



The Bulletin

Canadian Foster Family Association Newsletter July 2010

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SUMMER GREETINGS FROM THE PRESIDENT

By the time you receive this issue of the Bulletin summer will be in full swing! It is a time for us to spend with our children, and loved ones. Not having to do the daily routine of school mornings is a treat as well! Whatever your plans are, be it picnics, swimming, fishing, summer camps, barbeques, camping, or staying around home, have a great summer, be safe and enjoy yourselves. Thank you for your support of the CFFA throughout the year.

-Sheila Durnford

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PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT

The CFFA has experienced another very positive and productive year. Work continues on our Goals and Objectives: Improving Communication; Raising the CFFA's profile: Creating more Public Awareness; Strengthening & Increasing Partnerships.

Our Public Service Announcement "Room for One More?" is now available in French. Thank you to the Yellowknife Foster Parent Organization for doing this for us.

Visits to our Website continue to increase and updates are done regularly.

National Foster Family Month was celebrated across Canada again this year. The Right Honorable Steven Harper, Prime Minister and Her Excellency Michelle Jean, Governor General, recognized Foster Families with a letter of thanks which was distributed by the CFFA to all Provinces and Territories.

Thanks to Fran Harding our Newsletter Editor, The CFFA Bulletin is distributed 3 times a year with Provincial/Territorial updates and other relevant and current information for our members.

We continue to partner with the Foster Parent College who provides on-line courses on parenting and behavior management for foster parents, adoptive parents and kinship caregivers. The Foster Parent College is a great way to take courses right from ones home setting. The CFFA has endorsed the Foster Parent College.

I continue to sit on the Advisory Committee for the Child Welfare League of Canada - Building Education Opportunities in Child Welfare project on behalf of the CFFA .

Best Wishes for a Safe, Happy and Carefree Summer

2nd Vice President

The Board of Directors and Executive have had a busy but productive year. Some of the things worked on include executive role descriptions, more communication and information gathering for the purpose of looking at our policies and procedures. Example: a questionnaire was sent to our provincial directors to get input from their associations around the policies and procedures, at the same time, we had a parliamentary look at our manual. At our board meeting in October the results of the questionnaire and the recommendations from the

parliamentarian were discussed and voted on. At this time the information was sent to the parliamentarian for incorporation. We are pleased to have the NYIC sitting on our Board as an organizational member as their input will be invaluable.

I feel having a second face-to-face board meeting with all our directors (both provincial and organizational) will allow us to accomplish more per year and have better input from our associations and partner organizations.. This can only make us a stronger

association.

One of my tasks is to update and maintain the history of the CFFA. If you have any pictures and/or information you would like to share with the rest of Canada, especially from the last 5 or 6 years, please forward it to me.

Thank you for an interesting year and here's to another one.

Sylvia Thompson

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1st Vice President's Report

Warm greetings to everyone, It is with mixed feelings that I write this report. It seems like I have been involved with CFFA. for so many years, on the board, as 1st. vice then president and back to 1st vice.

After the board meeting last October, I spent a month in B.C. looking after my daughter and delivering her first baby, my second grandchild. Although it was exciting, it was a difficult time and I arrived back in Antigonish just in time to prepare for Christmas. Things have been difficult and because I was feeling burned out, I made the decision to give up some of my activities and commitments, one of them being CFFA.

Since I became involved with CFFA, a lot of things have happened, but nothing happens unless you have a good team. It's all about teamwork.....and we have, and have had, some excellent people on the team.

Before I became President, there was very little communication between Symposiums. I thought email was one

way of having "executive meetings" and this has certainly proved to be true. Now we also have conference calls and the one full board meeting in between symposiums.

The new logo was very exciting, and although at the time there was some sadness about losing the old logo, which had been there from the start.....part of our history, the new one is well recognized and liked now. Of course this all took a lot of team work.

The five year plan we introduced at the working group a few years ago, was intended to to give more vision and purpose to CFFA and with team work we got a better idea of what was needed across Canada to improve fostering. This process continues.

Fund raising has always been a concern. We do have a regular fund raiser with the Christmas show, but this can only last so long. Unfortunately because of overload, I have not been able to develop the idea of letter to all foster parents for a small yearly donation which we spoke of last year, but this will still go forward.

I have enjoyed organizing the fund raising activities at the Symposiums and encouraging people to participate. I will be thinking of you all this year. I hope there will be plenty of participation at all the meetings, especially the National working group. Bid well and bid often on the auctions, and don't forget to put your dancing shoes on. During the coming year, my goal is to take care of my health and put my life in order.

Hopefully I will be able to attend the Symposium In PEI. next year. I wish for a successful Symposium and keep you all in my prayers. We have a great team for CFFA. and I hope you will continue to support them.

Love and blessings,
Pat Norman

*It only takes a little love to make this life more sweet
It only takes a little cheer to make
the day complete,
It only takes a little smile to brighten all the day,
So plan a little bit of each for all who
come your way.*

CANADIAN FOSTER FAMILY ASSOCIATION SUCCESSES 2009 - 2010

Federal Funding secured for a 3 year project in partnership with the Child Welfare League of Canada. Project title: Every Child Matters.

Board of Directors held a second meeting in October 2009.

Questionnaire sent to all provincial and Territorial Members for their input around questions which was raised at last year's AGM so that everyone's voice would be heard.

Parliamentarian reviewed and revised Bylaw's and Policy as directed by the Board of Directors.

Website useage increased.

Met with Health Canada to inform them about the CFFA.

Increase in numbers of Provincial/Territorial Members.

Increase in Donor Membership.

CONTINUE TO: Have Foster families recognized during National Foster Family Week receiving letters from the Prime Minister and the Governor General.

Have representation on the CWLC Advisory Committee for one of their projects.

Have representation on the 2011 IFCO conference planning committee.

Strengthen our partnerships with other organizations and groups.

Improve communication and information sharing within our organization.

Increase our profile at the Federal and Provincial levels.

Hold Executive conference calls to continue the work of the CFFA throughout the year.

Increase public awareness of the CFFA and fostering in general.

Update the CFFA website regularly.

Hold the annual Children's Christmas shows as a fundraising initiative.

Produce and distribute the CFFA Bulletin 3 times a year and post on website.

THANK YOU SASKATCHEWAN!!!

The Canadian Foster Family Association would like to thank the Saskatchewan Foster Family Association for hosting our 2010 Annual Symposium – Walking Together – Voices for Change.

Special thanks to Deb Davies, Executive Director and her staff, and to Tracie Gilchrist, President for all their assistance during the conference.

Thank you too to all the many others that made the conference a success.

CFFA Secretary Annual Report

I have been kept very busy since our last conference in Nova Scotia and I am very happy to be in Saskatoon this year.

At last year's conference several issues arose that needed clarification; therefore the Executive put together a questionnaire that I sent to all Provinces/Territories across Canada for discussion by their members. The questionnaire answers were then

brought or forwarded to the October Board of Directors meeting to be compiled. The Board of Directors directed the Policy Committee to reflect the wishes of the membership in the Constitution and Policy manual. I sat on the Policy Committee again this year and worked with the Parliamentarian to direct the changes requested by the Board. Thanks to Cathy Wiebe for finding us the Parliamentarian.

This year I also had the privilege of sitting on the advisory committee for the project "Every Child Matters". So far we have had one – 2 day face-to-face meeting and will have a conference call in the fall. This is a very exciting project where we have partnered with the Child Welfare League of Canada on a project that will benefit fostering across Canada.

Under Sheila's direction we have continued to make a lot of connections and she has kept me very busy with correspondence and reports. We are very lucky to have her as our President.

This year we again had correspondence with the Governor General and the Prime Minister which was very exciting

I have done my best over the past year to provide all our members with information about the CFFA. I have also tried to keep accurate and up to date records of all CFFA members and projects.

I have really enjoyed the time I have

spent helping the CFFA Executive and Committees with projects over the last few years and look forward to continuing my work with the CFFA Executive in the future.

- *Connie Mulholland*

REPORT ON 2010 CFFA ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM

Submitted by: Sheila Durnford, President

This year our 30th Annual CFFA Symposium was hosted by the Saskatchewan Foster Family Association in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. The conference – Walking Together, Voices for Change was held June 7 – 13th.

The CFFA meetings went well, being held during the first part of the week, with the Executive meeting on Monday, the Board of Directors on Tuesday, the National Working Group on Wednesday, and the AGM Thursday morning.

During the morning of the National Working Group there was a presentation and a consultation session on our joint National project with the Child Welfare League of Canada (CWLC) – Every Child Matters. (Update report on page 11). During the 3 year project consultation sessions will be set up in various Provinces throughout Canada. This will enable information to be collected from foster parents and others involved in the child welfare system.

During the afternoon an information sharing session was held. Directors shared information from their Provinces and reported on what is happening in their areas.

Elections were held at the AGM. I would like to welcome Mary Smith from Nova Scotia to the Executive as 1st Vice President. The following is your Executive:
President – Sheila Durnford – re-elected (B.C.)
1st Vice President – Mary Smith – elected (Nova Scotia)
2nd Vice President – Sylvia Thompson (Alberta)
3rd Vice President – Sharon Joyal (Man.)
Treasurer – Nancy MacFarlane – re-elected (PEI)
Secretary – Connie Mulholland (Man.)

I look forward to working with the Executive and Board of Director's in the coming year.

We are sorry to have to say good bye to Pat Norman. Pat as not able to attend this years symposium. To honor her dedication and work over the years the President's Award plaque was presented, and will be taken back to Nova Scotia to be given to her. She will be missed by everyone, and we hope that we will see her at some of our conferences in the future.

After our meetings ended on Thursday, we were treated to a fun filled evening with a dinner and dancing to a live band at the Saskatchewan Forestry Farm and Zoo. For those wanting something on the "wilder" side, we were able to visit the animals in the zoo.

Conference participants were offered an array of workshops and plenary speakers on Friday and Saturday.

Saturday evening was the Banquet and Closing Ceremonies. The guest speaker was Assistant Deputy Minister, Ms. Cheryl Senecal. The Saskatchewan Foster Parent Association presented awards honoring those who have fostered for over 20 years in their Province.

For the closing ceremonies, the CFFA Banner was passed on to Prince Edward Island, next year's (2011) hosting Province. A short presentation was made and Prince Edward Island invited and encouraged everyone to attend next year's conference being held May 9 - 14, 2011 in Charlottetown, PEI.

A huge **THANK YOU** to the Saskatchewan Foster Family Association for a wonderful symposium. Thank you to all those that worked so incredibly hard to make this such a successful conference. You were all very helpful, and made us feel right at home! What gracious hosts!

We look forward to seeing many of you at our 2011 Symposium. Keep an eye on our website (www.canadianfosterfamilyassociation.ca) for information as it becomes available

We are pleased that Fran Harding has agreed to continue on as our Newsletter Editor. Over the years Fran has done a remarkable job for us as our newsletter editor. It is not an easy job at times, having to remind us all to get our reports in, and then put all the information together, address and mail out to all our members. Fran is a hard and silent worker as she works behind the "scenes" so to speak. Thank you for all your work Fran!!
- submitted by Sheila Durnford

Nova Scotia Report

While I am writing this report as we are having our First major snowfall of the New Year, actually of the winter, we have been lucky.

Education is a big part of our Focus and we hope that this is helping Foster Parents in their effort to look after children in their care.

Our board is looking forward to some board training in March. We are looking forward to learning a lot to help us work more efficiently as a Board.

We are awaiting another meeting with the Minister of Community Services. We had a good meeting with her in the

Our board continues to meet on a regular basis. We continue to service the needs of our Foster Parents and be as supportive as we can.

fall and she has asked to meet with us again within 6 months. She does support a "raise" for the Foster Parents of Nova Scotia but also stated she needs to find out where she can "take it from". We hope to have more answers at our next meeting with her.

We have a new Interim Executive Director, Gary Landry. Gary hails from Yarmouth where he has been with the Yarmouth Agency for almost 30 years.

We continue with our Pride Program, Levels 1-12. We also have our Crisis Intervention Program and Sense and Sensitivity Program.

We are so lucky to have him in our Office with his voice of experience and wonderful support of Foster Parents. He looks forward meeting everyone in Saskatoon at the AGM in June.

I look forward to seeing everyone in June and that will come faster than we think.

Respectfully submitted,
Mary Smith

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FOSTER FAMILY COALITION OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

The FFC-NWT has had another busy year! In spite of much staff turnover, we continue to have many accomplishments. Below is a summary of the happenings over the past fiscal year.

The FFC-NWT Annual General Meeting was held at a beautiful location, Blachford Lake Lodge, from June 12-14. It was a great way to encourage the board to focus in a very tranquil location. As well as completing the AGM, some time was spent on board development and relationship building. All agreed that it was a very productive working weekend.

We were able to hold our summer camp for children and youth from across the NWT living in foster homes, Camp Connections. This camp is based 65 kms outside of Yellowknife and is a week long overnight camp that offers a positive, interactive opportunity for

children and youth ages 7-18 to connect with each other. As always, positive feedback was a great ending to the summer of 2009.

I came on board in September 2009, to cover for our Executive Director, Amy Jenkins who was away until May, 2010. Under her direction I was able to continue the operations and projects of the Coalition. Some of the high-lights are as follows:

In October I was able to travel to Alberta for the CFFA meetings. Because I am a foster parent and I have been involved in the local foster family association for many years, I have many relationships with CFFA board members. It was great to see and work with everyone on a different level!

Recruitment: The coalition did a recruitment blitz in the fall with the purpose of educating the general public

on the importance of providing well supported foster homes. This was done through advertising and high-lighting existing foster parents from various communities in the NWT. As we all know, the best recruitment tool is word of mouth and other foster parents.

Stay in School Awards: Stay in School Awards we offered and distributed to at risk youth across the territory. These were in the form of a \$100 cash award as well as a \$100 Canada Savings Bond in the youth's name.

Recruitment/Retention Project: In January 2010 we entered into a project with GNWT funding call a Recruitment/Retention Project. There were three areas of focus in this project. Firstly a pilot project offering a condensed pre-service PRIDE training was held in three different regions in the NWT. One in Yellowknife, one in Inuvik and the last one was held in Fort

Liard. The first two were done in groups of 12 – 15 people that were either from the community that the training was held, or from outer lying communities within that region. The training held in Fort Liard was done in a very casual format for one foster parent and one social worker. This was tried so we are able to train foster parents in remote locations where they may be the only foster home in that community.

Also the NWT is very large and many of the communities are only accessed by air or ice road in the winter. We had amazing feedback from the participants from all three locations. Self-care was also a focus and we were able to offer an evening for foster parents to network and enjoy each other's company over a nice meal. The last part of the project was to produce and publish and territorial foster family manual.

Presently I am preparing for Camp Connections 2010, a very busy time. Amy has decided not to return to the position of Executive Director so I have had to quickly change my direction and I am excited to see the coalition grow and move in a positive direction.
Tammy Krivda,
FFC-NWT Executive Director

Prince Edward Island Report

Greeting from the Island of Prince Edward - for those of you who don't know where we are, let me give you a little hint - we're on the East coast (that's to your left as you face North) and we're little - only 140,000 people. BUT!!! we are the most densely populated province and have more roads per capita than any other province and we have four - count them four MP's. Want to learn more? Well!!! you're in luck because next year, May of 2011, we are hosting the CFFA National Conference, and you're ALL invited. We would love to have you and show off our little but unique province. Lots of nice people, lots of good food, lots of local drinking stuff, etc.... Have I peaked your interest yet??? Good see you there.

We have been very active in our Fostering, as with the rest of Canada and the World we are short of Foster Care Givers, but continue to plug along and do the best we can with what we have. Our relationship with the Provincial Government is Great. We recently (April 16 & 17th) held our annual symposium with the theme of "One Island - One Policy". It was well attended and everyone enjoyed the comradery, the workshops, and the food. Our guest speaker was Dr Charles Emmrys from Moncton, whom we had seen at the National in Halifax last year. Our Federation held elections in October of 09 and Wayne

MacFarlane is our new President and Donna Blue came on as the new treasurer. Welcome to both of them. The Board has been very busy with planning for the Symposium in April and the National in May of 2011. We have already booked our keynote speaker along with some of the speakers for our workshops. It will be held at the Delta Prince Edward which is in the Heart of downtown PEI (the city is actually called Charlottetown) there is great shopping and entertainment. This is a tourist destination second to none and you all get the opportunity to get in early in the year and take advantage of all we have to offer before we fill up with tourists. Remember - Lobster season will be open so there will be plenty of them around. In addition we are known as the Blue Mussel Capital of the World - these tasty treats are available in a variety of ways but from a local's perspective steamed with lots of hot butter will do just fine - the same goes for the lobsters.

We have made some changes to the way we do clusters, there is an expectation that all care givers will attend the monthly meetings. They are offered both during the day and/or evening, your choice, this affords everyone to be able to attend at their convenience. The same formats will be used and the same topics will be presented. This idea was first used by the Summerside group and was quickly adopted and utilized by the

other areas. We hope to be able to make One Island - One Policy a reality but realize that it will take time and patience. We all realize that change is process - not an event. The good thing is that both the Department and the Care Givers are in favour of this, this makes it much easier to bring implement when it's a win/win for all. For the first time PEI is sending their Liaison to the National. Barry Chandler who is the Provincial Residential Services Coordinator, Community Services, Seniors and Labour, as well as our Liaison is going to be attending, in spite of his title - he's really a great guy and we are very excited to have him attend.

He is the closest thing we have to an ED. Barry is really looking forward to attend and to make contacts with all the ED from the other provinces. This will enable him to meet them and help in his hosting them at next years National. In addition we have Johanne Vokey as Acting Director and Don Avery as Acting President attending. Both Johanne and Don have been active members of the Federation for a number of years and bring a wealth of knowledge and experience to the table. I'm positive that they will serve The Island well and make us proud.

Yours in Fostering,
Wayne MacFarlane
Director

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Newfoundland and Labrador Foster Families Association

2009-2010 has been a year of cautious optimism for Foster Care in our province. The year began with the announcement of the new Department of Child, Youth and Family Services which is still in its developmental stages. We are optimistic that as it becomes fully operational, the needs of children and families will be more Our Symposium in June was very successful with approximately 90 participants. The symposium in Nova Scotia was great last year. Hats off to the Federation for a job well done. This year, for the first time, we participated in the IFCO Conference in Ireland with our social worker attending. In the Fall, we developed two PowerPoint presentations; one for students in an effort to create a greater understanding of foster care and to reduce the stigma and stereotyping experienced by children in the school system, and the other to educate the community and to assist with recruitment efforts. Foster Families Week was a great success with celebrations in most of the regions and media coverage throughout the province. The Association was invited to participate in a number of community initiatives this year including the Creating Community Connections forum and the Coalition for Educational Opportunities. We continue to co-facilitate a class at the School of Social Work at Memorial University. Our Association has also signed on as a Witness to follow the Assembly of First

consistently met. The Child, Youth and Family Services Act in our province is also undergoing a legislative review and we were identified as a significant stakeholder group and had the opportunity to give feedback on proposed changes, additions, etc. We also met with the Deputy and Assistant Deputy Ministers to talk Nations complaint against the Government of Canada. In March, our Executive Director attended the Building Education Opportunities Forum in Ottawa sponsored by the Child Welfare League of Canada.

We were pleased in October when the CFFA Board made a decision to invite the National Youth in Care Network back to the Board. Our understanding at that time was that the Director would have full voting privileges but would not be able to hold an Executive position. While our Association would have preferred that any Director could serve in an Executive position, in the interest of moving forward, our Board felt it could support this decision. We were very disappointed to later learn that the Policy Committee was asked to make revisions to the the bi-laws which would effectively remove voting privileges for the Network. In April, our Executive Director resigned her position on the CFFA Policy Committee with the support of the Board. These revisions to the bi laws and policies run contrary to the values and principles of

about the experiences of foster parents and our vision for a new and improved system. In the recent provincial budget, we received an increase of 30,000.00 in our operating grant and 36,000.00 was approved for a survey of foster families to look at their needs in an effort to provide better support.

our provincial association and we did not feel we could be part of this process. There has been a seat on the CFFA Board for the NYICN for a long time but it was vacant until two years ago when the Board contacted the Network and invited a representative. We ask other provinces and territories to carefully consider the implications of removing the voice of young people from the CFFA Board.

We would like to share some information on a upcoming book by Ray Johnson called ... and I owe it all to Bridget and John. Ray is probably best know as a member of the group, Buddy Wasisname and the Other Fellers. In this book, Ray pays tribute to his foster parents, the late Bridget and John Johnson. Our Association will be receiving a share of the book royalties. We have also started our planning for 2012 CFFA Symposium. Start thinking about it now; we guarantee you will have a wonderful time in beautiful Newfoundland and Labrador!

Fronie Blake, Director

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Greetings from Ontario!

The good news is that our FPSO is gaining a greater provincial voice. We have been asked to sit on an increasing number of committees to ensure that the voice of foster parents is heard.

We have given input to the review of the Child and Family Services Act (CSA).

We have spoken (loudly and clearly) to the Sustainability Committee, a group struck to investigate the sustainability of child welfare in Ontario, and to make recommendations. We have an ongoing conversation with the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies (OACAS).

The bad news is, again, funding. The government has mandated increasing duties to child welfare, and is refusing to fund deficits anymore. Since most agencies have historically run deficits, this is provoking a crisis. Many agencies have requested judicial reviews of their funding allotments. And foster parents are feeling the

effects.

Designations of children, regular, specialized and treatment here, are being challenged. Some agencies have removed them all together. Some agencies are designating children as regular when they are moved, and some are reviewing the designation every three months.

We have to wonder what will happen to trust and good will that has been built up over the years with experienced foster parents...

We look forward to the day when foster parents have access to an effective review process. The FPSO is advocating to have a Foster Parent Bill of Rights entrenched in the CFSA.

We have great hopes for the Sustainability Committee to bring about good reforms in the child welfare system. And we certainly appreciate the input of the other provinces as we continue our work!

Thanks'

Gena Morrow
Director

Manitoba Foster Family Network

Board of Directors Update

Continue to advance and benefit from a grassroots governance approach.

Have expanded our orientation and evaluation process.

We have two new members of our board; Norm Johnston and Robyn Gilfilin, both from our northern region.

Education this year included updated information on creating budget projections and creating a three-year strategic plan.

Peer Support Program

Grassroots method of providing support to Foster Parents throughout the province by training and supporting Foster Parents to provide reactionary support to their peers.

Volunteer base for this support program has more than doubled in the past year.

Ways to maximize the benefit of the program by partnering with government and outside agencies are being explored.

Preparatory training package for the volunteers has been streamlined and fine-tuned to ensure the most applicable

information is provided in the best possible manner.

Education Program

Completed a three year strategic plan for the Education Program with goals to increase Foster Parent facilitators and to partner with various organizations to provide affordable foster parent education.

Continue to work with the Authorities and government representatives on an education design team to create a standardized education system for the entire province.

Expanded on the use of our website to provide educational information.

Secured funding to conduct a pilot for a community-based mentorship program. If approved for on-going funding, this program would ensure a post-license orientation and mentorship relationship is established for all new foster parents and delivered by experienced foster parents in the region.

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British Columbia Report

Melanie Filiatrault, BCFFPA President, is our representative on the International Foster Care Organization 2011 Committee. She attended the conference in Dublin, Ireland in July accompanied by Heather Bayes, our Vice President. IFCO 2011 will be held in Victoria July 10 - 15th. We hope many Canadian Foster Parents will attend, have fun & help to make it a success for Canada.

Some facts on fostering in B.C. are:

- approx. 9,000 children live in care with about 3,500 foster families
- more than 1,000 children need an adoptive family
- 35% of British Columbians adopting children from MCFD are foster parents
- we have 24 delegated Aboriginal child & family service agencies, 21 First

Nations agencies and 3 urban Aboriginal agencies Unfortunately, although B.C.'s economy is on the upswing, it still holds the record for child poverty in Canada which should provoke a lot of soul searching.

During October, Foster Parent Appreciation events were many and varied in each of the regions. They were enjoyed by many foster parents and MCFD staff. A highlight was the signing of the Foster Parents' Rights document at long last on October 29, 2009.

Presently we are gearing up for AGM 2010 which is being hosted in Kelowna by the Interior Region May 28 & 29th. In addition to a choice of 3 workshops

we could also attend an information and discussion session regarding the Consultative Process for Residential Services Redesign. It is a joint planning initiative between the Federation of Community Social Services of B.C. and the Ministry of Children & Family Development. It will identify the redesign of residential care services for B.C. Input will be gathered from stakeholders between March & June 2010 which will be used to form the basis for MCFD's 5 year strategic plan for redesign of residential services in an effort to obtain better outcomes for children and youth in the foster care system and in staffed residential care programs. A report and recommendations will be provided to

DEADLINE

Deadline for submitting articles for the next issue of "The Bulletin" is **October 15th**. Do you have an article/report or fostering story that you would like to share with other foster parents? Please send your articles/reports/stories to: Fran Harding. Address can be found on the front page of each issue.

The Bulletin

Following is my report as Editor of "The Bulletin" for the year 2009 - 2010. As I have mentioned in previous reports, "The Bulletin" provides a great opportunity for all our Associations and foster parents to share information. I find it very frustrating that so many of our Provincial Associations do not contribute to this publication. I sincerely thank all those who have been faithfully sending in their reports and/or articles.

I try to send reminders out to all my Provincial and Territorial contacts 4 to 6

weeks in advance of my Deadline date. Some provinces send in their reports faithfully, and unfortunately there are some we never hear from. Which group is your province in?

The Bulletin is printed three times a year - July, November and March. Copies of "The Bulletin" are mailed out to all C.F.F.A. members and to each Provincial & Territorial Association. In order to be on my mailing list you MUST be a paid up member of the C.F.F.A. Unfortunately, some of the

newsletters are returned to me as 'undeliverable', due to an incorrect or incomplete address, so please make sure you have your complete address, including your postal code, on your membership form! If you are planning to move, and would like to continue receiving the newsletter at your new home, you **MUST** send your new address to the Membership Chairperson **AND** to the Newsletter Editor!

The cost for printing the newsletter for this past year is included in the report submitted by your Treasurer

Nancy MacFarlane..

I would like to extend a Special Thank You to those of you who have sent E-mail messages of encouragement and support. I really enjoy receiving input from the provinces/territories and putting this newsletter together, and I am willing to continue to do so if no one comes forth to volunteer for this position. Suggestions are always appreciated!

-Fran Harding
 Editor "The Bulletin"

MOVING ???

In order to continue receiving "The Bulletin" at your new address, you **MUST** send notification of your new address to: Fran Harding - Editor of "The Bulletin"; **AND** to Sharon Joyal - C.F.F.A. Membership Chairperson. Phone numbers and E-mail addresses can be found on Page 1.

Alberta Foster Parent Association

On behalf of the Alberta Foster Parent Association, it is with pleasure that we submit this report for the Canadian Foster Family Association's newsletter, the Bulletin.

The key areas, the AFPA has been focusing on over the past several months, are as follows:

- Foster Care Promotion – The AFPA was successful in recruiting Steve MacIntyre, number 33 of the Edmonton Oilers to be our new spokesperson for the AFPA's

commercial promoting fostering and adoption. This commercial was aired on CTV Edmonton, Global TV, Access TV and City TV and generated a great deal of interest in both adoption and foster care. If you are interested in viewing the commercial go to the AFPA webpage www.afpaonline.com. Web Page Update – The AFPA has developed a new web page which we believe will make it easier for our viewers to navigate their way around it. Please take a look as we are very proud of it.

Move – The AFPA moved to a new

location in December 2009. Our new address is 9750 – 35 Avenue, Edmonton, AB, T6E 6J6. It was a great deal of work as we had to do major renovations to our new office space however, it was well worth the effort. We held a very well attended open house in January 2010 and received many compliments on how everything turned out. If you are ever in Edmonton please feel free to come by and say hello.

AFPA James River Children's Retreat We (Norm) has been very successful in

recruiting volunteers to do various renovations and clean up at our campground. Our four new cabins are now built and ready for use. We are in the process of repairing the services to the RV sites and will be drilling a new water well to ensure that it is ready to

- Legal Assistance
- Conflict Resolution
- F.A.S.T. (foster allegation support team)
- Bursary
- Adoption Supports
- First Aid
- After Hours Support Line

In addition to the above the AFPA is in the process of organizing the 11th Annual Aboriginal Weekend which is

go if the current one should run dry.

The Children’s Camp Committee will be hosting three weeks of camp for children and youth this summer. In the past it has been two weeks. It is a great deal of work but the committee is doing held at the James River Campground and is also planning and organizing our 37th Annual Training and Awards Conference which will be held in Jasper, Alberta again this year.

We look forward to seeing all the CFFA delegates and Board of Directors at the Symposium in Saskatchewan.

IN closing we would like to thank Fran

an exceptional job of pulling it all together.

Support Programs – The AFPA continues to offer the following ongoing support programs to its members:

Harding for the wonderful work she does in ensuring the CFFA newsletter is compiled and distributed to all the members. Great work Fran!

We look forward to hearing news of what is happening in the other provinces and territories this year.

Best wishes to all!
Norm Brownell and Katherine Jones

* * * * *

Nunavut Report

Since our last Conference in Halifax, Nova Scotia, another year has gone by so very quickly and so, it is once again a privilege to offer warm and pleasant greetings and to re-connect with all of our very dedicated Foster Parents, colleagues, honoured guests and Board Members.

2009 was indeed a most fulfilling year for us in the Territory of Nunavut, and while much has been accomplished, so much more remains to be addressed.

While our continuing efforts at establishing Foster Parent groups in most communities is encouraged and supported by the Health and Social Services authorities and the Government of Nunavut, progress in this area has been painfully slow and, to

date, has yielded very little results. Nonetheless, we currently have about 160 dedicated foster families registered throughout the twenty six distinct communities in the territory. This is by no means a large resource base for the care of children in need, and we intend to redouble our efforts in the area of recruitment and retention of foster parents.

Consequently, and in keeping with the newly established guiding principles espoused in ‘Tamapta’, we are actively challenging local residents to become more involved in the daily activities of their communities and to assume a greater share of responsibility for the quality of life that we all enjoy in Nunavut.

With regard to the provision of basic foster care, we will continue to look first to extended family and kinship ties, and endeavour to begin the development of local, in-territory treatment and specialized care capabilities, and thus reduce the dependence on out-of-territory facilities. This means that we must also focus on the training of foster parents to offer competent care to children with higher levels of medical or specialized care requirements.

Kindest regards and Best Wishes to all!
Ambrose S Ojah Jr. BA, MSW. CCS.
Board Liaison for the Territory of Nunavut.
Canadian Foster Family Association

* * * * *

EVERY CHILD MATTERS - NATIONAL PROJECT **Every Child Matters: Strengthening Foster Families in Canada**

The CFFA is working with the Child Welfare League of Canada (CWLC) on a two-and-a-half year project that will bring together foster families across

Canada. Foster families will be involved in consultations and focus groups, exchanging information during national teleconferences, and

contributing to an understanding of how we recruit, train, and retain foster families nation-wide. In May 2010, the project team met with

the Directors of Child Welfare from across Canada and engaged them in the data collection phase of the project. This data differs from the national Data on pre-approval and post-approval training for foster parents was also collected from provincial and territorial training coordinators this spring. The models of training, training hours, and training modes (foster parent as lead trainer or co-trainer) are different across this country. The project team also consulted with researchers in Canada who have surveyed foster parents and studied recruitment and retention strategies.

In June 2010, the team presented Every Child Matters at the annual CFFA Conference. After the presentation, delegates from across Canada shared information on the strengths, concerns and successes of their provincial/territorial foster care system. This information is being used to plan

databases online in that the focus is on you. We need to know how many foster families there are in Canada in 2010, how you work with your private and for upcoming project activities.

Children in care identify foster family care as their preferred alternative care provision (Flynn, 2003:194). The educational outcomes of children in care who live in foster families are higher than those children who live in other types of alternative care provision such as group or residential care options (Kluger, Alexander & Curtis, 2000). There is also considerable international research (Bass, Shields, and Behrman, 2004) supporting family-based alternative care as the preferable care option for the child. In a word, foster family care is the best alternative out-of-home placement for a child who cannot live in the parental home. The question becomes how to support this best alternative placement, and this

public agencies, and why you leave fostering or choose to stay.

project will indicate how this support works best across Canada.

What to look for this Fall?

- CWLC will be going across Canada holding focus groups with foster parents.

- A National Teleconference (with a toll-free number of course!) with a lead Canadian researcher in the field of foster family recruitment and retention

- An edition of Canada's Children focusing on foster families.

There are many success stories in Canada to share, and many agency-foster parent partnerships that are working well. Working together we achieve so much more!

* * * * *

“Wounded Children, Healing Homes”: Understanding Foster/Adoptive Child Crises, Part 1

The following article is adapted from “Wounded Children, Healing Homes” (2009) by Jayne Schooler, Betsy Keefer Smalley, and Tim Callahan. “Part 2, Preventing Crises.” will be in the November issue of “The Bulletin”

All parents experience crises and challenges. However, foster parents are faced with challenges that families raising birth children don't share. And at times, these additional challenges can escalate into full-blown crises. Crises for foster children can be triggered by events, anniversaries, or even times of the year that remind children of losses or traumatic experiences. Parents can prevent or alleviate foster and adoption-related crises for most common triggers (see sidebar) through strategies that help them anticipate and avoid triggers, promote communication and understanding that the child is now safe and protected, and express empathy and support as the child moves through his grief process. Generalized survival skills for foster parents include:

- * Acknowledge the child's grief. Don't assume grief will disappear if losses are not discussed. The only way out of grief is “through.”

- * Network with other foster families. Foster families understand the challenges of parenting a traumatized child. Others may offer solutions that won't be relevant or useful for foster families.

- * Don't overreact to behaviors; not all behaviors are related to foster care.

- * Don't under-react to foster care related issues. Your child may be afraid to express his sadness regarding earlier losses or traumas, fearing that you will interpret this as an act of disloyalty.

- * Get as much information as possible about the child's birth family and history.

- * Communicate openly and honestly about the child's history. Encourage the child to have realistically positive feelings about his birth family. To enjoy positive self esteem, he must feel good about his “roots.”

- * Remember the child is able to love more than one set of parents at the same time. Your child should not be asked to choose. It is natural and expectable that he will have strong feelings for people who have cared for him or who should have cared for him during his life.

Common triggers for foster care related crises: Birthdays; Mother's Day; Moving; Transition to a new school or graduation from high school; Illness or death of a parent or grandparent; Death of a pet; Divorce of adoptive parents; Holidays; School assignments (the dreaded Family Tree, etc.); Visits with members of the primary family; Court hearings; Visits from the social worker

- * Be alert for reactions to foster care-related triggers.
- * Allow the foster father to become the primary parent during adolescence. Much of the child's grief and anger regarding abandonment and divided loyalties are directed toward the birth mother. This anger is often transferred to the foster mother (a dynamic known as "splitting"). The foster mother/foster child relationship can become very strained. The foster father should handle limit-setting whenever possible.
- * Unmet expectations regarding foster care and family life
- * The impact of foster care on other relationships (with the spouse, other children in the family, extended family, close friends)
- * Coping with child's needs or challenging behaviors
- * Dealing with multiple service providers (or the lack of foster care-competent service providers)
- * School issues
- * Feelings of failure and resulting guilt
- * Difficulty in finding substitute caregivers to provide occasional respite or relief
- * Managing either openness in the relationship with primary parents or the lack of a relationship with birth parents (including the psychological, rather than physical, presence of birth family members)

possible.

- * Choose your battles and win the war. You can't work on everything at once. Avoid control battles whenever possible.

Raising children is rewarding, but stressful business. Foster parents are vulnerable to even higher levels of stress related to raising children. Some of the added stressors for foster families include:

Betsy Keefer Smalley is a member of the FPC Faculty and is the Director of Foster Care and Adoption Training at the Institute for Human Services (IHS) in Columbus, Ohio. She is lead author of the IHS Preservice Training for Foster, Adoptive, and Kinship Caregivers, which is being adapted for FPC; session 1, "Child Abuse and Neglect," is now available on www.FosterParentCollege.com. Session 2 is in production. To purchase "Wounded Children, Healing Homes" visit www.SocialLearning.com.

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