

BC Federation of Foster Parent Associations

FosterlineBC

Fostering Awareness



Summer 2012
Volume 10, Issue 2



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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

Summer is here at last. As I am writing this I am basking in the sun after several days of rain and flood warnings—what it is to live in the Interior during snow melt season. I hope you all have some fun plans for the summer (see Page 13 for ideas) and got your applications in on time for the Camps for Kids bursary.

We have had another successful AGM. The workshops were informative and fun. Russell Pohl talked on Advocacy and Support which is a timely subject due to the increase in support that the BCFFPA has been doing this past year. Restorative Justice was another workshop and was very well received by the foster parents. Grief and Loss as always was close to our hearts, and Kim Sinclair's workshop on Baggage, Boundaries and Balance was timely, but remind me next time not to sit so close to my husband when we are throwing nerf balls around the room. He knows I have a hard time with hand/eye coordination.

The new format for the AGM was well received by all. The World Café gave everyone a chance to have their say in an inclusive manner. I was so proud to be a foster parent and to hear how participants felt about what we do and shared ideas for improvement. What I took away was when we asked what is needed to help foster parents, just about all the response focused on ways to help the children and youth in care. We are compiling the information gathered and will use it towards developing an action plan to share with the Ministry. Look to the web site and FostlineBC magazine for reports on our progress.

We had our elections and I am serving my last term as President and Russell Pohl is now our Vice President. With his election to the position, the Secretary role became vacant and Tamara Smith was appointed to the position until next year's election. I want to thank both Russell and Tamara for stepping up and working for the foster parents of BC. I would also like to thank the whole board for all their hard work over the last year and for their dedication in the coming year.

An Honorary Lifetime Member was named this year. Sheila Davis has been a foster parent for over 27 years and during that time has served on every level of BCFFPA boards. She has always been there with her calm straight forward way helping us negotiate our path through the changing times. I have been honoured to work with Sheila since coming to the Provincial Board and will miss her as she takes a well-earned retirement. Good luck, Sheila, and thank you from all of us.

I would also like to thank the staff: Ronda, Tanya and Jayne for all the organization of the AGM and for the fun we had at the banquet and Loonie Auction. We had an all-time record bid of over \$500 for one item! All the proceeds from the auction go to support our Camp for Kids fund.

Heather Bayes  
President

## Notes from the Office

The BCFFPA provincial office is in summer clean-up mode. After the AGM each year we take a bit of time to put our files in order, make any changes that have come to our attention during the year and as a result of the annual audit, and to rearrange our stock of information and AGM supplies for the next year.

May is also the time of year that we have a meeting with the Minister to bring her up to date with our activities and statistics, to deliver our Annual Report and to ask her thoughts on how we can best move forward in partnership with the Ministry. Our meeting last month was attended by the Minister and her assistant as well as the Provincial Director of Child Welfare, Doug Hughes, who is presently overseeing our contract. Our relationship with Mr. Hughes is open and honest and Heather Bayes and I have had occasion to speak with him several times regarding critical Provincial issues. See Page 4 for his message to foster parents!

You may have heard that BCFFPA is doing more support work than we had been over the past 10 years. Please be aware that our support program, though coordinated by the office, is delivered by trained and very skilled foster parent volunteers and at present, we have only a few to serve the province! We're here for you, but we're definitely multitasking, so please bear with us. We'll be running a training in the Fall for a few volunteers—hopefully a couple from each region—implementing a revised and updated curriculum. Stay tuned for more Information coming via e-mail.

With the need to redirect more of our funding to direct support for foster parents, the Board has elected to move to an electronic version of the FosterlineBC magazine. There will still be some available for those who do not have e-mail access. See page 9 for more information.

Jayne Wilson  
Executive Director

### 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



Call us!

fosterlineBC

1-800-663-9999

We're here for you





This message will undoubtedly reach you as you are counting down these last few days of the school year – maybe even taking part in graduation ceremonies – and beginning to make plans for what we hope is a warm, sunny and relaxing summer.

I wanted to give each of you a better sense of what the year ahead holds for the Ministry of Children and Family Development. We have just released the MCFD *2012/13 – 2014/15 Operational and Strategic Directional Plan* – created with the input of many of our key stakeholders and community partners, including the BC Federation of Foster Parent Associations (BCFFPA) -- which outlines the key actions and areas of focus for the ministry over the coming three years, building on the solid foundation already in place. I wanted to touch on a few of these in this note and encourage you, if you have a few minutes in what I know are your already very busy schedules to have a read through of the plan.

First, an important and ongoing focus for us is to continue to strengthen our relationship with Aboriginal partners across the province to improve outcomes for Aboriginal children, youth and families. We are also committed to strengthening services for vulnerable children and youth – and building on their own strengths and the strengths of those around them -- through an emphasis on collaborative strategies such as family group conferencing and mediation services.

Services for children who are in the care of the ministry – and achieving meaningful outcomes for these children and youth – continues to be a central priority in our work, and a goal we share with each of you. To this end, we continue to build on Kinship Care options through involvement of extended family members – and to build on past initiatives aimed at ensuring permanence for children in care, with a focus on collaborative planning with foster parents and community members.

We know that strengthening our foster care system is vitally important in achieving better outcomes for children and youth in care. Your work – your role as foster parents is, without question, the foundation for a strong support network for those children who, for a variety of reasons, must live outside their family homes. Recruitment, selection, education, training, supervision, support, recognition and compensation are key factors in the development and retention of a strong and diverse range of foster caregivers. In my role as Provincial Director of Child Welfare I continue to work closely with the executive of the BCFFPA to review and refine all of these elements on a continuous basis to ensure a quality system across the province.

My wish is for the coming year is to continue to build on the relationship we have forged -- both at the regional and provincial levels -- and to work together to find better ways to help children and youth in care realize their full potential. MCFD social workers, and most importantly, children and youth in care, look to you – our province's foster parents -- as the foundation, and the heart, which keeps our province's child welfare system strong and vital.



***Doug Hughes***

Provincial Director of Child Welfare  
Ministry of Children and Family Development

Check the link on BCFFPA's webpage to view MCFD's *2012/13–2014/15 Operational and Strategic Directional Plan*  
[www.bcfosterparents.ca](http://www.bcfosterparents.ca)

An organization's ability to learn, and translate that learning into action rapidly, is the ultimate competitive advantage. ~ Jack Welch

Over the past year we have re-established our network of community agencies, ensuring we take advantage of all opportunities for partnership. We have refocused our strategic plan to include measurable short and long term goals and, in support of our goals, we have secured a determined, knowledgeable and skilled Board and Staff team to carry us forward.

Some of our goals include:

- ☑ Online membership and AGM registration payments
- ☑ Provincial identification cards for foster parents
- ☑ Employ an Advocacy and Support Coordinator
- ☑ Redesigned website
- ☑ Tiered membership structure
- ☑ Regional offices
- ☑ Increased partnership with adoption initiatives
- ☑ Accreditation

This year's efforts have been successful. Though our membership numbers stayed about the same at 28% of BC's foster parents, we have an increase in *new* members. Our total revenues for membership were well over our projected budget with \$9500 to the Local Foster Parent Associations across the province. Though our core funding has not changed significantly, we are happy to report successes with fundraising and donation initiatives. We raised \$6,000 with the Love Is In The Air raffle (huge thanks to **Westjet** for their donation of a trip for 2!), and our donation efforts for AGM and Youth In Care Christmas Dinner and Gift Giving brought an abundance of items!

We have worked steadily throughout the year to represent the voice of foster parents at Residential Review and Education Advisory Table meetings, both initiatives enthusiastically supported by the Minister and Deputy Minister in their efforts to bring about positive change and partnership with foster parents.

Challenges we have encountered included increasing our regional involvement in areas of BC which are presently well served by regional agencies. We say an enthusiastic "bravo!" to the agencies and services that operate in areas where foster parents are very satisfied with the services they are receiving. We continue to address regional variances from policy with MCFD provincial office.

As always, BCFFPA will continue to identify areas where service expansion is needed, policy and practice require reinforcement or change, and to ensure that we are offering a compassionate ear and knowledgeable support wherever we can to BC's foster parents.

As many who attended the May 2011 AGM will recall, we were tremendously successful with donations for services, family activities and gifts for foster parents to bid on through the raffles and draws. We enjoyed the same success with our Youth In Care Christmas Party donation drive in Winter 2011.

We received an exciting donation for a trip for 2 anywhere Westjet flies this past Fall and held our "Love Is In The Air" Raffle, drawn on February 14th. *The lucky winner, a busy foster parent with a house full of children, was K. Simpson from Armstrong, BC!* Congratulations and we hope you enjoy your vacation!

MCFD renewed our 1 year contract for another 2 years, now to be reviewed in 2014. Still our sustaining source of revenue, we have a strong and enduring partnership with the Ministry.

We have identified areas where we would like to expand our services and are presently pursuing additional funding through alternative sources in order to support these goals.

## 2011-2012 Achievements and Activities

- Held Provincial Partnership project wrap-up meeting
- Partnered in the coordination of the 1st BC Child and Youth In Care Week event
- Secured a two-year contract renewal
- Met with Provincial MCFD staff and leaders to provide compiled list of regional practice concerns
- Participated in International Foster Care Organization (IFCO) Conference 2011 Planning Committee
- Attended, presented and hosted a table at the IFCO Conference in Victoria, BC
- Participated in Education Advisory Table meetings and conference calls (Residential Review)
- Attended Federation of Aboriginal Foster Parents AGM
- 7th Annual Youth in Care Christmas Dinner and Gift Giving
- Delivered Rider Insurance workshops through the Interior, on the Coast and in Victoria
- Assisted with set-up of 2 new Lower Mainland Local Foster Parent Associations
- Attended the Proclamation ceremonies of BC Child and Youth in Care Week and the 21st Annual Foster Family Month Celebration at the Legislature
- Established a connection with the opposition critic for MCFD
- Attended 3 regional Federation of Community Social Services AGMs
- Partnered with MCFD in a workshop series called InsideOUT for young people who have parents with mental health issues
- First steps in the creation of a short documentary foster parent recruitment tool

## Rider Insurance Program for Foster Parents (An Annual Summary)

by Ralph Libby of Megson Fitzpatrick Insurance Services

The insurance program has been providing protection to foster parents for over 25 years!

The program has been set up and administered by the Federation to protect the property of foster parents, should damage occur due to the actions of a foster child. The policy will protect you to a maximum of \$500,000.00. We are still actively pursuing increasing the limit to \$750,000 to provide a greater level of comfort to foster parents in the event of a total loss. The important factor for Rider Insurance coverage is that you must carry primary insurance in order for this Rider to be activated. Your policy becomes the basis of the coverage provided by the Rider. If you have theft coverage on your primary policy, then you have theft coverage on the rider, and so on.

The deductible on this policy is the same as the deductible on your existing home or tenants policy, subject to a minimum of \$500.

Be sure to inform your insurance broker that you are fostering, as the insurance company needs to know this information. Have

your broker put a note on your file and have them check with the insurance company to ensure that there are no restrictions.

If you have problems or difficulty in obtaining insurance coverage please feel free to call Cary Augustini at our office at 1-877-477-2276 (toll free) or via email:

caugustini@megsonfitzpatrick.com

Again this year, I was personally honoured to travel throughout the province with your executive director and discuss the insurance program with many foster parents. I hope that the information that we provided was of value to you. We provided 9 workshops in the Lower Mainland, the Island and the Interior regions attended by 123 foster parents and social workers.

We are presently deciding on how best to host a webinar or YouTube video series so that foster parents in the far reaches of the province can access the workshop online. We'll keep you posted about access to an online version of the Rider Insurance Workshop.

If you have any insurance questions please contact Jayne Wilson or Ronda Sweeney at the Federation office. The Federation staff are always there to help you and will work diligently on your behalf.

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



Call Megson Fitzpatrick  
Insurance Services.  
*Ralph Libby or Barb Fowler  
will be happy to assist you.*  
250-595-5212  
www.megsonfitzpatrick.com

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

### **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.

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

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

1. Respectful treatment of foster parents across the province.
2. Babysitting policy development.
3. Establishing BCFFPA's regional MCFD communication network to ensure that regional issues are dealt with more efficiently.
4. Mileage rates.
5. Creating lists of regional concerns that will be updated quarterly and shared with MCFD so that we can resolve these concerns together.
6. Addressing MCFD practice of regional variances from policy.



## Foster Parents Can Help Change the Stigma Associated With Mental Illness

by Lilia Zaharieva

I'd like to preface my article in FosterlineBC with some words of the most sincere gratitude. Foster parents of British Columbia: thank you for opening your homes and hearts to the children and youth in our province that need it the most. Your job is never-ending, trying on many levels, and too often goes unnoticed.

I've certainly benefitted from the care of some very supportive foster parents over the years since my placement in government care at the age of fifteen. My need for care was determined by the presence of serious mental illness in the family. My beautiful and brilliant mother was a professor of linguistics at the University of Victoria when she experienced the onset of Schizophrenia. It certainly doesn't discriminate. All of the degrees, merits and accomplishments did not matter in the slow decline of her beautiful mind.

In my very young age, I still knew that something was amiss. My parent was changing and slipping away from me before my very eyes. In attempts to shield and protect me, the Schizophrenia was never discussed. Far from protecting me, this added to the loneliness and confusion I was facing. I'll never forget the first time my mother was hospitalized. I missed her terribly, but was not allowed to ask why. Furthermore, I was too insecure to reach out for support in fear of judgement and rejection. Trusted with keeping our darkest family secret, I put up a happy facade and proceeded with life as usual. I worked incredibly hard at school, convinced that if I had higher grades and was a better child, my mom would cease her sadness.

My little brother became my responsibility, as did much of the household work. I know now that this was my assumption of a 'young carer' role, defined by the shouldering of burdens greater than those deemed as appropriate by society. It was exhausting, and not until years later that I identified the effects of this parentification at a young age and was able to fully mourn the loss of a normal childhood.

One third of young carers are placed into this role because of mental illness. Many of them, whether openly or not, have likely ended up in your care.

I urge you as guardians of these young people, to have patience, to act with discretion and to always read between the lines. The effects of this sort of upbringing can wreak havoc on a young person's life, but our societal neglect of this issue leaves many alone and unwilling to come forward. Children of mentally ill parents face the highest risk of any other group for mental illness themselves, but our reactive system fails to meet their needs. Is it any wonder that research has named them 'the invisible dimension of mental health?'

Psychoeducation, support from strong adult figures, and the space to make mistakes, be a kid and just 'be' are a few of the ways that you can acknowledge these youth in your care. The invisibility of mental illness contributes to the misunderstanding and stigma perpetuated in our culture. By modeling

compassion and meeting them exactly where they are, you have an opportunity to empower these young people.

The expected ups and downs of my mom's illness made it so that some days I loved her, other days I was angry and unwilling to nurture the relationship. Both of these reactions are entirely normal and it is important that young people feel supported in drawing their own boundaries. I would have wished for my own foster parents to see this, and to withhold judgement towards my biological parent regardless of the current status of her health. Studies show that as awareness of mental illness increases, the negative stigma rises with it. Change will start with people like you.

I am pleased to report that my mother is doing remarkably well, that we have rebuilt a supportive and fulfilling relationship, and that I have had the opportunity, thanks in part to the BCFFPA and MCFD to turn my experience into a support and education group for youth aged 13-19 titled InsideOUT. It is a difficult task, one not possible without the acknowledgment of you, the ones trusted with raising our most vulnerable population.

I am hopeful for a better vision of mental health in BC, and I believe that change can only begin when we examine our attitudes and grow from the inside out.

[www.thinkinsideout.ca](http://www.thinkinsideout.ca)



From left: Sobhana Daniel, Jayne Wilson, Lily Zaharieva, Minister McNeil

### Event Tickets for BC's 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).



## Our Heartfelt Thanks to Chuck Eamer and Sobhana Daniel

Flying under the radar of public awareness at MCFD's Provincial office are two heroes to BCFFPA. Retired Assistant Deputy Minister, Chuck Eamer, and newly assigned Director of Provincial Projects, Sobhana Daniel.

Before his retirement, Chuck was instrumental in creating a more direct way for BCFFPA to communicate with regional MCFD offices. His supportive guidance during a challenging time was invaluable to our executive team. We wish Chuck the best in his retirement!

Our mentor for the past 2 years, Sobhana Daniel, has recently been assigned to a wonderful new position in the Deputy Minister's office! Thank you for the gifts of partnership, strategic thinking and tremendous insight you offered as our contract liaison. Congratulations on your new position and we appreciate all of your efforts on our behalf.

## Programs and Services in 2011-2012

|                                               |        |
|-----------------------------------------------|--------|
| General, Information & Intake Calls/E-mail    | 16,225 |
| Support & Advocacy Calls/E-mail               | 12,660 |
| Insurance-Related Calls/E-mail                | 686    |
| MCFD Fostering Brochures Requested            | 813    |
| MCFD Fostering Brochures (other distribution) | 1,223  |
| Intakes/Potential Foster Parents              | 364    |
| Insurance Claims                              | 22     |
| Insurance Workshops                           | 9      |
| Insurance Workshop Attendees                  | 123    |
| Network & Partnership Meetings                | 156    |
| Support Meetings                              | 783    |
| Website Updates                               | 46     |
| BCFFPA & Rider Brochures Distributed          | 12,460 |
| Newsletters Distributed                       | 14,600 |

## Donations to BCFFPA Support Our Foster Families

Thank you to the generous donors who provided 36 donations toward door prizes and auction items for our AGM! Together we raised over \$2030 for foster kids to attend summer camp through our Camp for Kids program this year!

And thanks so much to Kari Bepple of Interior Community Services for acting as our enthusiastic and entertaining auctioneer again this year, and to Russell Pohl who roused the audience into record-breaking generosity. Prince George's donated basket was paired with a free stay at Sun Peaks Resort. The combination raised \$506!

*"The foundation  
of the foster system  
is relationships."*

... Doug Hughes  
Provincial Director of Child Welfare



*to our generous funders and donors!*

### Ministry of Children and Family Development

Estate of M. MacLean  
Mr. Mom's World  
The Fairmont Empress Hotel  
The Boathouse, English Bay  
Science World  
Old Spaghetti Factory  
Whistler Mountain Resort  
Seymour Mountain Resort  
Vancouver Zoo  
Tim Hortons, Langley  
Royal BC Museum  
Bootlegger  
Capilano Suspension Bridge  
Hell's Gate Airtram  
Spirit Ridge Vineyard Resort/Spa

M. Graydon  
Purdy's Head Office  
The Keg, Richmond  
Hyak Wilderness Adventures  
WildPlay Element Parks  
Subway Restaurants  
Chemainus Theatre  
Hell's Gate Airtram  
Accent Inns  
Cactus Club Cafe  
PNE/Playland  
Interior Whitewater Expeditions  
Grouse Mountain Resorts Ltd.  
Fernie Mountain Lodge  
Delta Sun Peaks Resort

Barkerville Historic Town  
Save On Foods  
Helium 2 Go  
CKNW Orphans Fund  
Costco, Port Coquitlam  
Westjet  
Splashdown Waterparks Inc.  
HR McMillan Space Centre  
Red Robin, Burnaby  
Minstrel Café and Bar  
Vancouver Aquarium  
British Columbia Wildlife Park  
Castle Fun Park  
Old Spaghetti Factory  
Butchart Gardens

Vancouver Giants Hockey Club  
Planet Laser, Kelowna  
Cineplex Odeon  
Vancouver Canucks  
Enchanted Forest  
Planet Ice, Kelowna  
Orchard Park Shopping Centre  
Northern Lights Wildlife  
Tonics Pub and Grill  
Panago  
Kelowna Arts Centre  
Kelowna Actors Studio  
Alantis Waterslides  
NK'Mip Cellars  
Accent Inns



## ~ Don't Foster In Isolation ~ Join a Foster Parent Local—Join BCFFPA!

Foster parents across the province join together in Local Association meetings as frequently as once every month. There are active foster parent locals in every region and if there isn't one near you, it's easy to start one! Gathering together on a regular basis gives foster parents the much needed sense of community that's needed when they're working within the complex Ministry/child welfare structure. Some of our Locals in outlying areas meet via Skype or have regular Facebook discussions while others enjoy a monthly meeting at a member's home or a community coffee shop.

Activities hosted by Locals include monthly/quarterly meetings, community events, workshops with guest speakers, family barbecues, Christmas parties and recreation activities. Locals are run by an elected executive committee that follow the policies and procedures of BCFFPA. Your Local reports to BCFFPA annually to provide a current list of executive members and financial statements and in return receives quarterly cheques for membership fees that we have received from foster parents in your region. Joining your Local and BCFFPA is a great way to participate in governance of your representative organization. By supporting BCFFPA, your voice is heard as we advocate for policy and practice development and changes that affect present and future BC foster parents.

Some of our local meetings are posted on our website! For more information about contacting or starting a Local Foster Parent Association near you, please call Ronda Sweeney at BCFFPA at 1-800-663-9999.

### **Congratulations to 2 New Lower Mainland Locals!!**

If you live in the **Surrey/Delta/Langley** or **Chilliwack/Hope** areas, and are interested and learning more about these two new Locals, please contact Tamara Smith at 778-549-7440.



### **An Everyday Deal for Members of BCFFPA!**

The Fairmont Empress has generously extended to us a special off-season Rate for foster parents who are members

of BCFFPA. If you are travelling to Victoria or live nearby and need a weekend escape between October 1st and April 30th, stay at the Empress with significant discounts on their Fairmont and Fairmont Gold room prices. Contact us for information on our special rates and how to process your



## **Read This!**



In order to invest more of our contract dollars into services for foster parents, we are planning to change our FosterlineBC seasonal newsletter distribution to an electronic and e-mail format.

As a foster parent in BC you should be receiving 4 FosterlineBC newsletters each year. If you are a member of BCFFPA already, we likely have an e-mail address on file. If you are not a member, you will receive a phone call from one of our staff members or volunteers to request your e-mail address specifically for the purpose of newsletter distribution.

If you would like to save yourselves a phone call or if you *are* a member and your e-mail address has changed, please let us know! Send us a quick e-mail to:

**[office@bcfosterparents.ca](mailto:office@bcfosterparents.ca)**

*...include your name and your postal address* so that we are able to add you to the appropriate regional e-mail list. If you don't presently have a computer and would like to continue to receive the newsletter by mail, please contact 1-800-663-9999 and let us know!

### **Are you a member of the Canadian Foster Family Association?**

The CFFA is a non-profit organization and was established with a mandate to speak as a collective voice for foster families throughout the country. Our primary goal is to enhance the quality of care provided to children and youth in care across Canada. To accomplish this the CFFA has representation from the Provinces and Territories and works with the Provincial/Territorial organizations.

The CFFA does not receive any funding at the Provincial/Territorial or Federal levels of government. Our funds come from membership fees, private donations and fundraising initiatives.

With funds such as these the CFFA will have the opportunity to develop relevant documents to assist and support foster families, lobby for and connect with foster families across the country and have a strong voice at the National level.

For more information or to join the CFFA, please visit the website at [www.canadianfosterfamilyassociation.ca](http://www.canadianfosterfamilyassociation.ca).



**You can donate to BCFFPA through CanadaHelps!**

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

Happy summer time everyone. I hope you are enjoying time with your families and taking it a little more easy than usual.

Earlier this year, I released a major report calling for a more coordinated system to protect B.C. children living with domestic violence. *Honouring Kaitlynn, Max and Cordon: Make Their Voices Heard* points out disconnects between service systems that so urgently need to be working closely together in domestic violence situations.

Kaitlynn, Max and Cordon were killed by their father, Allan Schoenborn, in April 2008. They were 10, 8 and 5 when they died. During their short lives, they lived with upheaval and anxiety caused by domestic violence and their father's untreated mental illness and addictions.

The loss of these children is heartbreaking, and even more so because they were preventable deaths. If the social safety net made up of child protection, income assistance, justice and mental health supports had worked appropriately and in partnership, there is a high likelihood that the deaths of these three children would not have happened.

A key recommendation in the report is that the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Children and Family Development take immediate steps to ensure that staff and professionals connected to their services understand the risks to children of parents with a serious untreated mental illness.

The other main recommendation is that the B.C. government must demonstrate a renewed and serious commitment to protect children living with domestic violence. Government was asked to provide a comprehensive plan for this renewed commitment by September 2012.

On the day I released it, the Ministry of Children and Family Development announced the creation of the Provincial Office of Domestic Violence.

This office will be accountable for ensuring all domestic violence policies, programs and services are effective and delivered in a unified way across government. The new office will be the permanent lead for government, focusing on strengthening the services and supports available for children and families affected by domestic violence.

The Provincial Office of Domestic Violence's responsibility is to ensure co-ordination and collaboration throughout government to build an improved system around domestic violence.

In March I also released *The Impact of Criminal Justice Funding Decisions on Children in B.C.* This special report demonstrates the need for clear direction and action to ensure B.C. children are not impacted by criminal justice funding decisions.

This special report was required after a serious child abuse prosecution was stayed by the provincial court in January 2010. In this case, 13 charges related to serious violence and sexual abuse of a child had been laid against the alleged perpetrator. However, there was apparently not enough money to translate witness statements into English – vital evidence that the accused and his lawyer were entitled to view. The failure to provide these translations resulted in the judge ordering a stay of proceedings because of a breach of constitutional rights of the accused to a fair trial and to be tried within a reasonable time.

The girl and her family members in this case were effectively denied access to justice. This contributed to the suffering of an entire family, and in particular added to the distress and isolation of a girl who was allegedly victimized and severely traumatized.

The issue of access to justice services for immigrant children and families is of great concern because of British Columbia's increasing ethnic and linguistic diversity. The events that are the subject of this report are symptomatic of the challenges facing the justice system in B.C., particularly in relation to safeguarding children, because of changing demographics.

While no component of the justice system has access to unlimited funding, there should be no approach to prioritizing funds that would not make this case a top priority within the criminal justice system. Allowing budgetary considerations to outweigh the plight of vulnerable children is shocking and unacceptable.

To access a copy of either these reports I've discussed, please go to [www.rcybc.com](http://www.rcybc.com)

I am pleased to let you know that nominations for the Representative for Children and Youth's fifth annual Awards of Excellence are now being accepted. These awards recognize excellence in British Columbia's child- and youth-serving system. Individuals and organizations whose work contributes to improving the lives of children and youth in B.C. are honoured and acknowledged.

There are seven Awards of Excellence categories and winners will be recognized and honoured at awards ceremonies in the fall 2012. The deadline for nominations is August 1, 2012, at 4:00 PM Pacific Standard Time. For nomination forms and more information on the Representative's Awards of Excellence, please visit [www.rcybc.ca](http://www.rcybc.ca).



Thanks, Mary Ellen, for the service  
you provide to BC's kids!

## Regional Delegate Annual Reports 2011-2012

### Coast Fraser Region by Tamara Smith

I came to this new role of Coast Fraser Delegate in February 2012. I am enjoying the process of becoming more familiar with the business of the Provincial Board of Directors and the fostering activities, issues and initiatives across our province.

Together with Russell Pohl on our Board, I participate in a large number of support cases across our region and we are working together on the redesign of our Support Worker and Advocacy Program. The recent changes at MCFD have had quite an impact in my own Abbotsford Local but also in other areas of Coast Fraser. Working together with MCFD in partnership is sometimes challenging for foster parents, but we continue to build respectful working relationships that will hopefully result in a solid care team for all of BC's children in care.

While I am still building my network and making contact with the Local Presidents from my region, my goal is to ensure that BCFFPA is visible and accessible to all foster parents.

I look forward to the next year as we are seeing a lot of positive changes. I believe that caregivers need to come together in a collective voice as we move through this change, and take our place as professionals in the industry of child welfare. We are often the voice for our children and we need to be strong, educated in the industry and active in protecting our rights and theirs. Most social service industries have the advantage of belonging to a larger group so they are not left standing alone. It is my hope that in the next year more and more caregivers come along beside us and have their voice heard.

### Vancouver Island Region by Jo Axe

The Island region has a unique culture and enjoys a cohesive foster parent network through the efforts of the regional agency and their coordinators across the region. BCFFPA has an increasing number of callers from the Island for foster parent recruitment and intake and we're happy to report that our membership has increased on the Island by 15% over the past year.

Over the past year we have heard about some challenges that have resulted in foster parents being without resource workers for a period of time.

Foster Family Month was memorable with a celebration at the BC Legislature attended by the Representative for Children and Youth and the Minister of Children and Family Development. In December the Ministry had a gathering for the Lighting of the Tree at the Legislature. It was a delightful experience enjoyed by adults and children alike.

Working in a local partnership with Foster Parent Support Services Society and the local coordinator for Federation of Aboriginal Foster Parent Associations is one of BCFFPA's goals.

Our executive director and I continue to make contact with both organizations as possible to explore opportunities for ongoing partnership.

### Interior Region by Kevin Daniel

It's hard to believe another year has passed since our last AGM. During the past year we have seen some new issues arise and some old ones rear their ugly heads.

Here are some of this years concerns:

- Last year's AGM was too short, too fast and not enough discussion.
- We require a provincial Standard for protocol investigations.
- Mileage amount are inadequate.
- 30, 60 and 90 day contracts are being used more.
- There is a great deal of 'black and white' thinking.
- Adoption timelines and processes.
- Foster parents are not being treated with respect or as part of the care team.
- New Integrated Case Management system.

We continue to deal with these issue on many different levels locally, regionally and through the provincial Board.

I would like to thank the group of people who have made it easier for us to communicate with our Locals and on a Provincial level. These are our area reps on the regional Macro Board: Marcy, Yvonne, Mary Anne, Sandy, and Gerri. I would also like to thank our ICS and OFPA Reps (Kari, Joan, and Mel), as well as our MCFD contact, Nancy McComb. This group of people has continued to meet on a monthly basis by phone conference to discuss our concerns and to brainstorm and share ideas.

On a positive note we have seen a renewed interest in some areas in respect to training with as much as a 150% increase in attendance! These are some of the courses we've seen over the last year.

- Derek Clarke
- Safe Babies
- Trauma Based Parenting
- Dr. Martin Brokenleg
- Non-Violent Crisis Intervention
- Dr. Bruce Perry

Reflecting on IFCO nine months later, it was fantastic. Foster parents, youth, and agencies continue to talk about the great opportunity for networking and what a learning experience it was. We've seen information that was learned at this event passed along to our foster parents through several different events.

In closing if you have a question or issue that you need help with, please feel free to contact me at one of these two emails:

[fuddmon@telus.net](mailto:fuddmon@telus.net) or [interior\\_delegate@bcfosterparents.ca](mailto:interior_delegate@bcfosterparents.ca)



## Regional Delegate Reports Continued

### North Region by Lee Lachmuth

I am honored to be the delegate for the North. The people of the North are a very resilient group able to carry on no matter what is presented. Foster parents have been doing a good job and with additional supports and the development of BCFFPA Locals and partnership meetings in all areas this work will carry on offering stable, strong, loving and committed homes for children and help for families.

The northern area is large with many little communities where foster parents are giving care to children and helping families often in isolation from other foster parents and supports. I hope to encourage and assist foster parents in our northern communities to communicate with each other and form locals in order for us to communicate better and advocate for and support each other.

As the Northern Delegate for BCFFPA I believe it is important for us to have the voice of all foster parents in the North. Obtaining these voices presents a challenge, demographically and financially. I hope to meet this challenge in a respectful, reliable and effective manner. I also hope to develop relationships between our Locals and MCFD staff, Aboriginal Agencies and Support agencies and others in our communities who offer assistance to families.

I believe in working individually and as a respected member of a team for the support and advocacy of foster parents and families.

Thanks to everyone who has welcomed me and assisted me in my position with BCFFPA and I look forward to continued positive change benefiting families.



### 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)

## Membership Services Report by Ronda Sweeney

It has certainly been a year of change! Here at the provincial office we have been working hard to increase our membership. We did three membership drives; one each in the Interior, Vancouver Coastal and Vancouver Island ending the year with renewal reminders in December 2011. Our membership is standing steady at 28% of BC foster parents. Our goal is to complete membership drives in Northern BC and Fraser regions this year.

We are in the process of completing phone surveys in order to have a personal connection with our members throughout BC and to find out more about our members' thoughts about our services. The feedback we are receiving is very informative and will help us create change within our organization and fostering practices within our province.

Another focus this year was to increase foster parent awareness about the Rider Insurance program. We attended 9 workshops across BC to educate foster Parents and MCFD workers and get the word out that all foster parents have extended property damage insurance coverage should something happen. Should you wish to receive more information about Rider Insurance please contact me 1.800.663.9999.

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce Tanya Pitts our Volunteer Coordinator & Administrative Support. Tanya joined our team in March 2012 and is taking on our membership services assistant role.

I encourage you to contact Tanya or myself with any questions, concerns or suggestions. You can reach us at the provincial office at our Fosterline number—1.800.663.9999. Open communication is the best policy and we welcome your input.



## Cloverdale Paint

**offers helpful money-saver  
discounts for BCFFPA Members!**

**With these great savings you can't  
afford *not* to spruce up your home!**

Call the BCFFPA Provincial office for details  
about how to get your discount

## Summer Fun Activities

When was the last time you ate dessert first, built a blanket fort or lay on your back in the grass to look for shapes in clouds? Summer. It's a time for fun and relaxation. Here are some ideas on how your family can spend your dog-days of summer.

- ✓ Try making your own ice cream from scratch
- ✓ Check out a farmer's market
- ✓ Build a mini golf course in your back yard
- ✓ Host an "everybody's birthday" party
- ✓ Have a nature scavenger hunt
- ✓ Camp in your backyard
- ✓ Plant a summer garden
- ✓ Go for a family bike ride
- ✓ Build a backyard water park
- ✓ Sidewalk art!
- ✓ Build a fairy house or a sports-fort out of boxes
- ✓ Find a free concert
- ✓ Create an outdoor movie theatre and host another family
- ✓ Visit a beach with a picnic
- ✓ Go for a hike
- ✓ Teach your kids to cook a new recipe
- ✓ Fill your yard with bubbles
- ✓ Spend an hour doing the opposite of what you'd usually do
- ✓ Make a puppet show
- ✓ Take a road trip
- ✓ Take a tour of a historical site
- ✓ Host a dance party
- ✓ Swimming at the pool or beach
- ✓ Find a petting zoo
- ✓ Build a tree fort
- ✓ Discover something new together
- ✓ Volunteer some time at your local SPCA
- ✓ Help your kids create dream boards
- ✓ Have a water fight
- ✓ Pick berries and make jam
- ✓ Go on a treasure walk with a bucket



### 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.

## BCFFPA's Present Strategic Plan

Our present Strategic Plan was created in the summer of 2011 and includes:

### 1 Year Goals

#### *BC Foster Parent ID Cards*

A proposal is presently being developed for the creation and distribution of BC Foster Parent ID Card Program. This initiative will require a committee to work through the logistics of delivery. Preliminary discussions with MCFD have been very encouraging.

#### *Online Membership Applications and Renewals*

We are presently working through the details of completing membership applications and renewals and taking payments and donations online.

### 1 to 3 Year Goals

#### *Membership Levels (BC Foster Parent ID Cards)*

If our BC Foster Parent ID Cards proposal is successful we will be proposing to our members an alternative membership structure which will not only provide all BC foster parents with a basic membership, but will dramatically increase our revenues for distribution to regional Locals.

#### *Advocate/Support Staff*

While at present we provide support and advocacy services to any foster parent in BC regardless of membership status or location, we do so without being funded for this program. Our present volunteer program is burdensome on our skilled and dedicated volunteers. Funds are being sought to employ an Advocate/Support Coordinator who will manage our support program across the province.

#### *Increase Community Network*

We always make a concerted effort to partner with other agencies on common initiatives. Fostering lends itself to partnerships with Adoption and Youth-in-Care programs and, of course, working with the Federation of Aboriginal Foster Parents whenever there is an opportunity. We already partner with these agencies on provincial events, but continue to seek initiatives of common interest.

### 2 to 5 Year Goals

#### *Raise the Profile of BCFFPA*

Through targeted expansion of our services and increased funding, to broaden our reach across the province.

Relocate the Provincial office to a more central location.

### Long Term Goals

- Open 2 branch offices with regional staff to provide support, advocacy, education workshops and to liaise with regional MCFD leaders regarding regional variances and policy development.
- Accreditation.

# Community Resources

## Provincial Resources

**BC Federation of Foster Parent Associations** 1-800-663-9999  
www.bcfosterparents.ca

**Foster Parent Support Line** 1-888-495-4440

**Federation of Aboriginal Foster Parents** 1-866-291-7091  
www.fafp.ca

**Federation of BC Youth in Care Networks** 1-800-565-8055  
www.fbcyicn.ca

**Adoptive Families Association** 1-877-236-7807  
www.bcadoption.com

**Pacific Post Partum Support Society** 604-255-7999  
www.postpartum.org (also supporting adoption placements)

**Parent Help Line** 1-888-603-9100

**Parents Together** 604-325-0511

**Parent Support Services of BC** 1-800-665-6880  
www.parentsupport.bc.ca

**Representative for Children & Youth** 1-800-476-3933  
www.rcybc.ca

**FAE/S Support Network** 604-507-6675

## Coastal Fraser

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

**Hollyburn Family Services** 604-987-8211  
www.hollyburn.ca

**Vancouver Aboriginal Child & Family Services Society** 778-331-4500  
www.vacfss.com

**Family Services of Greater Vancouver** 604-279-7100  
www.fosterhub.ca

**Fraser Valley Foster Parent Association** 604-865-1924

**Abbotsford Community Services Foster Parent Caregiver Support** 604-859-2165

**South Vancouver Youth Centre** 604-325-2004  
www.svyc.ca  
(Ask about their foster parent support workers!)

## Island

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

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

**Federation of Aboriginal Foster Parents**  
(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.*

**Federation of Aboriginal Foster Parents**  
(Westbank office) 250-768-4229

**Okanagan Foster Parent Association**  
www.okfosterparents.ca  
Central Okanagan 250-868-9285  
North Okanagan 250-558-0939  
South Okanagan 250-488-0561  
Shuswap 250-253-4499

**Okanagan Metis Children & Family Services** 250-868-0351

**Interior Community Services** 1-877-376-3660  
www.interiorcommunityservices.bc.ca

## North

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

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

*We are in the process of developing our Community Resources page. Please submit your relevant contacts to 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