

The Bulletin

Canadian Foster Family Association Newsletter
July 2009

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President Annual Report - May 2008 -May 2009

I must say that the first year of my 2 year term as President has gone by very quickly. Since my last annual report a great deal of work has taken place. We have continued working on our Goals and Objectives, improving communication, raising the CFFA's profile, creating public awareness, strengthening our partnerships, and working on recommendations from last year's conference and the Board of Directors meeting held in October.

In October of 2008 we held our official launch of the Canadian Foster Family's Public Service Announcement (PSA) - "Room For One More?" An event was held in Victoria, British Columbia with foster and adoptive families attending a movie night to launch our PSA. The PSA itself and the launch were funded by the B.C. Ministry of Children and Family Development. The PSA is available in both English and French upon request.

We were pleased that again this year the Prime Minister and Governor General recognized foster families during National Foster Family Week in October. Letters were received by the CFFA and distributed to all our Provincial Members for distribution.

At our last conference the Directors felt that it would be beneficial to have a second Board of Directors meeting during the year. This was arranged and a Board meeting was held Oct 15 & 16/08. Alberta was kind enough to host the meeting at their camp just outside of Calgary. Some decisions made at this meeting were:

1. To use some of our funds to produce our PSA in French - *completed*
2. Support British Columbia hosting the IFCO conference in 2011 by having Sheila sit on the IFCO planning committee - *IFCO planning committee conference calls attended*
3. Concentrate on two committees until the next conference - Fundraising and P&P. Directors at the meeting signed up for these committees
- *P&P committee to have a draft completed for approval at this year's AGM. - completed -Fundraising committee search other means of fund- raising options available to us and report at next meeting*
4. Re-Design of current CFFA website by hiring a website designer
- *Website designer hired website re-design completed. Pay pal now available on our website for donations. E-News available for those that sign up with their email address.*
5. Future conference confirmed: 2010 - Saskatchewan; 2011 - P.E.I.; 2012 - Newfoundland

Our Bylaws which were approved at last year's AGM were in need of some changes. A big Thank you goes to Graham Jones from Alberta who assisted us in making the wording corrections needed. Our Bylaws have now been approved by Industry Canada.

During the year I continued sitting on an Advisory Committee for one of the projects of the Child Welfare League of Canada, and as mentioned above am now sitting on the IFCO planning committee representing the CFFA.

The CFFA was contacted by Mr. Iain Matheson from New Zealand who was doing a research project with regards to fostering practices in Canada, the US and some other countries. Mr. Matheson was very grateful for the CFFA's assistance with his project here in Canada and has offered to share his findings with us during the conference. He will be speaking to all conference participants on Tuesday afternoon.

Our hard work during the year seems to be having positive results as we continue to have people contacting us via the website with questions or wondering how to find specific information.

The past year has been a very positive and productive one for the CFFA. I am looking forward to another productive year ahead. Thank you to the CFFA Executive and Directors for their support and work throughout the year.

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A special thank you to Connie Mulholland for all the work she has done for me throughout the year, the more productive a year the more work we seem to have to do. I would like to recognize Fran Harding our Newsletter Editor for her continued dedication and work on the CFFA Bulletin. Thank you to all those that continue to support the CFFA - your input and feedback is very much appreciated and needed.

And BIG thank you goes to Nova Scotia for hosting the 2009 CFFA Conference. All your hard work and dedication to making this a wonderful conference is very much appreciated. Here's to a wonderful week, and year ahead.

- Sheila Durnford
CFFA President

CFFA Secretary Annual Report

May 2008 – May 2009

Submitted by Connie Mulholland

The position of Secretary is all about Paperwork, organization and information sharing. It is the responsibility of the secretary to provide the Executive and Board with everything they need to do their jobs and it is also the Secretary's responsibility to provide all Government Departments with everything required to ensure that the CFFA is meeting their obligations to retain their non-profit status; and also the Secretary's responsibility, under the direction of the President, to keep all members informed and keep all records up-to-date. On all of these fronts it has been a very busy and rewarding year.

Under Sheila's direction we have made a lot of connections and completed a lot of the tasks deemed important at last year's National Working Group.

Since the last symposium in Winnipeg I have been working on getting Industry Canada approval of our By-laws and Constitution. This document has to be written in approved Industry Canada terminology and format. With the help of Diane Molloy, Graham Jones and Sheila Durnford and a few phone calls to Industry Canada the CFFA By-laws and Constitution finally received Industry Canada approval.

The other committee which I sat on this year was the Policy and Procedure Committee. I was not able to attend many committee meetings due to work schedules but I was

able to take part via email. The committee under the direction of Diane Molloy has done a wonderful job streamlining our Policy and Procedure manual and it is now complete. I would like to thank Diane Molloy, Nancy McNeil, and Sheila Durnford for their dedication and work on this project.

Another exciting project I helped with was the PSA "Room For One More". This project was spearheaded by Sheila who did the majority of the work and I was involved with some input and the information sharing of this project across Canada.

This year we had an additional Board meeting in October so I was busy prior to and after the meeting providing everyone with the information they required. This year we also had correspondence with the Governor General and the Prime Minister which was very exciting

I have done my best over the past year providing 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.

The Bulletin

Hi everyone

Following is my report as Editor of "The Bulletin". As I have mentioned in my previous reports, "The Bulletin" provides a great opportunity for all our Associations and foster parents to share information. It is 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. I find that there are some provinces that send in their reports faithfully, and unfortunately there are some we never hear from. Which group is your province in?

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** on your membership form! If you are planning to move, you must send your new address to the Membership Chairperson AND to the Newsletter Editor!

I would like to extend a Special Thank You to those of

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Newfoundland and Labrador

2008-2009 has been a challenging year for the foster care program in our province. A shortage of foster homes continues to result in children having to be cared for in staffed arrangements, outside the province and/or in homes approved on an emergency basis. However, there has also been significant progress made this year in efforts to respond to these challenges. Our Community Awareness Campaign has seen a significant increase in the number of people inquiring about becoming foster parents, a consultant hired by the province has completed a profile of all children in care in the province and an analysis of their needs and the Provincial Rates and Services Committee has put forward a set of recommendation to government which present a new long term vision for foster care with specific short term goals designed to reach the vision. This year there was also a Clinical Review completed on social work practice within child welfare and the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate completed a significant piece of research on Transitions within the foster care program. The committees and working groups of the Provincial Strategy for Children, Youth and Families continues to make progress in identifying priority areas, establishing goals and determining possible actions to address areas of need. Foster Care has been identified by several of the working groups as a priority area. We are expecting that as a result of all these pieces of work, by the time you read this report in May, our provincial budget will have been brought down and there will new financial resources for the foster care program in 2009.

In the past year, our Association has continued to support

you who have sent E-mail messages of encouragement and support. And last, but not least, thank you to whomever is reading this report on my behalf. 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. IF I am still Editor following the AGM - the deadline for submitting articles for the July/09 issue of "The Bulletin" will be June 15th.

The cost for these 3 issues of "The Bulletin" is as follows:

July 2008	\$332.27 (125 copies - 20 pages)
Nov 2008	373.69 (165 Copies- 14 pages)
March 2009	241.98 (170 copies - 16 page)

The total cost for sending our newsletter, "The Bulletin" to all our membership since the last Symposium was \$947.95 This includes printing, envelopes, address labels, postage, new computer program (Nov/08) and we must not forget the taxes!

Fran Harding
Editor

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our foster families and work with other stakeholders to enhance the foster care program. The year started on a positive note when we received a \$20,000 increase in our operating grant. Two significant tasks we have been working on are the foster parent handbook and our children's story book which we hope to have completed by our AGM in June. Participating in the Child and Youth Advocate's transitions research gave us the opportunity to share the experience of foster families around transitions, to highlight best practices and identify areas of difficulty. The Association was also involved in a piece of research being done in New Zealand on foster care standards. From a community perspective, we sit on a number of committees and boards to raise the profile of fostering and to build partnerships, specifically, Regional FASD Committee, CASEY (Coalition Against the Sexual Exploitation of Youth), Community Youth Network, Alliance for Children, Waypoints (residential program for children and youth) and we co-teach a child welfare class at the MUN School of Social Work. We also continue to sit on the Policy Committee of the CFFA.

In addition to our monthly teleconferences, our Board was able to meet in person three times this year which allowed for on-going board development. Staff were also able to travel to all regions of the province for meetings with foster families which is always a great experience. These meetings are an opportunity to connect with our families and Child, Youth and Family Services staff, talk about fostering issues, and provide an overview of the work of the Association. When it is feasible, we also try to use these meetings as a professional development session. We

have requested a staff position for training in our 2009-2010 budget submission to government. While we are not optimistic that we will receive the position this year, it is the first step towards increasing our ability to provide ongoing training for foster families. Foster Families Week was quite successful again this year with celebrations and media coverage throughout the province. In January, our Association presented at the provincial pre-budget consultations with the Minister of Finance and again highlighted the need for a significant financial investment

in the foster care program. A story in The Telegram the next day indicated that if one group stood out in the consultation it was ours, which was a positive reflection on the Association. Thanks are extended once again to the CFFA for its commitment to building a strong national organization. We are looking forward to the 2009 Symposium in beautiful Nova Scotia.

Diane Molloy, Executive Director

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Prince Edward Island's Director's Report

Greetings for the Island of Prince Edward, for Canada's smallest Province we're having a busy time.

Our Federation is currently working on a number of projects including: a new Web Site, not that we have an old one, we're just trying to get it up and running. We're also in the preliminary stages of making a new video, we do have an old one of these, I should also add that it will be a new and current video that we will be able to use when introducing prospective Care Givers to some of the goings on of being a Foster Parent. We hope to include some testimonies of current care givers and have some of them tell their stories. We are also continuing our dialogue with the Minister of Health, keeping the Government apprised of our current situation and looking at ways and means of improving our situation, both for the child in care and the care giver. This is an ongoing project and to date we have received some excellent support from our Officials. The Federation is also diligently working on a Recruitment and Retention Project. This is in the hopes of attracting and retaining new care givers. There is a great demand for care givers on the Island so this project is very important to our continued success in working with children in care.

We recently held our Annual AGM with a over 70 persons attending. Some of the areas we were looking into included: Recruitment and Retention of Foster Families, Foster Care assessment for children coming into care, Respite Care Families, Summer Camps for Foster Children, Liability, Cost of Living, Extended care 18 - 24 years of age, safe house for youth 16 years of age and up, and Paper Trail from Schools - need to develop one form to do all school activities through the year. Our Spring Symposium is booked at the Delta Prince Edward for Friday and

Saturday, April 17th and 18th, 2009. This looks to be a great Symposium as we are bring in Helene Hammel from Fredericton, NB who will be doing a workshop on Attachment Disorders. Some of the questions to be answered are: What is attachment? How do we build attachment? What impact does it have on how we see ourselves and others? The different types of attachment and the functioning of each of them. How do we intervene? Some ground rules of home and school plus some specific therapeutic approaches to making it work. The Delta has given the Care Givers a special rate of \$79.00 per room, which is excellent value for the money. Simply identify yourself as a Care Giver in order to get the special rate.

We are busy making arrangement to attend the annual Conference in Halifax from May 25th to the 31st, 2009. We hope to have a good turnout from the Province. Hopefully this will help us in hosting the 2011 Conference, we haven't secured the dates as yet but will let everyone know at the Conference in Halifax.

If you have any questions or concerns feel free to contact me anytime. macfarlane@pei.sympatico.ca or (902) 963-3888.

Well that's about it for now, so until next time, remember: "It's not what you know, It's what you're doing with what you know".

Yours in Fostering,
Wayne MacFarlane
Director, PEI

When the world says "give up" hope whispers, "try it one more time". Marilla Millar - P.E.I. Foster Mother

As I sat with Marilla chatting about her career as a foster mother, one of her newest foster children a six month old baby was playing on the rug, rolling, gurgling and smiling. Marilla rocked in her well-worn creaking rocking chair. A

chair that has held many an infant being cuddled, rocked and sang to. It is always a joy to visit Marilla, to reminence and share a laugh.

Marilla told me about the day that the first infant came into her life. She recalled in June of 1974 when a social worker from the Family Service Bureau in Summerside came to the Millar home with a new born baby girl. "My own kids were ecstatic. My boys thought we should keep her," Marilla chuckled. The family never looked back and to date Marilla has fostered 128 foster children.

Marilla and Pete had six children of their own with the youngest 11 and 12 when they began thinking about other children and how they could help. "The only thing I ever wanted to do was look after babies and Pete loved kids." From then on, one seldom saw Marilla without an infant in tow.

When asked about any special memories. "Oh, there are lots of special memories," smiles Marilla. She proudly keeps photo albums of all the children and sometimes wonders where they are and who they have become. Many of those children continue to keep in touch with her over the years with some often planning their vacations to come back to the Island to see Marilla. I ask her about the little fellow who was with her the same time she babysat my son nineteen years ago. Without hesitation, she recalls exactly who that was and proudly tells me, "He is a very talented boy, fine artist and I hear from him all the time."

Marilla says that there hasn't been any major challenges. She works together with the social workers and has never

had any trouble in that area. If there is a problem, it is discussed. One thing that has changed for the better is she gets to meet the adoptive parents. They get to know each other by coming into Marilla's home and spending time with the child. Over these visits, a bond forms that continues well after the adoption is complete.

This year at the spring convocation at the University of Prince Edward Island, Marilla received her Honorary Doctorate Degree for her years of compassionate service as a foster mom. Marilla shared the stage with prominent singer Anne Murray while sitting proudly in the audience were her children, grandchildren, friends, and social workers.

"The weekend was unbelievable," Marilla smiles. An open house was also held by her family with friends and former foster children there to bring best wishes.

"There is always something to laugh about at the end of the day," Marilla says with her eyes sparkling with memories. Fostering has given Marilla great joy and memories to fill a lifetime.

- June Ellis
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GOOD BYE & THANK YOU

We are sorry to have to say good-bye to two of our CFFA Executive members.

***Norm Brownell** who has been our 3rd Vice President for the past 8 years has left this position, however we welcome him back as the CFFA Provincial Director for Alberta.*

***Bob Richardson** has been on our Executive as 2nd Vice President for the past 2 years. Thank you Bob. All the best to you in the future.*

SMILE

*If the day seems long
And a step seems a mile;
What you need is a lift,
Which you'll find in a smile.*

*All the world toils along,
And troubles beguile;
Lift your share of the load -
Greet the world with a smile.*

Manitoba Foster Family Network

There have been so many things The Network has been involved with over the past year it is difficult to provide a comprehensive update and yet not submit a book that no-one has time to read! This year we've taken the approach that we will attempt to include the majority of things we have worked in a very brief format, allowing you to ask us for additional detail if you are interested in knowing more.

If nothing else, please provide us with feedback on the format.

GOVERNANCE

We continue to grow as a board. Our board is one that is both a governing board and a working board. All committees of The Network are co-chaired by a member of the board and a staff, which ensures we are maintaining our

grassroots approach to supporting foster parents. Equally important is having a highly functioning governance board that is transparent in its approach and knowledgeable about good governance practices. In the past year we have;

- 1 Reviewed a good governance practices package on non-profit sector governance.
- 2 Restructured our new board member orientation package.
- 3 Further defined the role of the Nominating Committee and our processes for seeking and screening board member applicants.
- 4 Developed a booklet that provides foster parents and collateral agencies with information on the functioning of our board.
- 5 Finished our review of Board By-Laws.
- 6 Developed a formalized system for creating board policies.

PROGRAMMING

The programming of The Network continues to be driven by foster parent input.

- 1 Our Peer Support Program has grown over the past year. We have done a formal evaluation on its

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functioning, with 97% of foster parents who used the program finding it met their needs.

- 2 The Education Committee has been involved in the creation and development of a standardized education program for all Manitoba foster parents. Foster parent input in this process has been valuable to ensuring the education program is tailored to the province.
- 3 Work has begun on a new type of support system that combines both the Peer Support Program and the Education program. This will be known as the Mentorship Program. If you would like to know more about it...just ask us!
- 4 We have created booklets on a number of our programming areas, including an overall look at the history and current functioning of The Network.

Ok...so we've tried to summarize some of the larger projects and undertakings. There is so much more that we could add, however we are running low on space! Let's sit down to talk about what else our provinces are doing.

Saskatchewan

As I write this report, I begin to reflect back over the last number of months and the accomplishments of our association, that we have continued to make positive changes and strides on behalf of our membership.

In November 2007, the Honourable Donna Harpauer was elected to government and was assigned the portfolio of the Minister of Social Services. Upon taking office, Minister Harpauer met with our association to review the issues that we had been negotiating with government over the past number of years. A commitment was made by Minister Harpauer to our membership that she would make the necessary changes that are needed to support foster families that care for Saskatchewan's most vulnerable children and youth.

In the spring of 2008 in partnership with the Ministry of Social Services, local law enforcement agencies, community lawyers and our association developed an informational session for foster families on Safeguarding. With the plethora of foster home investigations throughout the province, we wanted to emphasize the importance of safeguarding to our members in the prevention of foster home allegations. Over the past several months, we have provided sessions throughout the province, which have been very well attended.

In September, our office along with the Ministry of Social

Services (Centre Region) announced the piloting of an 18-month project that provides in home supports to identified foster homes that exceed the suggested number of children outlined by provincial policy. The association is coordinating 180 support staff that provides support to some 55 foster homes.

In October, the provincial government announced a 7% funding increase to Community Based Organizations to address the issues of retention and support to the staff of these organizations. This was an increase over and above the annual 3% increase to our budget and the annual cost of living adjustment to our foster families.

January 1st the SFFA provincial office took on the responsibility of responding to all fostering inquiries. When an inquiry requesting information on fostering is received our Recruitment / PRIDE Coordinator responds to the inquiry, followed by an informational package being sent out to all interested candidates. Within 10 days, the coordinator then follows-up with all inquirers to ensure that they have received the information and then at that time its' decided if the family would like us to make the referral to the Ministry for application. Once the referral is made to the Ministry we do further follow-ups to ensure that all inquiries are responded to in a timely manner. With this initiative, funding was provided for two full time positions one to focus on the recruitment of Aboriginal and Métis

families and the other position is to assist the Ministry's Provincial PRIDE Trainer in supporting the PRIDE training throughout the province.

Over the past few years, we have continued to see an increase of intakes through requests for advocacy or support to families throughout foster home investigations. We continue working on a number of projects that would provide support to the association's membership; distribution is planned for April 2009 for the SFFA Foster Parent Handbook. This past year the SFFA website was redesigned and the staff is presently reviewing our association information pamphlet. We are hoping to publish the brochure in Cree, Dene, Michif and French.

We are presently actively negotiating with the Ministry the following proposals:

- 1 A Damage Assessor, that would assess all damages that are submitted by foster families for reimbursement to the Ministry
- 2 A Placement Information booklet that would follow each child through their placement(s) in foster care, providing foster parents with updated and consistent information upon placement

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****Alberta Foster Parent Association****

The Alberta Foster Parent Association (AFPA) is once again proud to have had such a great 2008 and we have started planting new seeds for 2009. The AFPA and the provincial government are currently working on our fourth phase recruitment campaign and preparing to launch the second Edmonton Oiler recruitment commercial with the province. There continues to be a need to add to the number of foster parents and Aboriginal caregivers in Alberta. The need to increase placement options for children and youth is a challenge faced by provincial and territorial governments across the country and abroad. The new eight recommendations brought forward by Minister Tarchuk in 2008 are to strengthen the foster care system and are being put into practice.

In 2008, the provincial advisory committee had reconvened to talk about which training modules need to be updated. There is now a new form being used to collect feedback to the committee. This has proven to be a valuable tool and is widely used. This feedback is important when updating the training modules. Region 4 and Region 7 have continued

- 3 First Aid/CPR be mandatory for all homes that receive medically fragile children and youth, and that the Ministry cover all costs related to the training. Presently the SFFA provides this training to all families, but it is not mandatory and our association covers the costs of the training.
- 4 A Fire safety program, providing information on the use of fire extinguishers, the upkeep of smoke detectors, and how to develop and carryout an evacuation plan.

We continue to work in partnership with the Ministry of Social Services in implementing further supports for our families.

In closing, I would like to thank our Board of Directors, our partners (the Ministry of Social Services and the Children's Advocates Office) and the Provincial Office staff without the strong partnership and commitment from everyone we would not have been able to reach the milestones, which we have. We look forward to the continued partnerships and strive in providing further supports to our families and the children and youth that they care for.

Respectfully submitted Deb Davies, Executive Director

to do core training by video conferencing and the two regions are partnering up and taking turns in hosting these training sessions.

The AFPA continues to negotiate for changes to maintenance, holiday allowance, recreational allowance, skill fees and hourly childcare on an ongoing basis. The following increases were effective April 1, 2008:

- * Basic Maintenance rate increase of 4.7% for all children in care;
- * Skill fee increase of \$1.00 per/day bringing therate to \$13.50 per/day for a Level 1 foster parent and \$26.00 per/day for a Level 2 foster parent; and
- * Compensation for babysitting had increased to \$5.00 per/hour (the daily maximums for babysitting remain at \$50.00 per day per child or \$150.00 per day per home).
- * In addition, an increase to travel expenses in July, 2008 bringing this to 50.5cents per/kilometer.

The AFPA James River Children's retreat was such a success in 2008 with the summer camping programs for children and the increase in rentals that 2009 bookings were full earlier than usual. With the campground being completely paid for in 2008 and the donation of four new cabins, rental income for 2009 will be used to improve the facility further. Once again the AFPA will be holding the Annual Aboriginal Weekend June 12th through to June 14th. The AFPA will be holding its first Sweat Lodge on the property and expects that more families will attend this year. Last year the AFPA held two summer camp programs and the children who attended experience a safe, fun camping experience. This year however, the AFPA is holding three summer camp programs. The first will be held July 12th to July 16th for seven to nine year olds. The second will be held from July 19th to July 24th for children aged ten to twelve years. The third summer camp will be held from August 9th to August 14th for children aged ten

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to twelve years old. The Association celebrated thirty five years of operation in 2008. The 35th Annual Training Conference took place at the Sawridge Inn & Conference center in Jasper, Alberta in November, 2008. This year the Association will hold its 36th Annual Training Conference again in Jasper, Alberta from November 5th through to November 9th. In 2008 the Association increased registrations to three hundred, however this year we hope to increase these numbers again to have three hundred and forty registrations. In closing, 2008 was a busy year and 2009 has moved in. Thank you to the AFPA Board of Directors, F.A.S.T. team, After hours Support Line, Katherine Jones the Executive Director and her staff. As well I would like to thank all the volunteers who have worked hard to help make the Association such a success!

Norm Brownell
President

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British Columbia Provincial Report

Sheila Davis, CFFA Director

Our Provincial Board has been busy as usual this year working on behalf of our foster parents. We have been busy emphasizing the importance to our foster parents of having adequate insurance policies. A small team has been making presentations and providing training in the regions to both foster parents and MCFD workers. It's not just the cost of the land that has risen. The cost of construction in some areas has risen to \$200.00 per square foot in the last few years. Many homes also have security systems and other electronic equipment which can be costly to replace. Currently \$300,000.00 per incident is the maximum coverage under the Insurance Rider. Since we need larger homes to house larger families, the total loss could add up to significantly more than the present coverage provided by MCFD, especially in the event of a fire. Our Kids Up Front Program is still very popular with foster families and gives many foster children a chance to see sporting and cultural events which would otherwise not be available to them. Debbie Drewitz, the Repronal Delegate from Fraser Region has generously volunteered her time for several years to continue to make this program available. It is now official that our foster homes and vehicles are to be smoke free

zones. Many of the long term issues are still with us and do not seem to be changing for the better.

We have continued to find ways to trim expenses and to increase donations. It's hard work though. I'm sure you are finding the dollars more elusive than they ever were too. We have had to put our Camp Care Program on hold for now. Congratulations again to the Alberta Foster Parents for working hard and achieving their goal of such a wonderful camp for foster children & families. We have relocated our BCFFPA office as of March 1st.

Unfortunately this year as another cost cutting measure, our association is unable to provide funding for myself or Louise Dol to attend the CFFA Symposium in Nova Scotia. We wish you all a successful and interesting AGM & Conference.

Again we invite you to access our websites for further information:

- www.bcfosterparents.ca
- www.inyourgrasp.bc.ca
- www.fosterchildren.ca

North West Territories Annual Report

The Foster Family Coalition of the NWT had an eventful year! In May 08 the Coalition's Executive Director of two years went on maternity leave and was replaced until October 08 when the replacement ED was on suspension, and resigned shortly thereafter. The office has been essentially unfilled until our newest Executive Director

Nancy MacNeil was hired at the end of January 09. Nancy is a long time yellowknifer, with a lot of nonprofit experience, and brings some fresh enthusiasm and organization to the Coalition. Over the 0809 year there were some highlights for the Coalition notably

Camp Connections

- Our summer camp program for children and youth in care across the NWT ran another season

- We were fortunate to receive a donation of 6 canoe's and a canoe trailer from the Bosco Homes Treatment Centre located in YK

Foster Family Appreciation Week

- Foster family appreciation week supported community feasts and other honorariums for foster families across the NWT

- This week also brought significant media attention to the Coalition

Childrens Aid Foundation Funding

- Financial grants to youth at risk continue to be distributed across the territory

Foster Parent Training

- The Coalition continues to work with Regional Authorities across the territories to implement a consistent foster parent orientation training program

- The territories are still unfortunately no further ahead with implementing PRIDE training across the regions, however the Coalition is focusing on the work that we can do and will expand other territory wide training programs

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(beyond orientation) that can be promoted through our organization.

Foster Parent Recruitment

- The Coalition has been approved for a Territorial Foster Parent Recruitment Campaign which will kick start in the spring of 09/10. We are excited to develop many new and needed materials to be distributed across the Territory.

Support Services

- We continue to support foster families across the territory through our toll free phone line, as well as through regular Team Building meetings with the Regional Authorities

- We are very excited to have an updated website designed professionally which includes a discussion board open to the public, and have received a lot of positive feedback on this

With Nancy settled into her position and soon to be off and running with our programs we are excited to rebuild our relationships and continuing strengthening our organization over the 09/10 year.

NUNAVUT REPORT

Another year has gone by so very quickly and it is again a privilege to offer warm and pleasant greetings to all of our very dedicated Foster Parents, colleagues, honoured guests and Board Members, from all of us up here in the Territory of Nunavut.

This year, we are celebrating our tenth year as Canada's newest territory and there is a definite sense of excitement in the air ! We have accomplished much, yet much remains to be done, especially as it relates to the enrichment of the lives of children, their families and our communities as a whole.

At the present time, our most active and long-standing Foster Parent Group is located in Iqaluit, with smaller, and still somewhat informal Groups in Arviat, Baker Lake, Rankin Inlet and Cambridge Bay. As well, we have initiated some efforts in Pangnirtung and Pond Inlet, but these are still in the early exploratory stages.

Our continuing efforts at establishing Foster Parent groups in most communities is encouraged and supported by our Departmental and Divisional authorities at Government of Nunavut. As you may know, we have a brand new Territorial Government and Cabinet, led by Premier Eva Arriak, currently the only female Premier in Canada, and we hope to continue to access their support in the best interests of all children and families in Nunavut.

Because our basic cost-of-living is so high in the territory, we continue to offer the highest per diems to our foster parents and alternative caregivers. These rates are

also being reviewed at the present time to ensure that they remain adequate to meet the needs of children in care. As well, the entire Child and Family Services Act of Nunavut will be reviewed over this Summer and Fall, with a view of identifying any gaps or need for enhancements, and bringing it into line with the provisions of most other jurisdictions.

At the present time, we have almost one hundred registered foster families throughout the territory and continue our efforts to do more recruitment in all communities. We celebrated Foster Family Week with certificates of appreciation to all of our member families and hosted other local events as well, including radio broadcasts, congratulatory notices and program information in our local news media.

Once again, a number of our local foster parent groups planned and hosted 2008 Christmas Parties for children and their families in their communities, and fun times were had by all.

The spirit of serving, caring and sharing is alive and well in Nunavut and we are always on the look-out for "room for one more".

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

3rd Vice President Report - Annual Report

Eight years ago in Yellowknife, I was voted in as the 3rd Vice President of the CFFA. I have enjoyed my years on the Board and have seen positive growth in the organization over the last several years.

My dream was to build a strong donor membership that would be based across this great nation. Unfortunately, this did not happen and we will need a lot of help from our CFFA Directors and Provincial / Territorial members to bring this dream into fruition.

This could be a fundraiser that we all can get involved with. If we were to get five thousand donor members from over thirty thousand Foster Parents in Canada, this would generate close to \$100,000.00 a year. We all need to pull together to make this dream a reality.

Statistics

(81) Donor Memberships and (14) Five Year Memberships

Alberta	52 Donor + 8 Five Year Memberships	Iqualit, NU	01 Donor + 1 Five Year Membership
British Columbia	5 Donor + 3 Five Year Membership	Ontario	2 Donor + 1 Five Year Membership
Manitoba	11 Donor Membership	Prince Edward Island	17 Donor Memberships
New Brunswick	1 Donor Memberships	Quebec	00 Donor Memberships
Newfoundland	2 Donor Memberships	Saskatchewan	01 Donor Memberships
Nova Scotia	1 Donor + 1 Five Year Membership	Yukon	00 Donor Memberships

Northwest Territories 1 Donor Memberships

(12) Provincial / Territorial Memberships

Prince Edward Island Foster Parent Association	Manitoba Foster Family Association
Newfoundland & Labrador Foster Family Association	Saskatchewan Foster Family Association
British Columbia Foster Family Association	Ontario Foster Family Association
BC Aboriginal Foster Family	Alberta Foster Parent Association
Nova Scotia Foster Family Association	Northwest Territories Foster Parent Association
Quebec Federation of Foster Families	Government of Nunavut

As I leave the CFFA Board, I wish the organization the very best. The Board is very dedicated and is being steered in a positive manner by our President, Sheila Durnford. Thank you.

Norm Brownell

Dealing with Allegations of Child Maltreatment-- Suggestions to foster families, their foster parent associations, and their agencies. Part II.

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The previous article focused on how to prepare for allegations of child maltreatment, because there are few ways of “protecting” foster families from unsubstantiated allegations. This article will continue with those suggestions; there are fewer once child maltreatment has already been reported as involving a foster home. As before, my suggestions may not be applicable in every location; judge for yourself what is helpful where you live and work. The previous article also indicated that foster families – both children and parents – are more likely to be the subject of child maltreatment reports than the general public, even though substantiated abuse is much lower in foster care than in other reports involving the general public. I said that foster parents, foster parent associations, and their agencies, should assume that foster families who do not maltreat children * are going to be reported, every year, because they are foster families and it comes with the job, and that reports cannot be screened out at intake or trained out. I suggested ways that foster parents and agency staff can and should prepare for the reports that are going to occur; still it is inevitably a personal shock for foster family and agency staff when it happens.

This briefer article will suggest what foster parents can do after a maltreatment report has been received by the agency. These suggestions can also be found in my WEB-based article, *Dealing With the Effects of Child Abuse & Neglect Allegations* © 1990-2004; see <http://www.nysccc.org/ChildAbuseNeglect/Suggestionallegations.htm>.

After maltreatment has been reported: Much less can be done "after the fact," after the maltreatment report occurs. The situation is complicated by severe foster family stress and by agency non-cooperation in many instances. Expect that agency policies may mean it will act rapidly whether or not there is any indication or risk of child abuse/neglect: may include cutoff of communication; and/or sudden unplanned removals of foster children; non-return of foster children; removal or non-renewal of license and/or no further placements of children. You need to learn what your agency's policies and child protection agency policies are. If your agency provides support staff, make full use of them.

Suggested foster parent actions

IMPORTANT Do not isolate yourselves, especially from

other foster parents. Do not stigmatize and stress yourselves and others by keeping this crisis a "secret." Remember that foster families are at risk to be reported. Confidentiality of children's lives must be maintained, of course, but does not prohibit you from saying you have been reported for maltreatment!" In the US, "confidentiality" applies to client lives; it does not interfere with rights to individual freedom of speech to say they have been reported as maltreating.

Request assistance from your agency support staff, foster parent support group or state or Provincial or national association to get needed information, support and resources.

Request information from the agency on exactly what to expect once maltreatment is reported.

Continue or begin that dated written journal of events and communications. Keep good records.

****Request assistance from agency in explaining to children as needed, whether removed or not, what is happening and why. Ask agency assistance to maintain communication from your family with removed children. (Very important to children, who are otherwise further traumatized by the unplanned removal!)**

Seek out support from agency (if available), other foster families and persons important to you in community. Participate in (or start) a support group.

Insist on giving full input into the investigation. If you have not been interviewed, or you found the interviews inadequate, put into writing (keep a copy) the complete information you wish to give and send it to investigator.

Ask what information on legal rights exists and what you need an attorney for.

Expect the process to take a long time to resolve, depending on the professionalism of the agency and the complexity of the situation. If children have been removed, plan activities during this period to help with loss and grief, including work which allows you to continue being active and "giving". Pay attention to your health, physical and emotional. Foster parents may suffer a loss of confidence and self-esteem when suddenly treated by the agency in ways which feel negative. Foster parents often experience grief from the losses of children and losses of identity if foster children are

suddenly or inappropriately removed.

Maintain your professionalism as foster parents, cooperating fully with the investigation, insisting on giving full input and on being treated appropriately and seeking all appropriate information and resources to assist you at this time

Beyond individual foster family experiences

Once foster parents have been through the experience of report, investigation, and related actions by their agency, and they have valuable insights and experiences to share. Work with your agency and foster parent association jointly toward more constructive ways of handling maltreatment reports in foster care.

see the previous newsletter article, Part I, on *Preparing for maltreatment reports* for details on 1) Requesting education for current and new foster parents; 2) Requesting detailed information which can reduce shock and stigma; and 7) Working on legal resources.

work together for positive changes in agency policy and procedures.

work on state or provincial policy and information and resources for foster families when abuse/neglect is reported.

share with other agencies and foster parent associations those new policies, procedures and other ideas which are working well.

This bears saying again: ****keep in mind that foster parenting, done well, almost always involves being child advocates. Improving how foster families are treated once maltreatment is reported will be helpful to foster children as well as to foster parents and their own children. Best wishes to you, your foster parent associations, and your agencies in helping such positive change.**

Rosemarie Carbino, Clinical Professor, University of Wisconsin-Madison School of Social Work, 1350 University Ave, Madison, WI rcarbino@facstaff.wisc.edu 608-263-3675; Fax 608-263-3836

Nova Scotia

Greetings Fellow Foster Parents and Guests:

As CFFA Director for Nova Scotia, I would like to let you know of our busy year. Both the Federation and the Province have been active in advocating for foster parents. We had a meeting on October 28th, 2008, with then Minister of Community Services Judy Streach. The main topics discussed, but not limited to, were the per diem rate, Nova Scotia hosting the 2009 CFFA AGM, respite, foster parent support and the consistency or lack

thereof from agency to agency. We now have a new Minister of Community Services, Chris d'Entremont, and look forward to meeting with him in the near future. .

In January, we had the pleasure of meeting with Vicki Black, Provincial Coordinator of Foster Care. Vicki is our contact with the Department of Community Services. She is willing to discuss concerns of foster parents and does an excellent job responding. Mary Anne Fraser, the Provincial Coordinator of Children in Care, has been instrumental in ensuring that social workers include

foster parents in their team planning. We are very excited about the future of foster care with Vicki and Mary Anne at the helm.

We contacted Premier Rodney MacDonald expressing concerns with the current per diem rates. The per diem rates have not increased with the cost of living. A response from the Deputy Minister Judith Ferguson indicated that she feels the current rates are within the national average.

I would like to thank the CFFA Committee for all

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their hard work in coordinating this symposium. Please enjoy the activities and workshops planned, I know you will have great week.

In closing, I would like to thank you, the foster parent, for choosing to make someone's life better who otherwise may not be living a healthy lifestyle. Thank you all.

My Regards,
Wendell Fraser
CFFA Director for Nova Scotia

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

I just recently returned from a very productive, enjoyable and well organized CFFA Symposium which was held in Halifax, Nova Scotia, May 26th – May 31st. All those attending enjoyed the great hospitality of the Federation of Foster Families of Nova Scotia who hosted our week long event. A HUGE THANK YOU to the Federation and the Conference Committee for a job well done!

During the week various meetings were held, Executive meeting, Board of Director's meeting, National Working Group, Executive Directors Meeting, President's meeting, and of course the CFFA Annual General Meeting.

Participants had the opportunity to hear guest speakers.

* Iain Matheson came from New Zealand to present his findings on a research project the New Zealand Foster Parent Association asked him to do on Foster Parent Standards in 4 countries, one being Canada.

* The Child Welfare League of Canada shared information on 2 of their current projects. The CFFA has assisted with one of these projects but being a part of the Advisory Committee.

* Toronto Community Living – Explained their new web based computer program (Connect-Ability) to assist Foster Parents and others working with children & youth.. They were present during the conference giving demonstrations and answering questions.

* Nova Scotia Council for the Family shared information on their Youth Achievements awards which recognizes the achievements of youth in care in Nova Scotia who demonstrate outstanding perseverance in the face of life challenges.

There was of course some time scheduled for social events. An evening was organized with wonderful skits from some Provinces, great music, a fun evening of socializing, laughing and relaxing. One evening we loaded ourselves onto two school buses for a trip to Peggy's Cove and to the small town of Hubbard for a Lobster feast with good music and dancing. I am not sure about the other bus, but there was a great deal of singing, laughing, and joking

going on all the way home. The poor bus driver!!

Each Provincial Director has taken back all the information from these meetings to share within their Province/Territory so if you wish further details or information, please contact them directly. For those Provinces/Territories whose Directors were not able to attend, all the information will be forwarded to them.

Elections were held at our AGM. I would like to welcome Sylvia Thompson from Alberta to our Executive as 2nd Vice President, and Sharon Joyal from Manitoba as 3rd Vice President. We also look forward to the new people joining us as Provincial Directors.

A Board of Directors Meeting will be held again this year in October. Alberta has kindly donated the use of their camp again this year. It was felt by the Directors that having a second Board meeting during the year is very productive and positive. This enables the Board of Directors the opportunity to share input from their Provincial Boards on motions taken back from the AGM, bring forward items from their Province for discussion, to share information, to network, continue working on suggestions from the National Working Group.

The CFFA continues to grow and become stronger each year. This is not accomplished without a great deal of hard work and persistence. I thank the Executive and Board for their continued support and work throughout the year.

I encourage you to visit our newly designed CFFA Website www.canadianfosterfamilyassociation.ca for updated information throughout the year.

It is one of my goals to keep our website up-to-date as much as possible.

Included with my report is an up-dated list of successes of the past to give you an idea of what work has been done and our accomplishments.

I wish you and your families a very enjoyable Summer. After the winter we all experienced, we deserve a nice sunny, warm and dry summer.

Sheila Durnford,
President, CFFA

Canadian Foster Family Association (CFFA) Successes 2008 – 2009

- Update of website completed with new options added
- CFFA Public Service Announcement “Room For One More?” completed.
- CFFA Public Service Announcement aired during month of October at all Empire Theatres across Canada
- Special Event held October 1st in Victoria, B.C. for the unveiling of the PSA
- Public Service Announcement “Room For One More?” produced in French.
- A second Board of Directors meeting was held in Alberta Oct. 15th and 16th 2008
- Prime Minister again this year sent letter recognizing Foster Families during National Foster Family Week.
- Governor General sent letter again this year in recognition of National Foster Family Week.
- Policy and Procedure Manual revision completed by Committee
- Have representation on one of the Child Welfare League of Canada’s Advisory Committee’s for one of their projects
- Have representation on the 2011 International Foster Care

Organization (IFCO) Conference planning committee

Continue to:

- 1 Strengthen our partnerships with other organizations and groups
- 2 Update website regularly
- 3 Increase our profile at the Federal and Provincial levels
- 4 Increase Public Awareness of the CFFA and fostering in general
- 5 Improve communication and information sharing within our organization
- 6 Hold Executive conference calls between conferences and meetings.
- 7 See an increase of visits to our website (we now have the ability to monitor this)
- 8 Hold the annual Children’s Christmas shows as a fundraising initiative
- 9 Produce and distribute to our members, the CFFA Bulletin 3 times a year (also posted on website)

DEADLINE

Deadline for submitting articles for the next issue of “The Bulletin” is October 15, 2009.
Do you have an article or report that you would like to share with other foster parents?
Please send your article/reports to: Fran Harding, 2710 Rte 20, Darnley, Kensington R.R.#1, P.E.I. C0B 1M0
Fax: 1-902-836-5275 or
E-mail: fran-seabreeze@pei.sympatico.ca

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.