

The Bulletin

Canadian Foster Family Association Newsletter
March 2010

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Happy New Year to you all. My wish is that everyone has a very happy and healthy 2010.

The New Year has started out on a positive note for the CFFA. I am very pleased to be able to announce that the CFFA and the CWLC (Child Welfare League of Canada) will be working implementing a new national project starting in 2010. It will focus on the recruitment and retention of foster parents across the country. Both the CFFA and CWLC look forward working collaboratively with the provincial and territorial Foster Parent Associations on this important work which will support foster families, children and youth across Canada.

There will be a formal announcement about the program in the near future.

At the time of writing this report I am preparing to head to Ottawa to attend a national forum being hosted by CWLC. They are currently working on implementing a national project that encourages parents and caregivers, including foster parents, to open Registered Education Savings Plans (RSEP's) for children and youth receiving government services. The Building Education Opportunities in Child Welfare project also teaches youth about the importance of postsecondary education and the steps they can take to save money for their education. Over 40 participants will be attending from across Canada amongst them; foster parents, community service agencies, provincial and territorial government representatives, social workers. I am very pleased to be attending on behalf of the CFFA and as one of the foster parents. I will report on this in the next Newsletter.

I took part in the Policy and Procedure committee's conference call. The committee followed up on the recommendations from the Directors at the last Board Meeting. The recommendations of the Board have been forwarded to a Parliamentarian who will make the necessary wording changes and additions.

I continue to work on the IFCO planning committee and am also on several of the working sub-committees that have been formed. As the date draws closer the work load I am sure will increase.

Our fundraising campaign was over at Christmas time with a Children's Christmas show. The show was enjoyed by the many families and children who attended.

Again this year the donations were low, due to the economy, but every little bit helps us. I would like to thank all those who were so kind to donate to the campaign. We also received several donations from company's and individuals. A huge thank you goes to these folks as well. The CFFA depends

on donations such as these to continue the work we do and to operate the organization The 2010 Canadian Foster Family Association National Conference – WALKING TOGETHER, VOICES FOR CHANGE will be held in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan this year from June 7th - 13th. We are very pleased have the opportunity to hold the conference in Saskatchewan, in one of our central Provinces, and thank the Saskatchewan Foster Families Association for hosting the conference this year. They have been very busy organizing the conference and doing a great job at making this a well worthwhile conference. Further information and registration can be found on pages ___??

I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at this year's conference. It is a great time to meet new

people, catch up with friends from past years, learn what is going on in each of the Provinces/Territories, networking with others, taking in some of the speakers and workshops, and having some "ME" time without our precious children.

We are very interested in hearing from you, our members throughout the year. As we only are able to meet once or twice a year, communication via email or telephone is very important. Please feel free to contact myself directly or any of our Board members. Just a reminder too, that each Province has a CFFA Director representing your province/territory so information can be shared with them to bring forward to the CFFA.

Sheila Durnford

President, CFFA

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Newfoundland and Labrador Foster Families Association

Happy New Year. In 2010, may you recognize the difference you make everyday in the lives of children and families, especially on those days when you are ready to tear your hair out! Whether it's a challenging behavior, your partner getting on your last nerve, water running cold in the shower (because the person ahead of you was in for twenty minutes), the frustration of not being able to reach your social worker or tripping over toys left on the floor; put it all in perspective! You do this work for the children and on most days you know that what you do matters and is worthwhile. Foster parents, social workers and others who work in the helping professions have the opportunity to impact lives and make a difference in this world. You leave heart prints rather than foot prints.

Our budget request for 2010-2011 was submitted to government in October and once again, we have requested a training position. We are anticipating a deficit for the current fiscal year and have had to

make some adjustments to day to day operations to manage the shortfall. We are also hoping to increase our revenue by increasing our paid membership. As an incentive for foster families to pay their membership fee, we are having a draw for a one night stay in a Jacuzzi Suite at the Super 8 Hotel. We are grateful to Super 8 for donating this great prize. Foster Family Week was celebrated throughout the province in October with media coverage, our provincial drawing and writing contest and lots of social events. In the fall, Amy (social worker) and I traveled to the Eastern and Central regions of the province. It is always a good experience when we have the opportunity to meet with foster families and social workers. This year our Association will again be co-facilitating a class on foster care in the child welfare course at the Memorial University School of Social Work. In the fall, we also signed on as a Witness to the Assembly of First Nations complaint against the Canadian Government.

The newly created Department of Child, Youth and Family Services is still in its developmental stages and we are optimistic that as it becomes fully operational (3-5 years), the needs of children and families will be more consistently met. This is a year of transition for services to children and families in our province. While it can be frustrating waiting for change, we understand that it is only by taking the time to evaluate current practices, services, etc. that we can build a more effective, responsive system that is in the best interests of children, families and our communities. In November, we met with the Deputy Minister and Assistant Deputy Minister and had the opportunity to talk about the experiences of foster parents and our vision for a new and improved system. We also gained a better understanding of the enormity of the task of creating a new Department. The Child, Youth and Family Services Act in our province is also undergoing a legislative review. We were identified by the committee

conducting the review as a significant stakeholder group and had the opportunity to present our opinions on prospective changes, additions, etc. We are hoping that the term caregiver will be removed from the legislation and the terms foster parent/foster family returned. We have almost finished the final draft of our new Foster

Parent Handbook. As a result of the pending changes with the new department and the Legislative review we have put this piece of work on hold until April. We are now finalizing details for our Annual Symposium in June and looking forward to attending the CFFA Symposium in Saskatchewan. We are in the

process of forming our Planning Committee for the 2012 National Symposium. Start thinking about it now; we guarantee you will have a wonderful time in beautiful Newfoundland and Labrador!

May 2010 bring you good health, good luck, and much happiness.

Diane Molloy, Executive Director

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PEI DIRECTOR'S & PEIFFF PRESIDENT'S REPORT

As the title of this report implies, I am the PEI Director as well as President of the PEIFFF. So as such I feel that by submitting only one report, I'll be able to kill two birds with one stone, ...so to speak. Well here we are in 2010, as we look around our Federation's table we note that there are many of us who go back a long time, for some of us, too long to mention, but here we are doing what we do, looking after children in care and hopefully, each other. A lot of good "stuff" has happened over the past two years and we look forward to continuing this positive change. Our relationship with the Department has never been better and the news that we are heading towards "One Island - One Policy" is very encouraging indeed. I want thank, on your behalf, Barry Smith for serving as our President over the past two years and also to Don Avery who along with Barry had literally "been carrying the load" . Barry is staying on as Past

President and we certainly need his experience and will hopefully be able to utilize his strengths. Don is also remaining on as Secretary, but has taken a temporary break in order to re-energize himself. Alex Blue and I are co-chairing the National Conference being held on the Island in 2011. We have met with the Delta and officially signed the contract. With that being done, we have formed a Committee to start putting the Conference together. We are very fortunate to have representation from all over the Island on this Committee. We are waiting on news from Saskatchewan on the National being held there this year. Once we get the details we will be able to organize the members of our committee who will be able to attend. We certainly need to have a strong presence. Our Spring Symposium is set for the Delta and our guest speaker is Dr Charles Emmrys, we just need to pick a topic tonight for him to

speak on. We're going to have him do the same workshop twice, that way everyone will have the opportunity to take in his workshop. The Board is looking into having someone from the "dept" do a presentation on where we're going with Foster Care Giving and what our responsibilities are as they pertain to attendance at Cluster, regional meetings, federation meetings, training, etc...? As agreed, we are going to invite other organizations to the workshops, which will be at no cost. Child care will be provided for all Foster Caregivers at no cost to them. Donna Blue, our Treasurer and I met with representatives with the Department and the meeting went very well. Once again it was a very positive meeting. I believe that's it for now, thank you. Respectfully submitted Wayne MacFarlane

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Ontario's Report

In Ontario, some good things are happening! We have our annual conference coming up in just over three months, which regularly attracts up to 600 attendees. The many hours of training provided there look appropriate and substantial: of course the

networking and support we find there with other foster parents can't be beat. Our Foster Parent Society of Ontario, while managing this has managed, as well, to be heard provincially, to an extent we have not managed to reach before. We have a voice at the table reviewing

Ontario's Child and Family Services Act, and have been consulted by the commission reviewing the management and sustainability of our 53 Children's Aid Societies. Recently we have been offered a place within an oversight committee at the Ontario

Association of Children's Aid Societies. Meanwhile we carry on with our work of promoting equity for foster parents between Children's Aid Societies, and

providing information, advocacy and training. The current funding crisis in our provinces is worrisome to us all, and has slowed the progress of of child

welfare here, but again, we have a voice, and hope to have some realistic solutions emerge soon.

Gena Morrow

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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.

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.

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

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 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 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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THE MANITOBA FOSTER FAMILY NETWORK

CFFA Update: February 2010

GOVERNANCE: In the area of governance, we continue to assess and amend how we work as a board and staff. It feels great to have an effective way of operating while we ensure the grassroots focus of our organization. We can honestly say we have encapsulated the essence of building capacity within the fostering community. Building leads to change and improvements in our programming!

PROGRAMMING: Recent changes or improvements to our programming include;

Peer Support Program capacity has increased again this year. Peer

Support Providers are foster parent volunteers and are now responding to requests for support at the highest rate ever! We will soon have 17 volunteers who respond to inquiries made by their fostering peers. We are looking forward to this continued growth.

Education has been neck deep in assisting the Child Welfare Authorities and provincial representatives to establish a standardized training program for foster parents in Manitoba. Although working with so many diverse groups can be tedious and slow moving, we are very proud to say there has been progress in this area and foster

parents were one of the key factors in getting to where we are now! A large focus of our Education program has been the establishment of the Mentorship program. We are also primed to offer some one-day workshops to foster parents at a discounted rate by partnering with other organizations to reduce the cost of the workshop. There is very exciting growth in the area of Education.

Mentorship is new and has recently received funding for a pilot of this program. It is an educational program with a peer support contingent that will be created and managed by the

Network. Mentors will be foster parent volunteers that are responsible for delivering the first year training for standardized foster parent education in the Manitoba. The Network is responsible for creating the overall curriculum, recruiting and

screening volunteers, training volunteers in Peer Support and the material being delivered, and providing on-going support and education to these Mentors. Once again, this program sets us on track to build capacity within the fostering community!

See you soon!! In June!! In Saskatoon!!

Cathy Wiebe,

President

Manitoba Foster Family Network

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Northwest Territories

Greetings from the Northwest Territories! Although we have had beautiful weather for the month of February, winter is once again here with a temperature of -35 this morning.

The coalition office has been extremely busy the last couple of months working on a pilot project for territorial training. We are holding P.R.I.D.E. Pre-service training in a condensed version. It will be held in 2 different communities in the NWT, and one-on-one in an isolated community. We are very excited to have this opportunity as training has always been very important to us.

I am only working part-time in the office and have recently found out that Amy Jenkins, who has been on leave, will not be returning to her position of full-time Executive Director in May as planned. This will change how things happen in the office. One major

outcome will be changes to how we operate our summer camp, Camp Connections. We are not sure how that is going to look yet but we are going ahead with securing funding for now.

I will decide what my future with the coalition will be in the months to come as working full-time is not an option for me at this point.

I am looking forward attending a forum held by the CWLC in Ottawa next month on *Building Education Opportunities in Child Welfare Services*. This is also something that we are all passionate about in the north.

As spring gets closer I am sure we will have things everything sorted out.... happy spring everyone!

Tammy Krivda, Executive Director

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Report from BCFFPA

by Sheila Davis, CFFA Director

Many events were held for the Fall and Christmas holiday season. Foster families enjoyed some of the following: a fishing derby, coffee meetings, luncheons, dinners, Santa Breakfast, Christmas parties, New Year's Day brunch, etc.

Workshops in the planning stages throughout the province are: Back to Basics, Personal Wellness, Nutrition for Everyone, Getting

Ready for Young Adults, Anxiety Disorders, Streetwise, Sign Language, etc.

Some issues that are causing concern in our province are:

-some kids remain in care longer while the search is being done for healthy relatives who are willing to take them into their homes and families

-some children and infants are still

having to wait in foster care longer than hoped while waiting for adoptions to take place

-some foster parents are finding they have to be more proactive than in the past

-some foster parents would appreciate the mini forum type of meeting with resource workers

.....continued on page 8

CANADIAN FOSTER FAMILY ASSOCIATION

DONOR MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

April 1st 2010 - March 31st, 2011

Date.....

New Member:..... Renewal:.....

Foster Family..... Social Worker..... Other.....

Name (s) Date.....

Address..... Province/Territory.....

..... Postal Code.....

Telephone/Fax..... E-mail.....

Family Membership Fees: 1 year - \$20.00 or 6 Year - \$100.00

Method of Payment: Cheque..... Money Order..... Visa..... MC..... Cash.....

* Corporate & Associate (Group) Membership Fees available on request.

(A receipt for income tax purposes will be issued) Revenue Canada # 13746 7726 RR0001

Please mail this form and your Membership Fee to:

Canadian Foster Family Association

c/o Sharon Joyal

Box 1, Group 25

St Anne R.R.#2, MB

R5H 1R2

Your donor Membership entitles you to an income tax receipt, and a subscription to the C.F.F.A. Newsletter while you are supporting the work of our Association. An Income Tax receipt is issued for all donations.

PLEASE DO NOT SEND CASH IN THE MAIL

IF YOU ARE MOVING PLEASE NOTIFY THE MEMBERSHIP CHAIRPERSON!!!

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

Receipt Number..... Date Received.....

Date Mailed..... Initial.....

SUPPORT YOUR CFFA

Taking out a Donor membership is one way to support your National Organization and to enable the CFFA Board of Directors to continue their important work throughout the coming year.

We thank those foster parents who have taken out a donor membership in the past, and encourage others to do so for the coming year. This is the time of year to join and for those already members to renew. Please forward your cheque in the amount of \$20.00 payable to the CFFA to:

Mrs. Sharon Joyal
Box 1, Group 25, RR#2
St. Ann, Manitoba
R5H 1R2

Thank you for your support.

PLEASE SUPPORT THE CFFA SILENT AUCTION SASKATOON, SASKATCHEWAN.

Each year at the National Conference the CFFA holds a Silent Auction. Provinces are asked to donate items for the silent auction, and members attending are encouraged to donate something as well. In past years it has been very successful and fun having the opportunity to bid on items from all the various Provinces and Territories.

The Silent Auction is our main fundraiser for the whole year and the proceeds go to the publication of the Bulletin Newsletter, costs incurred for the annual Conference and general meeting etc.

So, please while packing your bags for this year's National Conference being held in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, include some items for the silent auction.

If you will not be attending and would like to donate an item or two, each Province's Provincial Director will be attending and perhaps they could bring the items.

Thank you in advance for your support of this event. We are looking forward to seeing everyone in a few months.

C.F.F.A. Executive

DEADLINE

Deadline for submitting articles for the next issue of "The Bulletin" is **June 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,
2710, Rte 20, Darnley,
Kensington R.R.#1,
P.E.I, C0B 1M0

Email:
fran-seabreeze@pei.sympatico.ca

C.F.F.A. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

At the A.G.M in Saskatchewan this year, the C.F.F.A. will be seeking nominations for the following positions: **President, First Vice President and Treasurer**

[At each Annual General Meeting falling on an even numbered year, the President, First Vice-President & Treasurer's positions will be up for election. At each Annual General Meeting falling on an odd numbered year, the Second Vice President, the Third Vice-President & Secretary's positions will be up for election.]

Report from BCFFPA...continued from page 5

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where they could discuss issues and have a question and answer period
-the provincial government made a cut of \$10,000,000.00 to the MCFD budget for this year's budgetary period during Feb. & Mar., which is very late in the year for such a cut. Apparently the new budget for 2010 - 2011 will be cut back as well.

-contracts for some individual foster families have been cut back as well.

-the BCFFPA has requested meetings with Minister Polak, Leslie Du Toit, Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond and all of the Regional Executive Directors about the issues that continue to impact caregivers throughout the province of B.C. To date we have not had the courtesy of a meeting with any of them. Presently we are gearing up for AGM 2010 which is being hosted in Kelowna by the Interior Region on May 28 & 29th. Registration packages

will be mailed out to foster parents April 5th with the early bird registration being cut off April 30th. For further information access our website - www.bcfosterparents.ca.

For those of you who wish to contact us - BCFFPA, #207 - 22561 Dewdney Trunk Road, Maple Ridge, B.C. V2X 3K1 OR 1-800-663-9999.

I hope you have all had a positive start to your new year!

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**CFFA MEETING SCHEDULE FOR 2010 CONFERENCE
JUNE 7 – 13, 2010**

**“WALKING TOGETHER, VOICES FOR CHANGE”
RADISSON HOTEL, SASKATOON, SASKATCHEWAN**

Hosted by Saskatchewan Foster Families Association

Monday, June 7th

9:00 am – 5:00 pm CFFA Executive meeting

*Note: Executive meeting only, no other meetings today

Tuesday, June 8th

9:00 am – 4:00 pm CFFA Board Meeting (Exec. and Prov. Directors)

7:00 pm President's meeting, Executive Director's Meeting, Social Worker Meeting

Wednesday, June 9th

9:00 am – 5:00 pm National Working Group (Directors, Delegates, all others)

Thursday, June 10th

9:00 am – 12 noon

CFFA Annual General meeting and closing ceremonies

Friday June 11th **

Plenary speakers during day and evening reception is planned

Saturday June 12th**

Workshops during day and evening dinner and awards ceremony

Sunday June 12th**

8:15 – 9:30 am – Ecumenical Service

****REGISTRATION COSTS AND CONFERENCE INFORMATION WAS NOT AVAILABLE AT TIME OF PRINTING. WHEN THIS INFORMATION IS RECEIVED FROM SASKATCHEWAN WE WILL POST IT ON THE CFFA WEBSITE, AND EMAIL IT TO ALL ON OUR EMAIL LIST ****



For immediate release

March 30, 2010

CWLC and CFFA Announce New Foster Parent Project

Support and resources focus of latest initiative

Ottawa – CWLC (Child Welfare League of Canada), in partnership with the Canadian Foster Family Association (CFFA), is pleased to launch its newest project, *Every Child Matters: An Action Plan for Foster Parenting Abused and Neglected Children*. This 3-year initiative will create opportunities for foster parents to access new information, resources and supports to improve their fostering experience.

“Foster children often have complex and challenging needs which require special attention and skills from their foster parents,” says Peter Dudding, Executive Director with CWLC. “There are problems in the current system with overcrowding, placement mismatches, lack of training and support, all of which can result in placement breakdown and harm for these children. Through this project CWLC, along with support from the Canadian Foster Family Association, will work with foster families to enhance some areas. There is a strong commitment by everyone involved to improve the quality of life and outcomes for children growing up in foster care.”

Sheila Durnford, current CFFA president, agrees. “Foster parents are involved with the system because they care about the most vulnerable children and youth but we do experience challenges with helping them. New resources and supports that help us develop as foster parents are really needed. We’re very happy with this project and we’re excited to get started.”

The new project, funded by the Government of Canada’s Social Development Partnerships Program, will also promote the sharing and interaction among child welfare organizations in the development of best practices for foster parent recruitment, retention, training and standards. CWLC will consult with the provinces and territories to develop a uniform data collection template to ensure consolidated information on fostering families.

“Families are the building blocks of our society and the Government of Canada partners with the provinces, territories, private sector and not-for-profit organizations to help families achieve their aspirations for a better and stronger future,” said the Honourable Diane Finley, Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development. “With our investment of almost \$600,000, the government supports the Child Welfare League of Canada in their project that will make a big difference in the lives of many foster families.”

CWLC is a membership-based national organization dedicated to promoting the well-being and protection of vulnerable young people. CWLC plays a significant role in promoting best practices among those in the field of child welfare, child rights, children and youth mental health and youth justice.

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