

The Networker

Manitoba Foster Family Network

June 2007

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Executive Director's Letter

Hi everyone.

As I sit at the table of the National Conference of foster family associations I'm reminded of the importance of being supported. The Network is supported by this national organization by linking us with similar groups from across Canada and it has become apparent to me that up until this point we've underutilized this support system. It certainly helps to know there are

people out there who have similar challenges and have overcome similar obstacles.

Support is also important for foster families. Foster parents play a key role in ensuring the needs of children in care are being met which is no small undertaking!

At the Network we strive to be supportive to all foster families in Manitoba by connecting foster parents with the larger fostering community. If

you have ideas as to how we can better support you we would love for you to share them with us. Use us...we're here for you.

Have a great summer!

Candace Seymour



President's Message

Welcome to summer. Last weekend was the MFFN's provincial conference and what a conference it was. A group of about 90 foster parents gathered for learning and lots of laughter. What I learned at the conference was how many foster parents like to perform. Karaoke brings out best in all of us. Now that

the conference is completed, a delegation of 4 foster parents is on our way to BC to the Canadian Foster Family Conference held in Richmond, BC. For anyone that has not heard, the conference of 2008 will be hosted by Manitoba so we are definitely going there to learn, with a sprinkling of fun. Once back, school will be

winding down and summer will be revving up. For me that means long, hot days at the lake with my children at my side. How about for you? Hopefully your summer is fun filled and as long or short as you would like it to be. Have a great summer and I look forward to seeing lots of you at the MFFN open house on June 21.

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For an Interesting "view" of the 2007 Conference...

Please feel free to stop by our Open House on June 21st to see the poster of all the fun had at the Conference.

More information on the Open House can be found on page 5

Southern Connection

It has been a busy spring for staff at the Manitoba Foster Family Network. I was pleased to be able to attend our Annual Conference and Annual General Meeting in Gimli in May and to meet many foster parents, and re-connect with some I have not seen in some time. It was a pleasure to sit back and watch foster parents connect with one another over common challenges and joys.

Boundary Trails Foster Fam-

ily Association meets the second Thursday of every month during the school year. For more information call Gerry Giesbrecht, at 343-2033. Our apologies for the error in our last newsletter!

Westman Foster Family Association continues to be alive and well in Brandon. For more information contact Kathy Bruneau at 728-2981.

Next month, June 19, there will be a Foster Parent Recruitment Fair in Brandon. For more details check out our website, www.mffn.ca, or contact Jody Van Daele at 727-8540. For each potential recruit you bring - you will receive one ballot for the door prize draw!

Jessica Askin

Interlake Bit's N Pieces

Our conference in Gimli May 11, 12 & 13th was a resounding success. We had about 100 participants. Previously untapped talent made their debut appearances during Karaoke following our AGM on Friday. Drs Len Greenwood and Sally Longstaffe facilitated interesting and educational workshops on attachment on Saturday. Musical entertainment was the highlight of Saturday evening provided by John Anthony and Jack Olsen from New Directions. This was followed by a relaxing fire pit

gathering. Sunday morning we connected with Elder Mae Louise Campbell and Aboriginal Teacher Bill Crompton. They provided us with some cultural teachings as well as a historical perspective. Many thanks to all who attended – It was great getting to know you. I feel my batteries have been fully charged and I am ready to tackle another year with enthusiasm. My goal over the next year is to more effectively connect with those of you fostering in the Interlake and the South. If you are looking to

The 2007 Provincial Conference entitled "Fostering Our Families" was a resounding success!

form an association or if you would like to meet other people in your area why not give me a call and we can set something up? I would love to travel to wherever you are – I'll even bring muffins!

HORSEMEN TO TRAVEL ACROSS COUNTRY TO RAISE AWARENESS FOR FETAL ALCOHOL SYNDROME.

The journey is called FASDrive. The purpose is to raise funds and consciousness for the disorder that has affected so many of our nation's children. This issue is present in the day-to-day living of many foster families and we, as a group, need to show our support. We would like to show our appreciation to this cause by planning something special when they come to Winnipeg.

They are scheduled to stop in Birds Hill Park on the afternoon of July 8, 2007. We want to greet them in a big way. The most important thing is your participation. We are in the initial stages of planning, but ideas include a bonfire and wiener roast. We hope to have children's entertainment. The "Timmie's" truck will be there to make sure we have plenty of hot coffee.

We would like to gather around 3:00 pm. We will instruct the gatekeepers as to our exact location. Just make it to the park and they will direct you. The more people we can congregate, the more support we'll show the travelers.

If you, or someone you know is affected by FASD, please join us. If you have ideas for the event, or time to help out, please contact the Network. We would love your input.

Winnipeg Grapevine

I have been CDW of the Winnipeg region for 3 months now and I feel a little guilty. I have been putting the majority of my time and effort into the city of Winnipeg. Having the office right in the city makes it hard sometimes to look beyond its parameters to the rural communities. You have not been forgotten, rural Manitoba!!

I, along with Winnipeg area board member, Sharon Joyal am hitting the open roads. Our goal is to help organize support groups throughout Manitoba. We have been told that foster parents sometimes feel isolated. Not everyone understands why you do what you do. Wouldn't it be great

to be in a room full of people that just get it? Wouldn't it be nice to have the ability to say what's on your mind, and not feel judged? Wouldn't it be great to pick the brain of a colleague for advice on a tricky situation? We would be sharing stories, resources, ideas, and most certainly a lot of laughs. Please check out the August issue of the Networker for dates and locations. We are having an Open House. You are invited!!

WHO: Manitoba Foster Family Network

WHEN: June 21, 2007

TIME: 3:00 – 6:00 pm

WHERE: 555 Broadway Avenue

WHY??? So you can check out our "new" office and meet the staff. There will be refreshments and fun stuff to do. Come early and check out our final Clothing Exchange before summer. Clothing Exchange runs from 10:00 – 2:00 on the same day.

I hope you all have an enjoyable summer.

Joanne Thornhill

Peer Support Program

The Peer Support Providers recently participated in the MFFN Conference that took place in Gimli, Manitoba from May 11th to 13th. They were able to present some of the highlights from their first year as Peer Support Providers. The foster parents were very enthusiastic about the Program and we have seen much success during the past year, with more than 55 intakes. This growth has been made possible through the efforts of Kathy Bruneau, who has worked for six years with the Peer Support Committee.

As a result of the terrific response to the Peer Support Program, we will be undertaking our second

phase of recruitment and welcome you to contact Sally at 223-0422 if you wish to explore this further.

If you require assistance with your foster care needs, please contact us by calling 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 Peer Support Line
1-866-940-7337

MFFN Phone Line
940-1280

Remember, please contact Sally at 223-0422 if you are interested in becoming a Peer Support Provider. The excellent training that you will receive and your willingness to assist other foster parents in a supportive role is an opportunity that is worth the investment.

Sally Tully

Call for further information on our Peer Support Program and How to Become a Peer Support Provider!

We are going on a Summer Holiday

No more working for a week or two...

You just heard these words from your social worker. Your first reaction might be to feel a wave of panic. What happens if you need to reach them? 2 weeks is a long time to wait to have a problem sorted out.

It turns out that when your social worker goes on holiday, they do not leave you high and dry. With careful planning, the time that he/she takes away from the office can go by smoothly.

Ask your social worker at the beginning of summer when they are planning to

take their holidays. Then you won't feel surprised when the day comes. Ask them who will be covering their case load and how

“My worker is on Summer Holidays...What do I do?”

outside of office hours. Each call is assessed. If it is non emergent, you may need to call back during regular office hours. If it cannot wait, they will help

that person can be reached.

Remember there is an after hours number that can be reached

you find the resources you need. There is also the youth emergency crisis stabilization system. This is the number to call for emergencies.

Included in this section is a pull out sheet with these important numbers on it. You can personalize it with your pertinent information. The top half can be placed by the phone so it is readily available. The bottom section can be folded and put in your wallet. If you need another copy, please feel free to photocopy it. Or ask at the office and another one will be made available to you.

Did you know?

If a child in your care intentionally damages your belongings/property, there is the “Intentional Damage Compensation Plan” in place to help. You would be expected to pay the deductible, but the rest would be covered for you. You have one year to apply and the form would be submitted on your behalf by your caseworker. Please note: Ordinary wear and tear is not covered.

Imagine . . .

John Lennon may have sung “Imagine” and encouraged us to see the world in a peace state instead of the usual war or fear-based state we find it in. John likely didn’t have to deal with children that are out of control, bored, or clinging to you like the Virginia creeper growing outside the front yard. And even if he did, he probably paid someone else to handle it. Obviously our concern for John Lennon’s parenting skills isn’t the issue here. Actually, John was right about one thing: the imagination is one of our greatest tools.

Regardless of where we might be at as parents, our imagination can help us get creative and resolve many problems. The key to successful imagining is concentrating on what we *want* and less on what ‘is’ or what we don’t want. Our thoughts are the most powerful manifestation tool we possess. It can make or break us in any given moment and ultimately creates our future, not just for ourselves but also for the children we

support and raise. So, be careful what you wish for is the phrase that comes to mind. Where do we then allow our thoughts to wonder?

Do we think about what others said that annoyed us and stew about it for hours, or even days? Or, alternatively do we reflect on the things we are grateful for and the abilities we all have and the wonderful connection we experience? All things change when we do and that change starts with our thoughts. We can move from lack and dis-ability or dis-ease, to gratitude and the abundance mentality simply by choosing a different thought consistently.

Once we have thoughts, we can apply correlating actions and begin to change our lives. We must do it consistently and we must find others who do the same. The people in our lives are mirrors. Whoever is in our lives feeds us in some way or depletes us. Our choices (which begin in thought format) are the catalyst that brings

forth the kind of changes all of long for. When things aren’t going according to plan or smoothly, asking ourselves, “what are we thinking?” is a good question.

If we want the kind of summer that will give us lazy days that release the stress, active days that renew and revive us, or a combination of both, let’s imagine what that might look like. It’ll be different for each of us. What memories do we want to have in our hearts after it’s over? Albert Einstein said that “imagination is greater than knowledge” and most would agree he was gifted with both. We are all gifted with both. Perhaps we don’t feel it to the same extent that Albert did. That needn’t be a reason to stop us from doing it though. In our mind’s eye see it, feel it, experience it. Let’s all let our imagination fly and create the best summer ever.

Rose Flaig

Community Living Manitoba

MFFN OPEN HOUSE!!

The MFFN will be holding their annual Open House at the MFFN office on June 21st, 2007. It will be held from 3:00pm to 6:00pm. We look forward to seeing everyone there. Some highlights include:

- **Scavenger Hunts**
- **Clown**
- **Kid's Craft Table**
- **Door Prizes**
- **Food**

Please contact Shawna at 940-1280 for more information or to register. Also, please feel free to come early (between 10:00 and 2:00) to see our clothing exchange!

Conference notice:

Oct 1 & 2, 2007 is the Community Information and Referral Conference.

It will be held at the Delta Hotel in Winnipeg

The theme is “Youth, Communities and Volunteering.” There will be an exploration about how we can meet the needs of youth in our communities

More info can be obtained on their website at www.informcanada.ca

Empowering Our Little Sisters

- A mentorship and empowerment program created by Aboriginal women for Aboriginal girls.
- It is delivered in partnership with Big Brothers Big Sisters of Winnipeg and other community assets.
- It represents the coming together of Aboriginal women to reclaim and nurture our young girls - our life givers – as they journey toward womanhood.
- Through mentorship, role modeling and hands on learning, Empowering Our Little Sisters provides a coordinated and holistic response to meeting the needs of female Aboriginal children, youth and their families.

Want more info? The website is:
www.empoweringsisters.com

Call **Lacquie Lylyk**, Program coordinator 988-9203
or jacquie@bigwinnipeg.com

St Amant Centre is offering a training opportunity for people connected to adults with developmental and intellectual disabilities. “Literacy for Life: Learning in the Community” is a tutor training program for assisting adults with intellectual disabilities to develop their literacy skills.

The program consists of 8 classroom sessions and 7, 2-hour practicum experiences. Each student tutor will receive a certificate of completion.

The course runs from Oct 18-Dec 13.

For more information contact **Alyson Bulloch** 258-7049

“There is nothing out there for me”. How many times have you heard a youth say that? What is sad is that it is so *far* from the truth. There is a program, a service, a group, an agency or just someone ‘out there’ to meet your needs.

Partners@ 510 Selkirk is a storefront office on Selkirk Ave. that serves as a **signpost to services** – pointing you in the direction you want to go and letting you know what supports lay down the road. Guardians, parents and youth themselves can find information about programs on health, recreation, counseling, starting a business, employment, training and on and on – everything from homework clubs to how to how to find a family doctor – from finding job to parenting programs.

Partners@ 510 Selkirk produces a handy pocket size Guide to Winnipeg for Aboriginal Newcomers and makes it available free of charge to anyone.

The office at 510 Selkirk Ave is open from 8:30 to 4:30 Monday – Friday or you can just call and ask for **Roberta** at 945 0447 and she can help you find ‘what you are looking for’.

I just wanted to let you know that **Knowles Centre** is pleased and proud to be offering a level 1 foster parent training program for 10 weeks commencing in September. The training will be offered weekly for 3 hours per night and is going to be very interesting and informative. Foster parents will receive a level 1 training certificate. If any foster parents know respite workers or others who may be interested in fostering they can contact me, **Andrea McKenzie** at 339-1951 to inquire further, with no obligation. Those who are serious candidates to foster for Knowles may participate in the training program. I would like to stress that we are looking for people who are not currently fostering with another organization in an effort to provide new beds to the already overloaded system

Métis Child, Family and Community Services in Brandon is looking for foster homes! We are in need of teen homes, homes that could accommodate a sibling group, as well as an “emergency only” resource. If you or someone you know would like more information, please call **Jody Van Daele** at (204) 727-8540.

THE MEN HAVE IT!

What a weekend we had in Gimli at the AGM conference for MFFN. The men seemed to have formed some solid relationships on this Mother's day weekend. Friday night was the beginning of the strong bonds being formed and through strong leadership by Scott Wiebe many of us found our inner voices and sang out for all to hear on the wonderful Karaoke machine. Duo's, trio's, Quartets and even a few solo's were heard and a good time had by all.

On Saturday morning Dr. Leonard Greenwood spoke to all on Attachment and how it affects all of us. After a wonderful lunch we broke off into a men's and women's group and Dr. Greenwood sat with the men while Dr. Sally Longstaffe joined the women. I cannot speak on behalf of the women's afternoon but the bonding and sharing and respect shown in the men's after-

noon was amazing. Dr. Greenwood shared his knowledge from a clinical perspective while the men shared ideas and perspectives from their own lives.

The result of the afternoon showed all of us that a need to have the men being able to connect with other men who understand what we are going through because they are foster dads was necessary. We took a list of all interested parties and our plan began to form. Our goal will be to begin in Winnipeg and create a time for the foster fathers to meet and share, whether it is to laugh, cry, and resolve issues or just to take a break from being a foster dad and get to talk with others who understand what we are going through. Some talk was also about the use of ceremonies such as a sweat lodge just for men. We also recognized that the men in rural settings need this same opportunity so ways to include them

were discussed and many felt a group going out to different towns for an evening was not only do-able but sounded fun. Further discussions continued and thoughts were shared of having a father and son or daughter days which including favorite fishing holes and or other activities together.

I strongly encourage any and all foster fathers to contact MFFN or my self if they feel they would like to contribute to these thoughts and or participate in them. We recognized the need and our hope is to strengthen your ability to be the best possible foster dad you can be by sharing, learning, laughing and singing out together.

Respectfully,

Kevin Koroscil

Board Member South Region

772-4513 or 389-4380

THANK YOU! THANK YOU!! THANK YOU!!!

We would like to extend a special thank you to the following people and businesses that donated items for our conference:

- ↳ Shawano Consulting
- ↳ Christie Cookies
- ↳ Sid Seymour
- ↳ Schmeckers Restaurant
- ↳ Candace Seymour
- ↳ Keystone Ford
- ↳ Donna Harris Kirby
- ↳ Sharon Joyal
- ↳ Cathy Wiebe
- ↳ Donna Charlette
- ↳ Kevin Koroscil
- ↳ Sandy Smith
- ↳ Cosmic Tools
- ↳ Mary-Anne Hart
- ↳ T-Mac Auto Services
- ↳ Curves for Women
- ↳ Natural Essentials
- ↳ Interlake CFS (Bette Far-gusson/Serena Stier)
- ↳ Human Bean
- ↳ Revitalize Soul Spa
- ↳ Agnes Jonsin
- ↳ Bo Min So Therapies
- ↳ Pure Energy
- ↳ Bernadette Koroscil

Thank you to Hon Gord MacIntosh for his generous donation toward our AGM dinner

Thank-You, Thank-you, Thank-you to all the volunteers, staff, and board members that contributed your time and boundless energy toward making this conference a success!

**Manitoba Foster Family
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We're On The Web!
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- Empowering Manitoba's Foster Parents!

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FAFAM Annual General Meeting - Volunteer Appreciation Reception and Open House

It's that time of year again when we gather together to celebrate our accomplishments, thank outgoing board members for their dedicated service, and elect new board members. This year we are hosting a three-in-one event. Join us at our new location for an open house beginning at 3:00. At 6:00 we will serve dinner and begin the AGM business. At 7:30 the volunteer appreciation reception will commence.

Volunteers are the heart and soul

of our organization and we are pleased to be able to recognize the gifts and talents of those who have given of their time and talent to help us meet our goals. Volunteers being honoured include, Jim and Marian Feakes, Donna and Neil Ames, Cathy and Scott Wiebe, Jennifer Woznesensky, Allison Chatterley, Laura Morton, Anne Molgat, Dale Kendel, Heather and Charles Garton, Eileen Davidson, Gwendolyn Kydd, Estelle Horton, Roberta Topp, Lucas

Nasekapow, Carl, Carmen Rodriguez, Connie Claeys, George Lohnes, Bev Eastcott, Val Surbey, Dorothy Schwab, Susan Opie, Shelley Proven, Paula Cook, Brian Bjorklund, Theresa Larabie, Anita Posaluko, Dan Neault, Isabel Villa, Tana Lyng, Mel Claeys and Jen Claeys.

If you are planning to attend the AGM dinner and/or volunteer reception, please telephone us at 786-1847 by June 13 to reserve a seat.