



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

Caring Network News



Summer 2011

Update from CFNCS ...

Submitted by Linda Lucas, Executive Director

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For the summer 2011 Society newsletter I would like to update our Partners on some organizational development activities that have made the Society healthier and have contributed to a solid team. For the past several months, we have engaged the services of Dr. Mackenzie Brooks, a coach who has provided us with tools and skills to solve problems, reach goals, enhance relationships and achieve better results in our work life. The model used by Dr. Brooks is essentially about “putting the elephants on the table” and having those open and honest discussions that lead to change within individuals and which ultimately ripple through the organization. In order to have those difficult conversations we used the Lessons Learned model, which is captured in three key questions:

1. What’s working?
2. What’s not working?
3. What’s missing?

The success of the organizational development can be attributed to our having asked ourselves “how do we want to conduct ourselves in the office with staff and our stakeholders and how do we want to engage with each other?” It has provided an opportunity to create a cultural milieu based on respect for all of the staff at Caring for First Nations Children Society and clarity in our roles and responsibilities as we inserted a new level of management within the Society. The final outcome of working with the model is that we created a Code of Conduct about how we as an organization operationalize our office and the values and principles which guide our work internally and externally. Working with the coach also helped us develop a Society staff Code of Conduct that will be used at each staff person’s annual Performance Review. The Code of Conduct is attached for your review (see page 6). Thank you.



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Training Update

Submitted by Gail Roach-Leforte

“Wisdom is a sacred communion.” – Victor Hugo

The awakening of spring has refreshed the soul; with summer it is now time to tend to the busyness of growth. It has been an extremely busy time for the Training Team at CFNCS. There have been so many changes that I hesitate to mention any for fear of missing one.

The new fiscal year is witness to changes, transitions, dreams and transformations.

Three long-time instructors have resigned from the Society to take on new challenges. We say farewell and the best of luck to Kim Grzybowski, Melanie Scott and Christine Pearson-Bronsch. Your contribution to the training program will always be appreciated.

The training program is quite fortunate in being able to find a successful replacement for one of the vacated instructor positions. We are pleased to welcome to our team: Melissa Hyland (photo and bio included in this newsletter).

This quarter, we will have completed a full session of ASW training, Family Support Work training in Kamloops and in Victoria, Supervisory training in Vancouver, Cultural Awareness training in Maple Ridge and Board training in Haida Gwaii.

The Training Advisory Committee was presented with a blended model for ASW training. Anne Cochran,

a dynamic and visionary consultant, worked with the Training team to brainstorm the concept of an on-line/face-to-face training program that will allow participants more diversity in their training experience while complementing the Aboriginal lens in viewing “best practices” within our First Nations and Métis communities. The TAC folks were quite receptive to the proposed model and will now bring it to the Partnership table for review. It is with much anticipation that we await approval for developing this new training format.

The training team with its newest additional staff are excited about the prospect of change. During our ASW training it has become evident how cultural practices and ceremony redesign who we are as people. It is with the utmost respect that participants engage in drumming, the sharing circle, smudging and sharing stories. These are traditional aboriginal practices that have lent to the overall health and wellness of communities. As our participants experience the value of these practices, they develop self-confidence and a level of understanding and awareness that is a must in working with families.

I am truly humbled to be on this journey with strong, courageous and supportive people.

Miigwech, Gail



Board Training in Haida Gwaii

Policy Update

Submitted by Leslie Morison

We have had an incredibly busy winter and spring here in the Program and Policy Initiatives Branch! The Policy Team has worked hard to keep up with our ever-increasing roles and responsibilities, including planning Forums, writing literature reviews and reports, providing technical support to the Directors Forum/Partnership meetings, and keeping active in many other assorted initiatives that keep emerging.

Kelly Legge continues to support the work of the Information Management portfolio. The Systems Advisory Reference Group (SARG) is presently working closely with the Integrated Case Management (ICM) team at MCFD and hosted an information gathering session with agency representatives. Through collaboration, the objective is to ensure that the ICM system can serve the needs of Delegated Aboriginal Agencies should they choose to adopt it. The system also interfaces with Cowichan Tribe's Best Practices.

Kelly also continues to support the work of the Partnership Quality Assurance Working Group towards developing a Quality Assurance Framework for Delegated Aboriginal Agencies. The Framework will be guided by the principles and values of the communities served. Thus far, the work of the group has been informed by a literature review that focuses on Indigenous and child welfare Outcomes and Quality Assurance Frameworks, a baseline survey and report on the quality assurance of Delegated Aboriginal Agencies in BC, and the Quality Assurance Visioning Session where agencies from across the province came together and collectively envisioned their framework. The Working Group also has a strong linkage with the AOPSI Redesign Initiative.

As mentioned in the Spring newsletter, Nedinska Donaldson has recently had a new portfolio added to the one she currently supports, and with that has a whole new set of commitments and work activities. In addition to the HR portfolio that she has been supporting over this past year, she now has Programs and Services as well. This is a dynamic portfolio with many corresponding working groups that fall within its scope, including Collaborative Planning and Decision Making and its offshoot Traditional Decision Making, Children and Youth with Special Needs Protocol Implementation Working Group, Child and Youth Mental Health as well as Kinship Care Advisory.

There is a great deal of work happening within the working groups. For example, CFNCS and the TDM

working group held a forum at the end of March on Musqueam territory celebrating Traditional Decision Making (see TDM Forum page 5). This forum was well attended by people from all over BC who are committed to using various traditional approaches to meet the needs of children, families and communities when it comes to children and family services.

Projects within the HR portfolio continue to move forward. The AOPSI Redesign Project has recently had a Face to Face meeting of the working group to review the standards that have been drafted to date. The project lead, Nota Bene, continues with their second round of community visits taking with them the work they have done and asking if they are heading in the right direction.

A project that emerged out of the Partnership Table from last summer is beginning to take shape. Currently, the policy team at CFNCS is working to support the development of a strategy aimed at improving education outcomes for Aboriginal children in care. The initial phase of research and identifying key stakeholders is complete and we are looking to set up an advisory group to oversee the development of a framework.

One of the initiatives that I have the privilege of working on, as a representative for the Society, is participating as a member of the International Foster Care Conference Organization Committee. This exciting International Conference is coming to Victoria from July 10–15, 2011.

To register for this conference, please log into the following link: www.ifco2011.com.

I continue to provide support to the Political Will and Finance portfolios. Under the Finance portfolio, over the last year I have worked in partnership with Aboriginal Agency Directors, MCFD and INAC as a member of the Delegation Enabling Agreement/Delegation Continuing Agreement Standardized Language Working Group. This group is working towards the development of a Master Template that Agencies can, if they opt to, use at the delegation agreements negotiating table. The template will be vetted by MCFD's legal department before completion and will be presented at the September Partnership meeting. The issues that have arisen have been tracked and will be brought forward to the appropriate portfolios/tables to manage. These issues are comparable to the ones that arise in true negotiation fettering timely resolutions.

continued page 4

Policy Update, continued

continued from page 3

Under the Finance portfolio I am also involved in providing technical support for the Federal Government's Move to Actuals for maintenance for children in care. Most recently a training session provided by Indian and Northern Affairs for Aboriginal Delegated Agencies was held in Vancouver on April 19, 2011.

For CFNCS's anniversary and Wellness Day, members of the Policy team suggested that staff create felted panels that could be sewn together into an organizational quilt. Instructor Mahsheed Hooshmand from Knotty by Nature

facilitated the felting workshop and it was a great day shared by everyone, making beautiful creations outside in the sunshine. Staff attempted to stay dry and out of the way of the Executive Director and Associate Director's shenanigans. Kelly has generously offered to sew together everyone's creative pieces for the Society quilt!

We look forward to ongoing successes with these identified initiatives and continued support for our partners in our collective efforts to improve outcomes and build capacity for children, families and communities.



Wellness Day – Mahsheed Hooshmand, Shawn, Linda and Rachelle

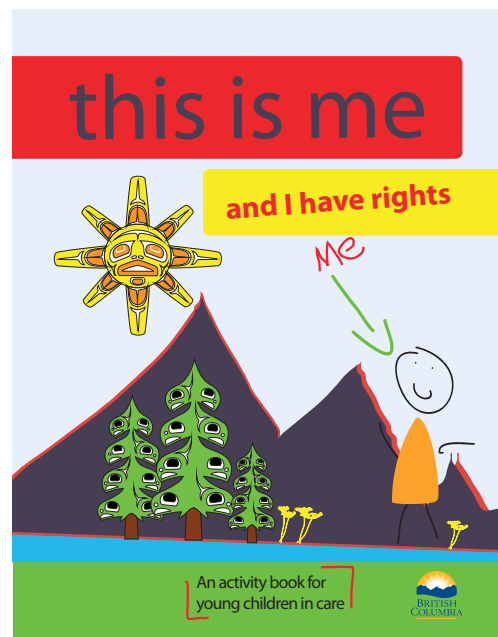


Wellness Day – Felt tapestry

This is Me and I Have Rights

This is Me and I Have Rights is a new resource that has been developed to engage children in care between the ages of three and eight to learn about their rights through a creative, supportive, and fun approach. This activity book is also for the adults who are involved in the life of a child who is in care. These adults include workers, family members, caregivers, community members, and professionals. The adults in a child's life have a shared responsibility to teach children in care about their rights and to help them understand the role that adults have in upholding their rights. This resource was designed for children and adults to do together and provides the opportunity to start a conversation with children about their rights. Depending on the age of the child, some activities are appropriate for children to do on their own. There is a strong emphasis on culture and adults are encouraged to explore cultural identity of children as they explore their rights with them. CFNCS had the opportunity to participate in the development of this publication as a member of the project advisory.

The activity book can be found on the MCFD Internet at: http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/foster/pdf/this_is_me.pdf



Traditional Decision Making Forum

Submitted by Nedinska Donaldson

Caring for First Nations Children Society (CFNCS) organized a two day forum, March 30 and 31, in Richmond, BC celebrating Traditional Decision Making in Aboriginal Child Welfare.

CFNCS was contracted by the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) to organize a forum celebrating and recognizing/reaffirming Aboriginal traditional decision making practices that are currently in use or at various stages of development throughout the province. The forum was intended as a partnership between MCFD and CFNCS with the goal of creating awareness for MCFD executives of the practice of using traditions in making decisions related to child and family well-being. The forum objectives were to:

- Celebrate and re-affirm traditional decision making
- Share best practices with peers
- Build a constituency of support for the use of Traditional Decision Making in Aboriginal Child Welfare.



To meet the objectives as identified, the PATH (Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope) process was identified as the facilitation tool. PATH was chosen because it is said to build on inclusion and diversity of participants while providing an opportunity to illustrate or chart the action plan identified by participants.

Using the PATH process, participants of the forum identified a vision for use of Traditional Decision Making, goals to achieve the vision, key partners to enlist in achieving the vision as well as strengths and first steps to take along the path to achieving the vision.

The forum was attended by community representatives, delegated agency family group conference coordinators, family group conference coordinators from MCFD, as well as Directors of Aboriginal Service Delivery Change and Executive Directors of Practice. It was hoped that targeting these individuals from MCFD would assist in creating awareness of community responses to child welfare needs as well as develop leadership within MCFD to engage with communities to support the traditional practices. Guests of the forum travelled from as far away as Fort St John, Prince Rupert, the Okanagan, East Kootenays and parts of Vancouver Island.

A key message from the forum participants included a strong desire to see sustained interest on the part of MCFD to fully support the use of Traditional Decision Making in all aspects related to delivering Child and Family Services to Aboriginal communities.

Left: Rachele Dallaire
Below: TDM - Path



Code of Conduct: Policy

Approved date: April 6, 2011

Authorized by: Linda Lucas, Executive Director

Policy: Caring for First Nations Children Society is strongly committed to modeling the highest standards of professional behavior within the Society as a whole. Every director, manager and employee shall act with respect, honesty and integrity and ensure that all actions taken by the organization meet the highest ethical standards. All employees of the Society are expected to behave on and off the job in a manner consistent with this philosophy and in a way that reflects well on the organization.

Condition: The goal of the Code of Conduct is to clarify the nature of the principles held in common by the employees of the Society and provides rules for engagement with each other in a way that promotes a respectful and professional working environment.

Rules of Engagement: Respect will always be shown towards the self; towards others; towards the Society and while in public. The employees of the Society demonstrate this through interactions with others by giving respect first by:

- Speaking and acting from their position within the Society;
- Keeping conversations focussed on the work and not the individual;
- Showing up on time;
 - For work;
 - For meetings;
- Keeping personal feelings out of the workplace;
- Minimizing expressions of anger or frustration;
 - When in disagreement by exercising control over voice tone and body language;
- Ensure people check out perceptions and ask (don't assume someone is reacting, the employees have agreed to ask each other directly to check out these perceptions);
- If a comment is made in reaction to another, employees have agreed to abide by the *5 second rule* and allow the comment to be immediately withdrawn and ignored as if it never occurred.

When in disagreement over issues, all individual employees will nevertheless show unity outside of the Society to all staff, youth, board members, funders and the public.

The employees of the Society do not engage in gossip or triangulation. Issues are to be dealt with by discussing directly with person involved as in the Conflict Resolution Agreement. When information is being shared, check intentions by asking:

- Why being told this information?
- Has this discussion taken place with people directly involved?
 - If not, ask what would it be like to have this discussion with people directly involved?
- Then, if no resolution arrived at, take the issue up the line to AD.

Disagreements and miscommunications will happen. The Lessons Learned Model to review issues is based on the principle that nothing is wrong; there are lessons to be learned when unexpected outcomes happen. Review the issue by identifying what is happening by asking these questions:

1. What's working?
2. What's not working?
3. What's missing and needs to change?

To reach resolution with other employees follow the lessons learned model. However, before doing this determine the purpose of doing lessons learned and ask **these** questions;

- How come? Ask this 5 times to get to *true north* reasons;
- What is the desired outcome?
- Are all of the relevant stakeholders here?
- Do we have control over this issue?
- Do we have a business model for this?

New Staff



Zhila Alizadeh-Borji

Zhila Alizadeh-Borji

Salom, my name is Zhila Alizadeh-Borji. I am a Persian woman, a mother of a beautiful nine-year-old daughter and a proud aunt. I am originally from Iran and came to Canada eight years ago with a business degree. I have a number of years of experience working in financial positions in Canada and am very pleased to have the opportunity to work with Caring for First Nations Children Society. I have many passions which include artistic endeavours, family values, and my work. I believe in the passion that is demonstrated by the Society in the work they do and for this, I am very appreciative to be a part of that passion and to work for such a dynamic team!

Sincerely, Zhila Alizadeh-Borji

Melissa Hyland

Greetings! My name is Melissa Hyland and I am Cree Métis from Manitoba, raised in care in BC primarily. I completed an Indigenous Social Work degree at UVic and went on to work with the Solicitor General's Office to Combat Trafficking in Persons. During my time there I had opportunity to connect with the Aboriginal community across the province teaching, doing workshops and developing curriculum that reflected the voice of the Aboriginal community on the issues of Human Trafficking. I am midway through my Masters in Education and am thrilled and honored to have the opportunity to join the instructor's team at Caring for First Nations Children Society. Here I will continue to meet with new social workers from communities across the province and together we will learn how to practice good social work policies in a respectful, honouring and culturally appropriate way. I look forward to meeting and working with you all as you come across the threshold here at CFNCS. Hai Hai



Melissa Hyland

Connie Martin



Connie Martin

My name is Connie Martin and I am a proud member of the K'omoks First Nation and a full-time student at the University of Victoria, where I am entering my final year of the BSW program (Indigenous Child Welfare Specialization). Since January I have had the pleasure of working with the CFNCS policy team as a practicum student and am very excited now to be working with the team as a part-time policy analyst. I am very much looking forward to continuing to be a part of such a dynamic and motivated team.

I have recently moved to Victoria from Vancouver, where I had the privilege of working with Aboriginal children and their families for over ten years. Having developed strong skills as a front-line service provider, working with CFNCS is helping me to develop a strong sense of how theory, policy, and practice work together, which I believe will help me in my future social work practice. I am fortunate to have the opportunity to learn both in school and at work; being part of the policy team validates my education and allows me to apply my learning in a valuable and professional context.

I am committed to continuing on this path to contribute to the good work being done by CFNCS for our Aboriginal children and their families. Much Respect, Connie Martin

Human Resource Corner

Do You Work in a High-Integrity Organization?

High-integrity, ethical leaders:

▪ **Build Values and Ethics Awareness.**

They regularly communicate and discuss the organization's shared values, operating principles, and ethical standards – making sure they are understood, supported, and accepted at all levels.

▪ **Hold People Accountable.**

They hold themselves and others accountable for ethical behaviour. And they have zero-tolerance for values violations because they know that “one bad apple can spoil the bunch.”

▪ **Lead by Example.**

They recognize that they earn the right to expect others to perform with integrity when they themselves “walk the talk.”

▪ **Use Values to Drive Decisions.**

They apply the organization's values and guiding principles when making decisions – whether big and strategic, or small and seemingly insignificant. They realize that ethics are displayed in everything we do, and everything we do counts.

▪ **Ensure In-Sync Policies and Practices.**

They make sure that rules and standards support the organization's values and ethics at every level. And, should an ethical dilemma occur, they welcome the opportunity to resolve the issue quickly and without fear of reprisal.

▪ **Pay Attention to Perceptions.**

They pay close attention to the feelings, opinions, and reactions of their colleagues, their employees, the customers they serve, and everyone in their circle of influence. They realize that perceptions ARE reality when it comes to ethics and integrity.

▪ **Hire and Promote Ethical People.**

They use the organization's mission, vision, and values as criteria for hiring and promotion decisions. And, they ONLY select those individuals who believe in these principles and who behave with integrity.

Source: www.walkthetalk.com

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