

BC Federation of Foster Parent Associations

# FosterlineBC

Fostering Awareness



Fall 2012  
Volume 10, Issue 3



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Publications Mail Agreement #40889526

Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to:

BC Federation of Foster Parent Associations  
207-22561 Dewdney Trunk Road  
Maple Ridge BC, V2X 3K1

E-mail: [office@bcfosterparents.ca](mailto:office@bcfosterparents.ca)

Publication of FosterlineBC has been made possible through funding from The Ministry of Children and Family Development. Thank you to all who provided content for this edition.

## BC Federation of Foster Parent Associations

Provincial Office  
207-22561 Dewdney Trunk Road  
Maple Ridge, BC V2X 3K1

Toll Free: 1-800-663-9999  
Fax: 604-466-7490  
E-mail: [office@bcfosterparents.ca](mailto:office@bcfosterparents.ca)  
Website: [www.bcfosterparents.ca](http://www.bcfosterparents.ca)

### Provincial Staff:

Executive Director	Jayne Wilson <a href="mailto:jayne@bcfosterparents.ca">jayne@bcfosterparents.ca</a>
Administration	Ronda Sweeney <a href="mailto:ronda@bcfosterparents.ca">ronda@bcfosterparents.ca</a>
Membership	Tanya Pitts <a href="mailto:tanya@bcfosterparents.ca">tanya@bcfosterparents.ca</a>

### Board of Directors:

President	Heather Bayes Interior
Vice President	Russell Pohl Coast Fraser
Treasurer	Marcy Perron Interior
Secretary	Tamara Smith Coast Fraser
Regional Delegates:	
Vancouver Coastal Interior North Vancouver Island	Vacant (nomination pending) Kevin Daniel Lee Lachmuth Jo Axe

For Board of Directors contact information, please call the Provincial office.

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The BCFFPA is a provincial organization for foster parents, run by foster parents. We are a registered Society aiming to bring foster parents, social workers and others together in order to continuously improve the standard of care for BC's children in care. BCFFPA provides education, training and professional development as well as advocacy, support and assistance for the foster parents of BC.

**FosterlineBC** (previously InfoLetter) is a quarterly publication (January, April, July, October).

**Submissions**—Forward articles, personal stories or ideas to the BCFFPA office. Materials may be edited for length and suitability.

**Advertising**—Please contact the BCFFPA office for advertising opportunities, sizes and rates.

## President's Report

October is Foster Parent Appreciation Month. I am sitting at a kitchen table covered in homework and the debris of the day, listening to the quiet of post bed time and thinking about what appreciation means to me.

In my first years of being a foster parent, "appreciation" meant sharing a dinner with my husband and other foster parents that I didn't have to cook or clean up afterward. Very simply it was a break in routine and a chance to laugh about our life with other likeminded people. But times go by and I got deeper into fostering and into the BCFFPA and appreciation came to mean so much more.

I appreciate the wonderful people I have met both provincially and internationally who give so deeply of themselves for the children and youth in their care, regardless of the challenges each child presents. Foster parents are present with an extra cuddle in the middle of the night or to stand firm with rules of the house because we need to be consistent. We are willing to go toe to toe with anyone to ensure necessary help for the young people in our care. Every day I talk with foster parents that are going through difficulties. Without fail their main concern is for the child or youth in their home. I stand in awe of the dedication and love they show to kids who will often not appreciate it until they are grown and have kids of their own.

I appreciate the sense of humour among us because some days, if you don't laugh, you will cry. I have often heard stories of turmoil and stress and in the middle of it the foster parent will say something that only another foster parent will find hilarious. Every one of us has stories to tell that would keep us giggling forever. I appreciate the compassion that is shown every day. The understanding when a treasured item is stolen or damaged and the ability to see beyond the immediate to the reason the youth acted out and to work on calming fear and anger in the youth; of opening our home again and again to frightened and often damaged children and continue to be the safe place to land for so many.

October is Foster Family Appreciation Month and I would like to ask you all to take the time to reflect on what you do every day and how special that is. Appreciate what wonders you achieve. Take the time to give yourself a pat on the back and accept the thanks that are your due.

As you are aware there has been a change in the minister for MCFD. I would like to thank former Minister Mary McNeil for her dedication to the children of BC and to wish her well in the future. I would also like to welcome Minister Stephanie Cadieux.

Heather Bayes  
President

### Our Mission

The BCFFPA represents and supports all Foster Parents to provide quality in-home foster care in British Columbia

### Our Vision

Supporting children and youth to reach their full potential through excellence in foster care

### Our Belief

Resilient Foster Parents = Empowered Children and Youth

## Notes from the Office

Foster Family Month comes at a busy time of year for families. All the more reason to take some time this month to remind yourselves that, not only are you busy parents and multitaskers—but you are also building stronger communities by providing positive experiences and family atmosphere for young people who otherwise might have done without. Thank you for your generosity and kindness. I admire the work you do every day while I reflect on the enjoyment and challenges of being a mom and step-mom/friend to 3 teen boys and a grown daughter.

As usual, the summer focus of BCFFPA's Provincial office has been to do some tidying, renewal of resource materials and planning in preparation for the coming busy seasons.

Mid-summer I was tasked with writing a comparison summary and review of our MCFD contract in order to bring our new liaison up to date with our current activities. This was a most worthwhile activity and brought into focus areas where our services have shifted over the years. Most enlightening for me was the realization that a comprehensive support program can be provided quite economically. In addition to referring support calls to regional agencies, it's been necessary to supply our own volunteer-based service for the past few years. The Board recently identified a goal to officially launch a BCFFPA support service. With a bit more funding we'll be able to offer an 'official' program with scheduled trainings and one central coordinator. With this in mind, I'm presently pursuing additional funding to go forward with our support program. To date we've had preliminary interest from two funders!

September always starts off with a flurry of planning for a Foster Family Month events, Youth In Care Christmas Dinner and the Spring *Stand Together* Conference. In addition, we have our first offering of the reworked Support and Advocacy Training.

Membership renewal is coming up by the end of December. Don't forget to renew early for a chance to win a prize for our early membership draw! If your membership renewal is received by November 30th, you have a chance to win a preloaded Visa card worth \$250!

Happy Foster Family Month to all of you!

Jayne Wilson  
Executive Director



call us!

fosterlineBC

1-800-663-9999

we're here for you





## Message from the Honourable Stephanie Cadieux

This October marks the 22<sup>nd</sup> year of celebrating Foster Family Month in British Columbia – an opportunity to publicly recognize and celebrate B.C.’s almost 3,300 foster families, as well as the organizations that support them.

I want to express my sincere gratitude for the work that foster families do throughout the year in support of our children and youth in care. You take on one of society’s most important jobs by caring for children and youth at a time when they need it the most, opening your hearts and homes to about 5,300 vulnerable children and youth.

Every child deserves a safe and nurturing home in which to live, develop, grow and play, and when their birth parents cannot provide that, you do. Your love and care give children and youth in difficult situations the support they need to develop into strong, confident adults. It is an important service that only a special person can perform.

There is always a need for more individuals and families to open their hearts and homes to help children and youth. Anyone 19 years or older can make the decision to open their home to a child or youth in need of care. The most important qualifications for a foster parent are a strong desire to make a positive difference in a child’s life, and a commitment to provide a safe, nurturing, stable home for children when they are not able to live with their family. I encourage anyone interested in becoming a foster parent to call the Foster Line at 1 800 663-9999.

I am grateful for the important work undertaken by foster families and agencies such as the B.C. Federation of Foster Parent Associations that support them. I hope you will join me in celebrating foster families now and throughout the year.



Sincerely,

Stephanie Cadieux  
Minister of Children and Family Development

## **A Message to Foster Parents from BC New Democrat critic for Children and Family Development - Claire Trevena**

As a new school year approaches, it is especially important to acknowledge and commend the hard work of foster parents across British Columbia.

Foster parents play an integral role in the health and well-being of some of our provinces most vulnerable children and youth. They are a beacon of light in uncertain circumstances and provide support, guidance and safety to children and youth facing difficulty.

The never-ending work of a foster parent is rarely glorified and often underappreciated. However it is important for all foster families to know that their work can make all the difference in the life of a child.

On behalf of B.C.'s New Democrat caucus, I want to extend sincere thanks to foster parents for their continued dedication and determination to spend each and every day providing children and youth from all walks of life with meaningful support and genuine compassion.



Sincerely,

*Claire Trevena*

Claire Trevena  
MLA North Island  
Opposition Critic for Children and Family Development



## BC FOSTER FAMILY MONTH 2012

On behalf of the Canadian Foster Family Association (CFFA), I have the privilege of sending Foster Families throughout British Columbia greetings from the CFFA as you celebrate FOSTER FAMILY MONTH during October. National Foster Family Week will be celebrated across Canada October 21 – 17, 2012.

This is a time for foster families to be recognized for the incredible work they do throughout the year with children and youth who are unable to live with their families. Your contribution to the lives of BC's children and youth provide them with positive experiences of love, stability and guidance during their formative years. We have healthier communities and stronger citizens because of your dedication!

The British Columbia Federation of Foster Parent Associations works together with the Ministry of Children and Family Development and regional support agencies in planning events during foster family month. I encourage you to take part in the celebrations organized in your area.

It is a time for you to all pat yourselves on the back for a job well done!

*Sheila Durnford*

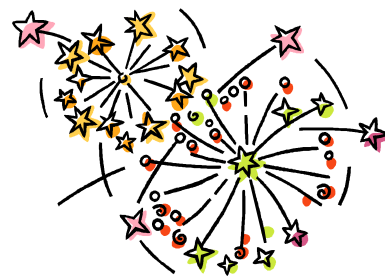
President  
Canadian Foster Family Association

### Read Carefully Before Signing

We caution caregivers to CAREFULLY read and understand your contract or modifications to that contract before signing. Once it is signed it is difficult to have it changed, and you may find yourself out of pocket.



You can donate to BCFFPA through Canadahelps!



BC Federation of Foster Parent Associations  
wishes you all the best for  
Foster Family Month 2012

***Thank you!***



**Cloverdale Paint**

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Find out more and see the application at:  
<http://www.storwell.com/bursary-application/>

## Thank You, Sheila Davis!

As most of you are aware, long term BCFFPA Board member, Sheila Davis, has recently retired. Sheila was on a cruise adventure during our AGM this year causing a bit of a delay in receiving her recognition award. Board President, Heather Bayes, made the trip to Vancouver Island recently and joined Sheila for lunch where Sheila was presented with her retirement gifts.

Please join us in thanking Sheila, once again, for her outstanding service and volunteerism at every level of our fostering community over many years. We will very much miss her ready wit and quiet manner, and her sincere ability to provide caring support to others.



*Thank you, Sheila!  
We wish you all the  
best in your retirement.*



## Farewell to Margaret Howley

Recently we received word of the retirement of Margaret Howley, who held the role of Executive Director of Vancouver Island's Foster Parent Support Services Society for the past several years.

Margaret's contributions to foster services on the Island and provincial partnership were significant and included the adapted Safe Babies program originally developed by BCFFPA, participation in the creation of the BC Foster Care Education Program and advanced caregiver training programs. Margaret enjoyed a successful IFCO 2011 event after leading the Planning Committee to produce this fabulous international conference.

We wish Margaret the best in her retirement as she moves on to new adventures!



Our sympathies to the family of **Fred Chiasson**, who passed away recently. Fred was a very respected and long term foster parent in the Cloverdale area.

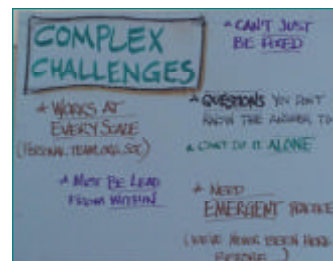
## Following in the Footsteps of BC's Leaders

By Jayne Wilson

Over the past year I participated in the first Leadership 2020 program facilitated by the Federation of Community Social Services of BC. Within the next few years, community services will be impacted by the retirement of many of BC's influential leaders who have shaped and improved our social service sector that provides care and service to children, families and individuals with low incomes, disabilities and challenges. Those of us who are still a few years from retirement age must step forward to learn all we can from our present leaders so that we can assimilate their knowledge and spread the wisdom during our own careers as members of a larger community of practice.

Throughout the year we engaged in conversation with problem solvers, leaders and strategists from across the country and the International community. We studied and listened to speakers on topics such as "toxin handlers", social innovation, communities of practice, resolving complex challenges, skills assessment, community engagement and "silo thinking".

During our two working residencies, we learned about many different approaches through which we can view our leadership and practice from a new perspective as well as facilitate positive change by resolving longstanding issues in our organizations and surrounding communities.



There is an increased reliance on social services and yet our financial resources are less. These ongoing challenges create a critical need for agencies to partner together and share expertise. Gone are the days of the one-stop-shop for service delivery. By building stronger mutually supportive partnerships among BC's service agencies, our communities will benefit, our service networks will expand and our leaders will have a greater pool of resource and knowledge with which to serve our citizens. We can no longer afford to be separate in our practice—it's time to work together.

"How does this affect BCFFPA?" you may ask. The benefit to BCFFPA of participation in the Leadership 2020 cohort further expands our links with fostering and family service agencies. Through involvement in Leadership 2020, I have experienced a year of tremendous insight and growth, not to mention an amazing show of support from others in the program for the work we do as an organization. One participant told me that she was excited to see future developments at BCFFPA considering the experiences we shared over the past year.

Overall, it is very clear that our sector is in a good position for the future. Our current and upcoming leaders will follow in the footsteps of those before to walk the path of caring, respectful service to BC's citizens.



## Safeguarding Your Home During Winter

### ***Fire Safety—How to Stay Warm, Safe and Worry Free***

Many families are opting for efficient and cleaner burning gas fireplaces. Gas fireplaces present much less mess and risk than the traditional wood fire, but there are still safety considerations to be aware of. Read the following tips for a warm and safe home this winter!

- \* Ensure that all combustible materials are stored away from the fireplace.
- \* Your gas fireplace should be situated well away from hanging draperies or foot traffic.
- \* Don't operate your gas fireplace if the glass doors are cracked or broken in any way.
- \* If your children are young, create a barrier around the fireplace to prevent serious burns from curious touching of the firebox or glass panels.
- \* Have your fireplace checked periodically, along with your furnace or other major gas appliances, by a registered gas contractor.
- \* Don't forget to change the batteries on your smoke alarms.

***For information about extended health, dental, life and critical illness insurance for foster parents, please call Ian Bideshi at 604-862-4262***

- \* Ensure smoke alarms are well away from doors and windows and at least 90 cm away from light fixtures and 60 cm away from any corner.
- \* The lifespan of the typical alarm is between 5 and 10 years.
- \* Smoke alarms can be cleaned by vacuuming.
- \* Children under the age of 15 are unlikely to wake up to the sound of a smoke alarm. You can purchase a voice alarm and record your own alert message. Make sure someone is assigned to check on sleeping teens in the event of an alarm.

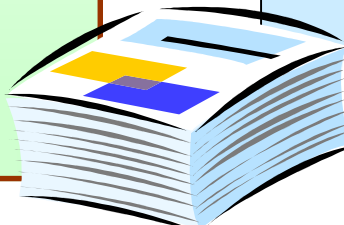
### ***Holiday Decoration Safety***

- \* Check that all string lights do not have exposed wires and that sockets are not cracked.
- \* Never use electric lights on a metallic tree!
- \* Keep "bubbling" lights out of reach of young children—the tubes can break easily.
- \* Avoid using decorations made from flammable materials.
- \* Plan for safety! Remember there is no substitute for common sense. Look for and eliminate potential danger spots near candles, fireplaces and/or electrical connections.
- \* Be careful of using "fire salts" which change the colour of the flame in wood-burning fires. They contain heavy metals which can produce intense gastro-irritation and vomiting if swallowed.

### ***What is the BCFFPA doing for YOU?***

The Provincial BCFFPA is *currently* addressing the following issues with the Ministry of Children and Family Development:

1. We have been told that the next issue of the Foster Family Handbook is awaiting one piece of policy before completion. The next version will be distributed electronically.
2. Working with MCFD to coordinate Foster Family Month events regionally.
3. Seeking additional funding in order to provide increased accessibility to support and advocacy for foster parents across BC.



Having trouble getting homeowners or tenant insurance due to your fostering profession?

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## 2012 Early Membership Renewal Draw

**Send in your membership renewal to  
BCFFPA's Provincial office on or before  
November 30th, 2012 and you will be  
entered into a draw for this year's gift, a  
\$250 Visa gift card!**

## Halloween Costume Ideas for Kids

Short on funds or tired of the same old Halloween costume themes? If you feel like taking a trip to your local discount store or rummaging through your home supplies and old clothes, think about creating some of these costume ideas for your young people to enjoy in preparation for trick or treat this year.

- ☒ Retro Robot—Paint a box silver with colourful dials. Cut arm and head holes or fit with shoulder straps. Create a helmet out of an old plastic pail. Paint square teeth and big round eyes.
- ☒ Karate Kid—Borrow a friend's karate or tae kwon do outfit.
- ☒ Pyjama Party—Wear large pyjamas so warmer clothes can be worn underneath. Put hair in curlers or wear a knitted night cap. Wear slippers. Carry a pillow case to collect your candy!
- ☒ Mini Businessman—Dad's old shirt, tie and a briefcase are easy props for a great outfit.
- ☒ Road Trip—BE the highway! Wear pants and a jacket of the same colour. Affix reflective yellow strips or lines of masking tape along legs and torso of the outfit. Pin, tape or glue plastic cars going in opposite directions beside the yellow lines.
- ☒ Paper Doll—Use cardboard to cut out a lifesize dress with dotted lines to represent the tabs that would fold over a doll shape. Colour the dress in so it looks like a paper doll outfit. Add a hat or purse to match! Affix to the front of child's clothing with tape or string.
- ☒ Real Life FACEBOOK—Cut a face-sized hole in the middle of a colourful exercise book. Slide onto your face. Write "face" and "book" on either side of the hole.
- ☒ Spa Girl—Wear a flannel robe and wrap hair in a towel. Secure the towel with a colourful eye mask. Paint nails with bright colours, paint face with a facial mask (or face paint) and carry a mirror!
- ☒ Rocker Dude (or Dudette)—Jeans, hoodie, long hair wig or wool-wig and an electric guitar. Add a dog collar or face paint and you have Gene Simmons!
- ☒ Dr. Pepper—Wear a lab coat with an assortment of peppers pinned to it.
- ☒ Static Cling—Wear regular clothes. Use safety pins to attach socks, underwear, shirts, dryer sheets and other small items randomly.
- ☒ Dry Cleaning—Slip a dry cleaning bag over your regular clothes.

Remember to ensure that kids are warm, walking with friends or adults, are carrying flashlights or are on well-lit streets and that everyone is wearing something reflective.

Have a safe and sweet Halloween!



## Redevelopment of BCFFPA's Support Program

As many of you have likely heard by now, BCFFPA has resurrected, restructured and revised our old support program. In view of the increasing contract, protocol and support challenges experienced by foster parents and with growing concerns regarding many deviations from Standards and policy, we are more than happy to offer our support and advocacy services to BC's foster parents.

At the end of September we completed our first 3 day Support and Advocacy training to take place in many years! We had participation from BCFFPA Local Association members as well as a few who paid full price for the opportunity! It was a wonderful success.

After recent meetings with the Minister and Provincial Director of Child Welfare we were told that support contracts in the province will be reviewed over the coming year. Since we lost our funding for regional coordinators and our organized support services 10 years ago, we have continued to provide ongoing support on a smaller scale through the kind services of our skilled volunteers—foster parents like yourselves. Plato said it best, "necessity...is the mother of invention...". Because we have continued with this service off the sides of our desks in order to address consistent requests, we are now able to offer a very cost-effective support program for the province. We must be doing something right!

Our key contacts for the support program are Board members, Russell Pohl and Tamara Smith who, along with the staff of regional support agencies, have been providing support services to Coast Fraser foster parents for the past few years.

Stay tuned-in to your Locals for information about future trainings being held in your area.

## A Message to Foster Parents from BC'S Representative for Children and Youth —Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond

Hello to all. I hope you have had a wonderful summer and are re-energized heading into the fall to continue the wonderful, supportive work you do for foster parents, children and youth in our province. The role of organizations such as yours is so important. This newsletter is a great opportunity for me to let you know about a few things going on in my Office.

Earlier this summer, I made the difficult decision to make a public statement regarding my serious concerns about the new Integrated Case Management computer system. This system affects the entire child welfare system, and it had become clear to me that users were experiencing grave problems that could put children and youth at risk.

In 2008, the provincial government began the process of developing a new child welfare information system, called Integrated Case Management (ICM). The system was to be user-friendly, provide for improved information flow and use of evidence for decision making. Over the last year, gaps in the system became evident. Implementation of ICM began at the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) this past April for child protection staff.

My Office has been inundated with calls and emails from child welfare workers and others using ICM who take their responsibility regarding child safety very seriously. The system seems to have an overwhelming number of technical issues that have burdened workers already facing work pressures. Those responsible for using the system are not certain they can keep children safe because they are not able to store information quickly on ICM, or find crucial information in a timely fashion.

As an overseer of the child welfare system, it is my duty to provide a public warning to government that the system does not work. I am very concerned that records are incomplete and decisions are being made on child protection cases without access to all the required information, and I am not confident that child safety can be assured through the use of ICM.

MCFD's minister and deputy minister have been quick to respond; they agree there are serious problems. My staff and I will continue to listen to front line staff, to closely monitor the ICM project, and to assess the effectiveness of changes proposed and implemented. For the sake of vulnerable children and youth in B.C., and for those working to keep them safe, there must be quick action and quick results.

On another front, during the past year, my Office received an increasing number of calls from the public regarding the Responsiveness of the youth mental health system of services. The nature of the concerns raised, the experiences of my Advocacy team and the findings from the work of my Investigations and Review team all led me to decide that a review of mental health services for youth was necessary.

The youth mental health project seeks to better understand how mental health services for youth ages 16 to 18 are delivered, and how well services are communicated and coordinated when youth are transitioning between different services.

Over the past year, information has been gathered through surveys, focus groups and interviews with practitioners, youth, parents and caregivers. Literature and jurisdictional research has been conducted to understand recent developments in child and youth mental health. Once the project is complete, I will be releasing a report with recommendations for the youth mental health system of services.

Another big project underway in my Office is an audit of Plans of Care. As you know, under the *Child, Family and Community Service Act*, every child who comes into care is expected to have a Plan of Care. As part of good social work practice, a Plan of Care provides an ongoing assessment of a child's needs and ensures that services for a child support goals for that child.

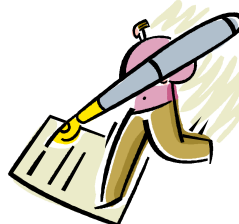
I am interested in both the quality of Plans of Care and the meeting of standards of care to ensure and improve the well-being and positive outcomes for children and youth in care. This audit is intended to provide an independent review that will confirm good practice and identify areas where practice requires strengthening, or where barriers to good practice exist.

The audit is based on a sample of active child welfare files from a variety of MCFD offices across B.C. Selected youth in care and youth who were previously in care have been consulted as a component of the review. We will release a public report on the audit findings and make recommendations, if necessary, to ensure that standards are met in care planning for children in care.

Thanks so much for providing space for me in your newsletter. Remember, if you or those you work with would like to talk to one of my advocates, please contact my Office. You can reach us from anywhere in the province at 1-800-476-3933 or email us at [rcy@rcybc.ca](mailto:rcy@rcybc.ca), and you can keep up to date with my Office's activities by following us now on Facebook.



### GET IT IN WRITING!



When agreements are made for the coverage of excess costs related to your role as a Caregiver (ie. agreement for extra respite coverage due to your needs, or payment for special travel related to the child), get it in

writing from MCFD prior to incurring the expense, so that the original intent of the agreement cannot be misconstrued or forgotten leaving you out of pocket for the expense.

# Regional Delegate Reports

## Coast Fraser Region by Tamara Smith

Welcome to 2 new Coast Fraser Region locals which were formed over the summer! Chilliwack Local president is Tami Smith who leads an awesome team of foster parents on the executive committee. Surrey's Michelle Power has taken on the role of president of the Surrey Local. Please join us in welcoming our new Local members!

It appears that homes in the Fraser Valley are being closed as foster parents age. We are being called to advocate for these experienced caregivers. So far 3 of 4 recently closed homes have been reopened after BCFFPA has become involved.

Chilliwack has been experiencing some real support challenges. BCFFPA's representative recently assisted in the development of a Safety Plan for one family. This plan is now being used as the template in the Chilliwack and Abbotsford areas.



Tamara Smith (r), BCFFPA Board Secretary and Abbotsford Local president with Tami Smith, the new president of the Chilliwack Local

We plan to hold an regional all-presidents meeting in the coming winter months. With the new membership and Locals in start-up mode, we hope that a joint meeting will provide an opportunity for idea sharing between the presidents within our vast region.

Foster Family Month activity plans are underway in the Coast Fraser Region. Please contact your Local for more information about arrangements being made in your area. I wish you all a wonderful month with plenty of acknowledgement and appreciation from your community members!

## Vancouver Island Region by Jo Axe



I hope everyone had a great summer and that you are all looking forward to the autumn with the changes in temperature and all that it brings. As summer comes to a close, it is a good time to reflect on things and say thank you to some people who have made everyone's lives a little easier.

A huge thank you to Margaret Howley for the time she gave and dedication she showed in her role as the Executive Director of the Foster Parent Support Services Society (FPSSS). Margaret left FPSSS earlier this year and I wish her all the best as she moves into retirement. Dan Malone is the new Executive Director of the FPSSS, so it is my real pleasure to congratulate him on his new position and I look forward to working with him in the coming months and years.

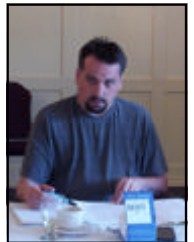
Sadly, Gina Lamberg, a dedicated foster parent, died in August. Our thoughts go out to all her friends and family, and we express many thanks to Gina for the time she spent supporting the children in her care.

Over the last few months, I have spent time discussing some of the issues close to people's hearts. One of these issues is foster parent burnout, and I think this is likely something we can all relate to. While there is no silver bullet solution to this problem, I think we can all understand the issue; one of the great things about foster parenting is that there are others around who can empathize. Sometimes merely talking to someone who understands can lighten the load a little; so, if you know of a new foster parent who could use a friend, I encourage you to reach out and offer a sympathetic ear. This can also help address another of the issues raised – the turnover rate of new foster parents who enter the system. We can probably all remember the challenges of being a new foster parent and we know that foster parents who are connected with others are more resilient, so encouraging a new foster parent to join in can go a long way to helping someone become successful in their role.

I wish you and your families all the best in the busy months to come,. Please let me know if there is anything that we can do for you at BCFFPA – the number to call is 1 800 663 9999.

## Interior Region by Kevin Daniel

It's hard to believe that it's been 3 months already since our AGM and our last newsletter. The Interior has seen some changes happen over the last few months on both local and regional fronts. The regional Board has recently had two members stepping down to pursue other things. I would like to thank both Gerri Burleigh (5+ years) and Sandy Dowie (2 years) for their dedication towards the Board and their areas, as well as the BCFFPA.



The current regional Board sits this way:

|                 |                      |
|-----------------|----------------------|
| Mary Ann Kelly  | (West Kootenays)     |
| Marilyn Machado | (East Kootenays)     |
| Yvonne Langlois | (Vernon)             |
| Marcy Perron    | (Kelowna)            |
| Kevin Daniel    | (Cariboo-Chilcotin)  |
| Vacant          | (Shuswap-Revelstoke) |
| Yet to be named | (Kamloops and area)  |

If you are from the Shuswap–Revelstoke area and are interested in being a representative for your region on the Board, please contact your Local or Kevin at:

[interior\\_delegate@bcfosterparents.ca](mailto:interior_delegate@bcfosterparents.ca) for more information.

I would like give the Vernon Local special thanks for setting up a babysitting service to watch our kids while foster parents attended two days of training and our AGM. It was also great seeing new and familiar faces again, networking and sharing ideas on how we can continue to move forward and better improve ourselves and the fostering system.

With school back in session, networking and training being offered, it looks to be busy over the next few months. In new issues appear, I encourage you to speak with your area reps, contact me or call the Provincial office.

## Regional Reports Continued

### North Region by Lee Lachmuth



I have had the opportunity to meet some of the foster parents in a few of the northern communities these past few months. I continue to be amazed at the work the foster parents do, often in isolation, for the best interests of the children and their families. I have been very busy with advocacy and am looking forward to having assistance from some wonderful people who have stepped forward to take the Support and Advocacy Training being offered this Fall.

Partnership meetings have been re-started in some northern communities and I am pleased to have been invited to be a part of this great opportunity for team work, sharing, problem solving and idea sharing. Together we are stronger and better able to support and help the children and their families and caregivers.

Work is well underway in planning for a "Northern Conference". A team with representatives from our Aboriginal Agencies, Support Agency, MCFD and BCFFPA has recognized the benefits and value of bringing Caregivers, Foster Parents, Social Workers and Agency workers together for learning, networking and sharing—and this conference will offer a venue for this to happen.

We were honored to be able to meet with our Deputy Minister, Dr. Stephen Brown, in an informal small group in Prince George during August. We shared some of our ideas and identified some areas where we, as foster parents, can offer better or more assistance to MCFD. We spoke about being able to develop into a stronger team to enable improvements in the areas of transition planning, developing plans of care, feedback, placement planning, etc. I believe the foster parents felt they were heard and their input was genuine and heartfelt.

Foster parents currently are planning and looking forward to attending the Aboriginal AGM being held in Abbotsford at the end September. The distance for our Northern Aboriginal Caregivers to travel and the costs associated with this has once again become the hurdle limiting attendance from the North. We are thankful for the Agencies and MCFD for sponsorship for a few foster parents to attend this wonderful event.

Foster Family Month is here and I am looking forward to hearing about the events surrounding this occasion. I am still in the process of establishing communication with the Northern Communities and the development of Locals within these communities. I will be recruiting some assistance with this task and I hope to increase our BCFFPA membership in the North.

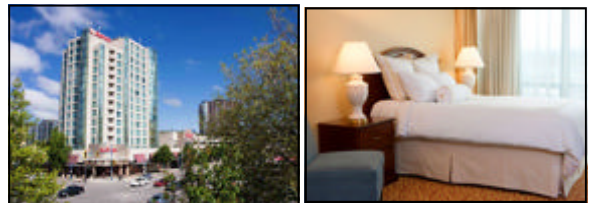
Thank you to everyone for welcoming me as the Northern Delegate.



## Join us at AGM 2013 in Richmond, BC

**BCFFPA's AGM 2013** will take place on  
May 24-25, 2013 at the **Vancouver Airport  
Marriott Hotel** in Richmond. Based on double  
occupancy the room rates will be:

- \$129—1 bedroom suite
- \$139—Two queen bed room (there are a limited number of 2-queen rooms)



***Please reserve your room by April 20, 2013  
to receive the discounted room rate!***

***Vancouver Airport Marriott Hotel  
604-276-2112 or 1-877-323-8888***

***(Please book your room under our reserved  
block of rooms. Quote "BC Foster Parent  
Association—2013 Annual General Meeting")***

Stay tuned for more information  
regarding AGM workshops and activities  
in the Winter issue of FosterlineBC.

## Membership Benefits for BC Foster Parents

BCFFPA members can receive tickets to events through *Kids Up Front Foundation*. To be placed on the mailing list e-mail the Provincial office at [office@bcfosterparents.ca](mailto:office@bcfosterparents.ca) or Debbie Drewitz at [ddrewitz@telus.net](mailto:ddrewitz@telus.net)



## We Asked and You Said... (Results from AGM 2012 World Café)

At this year's AGM we tried a new exercise that was very well received. After the business meeting we held a World Café style forum, posing 4 questions to the members who attended. Over two and a half hours, participants circulated amongst 4 tables for brief working/brainstorm sessions. At the end of the sessions the information gathered was posted along the walls and each participant was asked to place a colored sticker next to the issues they felt were a priority for their region.

Below we have outlined the top 5 issues for each topic that the foster parents across the province felt were the biggest priorities for BCFFPA to address in partnership with the Ministry.

Foster parents, social workers, agency staff members and MCFD leads were all in attendance at the World Café. We'd like to thank all 67 participants for their willingness to take a risk by sharing honestly with the rest of the group.

### *Topic A—What are the present barriers that you experience and how could they be removed?*

- Lack of respect toward foster parents
- Loss of stability of predictability of income
- Lack of assessments for kids
- Lack of relief because resources are shared and overused
- Length of adoptions, discrepancy across the board

#### *Possible Solutions...*

- Provide full disclosure about placements
- Contracts provided with the ability to add services as needed
- More accessibility to assessment resources
- Online list of resources, recruit more relief resource

### *Topic B—What are the foster-related issues of the most concern in your region?*

- MCFD deviation from policy or procedure
- Transportation costs and pay structure
- Feeling or being bullied by front line workers
- Foster parents are not being viewed as professionals
- Failure to accept foster parent opinions regarding child's needs

#### *Possible Solutions...*

- Increased collaboration between foster parents and workers
- Rate increase
- Know the complaint process and access to advocacy
- Mutual respect, increased involvement for foster parents
- Partnership meetings

### *Topic C—What is your vision of the future of fostering?*

- One realistic, respectful provincial protocol document
- Extended health benefits provided for foster parents
- CICs stay in foster family past age 19
- Regular increases to maintenance and service fees to match (at least) cost of living
- Children receive services as needed, when needed and for as long as they are needed

### *Topic D—How do we recruit new foster parents and retain those with lots of experience?*

- Positive media coverage (positive visibility)
- Fostering is acknowledged and respected as a career
- Provide extended health benefits
- Provide foster parent mentors
- Increased and financially supported opportunities for foster parents to continue educating themselves

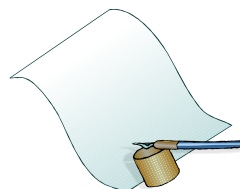
*...And, of course no fact-finding mission would be complete unless we also find out what's presenting working well...*

### *Sub-Topic—What's working right now in "your" fostering world?*

- Partnership
- Mentoring from Local Associations
- Increased foster parent participation in Local Associations
- Positive change in direction at MCFD
- Good training
- Good working relationship between BCFFPA Locals and MCFD offices

If you were unable to attend AGM 2012 and have ideas that you'd like to add to these topics, solutions you'd like to suggest or if you want to let us know what's working well in your area, please send us an e-mail or give the Fosterline a call at—1-800-663-9999.

E-mail: [jayne@bcfosterparents.ca](mailto:jayne@bcfosterparents.ca) (Subject line: "We Asked" Article)



### **BC Children's Hospital Visits... Cost of Lodging for Caregivers May Be Covered**

Did you know that there's a program that will cover either all or part of the costs for a parent's/caregiver's stay if a child is admitted or has an appointment with BC Children's Hospital?

Through this program they can arrange a room for you at Heather House or Easter Seal House. If these locations aren't available, partial costs of a hotel near BC Children's Hospital may be covered. Please contact the program for more information.

The BC Residence Program: 1-800-818-3666

[http://www.bcfamilyresidence.gov.bc.ca/pdf/bcfrp\\_brochure.pdf](http://www.bcfamilyresidence.gov.bc.ca/pdf/bcfrp_brochure.pdf)

# Community Resources

## Provincial Resources

|                                                                                                        |                |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| <b>BC Federation of Foster Parent Associations</b><br>www.bcfosterparents.ca                           | 1-800-663-9999 |
| <b>Foster Parent Support Line</b>                                                                      | 1-888-495-4440 |
| <b>Federation of Aboriginal Foster Parents</b><br>www.fafp.ca                                          | 1-866-291-7091 |
| <b>Federation of BC Youth in Care Networks</b><br>www.fbcyicn.ca                                       | 1-800-565-8055 |
| <b>Adoptive Families Association</b><br>www.bcadoption.com                                             | 1-877-236-7807 |
| <b>Pacific Post Partum Support Society</b><br>www.postpartum.org (also supporting adoption placements) | 604-255-7999   |
| <b>Parent Help Line</b>                                                                                | 1-888-603-9100 |
| <b>Parents Together</b>                                                                                | 604-325-0511   |
| <b>Parent Support Services of BC</b><br>www.parentsupport.bc.ca                                        | 1-800-665-6880 |
| <b>Representative for Children &amp; Youth</b><br>www.rcybc.ca                                         | 1-800-476-3933 |
| <b>FAE/S Support Network</b>                                                                           | 604-507-6675   |

## Coastal Fraser

*For contact information for local foster parent groups or support in your area, please call 1-800-663-9999.*

|                                                                                                        |              |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| <b>Hollyburn Family Services</b><br>www.hollyburn.ca                                                   | 604-987-8211 |
| <b>Vancouver Aboriginal Child &amp; Family Services Society</b><br>www.vacfss.com                      | 778-331-4500 |
| <b>Family Services of Greater Vancouver</b><br>www.fosterhub.ca                                        | 604-279-7100 |
| <b>Fraser Valley Foster Parent Association</b>                                                         | 604-865-1924 |
| <b>Abbotsford Community Services Foster Parent Caregiver Support</b>                                   | 604-859-2165 |
| <b>South Vancouver Youth Centre</b><br>www.svyc.ca<br>(Ask about their foster parent support workers!) | 604-325-2004 |

## Island

*For contact information for local foster parent groups or support in your area, please call 1-800-663-9999.*

|                                               |                |
|-----------------------------------------------|----------------|
| <b>Foster Parent Support Services Society</b> | 1-888-922-8437 |
| FPSSS (Victoria)                              | 778-430-5459   |
| FPSSS (Nanaimo)                               | 250-390-9686   |
| FPSSS (Campbell River)                        | 250-286-0555   |

|                                                                    |              |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| <b>Federation of Aboriginal Foster Parents</b><br>(Nanaimo office) | 250-591-0069 |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|

## Interior

*For contact information for local foster parent groups or support in your area, please call 1-800-663-9999.*

|                                                                     |              |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| <b>Federation of Aboriginal Foster Parents</b><br>(Westbank office) | 250-768-4229 |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|

|                                                                     |              |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| <b>Okanagan Foster Parent Association</b><br>www.okfosterparents.ca |              |
| Central Okanagan                                                    | 250-868-9285 |
| North Okanagan                                                      | 250-558-0939 |
| South Okanagan                                                      | 250-488-0561 |
| Shuswap                                                             | 250-253-4499 |

|                                                      |              |
|------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| <b>Okanagan Metis Children &amp; Family Services</b> | 250-868-0351 |
|------------------------------------------------------|--------------|

|                                                                           |                |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| <b>Interior Community Services</b><br>www.interiorcommunityservices.bc.ca | 1-877-376-3660 |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|

## North

*For contact information for local foster parent groups or support in your area, please call 1-800-663-9999.*

|                                                                                                      |                             |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <b>AXIS Family Resources</b><br>(24/7 support)<br>www.axis.bc.ca (satellite office locations online) | 1-877-392-1003<br>Press 205 |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|

*We are in the process of developing our Community Resources page. Please submit your relevant contacts to [jayne@bcfosterparents.ca](mailto:jayne@bcfosterparents.ca).*



**FEDERATION OF  
ABORIGINAL  
FOSTER PARENTS**

Provincial Office Location: 3455 Kaslo Street,  
Vancouver, BC V5M 3H4

Contact: 1-866-291-7091  
Local: 604-291-7091



**Federation of BC  
Youth In Care Networks**

Provincial Office Location: 55 8th Street, New  
Westminster, BC V3M 3N9

Contact: 1-800-565-8055

**Adoptive Families  
Association of BC**



Provincial Office Location: 200-7342 Winston  
Street, Burnaby, BC V5A 2H1

Contact: 1-877-ADOPT-07 (1-877-236-7807)  
Local: 604-320-7330



## Advertise Here! (1/2 page size)

### Readership, Exposure & Frequency

- **FosterlineBC** reaches over 3400 foster parents, agencies, community service locations, businesses and other individuals 4 times each year.
- Increase exposure for your business by advertising in **FosterlineBC**

### Cost

- 1/2 page ~ 4 issues per year ~ \$925
- 1/2 page ~ single issue ~ \$250
- 1/4 page ~ 4 issues per year ~ \$650
- 1/4 page ~ single issue ~ \$175
- Business card ~ 4 issues per year ~ \$475
- 1/4 page ~ single issue ~ \$125

For information on advertising in FosterlineBC,  
contact a staff member at BCFFPA! **1-800-663-9999**

**1/4 Page Size**

**Business Card Size**

**'IT PAYS TO BE A MEMBER'**

Please complete & return to: **BCFFPA 207-22561 Dewdney Trunk Road, Maple Ridge, V2X 3K1**

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City & Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_ Region: \_\_\_\_\_

Local Association \_\_\_\_\_

Level of Foster Home: (tick one) Restricted \_\_\_\_ Regular \_\_\_\_ Level I \_\_\_\_ Level II \_\_\_\_ Level III \_\_\_\_ Contractor \_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_

This is a: **New Membership** \_\_\_\_ (OR) a **Renewal** \_\_\_\_ .

**1 year:** individual \$30.00 \_\_\_\_ OR couple \$35.00 \_\_\_\_

**2 year:** individual \$50.00 \_\_\_\_ OR couple \$60.00 \_\_\_\_

\*\$10.00 of this membership fee will be used by the provincial body for administration of the program and development of services to foster parents. The balance of the fee will be returned to your region or local association.

I/we contract with (i.e. delegated agency regional agency MCFD etc.) Name: \_\_\_\_\_ OR my affiliation with the BCFFPA is (i.e. staff, MCFD, non-foster parent): \_\_\_\_\_. As members of the B.C. Federation of Foster Parent Associations, I/we agree to abide by the By-laws, Policy and Procedures, and Code of Ethics of the Federation. \_\_\_\_\_

[signature(s)]

Please bill my VISA \_\_\_\_ M/C \_\_\_\_ # \_\_\_\_\_ Expires \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

**BC Federation of Foster Parent Associations**

#207-22561 Dewdney Trunk

Maple Ridge BC

V2X 3K1