

FosterlineBC

BC Foster Parents Association



**Increased
Supports for
Foster Families**

**BCFPA's
Roadmap for
the Year 2023**



**BC Child and
Youth in Care
Week 2023**

**Meet BCFPA's
New Staff
Members**

BC FOSTER PARENTS ASSOCIATION (BCFPA)

208 - 20641 Logan Avenue
Langley, BC V3A 7R3

We are located on the traditional, ancestral and unceded territories of the Kwantlen, Katzie, Matsqui and Semiahmoo peoples.

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Submissions — Forward articles, personal stories or ideas to the BCFPA provincial office. Materials may be edited for length and suitability. To be added to our Foster Community Resources list, please email communications@bcfosterparents.ca.

IN THIS ISSUE

- 2** President's Report
- 4** Notes from the Office
- 5** Regional Reports
- 8** BCFPA's Roadmap for 2023
- 9** Sector News & Updates
- 11** MCFD Budget 2023 Investments
- 13** Budget 2023: Benefiting Foster Families
- 15** Meet our New Staff Members
- 18** Recommended Resources
- 19** Meet the 2022 Ames Family Foundation Bursary Winners
- 21** BC Child and Youth in Care Week 2023
- 24** AGM 2023 Information
- 24** FundScrip: Raise Funds for BCFPA through Gift Cards
- 25** March is Social Work Month
- 25** Join a Branch, Start a Branch
- 26** Foster Community Resources

President's Report



Hello Fellow Foster Parents:

BC Budget Day at the end of February brought good news to our community with the \$264 million investment over the next three years to increase financial supports for foster and extended family caregivers. Effective April 1, 2023, the maintenance rates for foster, kinship and out of care caregivers will see an up to 47% increase to their maintenance rates. Monthly service payments for all levels of foster caregivers will also increase by nearly 30%.

It took years of persistent and tireless advocacy, but it was all worth it. The road to change is never a quick and simple path but advocacy works. As BCFPA's President, it is an honour to represent you — the dedicated group of people who work 24/7 to ensure that the most vulnerable children and youth in our province are given the best chance at success.

We are grateful to everyone who took the time to fill out the survey that provided us with the information we needed to back up our advocacy efforts. Thank you to everyone who helped make the increases possible! The increased supports recognize the important role that foster families play in supporting BC's children, youth, and families. The investment ensures that we can continue to recruit and retain caregivers who can provide the quality and continuity of care that children and youth in government care deserve. You can read about the responses of some foster caregivers to the announcement and how the increased supports will benefit their families on page 13.

Hopefully, many of you were able to join our in-person workshops in Surrey, Victoria, Kamloops and Prince George! I was able to attend the Victoria and Kamloops workshops. Many were grateful that the financial barriers to attendance were significantly reduced for foster parents — with food, mileage, childcare, parking, and even hotel accommodation covered through BCFPA. After two years of virtual trainings, it was so nice to see faces in person again! The workshop topics were incredibly valuable and refreshing. We hope that those who were able to attend can share what they have learned with other parents and caregivers; and put the lessons they have learned into action.

I am hoping that many of you have been able to join or renew your BCFPA membership by January 31 to be considered a member in good standing. With a membership, you have the ability to direct our activities, form local associations or BCFPA branches, support other foster parents, host events, and address issues at the community level before they become difficult to resolve. As a BCFPA member, you receive membership perks and discounts as well as access financial assistance exclusive to members which include the Camps for Kids Grant and the Medical Travel Grant.

BCFPA is excited to send as many kids to summer camps as possible this year. If you're a BCFPA member, you can apply for the Camps for Kids Grants until May 31. We will also be awarding a few low-barrier education bursaries to youth from government care. A big thank you to all our donors whose generous contributions pave the way for opportunities and success for children and youth in foster families!

This year, the BCFPA board and staff will be hosting our Annual General Meeting and Conference in Surrey. It will be held at the Sheraton Vancouver Guildford Hotel on September 22-23, 2023. Save up to \$600 and book your rooms by August 20, 2023 to receive our discount of \$185 for traditional rooms and \$205 for deluxe rooms. If you're not able to attend in person, we will be making the AGM portion accessible via Zoom and YouTube Live. It will be another unique conference experience where we can learn together, network, and raise funds for BCFPA's Camps for Kids Grants. We have many valuable auction prizes for our attendees to bid on so prepare to be amazed!

Julie Holmlund
President

OUR MISSION

To represent and support all foster parents who provide quality in-home family care in BC.



OUR BELIEF

Supported and resilient caregivers raise empowered children and youth.



OUR VISION

Supporting children and youth to reach their full potential through exceptional care.



BC Foster Parents Association (BCFPA) is a provincial organization for foster parents, run by foster parents. We are a registered non-profit charity which aims to bring together foster parents, social workers and other stakeholders who are working to continuously improve the standard of care for children and youth in our province.

We provide information to the general public about fostering and recruitment services to the Ministry of Children and Family Development and Delegated Aboriginal Agencies. We offer our community a support network through our local Branch affiliations and our Solutions Program, accessible fostering information and education, a hub to share news across our sector and insurance resources for foster caregivers. For over 50 years, we have consulted about the revision and development of policy and practice within BC's child welfare sector.

BCFPA's structure facilitates contact with all foster parents in the province. We provide funding to our Branches and Regional Councils, and we maintain a Board of Directors that represents the diversity of our province. BCFPA's Board of Directors provincially, regionally and at a community level are all volunteers, elected by their foster parent membership community.

Notes from the Office



Firstly, I have to say how thrilled and relieved we all are about the increases for foster parents! We have been advocating for this significant increase for over 8 years. Successful advocacy is the result of long-term dedication to a purpose by a team of people. It involves writing letters, conducting surveys, producing evidence over a number of years, partnership and consultation with our community members, attending countless meetings with MCFD staff, and introducing sector issues and goals to every Minister of Children and Family Development who is appointed. In the case of advocating for increases, success is as much about relationship as it is about budget. Thanks to all who were involved!

We will be happy to move on to other topics that require concentrated advocacy. BCFPA has been working with the Quality Assurance Division to develop policy that clarifies the process when a foster parent requests a review of a serious sanction. The discussions and consultations have uncovered some additional concerns that need to be addressed so we are planning to discuss these issues with MCFD leadership in the new fiscal year. We are also working with the policy division to update the Foster Family Handbook. It's taking quite some time as the policy team has been focused on changes to BC's child welfare legislation. Progress is slow, but continuous.

The BCFPA YouTube learning channel continues to grow. Four more BC Foster Basics videos were produced recently. Topics include: policy change in support of Foster Parent Rights; fostering children in care under a Voluntary Care Agreement; Rider Insurance and Under-Deductible Losses program details; and a short video explaining why foster parents are now being called "foster caregivers". Subscribe to our YouTube learning channel and be the first to know when the new batch of BC Foster Basics videos are uploaded. With over 50 videos, our channel is an accessible location that provides foster parents and the general public with information, resources and insight into BC's fostering system. We hope that you take the time to watch the videos and share them with other community members.

Following our October AGM, we received a request from MCFD to host trainings about neurodiversity, 2SLGBTQ+ competency, and caring for young people of the global majority. We were excited to have so much interest from foster parents in these trainings which were hosted in Prince George, Kamloops, Surrey and Victoria in early 2023.

We are thrilled to share that the BCFPA team has grown, adding some fresh faces to the provincial office over the past year. Some of you might have already met our newest staff members at events and we thought a more formal introduction is long overdue. We are expanding, thanks to our strong foundation of talented and experienced individuals taking care of the fostering community's needs. You can learn more about our newest staff members on page 15.

The provincial office is deep into AGM planning. As you may know, it takes many months and hours of planning to put together one of our AGMs. We are currently gathering donations for our Camps for Kids fundraiser at the AGM 2023 in Surrey. This year, we plan to offer more workshops to choose from. You are sure to find a workshop that suits your learning goals! We're hoping that the lower mainland venue will be accessible and affordable for even more foster parents to attend. We look forward to seeing you there!

Don't forget to reach out to BCFPA if you have any questions or concerns. Wishing you all a safe and fun summer with your families!

Jayne Wilson
Executive Director

Interior Delegate Report by Raquel Lesieur

Planning activities for the year 2023 is still ongoing. There has been several changes in resource teams and turnover is high which makes relationship-building with teams harder.

Foster parents are disappointed about the change in services provided for children with support needs. Some smaller agencies closed in favour of the new one-stop “family connection hubs” – now known as Family Connections Centres (FCCs) under MCFD’s Children and Youth with Support Needs (CYSN) Framework. Children don’t attach easily and this change has affected many treatment plans. Although the new system was intended to address service gaps, there is widespread concern about the lack of consultation with key groups prior to launching the pilot centres in four communities.

Recruitment has been difficult in the region. Those who were interested say that the financial supports and the potential impact of fostering on their own children are



factors in not moving forward with fostering. We are hoping that the increased financial supports for foster families will change the trajectory of recruitment and retention challenges in British Columbia.

Foster families need all the support that they can get. I encourage you to reach out to your local foster parent support agency, a BCFPA branch in your area or the BCFPA Solutions Program. Don’t foster in isolation. If you need support, do not hesitate to contact the BCFPA provincial office at 1-800-663-9999. Reach out.

Coast Fraser Delegate Report by Catherine Clutchey

Coast Fraser has been a busy but fun (mostly) region over the past few months. It was such a crazy Christmas season with more snow than many of our kids have ever seen.

There continues to be many highs and lows of fostering in our region. In-person gatherings have picked up with lots of trainings, social events and workshops happening in the Coast Fraser region. In Surrey, BCFPA organized a workshop entitled “Fostering Inclusion: A Workshop on Providing Support for Children & Youth of the Global Majority in Foster Care” which was very well attended and had glowing reviews. Second-generation foster parent and registered counsellor, Ruth Unaegbu, inspired us all to foster inclusion in our homes especially for racialized children/youth.

The Surrey/Langley area has brought back in person (and in house) Safe Babies training with 17 people in attendance to learn how to care for our tiniest kiddos. Recruitment efforts are also underway for new foster parents of children of all ages.

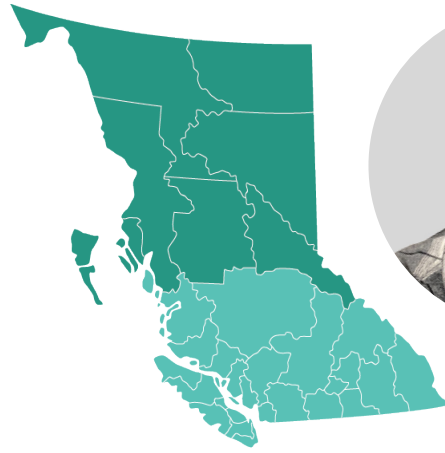


Of course, there continues to be struggles. The rapid rise in cost of living has impacted foster families in incredible ways. All foster parents are appreciative of the increased financial supports. Recruitment and retention remains a struggle everywhere in the region. Foster parents are pushed to choose a different path due to finances — needing to work more out of the home and not being able to meet the heavy expectations of having kids in care as well as lack of support and teamwork, communication and involvement in decision making.

Northern Delegate Report by Rocky Hindmarch

I am pleased to be back on the BCFPA board as the delegate for the Northern region. It was so great to attend the October AGM and conference in Victoria and connect with new and familiar faces in the fostering community! I have been reaching out to the foster parents in my region as well as meeting with social workers to discuss what we can do together to support foster families. I have also met with Axis Family Services, a foster parent support agency here in the north and handed out pamphlets and business cards so they are aware of BCFPA's programs and services.

I attended the March workshop in Prince George entitled "Parenting Neurodiverse Children and Youth: Bridging Understanding with Science-driven Effective Strategies" which was organized by both BCFPA and Axis Family Services. It was well attended and was an excellent training facilitated by Michele Shilvock, a certified behaviour analyst and social worker. Traditional parenting strategies are not always as effective when supporting a neurodivergent child so the workshop was an opportunity to develop a deeper



understanding of neurodiversity including evidence-based strategies on how to care for neurodivergent children in a neurodiverse-affirming way which means focusing on who they are.

I will continue to try to connect with communities further north and out west to look for foster parents who can keep me updated about events and issues in their communities.

March is Social Worker Month. I would like to thank all the social workers out there who are going above and beyond in supporting children, youth, and families.

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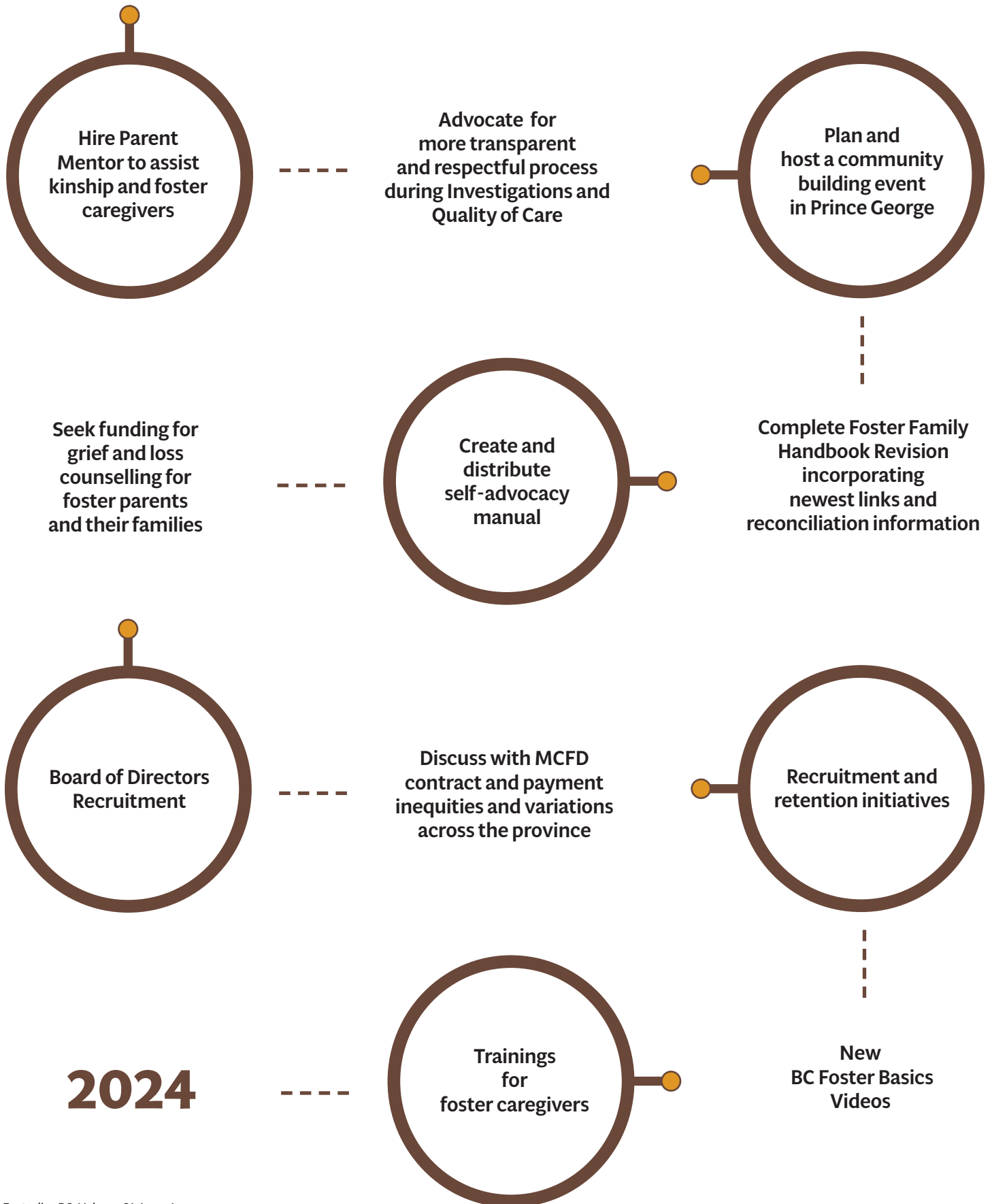
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**Don't foster in isolation!
Our Solutions Program Team
is here for you. We can all do
so much more together than
we ever can alone.**

**Call 1-800-663-9999 for
support and advocacy.**



Our Roadmap for 2023



SECTOR NEWS & UPDATES



BC passes historic legislation to uphold indigenous jurisdiction over child welfare

British Columbia child and family welfare laws now respect and uphold the inherent rights of Indigenous communities to provide their own child and family services with the passing of new legislation. The new Indigenous Self-Government in Child and Family Services Amendment Act lays the path for Indigenous Peoples in BC to legally assume jurisdiction over child and family services in their communities. The Act makes British Columbia the first jurisdiction in Canada to recognize an inherent right of self-government specifically in provincial legislation, which will help keep Indigenous children and youth safely connected to their families, cultures and communities.

The legislative amendments remove barriers and gaps within provincial legislation, enabling the Province and Indigenous Peoples to collaborate and ensure Indigenous Peoples can govern and provide services based on their own child and family laws.

The amendments:

- recognize the inherent right of self-government as written into section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982, and provide a pathway for Indigenous Peoples to implement their own Indigenous laws over child and family services in BC;
- remove existing barriers and gaps to allow Indigenous governing bodies to exercise direct responsibility for their children and youth under their Indigenous laws in matters related to child protection, custody, guardianship and care; and
- strengthen consultation, co-operation and consent-based decision-making with Indigenous communities about adoption placements for Indigenous children and youth.

To learn more, please visit this [link](#). — [Source: MCFD](#)

Budget 2023 increases financial supports for foster families

The BC government is investing \$264 million over the next three years to increase financial supports for foster and extended family caregivers, and for those caring for children, youth and adults with support needs. This includes increases to care provider rates by up to 47% to address cost-of-living increases, including recognizing the costs of housing and internet access.

Budget 2023 also provides funding to increase service and relief rates accordingly. The increased supports recognize the important role that foster and extended family care providers play in nurturing the children and youth in their care. The investment ensures that the province can continue to recruit and retain caregivers to provide the quality and continuity of care that children and youth in care deserve. Increased funding for kinship and out-of-care caregivers increases the likelihood that a child or youth can be well-supported without having to come into care, while maintaining connections with their family, community, and culture.

Respite supports are equally critical to families and caregivers. This funding will also increase the annual respite rates by over 34% for those caring for people with support needs. This includes families of children and youth with support needs and of adults living with developmental disabilities served through Community Living BC. To learn more, visit bcfosterparents.ca.

BC government removes age restrictions from the Provincial Tuition Waiver Program for former youth in care

In 2017, the BC government developed the Provincial Tuition Waiver Program that waived tuition and fees for former youth in care between 19 and 26 at the time of their application. The Provincial Tuition Waiver

Program covers a wide range of undergraduate study options, including courses leading to a certificate, diploma or undergraduate degree, non-credit courses, apprenticeship programs and continuing education courses.

Effective August 1, 2023, this expanded tuition waiver will be made available to all BC former youth in care at any age to make education and training more accessible and affordable. In an announcement made on March 14 at Vancouver Island University, Selina Robinson, Minister of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills, explained that: “Removing the age restriction for waived tuition will reduce barriers to post-secondary education, support people in pursuing good-paying and meaningful jobs, and support a more inclusive, balanced and diverse workforce.”

Individual grants for as much as \$3,500 per year will also be available to support youth in additional educational expenses such as textbooks, internet costs and computers.

To be eligible for the Provincial Tuition Waiver Program, students must:

- be studying full or part time at an undergraduate level at a B.C. public post-secondary institution, the Native Education College or one of 10 approved union-based trades-training providers; and
- have been in any legal care status for a minimum of 24 months (cumulative), or turned 19 in any legal care status, or been adopted, or formerly in the Child in Home of a Relative program.

Since its implementation, 1,900 students have benefited from the program, with \$13 million in tuition and fees waived. This extension of the program to former youth in care of all ages is expected to support an additional 1,200 students. Mitzi Dean, Minister of Children and Family Development, said that: “Even more young people who were in government care can now pursue their education goals and set themselves up for a bright future as a result of the expansion of this tuition waiver program.” — [Source: MCFD](#)

RCY launches the Belonging microsite

BC’s Office of the Representative for Children and Youth recently launched the [Belonging microsite](#) which hosts

a curated collection of resources that highlights the importance of belonging — a child’s sense of connection to people, community, culture, place, and a positive sense of identity. The microsite is inspired by the life and journey of a young girl named Skye whose search for belonging ended with her tragic overdose death on her 17th birthday in 2017.

In June 2021, RCY released the report *Skye’s Legacy: A Focus on Belonging* – a report that vividly illustrates the ongoing impacts of colonialism. The report shows that, when Skye was removed from her mother’s care, the government almost solely focused on finding her an adoptive home, rather than supporting a potential return to her mother’s care or facilitating Skye’s connection with her family, her Dene culture and her community. Skye was moved 15 times and never realized the sense of belonging that all humans seek and need to thrive. Her story reflects the stories of many First Nations, Métis, Inuit and urban Indigenous children whose families have been torn apart by the intergenerational impacts of colonialism—her mother was removed from her family during the Sixties Scoop and was adopted by a non-Indigenous family. Skye’s story shows us how colonial structures of power disrupt belonging for children, youth, families and community. — [Source: RCY](#)

RCY Report: Key Components for Effective CYSN Service Delivery

The Office of the Representative for Children and Youth recently released a commissioned report entitled “Key Components of Effective Service Delivery for Children and Youth with Support Needs and their Families” to provide information to MCFD as it moves forward with the new CYSN framework. While numerous advocacy efforts led to an announcement on November 25, 2022 that the government will “pause” provincial implementation of the proposed CYSN framework, MCFD announced that one-stop “family connection hubs” – now known as Family Connections Centres (FCCs) – would open in spring 2023 in four communities that will be known as pilot centres to be evaluated instead of early implementation sites – Central Okanagan/Kelowna, Haida Gwaii/Prince Rupert, Terrace/Kitimat and Bulkley Valley/Stikine. RCY believes that the report can be useful to MCFD as it conducts the promised evaluation of the four pilot sites. — [Source: RCY](#)

MCFD Budget 2023 Investments

Rate Increases for Foster Caregivers, Kinship and Out of Care Caregivers

Effective April 1, 2023, the maintenance rates for foster, kinship and out of care caregivers will see an up to 47% increase to their maintenance rates:

Maintenance Rates (Monthly)	Current Rate	New Rate Effective April 1, 2023
Children aged 0-11	\$ 1,024.64	\$ 1,465.86
Youth aged 12-19	\$ 1,124.86	\$ 1,655.91

Monthly service payments for all levels of foster caregivers will also increase by nearly 30%.

Service Rates	Current Rate	New Rate Effective April 1, 2023
Level 1	\$ 458.02	\$ 591.90
Level 2 - 1 child	\$ 1,140.40	\$ 1,473.74
Level 2 - 2 children	\$ 1,968.68	\$ 2,544.13
Level 2 - 3 or more children	\$ 2,692.92	\$ 3,480.06
Level 3 - 1 child	\$ 1,816.66	\$ 2,347.67
Level 3 - 2 children	\$ 3,113.12	\$ 4,023.08

- Daily rates for relief care for all levels of foster caregivers will also increase by up to 36%.
- An increase of more than 30% will come to the annual maximum respite payment to \$4,135.55 which will benefit families of children/youth with support needs in the province.
- Additional funding will better support out-of-care and kinship caregivers through the introduction of the Enhanced Out-of-Care (EOOC) agreements. These agreements will provide comprehensive, wrap-around supports to eligible children and youth with significant functional support needs and their out-of-care/kinship providers as we work to create a seamless network of care and supports to keep children and youth with family wherever possible, connected to community and culture.

Youth Transitioning into Adulthood

New investments of \$5.2 million for the continuation of the phased implementation of wrap around supports for youth transitioning from care into adulthood. Additional funding will provide more transition workers, the continued implementation of the health and wellness benefits, new life-skills and culture supports, and rent supplements. These increases build on accomplishments enabled through Budget 2022 including:

- A no-limit earnings exemption; employment income is now exempt when determining the level of funding a young adult will receive through the Agreements with Young Adults (AYA) program.

- Youth Transition Workers to support youth in care starting as young as age 14 and guide them until age 25 in accessing services and supports.
- The implementation of a new \$600 rent supplement program to help eligible young adults from care to live independently and afford their rent.

Child and Youth Mental Health Services

New investments of \$2.7 million for the continuation of the phased implementation of the expansion of psychologists supports into the Childhood Development Centres.

In Budget 2021, the government committed over \$70 million over three years towards expanding child and youth mental health services as part of government's new \$97 million investment in the Improved Wellness for Children, Youth and Young Adults pillar of A Pathway to Hope. This began with \$20 million in funding in 2021, \$23 million in 2022 and it continues this year with a further \$26 million. This includes:

- Growing early years mental health programs, including funding for more infant mental health clinicians, behavioural supports, family support workers, and Indigenous infant development programs
- Supporting service delivery teams of clinicians and others to help youth who struggle with substance use issues
- Increasing preventative mental wellness activities in early years settings and in schools

Children and Youth with Support Needs

New investments of \$34.5 million for services to children and youth with support needs that are currently underserved including children and youth with fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASD) and other neuro-cognitive developmental disabilities:

- Providing funding for an additional 90 foundational program therapist across the province for programs such as an infant development, early intervention, and school-aged therapies through investment in Childhood Development Centres or similar organizations in every community in the province
- Doubling the budget for Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Key Worker program which will allow support for approximately 2,500 additional families of children and youth with FASD
- 60% budget increase to agency-coordinated respite which will enable the program to expand to all regions of the province
- Adding an additional 175% above the province's current investment in School Aged Extended Therapy by doubling hourly reimbursement rates from \$80/hr to \$160/hr and increasing the annual maximum reimbursement to \$5,760 per year

In recognition of their obligation under the Declaration of Rights of Indigenous Peoples, MCFD is committed to engaging with their partners on cultural appropriate service delivery model for their communities.


Budget 2023/2024 also provides the following:

- Social work and therapist assistants to support social worker and therapists for children, youth and families
- Expanded access to 'city-based remote workers'
- Additional workers into the sector through post-secondary and graduate incentives to attract new workers
- Additional investment of \$6 million for the implementation of the four family connection centre pilots

These additional supports are in addition to the provincial government's commitment to continue individualized autism funding made in November 2022.

Budget 2023: Benefiting Foster Families

We asked some of BC's foster caregivers: How will the increased financial supports for foster families under BC's Budget 2023 positively impact your family?



"Freedom to make healthier choices at the grocery store. A little wiggle room for expenses that pop up unexpectedly. I feel like the extra financial supports will allow us to keep our heads above water for the time being! It was a nice surprise but so needed!"

Anonymous, Victoria

"These financial supports are so critical so we can care for the children in care. We want to help them participate in the activities and sports they love, be able to eat healthy, and have clothing available for their growing bodies. The needs are great and ever increasing as they get older and get more active. We appreciate the support and appreciate BCFPA for all the advocating on our behalf!"

Anonymous, Salmon Arm

"I've been a foster parent for over 18 years. I am grateful that the government has acknowledged the importance of the work we do, taking this amazing step to show that we are valued and supported. The increase will help me meet the support needs of my adopted children, such as respite time, extra support time, specialized dental appointments, inclusive summer camps, etc. It will alleviate the financial strain that is a part of meeting all of their unique needs."

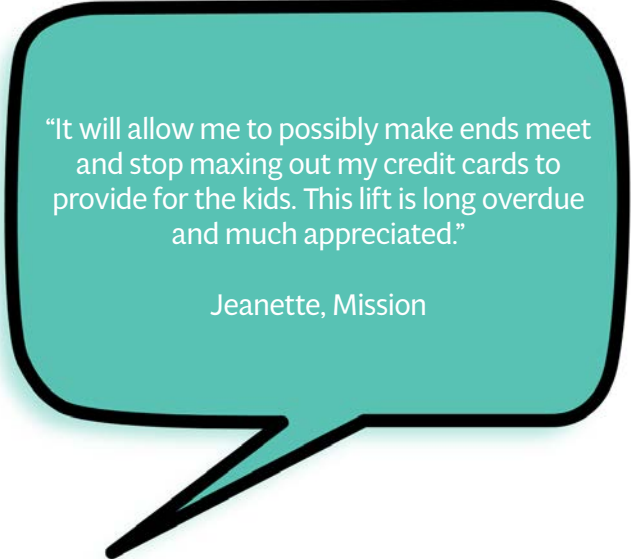
Jenn, Powell River

"I was in a position of having to downsize and move for financial reasons. I could only afford to support one child. I have two. I was going to have to choose who I would 'keep'. This was causing me significant stress. Now, I have some breathing room and don't have to make such a difficult choice. My only concern is that it took so long for us to be supported and recognized, to the extent that I was in the dire position I was in."

Anonymous, Nanaimo

"There are a few ways in which this increase will affect our family positively. There will be more fresh fruit and vegetables at every meal. There will be new opportunities to engage in community programs such as swimming, martial arts, and ballet which we have had to budget for and not always been able to provide. There will be some money to hire tutors and therapists as needed, which are often unavailable because of constricted budgets even through MCFD. There will be more opportunities to travel the province and camp with the kids in the summer. Thank you!"

Jane, Nanaimo



"It will allow me to possibly make ends meet and stop maxing out my credit cards to provide for the kids. This lift is long overdue and much appreciated."

Jeanette, Mission

“Financially - I won't be spending out-of-pocket anymore. Emotionally - I feel more like a valued member of the community. Ultimately, the youth in our care will be cared for in a way that truly honours their needs.”

Anonymous, Cowichan

“I will be able to buy good quality food such as fresh veggies and fruit. I have not been able to afford grapes for 3 years now. Last bag I bought was over \$17 I also don't drive the kids very often either since gas is so high. They have a bus pass but sometimes its nice to spend time in the car together. It would also be nice to take our family to a restaurant together. Having teens and older kids sometimes the only time we all are in one place at the same time would be if I made a dinner reservation. We rarely if ever go out to eat anymore.”

Julie, Victoria

“It alleviates some of the stress around purchasing groceries and necessities for my family while showing that my work is critical and appreciated. We feel more uplifted, more supported, and more capable when we have the financial resources to support our children with what they need to thrive. I will be able to take the kids on small trips which will go a long way to putting us on par with other families who have a working income.”

Carla, Richmond

“The increase in payments to caregivers in BC's 2023 Budget is long overdue and greatly appreciated. The quality of care that I can provide to the children in our home from the increase is enhanced leading to better outcomes for all children and youth in care in BC. To all that advocated and those that approved this increase a sincere 'thank you' to all of you.”

Carl, Maple Ridge

“I will be able to provide higher quality, nutrient-rich groceries. I will also be able to take kids on trips, buy clothing more often, and have extra funds for extra-curricular activities. I will not have to dip into my own funds to ensure children in care can be included in activities.”

Leslee, Nelson

“So thankful! I have been a foster parent for a number of years. Recently, my partner and I had to sit down and have the discussion about whether to continue with fostering as we just cannot afford it. Caring for mostly babies, I cannot look for work outside the home and rely on the financial supports. We have never done fostering as a “job” but more something we feel called to do. With the costs over the past few years increasing so substantially, we have had to consider to consider finding work outside the home that will provide more income as well as benefits. Foster parents really do work 24/7 and have not been shown appreciation for years so this increase is definitely a boost in morale for many.”

Anonymous, Kamloops

Meet BCFPA's New Staff Members

As we work to build and strengthen our team, we wanted to give you an opportunity to get to know our new staff members. We've asked each of them a few questions to help us all get a better understanding of who they are, how they fit in here at BCFPA, and what they hope to accomplish in their new roles. Full of passion, energy, and a hunger for making a positive impact they are excited to be here; and excited to meet all of you.



Taiah Repstock | Communications Assistant

What is your favourite part of working at BCFPA?

My favourite thing about working at BCFPA is that the work is never static; as part of the BCFPA team there is absolutely always something new to learn and/or take on. Working at BCFPA is rewarding, challenging, and tons of fun; I genuinely look forward to coming into the office each day.

Describe the BCFPA team in three words.

Dynamic; Open-minded; Passionate

What do you admire most about foster parents?

I most admire foster parent's resilience. Their strength, resolve, and flexibility that comes from nothing but love for BC's children and youth. It's incredible to witness their work and experiences as caregivers, and I often find myself taking pieces of their stories as lessons for myself.

What are you most excited about in your role? What do you hope to accomplish in your role?

I'm honoured to be part of a younger generation at BCFPA. While I still have endless lessons and skills to learn at the mentorship of our team, I am excited to bring to my role, as Communications Assistant, a fresh perspective on what it means to be inclusive and supportive of our youth, and what that looks like in both speech and practise.

What is something most people don't know about you? What fun fact might surprise people?

I'd like to imagine I'm an open book, as far as the pieces of myself I'm willing to share. However, if I had to choose one thing that I think may surprise others it's that I absolutely believe that mermaids exist - in some form - in the depths of the ocean that remain unexplored.

What is your favourite quote from a movie, TV show, or book?

"Maybe it's possible to have more than one home. Maybe it's possible to belong in a hundred ways to a hundred different people and places." - Book Lovers, Emily Henry

Finish the phrase "the way to my heart is..."

Thoughtful actions.

What is the best advice you've ever received?

If you can't change it, don't stress about it. If you can change it, do it.



Dinuri Jayasena | Reception

What is your favourite part of working at BCFPA?

My favourite aspect of working at BCFPA is the people I work with. As soon as I joined the team, everyone was extremely friendly and welcoming.

Describe the BCFPA team in three words.

Foodies; Friendly; Kind

What do you admire most about foster parents?

Their dedication to providing a safe and supportive home for foster children.

What is your favourite quote from a movie, TV show, or book?

“Look closely, the beautiful may be small” - Immanuel Kant



Ashley Phay | Solutions Assistant

What is your favourite part of working at BCFPA?

Amazing staff members that allow for both personal and professional growth, along with the opportunities to help others using the skills I have.

Describe the BCFPA team in three words.

Superheroes; Determined; Passionate

What do you admire most about foster parents?

Having the ability to extend the love and care to children who need it the most.

What are you most excited about in your role? What do you hope to accomplish in your role?

Learning new things has always excited me and being able to use my talents to help others.

What is something most people don't know about you? What fun fact might surprise people?

Every Milo (the hot chocolate) region has a different flavour, and I can tell the difference

What is your favourite quote from a movie, TV show, or book?

“You will never be satisfied, I will never be satisfied” - Hamilton, the Musical

What is the best advice you've ever received?

People's souls are dyed the colour of their thoughts.



Saarah Sandhu | Administrative Coordinator

What is your favourite part of working at BCFPA?

The team.

Describe the BCFPA team in three words.

Collaborative; Supportive; Engaged

What are you most excited about in your role? What do you hope to accomplish in your role?

I hope to contribute to making foster parents feel valued and appreciated for all they do.

What is something most people don't know about you? What fun fact might surprise people?

Most people don't know that when I am with my inner circle of people, I can be really goofy and funny, with a wry sense of humour, my outside persona is calmer and more composed. Also, it may surprise people to know that I write poetry.

What is your favourite quote from a movie, TV show, or book?

It's a quote from Brene Brown's book (The Gifts of Imperfection): "Compassion cannot exist without boundaries."



Benjamin Kathwaroon | Solutions Database Specialist

What is your favourite part of working at BCFPA?

I really enjoy working with the people here; it's a very welcoming, friendly environment. I love meeting foster parents and hearing their stories.

Describe the BCFPA team in three words.

Determined; Resourceful; Fun

What do you admire most about foster parents?

Their selflessness, dedication, and strength.

What are you most excited about in your role? What do you hope to accomplish in your role?

Working with the Solutions team, it's great to know that my work makes such a difficult job that little bit easier.

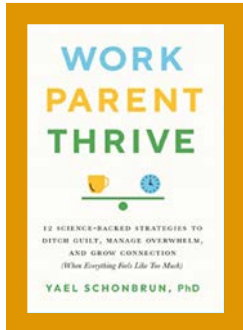
Finish the phrase "the way to my heart is..."

Good music! I love being introduced to a great new song or band.

What is the best advice you've ever received?

A friend and mentor from a writing community, about ten years ago, told me to paraphrase and generalize. Also that you need to make the most of something, say a project, to really get the best result from it.

Recommended Resources: Books & Podcasts

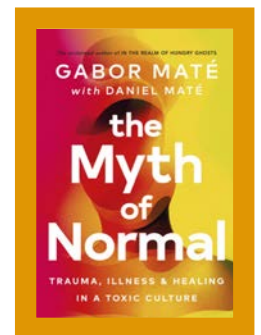


Work, Parent, Thrive by Yael Schonbrun

Dr. Yael Schonbrun calls out the myth of the work-life balance and offers practical strategies that can help us reframe our approach to working and parenting from the inside out. Based on Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, these strategies won't create more hours in the day, but they can shift how we label our experiences, revise the stories we tell ourselves about working and parenting, and recognize the value we get from each role.

The Myth of Normal by Gabor Maté

Co-written with his son Daniel, Dr. Gabor Maté dissects how Western countries are seeing an upsurge in chronic illness and general ill health. They look at the prevailing understanding of “normal” as false, neglecting the roles that trauma and stress, and the pressures of modern-day living, exert on our minds and bodies at the expense of good health. The book shows how Western medicine often fails to treat the whole person, ignoring how the toxicity of today's culture stresses the body, burdens the immune system, and undermines emotional balance.



Fostering Voices with Brian & Kim Vehon

A podcast dedicated to sharing the many voices in foster care and adoption. The hosts share about their own experiences being a foster and adoptive family living in Arizona with their children. Interviewing a host of folks who have experience in the world of foster care and/or adoption, the hope of this podcast is to educate, empower, and entertain listeners.

Foster Care: An Unparalleled Journey with Jason & Amanda Palmer

Jason and Amanda Palmer shares their personal experiences as a foster and adoptive family, and the stories that other brave souls are willing to generously share with them.



Fostering Change with Rob Scheer

Comfort Cases founder Rob Scheer hosts this inspiring show about how communities can come together to bring dignity and hope to children in the foster care system. Guests include former youth in foster care, foster parents, celebrities touched by the foster care system, child welfare advocates, and everyday people working to improve the lives of children in care. Rob brings a sense of positivity and humor to his conversations.

2022 Ames Family Foundation Bursary Winners

The Ames Family Foundation Bursary was established in 2022 as a low-barrier bursary designed to provide financial resources to youth from government care who are pursuing post-secondary education. Bursaries were awarded based on need, individual circumstance, and academic and career goals. As a steward of Ames Family Foundation's donation, BCFPA encouraged diverse and equity-deserving youth to apply, specifically those who are Indigenous, racialized, 2SLGBTQ+ identified, persons of all abilities, and the intersections of these identities. Last year, we were able to distribute 8 bursaries of \$5,000. We would like to thank the Ames Family Foundation for their generosity and ongoing support.

Ashely



I am a single mom who's struggling to find time for studying between being a mother and working. Education is a top priority of mine. This bursary will help me stretch out my income to cover my bills so I won't need to drop out to work more. I will be on my career path and finish my diploma. I will be able to get a good job so I can support my son and myself. I am really excited to finish school and start my career. I have so much hope for our future. This bursary means everything to me and takes off so much financial stress. I am trying to stay positive through these tough times and get through them with grace for my own well-being as well.

Alexandra

I am a person in recovery from addiction who is also a person with disabilities. Financially, university will be stressful. The licensed practical nursing program is a heavy course load which means I will be unable to work while attending. I am very fortunate to have a great social support network both in recovery and through school. However, the financial strain will be a challenge. This bursary helps with the costs associated with the licensed practical nursing program such as textbooks, school supplies, and uniforms. It will also lessen the financial strain of cost-of-living expenses. This would allow me to focus more time and energy on my program instead of worrying about how I will be paying for these things. I have spent the last two years upgrading to get into this program, and I am beyond excited for this journey. As we have seen through the Covid-19 pandemic, British Columbia needs nurses. I have mainly worked in social work the past decade and I am very excited to contribute further to the health and well-being of our community through nursing.

Parveen

This bursary will lessen the financial burden that I will experience associated with law school. Law school is expensive. I still carry some of the student loan debt that I incurred when my social worker signed off on student loans while I was still in care and other loans I had to take as I was too old to take advantage of the programs that children and youth in care now benefit from. Lower debt loads provide actual freedom to choose whatever area of law I am going to practice in based on interest rather than what is going to help me make payments. It gives me the opportunity to truly pursue all my areas of interest which include but are not limited to privacy, aboriginal law and representing the interests of children.

I want to thank the Ames Family Foundation and the other donors that contribute to scholarships and bursaries available through the BC Foster Parents Association. There are many people who aged out of care like me that, for one reason or another, do not qualify for the educational support available to other young people from care. Your donation helps us on our path towards achieving our respective goals and when the cost of living is as high as it is, every dollar counts. Thank you for taking an interest in our education and supporting us so we can enjoy the same opportunities that many of our peers that didn't grow up in care often take for granted.

Anonymous

As a child, I was often told that people will not remember what I did, but they will remember how I made them feel. Well, it was how a nurse made me feel one day after a challenging event that gave me the inspiration and perseverance to pursue a career centred on patient care. As a former youth from foster care, I want the children and youth growing up in our child welfare system to have every opportunity they could possibly imagine and more.

The BC Foster Parents Association and Ames Family Foundation Bursary has bestowed me the incredible opportunity to attend nursing school like I never imagined possible - focused on my studies. The constant onslaught of financial stress has been lifted and now I can focus on what matters, enhancing my learning experience so I can be the best caregiver to my patients possible.

Anonymous

I'm a 24 year old former youth in care, starting my second year in post-secondary. My journey to adulthood has been a story of struggle, always feeling like I'm playing catch up with life. I've had numerous periods of being homeless. My love for my family kept me alive. I've just finished my first year in college, in a science related diploma. Every semester, I've increased my GPA and now I'm even a biology tutor at my school. I finished the second half of the semester homeless, living in my car.

I wasn't born with natural talent as my grades were not always great but I've worked really hard. Hard work beats talent when talent fails to work hard. I'm not just in school because of my dream to be a scientist. I'm in school so I can build a roadmap for my siblings to follow. My new dream is to make their dreams come true.



Shania

One of the barriers that has a large impact on my ability to complete my post-secondary education is the financial stress that comes with the increasing household costs which include rent, food, and the overall rising prices of daily necessities. It is becoming harder to be a full-time student. Most students, like myself, have to have a part-time or full-time job just to get by. In the years that I have attended post-secondary school, I have always had to have a part-time job to keep myself in a safe financial position as I do not have family that financially support me, or that are a part of my life. I have been on my own since

I was 16 years old, and even though I had a caregiver who put a roof over my head, I did not have much love or support in the household I was living in. At a young age, I have always had to support myself emotionally, mentally and financially. At the age of 17, I had to come to the decision to move out on my own to find happiness and my place in the world.

From a young age, I knew that I was different from other kids and that my household situation was not healthy. Later in life, I realized it was very unstable. Based on my childhood and the abuse I went through, I knew that my dream in life was to make sure I would be that support for kids that have gone through similar situations that I have gone through, as I truly believe deep down to my core, that every child deserves a chance in this world to make a life for themselves with support and guidance. I want to be an educator who will support children and youth. I have had to endure so much pain and heartache in my life. At times, it has pushed me to the point where I have almost given up on myself, but I know that, to achieve my goals and have an impact on others, I need to push myself and use my past experiences in life as a strength. I know that I can make a positive change in the world and an even larger impact as a future educator.

This bursary means the world to me as it has made me think deeply into my future and where I see myself. After applying for the bursary, I have decided to apply next year to my dream school and attend UBC to pursue my Masters of Education in Society, Culture and Politics.

BC Child & Youth In Care Week 2023

May 29th to June 4th is BC Child & Youth In Care Week (BCCYICW)!

BC Foster Parents Association is a proud member of the BC Child & Youth In Care Week advisory committee; and we are proud to spread the word far and wide across British Columbia.

What is the goal of BCCYICW?

Our goal is to raise social awareness and shift negative perceptions; to recognize children and youth in care, like all young people, as individuals with talents, contributions, and dreams. We are a collective partnership of youth, service providers and allies working to challenge the stigma faced by children and youth in care by celebrating and honouring their awesomeness. We hope all British Columbians will join the celebration and gain the knowledge and tools to acknowledge and support our incredible young people in care every other week of the year, too.

The history of BCCYICW

A group of youth in and from care advocated for this week so their siblings in care could grow up feeling celebrated for their diverse talents and accomplishments, surrounded by a supportive community who stands with them. They also wanted to raise awareness about the barriers they face and fight the stigma that comes with being a “foster kid.”

Proclaimed by the province of British Columbia in 2011, BC Child and Youth in Care Week (BCCYICW) is a time for everyone in communities across the province to support and celebrate our province’s incredible, diverse young people in government care. Youth envisioned a week that acknowledges and celebrates the unique strength of young people in care, and that’s how BC Child and Youth in Care Week was created.



www.facebook.com/BCCYICW

How can I get involved?

Help spread the word!

To help raise awareness about BC Child & Youth In Care Week, you can visit the [BCCYICW website](https://www.bccyicw.com). Here you can find ideas for sharing the news on various social media platforms, download free graphics, or send an e-card to a friend. You can also spread the word by telling a peer, coworker, family member, teacher, or friend all about BCCYICW.

Nominate a youth for a Recognition Award!

Recognition Awards celebrate the incredible achievements of children and youth in care across British Columbia. From January 23rd to April 28th you can visit the [BCCYICW website](https://www.bccyicw.com) to submit Recognition Award nominations for a child or youth (ages 6 to 24) in government care.

Apply for a Community Celebration Grant!

Do you want to host a celebration in your community for children and youth in care? BCCYICW is awarding up to \$250 to applicants to help fund your event. Visit [the website](https://www.bccyicw.com) from January 23 to April 14th to find out more and submit an application.

Find out more!

Find BCCYICW on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/BCCYICW) and [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/BCCYICW), or visit the website to learn more, and follow along as we celebrate our children and youth.



www.instagram.com/BCCYICW

Disclaimer: Much of the content featured in this spread is borrowed, with permissions, from the BC Child & Youth In Care Week website. To get involved, or to find out more please visit [bccyicw.com](https://www.bccyicw.com).

Hear from two of the many former youth in care who advocated for the first ever BCCYICW!



Hi there! My name is Amanda Frechette. I am a mom to my beautiful seven-year-old daughter. I was in government care from the time I was about 3 on and off until I turned 19.

I can remember we were so tired of hearing about all the negative things that were happening to youth in government care. The media grabbed on to the negative stories and they outweighed the stories about youth who were successful, and who wanted to be seen for the positive things they had done. I think there were way more positive things happening for youth in government care than negative, and we wanted to be recognized and celebrated for what we have overcome! There are a lot of youth from care that have become extremely successful and it's really neat to see that.

“Celebrating young people’s successes sure feels great. It makes other youth believe that they can be successful too, and that they can find their own unique talent and grow with it.”

I hated seeing the negative things, and now with BC Child and Youth in Care Week we celebrate youth in care for being awesome. Celebrating young people’s successes sure feels great. It makes other youth believe that they can be successful too, and that they can find their own unique talent and grow with it.

I believe the celebrating youth in care is extremely important because it makes you believe in yourself, it makes you feel proud, and it makes you feel all of the support around you.



Tansi, Jessy Neal nits Kahsohn, Quesnel, BC Otchi Nia, Maka Mekwatch Surrey, BC ne wekin. Hello, my name is Jessy Neal. I am from Quesnel, BC but I live in Surrey, BC now. Niya Nehiyaw Iskewew. I am Cree Woman.

I was raised in and out of care of the Ministry of Children and Family Development from birth to aging out at 19. When I was 14, I joined the Federation of BC Youth in Care Networks (a BC Child and Youth in Care Week partner organization) as a youth member and have had various roles since then, from volunteer, to board member, and a staff member.

I still remember feeling like being in government care was my fault and that I had done something bad to end up in care. It was ingrained in me that being in government care meant that I was less than human or not worth enough to anyone to be part of a family that cared about me. I didn’t think that it was fair for other young people, especially the younger ones, to feel like they were worthless and bad just because they were not able to live safely with their parents. It is rather an emotional subject, but with all the negative comments and media portrayals and statistics of kids not ending up in good situations or having good outcomes as adults, it made it easy to fall into a spiral of low self-esteem and self-worth. I, and so many others like me, wanted this to change.

The Fed’s youth members (including me at the time) decided that some actions needed to be taken. Some youth members suggested that we create a way to celebrate all the successes of youth in and from government care to create more positive stories and conversations out there about youth in care.

The government of BC supported this and made an official proclamation in the BC legislature that May 23-29, 2011 was BC Child and Youth in Care Week! Different MCFD offices and youth organizations across the province have been celebrating youth in and from care every year since.

**SAVE
THE
DATE!**



MAY 29–JUNE 4, 2023

•••
BC Child & Youth in Care Week

notice. listen. respect. • celebrate children & youth in care

Join us in celebrating the strength, creativity, resilience and tenacity of children and youth in and from care!



YOUTH RECOGNITION AWARDS

Recognize the amazing achievements of children and youth in and from care from across BC ages 6-24!

Nominations open
January 23 - April 28



COMMUNITY CELEBRATION GRANTS

Get up to \$250 to help fund a BC Child & Youth in Care Week event and celebrate the children and youth in care in your community!

Applications open
January 23 - April 14

Participate and spread the word!

www.bcchildandyoungincareweek.com •  **BCCYICW**



BCFPA Annual General Meeting 2023

Our Annual General Meeting & Conference will be in Surrey at the Sheraton Vancouver Guildford Hotel on September 22-23, 2023. If you're unable to attend in person, don't worry because you can join the AGM portion via Zoom or YouTube.

Book your rooms by August 20, 2023 to receive our discount of \$185 for traditional rooms and \$205 for deluxe rooms.

[Book now at the Sheraton Vancouver Guildford Hotel.](#)



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**Where shopping
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FundScrip is an established, Canada-wide fundraising program. Use the code **QNKJCT** to support and raise funds for BC Foster Parents Association.

1

Buy \$100, Get \$100

Buy cards at face value, get face value at the retailers - you lose nothing



2

Shop As Usual

With cards from over 230 leading retailers, there's no need to change your shopping habits



3

Pay With Gift Cards

Pay with gift cards instead of credit/debit/cash for your everyday items & gifts



4

Raise Funds

Each purchase automatically includes a donation for your group that can quickly add up over time



March is National Social Work Month

Join BC Foster Parents Association in recognizing British Columbia's social workers and the incredible work that they do. Social workers are an essential part of our communities. They work tirelessly to create change, support, guide, advocate, connect communities, build relationships, and so much more. To the social workers in our communities, and across British Columbia and Canada, thank you!



JOIN A BRANCH, START A BRANCH

Community is important for foster parents. Gathering together on a regular basis gives foster parents the much needed sense of community that is essential when they're working within the complex child welfare structure. Nothing beats a group of like-minded people who share similar experiences. 85% of the membership fees paid to BCFPA are redistributed to our Branches across the province. The funds you give to us for membership in turn provide for your very own community's activities, meetings and workshops.

When foster parents come together in a Branch, they are able to communicate to BCFPA's provincial office the successes and issues experienced by their community. This better informs us so that we are then able to represent the interests and activities of your community in our discussions with the Ministry.

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

FOSTER COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Provincial Resources

BC Foster Parents Association bcfosterparents.ca	1-800-663-9999
After Hours Foster Parent Support Line	1-888-495-4440
Indigenous Perspectives Society fostercaregiversbc.ca	1-844-391-0007
Federation of BC Youth in Care Networks fbcyicn.ca	1-800-565-8055
Adoptive Families Association of BC bcadoption.com	1-877-236-7807
BC Council for Families	604-678-8884
Pacific Post Partum Support Society postpartum.org	604-255-7999
Parent Help Line	1-888-603-9100
Parents Together	604-325-0511
Parent Support Services of BC parentsupportbc.ca	1-800-345-9777
Representative for Children & Youth rcybc.ca	1-800-476-3933
FAE/S Support Network	604-507-6675
Kelty Mental Health Resource Centre	1-800-665-1822

Interior

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

Okanagan Foster Parent Association okfosterparents.ca Central Okanagan North Okanagan South Okanagan Shuswap	250-870-8991 250-558-0939 250-462-6907 250-515-1522
Okanagan Metis Children & Family Services	250-868-0351
Interior Community Services interiorcommunityservices.bc.ca icsfp.info East Kootenay West Kootenay Cariboo Kamloops and area	1-877-376-3660 250-426-6013 778-460-5174 250-609-201 236-421-0031

Island

For contact information for local foster parent groups or support in your area, please call 1-800-663-9999.	
Foster Parent Support Services Society (FPSSS) fpsss.com	1-888-922-8437
FPSSS (South Vancouver Island)	778-430-5460
FPSSS (Central Island)	250-618-8327
FPSSS (Comox/Courtney)	250-898-4488
FPSSS (Cowichan Valley)	250-818-3293
FPSSS (Upper Island)	250-204-1566
FPSSS (Port Alberni)	250-735-1124
FPSSS (North Island)	250-949-7419

North

For contact information for local foster parent groups or support in your area, please call 1-800-663-9999.	
AXIS Family Resources axis.bc.ca	1-877-392-1003
Community Bridge (Fort St. John) communitybridge.ca	250-793-2261
Coast Fraser	
For contact information for local foster parent groups or support in your area, please call 1-800-663-9999.	
Hollyburn Family Services hollyburn.ca	604-987-8211
Vancouver Aboriginal Child & Family Services Society vacfss.com	778-331-4500

Foster Hub fosterhub.ca	1-877-926-1185
Archway Community Services archway.ca	778-880-8555
Fraser Valley Foster Parent Association fraservalleyfosterparents.org	1-877-797-7701
South Vancouver Youth Centre milieu.ca	604-325-2004
Pacific Community Resources Society pcrs.ca	604-587-8100
The Children's Foundation childrens-foundation.org	604-434-9101

IT PAYS TO BE A MEMBER!

Please complete and return to BCFPA: 208-20641 Logan Avenue, Langley, BC V3A 7R3 or join or renew via our website at bcfosterparents.ca

Name(s): _____ Date: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ Postal Code: _____

Phone: _____ E-Mail: _____ Region: _____

Local Association (BCFPA Branch): _____

Level of Foster Home: (select 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 office 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 BCFPA branch.

I/we contract with ___ MCFD ___ Delegated Aboriginal Agency Other: _____

OR my affiliation with the BCFPA is (i.e. staff, MCFD, non-foster parent): _____

As members of the BC Foster Parent Associations, I/we agree to abide by the Bylaws, Policy and Procedures, and Code of Ethics of the Association. _____

[signature(s)]

Please bill my VISA or MC # _____ Expires ____ / ____

[signature for approval]

Get social with us!



@bcfosterparentsassociation



@bcfosterparents



Youtube.com/@BCFPA



@bcfosterparents