier Children Services in 2005 as a relief worker, following a placement in one of our residential programs as a Fanshawe Child & Youth Worker student. After noticing Angie’s excellent work ethic and exemplary child and youth work skills, she was hired into a full time Residential CYC in 2006. In 2008, Angie decided to explore other opportunities that Vanier had to offer. She worked in the Family Bridges treatment foster program on a 14-month contract. During this time, Angie developed a love of working with treatment foster families and the children.

In 2010, Angie was a valuable asset in the development of the new long-term residential treatment program, “Cornerstone”. Angie acquired a new set of skills while working in this new program with extremely challenging children. By 2012, Angie’s goal of returning fulltime to Family Bridges was met!

Angie is a well-rounded, resourceful CYC who continues to meet the needs of the families and clients that we serve. She exhibits positive energy and great passion every day. She demonstrates great enthusiasm and commitment to her team, the children and families she supports. Angie is able to put a smile on your face even when you’re having the roughest of days. Her positive energy is contagious allowing the children to feel a sense of safety while in her presence.

Angie is helpful, kind and welcomes new teammates to any team with open arms. Through the years, she has been a main source of guidance and knowledge to many co-workers in various programs. Angie is always willing to lend a helping hand and listening ear; she never turns away from a teammate in need. Angie continues to be a team player throughout her career and actively participates in the multidisciplinary process. Angie shows incredible commitment everyday with her day-to-day responsibilities and to her team. Angie takes the time and effort to make her teammates’ day a little better. Her thoughtfulness and attention to little details helps create an everlasting bond with her coworkers. Thanks for the many warm cups of coffees with free delivery and a smile! ☺

When speaking with some of Angie’s co-workers throughout the years, this is what they had to say about her...

Teammate of 4 years: “Angie presents with an inviting and exciting energy on a daily basis. She has been approachable and helpful throughout my years at Vanier. When feeling stuck or unsure what to do, I have felt comfort in talking with her and figuring out a plan. When working with children, she is very authentic and a true role model. She provides a structured and therapeutic environment, which helps foster the children’s well-being and treatment.

Angie is a leader and inspiration to various co-workers, children and myself.

Teammate of 2 years: “Angie is one of the many CYC’s I would consider more of a clinician than simply a “worker”. Angie is a critical thinker who has a wonderful talent for identifying and presenting strengths in someone after everyone else seems to have lost hope. She has a leadership quality and has the capacity to bring everyone back to center. I highly respect Angie’s skills to have

crucial and meaningful discussions and have learned so much from her in the two years I have worked as a therapist at Vanier.”

Teammate of 8 years: “Angie is very easy to work with, her dedication and passion to help children and their families really shines through. I always feel safe and confident working alongside Angie. Her humor is one way she works with the kids that sets her apart, she can de-escalate a situation so easily and make a child laugh. Angie is easy to talk to and is a great communicator; she listens and is empathetic to both her coworkers during times of debriefing and the children when they need someone to talk to. She makes the day at work easier. She is tactful and professional and is always growing and learning new things. She is a child and youth worker for the right reasons!”

Supervisor: “Angie relates to her team from a place of honesty and respect and it is clear that her team appreciates and benefits from this role modeling. She is committed to respectfully engaging in crucial conversation – she provides space for others to voice different perspectives – this supports her co-workers and supports her own growth!”

One of Angie’s most valuable qualities is remaining empathetic and focused on the challenging families that we serve. Angie’s empathetic nature never goes unnoticed. We can remember the time when she went out of her way to visit a client in the hospital on her day off. She offered this young woman some hope and compassion in a time that was most needed. Angie truly cares and is dedicated to being a part of creating change in these children’s lives. Angie always tries to incorporate the child’s interests and strengths into their recreational program. Angie brings healthy competitions and humour into her interactions with her clients. She is silly and allows the children to have fun and enjoy feeling silly themselves. She brings much humour to every situation creating a fun and easy going work environment.

Angie demonstrates the ability to be open, clear and direct in her communication both verbal and written. She is knowledgeable about many programs and different facets of programming at Vanier. She does not hold back in any setting, always putting forth the best strategies, information, and supports to meet the client’s needs. She provides feedback in a supportive manner, which allows for growth for any CYC’s including those with as much or more experience than herself.

Angie also demonstrates a calm manner during crisis situations. She is able to quickly ensure the safety of those around her and is open to taking breaks when she needs them. Angie is an excellent role model in debriefing by being open to conversations about the positives, negatives, and growth the situation can bring.

Angie is able to actively listen to, respects and cares for the parents and treatment foster parents that she works with. She interacts with them in a non-judgemental way and yet is able to have challenging conversations to promote new ways of thinking and parenting their children. She is a strong advocate and strength based thinker when supporting our clients and their families.

This is one of the **Foster Parent’s** experiences of Angie: “I have worked with Angie for about the past 6 months. I am a foster parent and one of her clients lives in my home. Angie has been very helpful as this was my first experience working with the “Family Bridges ” program. Angie has a positive and outgoing personality. She is very professional and at the same time seems like part of the family. She has been a great support to me as I try to juggle my busy life and meet the needs of the children in my family. She is eager to include the other children in my home and even has

attended "family game night" at my home. The children all look forward to spending time with her. I hope to continue working with Angie for many years to come. "

Angie is very creative when developing individual treatment plans for youth and parents. She provides engaging and stimulating activities for children and enjoys teaching children new skills such as cooking, swimming, tobogganing, and skating. Angie promotes a healthy living lifestyle and wellness by leading through example.

A twelve year old boy says "Angie is GREAT!! She makes me smile."

Angie takes initiative to complete tasks within the program and with the various committees she is a part of. She is an active member of several working groups, such as the Diversity Committee, Amalgamation Social Committee (Angie volunteered to be a part of making a video about Vanier with this committee). She is trained to complete TAPP-C (fire involvement) assessments, and will be receiving her certification as a Triple P Leader in April 2013. Angie supervises and mentors Fanshawe College CYW students. She has been active in the Community Bridges Program over the last three years, offering support to these families in their natural home environment to try and keep the children and families united. Angie facilitated and led a group of three CYC's who provided in-home support for three years to one family who had three high needs children. This was over and above her fulltime position. Angie has also been a part of planning annual camping trips and Canada's Wonderland outings. She has created and revised several forms for the Family Bridges Program.

Angie is an outstanding and remarkable Child and Youth Counsellor. Each and everyday she makes a difference in so many lives. Her cheery disposition and ability to lift spirits, offer advice and guidance are wonderful characteristics and skills. It is with deepest respect and pleasure that we nominate you for this Mentoring Award. We will end this letter with a couple of quotes that remind us of Angie and her compassion and devotion to this field.

"Leaders....should influence others. In such a way that it builds people up, encourages and edifies them so they can duplicate this attitude in others." – *Bob Goshen*

"Not all of us can do great things. But we can do small things with great love." – *Mother Teresa*

Sandra Pontes