

# Northern Fostering News

SPRING 2016



## WELCOME SPRING!

It has been a long and beautiful winter here in the North! Although the mild temperatures have been nice, we are excited to see the Spring arrive!

We look forward to sharing information with you in this edition of Northern Fostering News, including the return to the FFC-NWT office, a board member feature, plans for upcoming

recruitment booths new changes to the Standards at the Department of Health and Social Services and upcoming plans for Camp Connections! Please read along to learn more!

5125 50<sup>th</sup> Street Yellowknife NT

1-866-233-0136

867-766-3326

[info@ffcnwt.com](mailto:info@ffcnwt.com)

PO Box 2022 X1A 2P5

## FFC-NWT FACEBOOK SUPPORT GROUPS

The FFC-NWT has been hosting private support groups on our Facebook Page for a number of months and we would love to have YOU involved!

There are three separate groups, “Fostering” “Pre-Adoption” and “Post-Adoption”. These groups are an excellent opportunity to share resources, success stories, ask questions and receive support from people who are in similar process as you.

These groups are a safe-space and judgments free. We ask individuals to agree to a Code of Conduct before joining.

Please send us a Facebook Message at Foster Family Coalition of the NWT today to join!



## FFC-NWT'S NEW (AGAIN) OFFICE

As many of you know from our Winter newsletter, our beautiful office flooded a month after we moved in!

Well, we're back! We moved back into our office in late February and have been busy putting it back in order. Thanks to the

mild temperatures in March we were even able to move our plants back!

We look forward to having another Open House, scheduled for May 27<sup>th</sup> from 1-4 pm

Please come by and see our new (again) space! We are located at 5125 50<sup>th</sup> street in Yellowknife.



## MEET OUR BOARD MEMBERS!

We will be featuring our awesome Board of Director's in each issue of Northern Fostering News so you know who is available to talk to in your region! Meet Chris in Fort Smith!

Chris was born and raised in Halifax, NS, Canada. After graduating from the graphic design program at Nova Scotia Community College in 1998 she moved north and resides in Fort Smith, NWT. After three and a half years of working for a small graphic firm, she was given an opportunity, which allowed her to start her own graphic arts/art creations/promotional business, DeWolf ArtWorks.

Chris has been fostering since 2012 and sits on the board of directors for the FFC-NWT representing the Fort Smith region. She also is the Vice-Chair of the Northern Life Museum & Cultural Centre and most recently, the new library assistant at the Mary Kaeser Library. Recently, Chris has joined the Canadian Foster Family Association Board of Directors as the NWT Representative! Way to go Chris!

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

Spring is almost here and once again we have hit the ground running in the office. We have had quite and interesting year that I will do my best to recap for you.

The beginning of April is always a busy time of year as we are advertising, interviewing and hiring our camp staff for the summer. Our Camp Director Carlie Lachowski organized all this and hired AMAZING staff that pulled off another exciting summer jam packed with fun. Carlie was not able to perform all her duties as planned because of some health challenges but Nicole stepped up to the plate and took on the task under Carlie's direction. All worked out well and Carlie had a beautiful baby boy in December!

I attended some great training in Edmonton last April on the new FASD Diagnostic Criteria, this has really helped my when working on the Stanton Territorial Hospital FASD Diagnostic Team. I have continued on the team over the past year, meeting with and supporting parents and caregivers that have children seen at the clinic.

Also in April, we partnered with Yellowknife School District #1, Yellowknife Catholic Schools and Yellowknife Health and Social Services to bring up Russell Pohl to provided some workshops and information sessions on Inclusion and Diversity. The sessions were well very attended.

In May, I travelled to the annual Canadian Foster Family Association meetings in Sundre Alberta. This is three days of Committee meetings at the Alberta Foster Parent Association Camp. We are remote and there is lots of time to focus on the work that needs to be done. I continued to spearhead the revamping of the CFFA Safeguarding Manual.

In June, I went to Behchoko and delivered Pre-Service P.R.I.D.E. training over three days. The training was every well attended and it was the start of some much-needed communication between the foster parents and Social Services. This has really opened up those lines of communication for people in this community.

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

Camp Day was June 29<sup>th</sup> and it was really great to have Minister Abernethy attend. He was able to have a tour of the site and see first hand why Camp Connections is so near and dear to our hearts. Minister Abernethy nominated the FFC-NWT for the Arctic Inspiration Prize in the fall. Unfortunately, we were not chosen as winners of the prize, but writing the proposal set the much needed ground work for moving forward with fundraising for the re-build of our cookhouse. We have since acquired the renderings for the building so we are one step closer to launching our fundraising campaign.

The first session of camp started at the end of June and went until the middle of August. We were able to accommodate 92 campers over the summer even with an evacuation because of forest fire danger thanks to our flexible staff and the Scouts for lending us their campsite for the last session.

At the end of August I went to Fort Simpson to do some FASD Training at the teacher's conference that was held there. Getting out to the communities is always a great was to connect with foster parents and social workers in that community as well. September was the Canadian Foster Family Association Conference in Niagara Falls, Ontario. There were 5 foster parents that attended from the NWT; some were sponsored by their region, and some by funding from the NGO Stabilization Fund. I was so nice to have such a great turnout. I ran for a position on the CFFA Board of Directors as Secretary and I was successful. Chris Dewolf has since taken over the position as the NWT Board Member and will be traveling to the meetings with me in the upcoming year.

October brought National Foster Family Appreciation Week when we send out packages to all the foster parents across the territory and spent some time focusing on awareness and recruitment. There were some great celebrations in the communities to show how foster parents are appreciated. In November, we focused on National Adoption Awareness Month really spreading the word by social media.



## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

Also in November we were very happy to find a new office space in the Dene Nation Building at 5125 – 50<sup>th</sup> Street in Yellowknife.

We are street front and much more visible and accessible to the public. Unfortunately only a few weeks after we moved in, our office flooded and we were forced to move out while repairs were being done. We happily moved back in at the beginning of February and are unpacked once again.

The first bunch of Stay in School Awards has been sent out and we are receiving more for the next deadline that is on April 30/15. If you have a youth that is graduating from either grade 8 or grade 12, there are awards for them as well. Deadline is July 15. Check out our website for more details and for the fillable forms.

Registration is now open for *Camp Connections*. The registration forms are coming in at a steady pace so if you have someone that wants to attend camp make sure you get the registration form in as soon as possible. We are very happy to have Nicole working as our Camp Director and we look forward to her new ideas and creativity for programming this summer.

Some of the new Child and Family Services Standards have been completed and the social workers will be following them so you might see some changes to the way things are done. These will all benefit you and the children that you care for. Moving in to the New Fiscal Year, we will be sharing some very exciting news about Legal Defense Insurance that will be available to foster parents this year. We will be starting to work on this over the summer and it will be up and running in the fall. Also P.R.I.D.E. will be available online in this year as well. There will be more information in the July newsletter on how you can access it.

Hope to all see you at our Open House on May 27<sup>th</sup> from 1-4 pm!

Tammy Roberts  
Executive Director

## PRESIDENT REPORT

What a winter it has been!

We have been very busy at the Foster Family Coalition this winter.

One of the main projects we have been working on is the Liability and Legal Defense Fund with the Department of Health and Social Services Child and Family Services Division. It has been many years that we have been working towards this type of program and we are so excited to see it come to fruition. Launching soon, the Liability and Legal Defense Fund will be available to all foster parents in the NWT. We believe this will help relieve some pressure and stress on current foster parents as well as help recruit new homes, which are always needed in the communities.

Another big project we have been working on is the new P.R.I.D.E online model of training. Although not officially launched yet, we have had social workers in Fort Smith, The Deh Cho, Yellowknife, Tlicho and the Sahtu currently piloting the In-Service program and a few new coming foster parents taking the Pre-Service program.

We are very much looking forward to their feedback, as it will only continue to improve the program. Our partnership with Governor State University in Chicago IL, who developed the online model of P.R.I.D.E, has been so helpful and consistent when it comes to working out the kinks. We are confident that the feedback received by the pilot participants will be well received and make the program the best it can be.

The registration for summer 2016 of Camp Connections is now open. We encourage both foster parents and social workers alike to register the children and youth under their care to register them for one of five sessions this summer. We have three sessions dedicated to the popular category of 7-11 year olds, one for 12-14 year old and a youth camp for the 12-18 year old age group.

## PRESIDENT REPORT

The canoe trips this summer will depend on the forest fire season, which is unfortunately calling for a bad one again. We are hopeful that the youth camp will have the opportunity to do a few short overnight trips.

We continue to fundraise for the re-build of our cookhouse and have made progress over the winter by hiring Stantec Architect Firm to do some renderings of the proposed cook house. We feel this will aid in fundraising as it will give potential funders a vision of what it will look like!

We hope you all enjoy the remainder of the spring and have a restful and full-filled summer!

Yours in Fostering,

Dawn Pottinger  
President  
FFC-NWT



## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT

The Foster Family Coalition of the NWT is hosting its Annual General Meeting on May 9<sup>th</sup> at 8 pm. The AGM is open to all foster and adoptive families in the NWT and members of the FFC-NWT.

If you are not in Yellowknife and want to call in there is a Toll-Free log-in number. Please call the FFC-NWT office to get the number and log-in code at 1-866-233-0136.

Those in Yellowknife are welcome to come into the FFC-NWT office located in the Dene Nation Building to attend the meeting.

Currently the positions that are open for election are:

- Vice-President
- 1 position from Yellowknife
- 2 Position from the Deh Cho
- 1 Position from the Sahtu,
- 1 Position from the Beaufort Delta
- 1 Position from Fort Smith
- 2 Positions from Hay River
- 2 Positions from the Tlicho.

If you would like to nominate someone for a position on the board of directors, you can use the form on the following page.

The Annual General Meeting will be immediately followed by a short board meeting.

# FFC-NWT Board Member Nomination Form

Nominations must be made by a foster parent or you can nominate yourself.

I, \_\_\_\_\_ nominate \_\_\_\_\_  
(name of the person suggesting the Board member) (name of the person to sit on the board)

For a position on the Board of Directors with the Foster Family Coalition of the NWT.

The person I am nominating is from the community of: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Nominator: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Nominee: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please answer the following questions about the person who you would like to serve on the Board of Directors. This will be on the voters ballot that will be mailed to foster parents in your region in late February.**

1. How long have you been a foster parent and what do you like most about it?

2. What can you do for the FFC-NWT?

3. What do you feel is important for foster parents in the NWT?

# **FOSTER FAMILY COALITION of the NWT**

## **Board Member RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Individual Responsibilities of Board Members**

Meetings and teleconferences are one aspect of Board Member responsibilities. There are also other duties that will be expected of the Board Member to carry out in their region.

A Board Member, will be expected to:

- Understand and support the goals and objectives of the FFC-NWT;
- Represent the interests of the foster families in their regions and community;
- Share the responsibility for managing the business of the FFC-NWT by, planning activities, fundraising, newsletters and other work of the Board;
- Provide the FFC-NWT with information about the fostering community, issues, activities, and resources in their region, and bring information from the FFC-NWT back to their community and region;
- Attend Board meetings, be on time, keep a file for all board meetings/communication, and participate actively;
- Review all Board materials sent out before meetings;
- Keep informed about the FFC-NWT and other fostering activities;
- Ask for information when unclear about FFC-NWT issues, and insist on having enough information to make a responsible decision on an issue;
- Be willing to take a position on all Board matters;
- Not speak for the Board unless delegated to do so;
- Carry out responsibilities listed under corporate responsibilities;
- Recognize the differences between corporate and individual authority as a Board member. Respect this difference when acting on behalf of the FFC-NWT, both within the NWT and when traveling outside the territory.
- Keep up-to-date and informed about major developments within the FFC-NWT and all projects and undertakings it is involved with. Also keep informed about fostering issues in general;
- Complete an evaluation form at least once a year on your own effectiveness as a Board member;
- Communicate with the Executive Director on a monthly basis, outside of Board meetings, and provide an update on fostering issues/concerns in your region. This will benefit the Board member and the Executive Director, as both will be accountable for their actions and involvement in different regions/communities;
- Develop an effective working relationship with the Social Services office in your regions/community;

- Be open to supporting foster families in your region and provide information on FFC-NWT activities;
- Participate in FFC-NWT activities in your region/community;
- Participate in the creation of the newsletter; and
- Notify the FFC-NWT when you are no longer fostering.

The FFC-NWT Board of Directors as a whole is responsible for:

- The ongoing evaluation of the FFC-NWT's direction and mission;
- Defining and describing the duties of the President;
- Maintaining the financial integrity of the FFC-NWT;
- Evaluating FFC-NWT operations and effectiveness;
- Establishing mechanisms, which monitor programs and other FFC-NWT activities on an ongoing basis. This will ensure that the FFC-NWT continues to meet the needs of foster families in the NWT in the best manner possible with the resources that are available;
- Develop and approve bylaws that cover such topics as selecting board members, committee structures, meeting and voting procedures, and standards of Board conduct;
- Assuming powers that come with corporate status, such as the power to sue and be sued, and to enter into contracts;
- Regularly assessing the Board's performance and the performance of its committees;
- Creating a climate for innovation and progress within the FFC-NWT.
- The main responsibility of the Board of Directors is to give the FFC-NWT a sense of purpose and direction. Board members are responsible for the long-term welfare of the FFC-NWT.

## **Public Relations**

Effective public relations depend on the efforts of many people. Public relations are important in gaining and keeping public support.

To achieve this, Board members;

- Represent the FFC-NWT at all fostering events and activities they take part in;
- Are aware of fostering issues as they develop, both on a territorial and national level. The members are willing to personally interpret these to all interested citizens; and

- Consider communication and request from citizens and refer to the President and /or Executive Director.

### **Board Members' Code of Ethics**

1. I will try to serve the fostering community in the best way possible.
2. I will try to attend all Board meetings.
3. I will try to see that all FFC-NWT activities funds are spent efficiently, economically, and in the best interest of fostering and the children.
4. I will not use my position for my own personal advantage or that of my family and friends.
5. I will listen to the opinions of other Board members and individuals before making final decisions.
6. I will recognize that no individual Board member has the right to make decisions on behalf of the FFC-NWT.
7. I will abide by decisions of the Board and will support them as long as I remain on the Board.
8. I will not discuss the confidential business of the Board outside of Board meetings.
9. I will try to keep informed on local, provincial and national fostering issues.
10. I will not make disparaging remarks about other Board members to the best of my abilities.
11. I will read and abide by the Board manual.
12. I will fulfill my responsibilities as a Board member to the best of my abilities.
13. I will voluntarily withdraw from voting on a matter that will directly benefit a sibling, niece, nephew, spouse, and parent or self in relation to hiring, issuance of contracts or on other matters what will result in material or monetary gain. Should there be a need to raise an issue or concern on my or on behalf of my family, I shall do so, however I will refrain from participating in the decision relating to this matter.

## **EXECUTIVE RESPONSIBILITIES**

(As outlined in the bylaws)

### **President**

The President plans, organizes and directs the major functions of the FFC-NWT in consultation with other directors and within the powers designated by the Constitution and Bylaws of the Foster Family Coalition of the Northwest Territories. The President is the official representative of the FFC-NWT. The President may at times designate another member of the Board of Directors or an employee to represent the Coalition. The President is the direct supervisor of employees of the FFC-NWT.

### **Vice- President**

The Vice-President is a member of the Board of Directors and will assist the President in his/her behalf and perform duties of the President in his/her absence.

### **Past -President**

The Past-President is a member of the Board of Directors and shall be an advisor to the President.

### **Secretary**

The Secretary is a member of the Board of Directors and will ensure that:

- i. Official records of the FFC-NWT are maintained;
- ii. Minutes of all FFC-NWT meetings are prepared and kept;
- iii. Arrangements are made for the FFC-NWT meetings, agendas are made; and notice of the FFC-NWT meetings is given.

### **Treasurer**

The Treasurer is a member of the Board of Directors and will:

- i. Assist in the preparation of the budgets;
- ii. Prepare financial statements for presentation to the Board of Directors and membership of the FFC-NWT;
- iii. Keep complete records of financial transactions of the FFC-NWT; and
- iv. Plan and administer, through the Board of Directors, the FFC-NWT accounting system.



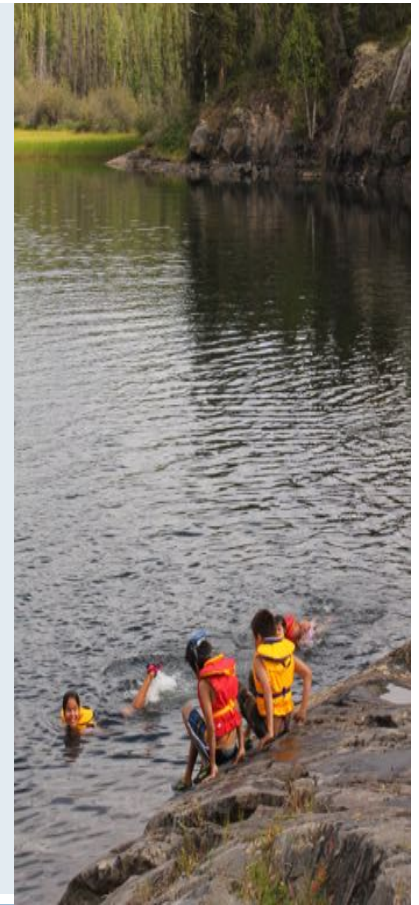
## RAISE THE ROOF AT CAMP CONNECTIONS

The FFC-NWT has had exciting progress on the re-build of Camp Connection's Cookhouse in recent months! Working with Stantec Architect Firm we have secured renderings of the new cookhouse. This is just the first step in developing blue prints to put together a cost estimate. We are very pleased with the results and look forward to moving along with this project!



## CAMP CONNECTIONS 2016

We are so excited for Camp 2016! This year we will have almost all new staff and we are excited for their fresh enthusiasm. We are also very excited about hiring a cultural advisor to assist in setting up the teepee and wall tent that will be used for morning check-in's and traditional fish smoking. Registration is now open for Camp 2016 so please visit [www.fcnwt.com](http://www.fcnwt.com) as space is limited and we want to ensure every child has the opportunity to come to Camp!



## CAMP CONNECTIONS 2016!

Session	Ages	Dates
Session 1	7-11	June 30 <sup>th</sup> - July 6 <sup>th</sup>
Session 2	12-14	July 11 <sup>th</sup> - July 17 <sup>th</sup>
Session 3	7-11	July 22 <sup>nd</sup> - July 28 <sup>th</sup>
Session 4	12-18	August 2 <sup>nd</sup> - August 8 <sup>th</sup>
Session 5	7-11	August 13 <sup>th</sup> - August 19 <sup>th</sup>

## MENTORSHIP FOR FOSTER AND ADOPTIVE PARENTS

The FFC-NWT in partnership with the Department of Health and Social Services is planning to develop a mentorship program for foster and adoptive families. This would involve long time foster/post-adoptive parents being paired up with new foster and pre-adoptive parents to share resources. This will be an excellent opportunity for people new to the process to have a chance to ask questions and receive support from people who have gone through the same or similar experiences. The FFC-NWT would like to ask for volunteers among foster and adoptive parents who are interested to help us develop this exciting program!

Please contact us Toll-Free at

1-866-233-0136



FOCUS on Foster Families is a new app for smart phones and tablets that was developed by UCLA and shares tons of amazing resources for foster children and parents!

There are video interviews, online tools and games to help problem solve, and improve skills related to communication, goal setting and emotion regulating.

It is a free download for both iPhones and Android smart phone and can be found at <https://nfrc.ucla.edu/focus-on-foster-families>



YOU ARE INVITED! CAMP DAY 2016  
WILL BE HELD ON JUNE 24<sup>TH</sup> FROM  
12-4 PM AT THE CAMP CONNECTIONS  
SITE! MUSIC, GAMES, SWIMMING AND  
A BBQ WILL ALL TAKE PLACE!

PLEASE CALL THE FFC-NWT TO RSVP  
and let us know if you need a ride!

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