



A quarterly publication brought to you by the Caring for First Nations Children Society

# Caring Network News



Spring 2011

## Update from CFNCS ...

*Submitted by Linda Lucas, Executive Director*

### contents

<b>Update from the Caring for First Nations Children Society</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>Training Update</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>Policy Update</b> .....	<b>3 &amp; 4</b>
<b>New Staff</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>New CFNCS Board Members</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>LLove Program</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>The Representative's Quarterly Update</b> .....	<b>8</b>

As we approach a new fiscal year it doesn't appear that things will slow down! On the contrary, the Society is busier than ever and I hear the same message from all of our Partners and community members. Everyone is busy with all the new initiatives being developed or soon to be developed. As I reflect back on the past year I am in awe of the work that has been accomplished with our Partners and the Society staff. Some of the highlights include:

- The Practice Standards Redesign. Some concrete work is being accomplished in this area and I am proud to see the standards and framework beginning to be fleshed out. This project highlights the innovative and creative approach to creating the new framework that will guide practice and operations of the delegated agencies;
- Quality Assurance Working Group and the Quality Assurance Visioning session held in Richmond BC in February 2011. This initiative is important and has a strong connection to the Practice Standards Redesign. I am excited to see where this can go, as the potential is considerable;
- Development of curricula for Designated Representative Training and the pilot being offered in March 2011. This is exciting as it has the potential for creative options for children coming into care;
- Ongoing work being done in the area of the Move to Actuals Project. While contentious, significant progress has been made and the processes have been clarified.
- The Research into Education Outcomes for Children/Youth in Care and the creation of a Steering Committee or Advisory Committee to guide the work will be a new initiative in the upcoming fiscal;
- The Aboriginal Youth Mentorship Program: Learning and Living our Values Ethically was a highlight for the summer of 2010 and I am happy to report that this initiative will be offered again in the summer of 2011. A few quotes from the youth capture the success of the program: "I got to develop a youth manual and organizing the Summer BBQ was huge for me" and "I got to learn cultural stuff." The Society hopes that through this program we are able to influence and contribute to capacity building of our Aboriginal Youth and create opportunities that they might not have had.
- Successful delivery of three 8-week sessions of Delegation Training, Supervisory and Board Training, as well as Family Support Worker Training.



### Contact Us:

664 Granderson Road  
Victoria, BC V9B 2R8  
Email: [info@cfncs.com](mailto:info@cfncs.com)  
Phone: 250-391-0007  
[www.cfncs.com](http://www.cfncs.com)

Also I would like to acknowledge the Caring for First Nations Children Society staff who have shown dedication to the Aboriginal Child Welfare field and continue to support the Partnership Table. We look forward to our continued working relationship with Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, the Ministry of Children and Family Development, the Delegated Aboriginal Work, and our other partners. Thank you.

# Training Update

Submitted by Gail Roach-Leforte

Indeed...the promise of spring reminds us of the fiscal year that has been accomplished and the new ideas, new growth that await us!

I have been at the Society for a half year and am hoping that by the end of the second half, I will have a good grasp of the many, many tasks that make up my job and how these all intersect in such an interesting and always challenging way. Like a child, I imagine that I am in a labyrinth... never knowing – for sure – what’s around the corner but anticipating with glee, nonetheless.

This past fiscal year reflects many amazing accomplishments for the Society as a whole; I will highlight those of the training department.

Since August 2010, there have been three new full-time positions and a term position added to the training team; Training Manager, a full-time Instructor and an Instructor/Cultural Support Worker. It was deemed necessary to provide additional support in the classroom and to the participants by way of the Cultural Support Worker. This support has enhanced the overall day-to-day experiences within the class and certainly has made a difference for individuals who have carried an additional burden during

*“Spring has returned. The earth is like a child that knows poems.” – Rainer Maria Rilke*

their training period. As well, the administrative assistance provided to our team has been enhanced; Chelsea Brouwer will be with the Society until September 2011.

Besides delivering three sessions of all of the designated training, our team has provided Family Support Work training (October 2010, March 2011), Board training (June and November 2010), Supervisory I, II and III (June and September 2010), and Adoption On Line (November-March 2011). As well, the following programs are being delivered before the fiscal year end: Youth Agreements, Family Support Work and Designated Representative Training.

Comprehensive review/analysis has been completed regarding the delivery of training (based on evaluation/feedback forms) that is shaping the future of how best to deliver training. This includes redesigning how delivery happens (classroom vs. on-line/or blended) and developing new training modules that are required in the field.

Lastly, in my short time here, I have witnessed two cohorts graduate from the ASW training (see picture below). It is an exciting time to be at the Society.

Miigwech, *Gail*



ASW Graduation – Students and staff, February 18, 2011

# Policy Update

*Submitted by Shawn Hoey*

It is an exciting time to be part of the incredible changes that are occurring at a rapid rate within delegated child and family service delivery within the province. Everything imaginable is open for discussion and consideration! Even with the expansion of the policy team from three to five people over the past year we continue to be very busy and continue to strive to keep up with the exponential changes affecting all of us!

As the manager of the Program and Policy Initiatives, I have been blessed with a strong team to support the delegated agencies and the Society to address these changes. In an effort to be proactive and to ensure that the agency voice is heard, we continue to be vigilant. We continue to reflect on our efforts and look for ways to better support the delegated agencies. We have had the opportunity over the last quarter to not only support agencies through external practice shifts but also support and advocate for practices central and intrinsic to agency practice. Our efforts in supporting the First Nations Advisory of the Third Cycle of the Canadian Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect bore fruit with the release of the findings late in 2010, with the First Nations findings coming very soon. The AOPSI Practice Standards Redesign team developed a strong framework for standards development, has embarked on the second round of community information sharing sessions and started putting pen to paper in drafting standards.

Kelly Legge has shifted gears and her primary focus will be quality assurance activities. The QA visioning session

in February was a huge success and we received glowing reviews. The findings of the event are forthcoming and we will be seeking direction from the agency Directors on next steps. Kelly's work also includes support to the Systems Advisory Reference Group that is currently looking at the implications of the commencement of Phase Two of the Ministry's Integrated Case Management System. Agencies are being asked to participate in this initiative as it will impact their own information management systems.

Leslie Morison continues to provide support to financial and political matters affecting agency practice. The federal government's Move to Actuals for maintenance for children in care has taken up much of her energies. Hopefully, by the time the dust settles on this initiative, she will be busy with Enhanced Prevention Framework funding for British Columbia. Currently, INAC is waiting for budget announcements to determine if and when it will be BC's turn. Leslie has also been the driving force from our office on an initiative to streamline the delegation agreement negotiation process. In February, both of these initiatives resulted in bringing representatives of all the delegated agencies together to share information and identify solutions.

Nedinska Donaldson has added programs and services to her busy human resources portfolio. This shift has kept her busy. Significantly, she is participating on the Ministry's Kinship Care Advisory. Sweeping changes to kinship care and out of care options are around the corner that will

*continued on page 4*



**ASW Graduation – Linda, Rachele, Deb Foxcroft, and Lesley du Toit**

# Policy Update continued

*from page 3*

increase options and alternatives for agency practice and children, families and communities. Nedinska is also leading the Traditional Decision Making meeting to be held on March 30 and 31 with the goal of celebrating best practice, reaffirming traditional decision making and increasing the utilization of tradition options. Also on the horizon is a project where Nedinska will be engaging with stakeholders in regards to improving educational outcomes for Aboriginal children in care. We hope to develop enough traction on this to lead to a province-wide strategic plan. And, this is on top of her continued support to the AOPSI Practice Standards Redesign, AOPSI Operational Review Committee, and Training Advisory Committee.

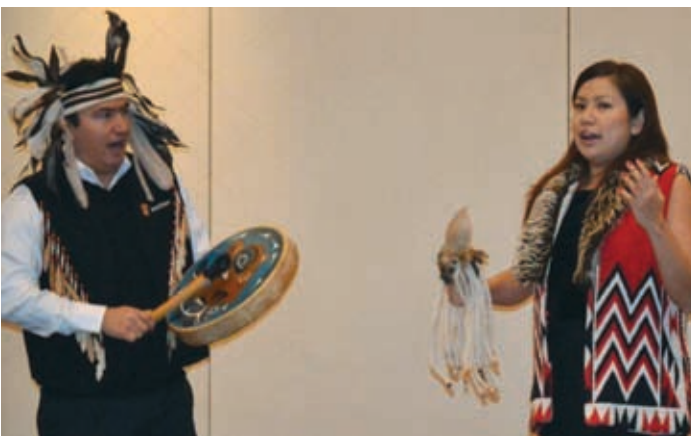
Connie Martin, a UVic Social Work practicum student, joined us on February 1. We are fortunate to have her with us. Currently, she is orienting herself to the work and supporting the other analysts. Over the next few weeks, I am sure that Connie will have the opportunity to interact with more of our stakeholders and to lead some of her own initiatives.

Pam Bevan continues to keep us organized. She truly is the superhero on the team. Her ability to organize all our travel, book our rooms, take minutes and everything else imaginable under the sun has been marvellous.

Over the past quarter we have not only taken a moment to celebrate our successes but also look to the future as we continue to build on our body of work to continue supporting you in your efforts to support others.



**Group dance**



**Shanook song catchers**



**Love Medicine drummers**

# New Staff

My name is Chelsea Brouwer, I'm a young mother of a three-year old-boy who is everything to me. I was born in Calgary and moved to British Columbia when I was five years old. I have lived in different places throughout BC that have helped me learn and grow from many experiences and life styles. After moving from the northern community to Victoria, I have learned to value life and the many gifts it has to offer.

While working at the Caring for First Nations Children Society I plan on furthering my education and knowledge, so I can go out into the world and do good by the Aboriginal youth. I am pleased to be offered this experience and am going to take advantage of every moment and also every little bit of information that gets handed to me.

All My Relations,  
*Chelsea*



**Chelsea Brouwer, office assistant**



**Connie Martin, Policy Team practicum student**

My name is Connie Martin and I am a proud member of the K'omoks First Nation. I am honoured to be a practicum student with the Policy Team of the Caring for First Nations Children Society.

I come to the Society with over 10 years experience as a front line worker with First Nations children, youth, and their families. As a student of the University of Victoria Social Work Program (Indigenous Child Welfare Specialization) I hope to both contribute to the work being done, and learn from the experienced staff at the CFNCS.

In the spirit of collaborative learning, much respect,  
*Connie Martin*

## Become a Member of CFNCS!

Corporate and Individual memberships are available and entitle the member to benefits such as:

- reduced registration fees for conferences
- quarterly newsletter
- access to the resource centre
- access to message posting

### Membership Fees

Annual Individual Membership Fee is \$20  
Annual Corporate Membership Fee is \$200  
Please make all cheques payable to:  
Caring for First Nations Children Society  
664 Granderson  
Victoria, BC Canada V9B 2R8

To join online please go to:  
[www.cfncs.com/membership.htm](http://www.cfncs.com/membership.htm)

# New CFNCS Board Members



**Charles Boehm-Hill**

With over 20 years of experience in workforce diversity training, Charles Boehm-Hill is owner and director of the consulting firm Paideia Educational Consulting and Mediation, based in Vancouver, British Columbia. He is a graduate of Indiana University with a BA degree in Education, the State University of New York at Buffalo with a M.Ed. degree in Early

Childhood Education, the University of Toronto with a MA degree in School Psychology and the Institute for Conflict Analysis and Management in Victoria, BC with 252 hours of training in mediation and negotiation. Charles consults with Non-Profit Agencies in the areas of workforce diversity, conflict resolution, collaboration and strategic planning.

In the area of Adoption and Foster Care, Charles co-authored “Raising Healthy Multiracial Adoptive Families: A Question and Answer Guide for Adoptive Parents”. He serves as a mediator and consultant to the Adoptive Families Association of British Columbia and introduced a widely accepted basic skills training program for families of adoption. Charles is a Board Member at large with Caring for First Nations Children Society. He brings experience in working for the past 14 years with seven First Nations communities on Vancouver Island.

Aboriginal families, schools and communities have participated in his workshops that address racism, lateral violence and other forms of oppression. Families experiencing conflict in divorce, separation, custody and access have benefited from participating in an alternative dispute resolution process.



**Marc Storms**

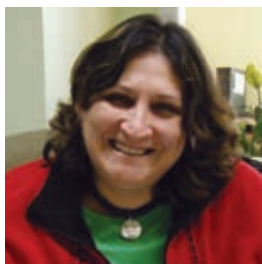
For the past 10 years Marc Storms has provided community development, needs assessments, organizational assessments, capacity building, program facilitation, community and organizational consultation, community consultation and other related activities predominantly with Aboriginal communities across all regions of BC.

Marc has spent more than 14 years as a front line Social Worker and Team Leader with the Ministry of Children and Families, including nearly 10 years living and working in the Northwest BC communities of Dease Lake, Iskut, Telegraph

Creek, Terrace and Kitimat. In addition to his experience in child protection, Marc has provided resources and services to people who are developmentally challenged, Autistic or FASD.

Marc has been a Consultant to the Tahltan First Nations Band (Telegraph Creek, BC) around their land and the potential for destination tourism to avoid the reclamation by the provincial government. Marc provided analysis of the tourism potential, and recommendations for environmentally appropriate use.

Marc has used his experience and expertise in the fields of training, marketing and small business, as well as his knowledge and understanding of rural Aboriginal issues to provide assistance and advice in the development of marketing/business plans, economic development initiatives, training curriculum and organizational management.



**Cheryl Aro**

Hello Everyone,  
I am pleased that I have been offered an opportunity to introduce myself in this newsletter. My name is Cheryl Aro and I am very proud to be a new Board member at the Caring for First Nations Children Society. I am a Gitxsan First Nations woman,

from the Gutginuxw house and the Fireweed clan. I have been employed at the University of Victoria School of Social Work as the Indigenous Specializations Field Education Coordinator since 2006. I have taught as a sessional instructor at the University of Victoria and

Camosun College during the past five years. I completed my BSW degree in the Indigenous Child Welfare Specialization in 2003 and my MSW in 2010. I have a strong commitment to strengthening and supporting First Nations child welfare in BC.

I look forward to working with Caring for First Nations Children Society for the next two years. My research interests revolve around Indigenous child welfare, education and health. I am hopeful that some of my skills and knowledge will be beneficial to the agency as a whole. I am thrilled to have the opportunity to give back to an agency that has given so much to Indigenous social work education.

Haa' mii' yaa Thank you.

# LLOVE program:

CFNCS will be hosting another session of the Aboriginal Youth Mentorship Program. The Society has brought on board a Youth Mentor who will work with up to two Aboriginal youth in care over the March Break. The youth are paid a wage to come and work in the office, learn new skills, experience new opportunities and develop some life skills. The Youth Mentor, Tanille Johnson, has developed some material to review with the youth that looks at positive money management, creative ways of obtaining high school credits while getting certifications and other credentials, and healthy relationships. The initiative over the March Break will also include a day trip to the university campus to get a feel for the grounds and opportunities there. Community is welcome to contact the Society Associate Director, Rachelle Dallaire, if they have a youth who may want to participate.

Tanille is a member of the We Wai Kai Nation located on the north end of Vancouver Island. She has recently completed her Social Work degree at the University of Victoria specializing in Child Welfare.



**Tanille Johnston**

Her passions include social justice, advocacy work, and being physically active. Among other things, Tanille will be using her degree to work toward creating an academic system that acknowledges and gives credit for Indigenous ways of learning, knowing and being. She is very excited to be a part of the Caring for First Nations Children Society's team and looks forward to the work ahead.

**REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN!**

**IFCO**

**2011 World Conference**

*Fostering Hope ...  
Together, we can  
make a difference*



IFCO 2011—International Foster Care Organisation  
XVII Biennial World Conference—July 10th to 15th  
Victoria, British Columbia, Canada

**GO TO [WWW.IFCO2011.COM](http://WWW.IFCO2011.COM)**

Caring for First Nations Children Society is a proud partner and sponsor of the IFCO 2011 Conference which is coming to Canada!

We are committed to delivering a dynamic conference that will provide opportunity for ALL parents, foster parents, social workers, clinicians, teachers, child care

workers and extended family to take part in meaningful educational experiences, numerous networking opportunities, and a variety of entertaining social activities. Our theme of *Fostering Hope – Together, we can make a difference* is in recognition of the crucial role we all play in the life of a child.

# The Representative's Quarterly Update



Hello everyone. Thank you very much for inviting me to contribute to your newsletter, *Caring for First Nations Children Society*.

In December of 2010, my Associate Deputy Representative, Andrew Robinson and I had the privilege of attending the First Nations Directors Forum in Victoria B.C.

Here we entered into an agreement and signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the First Nations Delegated Agencies. This understanding will enable us to officially work together to advocate on behalf of First Nations children and youth to ensure that they are fully supported and receive culturally appropriate, quality services from governments and agencies that addresses their needs, circumstances and aspirations.

This agreement reinforces our commitment to continue to work together on behalf of young First Nations people in this province. My Office values the ongoing efforts of those in Aboriginal agencies and their willingness to share information on a regular basis about what they are doing for children. It's important that we sit down, listen to each other, work together and respect what we have accomplished. This MOU represents a common set of values that will guide our efforts to protect our most vulnerable population.

Following the signing of the Memorandum, Andrew stayed on to meet with the directors' table to discuss important cross-province issues and identify opportunities where we can work together to improve services and outcomes. I am very encouraged by the open communication and the knowledge that together we can work to make a difference in the lives of B.C.'s Aboriginal children and youth.

I also wanted to tell you about the Office's latest report released in late January – *Fragile Lives, Fragmented Systems: Strengthening Supports for Vulnerable Infants*, an aggregate review of a large number of infant deaths. In this report, 21 infants' lives and deaths was examined in detail, and the information collectively studied to identify and analyze trends.

What we found is that vulnerable infants throughout B.C. are at risk because of the patchwork of services that exists across the health and child-serving systems. Some of the most fragile families in our province are slipping through the cracks and government needs to step in immediately to fix the existing lack of a coordinated and responsive approach and create seamless coordination among all support services.

The report identifies inconsistencies in when and how supports are given to struggling families to reduce risks and threats to the safety of young people. Provincially these include essential supports like prenatal and postnatal education and home visits, risk assessments and the provision of safe-sleeping information.

The report notes that most of the infants lived in serious poverty and died in unsafe sleep arrangements. The risk of sleep-related infant deaths is reduced when known risk factors, including poverty and inadequate housing are addressed. A key recommendation in the report calls on the Premier's Office to take the lead on the development of a child poverty plan, with demonstrated progress by June of this year.

The report also calls on government to develop provincially coordinated standards for postnatal public health nursing in the province. At present, the province's regional health authorities offer a variety of programs that vary and are not available everywhere in B.C.

If you are interested in the complete report I encourage you to access it on the RCY website at [www.rcybc.ca](http://www.rcybc.ca).

Finally I wanted to remind you that much of my Office's work centres on advocacy, a service that provides a place for people to go when they really need help.

We know that children and youth who are in care or receiving services from the child- and youth-serving system are more vulnerable than the general population. We know that they are more likely to be less healthy, less educated, live in poverty, experience family violence and have special needs. And we also unfortunately know that these trends are compounded for Aboriginal children.

We remain committed to getting out and having a real presence in communities. My office works to do this in ways that respect the unique sense of place, culture, language and community of Aboriginal peoples.

- Between April 2007 and January 2011 we have had 5,823 requests for advocacy services.
- 1,421 new advocacy cases have been initiated during the last 10 months of fiscal year 2010/11.
- Almost 14 per cent of these came from children and youth themselves.
- About 63 per cent of the cases had to do with MCFD services.

We notice that three significant themes are presented:

- children and youth don't feel protected or safe
- children and youth feel their right to participate in decisions concerning them is not being respected
- children and youth feel that important people in their lives are not engaged or communicated with adequately

Advocacy staff make a concerted effort to inform British Columbians about the Representative's Office, and meet directly with children and youth, their families and service provider organizations and will continue to do. Our advocacy staff will continue to work to expand our outreach, so we can assist children and youth throughout the province who are having difficulties with the services they are receiving, or are having a hard time getting access to services.

In closing I wish to thank you for all the work you do for children and youth. If my Office can assist you in any way, please contact us. We can be reached by phone at 1-800-476-3933 or by email at [rcy@rcybc.ca](mailto:rcy@rcybc.ca).

Sincerely,

Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond  
B.C.'s Representative for Children and Youth

