Plan Your Trip to Sunny Albuquerque Now!
The Canadian Children’s Optimist Foundation responds to the call

The Canadian Children’s Optimist Foundation is proud to be part of several projects that make a difference in the lives of youth all across Canada. With the outsourcing program, the Canadian Children’s Optimist Foundation helped the Kids Mental Health Optimist Club of Canada. The Canadian Children’s Optimist Foundation was able to optimize their fundraising efforts in order to produce great videos about anxiety that are available online at Miunderstanding.ca.

The following article was featured in the The Londoner on September 9, 2016 and was written by Chris Mantarini. The original text, “Local Approach to Children’s Mental Health Awareness Inspires New Optimist Club” can be found online at thelondoner.ca.

A lack of children’s mental health resources is motivating Londoner Paula Jesy to create her own, but she isn’t alone in her mission to educate local families about the importance of early intervention.

A former local television producer, Jesy has since moved on to a career in partnership development. More recently, she has been using both of these skills to establish a unique children’s mental health awareness organization called M.I. understanding.

The M.I. stands for mental illness. The organization, founded by Jesy about four years ago, is focused on producing kid-friendly mental health exhibits and web-based videos short to build awareness and empathy for children’s mental health issues.

“We’re respectful of the anxiety in this case but at the same time, we have fun with it,” Jesy explained. “What we found is whether it was adults, whether it was children, whether it was teen groups, whenever we showed these videos, hands go up and people are able to talk about it.

The resounding answer is, if a (puppet) dog and chicken can talk about it, so can I.”

Jesy’s project also inspired Ed and Ruth Edwards, a couple of long-time Members of the Southwestern Ontario Optimists. Convinced by evidence suggesting early intervention can successfully help kids overcome mental illness, the pair has started The Kids Mental Health Optimist Club of Canada, the first of its kind among the organization’s 7,000 clubs across the region.

“We are definitely wanting to learn as much as we can so we can take that information and build it into Optimist programs so each Club can feel comfortable that they’re doing what we hope is their number one fundamental purpose, and that is get rid of the stigma of children’s mental health,” Edwards said.

“A lot of people we run into, whether it’s a grandchild or a neighbour, there is so much anxiety today and it just seems so prevalent that we had to do something,” Ruth Edwards added. “It’s all Paula, we just found a way to get it out there and get more people involved.”