

# **Fools for Health**

clown-doctor program

## **A BRIEF HISTORY OF FOOL FOR HEALTH**

In 2000, Professor Bernie Warren of the School of Dramatic Arts at the University of Windsor began a research grant to investigate the effects of Clown-Doctors and humor in Canadian hospitals, namely those in Windsor, Ontario. Along the way, he trained four university students as Clown-Doctors. Bernie arranged with Windsor Regional Hospital, Western Campus on Prince Road for the young Clown-Doctors to work with patients on their In-Patient Rehabilitation unit as a pilot project. While Bernie never intended for this to be a long term venture, the staff and patients of Rehab were so impressed with the Clown-Doctors that they insisted they continue! With early support from the University of Windsor, Canada's first Clown-Doctor program, *Fools for Health* was born in 2001 and by 2003 became a registered charity. An administrative office and staff were added when they moved into in-kind space provided by WRH Western Campus. Along the way, *Fools for Health* has received several grants from the likes of the Ontario Trillium Foundation, Jobs Creation Partnership, Green Shield Canada, and the WindsorEssex Community Foundation as well as various awards and honors. The Clown-Doctors have visited thousands of patients in WRH Western and Met Campuses, Pediatrics at HDGH, later WRH Met Campus, all of Leamington District Memorial Hospital and Chatham Kent Health Alliance including their Wallaceburg Campus. In 2004, Familial-Clowns were born *Fools for Health's* Down Memory Lane program began visiting residents in nursing homes, especially those with dementia. By 2009, Familial-Clowns entered area retirement homes with their Laughter-Boss project to train staff in long term care. Thanks to OTF, two Clown-Doctors participated in the first international medical clown conference in Jerusalem 2011. In February 2014, *Fools for Health* found it needed to move its administrative office. Wanting to stay near the University of Windsor where student interns are still trained as Clown-Doctors by Bernie Warren, *Fools for Health* was welcomed with open arms by John Elliot at the Sandwich Teen Action Group on King Street. After 13 years of clowning in healthcare in Windsor and Essex County, we are proud to be able to remain in West Windsor and have the support of the community here. Please visit our web site at [www.foolsforhealth.ca](http://www.foolsforhealth.ca) and our Facebook page [www.Facebook/FoolsforHealth](http://www.Facebook/FoolsforHealth).

## **OUR MISSION**

*To foster wellness and improve quality of life for patients, residents, their families, and the professionals serving them, by integrating the latest research on humour and the arts into health care delivery.*

## OUR VISION

*To be the leading practice site in Canada for clown work in healthcare across the life span, and a strong voice to an International Centre for Research and Practice in the Arts and Healthy Aging.*

## WHAT WE DO

*Fools for Health* is an award winning charitable organization dedicated to using the arts to promote health and well-being in healthcare facilities. We work with patients and residents, their families, and the healthcare team to promote wellness and increase quality of life through the therapeutic use of music, improvisational play, reminiscence, and humour.

"Clown-Doctors do not forget the illness, but work with the parts of the individual that are healthy." - Bernie Warren PhD, *Making Sense of Health, Illness and Disease*

## Timeline

- **2000**
  - *Fools for Health* begins its inception with a committee consisting of members from the University of Windsor and each hospital in Windsor, Ontario
- **2001**
  - *Fools for Health* begins as a pilot project at In-Patient Rehabilitation at Windsor Regional Hospital, Western Campus
- **2003**
  - *Fools for Health* becomes a non-profit organization and a Registered Charity #88166 4304 RR0001
- **2004**
  - *Fools for Health* receives a Jobs Creation Partnership grant in order to expand and grow its program
- **2005**
  - *Fools for Health* starts a new project called "Down Memory lane" funded by a 2-year grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation for Familial-Clowns to visit seniors in long term care facilities
- **2007**
  - *Fools for Health* is recognized as a leading practice by the Canadian Council on Health Services Accreditation
- **2009**
  - *Fools for Health* is awarded the Ontario Trillium Foundation Great Grants Award for Human and Social Services and is presented to Provincial Parliament by the Minister of Culture, Aileen Carol
  - *Fools for Health* begins a new program and pilot project called Laughter-Boss funded by the Ontario Trillium Foundation for a two-year period

- **2011**

- *Fools for Health* celebrates 10 years as Windsor and Essex County's premier Clown-Doctor program
- *Fools for Health* with the assistance of the Ontario Trillium Foundation grant send two Clown-Doctors (Artistic Director Sandra Radvanyi – Dr. Merry Kay! and Charmaine Miron – Dr. Tilly Tom-Tom) to Jerusalem for the Dream Doctors 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Conference the **first international medical clown conference**

- **2014**

- *Fools for Health* moves its administrative office to the Sandwich Teen Action Group building at 3735 King Street in West Windsor.

### ***FOOLS FOR HEALTH: AN AWARD WINNING CHARITY***

#### **2007: Canadian Council on Health Services Accreditation**

The Canadian Council on Health Services Accreditation cited the *Fools for Health* Clown-Doctor program as a “Leading Practice” and recommended it as a “Standard for Care for Long Term Care (Rehabilitation/Complex Continuing Care).” In so doing, *Fools for Health* is identified as a “benchmark” for similar programs across Canada.

#### **2009: Ontario Trillium Foundation Great Grants Award**

At a ceremony in Toronto, November 5, 2009, *Fools for Health* received the Ontario Trillium Foundation's Great Grants Award in the Human and Social Services category, one of only seven awards at the 2009 Great Grants Award, and was recognized by Ontario Culture Minister Aileen Carroll at Parliament that same day. The award recognized the successful Down Memory Lane program.

“Great Grants Award finalists have been selected for the outstanding and long term impact their projects are having on the people and communities they serve,” said Ontario Trillium Foundation Chair Helen Burstyn. “We are very proud of (the) organization and are excited that, with this nomination, its work in the community will now be acknowledged across Ontario...” said Essex, Kent Lambton Grant Review Team Chair Rosemary Lavatore.

Ontario Trillium Foundation Great Grants Award finalists were selected from among 4,500 charities that received OTF support between April 2005 and December 2007.



**2010: University of Windsor Excellence in Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activity (To Professor Bernie Warren)**

Bernie Warren, founder of *Fools for Health*, was granted the Excellence in Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activity award by the University of Windsor. This award recognizes and spotlights both his research and activities in recent work regarding the work of Familial-Clowns with seniors who suffer from the effects dementia-related illnesses, including Alzheimer disease.

“What he has done with his imagination and creativity in terms of health care is a great example of how research can bring such valuable contribution to humanity” says the Vice-President of Research Rajanna Bird.