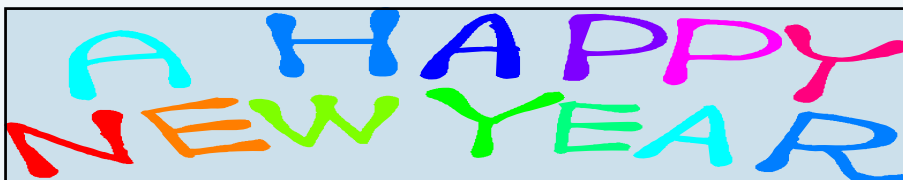


# Northern Fostering News

JANUARY 2012



Welcome 2012! Here is hoping that you all survived the holidays and were able to spend some quality time with family and friends.

We all realise that although Christmas can be an exciting time, sometimes it can also be a very depressing time for children living in foster care. It can

remind them of happier family times and they can be really torn. Here is hoping that everything went well in your home.

Now that everyone is back to school and back on routine things should be running more smoothly. I know my kids

were more than ready to get back to school and see their friends and share what they got for Christmas with everyone.

As we all buckle down and get busy the winters months, Everyone at the FFC-NWT is hoping 2012 is a great year for you and

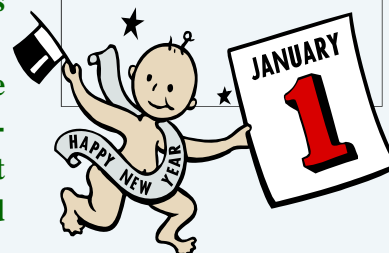
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OFFICE HOURS  
MONDAY TO FRIDAY,  
8:30 AM TO 5:00 PM



## Camp Connections

Unfortunately the FFC-NWT was unsuccessful in getting into the finals in the Aviva Community Fund Contest in the fall. It was a great opportunity for us to get some exposure so that everyone knows that we are looking for funds to fix up camp. We were very fortunate

to receive donations from Diavik, TTC-Bosco Homes Staff Christmas functions and other individuals in the community to a total of \$3,500.00. We will be looking into other ways to raise funds to rebuild our cookhouse.

PSAV Architects have agreed to do-

nate drawings of the new cookhouse design for us.

Thanks to everyone for your support!

Our Camp Manager is working part-time to prepare for summer camp. Registration will be available online on our website this year.

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

|                                   |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT       | 2 |
| FROM THE BOARD                    | 3 |
| RECRUITING                        | 3 |
| STAY IN SCHOOL                    | 4 |
| HELPING CHILDREN SOAR SCHOLARSHIP | 4 |
| REGIONAL NEWS                     | 5 |
| VACATIONS                         | 5 |
| LGBTQ YOUTH IN FOSTER CARE        | 6 |
| CRIB AND CRADLE SAFETY            | 7 |

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Happy New Year Everyone!

Now that I am back in the office after taking time off to spend with my family over the holidays, I have hit the ground with both feet running! Although it is great to relax, things tend to pile up a little in my absence.

I travelled to Ottawa for the 2nd Annual National Executive Director's meeting from November 9th—11th. This is a research group that gathers information about topics related to foster parents across the country. Although some things are different across Canada, you will find that foster parents are really interested in the same things and are faced with the same struggles as others.

I have been gathering information on liability insurance for foster parents. This would assist foster parents with legal fees if they were every to have fostering related charges laid against them. I have been talking with an insurance company in BC that provides this coverage for foster parents in that province and I will have more information for everyone in the near future.

It was decided at the fall Board Development Meeting to focus more on reaching out to the communities. We will be arranging our AGM through video conferencing in the future so we can utilize the budget to get out to the com-

munities and promote Team Building Meetings and possibly some foster parent training.

Decisions will be made in the near future as to which communities we will be traveling to. If you are interested in having training in your community, please call me and let me know.

We received some funding from the NGO Stabilization Fund to assist in travel expenses for national meetings, board development and upgrading office equipment.

I have traveled to Behchoko with the FFC President, Pat Strus, to initiate Team Buildings Meetings between the coalition and Social Services staff. We encourage these meetings to open lines of communication between foster parents and their social workers.

I continue to participate in Partnership Meetings with the Department of Health and Social Services. We are meeting on a quarterly basis. We have recently been approved to recruit foster parents through Facebook. There will be an ad running until the end of March 2012. More and more advertising is happening this way and it is accessed by so many people. It will be targeted to

users in the NWT who are over the age of 18.

Remember there are lots of funds available for the Stay in School Awards and Tutoring. More information is available in our website [www.ffc Northwest.com](http://www.ffc Northwest.com).

The Canadian Foster Family Association will be starting up their National Poster Contest again this year. More details will be in the next newsletter.

Our lines are always open to hear any concerns, questions, or comments from foster parents. We are here for you, and want to hear what you have to say. Call us toll free at 1 866 233 0136. I really look forward to hearing from you!

All the best in 2012!

Sincerely,

Tammy Krivda

Executive Director

FFC-NWT



2011– 2012 FFC-NWT BOARD OF DIRECTORS

|                  |                     |                             |
|------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------|
| Patricia Strus   | President/Treasurer | Yellowknife                 |
| Margaret Guthrie | Vice-President      | Yellowknife                 |
| Darlene Koe      | Secretary           | Beaufort—Delta (non-voting) |
| Wayne Richards   | Director            | Beaufort-Delta              |
| Bob Richardson   | Director            | Tlicho                      |
| Emma Amundson    | Director            | Dehcho (non-voting)         |
| Paulina Roche    | Director            | Sahtu                       |
| Marlene Tutcho   | Director            | Sahtu                       |
| Tracy Bird       | Director            | Fort Smith                  |

The Board of Directors represents all foster parents in the region they reside in. If you are in need of support, information or you just want to chat, contact your representative but emailing them from our website. [www.ffcnwt.com](http://www.ffcnwt.com) and clicking on Board of Directors and then their name. If you want to connect with them by phone, please call the FFC office at 1-866-233-0136 and Tammy will ensure that they connect with you. We also have positions that are open on the board! If you are interested in volunteering a few hours a month , please call today!

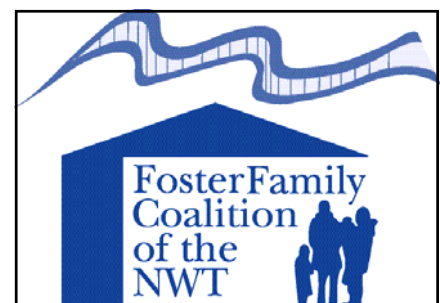
RECRUITING FOR NEW FOSTER HOMES

The FFC-NWT has received some funding from the Department of Health and Social Services to do a small recruitment ad on Facebook! The ad should be up and running by the end of the month. It will be visible to Facebook users who are residents of the NWT and are over the age of 18. By clicking on the ad,

you will be directed to the FFC-NWT website for more information. On our website there will be links to for each of the regions. We will also be able to give information and support from our office.

We have started a Facebook account and can be reached by searching FFC NWT. We can also follow

us on Twitter! Another way to reach out to people across the territory, please follow us!



STAY IN SCHOOL AWARDS

The FFC-NWT is proud to announce we are continuing to be a distributor for the Scotia Capital Stay in School Awards. This school year we have \$25,000 to distribute to school aged, at-risk children and youth across the territory !

Program Eligibility:

- ◆ Disadvantaged, at-risk youth in elementary or high school
- ◆ Currently being served by a Health and Social Services Authority/Agency or a partnering organization
- ◆ Recommended by staff and approved by a Supervisor

- ◆ Clear indication of significant academic achievement given personal circumstances

**Awards Available:**

**Stay in School Award:** \$100 cash and a \$200 Canada Savings Bond—Deadlines October 15 and April 15

**Graduation Award:** \$50 cash award for graduating from grade 8 or grade 12.— Deadline - July 15

**Leap to Learning Tutoring :** Funds are available to support a student who needs tutoring. Based on 1 hour per week - ongoing  
To apply go to our website at [www.ffcnwt.com](http://www.ffcnwt.com) and click on the link "Financial Grants for NWT Youth".



Helping Children Soar Scholarship Fund

The FFC-NWT has started a scholarship fund for NWT residents who have grown up in foster care, through the Yellowknife Community Foundation. Funds to start the scholarship were from generous donations from BHP and the Yellowknife Foster Family Association.

For more information about the scholarship and how to apply at <http://www.yellowknifecommunityfoundation.ca>.

Donations can be made on the site as well as through contacting the FFC-NWT.

The Yellowknife Community Foundation will be recruiting individuals to apply for the scholarship in the spring.



Helping Children Soar!

National Social Worker Month

March is National Social Worker Month!

This is a reminder to let your social worker know how much you appreciate all their hard work. Much like foster parents, social workers are rarely acknowledged for all that they do for families in the NWT.



## Regional News

### Beaufort-Delta

The Beaufort-Delta region is seeing lots of staff turnover. New staff means travel and training. We are working together with the authority to start Team Building Meetings in this region.

### Wayne Richards

#### Beaufort-Delta Region

#### Sahtu

Deline does not have a social worker living in the community. One travels in every 3 months.

It was a fairly quiet Christmas over the holidays with a cookout at the ski hill, hot chocolate and fireworks for New Year's Eve. Some kids went to try out for the Arctic Winter Games recently. We are making plans to go out on the land over spring break.

### Paulina Roche

#### Sahtu Region

### Tlicho

There have been two Team Building Meetings recently in our region and a third one is scheduled for the end of the month. This is a great way to open the lines of communication between the agency and foster families. We are currently looking at foster parent training and a social event. There is new staff coming onboard in the office and we are excited to be working with them.

### Bob Richardson

#### Tlicho Region

### Yellowknife

The foster families in the Yellowknife region have been busy over the last few months. We held our annual Christmas Party at the beginning of December. There was a great turnout for brunch, crafts and singing. All the children re-

ceived a gift from Santa.

There was a Silent Auction in December as well and we raised \$2,500 to help with the party.

YHSSA has had a lot of staff turnover lately as well. There are many new faces at the office.

We have a new Foster Family Liaison Worker working part-time in our office. Pam Weeks-Beaton provides support to foster families in the Yellowknife Region.

The Yellowknife Foster Family Association has some new board members and for once we have 50% men, 50% women on the board. We are really excited with all their new ideas.

### Margaret Guthrie

#### Yellowknife Region

## Vacations

Spring Break is coming up fast and summer is not far behind it. If you are going on vacation or travelling with your foster children, remember to get permission and a travel letter from your child's social worker. If you are flying and require a passport please give social services lots of advance notice. Obtaining a passport for a child/youth in foster care can take up to 6 months. Travel allowances are different in every region. Connect with your social worker to see what support you are entitled to when you take vacations with your foster children.

## ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF LGBTQ YOUTH IN FOSTER CARE

### Lack of Permanency

Youth in foster care who are LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered/ Transsexual/Two-spirited/ Transitioning, Queer/ Questioning) are less likely to find a permanent home than other children, whether that means reunification or adoption. “one of the issues that affects youth in the system who are sexual or gender minorities is not enough focus on permanency,” says Jody Marksamer, staff attorney and youth director at the National Center for Lesbian Rights (NCLR). “Child welfare workers often give up on the idea that these youth will find a family that’s excited to have them.”

Transgender youth may have the hardest time with permanency. “I’ve worked with a lot of homeless transgender youth who couldn’t find anyone who would accept them for who they are,” says Lydi Davidson, MSW, director of resource development for the National CASA.

As foster parents, we open our home to children and youth in need. The most important thing that LGBTQ youth need is for someone to

tell them that they are okay just the way they are.

Having to hide their identity means that youth can’t reveal the normal rites of passage such as their first romance or breakup. And while their peers may be confiding or even bragging about their experiences, they must keep silent.

Regarding coming out, foster mother Berdie Williams offers this advice to adults, “Just be neutral and if you know they are gay and have not come out, wait for them to address it. They need to come out to face it.” They build up confidence when they do. I tell them, “if people don’t accept you now, they’ll eventually come and round. And if they don’t, it’s their loss.”

Children and youth who enter foster care can find placement a destructive and frightening experience. The ‘place of safety’ can be an unsafe place for LGBTQ youth because they fear rejection.

### Sexual Orientation Definitions

**Bisexual**—Someone who is attracted to both men and women. A bisexual may prefer either a man or a woman on many levels—emotionally, intellectually and sexually—and defines himself or herself as bisexual.

**Dyke**—in the past, this was a derogatory term used to describe lesbians, but now the word is being reclaimed by many lesbians as a positive title.

**Gay Man**—a man who is attracted to other men. A gay man prefers other men on many levels—emotionally, intellectually and sexually and defines himself as gay.

**Gay Woman**—a woman who is attracted to other women. A gay woman prefers other women on many levels—emotionally, intellectually and emotionally and defines herself as gay. Also uses the term lesbian.

**Gender Expression**—how one shows they are a man or a woman through clothes, mannerisms, voice, hairstyle, makeup and grooming— which may or may not match their sex at birth.

**Gender Identity**—a person’s inner sense of whether they are a man or a woman— which may or may not be the same as their sex at birth.

**Heterosexual**—Someone who is attracted to members of the opposite sex. A heterosexual prefers members of the opposite sex on

## ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF LGBTQ YOUTH IN FOSTER CARE CONTD...

Many different levels—emotionally, intellectually and sexually—and defines him or herself as heterosexual

**Homosexual**— This is an older term that has come to include both gay men and lesbians. It was originally used only for men. Today it is not used as often as the terms gay and lesbian.

**Lesbian**— a woman who is attracted to women. A lesbian is a woman who prefers other women on many levels— emotionally, intellectually and sexually—and defines herself as a lesbian.

**Queer**—Formerly a derogatory term and still used in that way by some heterosexuals to describe other sexual orientations. Today the term is used by many LGBTQ people to include anyone who is gay, lesbian, transgendered or two-spirited but not straight.

**Straight**—a term for a heterosexual person.

**Transgender**—someone who is not comfortable with (or rejects) their birth gender. The term includes transsexuals, transmen, transwomen, transvestites, and cross dressers.

**Transsexual**—Someone who has strong and lasting feelings that they are the wrong sex. Some, but not all, transsexuals have full or partial sex reassignment surgery and /or hormone therapy.

**Two-Spirit**—A term from North American Indian culture that identifies persons who have both the spirit of a man and a woman in one body. Traditionally these people were regarded as having received a special gift.

NCLR—National Center for Lesbians Rights

CASA—Court Appointed Special Advocates

[www.respectyourself.ca](http://www.respectyourself.ca)

## EDUCATE YOURSELF...

As foster parents we take in youth that come from families that may be different than ours. This will include, culture, traditions and family values. We also are exposed to many different kinds of disabilities and social issues.



Educate yourself on how to best meet the needs of children and youth placed in your care. That means addressing them as a whole person which includes all of their needs; emotional, intellec-

tual, cultural, physical and their sexual orientation. In order to answer their questions; educate yourself. An excellent resource for everyone is : [www.respectyourself.ca](http://www.respectyourself.ca) You will find some very straight forward information that can be helpful for you and your teenaged children regarding many topics ; your body, healthy relationships, pregnancy and STI's as well as sexual orientation.

“Instead of seeing the rug being pulled out from under us, we can learn to dance on the shifting carpet.”

Thomas Crum

**CRIB AND CRADLE SAFETY**

The safest place for a baby to sleep is on a crib alone. They can sleep in a cradle alone until they are 6 months old, can sit up alone or have reached the weight restrictions.

**Choosing and Crib or a Cradle**

- ◆ Look for a label that shows it was made after September 1986. Older cribs may not be safe and cannot be sold or purchased.
- ◆ Cribs or cradles with decorative cut-outs, corner posts that are more than 3mm in heights or lead paint can be dangerous.
- ◆ Make sure the mattress is tight against all 4 sides of the crib. The space between the crib and the mattress should not be more than 3 cm. The

mattress should not be more than 15 cm thick

- ◆ The spacing between the bars should be no more than 6 cm
- ◆ Replace the mattress if it is not firm or worn out.
- ◆ Wood and metal parts should be free of splinters or burrs and there should be no loose nuts or bolts
- ◆ Cribs that are damaged or missing parts should be destroyed

**Using a Crib or a Cradle**

- ◆ Do not modify a crib in any way. Always follow instructions
- ◆ Check the crib often to make

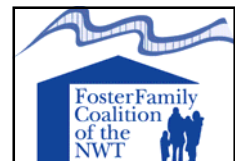
sure the frame is solid

- ◆ Ensure sides are up and locked when the baby is in the crib
- ◆ Move the mattress to the lowest level when the baby can sit up
- ◆ Remove all mobiles and toy bars when the baby begins to push up on their hands and knees
- ◆ Avoid soft pillows, comforters, stuffed toys and bumper pads as they can pose a suffocation hazard
- ◆ Place the crib away from windows, curtains, blind cords, lamps electrical plugs and extensions cords

Health Canada

We are here to support you.... If you have any questions or concerns or you just want to chat, please do not hesitate to contact us:

- ◆ Toll-Free Support Line at 1-866-233-0136.
- ◆ Drop in to our office located in the Centre Square Mall, lower level, through the library doors (signs are posted)
- ◆ Email us at : [info@ffcnwt.com](mailto:info@ffcnwt.com)



We are on the WEB!!!  
[www.ffcnwt.com](http://www.ffcnwt.com)