



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

Caring Network News



Winter 2010

Update from CFNCS ...

Submitted by Linda Lucas, Executive Director

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Welcome all to another quarter at Caring for First Nations Children Society. The Society has continued to grow not only in numbers but in projects as well. We participate in many joint efforts with the Partnership Table. Some of the initiatives include the Practice Standards Redesign, research about accreditation, development of curricula for Designated Representative Training and many other deliverables. Last quarter we discussed potential new training initiatives and these are still in the works. The Society is eager to share these initiatives with our stakeholders and will provide further information as the initiatives come closer to fruition.

Our training centre has brought on two more instructors and a new Training Manager in order to facilitate and enable Aboriginal social workers to engage in learning which is conducive to best practices when working with Aboriginal children involved in the child welfare system. Our policy team has also been busy with a number of projects and we are excited to be a part of the Move to Actuals project and Delegated Agency Business Planning. As many of you know, INAC will be "Moving to Actuals" for maintenance reimbursements by April 1, 2011. The Society is actively involved in this project and is playing a role in assisting agencies to be prepared for this shift. There will be much transitional work in this area for both INAC and the delegated agencies.

The Society is also looking forward to bringing on a Youth Mentor to assist in developing and delivering material to Aboriginal youth through our Aboriginal Youth Mentorship Program: Living and Learning our Values Ethically. As the Society continues to grow, we extend our thanks and gratitude to the community partners who have supported us in our efforts and progress. We thank the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, the Ministry of Children and Family Development, our partners and Society staff.

I am happy to be able to bring to your attention an honour bestowed on Caring for First Nations Children Society that could not have happened without your support and collaboration as we all move forward in our efforts to build capacity for First Nations, Aboriginal and Métis people through our collective efforts promoting the safety and well-being of First Nations, Aboriginal and Métis children, families and communities. The Institut International des Droits de L'Enfants (International Institute for Children's Rights) has acknowledged our work by recognizing us as their NGO for the month of November 2010. This has come as a huge and exciting announcement. I would like to encourage you to share in our excitement and to visit their web site at: www.childsrightrights.org/html/site_en/index.php?c=ong_ong



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Thank you and we wish you a happy holiday season!

Training Update



Submitted by Gail Roach-Leforte

Many changes have occurred within the Training Team during this past Fall quarter so it has been a busy but exciting time.

As the Training Manager, I am a part of the recent change to the Team, having begun in August, 2010. One of our team members was away for several months and is now back; this is change. T'oila (see page 6) is a new addition (although had been a familiar face to the Society) as of September, 2010. And most recently, Laurie McDonald joined our team. There had been four active team members in August and now there are eight of us – this is big change and will allow for the expansion of deliverables into areas that just have not been possible before.

This quarter, we have completed the 5-week Aboriginal Social Worker training and 21 participants are now ready to work in their respective delegated agencies. Child Protection training was delivered in July and Supervisory training was delivered in September. Aboriginal Adoption On Line, Guardianship and Child Protection training are ready to roll out in November and December. As well, there are curriculum development projects underway.

It is an exciting time, a challenging time and a time to be grateful that we can “be a part of the change we want to see in our world” (adapted from Gandhi).

Miigwech,
Gail Roach-Leforte, Training Manager



Graduation – November 2010

Policy Update

Submitted by T'lakwadzi

Lost warriors have only to open their eyes to find the right and good path.

– Chief Red Mountain

My supervisor for my practicum placement is Shawn Hoey and he recently asked me to provide the policy update for the upcoming CFNCS Newsletter. At first I was apprehensive, as I am not always confident in my writing; especially, writing to capture the essence of the latest aspects of the policy team endeavours. Of course, I know that this is not exactly policy writing, but just having the word policy in there is still intimidating enough. I have done some policy reading in my last few years of academia, but never have written; thus, my policy writing fears.

To begin, I have been involved in a few meetings and then a few more. Since the second day of my practicum placement I have been in meetings. The first meeting I attended was Traditional Decision Making at MCFD. And now, with the upcoming Partnership meeting and the numerous working group meetings to prepare for such, the work was not what I expected. The policy team also meets regularly to prepare for each of the impending meetings. Tasks are delegated accordingly to each team member, based on their area of expertise. I have been supporting a number of the staff and an interesting opportunity in my practicum to this point was the telephone calls I made to Executive Directors from each agency to identify who was the agency's contact for the AOPSI Redesign. This was an interesting opportunity for me and interacting with Directors in such a capacity has enabled me to gain another level of networking skills that I have not encountered up to this point of my academic life!

Kelly Legge has worked on a number of things, and naming a few would include: Quality Assurance – incorporating feedback on the Quality Assurance Report to determine next steps towards the development of a QA framework; and Kinship Care – this committee has just started and will be addressing the broad scope of Kinship care, including the Extended Family Program.

Nedinska Donaldson indicated that AOPSI has been her focus since the last newsletter was distributed. The Redesign Project held a “face to face” meeting in September of the Steering Committee, Working Group, Project Leads, as well as the representatives from MCFD and INAC. The Operational Standards Committee held its first meeting in October to discuss the scope and purpose of the committee with respect to the new Operational Standards released and implemented in 2009. Again, these are only a couple of tasks on Nedinska's ‘to do’ list.

Leslie Morison has been involved in a number of initiatives that include the Move to Actuals Working Group to assist the Delegated Agencies for the upcoming Federal Move to Actuals commencing April 1, 2011. In another, the Delegation Confirmation Agreement/ Delegation Enabling Agreement Standardized Language Working Group is working towards completing their goals to improve the process for drafting delegation agreements for child and family services. She is also providing support to the efforts to advocate for the immediate implementation of BC First Nations Enhanced Prevention Services Model and Accountability Framework.

To my knowledge, this is the story and I am sticking to it!

New Staff

CFNCS welcomes a new Training Manager



Gail Roach-Leforte

Boozhoo:

My name is Keewatinin Wabashkay Migizi'kwe (Northern White Eagle Woman) also known as Gail Roach-Leforte. I am from the Ojibwe peoples in Ontario and have resided in Manitoba for 30+ years before making the bold move to British Columbia. I am truly humbled by this experience and by the warm welcome that so many people have shared with me on my arrival.

I am a mother of five beautiful people, and Kookum to five precious grandsons and a partner to Ron (30+yrs). I have always been passionate about the rights of people in general and specifically about making right the wrongs that have been an ugly mar on the national Aboriginal mosaic for so long. Therefore, my life-journey has taken me down many different pathways: working in specialized youth care; working with sexually exploited youth; working with families who have children in care; teaching; resource development and, always, story-telling. These various pathways have allowed for the experience of teaching, reflecting and empowering others through listening to stories and telling stories.

It is an honour to be at Caring for First Nations Children Society where I can take my previous experience and passion and assist the training team in providing instruction and information with a similar passion.

Miigwech,
Gail Roach-Leforte

New Staff – Instructor



Laurie McDonald

Tansi!

My name is Laurie McDonald; I am From the Enoch Cree Nation, which is located west of the City of Edmonton, Alberta. First I would like to thank the staff of the Caring for First Nations Children Society for their warm welcome.

For the past seven years, I have had the privilege to have been working with Vancouver Aboriginal Child and Family Services Society in the capacity as their Child Protection social worker. Not only have I brought to this organizations seven years of front line work in child protection but also 27 years in the field of education where I have taught, not only special needs children, but also, I have had the opportunity to teach the Aboriginal component for the fourth year social worker students at Okanagan University.

I look forward to the coming months working with this progressive organization. If you get the opportunity, drop by my desk and have a chat.

All My Relations
Laurie

New Staff – Instructor

Tansi!

My name is Tina McIntyre, also known by my Aboriginal name T'oilá. New to Vancouver Island, I have just settled in the Colwood area after living and working in Sto:llo territory in the Fraser Valley for 17 years. I am the very proud mother of a 12-year-old boy who is the love of my life. I am very proud to claim heritage to both Cree and German descent.

For over 13 years I have been working with Aboriginal families and communities in several different capacities including Child Protection social work, family support, youth care work, employment counselling, foster parent orientation and recruitment, group facilitator for prevention programs and community development. Having been given very valuable teachings, knowledge and lessons, I feel honoured to be able to share this with others while in my position as an Instructor here with the Society.

My education thus far has awarded me with degrees in Social Work (child welfare specialization), Theatre and the Arts. My passion and love for people and



Tina McIntyre

advocating for social change through education has brought me to Caring for First Nations Children Society, where I have settled in nicely. I look forward to being a valuable and instrumental part of the important work that is being done with the Society.

All my relations,
Tina (T'oilá)

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:
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664 Granderson
Victoria, BC Canada V9B 2R8

To join online please go to:
www.cfncs.com/membership.htm

Practicum Student



Gary Dawson-Quatell

Gilakasla, Nu gwa um T'lakwadzi (K'lak-wa-dzee), I am Kwakwaka'wakw and was raised in Kingcome Inlet for my first 10 years of life. The rest of my childhood, until I graduated from high school, was in Campbell River. According to my respected teachings, I would like to say Gilakasla (thank you) as I am a visitor and have the privilege to study, work, and live on the traditional territory of the WS'ANEC' (Saanich), Lkwungen (Songhees), Wyomilth (Esquimalt) peoples of the Coast Salish Nation.

Acknowledging the territory is an old teaching I learned from my people and it humbly guides me

to respect all and everything! Moreover, I would also like to say Gilakasla to Caring for First Nations Children Society for taking me in to fulfill my fourth-year practicum, which is the final learning piece for my Bachelor of Social Work Degree – First Nations Specialization.

My non-Indigenous name is Gary Dawson-Quatell and I have lived here in Victoria for five years.

I have a Human Service Worker Diploma that I earned at North Island College in Port Alberni. My partner of seven and a half years is Natasha, who is of Nuu-chah-nulth ancestry and she is the mother of my youngest child. I have five children from the Nuu-cha-nulth territory; three boys and two girls. Even though playing soccer was a great passion of mine in my early years, loving and tending to my children has become my greatest enthusiasm, and then learning the best of both worlds I live in has become secondary. Excelling in my Indigenous epistemology and in the Colonial academia is something I want to share with my children and all the Indigenous youth!

Love & Prayers
T'lakwadzi

Notice of Annual General Meeting

Caring for First Nations Children Society Annual General Meeting will be held on:

Date: Wednesday, December 8, 2010

Place: Caring for First Nations Children Society
664 Granderson Road
Victoria, BC

Time: Dinner at 5:00 pm
AGM at 6:00 pm

For membership applications, please visit
www.cfncs.com/about-cfncs/membership

Please RSVP to Candace.McKivitt@cfncs.com

The Representative's Quarterly Update



Hello everyone. Thank you very much for inviting me to contribute to your newsletter *Caring Network News*.

In October of this year at the 2010 Champions for Children and Youth Summit, B.C.'s Provincial Health Officer, Dr. Perry Kendall, and I released a special report called *Growing Up in B.C.* It takes a sweeping look at young lives across the province, using as wide a lens as possible to examine the state of British Columbia's children and youth.

The report focuses on six important aspects of child well-being – health, learning, safety, behaviour, family economic well-being, and family, peer and community connections.

In order to get as complete an understanding as possible about the youth perspective on these topics, we also consulted with over 200 youth from across the province, to get their very important perspectives.

The youth, ranging in age from 12-22 and from a diverse mix of backgrounds, ethnicities and experience, including many Aboriginal youth, played an active role in 27 sessions across the province. They were asked to comment on what aspects of health and well-being were important to them, what they thought the key findings were with regards to the data, what data was missing, and what type of services, resources and policies would make a difference in improving outcomes.

Youth consistently identified having an adult in their life to turn to for support and guidance as an indicator of well-being and said that they felt a need to be more involved in these types of reports if child health and well-being outcomes are to improve.

In this report, we identified that there is not enough quality data to allow us to speak definitively about the unique characteristics of Aboriginal child and youth well-being, or the well-being of children and youth from diverse cultures.

However, while there is not enough data in some areas, there are some trends we can share.

Aboriginal children as a whole do not fare as well as other children in B.C. on indicators of well-being. This is concerning.

Throughout the aspects of well-being, Aboriginal children and youth score poorly on all indicators. This demands a closer scrutiny of the data and compels us to ask: what are the realities, current and historical, that frame the lives of these children? How do we measure those realities?

How do we assess the impact of cultural differences? We know that a disproportionate number of children in care are Aboriginal and that there is still much work to be done to create equal opportunities and experiences for many of the Aboriginal children and youth in our communities.

On a more positive note, Aboriginal students report high rates of participation in extra-curricular activities.

It is important to know that success is within reach. An example of this is the very strong improvement results from School District 81 (Fort Nelson) when they implemented their Great Leaps reading program, a research based program that enables students of all ages to make significant strides in reading. Their Grade 4 FSA results showed that 100 per cent of Aboriginal students met or exceeded expectations.

In the report we also asked the question “How important are family, peer and community connections to children and youth?” We know the cultural and linguistic commitment for our Aboriginal youth is vital to their well-being.

Almost 80 per cent of all youth reported that they felt a sense of belonging to their local community. As well, the youth we talked to were clear that adult support is necessary and valuable to their well-being. They understood the importance of long-term relationships and the significance of feeling connected to one's family and community.

You may want to take a closer look at all of the findings in *Growing Up in B.C.* and the complete report is on the RCY website at www.rcybc.ca

I want to thank all of you for the time and effort that you put into creating a better path for the lives of B.C.'s children and youth. Through you we can begin to change some of the negative findings and continue to reinforce the positive ones.

Paolo from Gleneagle Secondary School, one of the youth poets who performed for us at the Summit, told us this: “Even if you don't change the world in your lifetime, you can change the life that will.”

I think that is what we are all working on.

Sincerely,

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

