

Spring 2015 Volume 13, Issue 1



Photo: Kathy Basso, Foster Parent

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BC Federation of Foster Parent Associations 3rd Floor 131 Eighth Street New Westminster, BC V3M 3P6

E-mail: office@bcfosterparents.ca

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#### **BC Federation of Foster Parent Associations**

Provincial Office 3rd Floor 131 Eighth Street New Westminster, BC V3M 3P6

Toll Free: 1-800-663-9999 Fax: 604-544-1110 E-mail: office@bcfosterparents.ca Website: www.bcfosterparents.ca

#### **Provincial Staff:**

Executive Director	Jayne Wilson jayne@bcfosterparents.ca
Administration/Finance	Ronda Sweeney ronda@bcfosterparents.ca
Membership	Krissy Ramcharan krissy@bcfosterparents.ca

### **Board of Directors:**

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Vice President

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Rocky Hindmarch

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Tamara Smith Coast Fraser

Marcy Perron

Interior

North

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

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

**FosterlineBC** is a quarterly publication.

**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**

## Notes from the Office

As we step into 2015 from a very busy 2014, my hope is that 2014 was all that you had wished for. My wish is that you and your families had many triumphs and successes, that your hearts continue to love and your future days are filled with plenty.

2015 is shaping up to be a year of change. Here at BCFFPA we are starting to work on many projects which promise change. We are working in collaboration with our partners and of course the Ministry. We welcome fresh thinking from all sectors on how we accomplish more with less. How do we continue to work for our children in care and you, our foster parents, at making the system and processes easier or even better?

What I know is that we cannot do it alone. This is your time to step up to the plate. Ask yourselves what you can do. Do you have spare time, do you have a company that may be able to provide products or services, is there cash that you might be able to donate so that a child can go to camp? Whatever you can do is great. The BCFFPA board of directors also work hard at getting those donations so that we can continue to have a great time at our AGM with the foster parents and stakeholders that join us. Most importantly, though, our fundraisers at the AGM help us send more kids to great camps.

2015 will take us to Whistler for our AGM. It sound as though we'll see the largest attendance in BCFFPA's recent history. The office, as usual, has been working hard already to ensure we all have the opportunity for learning more and of course enjoying ourselves with a much needed break from our routines. Join us for some great workshops and to hear some inspiring speakers. After last year's AGM, we posted a survey online and sent the link to all our members. This years workshops are the result of the survey. We'll do the same this year, so watch for the survey in your e-mail! We are always seeking ideas from you on what or who to have at future events.

It is my personal goal to be able to meet more foster parents this year. I am hoping that I can visit a number of regions in 2015. I would also like you to write me personally if there are concerns that you have about your career in fostering or other foster-related concerns that you may need answers too. I will do my best to help but can also find the appropriate source for the answer you need.

Let 2015 be one where we continue to make a difference in the lives of our children. Let us continue the process of working towards a more collaborative system, that is filled with respect, honor and integrity.

Happy New Year one and all!!!

Russell Pohl President Greetings and happy 2015 to all our BC caregivers!

We are in the process of producing the last few topics of our BC Foster Basics video series. They are all available for free on BCFFPA's YouTube channel—though you don't have to sign up to the channel to view them. We have a large selection of topics that are all relevant to fostering and hope you've taken some time to have a look. Each video is delivered by a BC foster parent or someone in the sector with expertise on the topic they present.

Tanya Taylor left us in October with plans to move to Calgary! We wish her the best in her future endeavors. When you call the 1-800 line you will have a chance to welcome Krissy Ramcharan who has enthusiastically taken on the role.

BCFFPA provincial office has been in our new location for one year. As a result of being closer to the 'big city' we've been able to host meetings with our community partners, reduce many expenses and stay more closely connected to our mainland foster parents. We're enjoying our new space immensely and even have the company of a stray cat who never fails to let us know when someone is coming up the stairs.

You'll notice in the Bursaries section that we have a new Fine Arts Fund available for children in care. This fund is intended to cover the costs of supplies for pursuits including art, dance, music, fabric arts and more! See all the details in our Bursaries section on page 10.

The last quarter of each fiscal year is when we summarize any lingering issues and outline new initiatives we'd like to take on for discussions with the Minister at a seasonal meeting. We start to tally our statistics and write our final reports in order to be ready for the AGM.

Donations for the AGM fundraisers are already coming in. Ronda has big plans for the gift baskets this year!

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

BCFFPA AGM 2015 Whistler Village

# May 22 and 23, 2015

Join BCFFPA's Board of Directors and staff in beautiful Whistler Village for our Annual General Meeting and Conference. We have negotiated very reasonable rates at Hilton Whistler Resort & Spa! Spend an afternoon wandering the village shops or take the gondola to the top of the mountain. There's so much to do and see, we hope you don't forget to attend the workshops or the banquet!



Back by popular demand are the Banquet Dinner Dance and our Friday night Wellness Room where our guests can enjoy refreshments by the patio campfire and relax with a foot massage.

We're mixing it up a bit in 2015 by spreading out our Camps for Kids fundraisers with a 50/50 draw during the workshop day lunch hour, the bucket draw on Friday night at the Wellness Room and our ever popular Loonie auction, hosted by ICS's Kari Bepple, on Saturday at the Banquet.



Our room block is beginning to fill up. Book by April 20th to ensure you receive the foster parent rate!

Hilton Room (2 double beds) <u>or</u> King Junior Suite — \$135/night Underground parking is available at the reduced rate of \$15/day.

Please be sure to specify the event name "<u>Foster Parents"</u> when reserving to access negotiated rates. Ph: 604-932-1982 or toll free at 1-800-515-4050. E-mail: reservations@hiltonwhistler.com

Individual reservations must be guaranteed with a credit card or advance deposit. The Hilton will accept cancellation of guest reservations up to **14 days** prior to arrival.





# Apply for the AGM Bursary by April 1, 2015

The Ministry of Children and Family Development is supporting this years BCFFPA AGM in Whistler! Bursaries will be given to two foster parents in each service delivery area which will cover the cost of your Conference and AGM registration fee (\$300 value). A cheque for \$200 to cover some expenses will be available for the winners at the AGM.

If you would like to have an opportunity to receive one of the bursaries, please submit the following information to our office by April 1st, 2015. **Please note, bursaries for BCFFPA's AGM 2015 are open to all foster parents in BC regardless of BCFFPA membership.** 

### Instructions to Apply for AGM 2015 Bursary

# Send us the following information by mail, e-mail or fax by April 1st, 2015:

- 1. Your name, address, city, postal code and at least one phone number where we can contact you.
- 2. Provide your e-mail address if you have one.
- 3. The name of who you contract for as a foster parent? (MCFD, Delegated Aboriginal Agency or other agency)
- 4. If you have a current contract. (Applicant contract status will be verified.)
- 5. Send the above information to BCFFPA by e-mail, regular mail or fax:

E-mail: ronda@bcfosterparents.ca

Address: 3rd Floor—131 Eighth Street New Westminster, BC V3M 3P6

Fax: 604-544-2223

Winners will be notified by phone and e-mail (if provided) by Friday, April 3, 2015.

# We hope to see you in Whistler!

### **Tickets to Events 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 or Debbie Drewitz at debbiedrewitz@gmail.com



#### What's to look forward to at the AGM

- ★ Welcoming hospitality suite on Thursday evening
- ★ Workshops about:
  - Domestic Violence Effects on Youth
  - Transforming Limiting Beliefs and Stressful Thinking
  - The Impact of Trauma
- ★ Friday Night Wellness Room/Social with bucket draw fundraiser and door prizes
- ★ More fundraisers! 50/50 draw and our legendary Loonie Auction
- ★ Saturday night banquet dinner and dance
- ★ A photo booth to create your own memories of the banquet evening
- ★ Being in the heart of Whistler Village!
- ★ Networking and learning with your colleagues and new friends



# Note the Date

March 1 <sup>st</sup> :	AGM Registration open [Registration package will be posted on website and e-mailed to members and stake-holders.]
March 20 <sup>th</sup> :	Nominations and Special Resolutions must be received by BCFFPA Provincial office
April 7 <sup>th</sup> :	Registration and Ballot packages mailed to members
April 23 <sup>rd</sup> :	Notification of AGM 2015
May 13 <sup>th</sup> :	Deadline for BCFFPA office to receive Mail-In Votes
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#### **2015 CALL FOR NOMINATIONS**

BCFFPA will be holding elections for executive officer positions on the Board of Directors at our Annual General Meeting on May 23, 2015 at the Hilton Whistler Resort and Spa.

Due to a revision in the Bylaws at AGM 2014, there is a change in the order of positions elected. This year there are 2 positions for election on the Executive Committee:

- Vice President
- ☑ Treasurer

Each position has a two-year term. Nominations for each position **must** be received by the BCFFPA Provincial office by March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2015, for distribution to the membership.

The bylaws regarding eligibility to become an Officer of the Federation, state the following:

- Paid in full member as of January 31<sup>st</sup> of current year.
- Must be present at the AGM unless excused by the Board for extraordinary reasons.
- Nominations from the floor will not be accepted.
- Candidates and nominations for these officer positions shall be vetted by the Nominating Committee and are chosen for their knowledge and expertise in relation to these positions.
- The successful candidates will be elected through a combination of mail-in votes and the votes of those attending the Annual General Meeting.
- Associate Members, elected to hold positions on the Federation Board of Directors, shall have full voting privileges during their term of office.
- Any candidate for these positions must have held a BCFFPA membership in good standing for at least three years immediately previous to running, and must have served for at least one year in the previous three years on a local or macro regional council, or on the BCFFPA Board of Directors.
- Nominations require a nomination form duly moved and seconded by two members in good standing (ie. current membership as of January 31<sup>st</sup> of the present year).

# PLEASE FORWARD NOMINATIONS TO THE FEDERATION PROVINCIAL OFFICE

BCFFPA 131 8th Street New Westminster, BC V3M 3P6

Or by e-mail: jayne@bcfosterparents.ca (please request a response to your e-mail) Or by fax: 604-544-2223

#### Nominations must be received no later than March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2014

# **BCFFPA Provincial Officer** Nomination Form

Name of Candidate	Membership Number
Address	City
Postal Code Phone Number	or
Candidate Information	
Fostering Experience	
BCFFPA Experience	
Related Volunteer or Employment Experience	
Views and Objectives to Offer this Position	
Other Comments	
Nominated by	Membership Number
Nominated by	Membership Number
Signature of Candidate	Date

	Sno	acial Resolutions	
Whereas: (state		ecial Resolutions	
Therefore: (stat	e proposed special resolution)		
Moved By:	(name)	Membership Number:	
Seconded By:	(name)	Membership Number:	
		pril 7, 2015. Proposed Special Resolutions will be accepted from members Please submit one form for each Special Resolution proposed.	; in

"Special Resolutions": Prior to the

BCFFPA's Annual General Meeting, we receive proposals for special resolutions. A special resolution is a proposed change to our governance documents—our Constitution and Bylaws—that is presented to our membership as a whole and voted on. We require a majority vote for the special resolution to be passed. When a special resolution is adopted into the Association's Constitution and Bylaws, The wording of the resolution is then submitted to the governmental authorities to become part of the Association's permanent documentation.

#### **Read Your Contracts Carefully Before Signing**

We caution caregivers to CAREFULLY read and understand your contract or modifications to the contract before signing. Ask all your questions FIRST! Once you have signed it is difficult to have it changed, and you may find yourself out of pocket. **BCFFPA's Constitution and Bylaws** document is available online at <u>http://bcfosterparents.ca/wp-content/</u><u>uploads/2014/06/Constitution-and-Bylaws-2014.pdf</u>, or click on the image below if viewing online.

BC Federation of Foster Parent Associations Constitution and Bylaws
(Revision 2014)
fosters parents

#### Seeking Second Coast Fraser Delegate

BCFFPA is currently seeking a BCFFPA member to serve on the Provincial Board as a second Coast Fraser delegate. With this area growing rapidly we want to ensure all our foster parents are served. If you are forward thinking and want to ensure our mandate is met within the fostering community, we encourage you to contact our Provincial Office at 1.800.663.9999 for more information.

#### **BCFFPA's New Staff Member**

We are happy to introduce our newest member to the Provincial Office team, Krissy Ramcharan. Krissy joined our staff in November 2014 as Administrative Assistant. With her happy disposition and eagerness to learn about fostering, Krissy is a great addition to the office environment. Coming with a background in administration, Krissy's outgoing personality and organizational



skills are sure to keep us on our toes. Welcome Krissy!

#### Vancouver Island Delegate Needed!

Do you have a passion for fostering or a willingness to work towards a more cohesive working relationship within our community? Do you wish to help create the best policies and practice for the children and families we serve? BCFFPA is currently looking for a BCFFPA member who is dedicated to provide consistent and responsive representation of foster parents to serve on the Provincial Board as Vancouver Island delegate. If this is something that could be the right fit for you and you would like more information, please contact our Provincial Office at 1.800.663.9999.

# Extended Health Care Packages by Canada Financial

Canada Financial's Ian Bideshi is available to put together individual extended health benefit insurance packages for foster parents. Currently he is offering a 10% discount for foster parents who utilize Canada Financial's services.

Ian has helped over 110 foster parents and has saved them thousands of dollars over the past 15 years. Canada Financial also offers segregated funds which have some guarantees for your investments.

Contact Ian at 604-862-4262 for more information.

#### **Welcome Back Heather Bayes!**

Our Board of Directors and staff would like to welcome Heather Bayes back to the BCFFPA provincial team. Heather was appointed as the Interior (Macro) Region delegate this past Fall when Yvonne Langlois stepped down. Heather continues to be passionate about working for the foster parents to ensure practice and protocols are handled respectfully and in the best interest of the children we care for. With the knowledge and expertise that Heather brings to the table, BCFFPA is confident that Heather will excel in the position. Welcome Back Heather!

#### "Ronda's been talking to her contacts again!"

An exclusive offer for BCFFPA member foster parents from Sun Peaks Grand Hotel and

#### **Conference Centre**



#### **Coast Fraser Report—Monica Buchanan**

Things in Vancouver Coastal were fairly quiet over the Christmas season and into the new year. The Vancouver area meeting was cancelled in January.

BCFFPA's President and ED met with Fraser's Ministry leadership team to discuss partnership and relationships between Ministry staff members and foster parents. There was some headway made towards ensuring that messaging regarding mutual respect is consistent across Ministry teams. Some of the younger social workers are unaware of BCFFPA and the value of partnership with foster parents. There was discussion about possible partnership meetings bringing all parties to the table as this is done in other regions.

There are still some support calls coming in for the region. These are handled by our volunteers and there hasn't been a strong need for advocacy in many of these cases.

We need a second Coast Fraser delegate as the region is so large.

#### North Regional Report—Amanda Lindquist Hello Foster Families!

Happy 2015 to you all, I hope the holiday season was great for everyone.

The past few months have been filled with family holidays and celebrations, which means a lot of Foster Families had a lot of time spent together. Prince George has many agencies, therefore we had a variety of events to choose from over the holiday season.

Our Partnership meetings continue, with a change of date for the new year. It is the hope that with a new day to meet we will be able to have our CSM's in attendance.

This year my goal is to make contact with our locals throughout the province. I am wanting to have some discussions and touch base with what's happening with BCFFPA members' foster homes. I am looking forward to hearing comments, concerns and general information and sharing between our communities. I look forward to speaking with some of you!

Some of our MCFD homes have taken the training about documentation. Those that have sat in on the training received revised documenting booklets. For each CIC they have daily logs, personal property inventory, medications administered and any purchases made for the CIC. These books are to be handed into the social worker every 90 days, as well as the monthly report as a 'snap shot' of the daily reports. Our Delegated Agencies have said that their homes can expect a version of these requirements in the future. There has been a lot of discussion at Partnership with regards to this system and it is clear that there is still some questions about consistency and clarification needed with this implemented plan.

Carrier Sekani has agreed to include BCFFPA local members when they do home visits with new foster parents. We asked if they would be open to us being a sort of 'Welcome Wagon' to new homes, and they agreed that pairing us up with new homes would be a great support system. We will embrace that in the year to come.

We have a lot of excitement about the 2015 AGM, and we can't wait to see some familiar and new faces this year!

#### **Interior Report—Heather Bayes (Interior Board)**

First I would like to reintroduced myself. As many of you will know, I completed my final term as BCFFPA President in May 2014. In the fall I was asked to represent the Shuswap and Revelstoke areas on the Interior Region Board, soon after Yvonne Langlois stepped down from the Delegate position. The Board appointed me to this Delegate position and I am very happy to represent the foster parents of our Region.

Yvonne has stepped down from the Delegate but is still busy with the Treasurer for our board and president of the Vernon local. As well as all the other things she does as a working foster parent. We all appreciate the work she has done and look forward to continuing to benefit from her hard work.

Besides being busy with the Christmas season our Board has been hearing from many of you with your concerns. There were well attended Christmas events in Kelowna and the Kootenays and the first one for Salmon Arm. Vernon's was cancelled due to lack of people wanting to attend.

A lack of support to foster parents is being reported from all areas. This includes resources, contracted support agencies as well as our foster parent peer supporters. The results of this are far reaching. Locals are struggling to get people out for meetings and, more troubling, to social events.

Other concerns are home closures and the lack of new homes opening. This has resulted in many homes being put in over capacity situations. We are aware of one home with 12 children!

As a Board, we will continue to work together to address as many issues as we can. Your help would be appreciated to give us clear information to take forward to BCFFPA's provincial Board.

#### Vancouver Island Report—No Delegate Report Available

#### It's That Time Again! May 2015 Submissions for BCFFPA Bursaries

#### **Maurice Graydon Bursaries (4)**

Maurice Graydon, a local Maple Ridge author and retired businessman, generously provided annual donations for these scholarships. The Maurice Graydon Bursaries will be awarded to youth currently or formerly in care who wish to continue their education.

Application Criteria: The successful incumbents will provide proof of registration with a business or vocational institution and demonstrate financial need. Bursaries will be awarded to those who demonstrate the highest marks.

Application Deadline: May 31st, 2015\*

#### William Curtis Memorial Fund

The William Curtis Memorial Fund was established in January 1979 for foster children who have reached the age of majority and wish to continue with their education. It is awarded annually.

Application Criteria: Former foster children residing in BC, aged 19 who show an interest in continuing their education (whether to complete high school, attend a business/ vocational school, college or university). High marks, though considered, will not be the only determining factor in awarding this bursary.

Application Deadline: May 31st, 2015\*

#### **Merv Davis Bursary**

The Merv Davis Bursary was established for foster children residing in the Coquitlam, Maple Ridge, Port Coquitlam, Port Moody or Pitt Meadows areas who have reached the age of 19 years old and wish to continue their education.

Application Criteria: Any youth who has been in care of the Ministry, residing in the Fraser River corridor (noted above), who has reached the age of 19 years, who intends to further his/her education, whether to finish high school, attend business or vocational school, college or university, and where other funds available are inadequate, is eligible to apply. The highest marks, although considered, will not be the only determining factor in the allocation of the bursary.

Application Deadline: May 31st, 2015\*

\*All application forms for our bursaries are available through our website at www.bcfosterparents.ca.



#### **Natural Child Bursary**

The Natural Child Bursary was founded in 1991 and is intended to be accessed by children born or adopted into a family providing foster care in BC.

Application Criteria: The eligible youth must be the child by birth or adoption, as stated above, to a foster family who are members of BCFFPA for three consecutive years since 1990. This can also apply to the child of an individual who is an Honorary Life Member. The youth must reside in BC, have graduated from highschool and is interested in extending his/ her education in any field of study. High grades, though considered, will not be the only determining factor in the allocation of bursary funds.

Application Deadline: May 31, 2015\*

#### **BCFFPA General Scholarship Fund**

BCFFPA occasionally receives funds from donors that they request be put toward scholarships for children and youth who were formerly in care. The Board of Directors has outlined a General Scholarship Fund into which we can place donations from these generous donors. Unless directed to do otherwise, scholarships will be distributed under the name of the donor(s) until the funds are expended.

The General Scholarship Fund was established in 2013. One bursary will be distributed annually.

Application Criteria: Former foster children residing in BC, aged 19 who show an interest in continuing their education (whether to complete high school, attend a business/ vocational school, college or university). High marks, though considered, will not be the only determining factor in awarding this bursary.

Application Deadline: May 31st, 2015\*

#### **BCFFPA Fine Arts for Kids Fund**

BCFFPA has received two generous donations to support the establishment of the Fine Arts for Kids fund. This fund is available exclusively to BCFFPA member foster parents in order to assist them with the costs of involving their foster children in the arts. The fund will cover costs including (but not limited to) art supplies, paints, easels, canvas, paper, dance shoes, costumes, lessons of all varieties, musical instrument rentals and purchase, drum making, carving, fabric arts and regalia making supplies. This fund is for support of extracurricular programs and not available to support school district art program activities.

BCFFPA's Board of Directors will identify annual awards based on funding available.

Application Criteria: Child must be between the ages of 6-18, must be in your care at the time of application, and receipts for supplies must accompany the application. We will accept one application per year per family but new families will have priority.

Application Deadline: December 15th, 2015\*

#### Foster Parent Support Services Society

"Serving the Foster Parents of the Vancouver Island Region through Support, Networking, Education and on-going Training"

#### Regional Office: 145-735 Goldstream Ave., Victoria V9B 2X4 toll free: 1-888-922-8437 fax: 778-430-5463 websites: www.fpsss.com



#### <u>Mission Statement</u>

The FPSS Society is a Grass Roots organization committed to providing meaningful and accessible support, education and networking services which will continually enhance the skills and abilities of foster parents to deliver the best care possible to the children in their homes.

The FPSS Society has been contracted by MCFD to provide the following services to foster parents on Vancouver Island. Foster parents can go to <u>www.fpsss.com</u> to see and download our calendars of current events.

#### Peer Support Groups

Opportunities for foster parents to network through the development, organization and scheduling of Peer Support Groups, which are meaningful and effective, and best meet the needs of foster parents in the Region.

#### **Protocol Support Team**

Support to caregivers involved in protocol processes, including the organization, training and supervision of volunteer support workers.

#### **Mentoring Program**

A Mentor is an experienced foster parent who acts as a trusted advisor, friend or support person and reduces the isolation foster parents may experience. The goals of mentoring are to increase the retention rate of foster homes, provide foster parents with a support network and information, and to help prevent placement breakdown.

#### **Region-wide Communication**

*The Island Connection* is a comprehensive newsletter, published 5 times per year and mailed to all foster parents free of charge.

#### Area Coordinators

Area Coordinators are in Victoria, Cowichan Valley, Nanaimo, Port Alberni, Comox Valley, Campbell River, and Port Hardy to assist foster parents in obtaining current and accurate information; support services to caregivers including training and development, and peer support.

#### MCFD Team Building Meetings

Identification, presentation and management of common issues for caregivers.

#### Networking

The FPSS Society provides opportunities for foster parents to connect with resource/support services in their communities and with other foster parents who share the challenges and benefits of fostering. FPSS works collaboratively with organizations like the BCFFPA, Delegated Aboriginal Agencies, and regional support agencies to represent, inform, and support all foster parents on Vancouver Island. FPSS is involved in all Vancouver Island foster parent appreciation events and the Communities of Caring project in Duncan.

#### Workshops and On-going Training

Opportunities for foster parents to further their skills and knowledge development in areas such as Trauma Informed Care, Attachment, FASD, and Cultural Awareness.

#### **BC Foster Care Education Program**

The FPSS Society provides the BCFCE training for all foster parents on Vancouver Island. Classes are offered in Victoria, Cowichan, Nanaimo, Port Alberni, Courtenay, Campbell River, and Port Hardy.

#### A Guide to Scholarships, Bursaries, Tuition Waivers and Awards for Children in and from Government Care

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Foster Parent Support Services Society on Vancouver Island has compiled an easy-reference one-stop booklet that catalogues fee waiver opportunities at BC universities and other financial assistance available to children in and from care. The document can be viewed online at *http:// fpsss.com/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/A-Guide-to-Scholarships-Bursaries-Tuition-Waivers-PDF.pdf* (or click the picture below if viewing online), obtained from one of the FPSSS coordinators or via Canada Post by contacting the Regional Office at 1-888-922-8437. Or contact Foster Parent Support Services Society at admin@fpsss.com.



### Message for BC's Foster Parents from the Representative for Children and Youth, Mary Ellen Turpel Lafond

Hello and a very happy new year to all. Thank you for giving me space in your newsletter to bring you up to date on some of the activities in the Office of the Representative for Children and Youth.

In 2013, I issued a challenge to B.C.'s publicly funded postsecondary institutions – waive the cost of tuition and help eliminate a major barrier to higher education for former youth in care. It's an important first step toward inspiring children in care and giving them the opportunity to succeed alongside their peers. And it's a sound investment in our province's most vulnerable young people. Education affects almost every measure of well-being – from financial independence, to family functioning, to health. Because youth who grow up in care already face many barriers to postsecondary education, tuition waivers can make all the difference in helping them reach their full potential. Tuition waivers also have a ripple effect across the whole system – from the students who can now afford their next semester, to children still in grade school who know that post-secondary achievement is one step closer than ever before.

Vancouver Island University was the first to meet that challenge and almost one-third of B.C.'s universities, colleges and institutes have followed suit. I believe that there are even more ready to step forward. Each of us has a role to play in making this happen. Follow us on Facebook and Twitter to share your support and to read about any developments as they happen.

In December 2014, my Office released the report Who Cares? B.C. children with complex medical, psychological and developmental needs and their families deserve better. The report sought to understand the experiences of children with complex care needs and whether they had a safe, nurturing and secure home in B.C.'s residential care system. What it found was that the ministry is failing to meet the needs of some of B.C.'s most vulnerable young people. Inconsistencies with assessments, planning, screening, matching and monitoring activities mean that young people are often winding up in unsuitable homes. Furthermore, the report found that a lack of services, particularly in rural and remote areas of the province, prevent children and youth with complex needs from receiving necessary supports. The report, an aggregate review of 31 critical injuries and deaths of children in care, includes interviews with service providers and youth perspectives. The report recommends the creation of a new class of foster and shared care that would permit, when appropriate, shared guardianship between family members and MCFD and allow parents a continuing hand in the care of their children while also keeping the children in their homes and communities whenever possible. The report is available on my website at www.rcybc.ca

Recently, my Office launched a new mobile app, Rep4Rights, to help us reach out to children and youth in their preferred channel. The app is easy to download by going to the iStore or GooglePlay or by visiting my website at <u>www.rcybc.ca</u> Rep4Rights includes a lot of useful information about how children and youth can stand up for their rights and interact more effectively with their caregivers and service providers. It also provides key contact information for the Representative's Office and explains how we can help. There is even an interactive game which helps children and youth to learn about their rights. The RCY app is a tool they can literally have in their back pocket, wherever they may be. We encourage everybody to download it and try it out.

It is important for me to keep you informed about the work of my Office – so thank you again for giving me space here. If you know anyone who 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@rycbc.ca We can also be found on Facebook at *B.C.'s Representative for Children and Youth,* and you can follow the Office on Twitter @rcybc.





#### **BC Foster Basics Video Series**

by Heather Bayes—Video Project Chair

It seems like yesterday that I was sitting in my kitchen trying to figure out what to do to help foster parents get information when they need it. YouTube seemed to be the answer. We fleshed out the idea and presented it to anyone who was willing to listen. Thankfully, MCFD supported the proposal for a minimum of 10 videos. Once we are completed, we will have 20 topics completed!

The series is comprised of short informational videos on a variety of popular topics—from why cultural awareness is so important (thanks Willy and Reuben for presenting an engaging conversation) to care plans, critical incident reporting and self care. Our choices of topics were taken from the questions BCFFPA is most frequently asked. Our goal is to give information consistent with policy and practice as well as some fostering tips from long term foster caregivers. This information is available when you need it—any time of the day.

It has been an amazing project. I have learned so much and worked with awesome people. There are so many people to thank. Our producer, Mo Soliman, with his technical and artistic leadership not to mention his patience with all of our questions and frequent bloopers. Dianne Swansburg, who confirmed all the policy guidelines so we would deliver consistent information. The BCFFPA Board of Directors, who supported this from the very beginning. Ronda for coordination of all the video facilitators and, as always, Jayne, who kept it moving forward, doing anything that was needed and writing all the scripts for the videos. With 20 videos we have many presenters to thank for their willingness to participate and for their patience with the process.

I didn't realize how difficult it was to read a teleprompter until I tried the first time, I recently presented the care plan topic and was shocked when Mo said we were done. The first video I did seemed to take forever because of all my mistakes. This time I couldn't see a little word 6 times in a row. No one told me that the studio lights sit so close while you're being filmed and that they are HOT. I'm a woman of a certain age and heat is not my friend!



I hope you all take the time to watch these videos and that they help you better understand the practice of fostering. There will be a few more videos being made available on YouTube before the end of June, so watch for them!

Again thank you to everyone involved. This was a great job done well by all of you.

#### છાલ

A HUGE thank you to our presenters!

Heather Bayes, Foster Parent (*Topics*) Understanding Your Contract Questions to Ask Before Placement Reporting and Documentation Foster Parent Rights/Support & Advocacy Care Plans

#### **Russell Pohl, Foster Parent**

*(Topics)* Self-Care for Caregivers Support Agencies at Your Service Supervising the Use of Media & Supporting Children's Right to Privacy Working with Families

#### Joan Kirkbride, OFPA Executive Director

*(Topics)* Support Agencies at Your Services Continuing Education for Foster Parents

Scott Johnson, MCFD Team Leader (Topic) Who's Who (voiceover)

Monica Buchanan, Foster Parent (Topic) Health Care for Children and Youth

Willy Neal, Foster Parent Reuben Unaegbu, Foster Parent (Topic) Accommodating Cultural Diversity

Frank Hetherington, ICS Coordinator (Topic) Supervising the Use of Media & Supporting Children's Right to Privacy

(Continued on page 14)

# A HUGE thank you to our presenters (continued)

Kari Bepple, ICS Program Coordinator (Topic) Supporting LGBTQ Children and Youth in Care

Renaa Bacy, MCFD Provincial Adoption Team (*Topic*) Adopting Your Foster Child

Karen Berry, MCFD Strategic Priorities Branch (*Topic*) Critical Incidences and Reporting

Gaye Smith, MCFD Resource Team (*Topic*) Rights of Children in Care & Facilitating Services

> Amanda Lindquist, Foster Parent (Topic) Babysitting and Relief

Jayne Wilson, BCFFPA Executive Director (Topic) Grief and Loss (voiceover)

...and to all those who agreed to provide their insights and interviews at event gatherings and for Foster Family Month...

# Camps For Kids 2015

Camp For Kids is an annual program that provides up to \$250 per child per eligible applicant (maximum 20 bursaries) to attend summer camp. Each year BCFFPA raises funds to help send foster kids to camp. Total funds available fluctuate from year to year. Please spread the word to your community business people and personal contacts regarding the benefits of providing this much needed support to foster families.

The application form can be found on our website and are accepted from February to the end of May each year.



**Interior Community Services** – Support to Family Care Network program provides education, training and support to foster parents in our service areas. We consider it a privilege and an honor to be starting our 12<sup>th</sup> year as a program serving:

**Thompson:** Kamloops, Barriere, Clearwater, Ashcroft, Merritt, Lillooet, & Revelstoke – supported by Deb Allan, Kari Bepple and Debbie Ross.

**Cariboo:** 100 Mile House, Williams Lake – supported by Sandi Lackey and Sharon Stolz.

**East Kootenays:** Cranbrook, Creston, Golden, Invermere, Fernie and Elk Valley – supported by Frank Hetherington.

**West Kootenays (subcontracted through ARC Programs):** Nakusp, Trail, Nelson, Castlegar, and Boundary – supported by Joyce Johnson.

**Program Coordinator:** Kari Bepple, and Program Director – Val Janz

Kari and Val participated in two days of positive, productive meetings with other contracted service providers, provincial support agencies (BCFFPA and FAFP) regarding working together in supporting the caregivers of B.C.; on day two MCFD staff joined us and we discussed the 53 Hour Education Program and the need to revise it.

Our program has had lots going on over the last several months. Our foster parent survey draw for a mini IPad was held on Friday, January 30. Thanks to all of the foster parents that participated, we appreciate your feedback.

We are working on getting a dedicated tour bus to transport ourselves and foster parents to the BCFFPA AGM in Whistler, B.C. on May 21-24, 2015. We are hoping to have a few fundraising events to help subsidize the cost if all goes well.

We are also working on a dedicated website for our program that we hope to have up and running by early April, 2015: <u>www.icsfp.info</u>

Winner of the Early Renewal Draw Elimar Acosta, Foster Parent in Surrey

Winner of the 2015 New Membership Draw Teresa Sommerey, Foster Parent in Salmon Arm

Congratulations to both of you! You will each receive a *complimentary registration at BCFFPA's 2015 AGM in Whister* on May 22 and 23, 2015

FosterlineBC

### Helping Teens Take Charge of Their Health Care (adapted from kidshealth.org)

Preparing kids for independence and adulthood brings many challenges for all parents — teaching teens to drive, negotiating later curfews, planning for advanced education and discussing tough topics, to name just a few.

Among these hurdles is helping teens start managing their own health care. It can be hard to let go — after all, you have been handling the doctors' appointments, prescriptions, immunizations, dental visits and countless other health concerns since they've been with you.

But it's important to guide teens toward taking this responsibility on. After all, you won't always be around to manage their health care into adulthood and they need these skills by the time they are of legal age.

And keep in mind that the decisions made in the teen years about things like alcohol, drugs, healthy eating, exercise, sex, and smoking can have long-term consequences — even if teens feel invincible. Becoming more invested in their own health care lets teens learn more about and understand the potential outcomes of choices they make now.

At what age are teens able to start taking some control? It can vary: factors like a teen's maturity level, health issues, and ability to keep track of the details all play a role, as does your willingness to support this transition time.

So, how can you start handing over the reins? You may want to strategize about this with the child's worker and plan together to support this change. For a start, it can begin by talking about medical topics in age-appropriate ways with your kids; for instance, discussing the medications they take and why, or teaching kids with chronic conditions ways to help care for their medical equipment. Maybe your teenager is ready to handle filling and refilling his or her own prescriptions.

It's important for you to encourage your adolescent to take advantage of private time to talk with the health care provider. During puberty and the teen years, kids are likely to have questions or issues that they're not comfortable discussing with a caregiver or parent in the room. (Be assured that a doctor who feels that a patient who might be at risk for self-harm or harming another will alert you.)

If you think your child might need additional help with teen issues, consider suggesting that they meet with an adolescent medicine specialist. These doctors not only are well-versed in the care of teens' physical health problems but also have additional training in helping their patients deal with risky behaviors and mental health concerns.

It's also wise to talk about health insurance and medical records to older teens. Remember, they will eventually have to

understand all about taking responsibility for their health and wellbeing which means booking appointments, seeing specialists and understanding about medical and dental insurance coverage once they leave government care.

#### Seeking Additional Donations—Fine Arts for Kids

Are you skilled with Fine Arts or do you know someone who has these skills? In order to support our Fine Arts for Kids Fund, we're seeking individuals who would be able to donate some time to provide lessons to foster children. Whether it's music lessons, sewing, painting or pottery knitting, fabric arts, drum making or stained glass, please let us know if you or someone you know would be available to assist BC's children and youth in care to develop these valuable skills.

BCFFPA is seeking additional donations from art and music supply stores so that we can further support the program. Please forward any information for contacts you may have to ronda@bcfosterparents.ca. Thank you!

# Self Care

Otherwise known as "taking care of yourself", "stress management" and sometimes even "self-indulgence" (gasp!), there are some very wise reasons why you should incorporate this into your daily and weekly routine.

- It's the best way to beat stress and to keep stress from overwhelming you.
- Caregivers can suffer burnout and vicarious trauma when they are always "on" and don't take a break.
- It enhances your feelings of wellbeing and supports your self-esteem.
- Time taken for ourselves allows us to feel more generous and open to others.
- Time away from the routine supports our physical health

...check out the BC foster Basics Selfcare for Foster Caregivers video at www.youtube.com/user/bcffpa.



### Kids and Food—10 Tips for Parents (kidshealth.org)

It's no surprise that parents might need some help understanding what it means to eat healthy. From the recommended daily food guide to the latest food fad, it can be awfully confusing.

The good news is that you don't need a degree in nutrition to raise healthy kids. Following some basic guidelines can help you encourage your kids to eat right and maintain a healthy weight.

Here are 10 key rules to live by:

**Parents control the supply lines.** You decide which foods to buy and when to serve them. Though kids will pester their parents for less nutritious foods, adults should be in charge when deciding which foods are regularly stocked in the house. Kids won't go hungry. They'll eat what's available in the cupboard and fridge at home. If their favorite snack isn't all that nutritious, you can still buy it once in a while so they don't feel deprived.

#### From the foods you offer, kids get to choose what they

**will eat or whether to eat at all.** Kids need to have some say in the matter. Schedule regular meal and snack times. From the selections you offer, let them choose what to eat and how much of it they want. This may seem like a little too much freedom. But if you follow step 1, your kids will be choosing only from the foods you buy and serve.

**Quit the "clean-plate club."** Let kids stop eating when they feel they've had enough. Lots of parents grew up under the clean -plate rule, but that approach doesn't help kids listen to their own bodies when they feel full. When kids notice and respond to feelings of fullness, they're less likely to overeat.

**Start them young.** Food preferences are developed early in life, so offer variety. Likes and dislikes begin forming even when kids are babies. You may need to serve a new food on several different occasions for a child to accept it. Don't force a child to eat, but offer a few bites. With older kids, ask them to try one bite.

**Rewrite the kids' menu.** Who says kids only want to eat hot dogs, pizza, burgers, and macaroni and cheese? When eating out, let your kids try new foods and they might surprise you with their willingness to experiment. You can start by letting them try a little of whatever you ordered or ordering an appetizer for them to try.

**Drink calories count.** Soda and other sweetened drinks add extra calories and get in the way of good nutrition. Water and milk are the best drinks for kids. Juice is fine when it's 100%, but kids don't need much of it — 4 to 6 ounces a day is enough for preschoolers.

**Put sweets in their place.** Occasional sweets are fine, but don't turn dessert into the main reason for eating dinner. When dessert is the prize for eating dinner, kids naturally place more value on the cupcake than the broccoli. Try to stay neutral about foods.

**Food is not love.** Find better ways to say "I love you." When foods are used to reward kids and show affection, they may start using food to cope with stress or other emotions. Offer hugs, praise, and attention instead of food treats.

**Kids do as you do.** Be a role model and eat healthy yourself. When trying to teach good eating habits, try to set the best example possible. Choose nutritious snacks, eat at the table, and don't skip meals.

**Limit TV and computer time.** When you do, you'll avoid mindless snacking and encourage activity. Research has shown that kids who cut down on TV-watching also reduced their percentage of body fat. When TV and computer time are limited, they'll find more active things to do. And limiting "screen time" means you'll have more time to be active together.

Grain	Vegetables	Milk	Meat and
Products	and Fruit	Products	Alternatives
Choose whole grain and enriched products more often.	Choose dark green and orange vegetables and orange fruit more often.	Choose lower- fat milk products more often.	Choose leaner meats, poultry and fish, as well as dried peas, beans and lentils more often.



# Food for Thought...

Imagine the difference you can make as a foster parent. Famous people who were once in foster care:

Charlotte Ayanna Tom Monaghan Eddie Murphy Victoria Rowell Eleanor Roosevelt Daunte Culpepper Allison Anders Carl Hancock Rux Willy Nelson Dave Pelzer Marilyn Monroe Tommy Davidson Dr. Ruth Westheimer Dan O'Brien Alonzo Mourning Cher Ice T John Lennon James Dean Billy Mills Esai Morales Dr. Wayne Dyer Malcolm X Babe Ruth Bruce Oldfield Harold Robbins Steve Jobs Eriq LaSalle Jamie Fox Pierce Brosnan Nelson Mandela Samantha Morton Seal Neil Morrissey Lemn Sissay

# Celebrate Social Worker Week! March 8th-14th, 2015

Our social worker partners chose their careers because of a passion to work with people and to make a difference. They had a choice of settings and sectors in which to work, but they chose to work with children in care. Thank you to all BC's social workers for being our partners on the care team and for working together with BC's foster parents to make each of our communities stronger, healthier and happier places to live.

If you haven't thought about it already, don't forget to do something nice for your all the social workers on your team during Social Worker Week in BC. If you need some ideas, feel free to call us at BCFFPA or discuss it with your fostering network.

**To all the social workers in BC, thank you!** ... from all of us at BCFFPA



Budgets are always tight and it's difficult to keep our technology up to date. Over the past two office moves, our already dilapidated furniture has taken a beating. BCFFPA is seeking donations for the following items:

- Sectional desks
- Steno chairs
- Meeting room chairs
- Reception chairs—or a sofa in good shape
- Coffee table or side table
- 3 new desktop computers
- Digital camera
- InDesign desktop publishing software
- Photoshop picture editing software
- Tablets for Board members

If you are interested in making a donation or know someone who is, please contact Jayne for details. Our thanks to you!





Pro	vin	cial	Resources

BC Federation of Foster Parent Associations www.bcfosterparents.ca	1-800-663-9999
After Hours Foster Parent Support Line	1-888-495-4440
Federation of Aboriginal Foster Parents www.fafp.ca	<b>1</b> -866-291-7091
Federation of BC Youth in Care Networks www.fbcyicn.ca	1-800-565-8055
Adoptive Families Association www.bcadoption.com	1-877-236-7807
Pacific Post Partum Support Society www.postpartum.org (also supporting adop	
Parent Help Line	1-888-603-9100
Parents Together	604-325-0511
Parent Support Services of BC www.parentsupport.bc.ca	1-800-665-6880
Representative for Children & Youth www.rcybc.ca	1-800-476-3933
FAE/S Support Network	604-507-6675
<b>Coastal Fraser</b> For contact information for local foster parent gro your area, please call 1-800-663-9999.	ups or support in
Hollyburn Family Services www.hollyburn.ca	604-987-8211
Vancouver Aboriginal Child & Family Services Society www.vacfss.com	778-331-4500
Family Services of Greater Vancouver www.fosterhub.ca	604-279-7100
Fraser Valley Foster Parent	604 522 1024

Association	604-533-1924
Abbotsford Community Services Foster Parent Caregiver Support	604-859-2165
South Vancouver Youth Centre www.svyc.ca	604-325-2004

<sup>(</sup>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
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#### Interior

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

<b>Okanagan Foster</b>	Parent Association
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www.okfosterparents.ca

Okanagan Metis Children		
Shuswap	250-253-4499	
South Okanagan	250-488-0561	
North Okanagan	250-558-0939	
Central Okanagan	250-868-9285	

Okanagan Metis Children & Family Services

250-868-0351
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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 Resources1-877-392-1003(24/7 support)Press 205www.axis.bc.ca (satellite office locations online)

North Peace Community Resources	
Society	250-785-6021
Fort St. John	(ext. 235)

We are in the process of developing our Community Resources page. Please submit your relevant contacts to jayne@bcfosterparents.ca.



<b>'IT PAYS TO BE A MEMBER'</b> Please complete & return to: <b>BCFFPA - 131 Eighth Street, New Westminster, BC V3M 3P6</b>		
Name(s):	Date:	
Address:	_ City & Postal Code:	
Phone: E-Mail:	Region:	
Local Association		
Level of Foster Home: (tick one) Restricted Regular Level of Foster Home:	evel I Level II Contractor Other	
This is a: New Membership (OR) a Renewal   1 year: individual \$30.00 OR couple \$35.00		
<b>2 year:</b> 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	e: 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)]	
<i>Please bill my VISA M/C</i> #	Expires/	

**BC Federation of Foster Parent Associations** 131 Eighth Street New Westminster, BC V3M

