



in **action**
upstart

Champions for Children and Youth

UpStart Staff

Director

PHIL CARLTON

Strategy Lead

NANCY DUTTON

Associates

KATY DOUCETTE

RHONDA ROTH

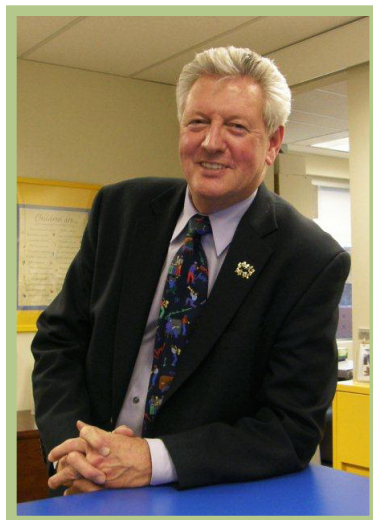
Executive Assistant

KATHY MACDONALD

**Communications
Associate**

JOY SCHMIT

The Council of Champions commits to action!



UpStart's director Phil Carlton.

On December 10, the Council of Champions met for our priority-setting retreat. Throughout the afternoon I heard loud and clear a message of action from members of the council - "enough talk let's do something". And this commitment to putting the action behind the conversation was evident as the members worked through a number of activities.

By the end of the half-day retreat, there was an overall agreement that three focus areas would guide the work of UpStart over the next three years: School/Community Collaboration, High School Graduation, and Early Years/School Readiness.

As well, the Council asked that an example of "Promising Practice" be shared at the next council meeting to stimulate discussion and further action around the priority area of School/Community Collaboration. Chief Hanson, Superintendents Johnson and Miller, and City Director Branch will be sharing the joint initiative: MASST (Multi-Agency School Support Team) as the example of promising practice and the intended outcomes of this initiative that will make a difference in the lives of children and youth.

In the first months as Director of UpStart, I have found an extraordinary level of commitment from not only our staff, but the volunteer Council to making a real difference in the lives of young people in our city. I am excited about the focus the Council is taking and the guidance and direction they are providing for the UpStart team in support of all children and youth in Calgary having the opportunity to Grow Up Great.

In Review

On December 10, the Council of Champions convened at Mount Royal University for a strategic planning session to identify the vision for UpStart as well as commit to the priorities which would achieve that vision. As part of the process those in attendance participated in an exercise which would help identify gaps and connections between each organization's work and the priorities of the Council of Champions.

Almost the entire Council was able to attend the afternoon planning session and through a process of larger group discussion and breakout sessions, a consensus emerged as to where the initiative will be going over the short and long term.

With regards to the 10-year vision for UpStart and the Council of Champions, at the end of the day the Council came to the consensus that the work of the group could best be defined as being "Champions for Children and Youth."

In terms of the priorities then that would help achieve that vision, the group identified nine priority focus areas:

- Early Years
- School Readiness
- School/Community Collaboration
- Student Engagement
- Student Development
- Parents are Supported
- High School Completion
- Successful Launch into Adulthood
- Constructive Use of Time (Children & Youth)

The UpStart team took the nine priorities as identified and positioned them into three distinct groups: Child and Youth Development; Child and Youth Engagement; and, Child and Youth Support as a means of grouping the work. Then, they also took the overarching commitment to creating a collaborative approach to the foundation piece which would include both parents and family as well as school and community to provide the necessary infrastructure to help all children and youth grow up great.

The final exercise of the afternoon was to look at the nine priorities and have each person in attendance identify where their individual organizations either had programs that supported the priority areas, as well as where they saw gaps in support. UpStart staff also identified where their work supported the priorities. The collection of the information will form the basis of UpStart's work derived from the Council of Champions' priorities.

