



# OKANAGAN FOSTER PARENTS ASSOCIATION

## ANNUAL REPORT - 2008

*This document is a companion document to Attachment 1.1  
Support to Family Care Network- 2008  
Quarterly Summary Report of Services Provided- Okanagan Foster Parents Association*

**The Okanagan Foster Parents Association supports caregivers through a wide range of services. The primary goals are to provide information and education, as well as opportunities to build and strengthen relationships and to develop skills. Foster Parents in our region continue to be committed to meeting the difficult needs of the children in their care. We have been honored to provide support services to Foster Parents in our area. Foster families are committed to improving the lives of children and youth of our community. We commend them for their devotion and commitment!**

### ***Background***

*The Okanagan Foster Parents Association (OFPA) was formed in 2002 in response to the need to restructure support services to Family Care Homes in the Okanagan. OFPA is funded by Ministry of Children and Family Development to provide support services to Foster Parents in the Okanagan, Similkameen and Shuswap. The Okanagan Foster Parents Association is a consumer-driven, community based organization and is cross-cultural. In June 2007, support services in the Shuswap area were added to our contract.*

### ***The Okanagan Foster Parents Association***

- *Provides support services to caregivers in the Okanagan, Shuswap and Similkameen who have a family care home agreement with MCFD and CLBC.*
- *Develops and facilitates support groups for family caregivers in the Okanagan, Shuswap and Similkameen*
- *Assists MCFD in recruitment and retention of family care home caregivers*
- *Provides education and training for family caregivers in the Okanagan, Shuswap and Similkameen*
- *Provides an avenue for identification and resolution of issues common to caregivers, in partnership with MCFD and CLBC.*

### ***The philosophy of the Okanagan Foster Parents Association is:***

*Foster Families are a key component of the Family Care Home system in British Columbia. Caregivers need a variety of support services and educational opportunities in order to meet the physical, emotional, cultural, and spiritual needs of children and youth in care. As an organization of caregivers the Okanagan Foster Parents Association recognizes the need to be flexible in meeting the ever-changing needs of caregivers, the children/youth who they care for, and their families.*

### **Board of Directors-2008- Okanagan Foster Parents Association:**

- President- Bonnie Thompson- Oliver, BC
- Vice President- Jessica Macfarlane- Kelowna, BC
- Treasurer- Gerry Schalm- Penticton, BC
- Secretary- John Musgrave- Oliver, BC
- Melanie Filiatrault- Kelowna, BC
- Pat Monahan, Oliver, BC
- Grant Smith-Salmon Arm, BC

**Foster Parent Coordinators-2008:**

- North Okanagan -Noelle Typusiak
- Central Okanagan -Joan Kirkbride
- South Okanagan/ Similkameen -Betty Bogyo
- Shuswap area- Kathi Fischer, Judy Flintoff

The Coordinators, with the Team Leaders from the respective Resources offices, develop and coordinate services to suit the needs of each area. This report will provide a brief summary of the activities in each area. The Shuswap had 2 Coordinators this year, Kathi Fischer, Jan-Sept, and Judy Flintoff, Oct-Dec.



**OFPA Board members and Coordinators at the BCFFPA AGM, Sun Peaks 2008**  
Back row: Left to Right- Grant Smith, Jessica Macfarlane, Joan Kirkbride, Betty Bogyo  
Front Row: Noelle Typusiak, Melanie Filiatrault, Bonnie Thompson  
Missing: Gerry Schalm, John Musgrave, Pat Monahan, Kathi Fisher

## 1. Communication

Communication is provided to caregivers through regular newsletters and group emails. These newsletters and emails provide information about upcoming educational and social events. Relevant information on community events is also advertised. We liaise with a wide number of community groups to keep updated about what is available in the community. Peer groups, Foster Parent meetings, workshops and social events provide opportunities for caregivers to meet and network amongst themselves.

Times per year	N. Okanagan	C. Okanagan	S. Okanagan Similkameen	Shuswap	Totals
<b>Newsletters</b>	13 (1700)	6 (1159)	7 (705)	3 (171)	29 newsletters (3735 total)
<b>Group E-mail news</b>	244	184	143	No data	571 group emails sent
<b>Social Events</b>	12	4	5	2	23 social events *.
<b>FP local meetings</b>	8 FP Assoc meetings	9 FP Assoc meetings	8 Safe Babies meetings	Shuswap FP Assoc. meets regularly	Meetings held in each area
<b>Meetings with MCFD (Resource team meetings)</b>	Attended whenever available – usually 3 per month	Attended bi-weekly – then monthly	Attended every second week, once monthly in summer	Attended on request	Coordinators meet regularly with Resources teams
<b>Partnership meetings</b>	-MCFD Partnership mtgs -CIC Committee -Aboriginal Partnership -CLBC Partnership -FP Mtg with SD 22	-MCFD/ FP partnership have resumed -System of Care committee -Community Partners meeting	2 partnership meetings	2 partnership meetings	Partnership meetings are being held in all areas

Our Coordinators, Joan, Noelle and Betty continue to provide wonderful support services to caregivers in the Okanagan. Our Coordinator in Salmon Arm is new, having started in October. Judy is learning quickly and is a pleasant addition to our staff. Our relationship with MCFD staff continues in a spirit of shared vision and teamwork. Together, we provide support services that meet the needs of our Foster parents and MCFD. Coordinators consult with Team Leaders and develop detailed work plans to guide the direction of services provided.

We assist the local Foster Parent Associations as needed and liaise with provincial fostering associations, the BCFFPA and the FAFP.

\*Social events occurred in each area. Some were MCFD Appreciation events, some were parties planned and hosted by Foster Parent Associations and some were hosted by OFPA. We advertised and promoted the events and attended most of them.

Learning to put out fires  
Vernon



Okanagan Foster Parent Association Barbecue- Kelowna

## **Web site [www.okfosterparents.ca](http://www.okfosterparents.ca)**

Our website has a vast amount of information for foster parents to access online. It is continually updated and more features have been added. We have seen the use double over the past year, from 225 visits per month by unique visitors (separate visitors, not including repeat visits) to a high of 500 unique visitors in one month. We received nearly 1000 visits in one month.

Some information that can be found on the website:

- Coming events, by area
- Current and previous newsletters
- FAQ- on a variety of pertinent fostering topics
- Becoming a Foster Parent
- Library lists
- Important web links



## **Community liaison**

Foster Parent Coordinators work closely with community partners in their areas, especially:

**South Okanagan-** FASD Family Support Worker, ARC Programs, Child & Youth Mental Health, Youth Probation, Penticton & District Community Resource Society, South Okanagan Boys & Girls Club, CLBC, OSNS Child Development Centre, Infant development Centre, En'owkin Centre, BCFFPA, Federation of Aboriginal Foster Parents Association, Adoptive Families Association, Ooknakane Friendship Centre, Penticton Public Health.

**Central Okanagan-** Child and Youth Mental Health, Special Needs Adoption Program (SNAP), Ki-low-na Friendship Society, Okanagan Metis Children & Family Services, Building Healthy Families, Lake Country Native Association, Federation of Aboriginal Foster Parents Association, The Bridge Family Services, Okanagan Boys and Girls Club, Community Living BC and Community Connections, BCFFPA, System of Care committee, Adoptive Families Association, Central Okanagan Child Development Association, Interior Health Authority- Public Health Unit, CATCH Community Network, ARC Programs, Aboriginal Partnership Committee, Kelowna Alcohol and Drug Services, Kelowna Youth in Care network.

**North Okanagan-** FASD Community Team; North Okanagan Child, Youth and Family Committee; Lumby Child Youth and Family Committee; Children in Care Committee; North Okanagan Youth and Family Services Society; CLBC, Adoptive Parents Association; Federation of Aboriginal Foster Parents; BCFFPA; Family Resource Centre; Mental Illness Family Support; Interior Health Authority, Public Health; Community Volunteer Coordinators Group; CLBC Community Council, North Okanagan Neurological Association; Social Planning Council

**Shuswap-** Shuswap Family Resource & Referral Centre, Intensive Family Support Workers, Shuswap Children's Association, CLBC, Public Health Nursing, Drug & Alcohol Services, Mental Health Services

## 2. Education & Training

The BC Foster Care Education Program was offered 3 times in our region in 2008. Caregivers are very satisfied with the classes and the presenters, according to the evaluations completed after each module. In Vernon and Kelowna, the program was divided and offered in two parts, series one in the Fall or Spring and series two offered at the opposite time. This allowed caregivers to have a break between sessions. In Penticton, the spring session was postponed due to low registration and series one was offered in the Fall.

We will offer the full program three times in 2009, once in each of our areas. Foster parents in the Shuswap area will be assisted with mileage to attend the training in Vernon. The training is also available to Foster Parents online through Interior Community Services. We appreciate having this option to offer our caregivers, though we have not had a large number access this training.

Other educational opportunities and workshops were presented in each area on a variety of topics. Attendance at training events continues to be unpredictable. Evaluation of Foster Parent's training and support needs is a continuous process. Training topics reflect the priorities of each area.

### B.C. Foster Care Education Program

Contracted trainers 2008:

- South Okanagan- Daniel Pitman
- Central Okanagan- Sue Foisy
- North Okanagan- Emily Mayne

	North OK	Central OK	South OK	Shuswap	Totals
<b>BC Education Program</b>	286.5 modules	195 modules completed	46 modules	Will provide mileage for FP to attend in Vernon.	527.5 modules were completed this year in class. 32 completions. We also facilitate foster parents to take modules online through ICS if required
<b>Library materials borrowed</b>	63 borrowed 43 new resource materials	73 borrowed 39 new resources	33 borrowed 49 new resources	20 borrowed ~40 new resources	189 borrowed 171 new resources added

All of our libraries are listed on our website: [www.okfosterparents.ca](http://www.okfosterparents.ca)

A 20 DVD set of behavior management videos called "Foster Parent College" has been a great hit with Foster parents. This has been added to each of our libraries.

## **Workshops and training**

Workshops and training opportunities are offered in each area, according to need and interest. Training needs are assessed on an ongoing basis.

Coordinators present and facilitate events as well as promote and advertise relevant training events in the community.

Subsidies were provided to Foster Parents attending OFPA workshops. Usually a nominal fee was charged, then refunded following attendance. Most of our workshops were presented free of charge to Foster Parents

Subsidies were given to foster parents to attend First Aid training.

### **North Okanagan**

- Non-Violent Crisis Intervention – core – offered twice
- Non-Violent Crisis Intervention – refresher – offered twice
- Safe Babies – core certificate training
- Safe Babies – Speech, Language & Hearing
- Safe Babies – Transition to Adoption
- Safe Babies – Infant Massage
- Safe Babies – Oral/Dental Care
- Safe Babies – Nutrition
- Safe Babies – Growth & Development
- Safe Babies – Birth Mom; Sleep
- Safe Babies – Infant and Toddler Safety
- Basic Standards – Contracts
- Basic Standards – Life Books
- Basic Standards – Family Group Conference; Levels of Care
- Basic Standards – Alternate Care
- Basic Standards – Documenting & Other Record Keeping
- Basic Standards – Placement Considerations & Questions
- Schizophrenia - BCSS Partnership Presentation
- Reading Strategies
- Culture of Poverty
- Connect Parenting – Foster Parent Presentation (joint with NOYFSS & The Maples)
- Car Seat Clinics – 3 (Joint with MCFD)
- Mental Illness in Persons with a Developmental Disability special thanks for financial assistance to: CLBC CP&D, CLBC QS, IHA DDMH
- Alcohol, Drugs, and Disability

Advertised the following, which Foster Parents attended:

- Traditional Parenting (Elders Group)
- Stand Together III Conference
- BCFFPA AGM and Conference
- Tanya Helton – Attachment
- Representation Agreements
- Street Drugs (Vernon Foster Parents Association)
- Connect Parenting – Community Presentation (NOYFSS & The Maples)
- Modified CPOC (MCFD Aboriginal Team)
- Foster Parent Insurance (BCFFPA)
- Drugs, Alcohol, & Gang Related Activities (Vernon Foster Parents Association)

- First Aid for Foster Parents (Vernon Foster Parents Association)
- Interior Region FASD Conference
- Gordon Neufeld - Hold on to Your Kids

### **Central Okanagan**

Training is offered in the Central Okanagan through MCFD Resources office, the Local Foster Parent Association and the Okanagan Foster Parents Association. The Coordinator also advertises workshops available through other community agencies and encourages Foster Parents to attend.

- CPI- Non Violent Crisis Intervention
- Safe Babies Training (partnership with MCFD)- program offered twice
- Who's Got the Power? Behavior management workshop
- St John Ambulance CPR and Emergency First Aid
- Sexuality and Children, Tweens and Teens with Disabilities.
- FASD/ CCY training
- Insurance training with BCFFPA

We also advertised and encouraged foster parents to attend local and regional workshops

- Mental Health series- offered by Resource unit
- Attachment workshop- Tanya Helton
- Gordon Neufeld- Hold Onto Your Kids workshop
- BCFFPA AGM and workshops
- Aboriginal Cultural Awareness workshops
- FAFP AGM and training
- Mental Health First Aid- Adult Mental Health
- Adoption "True Colors" mentoring
- Various television events relevant to Foster Parents
- Dr Gabor Mate, Boundaries workshop
- Regional FASD conference Kamloops

### **South Okanagan**

Training in the South Okanagan is provided as required and at Safe Babies support group. Many community workshops which are relevant are promoted and advertised as well.

- Life Book Working Group
- CPI Training Penticton-9 foster parents completed
- Life Book Group
- Tanya Helton, Attachment Disorder Workshop
- Insurance training-BCFFPA
- Safe Babies (1 day core training)
- Safe Baby Support Group Training-Meeting about 9 times this year, Training included Psychologist-FASD, Pediatrician- Withdrawal symptoms and care of newborn and St. John Ambulance- Infant CPR introduction and promotion for upcoming winter training

Workshops/event advertised (in and out of the South Okanagan)

- Traditional Parenting Workshop- Vernon
- Parenting with Pizzazz- B&G Club
- Who's Got the Power? Workshop

- Shaken Baby Teleconference
- Partners in Parenting Workshop, Rock Creek
- Parenting Wisely- Oliver
- FASD and Mental Health, Vancouver.
- BCFFPA AGM- Sun Peaks
- FORCE Parent Group-Mental Health, Penticton
- Dr. Gabor Mate- Boundaries, Kelowna
- Safe Online Training, Oliver
- FASD Training, Keremeos
- Aboriginal Cultural Awareness, Penticton
- Fire safety training, Penticton
- Aboriginal Day events
- Car Seat Safety Check
- Our Place in the Circle, Reg. Elder and Youth gathering
- FASD Regional Conference
- Communities For Kids Conference
- Oonakane Friendship Center - Mental Health Series
- Fed. of Aboriginal FP Conference & AGM
- Pathways addictions Centre- Reality Party
- Sexuality and Disabilities, Newbury-Jones, Kelowna

**Groups advertised :**

- FASD Parent Support group, PDCRS
- FORCE Parent Group-Mental Health, Penticton
- Adoptive Families Boot Camp

**Shuswap**

Training is offered in the Shuswap through MCFD Resources office, the Local Foster Parent Association and the Okanagan Foster Parents Association. The Coordinator also advertised workshops available through other community agencies and encourages Foster Parents to attend

- Non-Violent Crisis Intervention
- Strategies of Co-Parenting- Bob Pushak

Workshops held in other areas were advertised as well.

Note: Thank you to MCFD for their added support to present Safe Babies training in Penticton and Vernon.

**3. Crisis Support**

	<b>N OK</b>	<b>C OK</b>	<b>S OK</b>	<b>Shuswap</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Crisis training provided</b>	Non Violent Crisis Intervention	NVCI	NVCI Support binders were updated	NVCI	Non Violent Crisis Intervention training delivered in all areas
<b>Support pamphlets distributed</b>	Distributed at Preservice, to new Foster Parents and mailed out to all Foster Parents	Distributed at Preservice and to new Foster Parents	Brochures, networking phone list, magnets sent to all fp's (96)	Support brochures, magnets distributed	Support pamphlets and magnets were distributed
<b>Crisis support provided</b>	4	12	2	0	18

Note: Our Foster Parent Coordinators are available for crisis support after hours, when needed.

#### 4. Support to Caregivers involved in Protocols

	North OK	Central OK	South OK	Shuswap	Total
<b>Number of trained support workers</b>	7	6	3	3	19 trained Support Workers available
<b>Number of Investigations of Abuse Allegations where support was provided</b>	Investigation Protocol - 4	17 There were a huge number of Protocol s in the first 2 quarters this year..	1	0	22 cases where support was provided-Support provided on requested
<b>Support provided in Conflict Resolution</b>	Protocol - 6 Non-Protocol - 7	8	1	0	22 cases where support was provided

#### 5. Support & Mutual Aid

	North OK	Central OK	South OK	Shuswap	Total
<b>Information / support from Coordinator</b>	Average of 38.5 FP's accessing services per month	Average of 34 FP's accessing services per month	Average of 31 FP's per month accessing services	Data unavailable (approximately 15 per mo)	Average of 118 Foster parents accessed direct support services per month
<b>Peer groups</b>	5	1	2	1	9 Peer groups meeting
<b>Home Visits</b>	13	12	14	2	41 home visits

Support is provided in a variety of ways to all caregivers, including newsletters, emails, education etc. We have tracked the number of individual Foster homes receiving direct support or information.

## 6. Identification of Common Issues

Common issues are identified in a number of ways.

- Partnership meetings are held in all areas
- Local and small group meetings- Vernon, Kelowna, Penticton, Princeton, Salmon Arm, Lumby
- Children in Care committee (Vernon), System of Care committee (Kelowna)
- Formal and informal discussions with Foster Parents
- Team Meetings- Coordinators in each area attend team meetings with the Resources unit to discuss any issues identified in the network.

Issues, once identified are worked on with MCFD to find a solution.

## 7. Recruitment

OFPA works with MCFD to promote fostering in a positive manner and help with public awareness. We provide newspaper articles, distribute posters, put banners up, maintain our Web site, and distribute pamphlets. We attend and man booths at Volunteer Fairs in Vernon and Kelowna.

Fostering inquiries are received, responded to and forwarded to MCFD. Information Sessions are handled differently in each area. Many inquiries are generated from our website.

Recruitment of new foster homes continues to be a high priority with most MCFD offices. We were pleased to assist them by submitting articles to newspapers, letters to the editor, mall displays, Information Sessions, Volunteer Fairs, and by displaying banners. We present the Pre-Service Orientation Program in the North and South Okanagan and assist with the New Foster Parent training offered in the Central Okanagan. We receive a large number of fostering inquiries. We respond to them, invite them to Information Sessions, and forward to MCFD.

	North OK	Central OK	South OK	Shuswap	Total
<b>Number of Pre-services offered</b>	2	3	3- one delivered by OFPA contract, and 2 through MCFD alone	Delivered by MCFD	8
<b>Number of participants</b>	69 & 2 MCFD staff	Tracked by MCFD	59	No data	130++
<b>Number of completions</b>	38 & 2 MCFD staff	Tracked by MCFD	29	No data	67++
<b>Number of Info sessions</b>	8 info sessions	6 info sessions 3 individual sessions	Delivered by MCFD individually	Delivered by MCFD	



Volunteer Fair- Kelowna

## **Retention**

Retention has been a priority this year. We hosted Barbecues this year in appreciation of all of our Foster families. Cards were sent on Mothers Day and Fathers Day along with tokens of our appreciation inside (Tim Horton gift cards, flowers)

Letters were sent to local newspapers to commend the work Foster parents do. This was also a recruitment tool. We are planning a recognition event to honor long-term caregivers in the New Year.

## 8. Aboriginal

We provide support services to all Foster Homes including those who care for Aboriginal Children and Youth. We work with MCFD Aboriginal teams and Aboriginal Support Agencies and promote cultural training for caregivers.

This year we promoted, advertised and attended the ROOTS aboriginal celebration gathering in Armstrong in June. Many Foster parents brought their families and enjoyed the weekend.

We also promote activities that are of benefit to aboriginal children, including cultural children and youth groups, National Aboriginal Day celebrations and Pow Wows.

We continue to monitor the services we provide to assure it meets the needs of caregivers as we move toward a division of services between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal homes.



## 9. Community Living British Columbia

We continue to support CLBC contracted Foster homes. They receive full support services. Several workshops we provide are on topics concerning Developmental Disabilities. Many of the materials in our libraries are of interest to caregivers of kids with disabilities.

Volunteers are a crucial part of our organization. The Board of Directors of the Okanagan Foster Parents Association volunteer many hours to ensure the smooth delivery of services. The local Foster Parent Associations, to whom we provide support, are all volunteers. Our Foster Parent Support Workers, who provide services to other Foster Parents during Protocols are volunteers. Volunteers have also assisted with providing training to other caregivers and assisting in others ways too numerous to mention. Thank you to all of these wonderful dedicated volunteers!

Respectfully Submitted

Okanagan Foster Parents Association  
January 21, 2009

Questions or comments may be addressed to:  
Board of Directors [Board@okfosterparents.ca](mailto:Board@okfosterparents.ca) 250-535-0201 or  
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