

FosterlineBC

BC Federation of Foster Parent Associations



**foster
parents**
British Columbia

BCFFPA

Fall 2018
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BC Federation of Foster Parent Associations

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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.

**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 Reflections

Hello Friends,

This year's AGM was held in beautiful Nelson, BC. I think that everyone who attended would admit that the scenery, from the drive or from the air for those that flew in, was absolutely spectacular. The hospitality of the Prestige Lakeside Resort on Kootenay Lake and the friendliness of the locals only added to the event.

There was a meet and greet on Thursday evening where everyone mingled and reconnected—Ministry staff, foster parents, and agency staff alike. Many participated in the purchase of raffle tickets and fundraising for the Camps for Kids fund. There were 130 attendees and 40 of those were MCFD workers. It was one of our largest attendances so far.

Speakers from this year's AGM included a few words from our new Representative for Children and Youth—Dr. Jennifer Charlesworth, Assistant Deputy Minister—Carolyn Kamper and our Minister of Children and Families—Katrine Conroy. The messages sent to us from the Ministry gave us a positive look down the road that change is indeed on the way.

Workshops available to attendees included sessions around all types of transitions for children and youth aging out of care, an interactive session on a positive future for fostering and an informative workshop on the Green Shield extended benefits coverage available to foster parents. All the workshops were informative and included a lot of dialogue from participants and panels.

Foster parent and BCFFPA Board member, Lance Bereck, took some time to share with us a deeply moving story of a previous child in their care and the tragic ending to her story. He encouraged us to advocate for our children in care and make your voice heard. He provided messages that included calling your MLA and ombudsman or the Representative for Children and Youth, but please don't call the media. He encouraged the Ministry to listen to what foster parents have to say when they are concerned for a child or youth and not to suppress a foster parent's advocacy for a child. We are grateful to Lance for his courage to bring a very difficult topic and tremendously painful outcome for a young woman to all of us with a strong message for our community.

With the help of our amazing office staff, Board members and AGM attendees we were able to raise enough money to send 25 kids to camp next year. Thank you to the office staff for all of their dedication and hard work. You truly made this AGM a success.

Next year the 2019 BCFFPA AGM will be held on October 4th and 5th in gorgeous Harrison Hot Springs, BC. We hope to see you all there.

Marcy Perron  
President

*\*See the President's Foster Family Month message on page 5.\**

## Notes from the Office

Happy Foster Family Month to all of our friends in the fostering community!

As lead of the BCFFPA staff team, I know that I speak for all BCFFPA's employees when I say that the resilience and dedication of foster parents inspires all of us in the office to work harder and to do our best to represent you well out in the community. You may see yourselves as average humans doing meaningful work. While this may be true, you are also making lifelong connections and committing yourselves to reshaping the futures of young people. This is an awesome responsibility and the gravity and importance of this is not lost on us. Many of BC's future leaders, parents, teachers, counsellors, social workers, lawyers, laborers, truckers, artists and social service advocates will have lived in your homes.

I speak to foster parents every day. Typically we don't hear much from those who aren't experiencing difficult challenges requiring BCFFPA's assistance. Many of those who reach out, however, are up against any number of frustrating complications in the lives they lead 'parenting in a fishbowl'. But regardless of the number of times we've worked through issues together and no matter how long it takes, the majority of foster parents who have had their lives dissected, critiqued and judged persevere. They love kids and they love to make a difference in their communities.

Our new Communications Coordinator starts at BCFFPA this month. Our ability to hire for this role has been many years in the making. One of our first tasks in the new year will be to launch a myth-busting campaign. There are so many assumptions in general society about foster parents. I know from first hand experience the shock on peoples' faces when you tell them that foster parents are not being paid a wage for the work they do. Facts have the power to change and influence our society. I am very excited to work on this next awareness project. Let's see how many eyes we can open and minds we can change. It might even result in more foster parents in our province.

As Coriana takes on the role of Communications Coordinator, my 8 year tenure as BCFFPA's newsletter production chief will be over. We hope to provide you with a modern, informative magazine that will feature an updated design and more diversity in the future.

Thank you, again, so very much, for your faith in us at BCFFPA. We hear your voices and we carry your message with us wherever we go. We wish you a very celebratory and fun Foster Family Month.

Jayne Wilson  
Executive Director

### BC Federation of Foster Parent Associations

#### 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 Raise Empowered Children and Youth

Message from the Minister of  
Children and Family Development,  
the Honorable Katrine Conroy

My first year as Minister of Children and Family Development has been an exciting, rewarding time, learning from caregivers such as you, from youth in care, from Indigenous communities, families and all the people who work in our ministry.

I am so appreciative for all the work you do and the difference foster caregivers make every day in the lives of some of our province's most vulnerable young people. I know it's truly a team approach with families, social workers, foster caregivers, and other professionals working together to support and nurture these young people.

As a parent of four and granny to nine, I know that what you do is a 24/7 responsibility. Through good times and bad, your steady support makes it possible for the children and youth you care for live better lives.

My ministry's new System of Care Working Group has been meeting with and listening to your members and individual foster caregivers. We're continuing that process at your AGM, where our Strategic Priorities Division is eager to hear directly from you.

We appreciate your input and your forthrightness in helping us plan for changes; especially those changes that you've told us would be most significant in improving your experience as caregivers.

I have great hope every time I meet with young people who grew up in foster care and who are passionate about improvements for their younger "brothers" and "sisters."

We are determined to find new and better ways to support your incredible work, and to improve the experience for new caregivers.

I am so thankful for your willingness to share your life, skills and love and to be there for young British Columbians who are counting on you.

From the bottom of my heart, thank you!



Message from the Acting Representative for  
Children and Youth, Jennifer Charlesworth

This October, as we celebrate foster families in all their diversity, I want to take a moment to recognize the dedication of all foster families to vulnerable children and youth. At RCY, we are fortunate to have contact and relationships with some extraordinary young people who have experienced – and in some cases, grown up in – foster care. I want to quote one of them now.

Sema'tse Jordan, a member of our Social Media Youth Team, says: *"A child is a gift of life, and within life, if you do good, you receive good. With a child, you give them all the tools they need ... love, knowledge, stability and a place to call home, then they will do good themselves and become loving and caring people who will be filled with knowledge and curiosity to conquer the world. But you have to give them a chance no matter where they come from or who their family is."*

Jordan's message is powerful and I know it will resonate with foster parents and families. Her point, so beautifully stated, is that the work you do and the love you give to children in foster care is formative and stays with those children throughout their lives. There is no denying that foster parenting can be challenging, just as it can be challenging to be a child in foster care. But, as Jordan highlights, the emotional investment you make in a child always pays off, and will manifest most visibly when they go on to become healthy, caring adults who are able to fully realize their potential and nurture new generations.

I also want to recognize the skills and knowledge foster parents bring to the position when they open their homes to children and youth. Caregivers bring a wealth of experience, education and training to the role, which is vital to ensuring positive outcomes for young people in care. I am very aware that, in addition to the warmth and nurturing caregivers provide, they have undergone specific training and wear multiple hats, including child-centred advocate, collaborative problem-solver, counsellor, health and safety officer, and long-term planner to name just a few. The responsibilities, I know, are vast, and they are unique to each individual family.

By fostering a child, you are making an impact, and it is deeply appreciated. So, to all foster parents in B.C., I want to personally thank you for your skilled and heartfelt work.

Sincerely,





## Message from Canadian Foster Family Association President, Kevin Harris

Greetings all,

You will notice that the CFFA has decided that we would like to use the month of October to recognize the role of foster families in Canada. Our BC members have celebrated Foster Families for the entire month for quite some time, and as a board and executive we believe that the whole country should honor foster families in the same way.

At our last CFFA National Working group the delegates, board of directors and Executive Directors spent time in reinvigoration the CFFA purpose statement, the philosophical heartbeat of the organization.

We discovered the purpose of the CFFA, what the CFFA does, how we do what we do and most importantly why we do what we do. Simon Sinek calls it the *"Golden Circle"*.

Our WHAT: We empower Foster Families in Canada.

OUR HOW: We empower foster parents by connecting with each other to motivate, share ideas and to inspire. We empower foster parents by educating and informing others about the work of foster families.

OUR WHY: We do this because Every Child in Canada has the right to a Safe and Loving Family.

What this means going forward is that our Why will permeate all that the CFFA does. It unites all foster parents across Canada and defines the relationship with ALL Territorial and provincial organizations.

On behalf of the CFFA executive and Board of Directors we ask you to join with us as we celebrate foster families during the month of October.

Regards

Kevin Harris  
President, CFFA



**BCFFPA members can now join and  
renew through our website**  
[www.bcfosterparents.ca](http://www.bcfosterparents.ca)



## Message from BCFFPA President, Marcy Perron

Hello and Happy Foster Family Month to all of BC's foster parents!

For over 25 years we have been celebrating foster families throughout the month of October. Many of you will be invited by your support agencies and Ministry offices to participate in an event that acknowledges the work you do for your community. Others will receive a gift or kind word from staff if nothing formal is planned for your area. But there are still foster parents who are working quietly, isolated from their fostering community without the ability or time or social contacts to create a strong supportive network for themselves and their family. We celebrate the efforts of these foster families too and we encourage others to reach out and encourage them to join with their fostering community members. Networking not only provides a supportive community of practice, but having friends who foster is a way to take care of yourself as a foster parent. Who else understands our lives?

If you know of someone who fosters who is isolated due to their geographic location or their busy schedule, reach out to them and invite them for a coffee, a conversation, or a meeting with a group of fostering friends.

This Foster Family Month I am celebrating the humble and yet profound successes of the children in my home. I'm also hopeful about the future of BC's fostering sector. Every meeting that BCFFPA has with Minister Conroy or a member of the MCFD provincial team indicates that change is on the way. We still have a long road to see shifts in areas of practice and true acknowledgement that foster parents are a vital part of the Care Team. But the Minister continuously sends messages that she expects foster parents to be treated with respect. Along with this we know that there is a long overdue process underway that will renew the payment structure for foster parents. The changes will take some time to implement, however they are in the works.

Thank you for what you do every day for the children in youth that you love and care for. We understand your sacrifices, your joys, your sorrows and your successes. Together we are building more resilient young people and stronger communities.

Take some time this month to celebrate your hard work.

Sincerely,

Marcy Perron  
President, BCFFPA





PRIME MINISTER • PREMIER MINISTRE

October 2018

Dear Friends:

I am pleased to extend my warmest greetings to everyone celebrating National Foster Family Appreciation Month.

This month offers a wonderful opportunity to recognize foster families for their commitment to the children and youth living under their care. I am certain that participants will leave with a better understanding of the challenges facing foster families, and with a renewed appreciation for their vital role in our society.

I would like to commend the Canadian Foster Family Association for advocating for foster families throughout Canada. You can take pride in the knowledge that you are making our country a better place to live.

Please accept my best wishes for a successful month of events.

Yours sincerely,

The Rt. Hon. Justin P.J. Trudeau, P.C., M.P.  
Prime Minister of Canada



## BCFFPA's Solutions Program (previously named our "support and advocacy" program)

It's been a long time coming! We now have BCFFPA's Solutions Manager in place. Annette Harding comes to us most recently from MCFD provincial office where she has had many roles, most of them focused on the foster care system in BC. She has been an advocate of BCFFPA's services since being our contract manager in the early 2000s and a key contact for us ever since.

We are certain that Annette's background in education and social work, her comprehensive knowledge of policy and practice coupled with her practical approach to problem solving will be a perfect fit for the role.

Annette's understanding of BCFFPA's long history of collaboration with the Ministry will form part of our outreach initiative to ensure that our work with foster parents, agency staff and the Ministry includes a focus on partnership.

Looking to the future we will be hosting more trainings for peer support volunteers, building our team of regional support workers, promoting the Solutions program with MCFD offices throughout the province, and tracking and reporting support trends and issues across the province. Of course we will continue to provide direct one-on-one advocacy when necessary in partnership with agencies and independently.

Assisting Annette in the Solutions Program is Krissy Ramcharan, who has been the helpful and compassionate voice on the phone at BCFFPA since 2014. Krissy will ensure that you are referred to the appropriate community service if we are unable to assist.

Contact Annette or Krissy through our office at 1-800-663-9999.

Krissy Ramcharan (left) and Annette Harding



## BCFFPA's New Communications Coordinator, Coriana Constanda

Coriana grew up partly in Bucharest, Romania, and mostly in New Westminster, BC—two cities she loves for their character and diversity. She enjoys traveling and believes it's great for a healthy mind, body and soul. Her favorite destinations include Mexico and Greece, as she enjoys their climate, food, beauty and culture.

Coriana graduated with degrees in English and Publishing. She has a great love of language and literature, and it brings her joy to work with words. This seems most fitting as she admires Canadian author Margaret Atwood's talent, voice, passion and pioneer spirit.

She describes herself as quirky, kind, genuine and with a good sense of humor. Her hope is that she can touch people's lives in a meaningful and positive way. Inclusivity is important to her, and she wants to contribute more love and empathy to her community.

Welcome to the team, Coriana!



## BCFFPA's Provincial Board of Directors Secretary, Julie Holmlund from Kelowna

Welcome to our Provincial Board Secretary, Julie Holmlund!

Julie has a background in electrical and mechanical design and her husband works in sales. They were attracted to fostering after providing relief care for a friend who fostered and have been a foster home since 2009.

They primarily foster babies and young children to age 6. As a foster parent, Julie struggles with sending children home when she and her husband suspect that the return won't be successful. For those who do return home successfully, she is always happy to maintain those relationships when the family is open to it.

Julie shares with us that her biggest challenge is the lack of consistency among the social workers she has worked with and the different interpretations of MCFD's policies. She would like to work toward establishing consistency within Ministry offices.

In her role on BCFFPA's Board of Directors, she hopes to assist with creating positive change that enables foster parents more freedom to better parent the children in foster homes.

Julie shares that her greatest success was the adoption of her 5 children.

We look forward to working with Julie over the next few years.



## Thank you to G & F Financial Group!

G & F Financial Group provided BCFFPA with much needed resources so that we were able to upgrade our technology and office infrastructure. G & F Foundation has assisted us with purchasing necessary equipment and software upgrades that would otherwise be unachievable. Thank you!



"G&F Financial Group is proud to work with community partners like the BC Federation of Foster Parent Associations (BCFFPA), who make such a positive and lasting impact in our local communities.

We are pleased that funding from our G&F Foundation is able to help the BCFFPA purchase vital technology and equipment to better serve the foster families who rely upon the Association for support. The BCFFPA currently provides service to over 2300 foster families throughout BC and G&F is happy to enable new and upgraded technology that can be used to connect people all across the province with the supports they need." Bill Kiss and Jeff Shewfelt, Co-CEOs at G&F Financial Group.



## Join us for our next Annual General Meeting and Conference in Harrison Hot Springs! October 4 and 5, 2019

Join us next year at the Harrison Hot Springs Resort in one of BC's most beautiful lakeside locations. What could be more relaxing than spending a Friday night lounging in the mineral pools after a long day of community engagement?

Room rates start at \$150. Stay tuned for more information in our winter FosterlineBC magazine.



## Join a Branch, Start a Branch

BCFFPA's structure is based on community branches (formerly called Locals). Foster parents in a community join together to create an entity that operates under BCFFPA's bylaws and policies for the purpose of strengthening the community network for foster parents. Most branches meet monthly to give and receive support, discuss the work of fostering, host an educational workshop, plan family events, and offer mentorship to newer foster parents.

BCFFPA provides funds for the operation of these branches through membership funds paid in the community where the branch resides. The funds can be used to pay for any branch activities.

Many branches form partnerships with contracted foster parent support service agencies in their region or with a Ministry office who may offer sponsorship to the group. Branches also may choose to fundraise locally or to seek discounts from vendors in the community that will be offered to foster parents to reduce expenses for their families.

Foster parents who are part of a BCFFPA branch are more aware of what takes place in the fostering sector as a whole. They have a say in BCFFPA programs and activities and can exercise their right to vote for regional representation on the BCFFPA provincial Board of Directors.

BCFFPA was created by foster parents to provide services to foster parents and is governed by foster parents who work with a dedicated staff team. Please join us!

For more information about joining or starting a branch in your community, please contact 1-800-663-9999.

## Election Time: Coast Fraser Region Delegate and North Region Delegate

BCFFPA's Coast Fraser Region Delegate, Walter Aguilar, will not be seeking re-election this fall as his 3 year term expires. Our North Region Delegate role is currently vacant.

Are you interested in representing your region?

### Qualifications:

- *BCFFPA full member in good standing*
- *Active member of a BCFFPA branch (preferred) so that understanding of BCFFPA's structure, function and communication stream is understood*
- *Demonstrated strong relationships and networking activity within the region's foster parent community*
- *Not currently sitting on a Board of Directors of another foster parent support agency*

### Commitment Guideline:

- Attend monthly Board of Directors conference calls or in-person meetings when required, including the AGM
- Regular discussions with regional agency partners and Ministry representatives
- Attend agency and Ministry partnership meetings on a regular basis
- Contact all active BCFFPA branches in the region monthly to gather information and build relationships
- Develop supportive relationships with community partners and fostering stakeholders
- Provide referral to services in your community
- Participation in BCFFPA and partnership committees
- Work as a team members with other Board members and staff of BCFFPA
- Provide written reports about regional activities for FosterlineBC newsletter and Annual Reports outlining current activity, regional trends and news within your region
- Regional delegate is a 3 year term

### Election Process:

1. Submit your nomination form signed by two foster parent BCFFPA members in good standing
2. Submit nomination forms to [jayne@bcfosterparents.ca](mailto:jayne@bcfosterparents.ca) or by fax to 604-544-2223
3. Deadline for Nomination Forms: November 5<sup>th</sup>, 2018
4. Nominees will be vetted for eligibility and approved by BCFFPA Nominations Committee
5. If there is more than one eligible nominee for any region, nominee biographies and voting ballots will be sent to the regional membership for voting. If there is only one eligible nominee for any region, they will be appointed to the position and the appointment will be announced in the next FosterlineBC newsletter.



## BCFFPA Regional Delegate Nomination Form

Name of Candidate: \_\_\_\_\_ Membership Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_

Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

### ***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: \_\_\_\_\_

**\*\*All BCFFPA Board of Directors volunteer positions are governed by BCFFPA Constitution/Bylaws, policies, procedures, privacy and ethics guidelines.\*\***

## Getting to Know Annette Harding—BCFFPA’s Solutions Manager

by Jayne Wilson and Annette Harding

As an admin staff member for BCFFPA back in 2006, I met Annette on a few occasions. When I met her I understood the reasons behind her reputation for being humble, informative and direct. I liked her right away. Since becoming executive director of BCFFPA in 2010, I’ve had many occasions to work directly with Annette on projects and in partnership with other agencies. As is true of most work relationships, I am very familiar with Annette’s temperament, I know a few details of her personal life and we had well established healthy boundaries around the divide between my role in the non-profit sector and hers at the Ministry. I’ve always enjoyed her company and talking to her about her vast knowledge of the history of foster parent support in our province.

In order to introduce our community members to Annette properly, I sent her a few questions to answer so that I could create a biography of sorts for the newsletter. Once I read her answers I realized that Annette’s history makes her the perfect fit for the role of Solutions Manager. I couldn’t possibly summarize her background, so with her permission, I will share the answers to the questions I sent in her own words.

### Q1: What is your favorite thing about yourself?

First talking about yourself is very difficult and I’ve never actually thought about my favourite thing about myself. But now pressed I would say being a mother and grandmother is my favourite as my 3 adult sons and my 3 grandchildren are very precious and important people in my life.

I have been a single parent since my youngest child was 6 and I am glad I was able to be both parents to my growing sons and ensure they had other male role as their dad was not around. I was definitely like a mother bear with her cubs as it was often just us 4 dealing with a world that was falling apart not long after immigrating to Canada. So I guess I like my resilience, which comes out as rebellious, in that nothing can keep me down if I want something enough.

I’ve also learned more about unconditional love and patience, and willingness to face fears, loss, pain and discomfort in ways I could never have imagined when going through the loss of my beautiful 8 year old grandson, Tiernan, to an extremely rare, aggressive type of cancer, and the more recent loss of my dad due to a major stroke. Through such major life events we all learn so much about ourselves and I was grateful to find that Mindfulness helped me greatly along this healing journey. I am striving everyday to live more mindfully, with patience, trust, acceptance, kindness and compassion, including self-compassion as my guide.



Annette’s grandson, Tiernan, age 5

### Q2: Who do you greatly admire and why?

There are so many people I greatly admire it is hard to select one, so I am going to choose the men, women and children who fought in the 1916 Irish Rebellion for the right to a free Ireland.

The 1916 Proclamation penned by the Rebel leadership remains one of the most socially democratic, equal and just descriptions of what a united, free Ireland could be like. Noted for the inclusion of women and children as being of equal importance, tolerance of all religions, equal rights and liberties and opportunities for all

citizens, the Proclamation was way ahead of its time in terms of supporting diversity, feminism and social justice.

Ever since I was young I have always loved history along with a growing awareness of fairness and equity within my own community. My mum is from Dublin, Ireland where the main battles of the Rebellion took place, so every time I visited I would learn more about the events and people of the 1916 Rebellion, most recently finding out about all the children involved.

I continue to read and learn more about the courage, tenacity and leadership of the women involved, many of whom took on leadership, combat and support roles. Many sacrifices were made to be a part of the Rebellion, but I admire greatly their conviction, resilience, clear vision of a better future, and unwavering belief in equality and justice.

It may be in the DNA of all Irish people but I seem to have inherited the “rebellious” gene from my mum as working for equality, fairness and respect has been a constant theme in all my roles.

### Q3: Where did you grow up and what is your favorite thing about your home town?

I was born and raised in Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire, England. Hemel was a new town developed after World War 2 to house all the bombed out Londoners as well as all the people helping to rebuild London and south-east area of the country. The new town swallowed up several small villages as it grew but I think it created an interesting mix of very old and new architecture and blend of village and urban characters and communities.

I lived on a council housing estate in rented homes as purchasing a home in the UK at that time was only for the rich. As both my parents worked in factories in the strong class system that still exists there, I grew up working class and remain eternally grateful that I did.

I think my favourite thing about growing up in my home town is that it did prepare me for everything that I could or would encounter in my personal life and definitely prepared me for social work of all kinds. From where and how I grew up I understand the impact of poverty, job loss, imprisonment, losing your home, substance use problems, struggling to look after children and fears about “social services”. My parents always modelled helping others and were often helping family members on a weekly basis so I thought this was the normal way to be and

began volunteering at a very young age. Luckily I met people, who understood my curiosity and passion to help others and they helped guide me to my path in social work. I remain the only person from my secondary school to ever go on to University – that is the power of the class structure. Only by rebelling could I break through. That’s a whole other story!

### Q4: What are two fun facts about you?

First, I am a totally devoted and dotty parent to 3 cats, Juno, Molly and Leo, and 1 dog, Morse, who is a cross between a Yorkshire Terrier and Bichon Frise. They all keep me busy but especially Leo and Morse. We go on daily walks together.

Leo is a beautiful Bengal cat who has to be the most photographed cat in Victoria as he has so many admirers. Leo and Morse are devoted walking and playing companions and if Leo misses out on a walk he will meow until I give in and go out to walk again with him included this time. Who's in charge here?



Second, shortly after arriving in Canada, in my job in the Northwest Territories as a community social worker, I had to measure polar bear skins as part of the income assistance process. This was a true cultural experience for the Probation Officer from Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire.

**Q5: When you read the word "foster", what is your first thought?**

My first thought is "family" and not just because I have worked with foster families throughout my 36-year career as a social worker, but also because when I see "foster" I think of how many mothers in the animal world foster babies that another mother animal cannot look after for various reasons, sometimes even across species. I'm also reminded of the male animals who may or may not be fathers themselves, caring for and nurturing the young ones that are seeking security and comfort. Two of my kittens were being cared for by a huge male ginger tabby when I adopted them on different occasions. The staff said the male cats are often the best, most tolerant kitten sitters.

This leads to seeing the word "foster" as an action verb with the following coming most readily to mind when I think of all that foster families do; to foster love, to foster attachment, to foster development, to foster resilience, to foster nurturance, to foster change, to foster fun, laughter and joy, to foster connections with the child's family, to foster the child's relationship with siblings and family, to foster and support the child's lifelong relationships and to foster teamwork.

Foster families have taught me it's not possible to look after children in isolation and that teamwork, networking and support are crucial to the success of each child.

**Q6: How do you see yourself contributing to the fostering community and what do you hope to accomplish in this role?**

I welcome this opportunity to continue working with the fostering community in a new and different role on the vision and goals that many of us have been striving for to strengthen and develop foster care in BC. Having worked in practice, training, program development, and policy I see the Solutions Program as a great way to put all my learning, experience, knowledge and skills into action, drawing on various elements as needed.

As you can tell from my earlier responses I have strong values about fairness, equity, trust, honesty and respect. These values permeate foster care and I am keen to work in partnership with all support agencies and contractors, the Ministry and the Delegated Aboriginal Agencies to build and maintain fair, equal, trusting, honest and respectful working relationships that truly support and value foster families and the children in their homes. Fortunately over the years I have built up many working relationships and been a part of many partnerships that I know will help and guide me in this role.

There are 2 key areas where I hope to contribute and these are the promotion, understanding and use of the Foster Parent Rights in everyday practice and that these rights are respected.

The second is to support, as much as possible, the full implementation of the PRIDE Model of Practice so that everyone working with foster families is fully versed in the 5 competencies and that all staff understand the meaning and importance of including foster caregivers as members of the professional team.

I was pleased to learn at the recent AGM that the ministry has just released an Introduction to Pride as an online course for all Ministry staff whose role intersects with foster families. Foster families know that if you were just included as a team member in all planning, assessment and decision-making for children in your homes 70% - 80% of the current issues, challenges and conflicts that arise between foster families and social workers would melt away. I would love to be a part of the team around the province that achieves this particular PRIDE competency as I believe it will make all the difference for everyone concerned.

I am very solutions focused. Whenever I'm presented with an issue I can easily think of several solutions, even if some of them may be a bit out there!! I am a true Aquarius. I do this best when sparking off other people and believe collectively with the voice of all foster families we can develop many solutions that will keep strengthening foster care in BC.



**AGM 2015** (from left) Annette Harding, Dianne Swansburg, Terrena O'Connor, Sobhana Daniel, Mark Sieben, Melanie Filiatrault

Investigation? Protocol? Need Information? Give us a call!  
**BCFFPA** ... serving BC's foster parent community for over 50 years.

**Fosterline BC**  
**1-800-663-9999**



### 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](mailto:office@bcfosterparents.ca) or Debbie Drewitz at [debbiedrewitz@gmail.com](mailto:debbiedrewitz@gmail.com)



## Healthy Eating Throughout the Year

You don't need a degree in nutrition to raise healthy kids. Here are 10 key rules to live by that will encourage your kids to eat right and maintain a healthy weight.

1. **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.
2. **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.
3. **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.
4. **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 a few different times 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.
5. **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.
6. **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.
7. **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.
8. **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.
9. **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.

10. **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.



## Hints for a Spooktacular Halloween! from [kidshealth.org](http://kidshealth.org)

- Go with young children (under age 12).
- Know the route taken by older kids who trick-or-treat on their own and when they'll be coming home.
- Go in a group and stay together.
- Only go to houses with porch lights on.
- Walk on sidewalks on lit streets. Avoid alleys and don't cross lawns.
- Walk from house to house and always walk facing traffic when walking on roads.
- Avoid running! It's not safe and it's easy to trip over costumes.
- Keep your distance from candles and other flames.
- Cross the street at crosswalks and never assume that vehicles will stop. Drivers have a lot to look out for on Halloween night!
- Give kids flashlights with new batteries. Kids may also enjoy wearing glow sticks as bracelets or necklaces.
- Limit trick-or-treating to your neighborhood and the homes of people you know.
- When your kids get home, help them check all treats to make sure they're sealed. Throw out candy with torn packages or holes in the packages, spoiled items, and any homemade treats that haven't been made by someone you know.

**Note:** Make sure trick-or-treaters will be safe when visiting your home too. Remove anything that could cause them to trip or fall on your walkway or lawn. Make sure the lights are on outside your house and light the walkway to your door, if possible. Keep family pets away from trick-or-treaters.

## Gobbling Down Halloween Goodies

- Consider buying Halloween treats other than candy. Stickers, erasers, crayons, pencils, coloring books, and sealed packages of raisins and dried fruits are good choices.
- Know how much candy your kids collected and store it somewhere other than in their bedrooms. Consider being somewhat lenient about candy eating on Halloween, within reason, and talk about how the rest of the candy will be handled. Let kids have one or two treats a day instead of leaving candy out in big bags or bowls for kids to consume at will.





**After years of enquiries and searching for affordable personal extended health benefit plans, we are excited to present...**



## Health Insurance for Foster Parents!

Brought to you by  
**Green Shield Canada** and **BCFFPA**

Not covered by a group health plan? Concerned about health and dental expenses? Find the coverage that's right for you and your family with a Health Assist plan from Green Shield Canada.

As independent contractors, foster parents experience challenges accessing affordable extended health benefits.

Health Assist provides a variety of health plan options with varying levels of benefits and coverage to choose from. Many offer guaranteed acceptance\* whereas for other plans, GSC asks that you complete a medical questionnaire. Each plan is competitively priced. It's all about you, your health and the financial protection you need.

### Getting the coverage that's right for you can be really simple!

For more information or to take advantage of the benefits Health Assist plans provide, contact:

#### **Candace Dodson-Willis, GBA**

A strategic alliance with Group One Planning Solutions

Email: [candace\\_dodson@icloud.com](mailto:candace_dodson@icloud.com)

Phone: 250-299-2768

OR click on the image below for instant access to coverage options!



(or copy and paste this link) <https://mygscadvantage.ca/Quote/AllProducts?mgaid=1598&oid=HA329&aid=N7597>

### Health Assist plans are easy to use...

- ✓ **No waiting period**—with all Health Assist plans, your coverage starts the first of the month following approval of your application.
- ✓ **Benefits for life**—Once your application is approved, you have coverage as long as you need it (as long as your monthly payments are made, of course).
- ✓ **Hassle-free claiming**—Most of your prescription drug, dental, extended health care and vision claims can be processed instantly using your GSC ID card. Other claims can be reimbursed quickly with direct deposit to your bank account. (Kiss waiting for a cheque in the mail goodbye!)
- ✓ **Mobile info on the GO**—GSC's fully mobile-friendly website and GSC on the Go® app make sure you stay connected by giving you quick, easy access to your benefits, claims status, history, health care providers, and much more on your desktop, laptop, tablet or smart phone.

### And easy to love...

- ✓ **Rewards for living well**—Change4Life is a free online portal that's designed to support (and encourage!) healthy life choices by providing tools, resources and health information tailored to your specific needs. You'll earn points for your activity that can be used for chances to win great rewards, including gift cards from major retailers.
- ✓ **Legal assistance**—As a GSC customer, you'll have access to a free legal advice service in Canada 24/7 via toll-free telephone to help guide you through most major types of law. The legal advice service can also give referrals to experienced local lawyers at preferred rates.
- ✓ **Travel Coverage**—Emergency medical travel benefits and out of country assistance are included in all LINK plans

Plans provided by **Green Shield Canada (GSC)**

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\*Acceptance is guaranteed for select plans as long as GSC receives the initial payment, other plans require completion of a health questionnaire and medical underwriting. Any other eligibility requirements? Just easy ones. To be eligible to apply for Health Assist plans, you must be a Canadian resident with valid provincial health insurance coverage; for Health Assist ZONE, you must be under 75 years of age; for Health Assist LINK you must be under 80 years of age and GSC must receive your application within 90 days of your group coverage end date.



## Did you know?

Each year, approximately  
**42% of all adoptions**  
**in BC are foster parents**  
**adopting** the children in  
their care.

# Foster parents make great adoptive parents!

Being adopted by their foster parents means stability and less disruption in the child's life and relationships. The message children hear when they're adopted is "I'm wanted, loved, and know where I belong."

If you're thinking about adopting your foster child, post-adoption assistance may provide funding for services and maintenance. While financial assistance continues, decision making and legal responsibility for the child shifts to you, the new adoptive parent.

Visit **[www.bcadopt.com](http://www.bcadopt.com)** or call us at **1-877-ADOPT-07** to learn more about adopting your foster child.



## AEP-Online Refresher

*Learn the essentials for building  
a strong adoptive family!*

This convenient online course has been designed especially for foster parents who need to meet the mandatory adoption education requirements in BC in order to adopt their foster children. Get more info and sign up at **[bcadoption.com/aep-refresher-child-home](http://bcadoption.com/aep-refresher-child-home)**.

# Foster 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>Indigenous Perspectives Society</b><br>www.http://ipsociety.ca/foster-caregiving/                   | 1.844.391.0007<br>(ext. 229) |
| <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                                        | 1-800-345-9777               |
| <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>Foster Hub</b><br>www.fosterhub.ca                                             | 1-877-926-1185 |
| <b>Fraser Valley Foster Parent Association</b>                                    | 604-533-1924   |
| <b>South Vancouver Youth Centre</b><br>www.milieu.ca/svyc                         | 604-325-2004   |

## Island

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

## Foster Parent Support

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

## Interior

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

## Okanagan Foster Parent Association

|                        |              |
|------------------------|--------------|
| www.okfosterparents.ca |              |
| Central Okanagan       | 250-870-8991 |
| North Okanagan         | 250-558-0939 |
| South Okanagan         | 250-462-6907 |
| Shuswap                | 250-253-4499 |

## Okanagan Metis Children & Family Services

250-868-0351

## Interior Community Services

1-877-376-3660  
www.interiorcommunityservices.bc.ca

## North

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

|                                                                                                      |                             |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <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 |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|

## Community Bridge

250-785-6021  
Fort St. John (ext. 235)  
www.communitybridge.ca

*Please submit your relevant regional or agency contacts to Jayne Wilson at: [jayne@bcfosterparents.ca](mailto:jayne@bcfosterparents.ca).*



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

Please complete & return to: **BCFFPA - 208-20641 Logan Avenue, Langley, BC V3A 7R3** or **join or renew via our website at [www.bcfosterparents.ca](http://www.bcfosterparents.ca)**

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

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

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

Local Association (BCFFPA Branch) \_\_\_\_\_

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 regional board 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 BC Federation of Foster Parent Associations, I/we agree to abide by the Bylaws, Policy and Procedures, and Code of Ethics of the Federation.

\_\_\_\_\_  
[signature(s)]

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

