

# FosterlineBC

BC Federation of Foster Parent Associations



Spring 2018  
Volume 16, Issue 1

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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.



Hello everyone!

There is a saying "the older you get the faster time goes by". I used to think it was crazy but now that I'm one of the "older" ones I can attest to the fact that it is true. I cannot believe that over a year and a half has passed since I became your President.

When I was elected into the President role, there were 4 issues I thought were important to address right away.

1. Affordable extended health benefits for foster parents and their families. Throughout early 2017 we worked diligently to bring you an affordable extended health benefits package which became accessible online as of July 2017.
2. Retirement/Pension Plan: Discussions are underway with our insurance contacts.
3. Contracts that are uniform and consistent with policy: Discussions are in process.
4. The need to address the insufficient maintenance rates and advocate for an increase that is sufficient to current day cost of living: BCFFPA has received confirmation from the Ministry that this work will begin very soon and that we will be involved in the consultation. In support of this initiative, BCFFPA partnered with UBC Department of Economics for a student project which studied the sufficiency of today's foster parent rates. The resulting report was summarized and forwarded to the Minister's office. See page 12 for key findings.

We have been working on the motions brought forward at our last AGM. The motions with the most support from members were 06 & 07/AGM/2016—facilitating next steps to aligning foster parents with a union and to create a 6-member working group. The union working group presented their findings at the AGM. With their recommendation to move forward with aligning foster parents with a union, BCFFPA must pass the baton to other individuals to take the next steps.

BCFFPA has had a busy year, not only with our regular work, but with the projects to create 3 new trainings, redesigning the membership database for online access by members and new community members to join BCFFPA, and of course the 50th Anniversary National Conference hosting the Canadian Foster Family Association. This event was truly a year long production.

Our volunteer Solutions Facilitator, Russell Pohl, has taken a step away from BCFFPA's work for the time being after spending several years reaching out to as many foster parents as possible. I sincerely appreciate the time Russell has taken away from his family and the unbelievable support he has given me. We are very happy to support Russell's choice to refocus on his family. We hope to work with him again soon.

Lastly, thank you all for everything you do for our children and know that we are aware of the issues we all face daily. We are trying our best to help support and advocate for you in every way possible.

**Marcy Perron**  
BCFFPA President

Many of you may have wondered where your issues of the FosterlineBC magazine have gone. BCFFPA (yours truly, to be specific) has been inundated with projects and multiple priorities for several months now. While I personally believe that providing timely information to BC's foster parents is one of the highest priorities at BCFFPA, it also highlights the fact that we have been operating on a shoestring and that the juggling of priorities is beginning to show in missed opportunities and unmet goals. I apologize. I expect that your regional agencies have kept you all informed of all activities and events in your regions.

One of the alternate priorities that kept us busy was the need to issue a comprehensive proposal to the Ministry for a series of new programs and services. While the majority of our proposed services will be discussed with the Ministry in the future, we are happy to report that we have received enough increased funding to hire someone to cover our communications commitments and to begin staffing our Solutions program.

As some of you may have heard, I am now working remotely from Kamloops, though I travel to the coast once per month to take care of office-related responsibilities. It's wonderful to be away from the hustle and bustle of the lower mainland and step into the regional fostering community more than I have been able to in the past. Going forward I expect to be making the rounds from Salmon Arm to Penticton and, working with our BCFFPA Branches (formerly called Locals), to sort through some lingering sector challenges in the area.

You may have heard that the AGM and Conference last year was a busy affair filled with many great event options and fabulous food! While it is always wonderful to host another agency's AGM, in this case the Canadian Foster Family Association, there is a significant cost to these joint events. In the next few years BCFFPA will be returning to our old model of hosting more modest events. Don't worry, we'll still feed you delicious menus and find lovely locations!

For those of you who have called the office in the past few months, you will likely appreciate that Krissy's warm and helpful voice is once again on the other end of the phone. We are excited that she has returned to BCFFPA on contract.

Our fund developer, Anita Cymet, has been successful in her pursuit to gather funding that adds to BCFFPA's ability to offer more assistance to members. Most recently we have received 2 grants to support foster parents who are travelling with children in care to medical visits out of town. Some MCFD offices don't cover additional cost for out of town medical trips like meals, cab rides, public transit or activity costs while waiting for the next appointment. As our President says, when you're travelling for medical reasons, it's hard to focus on collecting receipts for reimbursement. See page 7 for all of the grants available this season, including the Medical Travel Grant for Caregivers which will assist with the out of pocket expenses associated with medical travel.

In the next couple of months we will be hiring new staff. I look forward to announcing these new positions shortly!

**Jayne Wilson**  
Executive Director

## BC's Minister of Children and Family Development— the Honorable Katrine Conroy

Since I was elected and took on the role of Minister of Children and Family Development, I've had the opportunity to meet with many incredible children, youth, foster families, adoptive families, social workers, Indigenous leaders and communities.

I especially enjoyed the chance to meet with members of the BC Federation of Foster Parent Associations at your Conference and AGM in Whistler last October. I was honoured to acknowledge the vital role that your organization has played throughout its 50-year history. Congratulations on such a significant milestone!

We count on foster parents to provide children and youth in care with support, guidance and a soft place to land as they grow and mature.

You are one of about 2,700 foster families supporting foster kids and as you know, there is an ever-present need for more foster caregivers. Our most recent statistics reveal that there are approximately 6,815 children and youth in care in B.C. Our government has made it a goal to reduce the number of Indigenous children in care by keeping them with their families and in their communities and we're making progress: in the last year, we've decreased the number of Indigenous children in care in BC by almost 100 – but there's much more work to be done.

Still we know there are a lot of kids seeking what you have already stepped up to provide and I cannot overstate the gratitude we at the Ministry feel that you have opened your hearts and your homes.

We know that as foster caregivers, you do the hard, on-the-ground work of listening, advocating, guiding, and let's not forget—celebrating—the children and youth in your care! I also appreciate that BCFFPA takes on the important role of liaising with staff in the ministry in order to shape policy and bring the voices of foster parents to the table. This is imperative in ensuring we continue to help foster caregivers meet the complex challenges that are inherent in this important calling and work.



Minister Conroy with 50 Years of Fostering panelist, Frances Nuttgens from Duncan, BC.

I think you'll be pleased to know that in this coming year we'll be moving forward with a thorough review of family-based caregiver rates to look at how to achieve a more equitable system of pay for the many different types of caregivers that are supported by the ministry. The scope of this initiative will include foster and kinship caregivers as well as families who are under the Post Adoption Assistance and Post Transfer of Custody Assistance programs. We hope that as we initiate this work, the BCFFPA, other foster agencies and foster caregivers will join us in collaboration to determine the best path forward. The ministry recognizes that family-based caregiver payments are complex and that a solution that works for everyone may take some time to develop, but we are excited to begin this journey right away.

I know you share my commitment to working towards a better future for all children, youth, and families in BC. I look forward to continuing this work together, thank you so much for all you do.

## New Monthly Meetings Between BCFFPA Provincial Office and BCFFPA Branches

March saw the launch of BCFFPA's scheduled monthly meetings between our provincial office and our community Branches. Our first call hosted 13 people with only a couple of Branches not represented. We discussed what is working well in each community as well as current activities in the office.

The goal of these calls is to ensure that our provincial news is more consistently spread throughout our communities and that the voices of foster parents across the province are heard by our provincial Board of Directors and represented at meetings with the Ministry.

If you would like to join one of our existing Branches or would like to start one in your own community, please contact our office at 1-800-663-9999 and we'll set you up with all the information you need.

## BCFFPA's Board of Directors new Vice President, Chad Hooker

has been on the Board since 2015 and has served as Vancouver Island Delegate and Secretary. Chad is active in the partnership meetings on Vancouver Island and is focused on increasing BCFFPA's network to ensure that foster parents know about our services. Chad and his wife, Tanya, who happens to be our Vancouver Island Delegate, are quite a dynamic pair spreading their enthusiasm for fostering and community building far and wide across the Island region.



## Tanya Tagmann has been on the Board since 2015 and is now BCFFPA's Board Secretary.



Keeping a diligent watch over the North region, Tanya is very invested in building community partnerships with BCFFPA. Though Tanya is still watching over the North in her Executive role, our North Delegate position is currently vacant. If you or a friend in the fostering community are interested in receiving more information about the North Delegate role, please contact our Executive Director at [jayne@bcfosterparents.ca](mailto:jayne@bcfosterparents.ca).

## 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 = Empowered Children and Youth

Message from Bernard Richard, Representative for Children and Youth

Hello everyone,

One of my key priorities since I became British Columbia’s Representative for Children and Youth is the over-representation of Indigenous children in care. As you know, the numbers are horrendous. Although they are always fluctuating, it has been a constant since I arrived in B.C. just over a year ago that more than 60 per cent of children and youth in care are Indigenous, despite the fact that only about 8 per cent of B.C.’s total child and youth population is Indigenous. Across Canada, colonialism and many related public policy decisions continue to cast a long shadow with grossly disproportionate numbers of Indigenous children and youth being removed from their families. One federal cabinet minister, Jane Philpott, recently referred to Indigenous child welfare as a “humanitarian crisis”.

So I was pleased to join Indigenous leaders and my colleagues – children’s advocates from across Canada – in Ottawa in January to take part in the federal government’s emergency meeting on Indigenous child welfare. While it is difficult to overcome cynicism, key commitments were made and I believe there is reason for cautious optimism. I will be closely monitoring further developments and tangible actions to reduce the number of Indigenous children in care. The announcement from the federal government of new funding for Indigenous child welfare agencies is a significant one and a step in the right direction, given that the urgency of this issue cannot be overstated. My colleagues and I released a statement on the situation which you can read here: <https://www.rcybc.ca/reports-and-publications/statements/statement-canadian-council-child-and-youth-advocates-indigenous>.

In other news, my Office released an adoption update in December. In the *B.C. Adoption and Permanency Options Update*, we found that far fewer children and youth were adopted in the first half of last year, compared to what we saw in the previous two years when there were substantial improvements in adoption rates. In the first six months of the fiscal year, only 84 children and youth in care were adopted, and of those, just 16 were Indigenous – a long way from the 55 and 40 Indigenous children and youth who were adopted in 2015/16 and 2016/17 respectively.

The numbers were, frankly, disappointing because they represent real children and youth who are waiting for a family to nurture them. It’s especially concerning to see that improvement has stalled, given higher provincial investments in adoptions. We believe that government must make it a priority to find permanency for children and youth. You can read the full report here: <https://www.rcybc.ca/adoptionupdate2017>.

In another report that has received a lot of attention over the past few months, we shone a spotlight on education in *Room for Improvement: Toward Better Education Outcomes for Children in Care*, which we released last October. For some time, it has been known that children and youth in care often don’t do as well academically as their peers, and we felt it was necessary to take a look at the reasons for that gap in achievement and the supports that are needed for improvement.

We conducted extensive research involving more than 1,200 people with experience in the school and care systems, including youth and teachers, and we also studied data from the Ministry of Education. We found that children and youth in care had significantly lower academic achievement as a group, and the results were even poorer for Indigenous children and youth in

care. For example, only 44 per cent of Indigenous youth in care graduated within six years of beginning Grade 8 – a clearly troubling number.

As a result of our study, we made six recommendations, including that the Ministry of Education allocate specific funding to schools based on the number of children and youth in care. We also repeated a call made by the B.C. Auditor General in 2015 calling on the Ministry of Education and its partners to develop and implement a system-wide strategy to close the gaps between Indigenous and non-Indigenous student outcomes.

The issues are complex and solutions must be designed with an understanding of the complexities, but we are encouraged that response to this report has been positive and we will be monitoring to see that our recommendations are acted upon. You can read the full report on our website at: <https://www.rcybc.ca/roomforimprovement>.

If you want to keep up with the latest news and happenings at our Office, we’re on social media. Find us on Facebook (@RCYBC and @rcybcyouth), Twitter (@rcybc and @rcybcyouth), Instagram (@rcybcyouth) and YouTube (Rep4Youth).

Remember, if you or any youth or family you know need help dealing with government, getting connected to programs or services or speaking up, call us. RCY advocates are available Monday to Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at 1-800-476-3933 or [rcy@rcybc.ca](mailto:rcy@rcybc.ca). And don’t forget, we can also advocate for those receiving or eligible to receive CLBC services, until the age of 24, so please don’t hesitate to call.





## 50 Years of Fostering—Jeanette Dyer, Foster Parent from Mission, BC

At this year's Annual General Meeting and Conference, we hosted a panel that featured youth who have aged out of the foster care system, retired social workers and foster parents who have been raising children for 50 years. BCFFPA recently had an opportunity to interview one of our foster parent panelists about her many years of experience.

In 1954, when Jeanette was very young herself, she was asked by a policeman if she would care for an infant who needed a safe place to be. Jeanette accepted the challenge and lived with the infant in a hotel for a few months. After the baby was returned to its mother, Jeanette was asked to care for another child. Thus began her career as a foster parent. Back in those early years there were no contracts to sign and no money to help with caring for the children. There was just a need to fill and Jeanette did her best to fill it. Her belief was then and still is that there is always room for one more; just throw another potato in the pot.

Over her many years of fostering, Jeanette estimates that she has cared for 25-30 children. During these years she worked as a hair-dressing apprentice, waitress, clerk, cashier, short order cook, fitness instructor and body building judge.

For the majority of her experience Jeanette has fostered outside of any official office. It wasn't until 1999-2000 that she has worked exclusively with MCFD. She asked for and had the children of a previous foster child placed in her care. They are still part of her family. Jeanette asks that the children and youth must call her either Ms. Dyer or Granny—most opt for "Granny".



When asked to share a story of success from her long career, Jeanette spoke about a young boy and his sister who were in her care in the 1970s. The brother had experienced unknown trauma that resulted in serious behavioral issues. Jeanette cared for him off and on for 9 years until he eventually lost contact altogether. Two years ago, Jeanette received a package in the mail from this same young man who was now grown, retired, and a father of four with one grandchild. He said that he had followed a girl to Ontario where he was given an ultimatum by her parents and consequently, he was put on the right path. The now grown man thanked Jeanette for everything he learned. He said that his sister was also doing well, living on her own successfully. Understandably, this was very welcome news.

Jeanette continues to be available to the young people she has had a hand in raising. She advises new foster parents to learn all they can, go in with an open mind, lower your expectations, have patience, practice forgiveness and don't sweat the small stuff! She says that just because you are willing to help a child, doesn't make everything warm and fuzzy. Fostering is a tough job.

After 50 years working in the community, Jeanette says the biggest changes in the system are the expectations that are now put on foster parents. There is more paperwork; there are "i's" to dot and "t's" to cross. Though we are getting to the point where foster parents and other members of a child's care team are working together, teamwork isn't always the case. She reminds us that there is no one person working within the system who is more or less important than any other. We need to work together, not alienate others due to periodic frustration and remember to work cooperatively and practice open communication.

Today Jeanette is still fostering, still willing and able to reach out, open her door and heart to those vulnerable kids who need a safe, caring place to call home for however long. It is her profound belief that all of our futures are dependent on the accepting, loving, and nurturing of our children now in order to foster positive outcomes for tomorrow. Jeanette believes that if we do it right the first time, then maybe we won't have to do it again.

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

### How Does a BCFFPA Membership Benefit You?

BCFFPA was formed 50 years ago by BC's foster parents and social workers. We continue to be BC's contracted advocate with a provincial mandate to represent foster parents, regardless of where they live or who they are fostering for—whether Ministry or an agency.

#### *Why be a member?*

- 85% of the membership fees paid to BCFFPA are sent to our community branches formed by our network of foster parents across the province. The funds you give to us for membership in turn provide support for your very own community's foster family activities, meetings and workshops.
- Members have access to our annual Camps for Kids bursary. We also support the youth in our community with education bursaries for former children in care and for your own children.
- **NEW!** Members have access to our new Medical Travel Grant. Foster parents should not be out of pocket for the work that you do, and we realize that you often incur extra costs that may not be reimbursed for those out of town trips for medical care.
- BCFFPA maintains a list of vendors where our members can receive substantial discounts on goods, services and hotels.
- As a member you can participate in shaping the future of the foster care sector by proposing motions for action at our Annual General Meeting, through working with committees or by joining the provincial BCFFPA Board of Directors.

## It's That Time Again! May 2018 Submissions for BCFFPA Bursaries

### **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, 2018\*

### **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, 2018\*

### **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 high school 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, 2018\*

### **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, 2018\*

### **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, 2018\*

### **(NEW!) JCW Excellence in Writing Grant**

Previous president, Russell Pohl and his husband, Darrell Ewasiuk, have generously provided funds to establish a bursary in the name of our Executive Director whose passion is the art of writing.

Application Criteria: Any youth (17-24) who has been in care of the Ministry who intends to further his/her education in the field of writing—whether it be journalism, screen or play writing, poetry, travel, creative, political or non-fiction, can apply for this bursary to cover the cost of courses that will further their skills. Submission of a 500-word short story or essay about their future goals accompanied by a description of their desired education program or receipt for the program they intend to pursue should be submitted. One bursary of \$2,000 per year is available until funds are expended.

Application Deadline: May 31st, 2018\*

### **(NEW!) Medical Travel Grant for Caregivers**

This grant is accessible to BCFFPA member foster parents who travel to hospital for medical appointments with their foster children, finding themselves away from home for a night or two. You may find yourself with time on your hands between medical appointments or in need of a nutritious meal. Maybe you've encountered bad weather on the way home and you need to spend an extra night in a hotel. Or maybe you need some extra funds for relief that isn't covered by your contract.

Application Criteria: Any BCFFPA member foster parent can apply two times in a calendar year. Proof of medical travel and overnight stay away from home can be provided by copy of an email confirming the medical appointment dates or a note from your resource worker. Grants of \$250 dollars are available until funds are expended.

Application Deadlines: June 15th and December 15th, 2018\*

\*All application forms for BCFFPA bursaries and grants are available through our website at [www.bcfosterparents.ca](http://www.bcfosterparents.ca). Or call 1-800-663-9999 for more information.

**[See Camps for Kids Grant on page 8]**

## BCFFPA Camps for Kids Grant

BCFFPA's Camps for Kids Grants were established by BCFFPA to alleviate some of the costs foster parent members encounter when sending their foster, adopted or birth children aged 6-19 to camp. **Bursary amounts have been raised to \$300 per "campership".**

Application Criteria: BCFFPA foster parent members in good standing who require assistance can apply. Foster parent must provide proof of payment of the camp deposit along with any other relevant documentation prior to awarding the grant.

Application for the Camps for Kids grant can be found on our website at [bcfosterparents.ca](http://bcfosterparents.ca).

Application Deadline: May 31st, 2018\*

## **Apply for the AGM Bursary by June 1, 2018**

The Ministry of Children and Family Development is supporting this year's BCFFPA AGM in Nelson! Bursaries will be given to two foster parents in each of BC's service delivery areas which will cover the cost of your Conference and AGM registration fee (\$300).

If you would like to have an opportunity to receive one of the bursaries, please submit the following information to our office by June 1st, 2018. **Please note, bursaries for BCFFPA's AGM 2018 are open to all foster parents in BC regardless of BCFFPA membership.**

### **Instructions to Apply for AGM 2018 Bursary**

**Send us the following information by mail, e-mail or fax by June 1, 2018:**

1. Your name, address, city, postal code and at least one phone number where we can contact you.
2. Provide your e-mail address.
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](mailto:ronda@bcfosterparents.ca)

Address: BCFFPA  
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 June 30, 2018.

**We hope to see you in Nelson!**  
**(see page 13 for details)**

## BCFFPA Training Projects Update

BCFFPA's role in the development of Caregiver, Kinship and Resource Worker training is wrapping up in the coming months. Over the past three years we have worked in partnership with several agencies, subject matter specialists, community members and provincial government divisions to create and deliver new comprehensive trainings for our sector. The process took us down a windy road of consultation, recommendations and approvals. Though we haven't seen the final product yet for some of these trainings, one has been launched, one has been piloted and the rest are well underway. Overall we think the results are something we will all be proud of.

As BCFFPA transitions out of the project, stewardship and delivery of the trainings will be the responsibility of 2 Ministry divisions: Guardianship, Adoption & Permanency and Learning & Development. BCFFPA will be available as a champion of PRIDE pre-service and in-service and in a consultation role until all the trainings are delivered and launched.

### **Caregiver Online Training (PRIDE Pre-Service and In-Service)**

PRIDE Pre-Service is well underway with mixed cohorts of new caregivers and Ministry staff starting the training monthly. Our current statistics are reflecting some very encouraging numbers!

- *Foster Parent Applicants*
  - 380 enrolled
  - 127 completed
  - others either withdrawn, in progress or waiting to begin

PRIDE In-Service, which will replace the 53-hour training, is currently undergoing edits to include BC content and we estimate that a launch will take place sometime later in 2018.

### **Kinship/Out-of-Care Training**

BC's new Kinship/Out-of-Care Training will be accessible through the PRIDE online platform. The training will be a considerable resource and benefit for both kinship and out-of-care caregivers.

### **Resource Worker Training**

Our project team of subject matter specialists who have been working in resources for many years, created comprehensive training for Resources staff to be delivered through the Justice Institute's online platform. The pilot was completed in the summer of 2017. Pending some additional changes to the format of the training, we anticipate the launch later in 2018.

**WE JUST WANT TO SAY...**  
**THANK YOU!**

BCFFPA would like to thank everyone who worked on the development of these very important trainings. The team was large and all were invested in the project for either the full duration or had a role to play for a period of time.



**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.

## 2017 Regional Delegate Reports

### Interior Delegate Report by Kevin Daniel of Williams Lake

Greetings from the Interior of BC. 2018 has brought some small changes for the first quarter of the year for the regional branch. Vernon's long time representative, Yvonne Langlois, has stepped down from her role on the Board. Yvonne has been a part of our regional branch since 2008, including representing the Interior as a Provincial Delegate for a time. We thank you for your service for the past 10 years.

In early March, BCFFPA's provincial Board hosted our first conference call among with representatives from all the BCFFPA Branches in BC. Speaking with some of the folks on the call the response has been very positive and people are looking forward to the next call in April. Many of our sector issues continue to be the same from region to region. For the Interior, one of the biggest issues is the deficiency of foster homes. Many areas are in dire need of homes. Some of the smaller areas have seen some increases in foster homes however it's not enough. One surprise I recently received was that Kelowna now has 9 homes with beds available.

The coming months will be interesting as we see the new NDP budget roll out and how some of these changes will effect our sector. I believe with some of the changes that are coming, specifically regarding the cost of child care, this could help ease some of the cost for our homes that have younger kids in them. I know this is a small piece of the puzzle that does not affect everyone, but it's a start as we see long-term projects that have been worked on provincially over the last 5 years come into play and rollout.

As many of you know, our Executive Director is now situated in the Interior region. She expects to be making the rounds to Branch meetings and meeting with the Ministry leaders around the region.

### North Delegate Report by Jayne Wilson via Tanya Tagmann of Prince George

Partnership meetings have not taken place in the Prince George area for a number of months but it appears that the Ministry is beginning to reinstate interest in these meetings.

Safe Babies isn't as successful in the North as the Baby Steps program. Attachment-themed training called Circle of Security has been offered for foster parents.

All Branch presidents were contacted in the late Fall to discuss community connection. The resulting feedback has led to a monthly conference call among all Branches and the provincial BCFFPA office that started up in March. The first call was very successful and well received.

The Northeast region is experiencing some challenges with foster parent adoptions that appear now to be stopped or stalled. We are doing what advocacy that we can to assist the affected foster parents.

The opioid crisis is hitting the North hard. Many babies are being born and are going into the NICU.

The Prince George Branch is needing some new community members to join in and invigorate interest. Please contact the BCFFPA office for more information.

### Vancouver Island Delegate Report by Tanya Hooker of Courtenay

Hello Vancouver Island!

Hopefully all of you had an enjoyable Winter. Once again we're into another change of season, with Spring in the air...FINALLY!! Now begins the Spring routines.

That said...Here's what's happening on the Island:

Activity across the Island continues to look promising as we make progress in the areas of communication, networking, and bridging with foster parents, MCFD and FPSSS as Delegate and of the BCFFPA.

Since the last newsletter, the newly formed North Island Branch of the BCFFPA hosted our first foster parent community event held in Courtenay. The Branch board planned and organized a foster parent family swim & pizza night...the event was packed out, even above the allowable capacity. This was a great problem to have. Everyone had an amazing evening as everyone swam, talked, connected, and shared incredible food with each other. A huge shout out to the North Island Branch President Kevin Lagan and the rest of the board for organizing this event - putting the foster community first.

The NI Branch holds monthly meetings which are open to the fostering community, and welcoming MCFD staff as well. If you're interested in attending one of these meetings and getting to know the board members of the Branch, please contact myself or Chad Hooker to communicate the next date and time of the meeting.

If you reside on the South of the Island and recognize the benefits and importance of having a Branch in your area - please don't hesitate to give us a call or send an email...we'd be more than happy to visit your community and set up a BCFFPA Branch Info Session. Branches create a strong voice in your local community, with a collective provincial impact. Together as a unified body, we create a strong and healthy voice moving forward in our province as a fostering community.

As your Vancouver Island Delegate I've been attending local partnership meetings, the VI Regional Partnership meetings twice a year, taking phone calls from foster parents for advice, direction, connection, answering questions, and local support situations. Remember, we are here as your provincial voice...the BCFFPA wants to advocate for you. Empowered foster families = Resilient children in care!

I encourage you to contact us at any time...questions, concerns, comments, or support from a provincial level. Let's meet for coffee or go out for lunch!

Well, until next time...enjoy your Spring!

### Vancouver Coastal Delegate Report by Walter Aguilar of Coquitlam

The Foster Parent Support group continues in Coquitlam on the second last Tuesday of every month at 6:30 at the Douglas College Campus on 1250 Pinetree Way, Coquitlam. The meetings are hosted by Hollyburn Family Services.

Mission Foster Parent Branch meets the 1<sup>st</sup> Monday each month from 9:30- 11:30 in the Community Room at Vancity Credit Union

at The Junction. They offer informal support, information, updates on training events, small workshops on a wide variety of topics, friendly faces, yummy snacks and a door prize. Mission and Abbotsford caregivers are all welcome to come on out and make some new valuable community connections.

The Mission Branch has decided to pay for any new 1 year BCFFPA memberships for foster parents in Mission and Abbotsford.

Next Mission Branch meeting is May 7th and the topic discussion will focus on documentation, journaling and report writing.

A Spring Fling is planned for all Mission and Abbotsford foster parents to join us in an informal social evening on Friday, May 25th from 7-9pm (location to be emailed to all caregivers). Look forward to snacks and door prizes!

Mission has just finished up with Safe Babies training and it was quite successful. They had a good turn out to their last information session and 6 homes are now going to continue with the PRIDE training.

For anyone interested in participating, the "Empowered To Connect Conference" takes place April 27-28, 8:30 am-5pm. Featuring trust based relational intervention methods developed by Dr. Karyn Purvis & Dr. David Cross. Cost \$25 for an individual or \$30 for a couple (for both days) lunch provided on both days. Takes place at Aldergrove Alliance Church, 26291 28<sup>th</sup> Avenue, in Aldergrove. Register with Cindy at [egistereventcon@gmail.com](mailto:egistereventcon@gmail.com).

### BCFFPA Home Studies Project

BCFFPA has taken on the task of arranging for home studies to be completed for foster parent applicants. We have been working diligently with MCFD to create a flow to the documentation that includes applicants completing the online PRIDE pre-service curriculum. It is our goal that through this process, foster parent applicants will be able to move efficiently through the steps to becoming one of BC's committed caregivers.

### More BC Foster Basics Videos Coming Soon!!

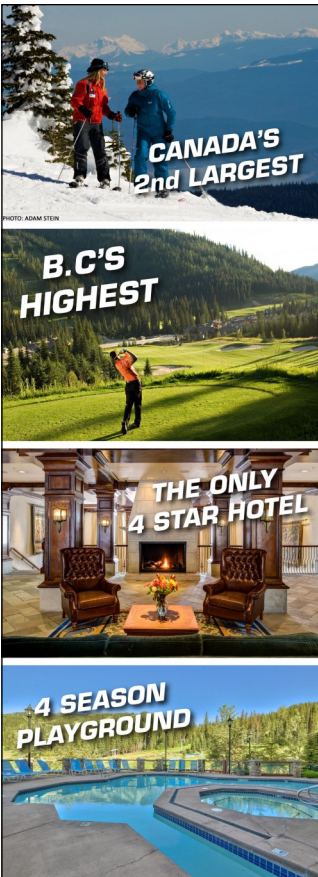
Past President, Heather Bayes, started a good thing! The Ministry has provided more funding to create additional videos that will expand our library of information for new and seasoned foster parents across the province. Watch for new topics to be launched sometime this year!

Teamwork makes it happen!



### 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)





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### Loss of Foster Homes Reflects a Retention and Recruitment Challenge

With the ongoing discussion about retention of foster homes, BCFFPA completed a survey of foster home numbers between December 2011 to December 2017. **There has been a loss of 907 foster homes in 6 years.**

|               |                         |
|---------------|-------------------------|
| 2011 December | 3277 foster homes       |
| 2012 December | 3192 foster homes       |
| 2013 December | 3030 foster homes       |
| 2014 December | No statistics available |
| 2015 December | 2735 foster homes       |
| 2016 December | 2608 foster homes       |
| 2017 December | 2370 foster homes       |

The loss of so many foster parents in the past few years speaks to the critical lack of homes to provide relief care across the province and the over-capacity situation in many of our communities.

There is a critical need to understand what will attract the younger generation to become foster parents. BCFFPA is currently engaged in researching the trends and the motivators of the millennial generation. We are hopeful that this research will lead to a better understanding of how the design of new recruitment campaigns can spark their interest and commitment to fostering.



## Are the Current Foster Care Rates Meeting the Needs of BC's Children in Care

BCFFPA has established a partnership with the Vancouver School of Economics Study at University of British Columbia to study current foster care rates and cost of living. The results of the first phase of the study are in.

As you can imagine, the commentary of the study is lengthy. We have provided some key excerpts with statistics here. You won't find any surprises, however with over 700 caregiver participants in the study, the results are sobering and highlight the economic challenges and losses that foster parent experience every day.

### Demographic of Survey Respondents

- Mainland—21%, Thomson/Okanagan—26%, Cariboo/Chilcotin—6%, Kootenays/Rockies—6%, Vancouver Island/Coast—32%, Nechako—4%, North Coast—2%, Northeast—3%
- Children being cared for by respondents: 1298
- 48% of respondents do not earn an income, 58% have no stable employment, only 14% of respondents hold down a full time job—the low percentages reflect that the nature of fostering presents challenges with meeting external work commitments
- 18% of respondents identify as Indigenous, 65% foster with a partner, 33% of respondents were single
- 50% of respondents had been fostering over 10 years and 50% under 10 years

### Economic Statistics

- The cost of raising children in foster care is, on average, 25% higher than raising children out of care.
- Household purchasing power has declined by 22% between 2002-2016.
- Since the last maintenance rate increase, prices have seen an increase of 9%.
- Cost for personal technology has increased by 7% over the past 5 years.
- Phone and Internet plans have increased 37% over the past 5 years.
- Child poverty in Canada is highest in BC at 18.6% versus the national average of 13.3%.
- Total spending on poverty reduction is \$8.1-9.2 billion per year in BC.
- Spending on children and youth in care is \$263 million.
- Median annual cost for a child in care without special needs is \$31,668 and with special needs \$40,982.
- Foster parents receive total maintenance of \$9600-\$10,000 annually.

### Foster Parent Motivation

- The general assumption of society and government workers is that foster parents are propelled by altruism and do not need to be compensated further than direct costs of caring for a child.
- Foster parents are leaving to take on other employment with regulated hours and pay as in search of recognition and respect.
- The top three reasons cited for foster parents quitting are agency paperwork (37%), lack of support services (32%) and conflict with social workers (26%).

### Top Priorities That Respondents Would Like to Address

- Increase in care rates—47%
- Increase in respect for foster parents—25%
- Additional reimbursement for additional services—11%
- Increased allowances for health and dental care—11%
- Support for physical/mental disability—9%
- Support for recreational programs—8%
- Funding for clothing/footwear—8%
- Support for significant life events—7%
- Property insurance—7%
- Classes/courses for foster parents—7%
- Support for child's ethnic/cultural heritage—6%
- Increased mileage allowance—6%

### Out of Pocket Expenses

- 75% of foster parents have paid out of pocket for a health related expense for children in care
- 93% of foster parents have paid out of pocket for non-health related expenses for children in care
- Top out of pocket expenses: Food—29%, Wear and tear to house/furniture—24%, Babysitter/daycare—17%, Leisure and sports—16%, Transportation—15%, Clothing—15%, Personal supplies (diapers, health care items) - 14%, Prescription medication—13%, Technology—12%, Non-prescription medication—12%
- Average out of pocket expenses were between \$3500-4000 annually

### Recommendations

The recommendations are that the maintenance rates need to be increased significantly and then regularly thereafter to account for inflation.

Additional studies are ongoing and the results will be shared with the Ministry and stakeholders. After forwarding the results of this first study BCFFPA received confirmation from Minister Conroy that the province is stepping forward in partnership with the fostering community members to begin the work of ensuring that the future family-based caregiver payment model properly deals with the current challenges and works well for caregivers and families.

We would like to **thank the UBC Vancouver School of Economics students** for the work they've done on the first phase of the study. And a **heartfelt thank you to Minister Conroy** who has listened to BC's foster caregivers and has quickly responded with supportive action.



a place of mind



## Annual General Meeting and Conference 2018 September 28 and 29, 2018

(see the AGM Bursary Application Information on page 8)

### Prestige Lakeside Resort & Convention Centre

701 Lakeside Drive  
Nelson, BC V1L 6G3

Toll Free: 1-877-737-8443  
Direct: 250-352-7222

When booking, ask for the  
"BCFFPA" room block.



Standard King, Queen or Twin Queen room is **\$140/night based on double occupancy**

Join us for a back to basics event featuring great workshops, good food, guest speakers and free time for you to relax on your trip away from home.

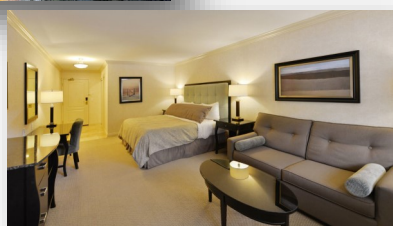
*Workshops will include:*

- ♦ **Transitions:** back to family, into adoption or other permanent placement, out of care, and of course the daily transitions experienced by foster families when a child leaves their home
- ♦ **BC's System of Social Care:** led by staff from the Strategic Priorities Division, foster parents and stakeholders can engage in a lively session discussing the future of our sector
- ♦ **GSC healthassissit:** find out more about the health insurance options for foster parents through our joint program with Green Shield Canada (see page 9)

*Additional conference features:*

- ♦ Thursday evening Meet & Greet for community members and stakeholders
- ♦ Guest speakers: MCFD's Minister Katrine Conroy and Bernard Richard, "The Rep" for BC's for Children and Youth
- ♦ Free time to relax and rejuvenate on Friday night
- ♦ Saturday evening dinner and fundraiser

**We hope to see you there!**



## BCFFPA Member Motions from AGM 2017

**MOTION (06/AGM/2017)** to change the AGM back to May starting in 2019.

*With fiscal year end being March 31st and with our increased program and project activity, it is now impossible to complete a financial audit by the end of May. BCFFPA is expected to present annual audited financial statements at the AGM. For this reason as well as a list of others, a Motion was passed at the February 2018 Board of Directors meeting not to pursue a change of date for our Annual General Meeting.*

**MOTION (07/AGM/2017)** that the Board reappoint the subcommittee similar to that which was formed to look into the feasibility of forming a union and continuing the work, and add 1 more member as per 2016 AGM motion carried.

*BCFFPA has forwarded all prior work done by the union working group to interested individuals in the community for further follow-up. We will receive updates periodically when there is activity to report.*

**MOTION (08/AGM/2017)** that whenever possible our elected President attend meetings to represent and advocate for all foster parents, and the goal of saving money on travel expenses not be a consideration.

*BCFFPA's President will continue to represent the Federation at meetings and events as necessary. Fiscal responsibility is always a consideration given our multiple priorities that must be managed with our limited contract dollars.*

**MOTION (09/AGM/2017)** that BCFFPA continue to advocate on a provincial level for both a funding increase in maintenance rates and service payments.

*The Minister of Children and Family Development has indicated that the work of reviewing the rates will begin in 2018-2019 fiscal year.*

**MOTION (10/AGM/2017)** that BCFFPA continue to advocate for consistent payments and reimbursements.

*Continuously in process.*

**MOTION (11/AGM/2017)** that BCFFPA advocate for foster parent training to include face to face interactions where possible with involvement of current foster parents.

*Those responsible for delivering the Caregiver Training are aware of our opinions based on our role as contract holder for training development. Decisions are pending.*

child placement heart family happiness  
court case worker plan  
**Foster care**  
support healing trauma  
home hope loved safe  
heart

# 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).*



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### Cost

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

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

**1/4 Page Size**

**Business Card Size**

Please complete & return to: **BCFFPA - 131 Eighth Street, New Westminster, BC V3M 3P6** or **join or renew via our website at [www.bcfosterparents.ca](http://www.bcfosterparents.ca)**

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