



The Networker

Events and Updates

Volume 6, Issue 5

October, 2007

**The Manitoba
Foster Family
Network Inc.**

Foster Parent Support Meetings

Joanne Thornhill and a number of foster parents held a support meeting in Steinbach. Although the meeting was small, it was a success! She is looking at holding more support meetings in that area. The support group is considering having a morning coffee time instead of an evening meeting. If you are interested or would like more information, please contact Joanne at 940-1281.

Support Group Meeting

We have planned another Supper Club meeting for Winnipeg foster parents. It will be on November 6, 2007 at 6:30pm. The location will be Jonny G's (177 McDermot). If you feel like getting out and meeting other foster parents, give it a try. If you would like more information, or to RSVP before November 1st, please contact Joanne at 940-1281.

If you are part of a group in the Interlake, (no matter how informal) or if you want to form a group or if you feel all alone in fostering and would like to meet with other people in your area that foster, give Lisa a call at 940-1282.

Foster Fathers met for the first of what will hopefully be many meetings throughout the province. All men involved in fostering are welcome. Please call Kevin Koroscil (772-4513) or Scott Wiebe (586-9312) if you have any questions.

October 21 to 27 is Foster Family Week with the minister's proclamation at the MFFN office on the 22nd at noon. It is a time when we as Child Welfare agencies honour and acknowledge the work you as foster parents do day-in, day-out, every day (and night) of the year. Our office is planning to have an afternoon of fun and cake beginning at 11:00! Please call 940-1280 to register for the draw before the 25th. Prizes will include a quilt and two 2008 Conference package for two including accommodations. Draw will be held on October 26th. Winners will be contacted by phone on October 29, 2007.

LUNCH AND LEARN!! The MFFN's Education Committee has set up two free workshops for foster parents and respite workers. These will be held from 11:00am to 2:00pm. The first will be held on November 1st and Lisa Moxam will be presenting "How to talk to your kids about sex without mumbling.". The second will be held November 8 and will be about "Drugs". Lisa would like your input on which drugs in particular you would like to discuss so please call her at 940-1282 to let her know and to register. Please bring a bag lunch to the MFFN office and we will provide the beverages.

2008 Canadian/Provincial Conference.

The MFFN is proud to announce that in addition to our annual provincial conference, in 2008 we will also be hosting the National conference for all Foster Family associations across Canada. They will be held in Winnipeg and the theme of the conferences is "It Takes A Village...". Registration will begin on November 1st, 2007. Please call 940-1280 to register. For more information, check out our website at www.mffn.ca.



Just a re-
minder to
turn back
your
clocks on
November
4th!!!

ADHD Basics

Fall/WINTER 2007 – Two evenings 7-9pm

This course, taught over two evenings and discusses ADHD characteristics, diagnosis, and treatment. It will also deal with issues including the impact that a diagnosis of ADHD has on the individual, family and school. Some information strategies will also be provided.

Parents, professionals, adults and other interested individuals welcome.

The cost per course is \$20.00 and is payable at the first class. Subsidies available if needed. Location and time for both courses: Herzing College 723 Portage at Mcgee. For more info call 204-774-1821 ext.11



FAFAM is pleased to announce that we will be hosting our Monthly Workshop Series at our new office. Workshops will be held the second Wednesday of each month from 7:00-9:00 pm, 3rd Floor, 555 Broadway Avenue West at Good Street. Workshops are open to parents, caregivers, and service providers. Anyone who is interested in learning more about FASD is welcome. There is no registration fee and child care is provided to those who have registered. In order to register please contact Razan at FAFAM 786-1847 or toll free 866-890-1402.

Free parking is available to the first nine guests off Good Street in the lot behind the building in the stalls marked MFFN. There is also street parking on Good Street. The entrance to our office is on Good Street. Take the elevator to the 3rd Floor.



FOSTER FAMILY BOOK

In recognition of the unique family experience which is that of every foster family, the Manitoba Foster Family Network will be publishing a compilation of stories. All members of foster families are invited to submit inspirational stories from your lives in a foster family - narratives, stories, art, poems or *whatever form* your story-telling takes!

Consideration will be given to all entries, but only items selected for inclusion will be contacted. All submissions become the property of the MFFN. The Network reserves the right to edit for suitable content and to assure the confidentiality of all parties.

Entries can be submitted to stories@mts.net. Questions or requests for more information may be directed to Lisa at 940-1282.

For a sample story, please see the back page.

THANKS FROM PEER SUPPORT
COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON

KATHY BRUNEAU

Thank you to the faithful and committed Peer Support Providers who continue to offer assistance to the foster parents of Manitoba. As Peer Support Providers you are making a difference in the lives of families throughout Manitoba. The Program is moving forward and we would like to invite anyone interested in becoming a Peer Support Provider to contact Sally Tully at 223-0422 or Kathy Bruneau at 728-2981. We are looking for foster par-

ents from the South Region at this time.

If any foster parents throughout Manitoba request assistance please contact the Network or the Peer Support Line and one of our trained Peer Support Providers will respond.

Winnipeg Peer Support Line 231-0391

Toll Free Line 1-866-940-7337

MFFN Phone Line 940-1280

ALL THE BEST;

KATHY BRUNEAU

Clothing Exchange – How do you pay, you ask? YOU DON'T!! That's right, our clothes are absolutely free for the taking. Our clothing exchange is a monthly event, made possible by the efforts of Bev Johnson and Phyllis Davis. It takes place on the third Thursday of each month right in our office at 555 Broadway. It is a time of great conversation, great finds and a great way to connect. The next clothing exchange dates are: October 18, November 15 and December 2 from 10:00 to 2:00

CRT Institute presents: DE-ESCALATING POTENTIALLY VIOLENT SITUATIONS: Topics covered include, Dynamics of anger and violence, Phases of aggression, Warning signs of potentially violent situations, Defusing techniques and Coping skills in post-violent situations. This workshop will be held November 5th and 6th in Winnipeg. For more information, call 1-877-353-3205 or email: info@ctrinstitute.com

CRT Institute presents: SUICIDE PREVENTION, INTERVENTION AND POSTVENTION STRATEGIES: Topics covered include: Suicide intervention techniques, Conditions that lead to suicide, Warning signs of suicide, Cluster suicidal behaviour, How suicide has a different impact than other deaths. This workshop will be held December 4th and 5th in Winnipeg. For more information, call 1-877-353-3205 or email: info@crtinstitute.com

NON-VIOLENT CRISIS INTERVENTION COURSE:

The MFFN will be holding another NVCi course on November 13, 14, 20 and 21 from 6:00 to 9:00pm. Cathy Wiebe will be presenting and it will be held at the MFFN office on the 3rd Floor of 555 Broadway Avenue. This is a certificate course and the cost will be \$20.00 to cover the cost of books. If you are interested in attending, please call Shawna at 940-1280 to register.

The Manitoba Foster Family Network Inc.

3rd Floor-555 Broadway Avenue
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3C 0W4

Phone: 204-940-1280
Fax: 204-940-1283
Toll Free: 1-866-458-5650
Email: manfost@mts.net

Empowering Manitoba's Foster Parents!

Check Out Our Website!

www.mffn.ca



Candace Seymour		
Executive Director	940-1285	director.mffn@mts.net
Jessica Askin		
South CDW	223-9050	jsaskin@mts.net
Lisa Moxam		
Interlake CDW	940-1282	cdinterlake.mffn@mts.net
Joanne Thornhill		
Winnipeg CDW	940-1281	cdwinnipeg.mffn@mts.net
Sally Tully		
Peer Support Coordinator	223-0422	peersupport.mffn@mts.net
Danika Jones		
Accounting	940-1284	accounting.mffn@mts.net
Shawna Normand		
Admin. Assistant	940-1280	manfost@mts.net

Fostering Stories

Jim's Job

Jim was very excited about his new job. The business was just starting out with three partners. They were brothers that Jim had already dubbed *'the three amigos'*. Jim liked the fact he was given complete creative control -- at first. Understanding that it would likely be more work in the beginning until things stabilized, he felt it would be worth it. Jim didn't even mind that he had to be on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week, just as long as his hours were flexible. Another very important bonus for Jim was that he could have his own two kids at work with him.

His hours were not so flexible. Of the three "partners", the younger one Carl, proved to be very demanding and immature. Every time Carl wanted something done he literally screamed his wishes at Jim. Sure, the place got loud and it was necessary to raise one's voice at times, but screaming appeared to be natural for Carl.

Carl came to like Jim a lot. Strangely this made him even more demanding. Jim found if he catered a bit to Carl's emotional needs he could be more agreeable. Still, not three hours went by without Carl calling Jim with another "errand"; all day, all evening, and unfortunately during the long graveyard hours. This was wearing on Jim as he became sleep deprived. Jim remembered that sleep deprivation had been used on war prisoners as torture, and he

set his jaw against letting it get to him.

The other partners were no help. They couldn't handle their own affairs either, never mind work operations. That was his job. He regularly had to step in to straighten their messes, while being careful not to demean them. Their personalities were unlike anything he was used to dealing with. Becoming immersed in the dynamics of the partners' behavior, Jim's own children began acting out as well. It was difficult to get any work matters attended to while having to look after the three amigos' debacles and his own children. Everything seemed to be falling apart. Jim didn't see how anyone could do this job well -- why anyone would do this job?

His friends were no help. "Dude, just get a regular 9 to 5. Then you can come home after and kick your feet up. No worries." Jim cringed a little inside. He had already switched job roles with his wife when he had become a stay-at-home dad. She made a point of 'kicking up her feet' when she got home, just like he'd always done. Jim honestly had thought he'd be able to do everything necessary before 5:30, then be able to relax too. He wasn't used to being so wrong. Unable to admit he needed help, he'd become overwhelmed. That part had been his own fault.

Maybe this was his fault too. Maybe he wasn't as knowledgeable as he figured. Maybe he was so sleep deprived his perspective was affected. He needed a weekend off, or a holiday or something. Just one morning to sleep in! He had lost a sense of his self. Still Jim was not

a quitter.

Jim was teetering on the edge of quitting. He was going to call it "self preservation". Googling his job, he found the burn out rate was averaged at one year. Oddly that made him feel better. He wasn't alone. Perhaps it was time to admit he was in trouble.

Jim decided to turn to a higher power for help. He called *the partners'* social worker, Roxanne. Finding his difficulties were common amongst foster parents, Roxanne helped Jim learn some behavior strategies. Some Respite was also available, especially for newborn babies like Carl. As well Jim found help from foster parents that offer peer support specifically for fostering sibling groups.

Jim had always excelled at every other job he'd had. Since becoming a stay-at-home dad his first lesson had been that "woman's work" was highly under-rated. His second lesson was that fostering was doubly so. It's a job that takes a particular character which he hoped to develop into. Good thing he loved a challenge.

More over, he now couldn't imagine his little 3 amigos being anywhere else out there. The idea of it literally scared him. 'So that's how they hook you into this crazy job,' he thought.

Fin