

# fosterlineBC

BC Federation of Foster Parent Associations



Happy  
New Year  
2017!

Winter 2016  
Volume 14, Issue 3



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For Board of Directors contact information, please call the Provincial office.

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The BCFFPA is a provincial organization for foster parents, run by foster parents. We are a registered Society aiming to bring foster parents, social workers and others together in order to continuously improve the standard of care for BC's children in care. BCFFPA provides education, training and professional development as well as advocacy, support and assistance for the foster parents of BC.

**Submissions**—Forward articles, personal stories or ideas to the BCFFPA office. Materials may be edited for length and suitability.

**Advertising**—Please contact the BCFFPA office for advertising opportunities, sizes and rates.

## President's Report

Seasons Greetings to BC's foster parents!

My first few months as your president have been enlightening and with support from Jayne and Russell, I am learning about the valuable work that is well underway and the complexities of dealing with the different offices within the Ministry.

Jayne, Russell and I spent two days in Victoria where I was introduced to several Ministry people. They shared with us in their Multi-Year Plan what they are doing to help the fostering community, and I was very impressed by the acknowledgement from each different office that foster parents are a crucial and important part of the team needed to support the children in our care.

The Board is working hard to address each of the Motions brought forward at our AGM and our goal is to have as many of these motions remedied, in the works with status updates or clear reasons why no action has been taken by our next AGM in 2017.

We have a new website that was launched simultaneously with the Ministry's foster caregiver recruitment campaign in October. Our new website is simpler to navigate, has all the same information that you'll be used to finding, includes a newsfeed with a comments section and perhaps the largest development, will host BCFFPA's new online membership database. In the new year, members will have the ability to renew online and new community members can join BCFFPA via the website.

We are a fairly new Board and as with new people you get lots of enthusiasm, new ideas and new perspective on the old ideas—all of which make for a challenging and exciting work environment. I am looking forward to 2017 and have high expectations of what will be accomplished by our Board of Directors and committee members. I would like to sincerely thank Russell for offering his unconditional support through this time and especially his agreement to stay on as our Representative for the Solutions Program (formerly called our Support and Advocacy Program) and as the committee chair for our joint BCFFPA/CFFA AGM and Conference in Whistler. His presence is a huge benefit to the Board and enhances our ability to accomplish our goals for next year.

Recently our staff and Russell visited the 2017 site to review booking details. They assure me that our members and guests will be well taken care of and will thoroughly enjoy the luxurious surroundings of the conference venue, the amazing food provided through the hotel and the cultural centre which will host some of our workshops and events. I look forward to seeing many of you there to celebrate BCFFPA's 50th Anniversary!

Winter is fast approaching and with this in mind, I would like to wish everyone a Joyous Holiday and a Happy New Year.

Marcy Perron  
President

## Notes from the Office

Hello friends,

I must begin with an apology! We had intended to have the FosterlineBC newsletter ready for Foster Family Month but with the change in the AGM date and other project priorities I was unable to complete the issue. Next year will be different!

This calendar year has been filled with project work, new staff members, event planning and some (though reduced) travels. We're putting more funds into outreach these days, to maximize our exposure and ensure that foster parents are receiving information about BCFFPA's services. As Ministry workers retire and move into other positions, our connections within the Ministry offices sometimes are lost so we have to begin building those relationships again!

Common themes for providing support this year have been foster parents who are experiencing very lengthy protocols, who are out of pocket for both large and small exceptional expenses, who are experiencing adoption process halts and removals of children who were in the process of being adopted by the foster parent. Regardless of his change in role from Board president to past-president, Russell Pohl continues to be very engaged in providing support and advocacy. Currently there are over 100 foster parents who are relying on Russell's skills and commitment to ensuring that solutions are found for the most complex challenges.

The AGM this year was tremendously successful. Personally I was shocked to see so many people attend an AGM that included the additional cost of crossing the pond to Vancouver Island! I think this speaks to the engagement of our foster parent community and the Ministry leadership, many of whom also attended. Our AGM numbers are larger every year. This may be partially due to our new process of asking our participants about their experience and for their ideas about the following year's conference. But our ongoing success is undeniably due to Ronda Sweeney's amazing production planning.

Get ready for AGM 2017 in Whistler! I had an opportunity to visit the venue last month and I have to say we'll be in the lap of luxury. The venue boasts not only a beautiful mountain setting, but guest rooms that are positively luxurious and abundant conference space. We're excited about hosting part of our conference in the Squamish Lil'wat Cultural Centre across the street from the Fairmont—another beautiful setting.

Well folks, 2016 is a wrap and here's hoping that 2017 brings many wonderful experiences and much happiness to all of your families. Thank you for all that you do for the children and youth in your care. Best wishes for a wonderful holiday season.

Jayne Wilson  
Executive Director

## Anne Clayton, Executive Director of Guardianship, Adoption and Permanency & Provincial Director of Adoption, MCFD

I have had the pleasure of being the contract manager for the BCFFPA for the last few years and I wanted to express my thanks and congratulations to the organization for working with the MCFD and myself for the recognition and advancement of foster parents in the province of British Columbia. The last year in particular has been extremely busy, challenging, and ultimately successful! MCFD was able to leverage some funding on a one time only basis to focus on updating the training for both foster parents and for resource social workers in the ministry and DAAs. The deliverables were immense and the time frame was crazy but as we have completed the pilot for the Caregiver Training and are preparing for piloting the Resource Social Worker Training. I'm happy to say thank you for all the hard work!

A more modest success was the signing of a multi-year contract with the BCFFPA to provide the insurance program for foster parents and to continue their support and advocacy work. My hope is that this will provide the organization with some stability and security so that together with the ministry the focus can now be on retaining and recruiting skilled foster parents.

MCFD Guardianship, Adoption and Permanency branch are pleased to announce that the **Indigenous Perspectives Society** was the recent successful proponent of the contract for the Aboriginal Foster Parents training and support.

Indigenous Perspectives Society will be offering both Aboriginal foster parent training and providing support to the Aboriginal Foster Parents across the province. The Society has hired Gaye Smith as their foster parent support person – she can be reached at 250.391.0007 extension 229, toll free at 1.844.391.0007 extension 229 or by email at [gayes@ipsociety.ca](mailto:gayes@ipsociety.ca).

### Thank you for everything, Anne!

After a career spent looking out for the best interests of children in care and creating families through adoption, Anne Clayton is retiring at the end of December.

BCFFPA has been the happy beneficiary of Anne's insights, her expertise and her influence, not to mention her contagious chuckle. Together we have worked toward increasing BCFFPA's profile across the province and improving the environment for foster caregivers. We have thoroughly enjoyed working with Anne over the years. Thank you, Anne, for all you have done for us and for BC's foster parents. We wish you much fun, many adventures and relaxation in your retirement! Safe travels.

Jayne Wilson  
Executive Director

## Congratulations on Your Retirement to Our Friend and Colleague, Dr. Anne Clayton!

Children and families of BC have had a quiet superhero working for them behind the scenes for many years quietly changing and building on all that would make children's lives better and creating families where there may not have been one, with the goal of achieving permanency. Certainly not doing it alone but being that formidable guiding force to make it all happen.

Dr. Anne Clayton has remained strong and for the most part silent over the years as she has went about her business. Permanency and adoption have been her career focus since 1997. Over her long career things have shifted but she has remained a quiet force bringing positive change to what she could and targeting the things she wanted to change.

The end of December will see Dr. Anne Clayton move into a well-deserved retirement. Her plan to travel in her 5<sup>th</sup> wheel with her partner have brought tears to many peoples eyes. While we are sad to lose her, hearing the details of their long preparation for a travelling retirement would leave the most stoic in stitches.

Anne leaves our foster and adoptive community better for sure, but she has also laid the foundation for the work to be continued by others. I think that her biggest legacy is not what she has done, but rather the people she has mentored to continue to do good work when she is gone.

Her calm and gentle spirit will be missed for sure. Her ability to make things move and make the puzzle pieces slide into place will challenge those after her to continue to work on behalf of our children and families in care.

With that we will send her off with a huge thank you, and best wishes for your retirement. Thank you, Dr. Anne Clayton, for your dedication to the families of British Columbia.

Russell Pohl, Solutions Facilitator  
Past President, BCFFPA



## BCFFPA Board of Directors Changes

The AGM in Nanaimo was a great success with well attended workshops and vigorous membership activity at the AGM itself. Altogether we received 17 action items for the coming year. Luckily, many of these are already in process through recent projects and conversations!

The members voted Marcy Perron as BCFFPA's new president. Welcome to Marcy! You may remember Marcy from her years as Interior Delegate and Treasurer to the provincial Board of Directors. She joins us with a modest but important mandate to secure health care insurance, seek pensions, secure a much needed increase in maintenance and to improve general working conditions for all foster parents in the province of BC. A big undertaking that we have already begun to work on.

By way of continuity and to ensure continued success with our current initiatives, Marcy has asked that Russell Pohl continue to represent BCFFPA at meetings, events and on committees. Happily for us, he has agreed to do so.

### *BCFFPA's Solutions Program*

Much of Russell Pohl's ongoing work involves providing direct support and advocacy to foster parents across the province. Sometimes the languaging of this service becomes problematic as BCFFPA's contract doesn't include support, and sometimes the word "advocacy" can push buttons. However, MCFD's provincial office is supportive of the work that has been done and have encouraged us to continue, as they observe community level benefits.

After additional consideration of our goals and function of our services, we have decided to apply a new name to the support and advocacy program which more accurately reflects the community's needs and our intention when we enter into these sometimes very challenging scenarios. BCFFPA's **Fostering Solutions Program** aims to identify solutions to difficult situations that arise, whether these solutions be community-based or across the sector. The name reflects our broader goal to seek out solutions no matter how simple or complex the problem.

Russell Pohl has been appointed as **Solutions Facilitator** and will lead the program. As funds are available or as engaged by MCFD, trainings will continue and regional coordinators will be identified.

Russell is available to travel to your area of the province for meetings and consultations if required. You can contact him or our **Solutions Coordinator**, Krissy, at 1-800-663-9999.



### Staff Profile

Finding additional funding is always a challenge and, as many know, our base contract is pretty small. We have decided to use some recent savings in a couple of budget areas to bring in an experienced fund developer. In the first week she has secured a donation of 200 bus shelter advertising spaces for BCFFPA which will increase visibility and enhance foster parent recruitment.

Anita joined our team at BCFFPA in November as the Fund Development Coordinator. She says she is thrilled to become part of a great organization that works hard for foster children and families.

Raised in Boston, Anita has resided in Canada for over 25 years and has worked in the field of fundraising and community building for over 30 years while striving to do something important for others. Anita's background is in fundraising and communications and feels that her real passion lies in building community relationships in the non-profit world.



Anita currently resides in Surrey with her husband, has 3 grown children and a variety of fur and feathered friends. Please join us in welcoming Anita to the team. She can be reached at: 604-544-8855 or [anita@bcfosterparents.ca](mailto:anita@bcfosterparents.ca).

## Rider Insurance for Foster Parents

In the past several months we have received claims for damages done by children in foster care that didn't trigger the Rider coverage. We can't stress enough that it is the responsibility of each foster parent to ensure that their own home or rental insurance must include any additional items that aren't covered under your average policy. For instance, if you have very expensive jewelry or antique items that exceed the general coverage, please ensure that you purchase a rider to your own home insurance that includes items of exceptional value. The *Extended Property Damage (Rider) insurance* coverage for BC's foster parents **mirrors your own policy**. If you don't have coverage for it, then the Rider won't be triggered.

If you have a pet who is injured either accidentally or on purpose by a child in your care, unless your home insurance covers the costs of injuries to your pets then there is no assurance that the Rider will be triggered. Ministry offices are understandably resistant to covering costs for injured pets. Pet insurance is available and we advise you to know exactly what the risks to your animals are. Vet bills climb very quickly!

Although the Ministry will often pay either all or a portion of the costs of damages done that aren't covered by the Rider insurance, this is an unexpected expense for the Ministry office. Policy wording does indicate the Ministry's intention that caregivers not be out of pocket for damages done by the children in their care, but please be very aware that repayment of damages is seen as a discretionary expense.

Some questions have arisen regarding the speed and efficiency of processing Rider claims. Once all of your claim-related paperwork has been submitted, the claim is sent to the claims adjuster. Please be aware that the claims adjuster may need to be in contact with you a few times in order to assess damages and settle a claim. This may require a bit of time but we do our best to process claims quickly.

BCFFPA's role in claims processing is to ensure that the paperwork necessary to support a claim is collected prior to processing. We are not qualified to assess or evaluate the claim. While we always strive to be supportive, insurance claims are a very "black and white" process with very clear guidelines regarding claims settlement. As much as we hope for all claims to be successfully settled, we have no influence on the adjuster's assessment.

Ronda and Jayne are available to answer your Rider Insurance related questions. Please contact us at 1-800-663-9999.



## BC Federation of Foster Parent Associations hosts the Canadian Foster Family Association in Whistler for our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary AGM & Conference!

The BCFFPA Provincial office is busy planning for the 2017 AGM and we have a lot of great events! The hotel block is now open for reservations and we encourage you to book your accommodations as soon as possible.

**Join us at the beautiful Fairmont Chateau Whistler! October 5, 6 & 7, 2017**

**\*\* SPECIAL RATE \$169.00/night\*\***

Call today to make your reservation at the **Fairmont Chateau Whistler**  
**1-800-606-8244**

(Please quote "[BCFFPA – BC Federation of Foster Parents](#)" or group code [1017BCFF](#) when booking.)

\*The Canadian Foster Family Association will be hosting a Working Group/World Café on Wednesday, October 4 in the afternoon. We encourage all BC foster parents and agencies to join in. Topic to be announced in registration package which will be available April 1, 2017.\*





**A Division of Indigenous Perspectives Society**  
*Creating Excellence through Training and Leadership*

The Indigenous Perspectives Society (IPS), formerly Caring for First Nations Children Society, is a registered charitable non-profit organization working since 1994 to strengthen lives and build successful relationships in Indigenous communities. The Society has played a significant role in the delivery of training and policy development for Aboriginal Child Welfare, both in British Columbia and across Canada.

Building on the Society's vision to strengthen the lives and contribute to the self-determination of indigenous peoples through culturally relevant training, IPS was the successful proponent on a request for proposal to offer training and support services for foster caregivers of Aboriginal children and youth. With their new division, Indigenous Caregivers of BC, IPS offers training and a caregiver support hotline to support every child having a caring and understanding home.

There is an urgent need for foster caregivers for some of the most diverse populations of children in care. We want to ensure that Aboriginal children and youth have foster caregivers to support their journeys until they return to their families, extended families or communities.

You do not have to be Aboriginal to be a foster caregiver; however First Nation, Metis, Inuit, Status and Non-Status Aboriginal foster caregivers are needed across BC. The first step to becoming a foster caregiver is to contact us at [www.fostercaregiversbc.ca](http://www.fostercaregiversbc.ca).

If you are looking to become a foster caregiver of Aboriginal children or are looking for foster caregiver support, call **Gaye Smith**, our **Caregiver Support Worker**, at our Toll Free Foster Caregiver Support Line 1 844 931 0007 ext. 229

*In Memory Of...*

It is with sadness that we say good bye to a long time foster and adoptive parent, **Judy Chiasson**. Judy passed way November 18, 2016 at Surrey Memorial Hospital after a length struggle with health issues.

Judy was predeceased by her husband, Fred. They fostered for many years in Vancouver and later on in the Surrey/Langley areas. She leaves behind an adult son and foster daughter, three sisters, her mother, and many other family and friends.

She will be missed by her friends in the fostering community!!

**Foster Parents Protecting the Privacy of CICs**

In June 2016 the Ministry distributed information to all contract holders regarding Privacy Training. If you did not receive a link to complete the course online, please contact your resource worker. The deadline to have completed the training was in mid-2016 for most contract types.

With the holiday season upon us and considering the prevalence of social media, please be aware that, as a foster parent, you are expected to safeguard the privacy of *all* foster children, past and present, who have been in your care regardless of their age, family permission to share photos or other extenuating circumstances. Lets review the basics...

Personal information means recorded information about a child in your care (or formerly in your care) that has been collected or created by the contractor (you) as a result of performing specific contracted services. You are expected to ensure that none of the information below is shared with anyone. [Please note that this is not an exhaustive list and you are expected to complete the training.]

- Individual's name, address or phone number
- Photo, video or other likeness of the individual
- Race, national or ethnic origin, colour or religious beliefs or associations
- Age, gender, sexual orientation, marital status or family status
- Any identifying number, symbol or other particular assigned to the individual
- Fingerprints, blood type or inheritable characteristics
- Health care history including any disability
- Educational, financial, criminal or employment information
- Opinions about the individual
- The individual's personal views or opinions

**FACTS YOU SHOULD BE AWARE OF**

Though we are always looking for creative solutions and to decrease the risk of caring for children, we have yet to resolve this one... **Adult children of foster parents who live in the home are NOT PROTECTED against any allegations against them.** Please advise your adult children who live with you to look into personal liability insurance coverage in order to protect themselves.

~ ~ ~

Did you know that if a youth runs away from your home there is no one who can make them return home? Not the Ministry, the police, the Child Advocate's office or any family member. And further to this, a homestudy will not be completed on the home they choose to live in.

## Caregiver Training and Resource Social Worker Training Project Update

We are happy to inform you all that the online pilot for the new PRIDE Pre-service training has been completed. There were over 60 individuals who agreed to test the new format—a diverse group that included existing trainers, Ministry staff, agency staff, experienced foster parents and brand new fostering applicants. Depending on the test student's frame of reference the feedback was varied, and we came away with some excellent suggestions for tweaks prior to launching PRIDE Pre-service training in the new year.

Next up we will be working toward enhancing the excellent PRIDE In-Service curriculum to include BC-specific material. This is truly a team effort and everyone is very focused on ensuring that the final result is engaging and informative.

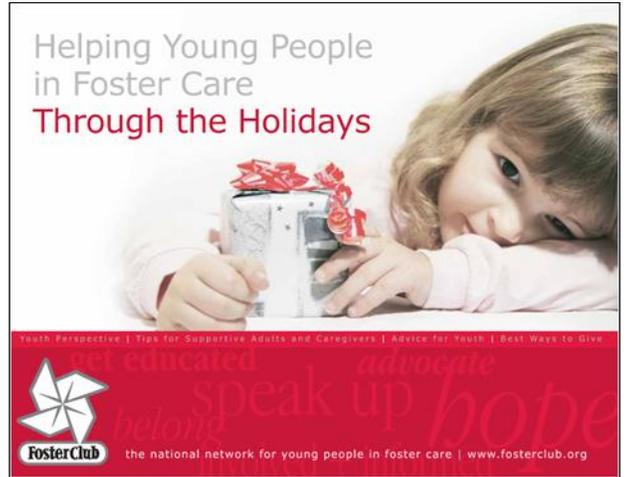
The Resource Social Worker Training development is moving along quickly now that format and platform have been completed. Videos of BC foster parents and social workers will be included into the training to add a personal touch and some testimony of lived experience. The pilot for the Resource Social Worker training is expected to take place in the first quarter of next year. This is the first training of its kind in BC and we are very excited to hear how it will be received.

Ministry leadership has approved the recommendation from Strategic Priorities that Ministry Resource Social Workers and Team Leaders with resource responsibilities will be required to audit the PRIDE Pre-service course. This is a best practice goal for PRIDE as it has been the experience within other provinces who use PRIDE that when foster parents and social workers are both trained in Pre-service and understand the PRIDE competencies, it creates a much more supportive and ultimately successful work environment.

For more background information regarding community consultation that has taken place and for progress reports, please check out BCFFPA's website under Training Project Updates—or [click on the PRIDE image below!](#)



Click the picture to read the booklet!



### Early Renewal & New Membership Draw

The winner of the 2016 draw is

**A. Delupio of Vancouver!**

Mr. Delupio receives 4 nights and registration at the 2017 AGM in Whistler  
**A value of over \$1300**

### The Representative for Children and Youth and his team are a Voice for Kids in BC

The Representative for Children and Youth supports children, youth and families who need help in dealing with the child-serving system.

### BC Federation of Foster Parent Associations

#### Our Mission

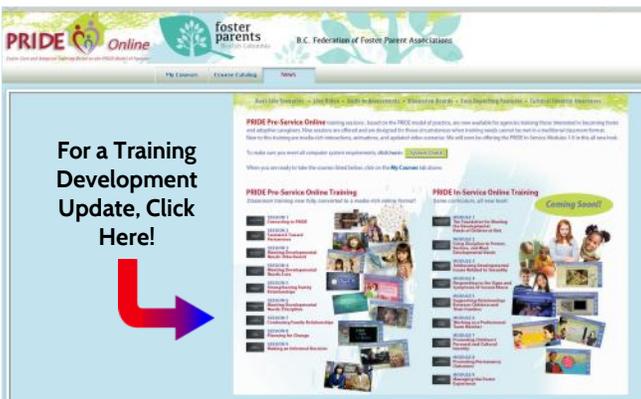
The BCFFPA represents and supports all Foster Parents to provide quality in-home foster care in British Columbia

#### Our Vision

Supporting children and youth to reach their full potential through excellence in foster care

#### Our Belief

Resilient Foster Parents = Empowered Children and Youth



## Regional Delegate Reports

### Coast Fraser Report—Walter Aguilar

I have had a few chats with other foster parents and there seems to be a lack of support of those who foster special needs kids. When it comes to severe special needs, they are seen as the exceptions not the norm and foster parents can feel very alone in their journey. Dealing with MCFD, the school system, and the medical systems can be a daunting task. MCFD tries to provide additional respite when needed, but as far as helping them find the specialized respite that people need, they are left on their own. When dealing with the school and nursing support, it can be challenging at times as foster parents are not respected as caregiving professionals. With the medical people, not being the child's parent does have some effect on our ability to advocate effectively.

Kids need diagnoses to access funding for therapies and long waiting lists for those medical professionals. It is challenging being a foster parent in the best of times, but taking care of a child with severe special needs, even more so.

There was great relief when everyone heard that Russell would remain as an advocate.

There has also been curiosity from foster parents about the whole union thing and what is happening with that.

### North Regional Report—Tanya Tagmann

Today I received the Purdy's catalogue and Jayne's request for an update for the December FosterlineBC. It's definitely time to think Christmas!

I was struck by two things at the AGM this year. One being the number of resolutions from the floor and secondly, the dedication that our members have. Attending the AGM is a big commitment and it's heartwarming to see so many members who make it a priority. I loved the fundraising for camp; what a great cause. Make sure to apply for those bursaries in the Spring.

I am very much looking forward to Whistler 2017 and want to encourage foster parents to plan on attending. Don't put this decision off until the new year, make a commitment today! Reach out to your community, plan to share rooms and transportation to reduce the cost. We'll only turn 50 once!

One of our goals for 2017 is to increase membership. I cannot think of a better way to invest our energy than building up our membership so we become one unified voice that drives our community forward. Get connected with us by becoming a member or come out to a local meeting.

I attended a pre-service orientation this week with 14 participants. When I asked if folks were excited about their first placements, grins broke out all over the room. We all do this work because we have a connection with kids and want to make a difference in the life of a child.

What have I been up to?

- I have volunteered for the PRIDE pilot on the Pride review
- Working away on my support and advocacy training
- Working on the foster parent survey
- Providing support and advocacy in my region
- Presented on behalf of BCFFPA at a Prince George pre-service orientation
- AGM 2017 sub-committee for planning discussions
- Learning more about fundraising
- Chair of our BCFFPA Local Foster Parent Association

Wishing everyone a very happy holiday!

### Interior Report—Kevin Daniel (Interior Board)

It's hard to believe that we are coming to a close of another year as this year has been very busy for many of our foster parents. One of the busiest is Kelowna. I recently learned that they had completed over 130 adoptions. The most for any one community in British Columbia. Kelowna's adoptive parents, adoption workers and all other team members who support these placements should feel very proud of this accomplishment.

In other areas we continue to struggle with the lack of foster homes, inexperienced caregivers, and a lack of accessible training. Hopefully with the new roll out of the Fostering Connections website ([fosteringconnections.ca](http://fosteringconnections.ca)) and the recently announced PRIDE program, we will be able to fill in some of these voids in our communities and further stabilize the system.

Other issues that have been raising their ugly noses are the cost of living and the cost of raising kids. Sports and activity costs have gone through the roof yet we are asked to use funding streams like Jumpstart and Kidsport to only be told they not reliable as the ministry should be providing the funds for kids. This often results in caregivers absorbing these extra costs so that children don't go without. Some of our caregivers have recently sent in their records on how much they spend on the kids in their homes on a monthly basis to help the province put a face on the real lived costs to raise a child today.

On September 30th in Nanaimo the Interior Region hosted their AGM. We had 20 people come in and put forth 8 motions that were then brought to the floor of the provincial AGM. It also brought an interesting change with Marcy Perron leaving our regional board to take a spot on the provincial.

In closing I would just like to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Years.

### Vancouver Island Report—Tanya Hooker

Well winter is almost here, or is it still going to remain Fall until Spring?...with all the rain we've been having lately, it might be time to equip Vancouver Island with a flotation device in order to keep us afloat. But, moving right along...

Hello Vancouver Island, and the rest of British Columbia. I'd like to introduce myself to you all (for those that weren't able to make it out to the AGM this year)...my name is Tanya Hooker, the newly appointed Vancouver Island Delegate. I've been a foster parent for 7 years, a home schooling stay at home mom for 10 years, and am currently actively involved with a large number of community outreach projects.

It was great to meet so many new faces, and see so many familiar ones as well at the BCFFPA AGM in October. The AGM is an excellent environment for all of us to connect and network with one another. If you thought this year's AGM was a blast, you'd better start to planning for the 2017 AGM in Whistler! It's the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary for the BCFFPA...Now that'll be an epic event!

Now that we once again have solid representation for the BCFFPA on Vancouver Island, we're starting to notice members, and non-members alike, communicating their personal and sector concerns, questions, or comments. Consistent communication is taking place, which is a positive sign of progressing forward together as a unified fostering community. As recently as taking on the VI Delegate position, I've already had a few phone calls and conversations with a number of individuals from the North Island. I encourage anyone from South Vancouver Island to call with your questions which could be provincially relevant to the fostering community. If you're not sure what that might look like, just call anyway—I'd love to have conversation and build relationship with you.

There has been talk amongst many from the North Island of forming a Local again. Please contact me directly if this is something you're interested in. I would be happy to answer any questions or concerns you may have. Another perk as a BCFFPA Delegate, is the privilege to work along side you through protocols or high level meetings as your provincial voice. That's right...we can speak directly to any given situation on your behalf, or just be a support in the room for you as well...keeping in mind that our goal is to always work towards a collaborative positive solution.

I look forward to hearing from you! Well, until next time...working together to build a strong and positive fostering community on Vancouver Island, and across British Columbia. Contact me at (250) 218-8121 or [island\\_delegate@bcfosterparents.ca](mailto:island_delegate@bcfosterparents.ca)

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to you and your family!

### Opening for Foster Caregivers at SOS Children's Village BC

As Canada's only SOS Children's Village, SOS Children's Village British Columbia provides homes, a supportive village environment, and programs to help foster children and youth in need grow into caring, self-reliant adults. Additionally we are developing programs to support foster parents on their journey to become professional Caregivers.

Located in Surrey, BC, on a beautiful 2½ acre campus, we have five (six bedroom) homes, transition suites, sports courts, playgrounds, forested trails, and a Village Centre housing homework and therapy rooms, a music studio, and activities space. SOS is embracing a trauma informed interactive therapeutically intensive approach to working with foster families including: Trauma focused cognitive behavioural therapy, Expressive Arts, Cognitive Rehabilitation, Neurofeedback, Narrative, and other therapies as determined by a foster child's needs. Other programming includes: Homework Club, Sounds of Learning (group and individual music lessons), Camps, Recreation, Cultural, Transition to Adulthood, and After Care. After Care reflects SOS belief in lifelong connection with our children, nineteen is just a birthday, at SOS children who have been in our Village can expect lifelong support. All programs and support for the foster families in our Village are provided at no cost to them, and a limited number of families also receive rent subsidies.

If you are, or wish to become, a professional Caregiver in BC, are willing to foster 3 to 5 foster children, excited about being a contributing member of a mutually supportive village environment, and are willing to agree to a minimum five year commitment, please contact SOS BC today at [office@sosbc.org](mailto:office@sosbc.org) with a subject line of "Village Membership Enquiry". The Ministry of Children and Family Development, Vancouver Aboriginal Child and Family Services Society and other Agencies, are the employers of Caregivers in BC and we look forward to working with them as partners in the acceptance process of any applicant to the SOS BC Village.



Self-Care is a  
priority and necessity  
- not a luxury -  
in the work that we do.

## Caregiving On Empty

by Karen Berry

I was recently lucky enough to share time and space with a group of remarkable caregivers and professionals at the BCFFPA Annual General Meeting in Nanaimo. I have given laughter workshops in the past with themes about using laughter as stress relief and care for the caregiver. I have been a foster caregiver, a daughter to an elderly disabled father, primary wage earner for my family, a mother, supervised access worker, child and youth care worker, crisis line worker, victim support worker and foster family support worker. I think I can confidently say that I understand compassion fatigue. I am aware of the importance of caring for the caregiver, as it were, and the necessity for us all no matter who we care for to remember one thing first and foremost.

We are at the top of the heap. We need sustenance! I am confident that this is not new information to any of you. It is a reminder, loud and proud. Take care of you. Make you a priority. Take time and space to breathe, to slow down. You're Atlas and your arms are tired. Sit down. Make tea. Draw a bubble bath. Pour a beverage. Use your best crystal. We cannot be caregiving on empty; we must refill our tanks.

The caregivers and others at the workshop did a number of exercises with me intended to remind them of the importance of the work that you all do and that you cannot do it on empty; it requires continued nourishment with things like joy, strength, care and love. The image here is the post-it notes from the group. They were asked to list one essential ingredient to keep their cornucopia of compassion and joy filled (we were playing reverse Hunger Games!).



There is a common thread weaving through the notes, with humour, faith, love, trust and laughter mentioned over and over. People wanted naps, sleep, and time to themselves, frustration management, music and creativity. They wished for and needed patience, a bubble bath, wine and compassion (not necessarily in that order). They saw value in networking with other caregivers, connection and supportive relationships. There were a few wistful things that may be a bit harder to find – diamonds, a maid service and a sunny day. All the rest seem highly possible.

As the holiday season is upon us it is extra important to remember yourself and take time outs to practice that mythical thing called "self-care". Holidays can be particularly challenging for children and youth in care; expectations can run very high or very low. Making the season memorable requires a point person to ensure gifts are purchased, stockings filled, that bio-children have special traditions that continue and that the magic and merriment fills all souls. For an already busy person this only ramps it up so it is essential that you pause; create rituals of your own, whether it be a quiet cup

of tea and a book, a bubble bath with a do not disturb sign on the door, headphones and your fave music or anything else that centres you to start each day anew. Please have a joyful holiday season however you celebrate but remember to ask yourself often "What have I done for ME lately?"



Karen Berry, laughter and joy aficionado

Karen works full time in project management and part time on a crisis line. She was a foster parent for 20 years so knows the fine balancing act of managing a household with multiple children on multiple schedules. She has recently worked as a child care worker, supervised access worker, transporter of children in care to visits and shelter worker. Karen has been presenting laughter workshops for years and always enjoys the opportunity to connect with those at the front lines. She likes to help remind caregivers and others how important it is to pause and have fun, to laugh and share that joy with the children and youth in their families and in their care.

### BCFFPA Is Available to Deliver Workshops in Your Community

In the past 2 years MCFD has requested that BCFFPA deliver workshops to foster parents and Ministry staff jointly. To answer this need, we have 5 workshops available for delivery.

#### *Half Day Sessions Currently Available*

- Safeguarding for Caregivers and Children
- Permanency
- Communications in Partnership
- Solutions Facilitation
- Grief and Loss for Caregivers

#### *Two Day Session Currently Available*

- Solutions Training (formerly "Support & Advocacy Training")

If your Local or community of caregivers would like us to come to your community, please connect with Jayne Wilson or Russell Pohl at the BCFFPA office on our toll free line (1-800-663-9999).

## Foster Care and The Holidays

By Dr. John DeGarmo, Ed.D.

The stockings are hung, by the chimney with care, in hopes that...In hopes of what? For many children who have been placed into the foster care system, they have come from homes where there was no Christmas, there was no hope. They have come from families that did not celebrate a holiday. They have come from environments where there were no presents, no tree. They have come from homes where there was not holiday joy or love.

The Holiday season is upon us. Christmas, Hanukah, New Years, Kwanzaa; these are times that can be extremely difficult for many foster children. During this time of Holiday Cheer, many foster children are faced with the realization that they will not be "home for the holidays," so to speak, with their biological family members. When they wake up Christmas morning, and are surrounded by people who just may be strangers to them, strangers who are laughing and having fun, it can be a very difficult time for them, indeed. To be sure, it is a day that is a stark reminder to these children that they are not with their own family. It is during the holidays when families are supposed to be together, yet these children in care are not. They are not with their families, and they may not know when they will see them next.

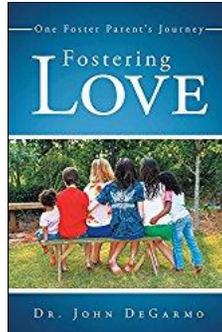
Along with this, foster children also struggle with trying to remain loyal to their birth parents while enjoying the holiday season with their foster family. There are those moments when a child from foster care may feel guilty for experiencing joy and laughter with their foster family, they may feel that they are not only letting their birth mother or father down, they might even be betraying their birth parents and member of their biological family, causing even more grief, guilt, and anxiety within the child during this season of holiday joy. Indeed, this can be a very emotionally stressful time for all involved.

As one who has fostered many children, myself, during the holiday time, I have found that it is important to address these issues beforehand. Before Thanksgiving, before Christmas, before Hanukah; even before family members and friends come to visit, foster parents need to prepare their foster child ahead of time.

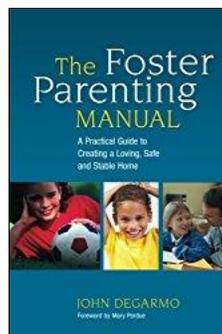
To begin with, foster parents can best help their foster child by spending some time and talking about the holiday. Perhaps the holiday being celebrated in their new home is one that their birth family never celebrated, or is a holiday that is unfamiliar with them. Let the foster child know how your family celebrates the holiday, what traditions your family celebrate, and include the child in it.

Ask your foster child about some of the traditions that his family had, and try to include some of them into your own home during the holiday. This will help him not only feel more comfortable in your own home during this time, but also remind him that he is important, and that his birth family is important, as well. Even if his traditions are ones that you do not celebrate in your own home, try to include some of his into your own holiday celebration, in some way and some fashion.

Far too many children have come to my own home and have never celebrated their birthday, have never sung a Christmas carol, have never opened up a present. Perhaps you have had similar experiences, as well. Sadly, this is not uncommon for children in foster care. It is important to keep in mind that many foster children may come from a home where they did not celebrate a particular season, nor have any traditions in their own home. What might be common in your own home may be completely new and even strange to your foster child. This often includes religious meanings for the holiday you celebrate. Again, take time to discuss the meaning about your beliefs to your foster child beforehand.



More than likely, your foster child will have feelings of sadness and grief, as he is separated from his own family during this time of family celebration. After all, he is separated from his family during a time that is supposed to be centered AROUND family. However much you provide for him, however much love you give to him, you are still not his family.



Like so many children in foster care, they want to go home, to live with their family members, despite the abuse and trauma they may have suffered from them, and despite all that you can and do offer and provide for him. Therefore, this time of holiday joy is especially difficult.

You can help him by allowing him to talk about his feelings during the holidays. Ask him how he is doing, and recognize that he may not be happy, nor enjoy this special time.

Look for signs of depression, sadness, and other emotions related to these. Allow him space to privately grieve, if he needs to, and be prepared if he reverts back to some behavior difficulties he had when he first arrived into your home. You may find that he becomes upset, rebellious, or complains a lot. Along with this, he may simply act younger than he is during this time. After all, he is trying to cope with not being with his own family during this time when families get together. These feelings and these actions are normal, and should be expected. You can also help your foster child by sending some cards and/or small gifts and presents to their own parents and birth family members. A card or small gift to

his family members can provide hope and healing for both child and parent, and help spread some of the holiday cheer that is supposed to be shared with all.

Each family has that crazy old Aunt Ethel, loud and obnoxious Uncle Fred, and the ever hard of hearing and over whelming Grandma Lucy.

Your family is used to these relatives and their personalities, your child in foster care is not.

If you have family members visit your home, prepare your foster child for this beforehand. Let him know that the normal routine in your home may become a little "crazy" during this time, that it may become loud, and describe some of the "characters" from your own family that may be coming over to visit. Remind him of the importance of using good behavior and manners throughout this period. Along with this, remind your own family members that your foster child is a member of your family, and should be treated as such.

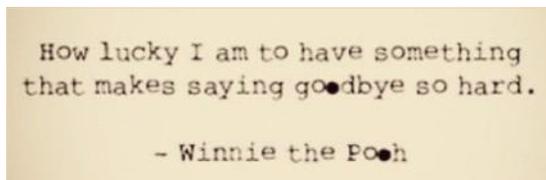
Remind them that he is to be treated as a member of the family, and not to judge him or his biological family members, or fire questions at him. This also includes gift giving. If your own children should be receiving gifts from some of your family members, your foster child should, as well. Otherwise, your foster child is going to feel left out, and his sadness and grief will only increase.

Be prepared, though, for some in your family not to have presents and gifts for him. Have some extra ones already wrapped, and hidden away somewhere, ready to be brought out, just in case.

With a little preparation beforehand from you, this season of joy can be a wonderful time for your foster child, one that may last in his memory for a life time, as well as in your memory, too. After all, the gift of love is one that can be shared, not only during the holidays, but all year long.



Born in 1969, leading foster care expert and consultant Dr. John DeGarmo has worn many hats throughout his life. Singing and dancing while touring around the world in the international super group, Up With People, serving as a D.J. at four different radio stations on two different continents, working in the professional wrestling industry, teaching English and Drama at the high school level, working as a media specialist, and founder of Never Too Late, a residential group home for boys in foster care, Dr. DeGarmo has had a variety of experiences.



## 8 Ways to Celebrate the New Year with Children

### *Special Dinner*

Celebrate the beginning of a new year with a special dinner. The kids can help create a celebration dinner. Talk about ideas for the new year—what do they hope 2017 will bring?

### *Movie Night*

New Years Eve can be a great time for family bonding. Pick a theme and find a selection of movies that everyone can enjoy. Have your snacks ready!

### *Games Tournament*

Turn off the TV and game systems! Break out the board games or card games and spend a happy few hours together.

### *City Lights, Parties and Fireworks*

Whether it's at the city hall grounds, a popular park or other landmark, there is usually a lights display and fireworks to ring in the new year. Best part is that these venues are usually free for everyone! Bring the thermos of hot chocolate!

### *Get Together With Other Families*

We often hear that it's difficult for foster families to socialize with others. Maybe New Years Eve is a good night to plan an event with other foster families so the parents can mingle and the kids can play. Host a pot-luck dinner!

### *Museums and Galleries*

Most cities have museums and art galleries that offer special new year events that are geared towards families. Many locations offer kid-friendly parties, arts and crafts and live entertainment.

### *Photobooth Fun*

Use your costume props and pull out some felt pens to make paper moustaches, eyebrows and bow ties. Drape a curtain or colorful sheet behind you. There are plenty of photobooth apps (like [Pocketbooth](#)) and have fun!

### *Have A Dancing Kitchen Party*

Create a playlist of your family's favorite tunes and dig out your favorite recipes. Get everyone dancing in the kitchen while you create culinary treats!

## Tickets to Events for BC Foster Parents

BC foster parents can receive tickets to events through *Kids Up Front Foundation*. To be placed on the mailing list e-mail the Provincial office at [office@bcfosterparents.ca](mailto:office@bcfosterparents.ca) or Debbie Drewitz at [debbiedrewitz@gmail.com](mailto:debbiedrewitz@gmail.com)



# Foster Community Resources

## Provincial Resources

|                                                                                                        |                |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| <b>BC Federation of Foster Parent Associations</b><br>www.bcfosterparents.ca                           | 1-800-663-9999 |
| <b>After Hours Foster Parent Support Line</b>                                                          | 1-888-495-4440 |
| <b>Federation of Aboriginal Foster Parents</b><br>www.fafp.ca                                          | 1-866-291-7091 |
| <b>Federation of BC Youth in Care Networks</b><br>www.fbcyicn.ca                                       | 1-800-565-8055 |
| <b>Adoptive Families Association</b><br>www.bcadoption.com                                             | 1-877-236-7807 |
| <b>Pacific Post Partum Support Society</b><br>www.postpartum.org (also supporting adoption placements) | 604-255-7999   |
| <b>Parent Help Line</b>                                                                                | 1-888-603-9100 |
| <b>Parents Together</b>                                                                                | 604-325-0511   |
| <b>Parent Support Services of BC</b><br>www.parentsupport.bc.ca                                        | 1-800-345-9777 |
| <b>Representative for Children &amp; Youth</b><br>www.rcybc.ca                                         | 1-800-476-3933 |
| <b>FAE/S Support Network</b>                                                                           | 604-507-6675   |

## Coastal Fraser

*For contact information for local foster parent groups or support in your area, please call 1-800-663-9999.*

|                                                                                   |                |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| <b>Hollyburn Family Services</b><br>www.hollyburn.ca                              | 604-987-8211   |
| <b>Vancouver Aboriginal Child &amp; Family Services Society</b><br>www.vacfss.com | 778-331-4500   |
| <b>Foster Hub</b><br>www.fosterhub.ca                                             | 1-877-926-1185 |
| <b>Fraser Valley Foster Parent Association</b>                                    | 604-533-1924   |
| <b>South Vancouver Youth Centre</b><br>www.milieu.ca/svyc                         | 604-325-2004   |

## Island

*For contact information for local foster parent groups or support in your area, please call 1-800-663-9999.*

|                                                                    |                |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| <b>Foster Parent Support Services Society</b>                      | 1-888-922-8437 |
| FPSSS (Victoria)                                                   | 778-430-5459   |
| FPSSS (Nanaimo)                                                    | 250-390-9686   |
| FPSSS (Campbell River)                                             | 250-286-0555   |
| <b>Federation of Aboriginal Foster Parents</b><br>(Nanaimo office) | 250-591-0069   |

## Interior

*For contact information for local foster parent groups or support in your area, please call 1-800-663-9999.*

|                                                                           |                |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| <b>Okanagan Foster Parent Association</b><br>www.okfosterparents.ca       |                |
| Central Okanagan                                                          | 250-870-8991   |
| North Okanagan                                                            | 250-558-0939   |
| South Okanagan                                                            | 250-462-6907   |
| Shuswap                                                                   | 250-253-4499   |
| <b>Okanagan Metis Children &amp; Family Services</b>                      | 250-868-0351   |
| <b>Interior Community Services</b><br>www.interiorcommunityservices.bc.ca | 1-877-376-3660 |

## North

*For contact information for local foster parent groups or support in your area, please call 1-800-663-9999.*

|                                                                                                      |                             |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <b>AXIS Family Resources</b><br>(24/7 support)<br>www.axis.bc.ca (satellite office locations online) | 1-877-392-1003<br>Press 205 |
| <b>Community Bridge</b><br>Fort St. John<br>www.communitybridge.ca                                   | 250-785-6021<br>(ext. 235)  |

*We are in the process of developing our Community Resources page. Please submit your relevant contacts to [jayne@bcfosterparents.ca](mailto:jayne@bcfosterparents.ca).*

## Advertise Here! (1/2 page size)

### Readership, Exposure & Frequency

- **FosterlineBC** reaches over 3400 foster parents, agencies, community service locations, businesses and other individuals 4 times each year.
- Increase exposure for your business by advertising in **FosterlineBC**

### Cost

- 1/2 page ~ 4 issues per year ~ \$925
- 1/2 page ~ single issue ~ \$250
- 1/4 page ~ 4 issues per year ~ \$650
- 1/4 page ~ single issue ~ \$175
- Business card ~ 4 issues per year ~ \$475
- Business card ~ single issue ~ \$125

For information on advertising in FosterlineBC, contact a staff member at BCFFPA! **1-800-663-9999**

**1/4 Page Size**

**Business Card Size**

**'IT PAYS TO BE A MEMBER'**

Please complete & return to: **BCFFPA - 131 Eighth Street, New Westminster, BC V3M 3P6**

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City & Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_ Region: \_\_\_\_\_

Local Association \_\_\_\_\_

Level of Foster Home: (tick one) Restricted \_\_\_ Regular \_\_\_ Level I \_\_\_ Level II \_\_\_ Level III \_\_\_ Contractor \_\_\_ Other \_\_\_

This is a: **New Membership** \_\_\_ (OR) a **Renewal** \_\_\_ .

**1 year:** individual \$30.00 \_\_\_ OR couple \$35.00 \_\_\_

**2 year:** individual \$50.00 \_\_\_ OR couple \$60.00 \_\_\_

*\*\$10.00 of this membership fee will be used by the provincial body for administration of the program and development of services to foster parents. The balance of the fee will be returned to your region or local association.*

I/we contract with (i.e. delegated agency regional agency MCFD etc.) Name: \_\_\_\_\_ OR my affiliation with the BCFFPA is (i.e. staff, MCFD, non-foster parent): \_\_\_\_\_. As members of the B.C. Federation of Foster Parent Associations, I/we agree to abide by the By-laws, Policy and Procedures, and Code of Ethics of the Federation. \_\_\_\_\_

[signature(s)]

Please bill my VISA \_\_\_ M/C \_\_\_ # \_\_\_\_\_ Expires \_\_\_ / \_\_\_

**BC Federation of Foster Parent Associations**

131 Eighth Street  
New Westminster, BC V3M

