

BC Federation of Foster Parent Associations

# *FosterlineBC*

Summer 2013  
Volume 11, 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

Happy Summer! It is one of the most exciting and most anticipated times of the year. Every child has a million plans for the 2 months off school and every teen dreams of the extra hours of sleep and time spent at the local beach with friends. As foster parents we try to figure out how to make all the appointments work and still have time for fun.

I hope all of you take a little time for yourselves and enjoy the freedoms of summer. During the busy school year we spend much of our time just trying to keep everyone's schedule straight and still get dinner on the table on time. We deserve the freedom of cook-outs and beaches, hikes and camping, so go out there and enjoy. If you're planning to stay near home, don't forget to find some simple ways to take time for self-care.

We had a great time at the AGM and for all of you who attended—thank you. I am torn over which was best—the AGM itself and the questions that were brought forward or Friday evening's Wellness Room with wine and cheese. The massage was fantastic! Thank you to Megson Fitzpatrick for the self-care evening. From all reports back, the weekend was a great success. I am looking forward to our next AGM in Prince George.

On behalf of the Board of Directors I'd like to thank the members of our governance team that have moved on this year—Jo Axe, who represented the Island over the past couple of years, Kathrynne Coxon who wore the Coast Fraser Delegate hat for the past year and Lee Lachmuth, who will be moving away from the North region and therefore stepping down from her role representing the North on the provincial Board. Thank you all for your dedication to BC's foster parents. We will miss you a great deal.

Welcome back to our newest Board member, Les Toth, who many of you may recall as our former Treasurer. Les will be representing the Island as Regional Delegate.

Now that the election is over and the cabinet has been named we can put our attention back to the Communities of Caring project. I would like to congratulate Minister Cadieux on being reappointed as Minister of Children and Family Development and to welcome Deputy Minister Mark Sieben back to the fold after a brief time out of MCFD.

Go out and have a great summer, just don't forget to let the social workers know where the kids are!

Heather Bayes  
President



**fosterlineBC**  
**1-800-663-9999**  
**We're here for you**

## Notes from the Office

Summer greetings to everyone! We hope those who attended the AGM in May had as much fun as we did planning it. We've heard some very gratifying feedback from the event which gives us great ideas for next year in Prince George. We hear they throw a good party up north.

We have a gigantic task list for the next year resulting from the revised strategic plan and the members' motions from the floor during the AGM. Check out page 7 for the summary of action items that we'll be reporting on throughout the year.

Over the years we have seen a great fluctuation in membership numbers. At present 20% of BC's foster parents are BCFFPA members. While we represent all foster parents in BC regardless of membership status, who you foster or who you foster for, we are a membership-driven organization. Please consider joining BCFFPA so that our voice truly represents the needs of foster parents across the province. We need to hear from you! Your membership also supports the activities of the Local Foster Parent Associations in your region by providing funding to arrange for community events for foster families and speakers on relevant topics. Your foster parent network is an invaluable resource of information, support and community for you.

We have recently reviewed our support/advocacy case load and have discovered that a very large percentage of our advocacy cases come from non-members. We don't know if this speaks to the day to day benefits of being a BCFFPA member, but the fact that BCFFPA members call for support less often is a surprising fact.

If you have a look at this year's statistics from our programs and services (pages 7 and 9), you'll see that our Advocacy Program is in demand. Our skilled volunteers often have as many as 22 active advocacy and support files at one time. On a daily basis they juggle family and employment demands in order to volunteer their time to assist those in the fostering community who are experiencing tremendous challenges.

Please join me in offering thanks to our volunteer foster parent advocates for their passionate stewardship of our community members. Those of us in the office wouldn't be able to do what we do without their help.

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

## A Message from BC's Representative for Children and Youth—Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond

Hello to all the parents and caregivers who look after foster children and youth in British Columbia. And welcome back the warmer and brighter days of summer!

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to bring you up to date on some of the work that my Office has been doing since January.

We are still working out the details of how my Office is going to move forward on our change of mandate, but starting Sept. 30, 2013, RCY advocates will begin to provide information, advice and support to young adults 19 to 24 years of age and their families who are eligible to receive services from Community Living. When I have more information on this subject, I will certainly share it with you as quickly as I am able.

In late March, my office released *Much More than Paperwork: Proper Planning Essential to Better Lives for B.C.'s Children in Care*, a report on an audit that examined the lives of 100 randomly selected children and youth in continuing care as of March 31, 2011. We found that just five per cent of the audited Comprehensive Plans of Care (CPOC) met the Ministry of Children and Family Development's (MCFD) own standards.

In general, the audit found scattered and ineffective documentation of planning for children and youth, as well as a clear lack of emphasis on comprehensive and regular planning and intervention for vulnerable children and youth.

As you are probably aware, nearly 4,500 children are in continuing care in B.C. at any one time. They have come into care because their parents have been unable to provide a safe home. Some have experienced abuse, neglect and other traumatic circumstances that increased their vulnerability. For these children, the government has assumed the role of prudent parent. Its child welfare system has a duty to provide focused and comprehensive care and support to improve their opportunities and outcomes.

Of the 100 children whose files were audited, 60 were identified as Aboriginal. However, only three of those children had a cultural plan – a critical element in ensuring that children remain connected to their cultural heritage and required by the *Child, Family and Community Service Act*. The number of children in the audit with an out-of-date CPOC was also much higher among Aboriginal children than non-Aboriginal children.

The findings of this audit are simply unacceptable. CPOCs are not bureaucratic paperwork; they are evolving life-plans for children who need them. CPOCs that are maintained and constantly updated are essential for children in government's care.

I made 10 recommendations in this report, including a call for MCFD to invest in the resources necessary to effectively enforce its own planning standards. I also recommended that MCFD explore the idea of changing social workers' core hours to make it easier for them to regularly meet with children and families, and to review all cultural plans for children in care to ensure they meet legislative requirements and standards.

Another report I released this spring is *Still Waiting: First-hand Experiences with Youth Mental Health Services in B.C.* This report clearly identifies that youth with mental health problems in this province are not consistently receiving the treatment and support they desperately need – and that is very troubling.



This report is focused on transition-age youth – those between the ages of 16 and their 19<sup>th</sup> birthdays – because this has been identified as a particularly problematic period when youth are transitioning into adulthood and between services designed for children and youth and those designed for adults.

What this review reveals is a fractured youth mental health system in B.C. that is confusing, frustrating and sometimes traumatic for youth and their families to navigate. It is a system that is punctuated by long wait times – sometimes up to a year for youth waiting to see a mental health professional – a lack of suitable acute care, specialized emergency care, and community-based intensive intermediate care, poor transitioning from youth mental health services to adult services, and a lack of communication, coordination and planning between service providers.

The youth mental health system is not really a system at all. Rather, it is a patchwork of services that is inconsistent from region to region and community to community, with many places where no services are directly available.

Weighing input from more than 850 youth, parents, caregivers, and professionals who work in the field, *Still Waiting* concludes that having one clear point of accountability for a system of services that spans government ministries and health authorities is key. That's why I recommended the creation of a Minister of State for Youth Mental Health, with a call for a three-year operational plan and immediate improvements to direct services in emergency, acute and community-based intensive intermediate care. I will continue to monitor government's response to this report.

I would also like to remind you that nominations for the Representative for Children and Youth's sixth annual Awards of Excellence are now being accepted. These awards recognize excellence in B.C.'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.



## Message from BC's Representative for Children and Youth continued...

There are seven Awards of Excellence categories presented: advocacy, [cultural](#) heritage and diversity, innovative services, service provision, mentoring, and youth leadership. Only youth may submit nominations for the mentoring Award of Excellence. As well, a lifetime achievement award is given to a seasoned individual who has made significant and lasting positive change in the lives of vulnerable children and youth, and is both an advocate and a leader.

The deadline for nominations is July 31, 2013, at 4 p.m. Pacific Daylight Time. Winners will be recognized and honoured at an awards ceremony in the fall. For nomination forms and more information on the awards, please visit [www.rcybc.ca](http://www.rcybc.ca).

Thank you for giving me space in your newsletter so that I can keep you informed about the work in my Office. If you or anyone that you work with would like to talk to an RCY advocate, you can reach us anywhere in the province at 1-800-476-3933 or email us at [rcy@rcybc.ca](mailto:rcy@rcybc.ca).

## BC Child and Youth In Care Week 2013

On Wednesday, June 5th, we partnered with other organizations and hosted an event in the Lower Mainland to celebrate BC Child and Youth In Care Week 2013. Participants enjoyed food, speeches, awards and were entertained by a talent show. We're looking forward to next year! Below is the message to children and youth in care presented on the event program.

"This year, six provincial organizations join together to acknowledge and celebrate the uniqueness, diversity and resilience demonstrated by BC's children and youth in – and from – care. We would like you to know that the individual stories you share of your experiences and your time in care have incredible value, to you, to your peers and to members of our society. Each of you has a distinctive vision of what you will become and how you will carry your experiences forward, glean value and significance from your histories to construct successful futures. We are here for support. Together we notice. We listen. We respect. We stand together with children and youth in care."

Ministry of Children and Family Development  
BC Public Guardian and Trustee's Office  
BC Federation of Foster Parent Associations  
Federation of Aboriginal Foster Parents  
Federation of BC Youth In Care Networks  
Adoptive Families Association of BC

The Representative for Children and Youth presents the

# 2013

## AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE

DEADLINE FOR NOMINATIONS: 4:00 PM Pacific Time, July 31, 2013

These awards encourage excellence by honouring people and organizations whose work makes the lives of children and youth better, and exemplifies innovation and respect.

### Awards Categories:

- Advocacy
- Cultural Heritage and Diversity
- Innovative Services
- Service Provider
- Youth Leadership
- Lifetime Achievement Award
- Mentoring



REPRESENTATIVE FOR  
CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Winners will be recognized and honoured  
at an awards ceremony in September.

To make a nomination or for more information  
on the Representative's Awards  
visit [www.rcybc.ca](http://www.rcybc.ca)



# The Challenges of Creating a Health Insurance Program for Foster Parents

By Jayne Wilson

As you will see on page 7, at the AGM this year the members present voted to have BCFFPA take another stab at creating an extended medical and dental program for foster parents. We have been looking into this for a number of years (long before my time here, in fact) yet have never managed the creation of an affordable benefits package specific to foster parents' needs. Those of us who don't work in the insurance industry and who are unfamiliar with insurance lingo often find the ins and outs of insurance quite daunting. Why can't we simply create a program that works for those of us who can't afford to pay a lot for coverage?

Part of the process of creating any new program is to do our research first. What I discovered was illuminating and, not surprisingly, brought up more questions. BCFFPA aims to support all foster parents by ensuring we continuously work with the Ministry to improve BC's fostering policies and practices—but we also believe that our role is to continuously build accessible, reliable and affordable resources for caregivers.

Below I've outlined some of the challenges we have to face as a community before we'll be able to put together a comprehensive affordable extended medical/dental insurance package that is accessible to foster parents.

## Voluntary vs. Mandatory Plans

Insurance companies prefer mandatory plans when offering to a specific group because otherwise the tendency is for those who tend to have more health challenges to enroll in the plan which leads to a high number of claims (and dollars spent to cover these claims) and not enough premiums collected to support the claims.

## Individual Insurance vs. Group Insurance

Individual insurance is expensive and usually dependent upon a medical assessment first. Individual insurance is purchased on a per person or per family basis. Most health insurance companies offer individual plans. Some foster parents arrange for their own insurance or are covered by a partner's employer's program.

Group insurance provides the benefit of spreading out the risk of large payouts for insurance companies and more affordable prices for group members. In general group insurance does not require medical consultation. However group insurance requires a large number of the target community (a group of employees for example) to "opt in" to the insurance program, thereby lowering costs for group members and risk for the insurance provider. For a group plan to be effective, a large percentage of BC's foster parents would need to commit to the program.

## Foster Parents are Contractors, Not Employees

Ministry foster parents are contractors, not employees. Creating a group insurance plan for contractors may be impossible as we have yet to find an insurance providers who will do so. Contractors have no employer, therefore, ensuring reliable monthly payment of insurance premiums is nearly impossible. Other challenges include regulating the group/

community who are entitled to join the insurance plan (ie. closed homes, fluctuating or short term contracts) and ensuring program information and accessibility to all eligible foster parents—especially if it's a mandatory program. At present BCFFPA encounters many challenges relaying information about the Rider Insurance program to foster parents and social workers across the Province to ensure that everyone has the necessary information about what is covered under the program and how to file a claim.

## Qualifying for Insurance Coverage

All insurance programs require paperwork—usually during a face to face meeting with an insurance representative. Acceptance for an individual insurance policy can depend on an assessment of age, gender and any pre-existing health conditions for the policy holder. Generally this isn't the case for group health insurance programs although when there is a disability component to any group health insurance program, pre-existing conditions are considered before being approved for disability coverage.

## Insurance Program Affordability for All Foster Parents

One concerning element of accessibility of a program to all foster parents is that, depending on additional income, Restricted, Regular and Level 1 foster parents may be unable to afford a monthly extended medical premium even if they qualify to receive the benefits. In addition, depending on the structure of a group plan, benefits such as disability are dependent upon income—which foster parents are unable to claim.

## Summary

We are currently in discussions with our contacts to see how we can best work through these challenges. We will certainly keep you posted on our progress.

Having trouble getting homeowner 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](http://www.megsonfitzpatrick.com)

## AGM 2013 Motions for BCFFPA Action

Each year at our AGM members are invited to request that BCFFPA resolve concerning common issues that affect foster parents. The members present vote on whether or not BCFFPA should pursue an answer to the concerns. Coupled with our strategic plan, the motions create our task list for the year ahead.

**01/AGM/13 MOTION** to investigate the process, pros and cons of a foster parent union.

**02/AGM/13 MOTION** that BCFFPA advocate with MCFD for increased mileage amounts to foster parents that are more reflective of mileage paid to MCFD staff.

**03/AGM/13 MOTION** that BCFFPA advocate with MCFD to revisit the need for and provision of safe spaces for children and youth.

**04/AGM/13 MOTION** that BCFFPA advocate with MCFD to create an insurance or other program for foster parents who contract critical or serious illnesses from a foster child. (eg. Hep C or AIDS)

**05/AGM/2013 MOTION** that BCFFPA advocate with MCFD that safety and security measures for foster parents be created in policy to protect against the results of high risk behaviors of children and youth in care.

**06/AGM/2013 MOTION** that BCFFPA advocate with MCFD to involve foster parents with assessments or decisions regarding the children and youth in their care. Foster parents who know the child(ren) should have the most input.

**07/AGM/2013 MOTION** that BCFFPA look at the medical/dental plan options so that a plan is in place for foster parents.

**08/AGM/2013 MOTION** that BCFFPA pursue the creation of a program for retirement benefits for foster parents.

**09/AGM/2013 MOTION** that BCFFPA investigate and discuss with the Ministry the ramifications of Chuck Geddes' CCI program on the smooth functioning of a foster home.

**10/AGM/2013 MOTION** that BCFFPA advocate with the Ministry for cost of living increases for foster parents.

## Support and Advocacy Statistics 2013

As most of you are aware, BCFFPA restructured its Support and Advocacy program in 2012. Our program is different than those offered by regional service organizations because we have created a volunteer peer-based model that is very cost efficient and community based. There is a great deal of research detailing the benefits to both recipient and provider of peer support. Considering the stresses associated with parenting in general and fostering specifically, and that BCFFPA operates on a small contract, we are pleased to have created a program that results in tangible benefits to all parties involved. The Support and Advocacy program is presently not funded and we have a very small number of volunteer supporters to cover the whole province. We hope to increase available funds and recruit representation of volunteer supporters from all regions across the province in the next two years.

We launched our new training model in Fall 2012. Our initial three trainings went very well and we are now discussing with some MCFD offices the possibility of providing similar workshops to MCFD workers in order to increase the cooperative dialogue between foster parent and social worker communities. This idea has been well received by Fraser and North MCFD leads and we are hoping to discuss this more with the Island teams and across the Interior.

In 2012-2013 we provided an unprecedented level of support across the province. Our volunteer supporters are skilled and dedicated to seeing an issue through to its conclusion. A huge and heartfelt "thank you" to those who are working as peer-supporters to foster parents across the province. Your work is so valuable to your communities.

- Support and Advocacy—Volunteer 2560 hours
- Equivalent to 341 days of work
- Equivalent Wage Value (@ \$23/hr) \$58,880
- Total in Expense Reimbursement \$12,227
- Total Number of Cases 132
- Types of Cases
  - contract payments
  - removals
  - policy and practice
  - high-handed behavior and disrespect
  - investigations and protocols
  - mileage non-payment
  - misunderstandings
  - relief payments
  - assistance with CIC behavior
  - human rights
  - adoption



## 2013 Honorary Associate Membership Award

In October 2010 BCFFPA was assigned a new MCFD Contract Liaison—Sobhana Daniel. At the time we were in the midst of a monumental organizational shift and we had a lot of work ahead of us. Sobhana and our Executive Director quickly came up with a plan of action and went to work on strengthening BCFFPA's partnership with the Ministry and redeveloping community ties. Thankfully that work is well behind us. Throughout the process we developed a tremendous respect for Sobhana's leadership, insight and honest communication. We may have been able to do the work without her but we would have been missing a tremendous opportunity to work with a woman who is a mentor and role model for professionalism.



Sobhana has moved on to work in the Provincial Office of Domestic Violence as a Director. We feel certain that Cory Heavener and her team will benefit from Sobhana's commitment and dedication to her role.

The BCFFPA Honorary Associate Membership Award was presented to Sobhana in recognition of outstanding leadership.

**Thank you to  
CKNW Orphan's Fund  
for your generous  
donation that will send  
14 foster kids to  
summer camp this year!**

*A hundred years from now it will not matter what my bank account was, the sort of house I lived in, or the kind of car I drove...but the world may be different because I was important in the life of a child.*

*...Forest Witcraft*



You can donate to BCFFPA through CanadaHelps!

## What Exactly is a SAFE Home Study? (from [www.safehomestudy.org](http://www.safehomestudy.org))

*"SAFE is a structured evaluation process that assists practitioners in identifying and addressing both strengths and areas of concern that may impede current functioning as well as safe and effective parenting. SAFE provides home study practitioners with a structured methodology that supports the social work interview as well as provides a uniform methodology of interpreting and assessing the information gathered during the home study process."*

### **Information Gathering Tools**

SAFE provides practitioners with uniform information gathering tools that support the home study interview. These tools include; Questionnaire I, Questionnaire II and the SAFE Reference Letter. These tools aid the Home Study Practitioner in doing more targeted interviewing. The Questionnaires and Reference Letter assist the Home Study Practitioner in identifying strengths, as well as issues to be addressed early in the home study process, thereby eliminating a great deal of time "guessing and/or fishing" for issues that should be addressed or explored further.

### **Structured Analysis**

SAFE has identified 70 Psychosocial Factors that research has demonstrated to be necessary for safe and effective parenting - either through adoption, kin or foster care. The **SAFE Desk Guide** and **Psychosocial Inventory** provide an inter-related, supported and structured process to assist Home Study Practitioners in determining the strengths and limitations of a particular Applicant Family.

### **Pre-Formatted Home Study Report**

The Pre-Formatted Home Study Report is uniform in its organization and appearance, but is tailored to each jurisdiction or private agency's requirements. Each SAFE Home Study looks exactly alike while still meeting the needs of individual regulations, laws, and rules of a jurisdiction or agency. Because of the uniform nature of the Pre-Formatted Home Study Report, the SAFE home study reader knows exactly where to look for the issues and strengths of the Applicant Family and how those strengths and/or issues might affect either a specific child or child yet to be identified.

### **The Compatibility Inventory**

The SAFE Compatibility Inventory helps support placement workers in determining the appropriateness of fit of an Applicant Family and the child or children in question.



## Programs and Services in 2012-2013

|                                                    |                     |
|----------------------------------------------------|---------------------|
| General, Information & Intake Calls/E-mail         | 10,412              |
| Support & Advocacy Calls/E-mail                    | 5,263               |
| Insurance-Related Calls/E-mail                     | 717                 |
| MCFD Fostering Brochures Requested (enquiry calls) | 712                 |
| Intakes/Potential Foster Parents                   | 342                 |
| Insurance Claims                                   | 28                  |
| Insurance Workshops                                | 11                  |
| Insurance Workshop Attendees                       | 117                 |
| Network & Partnership Meetings                     | 278                 |
| Volunteer Support Hours                            | 2560                |
| Support Meetings                                   | 352                 |
| Website Updates                                    | redesigned/launched |
| BCFFPA & Rider Brochures Distributed               | 1,450               |
| Newsletters Distributed                            | 12,200              |

## 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 Beppe 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!

## Summer Elections for Regional Delegates

BCFFPA will be holding an election process in the Coast Fraser Region for two new delegates. Coast Fraser is a vast area and our recent delegates have found the task of community connection and Local Association development to be a challenge. With the recent vacancy of the position, the Board of Directors voted to increase our delegate representation in the region.

A big shout out of thanks to **Kathrynne Coxon** who held the position of Coast Fraser Delegate for the past year.

Another regional delegate who will be resigning her position due to a regional relocation in the next month is **Lee Lachmuth**, who has been a mover-shaker in the North region for the past 2 years. Our thanks to Lee for all of her dedicated efforts to build positive partnerships and increasing BCFFPA's network in the region.

Welcome back to **Les Toth**, our former Treasurer, who rejoined the Board after our AGM this year as Vancouver Island Delegate.

Our delegates are available to represent *you!* Please feel welcome to contact them at any time.

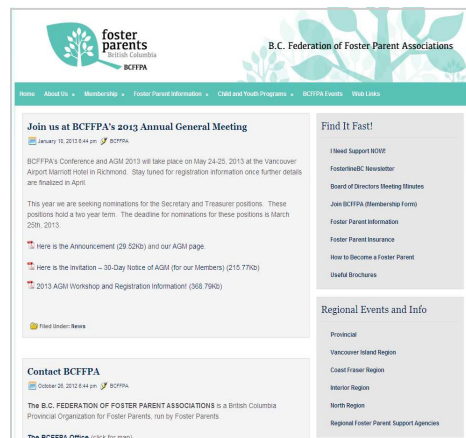
## What's BCFFPA Been Up To This Year?

Thanks to a partial grant from MCFD, in June 2012 we finalized our video titled "Stories from Foster Care" - a 10 minute video to be used as a

recruitment tool and information for the public about what it takes to be a foster parent. The video features sound bytes from a cross-section of BC foster parents and the Executive Director of BCFFPA.



Our new logo was featured on the cover of our Winter Issue FosterlineBC newsletter. The logo was created based on the theme that foster families are another branch of the family tree. The new logo symbolizes strength, balance, grounding, roots, commonality, diversity and being an integrated part of the whole.



Just before year end we launched our redesigned website. It is simpler to navigate and more user friendly. The best part, however, is that the new website can be maintained in-house, allowing us to conserve a few thousand dollars each year!

Support and Advocacy workshops were an important aspect of our service delivery this year. We provided three workshops—Richmond, Vernon and Prince George and have more scheduled for the next few months. These workshops were well attended and are focused on ensuring that foster parents understand and develop the skills necessary to support themselves and other caregivers in their communities. MCFD and agency workers have attended the workshops as well and have found the information very useful. We are presently designing an adapted program for delivery to an audience of social workers.

BCFFPA's annual statistics will demonstrate that we've been busy with partnership, support, and insurance activities all year. You may notice that our numbers are a little different this year. This is due to a change in the way we categorize our program activities in order to reflect a greater level of accuracy in our data collection.

## BCFFPA Regional Delegate Reports

### 2012 Coast Fraser Delegate Report

Coast Fraser has welcomed 2 new Local Associations over the past year—Chilliwack and Surrey, bringing our regional Local number to 7 active Locals and 2 that are currently inactive.

The demand for support in the Coast Fraser region has been extreme over the past year with cases such as home closures due to foster parent age, investigations, an Aboriginal agency threatening placements if foster parents participate in Local activities and an ongoing case concerning a very high need CIC and foster parent mistreatment by guardianship workers. It's been an extremely busy year for support!

The Local Associations in the Valley have held seasonal foster family events in order to bring caregivers and kids together. This has been an effective method of creating community connections.

Surrey's Local is gaining members and has introduced themselves to the MCFD office in the area.

On the Sunshine Coast, the Local meets only a few times each year. There is some interest in creating a local in Powell River.

### 2012 Vancouver Island Delegate Report

Our Vancouver Island Delegate resigned from her position at the end of the year. The Island continues to be a difficult area for BCFFPA to invigorate agency partnerships though our relationship with Island MCFD remains solid.

Early in the year we held a series of Insurance Workshops from Victoria to Campbell River which were well attended. FPSSS former ED retired last year with Dan Malone stepping up to the helm.

Royal Roads University has generously sponsored a research project undertaken by BCFFPA involving online strategies for support and education of foster parents.

### 2012 Interior Delegate Report

Over the last year we have seen a bunch of changes happen in the Interior due to financial restraints. The biggest of those changes was implemented in late November in Kamloops—exceptional resources and guardianship payments. Vernon, Kelowna and other areas soon followed in the New Year. For those who do not know about these changes, the Executive Directors of Service for the Interior region brought this policy in to deal with spending inconsistencies. These additional expenses are reviewed by small committees in each service area led by their CSM. The committees meet once a week to provide an answer within two business days of the meeting. As of this time social workers have no spending authority. It is still very early to judge how this new system will impact foster parents and kids in care.

Some other issues that have been brought up by your area reps on the Macro Board that have been passed on to the BCFFPA Provincial Board were: updates to provincial guidelines/practice about babysitting, reviewing the Provincial Protocol documents with the intent of replacing regional Protocol practice, discussions about the levelling of foster parents, and contract wording. The updated babysitting guidelines should be in effect in May. The interior MCFD, foster parents and Macro have been asking that a new Provincial Protocol be put in place as the current ones that are in use are out of date. BCFFPA and MCFD are currently communicating on weekly conference call and hope to have this completed and out before the end of the year. The final issue that was brought forward was about updated contracts. This is currently being reviewed as part of the Building Communities of Caring (Residential Review) initiative.

With the help of our supportive agencies we continue to see many courses being offered such as Safe Babies, 53 hour (sit-down), FASD Conference (Kelowna), parenting in the Cyber Age and Support and Advocacy for caregivers. Foster parents have also been travelling to different parts of the province to attend training such as the Stand Together workshop in Richmond. Throughout the Interior we continue to see foster parents also being active in fundraising, partnership and attending local meetings.

I would like to give a special thanks to those area representatives and service providers that regularly attend our monthly conference calls. With your wealth of knowledge and information you make job as Regional Delegate much easier! As another year closes, I look forward to seeing what new challenges lie ahead with the possibility of a new government taking power and what avenues they might take as we continue to move forward in the best interests of our kids.

### 2012 North Delegate Report

I am honored to be the delegate for the North. This past year has been a learning and development year for me in this position. I am so thankful for the wonderful foster parents of the North who have shared their stories and struggles and allowed me to share in the joys and success of their fostering journeys.

During this past year there has been a commitment from MCFD, Aboriginal Agencies and Support Agencies to work together and use each other's strengths to better serve the children and families in the North. Partnership meetings in Prince George have been held once each month and from these the community was given a commitment from MCFD to facilitate partnership events several times throughout the year. The partnership events allow for a venue where social workers and caregivers can come together and discuss ideas and concerns and plan for change. I would like to see these partnerships established in all of our northern communities and will be working toward this over the next year.

## BCFFPA Regional Delegate Reports continued...

BCFFPA has sponsored two Insurance workshops in Prince George this past year where we were given the opportunity to learn about the Rider insurance policy and Liability insurance provided to foster parents and ask questions. BCFFPA also sponsored and provided a Support and Advocacy Training Course in Prince George for caregivers, social workers and agency staff. We hope to provide this course to other communities in our Northern Region this coming year.

The development of BCFFPA Locals has been in the works. We have been given access to a conference call system to assist in doing this work. I will be organizing conference calls in communities throughout the North to link foster parents and provide another avenue for communication and sharing of information.

Some Northern foster parents have been able to attend the BCFFPA AGM, the FAFP AGM, the Stand Together Conference, etc. All of these events have continuing benefits to the foster parents through networking and sharing of knowledge.

Foster parents continue to work through change within the government systems. We have many more changes to look forward to and I am so thankful for the efforts of our Northern foster parents to remain constant in their commitment to the care of children and youth and their families.

I thank everyone who has welcomed me in their community and those who have assisted me in my position with the BCFFPA and I look forward to continued positive change benefiting families.

### 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).

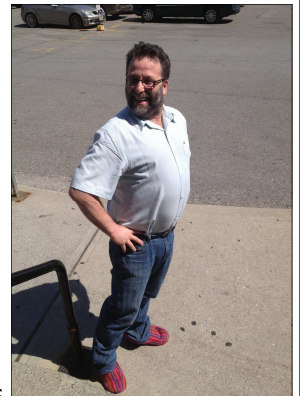
## Canadian Foster Family Association—2013 AGM and Conference

This year's CFFA Conference and AGM was held in Richmond Hill, Ontario. We were treated to a wonderful week of workshops and guest speakers. The elections were held and although positions were challenged this year no new changes to the CFFA Board were made.

BC representative, Sheila Durnford remains as president, Mary Smith of Nova Scotia remains 1st vice president, Sylvia Thompson of Alberta will remain the 2<sup>nd</sup> vice president, Sharon Joyal from Manitoba will be 3<sup>rd</sup> vice president; secretary, Connie Mulholland and treasurer, Nancy Macfarlane will keep their current positions.

Alberta hosted a hospitality night and will host the 2014 CFFA Conference and AGM in Edmonton.

Landy Anderson was the highlight of the week, launching her new book, *The Foster Parent Survival Guide*. Her workshop touched on the core of her book. Based in Ontario, she has written from the perspective of a foster parent and social worker. Although she references her home province the book is written from a national perspective and information from all provinces (where available) is included. BCFFPA has several books on hand for purchase at \$25 per copy.



BCFFPA's Vice President and CFFA Director, Russell Pohl

The book is well written and informative. CFFA President, Sheila Durnford, was one of people chosen to critique the book. Sheila was also asked to write the forward.

The National working group again spoke on a variety of topics and will continue to tackle issues that need to be addressed.

BCFFPA's ED, Jayne Wilson, attended the National Executive Director's Working Group meetings. This group is invaluable to our provincial Boards as they are the direct link to foster parents on a daily basis. Executive Directors are the ones that work directly with our Ministries and maintain the provincial association network and information collective.

Considering our ongoing activity with BCFFPA's Advocacy program, it was with particular interest that we attended the conference workshop on the same topic. We learned a few new things that we will be implementing into our program. For the most part it validated that we were clearly on the right path. We initiated conversation regarding the creation of a national Advocacy group. That may be a project in the works.

The conference finished off with Friday and Saturday dinners. Overall the highlight of the conference was the amazing people we met from across Canada. There was a great deal of sharing of many wonderful ideas and common thoughts. It was clear to us that throughout Canada there are people with much passion for working with children. It also showed us the importance of joining the national group. The more voices we have the stronger the message to our provincial governments.

## Cyberbullying (from [www.kidshealth.org](http://www.kidshealth.org))

Bullies and mean girls have been around forever, but technology has given them a whole new platform for their actions. As adults, we're becoming more aware that the "sticks and stones" adage no longer holds true; both real world and online name-calling can have serious emotional consequences for our kids and teens. It's not always easy to know how and when to step in as a parent. For starters, our kids tend to use technology differently than we do. Kids and teens today start playing games online and sending texts on their cell phones at an early age, and most teens have smart phones that keep them constantly connected to the Internet. Many are logged on to Facebook and chatting or sending text messages all day. Even sending email or leaving a voice mail seems "so old-school" to them. Their knowledge of the digital world can be intimidating, but if parents stay involved in their kids online world, just as you do in their real world, you can help protect your kids from online dangers.

Fortunately, our growing awareness of **cyberbullying** has helped us learn a lot more about how to prevent it. Here are some suggestions on what to do if online bullying has become part of your child's life.

### What Is Cyberbullying?

Cyberbullying is the use of technology to harass, threaten, embarrass, or target another person. By definition, it occurs among young people. When an adult is involved, it may meet the definition of **cyber-harassment** or **cyber-stalking**, a crime that can have legal consequences and involve jail time.

Sometimes cyberbullying can be easy to spot — for example, if your child shows you a text message, tweet, or response to a status update on Facebook that is harsh, mean, or cruel. Other acts are less obvious, like impersonating a victim online or posting personal information, photos, or videos designed to hurt or embarrass another person. Some kids report that a fake account, web page, or online persona has been created with the sole intention to harass and bully.

Cyberbullying also can happen accidentally. The impersonal nature of text messages, IMs, and emails make it very hard to detect the sender's tone — one person's joke could be another's hurtful insult. Nevertheless, a repeated pattern of emails, text messages, and online posts is rarely accidental.

A 2006 poll from the national organization Fight Crime: Invest in Kids found that 1 in 3 teens and 1 in 6 preteens have been the victims of cyberbullying. As more and more youths have access to computers and cell phones, the incidence of cyberbullying is likely to rise.

### Effects of Cyberbullying

No longer limited to schoolyards or street corners, modern-day bullying can happen at home as well as at school — essentially 24 hours a day. As long as kids have access to a phone, computer, or other device (such as an iPod), they are at risk. Severe or chronic cyberbullying can leave victims at greater risk for anxiety, depression, and other stress-related disorders. In some rare but highly publicized cases, some kids have turned to suicide.

The punishment for cyberbullies can include being suspended from school or kicked off of sports teams. Certain types of cyberbullying also may violate school codes or even anti-discrimination or sexual harassment laws.

### Signs of Cyberbullying

Many kids and teens who are cyberbullied are reluctant to tell a teacher or parent, often because they feel ashamed of the social stigma, or because they fear their computer privileges will be taken away at home.

The signs that a child is being cyberbullied vary, but a few things to look for are:

- signs of emotional distress during or after using the Internet or the phone
- being very protective or secretive of their digital life
- withdrawal from friends and activities
- avoidance of school or group gatherings
- slipping grades and "acting out" in anger at home
- changes in mood, behavior, sleep, or appetite

### How Parents Can Help

If you discover that your child is being cyberbullied, talk to him or her about any experiences you have had in your childhood. This can help your child feel less alone. Let your child know that it's not his or her fault, and that bullying says more about the bully than the victim. Talking to teachers or school administrators also may help, but take cues from your child.

Many schools, school districts, and after-school clubs have established protocols for responding to cyberbullying; these vary by district and state. But before reporting the problem, let your child know that you plan to do so, as he or she could have concerns about "tattling" and might prefer that the problem be handled privately.

Other measures to try:

- **Block the bully.** Most devices have settings that allow you to electronically block emails, IMs, or text messages from specific people.
- **Limit access to technology.** Although it's hurtful, many kids who are bullied can't resist the temptation to check websites or phones to see if there are new messages. Keep the computer in a public place in the house (no laptops in children's bedrooms, for example) and limit the use of cell phones and games. Some companies allow you to turn off text messaging services during certain hours. And, most websites and phones provide the option for parental controls, which provide parents with access to their children's messages and online life.
- **Know your kids' online world.** Check their postings and the sites kids visit, and be aware of how they spend their time online. Talk to them about the importance of privacy and why it's a bad idea to share personal information online, even with friends. Encourage them to safeguard passwords. Write up cell phone and social media contracts that you are willing to enforce.





## Cyberbullying continued...

- **Look to the web for resource and support information about cyberbullying.**

If your son or daughter agrees, you may also arrange for mediation with a therapist or counselor at school who can work with your child and/or the bully.

### When Your Child Is the Bully

Finding out that your kid is the one who is behaving inappropriately can be upsetting and heartbreaking. It's important to address the problem head on and not wait for it to go away.

Talk to your child firmly about his or her actions and explain the negative impact it has on others. Joking and teasing might seem OK, but it can hurt people's feelings and lead to getting in trouble. Bullying — in any form — is unacceptable; there can be serious (and sometimes irrevocable) consequences at home, school, and in the community if it continues.

Remind your child that the use of cell phones and computers is a privilege. Sometimes it helps to restrict the use of these devices until behavior improves. If you feel your child should have a cell phone for safety reasons, make sure it is a phone that can only be used for emergency purposes. Insist on strict parental controls on all devices if there is any history of your child making impulsive decisions when they are online.

To get to the heart of the matter, sometimes talking to teachers, guidance counselors, and other school officials can help identify situations that lead a kid to bully others. If your child has trouble managing anger, talk to a therapist about helping your son or daughter learn to cope with anger, hurt, frustration, and other strong emotions in a healthy way.

Professional counseling often helps kids learn to deal with their feelings and improve their confidence and social skills, which in turn can reduce the risk of bullying. If you're tech-savvy yourself, model good online habits to help your kids understand the benefits and the dangers of life in the digital world.

### 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.

## Membership Benefits for BC Foster Parents

BC foster parents 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 [drewitz@telus.net](mailto:drewitz@telus.net)



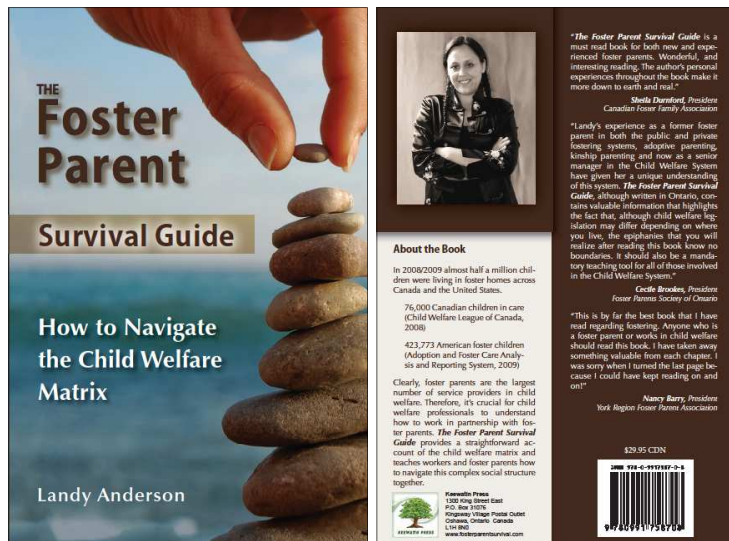
## A New Must-Read Book for Foster Parents

### The Foster Parent Survival Guide How to Navigate the Child Welfare Matrix

By Landy Anderson

Landy recently presented at the June 2013 Canadian Foster Family Association's conference in Ontario. BCFFPA has a few copies of her book available at a cost of \$25.

Please contact the office at 1-800-663-9999 for your copy.



### In Need of Support After Hours?

### Call the After Hours Provincial Foster Parent Support Line

The Foster Parent Support Line is a toll free provincial phone line available to foster parents, out of care providers and kith and kin homes. They provide support, direction, documentation on request and suggestions for dealing with challenging situations and behaviors. They can also provide some assistance in emergencies.

The line is a program of MCFD. Support workers have access to computer information regarding children, their families and social workers. If there are visit scheduling difficulties, problems with bio-parents, or anything where more information is needed or needs to be passed on to the district offices, the Support Line can help!

This service is confidential so they don't need to know name/details unless a caregiver is calling to discuss a reportable incident.

Other reasons to call... need more information about MCFD policy, understanding procedures, unsure of the rights of children in care, want to pass on a good idea about how to deal with an issue, reporting an AWOL, needing to talk about a difficult day, more information about caring for kids ... call them!

**1-888-495-4440**

4:00 pm to 12:45 am weekdays  
8:00 am to 12:45 am weekends and holidays

# Community Resources

## Provincial Resources

|                                                                                                        |                |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| <b>BC Federation of Foster Parent Associations</b><br>www.bcfosterparents.ca                           | 1-800-663-9999 |
| <b>After Hours 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>                                                         | 604-533-1924 |
| <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).*

## 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