

METIS CHILD, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES



ANNUAL REPORT APRIL 1, 2009 TO MARCH 31, 2010





VISION STATEMENT

THE METIS FAMILY AND COMMUNITY
IS THE CORNERSTONE OF OUR NATION
AND IS BUILT UPON LOVE, RESPECT,
HONOUR, STRENGTH AND HERITAGE.

MISSION STATEMENT

Metis families and communities have the right and responsibility to care for children. Metis Child, Family and Community Services will work to strengthen the capacity of families to care for children through culturally relevant community-based programs. We believe in the inherent strength of our families and in the need to build on the capacity of our community to care for and nurture Metis children.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- 1 Metis families and communities are the cornerstone of the Metis Nation and the service delivery system must reflect this vision.
 - 2 Responsibility for decision-making regarding Metis children and families lies with the family, extended family and community whenever possible.
 - 3 The organizational structure promotes and supports community governance at all levels.
 - 4 The service delivery system will encompass both formal and informal elements.
 - 5 The service delivery system must be operated in an efficient and effective manner.
 - 6 The service delivery system will be outcome-based and will reflect the core guiding principles of MCFCS.
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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



For the Metis, family has always been the center of our Nation. Family is part of a larger community that can help our best efforts to raise our child. We are all responsible for ensuring that children are raised in our Nation that doesn't just talk about family values, but acts in ways that values the family. It was the vision of our Elders and our past leaders who wanted to see us look after our children. They understood that strong families create a strong nation.

Believing in yourself, your family and the Metis Nation is very important. It is with this philosophy that the Metis Government provides services to the Metis Citizens. Supporting our children as they participate in our culture and teaching them to grow into respectful, thoughtful and energized young adults is something we all want to see. Listening to our Elders as they provide advice, guidance and wisdom is something we must always remember. It is the knowledge that we have family support through our grandparents, our uncles, aunts and cousins. This is the foundation to the strength for our Nation. Of course, it is also the ability for our families to provide for themselves and those in need will keep our Nation strong.

This is why the services the Metis Child, Family and Community Services (MCFCS) provides are so vital to the Metis Nation. They provide strength as the cornerstone of our Nation and why the quality of services the MCFCS provides is surpassed by none in this country. The MCFCS has achieved such success that both the Province and stakeholders in other countries are looking at us and how we managed to be more successful in five years than any other agency. We've been able to do this thanks to our innovative approach made possible by the passion and skills of MCFCS staff, volunteers, and our families. I am especially proud of the Age of Majority program which helps bridge gaps and empowers our young adults who would otherwise be unsupported after they leave the Agency's care.

It has been 125 years since our past leader, Louis Riel, was unjustly executed for protecting our values and our children. 2010, the Year of the Metis, is a year we can all look at our Nation's prosperity and successes. It was a very proud day when we took control of our children through the development of child and family services, but we must remain vigilant and never take our achievements for granted. It is with hard work and dedication that we must protect the future of the Metis children, just as our forefathers did. It is the Metis children that will carry the fire of our beliefs into the digital age and beyond.

Believe in yourself, Believe in Metis!
Meeqwetch,

David Chartrand
President

MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER



On behalf of the President and the Provincial Board of Directors of the Metis Government I am honored to send you a message on behalf of the Metis government.

As always we must acknowledge our Elders for their wisdom and guidance, our Agency Board members for their dedication and commitment and the staff and countless volunteers for their outstanding service.

In addition, we wish to recognize our Agency Executive Director, Alana Brownlee. Our thoughts are with her as she deals with a difficult time in her life. We acknowledge that under her leadership the Agency has embraced our Metis vision. Alana has recruited team members who share the same vision.

Our Agency case load is great and unfortunately that means our families are struggling. We will continue to support and guide them through this difficult time in their lives. Our staff have been very creative with limited resources and have successfully created and delivered culturally appropriate programs and services that help reunite and keep our families together. Today, these programs are being recognized provincially and nationally.

We will continue to advocate and lobby strongly on behalf of the Agency and we will continue to build external and most importantly internal partnerships within the Metis Nation and homeland ensuring our children and families are taken care of.

Respectfully,

Judy Mayer

Minister of Metis Child and Family

MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD



On behalf of the Board of Directors of Metis Child, Family and Community Services, it is my privilege to present our 2009-2010 Annual Report. This year's report highlights the continued growth and development of our Agency and its ever expanding creative services and programs designed to support our children, youth and families.

This year the Board had a unique opportunity to participate in a strategic planning session with senior managers of the Agency. The event allowed us to work together to develop future plans and goals that will continue to move us forward in realizing our Vision for the Agency. The Board wishes to acknowledge all of the staff of the Agency for their continued commitment, dedication and hard work. It is evidenced throughout this year's Annual Report.

This year staff have continued to further develop our model for service delivery which is consistent with the Agency's Vision, Mission and Guiding Principles. The model is respectful of families, inclusive of kin and acknowledges the important role of community. The Agency continues to develop new programs and services that are responsive to the unique needs of our children, youth and families and reflect and incorporate the history, culture and traditions of the Metis and Inuit Nations.

The Board would like to express our appreciation to our Metis Government; President David Chartrand, the MMF Board of Directors, Minister Judy Mayer and MFCI Director Desiree Gillespie, for their vision, leadership, support and guidance. We would like to acknowledge the Authority Board for their continued support and collaboration. Finally, we would like to say thank you to Steve Racine, our ex-officio Board Member whose term expired this past year. His knowledge and experience will be missed.

Mona Buors
Chair

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Chair

Mona Buors *(Interlake Region)*

Vice Chair

Lisa Halcrow *(The Pas Region)*

Secretary/Treasurer

Marcella Vezina *(Southeast Region)*

Members

Harold Delaronde *(Northwest Region)*

Karen Beaudin *(Winnipeg Region)*

Brandi Braun *(Southwest Region)*

Ex-Officio

Evelyn Nepinak

Chantell Barker

Steve Racine *(past)*



Back Row: Karen Beaudin, Harold Delaronde, Steve Racine *(past Ex-Officio)*, Marcella Vezina
Front Row: Evelyn Nepinak, Lisa Halcrow, Mona Buors, Brandi Braun
Missing: Chantell Barker, *(Ex-Officio)*

REGIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEES

Regional Advisory Committees (RAC's) were established at the inception of Metis Child Family and Community Services to ensure the Metis community had representation and input from throughout the province into the service delivery system of the Agency. A RAC was established in each of the seven regions of the province. Each RAC is made up of five members appointed by the Manitoba Metis Federation governance in that Region. An Elder, youth and general member are appointed by the Vice President of each Region. Two additional members are appointed by the Metis Women of Manitoba. Each RAC elects a chairperson who represents their region on the Agency Board of Directors.

Over the course of the past year a RAC Review Committee was struck to evaluate what was working well and what areas could be improved to enhance the important role the committees have in ensuring a meaningful and ongoing partnership between the Agency and the Metis community. The review process included a survey of community members and provided valuable feedback to the Committee.

As a result of the Review Committee's recommendations the Agency Board of Directors struck a RAC Sub-Committee to review and update the Terms of Reference for the RAC's which included clarifying the roles and responsibilities of RAC members. This important work is nearly complete. A number of "next steps" have been identified to assist the RAC's and the Agency in moving forward in a successful partnership. This includes seeking Board approval of the revised terms of reference document and once approved, providing the document to the appointing bodies for each region, confirming the status of existing appointments and requesting any vacancies be filled, and developing and delivering an orientation and training package to all RAC members and staff representatives. Involvement of the Metis community is critical to the Agency's ability to provide meaningful supports and services to enhance and build upon the strength and well-being of our children, youth, families and communities.



MESSAGE FROM THE ACTING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



It is my privilege to write this message on behalf of our Executive Director Alana Brownlee. Her absence has been keenly felt throughout the Agency and we all wish her a speedy return. As Acting Executive Director, I have received tremendous support from the staff, the management team, the Agency Board of Directors, our Authority and the Metis Family and Community Institute. I would like to thank each and every one of you for your guidance and wisdom.

This has been another exciting year for the Agency. We have seen tremendous growth and enhancement in our existing programs and services and we continue to develop new resources to enhance our capacity to strengthen and support our children, youth and families. It has been amazing to watch the energy and creativity of our staff as they find new ways to respectfully and actively

engage children, youth and families in identifying what is working well in their lives, what they are worried about and what the solutions are for change. I have witnessed many celebrations of success this year as our youth become young adults, children in care are returned home and permanent wards are reunited with family.

In the spring of this year our agency's programs and services were highlighted in the media as innovative and creative means to support children, youth and families. This is a reflection of the dedication and commitment of our staff who consistently go above and beyond to ensure the right supports are in place for children, youth and families to succeed. When gaps in service are identified, our staff find ways to fill them. When families identify solutions, our staff find ways to help provide them. When youth identify a need, our staff find ways to help meet it. They do this despite ever increasing caseloads and competing demands. The continued commitment, passion and dedication shown by our staff to this most rewarding yet often challenging work is truly incredible.

This past year the Agency's entire management team participated in a two day strategic planning session. The session focused on reconfirming the Agency's vision, mission, guiding principles and goals and evaluating where we are at in each program area in relation to fully realizing and implementing what is articulated in our vision, mission and guiding principles. The Agency's senior management subsequently had an opportunity to spend two days with our Board of Directors to review and receive feedback on the strategic planning goals. The two days afforded an excellent opportunity for members of the Board and the staff management team to share our dreams and vision for the Agency moving forward. A motion was subsequently passed by our Board authorizing the Agency to move forward on implementing the strategic planning goals. While very specific goals were developed for each program area, the overarching goals identified for this year are to solidify the Signs of Safety Model for service delivery throughout the province, continue to develop our training plans, further develop and

embed the cultural component of our service into everything we do and increase our collaboration between Agency programs and within the Metis Community.

I would like to express the Agency's deepest appreciation for the continued support, vision and leadership of President Chartrand, Minister Judy Mayer and the Manitoba Metis Federation Board of Directors. Our Metis Government has continued to provide incredible support to the Agency through attendance at events and celebrations, funding some of our very unique programs to support Metis youth and advocating with the Province on our behalf to have the funding inequities addressed.

I would especially like to thank Alana for her continued support and guidance. Her passion for and dedication to the work of the Agency is unrelenting. Her commitment to the vision, mission and guiding principles of MCFCS is evidenced in everything we do.

Penny Smith

Acting Executive Director



STRENGTHENING FAMILIES THROUGH ENGAGEMENT AND COLLABORATION

As an agency mandated under the Child and Family Services Act and the Adoptions Act MCFCS provides preventative, early intervention and protection services to Metis and Inuit families and children throughout all seven regions of the province. MCFCS remains committed to empowering families and the community to share in the responsibility of protecting and nurturing our children and youth. We continue to build upon our strength based approach to our work with families and have enhanced our ability to provide services and programs that honour and respect the history and culture of the Metis and Inuit peoples. We have heard the voices of our children, families and extended families through sharing circles, talking circles and family unity conferences.

Family Services is the primary service delivery vehicle within our agency, providing support and protective services to children and families across the province. Our agency strives to provide services that ensure the safety of children while supporting and enhancing the capacity of families to provide safe, nurturing care to their children. Over the course of the past year the Agency has researched models of service delivery in other jurisdictions in order to develop a consistent practice model for the Agency reflective of our vision, mission and guiding principles.

Signs of Safety is a solution and safety oriented approach to child protection work. It is a collaborative strength based approach that stresses the importance of developing meaningful relationships with families and collaborating with them on finding solutions that will ensure safety for their children. It acknowledges and promotes the important role extended family and the community play in providing the safety network to ensure children are cared for in a loving, safe environment. This approach respects and acknowledges the family as the “expert” of their own lives and ensures transparency in our work with them. It is a nonjudgmental approach that promotes the dignity of families while still identifying any risk to the well-being of children. Many staff have begun to use tools such as “words and pictures” to help children understand why they are in care and a process of “mapping” to help families identify their strengths, what they are concerned about and what needs to happen to address the concerns.

MCFCS has continued to expand upon our cultural programs and services for our children, youth

and families. We believe it is critical to the health and well-being of our families that we provide opportunities for them to learn about and experience various aspects of their history and traditions. As an agency we want to continue to promote pride and understanding for our children and youth in their heritage. We believe this to be an integral component of how we provide meaningful, supportive services that will enhance the capacity of our children youth and families to achieve their goals.



THE YEAR AT A GLANCE



MCFCS has continued to see substantial increases in the number of children and families receiving service from our agency in virtually every region of the province. The total number of cases has more than doubled from what was estimated in the original Resource Transfer Table (RTT). The Agency's current operational funding is based on the case numbers reflected in the original RTT.

The Province had previously committed to implementing a new funding model for child and family services agencies that would establish funding based on caseload size. To date this new funding model has not been implemented. As a result the average caseload per frontline staff has increased year over year. The incredible increase in workload impacts on every staff person in the Agency.

Despite this, staff continue to strive to provide quality services to all of our children, youth and families. They continue to stretch themselves and consistently go above and beyond in finding new and creative means to help those they work with achieve their goals. The continued increase in caseloads will however ultimately impact on staff's ability to provide the quality of services they would like to provide, and our children and families deserve.

Regions	Protection Cases	Voluntary Family Cases	Family Waiting Closure	Total Families	Children In Care Cases	CIC's Waiting Closure	Total Cases
Central	15	4	8	27	14	8	49
Interlake/Eastman	21	9	3	33	88	1	122
North	50	8	9	67	54	16	137
Parkland	136	35	41	212	84	46	342
Western	51	12	3	66	37	5	108
Winnipeg	445	33	61	539	520	145	1204
Total	718	101	125	944	797	221	1962

Children In Care

A significant number of children in care are permanent wards of the Agency. We have seen an increase this year in transfers of permanent wards to our agency from other Authorities. Any child who is made a permanent ward must be transferred to their culturally appropriate Authority for ongoing service and permanency planning. Our agency takes the responsibility as guardian of our children very seriously. Any child who is made a permanent ward of our agency is presented to our Permanency Planning Committee where after careful review a permanent plan is established that meets the individual needs of that child or sibling group.

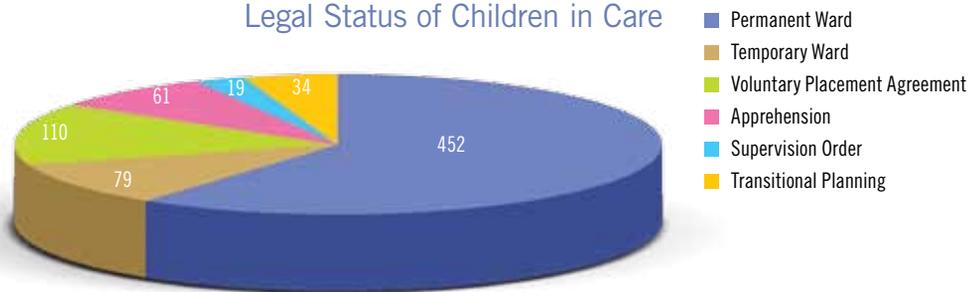
The MCFCS Permanency Planning Committee believes that every child made a permanent ward deserves a 'forever family' that best meets the needs of that particular child. We also respect children's rights to have a permanent plan that provides for stability and is able to support their development socially, emotionally and culturally. We believe in the inherent strength of our families and in the need to build on the capacity of our community to care for and nurture Metis children. We believe



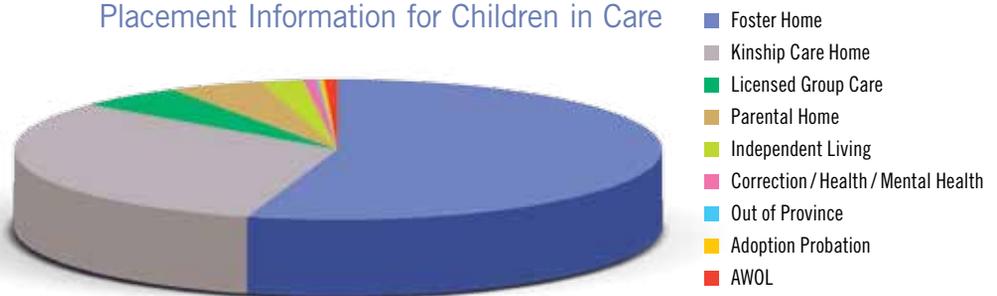
in the principle of children as inseparable from family and family as inseparable from community with child, family and community as the foundation of the Metis Nation. Our agency believes it is critical for our children in care to maintain and develop strong relationships with immediate and extended family whenever possible, regardless of the child's status in care.

The Agency continues to develop and expand upon our existing programs and services to support our children in care and ensure they have every opportunity to reach their potential and achieve their goals. We have continued to develop programs that provide opportunity for our children and youth to learn about and experience various aspects of their culture and heritage. We feel this knowledge is critical for our children and youth to develop a healthy and strong identity as they grow into adulthood.

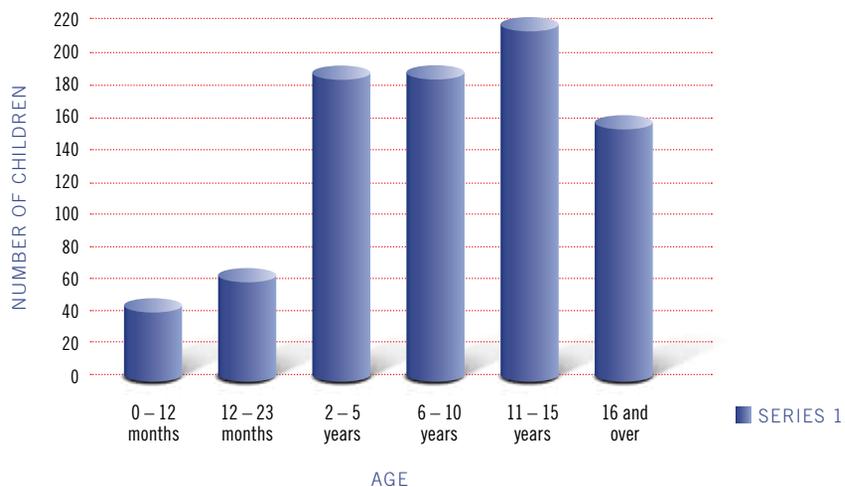
Legal Status of Children in Care



Placement Information for Children in Care



Ages of Children in Care



KEEPING THE SASH AROUND THE FAMILY



utilize a strength based, holistic approach to their work with families. We believe in the importance of establishing meaningful relationships with families and working collaboratively alongside them to find the right support and services to address their individual needs. We actively seek out extended family and community members who can be part of the support network for the family. We involve them in planning through a variety of means including sharing circles and family case planning meetings.

In all our services we strive to be inclusive and respectful of the cultural practices of our families and honour the heritage of the Metis people.

MCFCS has continued to develop and expand upon our continuum of services that focus on building the capacity of families to care for and nurture their children. A number of programs and services are unique to our agency and a direct result of the tremendous effort and creativity of our staff. Agency staff



STRENGTHENING FAMILIES THROUGH OUR CULTURE

As a child welfare agency mandated to provide services to the Metis and Inuit communities, MCFCS believes our services must reflect and incorporate the history, culture and traditions of those Nations into our day to day practice in order to best meet the holistic needs of our children, youth and families. We believe culture is not simply a program but must be reflected in all aspects of our agency and must continue to guide us as we grow and develop.

in a sharing circle and share their stories and concerns, for children and youth to learn about their culture and connect to their ancestry through participation in the teachings, and for staff to come together to share and support one another in the often difficult work we do.

MCFCS Cultural Programming, under the guidance of our Director of Cultural Services, and with the support of the Agency's Aboriginal



IN THE WORDS OF OUR ELDERS:

“If we don't know where we came from we don't know where we are going.”

MCFCS was very excited to see the completion of the cultural room at 2000 Portage Avenue. The room represents and epitomizes the love, respect, honour, strength and heritage of the Metis and Inuit people. It is a spiritual place. Simply entering the room, one finds solace and safety. Within the circle one can find a connection to the past and a renewed faith and hope in the future. The room has afforded a special place for many of our families to come together to begin their healing journey, for others an opportunity to participate



Advisory Committee, has continued to expand and develop as new opportunities have been presented and needs have been identified. The supports offered seek to enhance the well-being of our children, youth and families and promote pride and a positive identity as an Aboriginal person. The Program has five main areas of focus:

1 Spiritual Care and Critical Incident Debriefing

MCFCS provides culturally relevant, individual, group and family spiritual care as an integral part of our



continuum of services. Through our Elder we provide cultural services and supports to our families, care providers and staff in the event of a critical incident or to assist with the grieving and healing process.

Our Vision of Spiritual Care

Spiritual Care honours and respects the individual, personal journey through life. As spiritual caregivers we recognize the need for belonging and meaning; we will nurture each person's gifts in order that we may grow in a deepening awareness of a relationship to our Creator God.

2 Staff and Foster Parent Development and Training

A three day Aboriginal Awareness Training program continues to be offered for Agency staff and is mandatory training for new staff. In addition, staff have the opportunity to participate in cultural ceremonies such as smudging, sharing circles and sweat lodge ceremonies. This past year the Agency has offered quarterly one day training sessions for foster parents which have been met with tremendous success. To date 120 foster/kinship parents have been trained.

3 Family Group Decision Making

Our Elder and a Facilitator can provide family members and extended family members the opportunity to actively participate with our agency to develop a case plan for their family.

4 Family Supports and Services

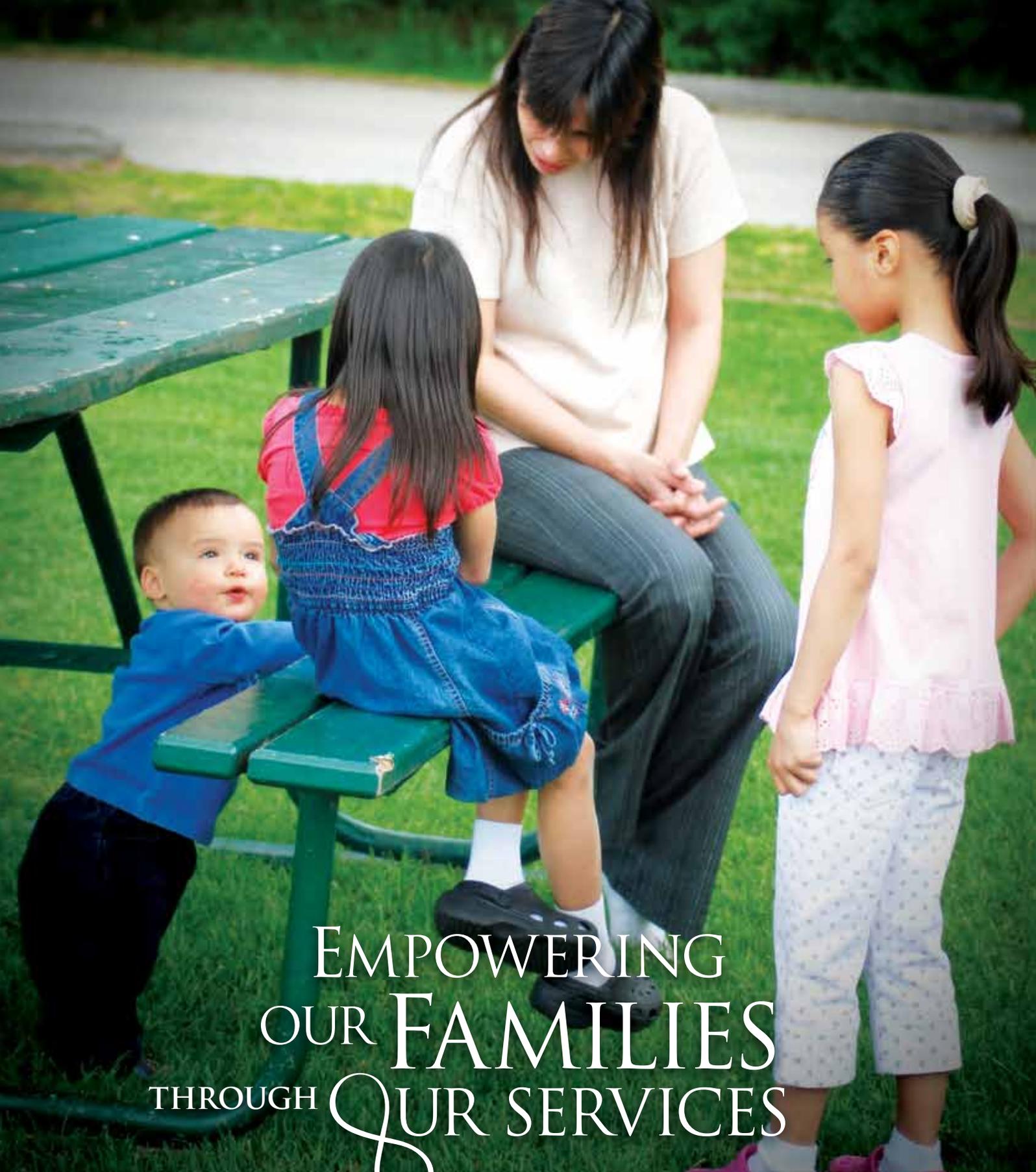
Our agency supports families through our Aboriginal Awareness Programs which offer our families an opportunity to learn about their culture and connect to their ancestry through sharing and healing circles led by our Elder, through family feasts as a means of celebrating significant achievements with our families, and individual support and counseling through the use of holistic traditional healing methods.

5 Children and Youth Programming

Our agency offers a variety of programs that provide opportunities for children and youth to learn about their culture, connect to their ancestry and participate in cultural activities that incorporate fun activities and teachings. In addition, individual support and counseling is available to youth, their families and caregivers through the use of holistic traditional healing methods. Last summer our agency hosted a three day Youth Aboriginal Awareness

Program in The Pas. The program was attended by seven youth in care, two youth who attended as guests of our youth in care and three foster parents. It was an incredible experience for everyone involved with the youth requesting an opportunity to meet again. The Agency is planning a two day cultural camp for children in care in each region of the province.





EMPOWERING
OUR FAMILIES
THROUGH OUR SERVICES



FAMILY SERVICES IS THE PRIMARY SERVICE DELIVERY VEHICLE WITHIN OUR AGENCY AND PROVIDES CASE MANAGEMENT SERVICES TO CHILDREN AND FAMILIES.

The family service teams across the province provide services to families who have been assessed by a designated intake agency as requiring or requesting ongoing services. Our agency strives to provide services that ensure the safety of children while supporting and enhancing the capacity of families to provide safe, nurturing care to their children. Our family services staff are diligent in their efforts to establish a respectful, collaborative working relationship with families from our very first contact with them. We know that having our families actively participate in identifying their strengths and needs and developing the case plans for the family will lead to greater success.

Our family services staff continually go above and beyond to find the right resources to mitigate risk to children so they can be safely maintained in their family home. They are strong advocates within our agency and with outside systems to ensure the appropriate services are in place. When children need to be in care staff ensure a strong connection is maintained with the family while we work together to resolve the issues so children can be reunified with their families. The Agency has developed a number of programs that help support the work of the family service teams. By working together we are better able to empower our families to achieve their goals.

Differential Response Family Enhancement

What a year this has been in Differential Response Family Enhancement (DRFE) at MCFCS. The Province of Manitoba has followed through on recommendations made in the Changes for Children Report and funded the Metis Authority to support the Agency in piloting two Family Enhancement Units in the province.

The Parkland Differential Response Project takes place out of the Intake program in Parkland. Differential Response has given the Intake program the capacity to support families referred to the child welfare system to provide a hand up during a difficult time. The Family Enhancement program is currently made up of two Family Enhancement workers in Dauphin and one in Swan River. These social workers are paying attention to ensure children are safe, but then go the next step to work “with families” in looking at ways of addressing the issues so they don’t need to get caught up in

the child welfare system. Having a Family Enhancement file in the Intake program is voluntary and an opportunity to talk with a Family Enhancement worker about what may be helpful to avoid problems in the future. Consistent with the Agency’s mission statement, the program philosophy is to help enlist the support of extended family members and close friends. This is why we are working closely with the Family Group Conferencing program out of the Dauphin Friendship Centre to look at alternative ways of bringing a family together to plan together. The program has just started, but early signs are that families feel included in the process and are encouraged by the changes they are seeing in how they are able to manage.

The Winnipeg Differential Response Project has been operating since September 2009. The unit consists of four Family Enhancement workers who look at the strengths and needs of families and then go about creating plans with the family

through mutual planning, sharing circles or family case planning conferences.

Three mentors are available to work with the families towards the goals they have set with the workers. A Cultural worker is there to teach, connect and support the workers and families on the importance of our Metis heritage to heal and celebrate family and life.

Differential Response Family Enhancement Team

Back Row: Jason Binkley (Social Worker), Jamie Morfoot (Family Mentor), Nicole Smukowich (Family Mentor), Julie Reichert (Social Worker), Jerome Desilets (Cultural Worker)

Front Row: Leanne Huska (Family Mentor), Anoka Salisbury (Social Worker), Tracy Oleschak (Social Worker), Alex Kozelko (Administrative Assistant)

Missing: Bill Nadurak (Supervisor), Sherry Culbreth (Administrative Assistant)



To say it has been a busy year is an understatement. The teams have:

- *Participated in orientation of the DRFE approach to service.*
- *Participated in Signs of Safety (SOS) Training. SOS is an innovative and respectful process of engaging with families using a questioning approach that pays close attention to how families are keeping children safe and to identify what may be worries.*
- *Participated in training in the use of Structured Decision Making tools to guide us in our work with families.*
- *Participated in Attachment Training through the Aulneau Renewal Centre.*
- *Networked with numerous community agencies to create resource lists and options for families as well as to inform them of the work of DRFE.*
- *Workers, Mentors and the Cultural Worker have been very actively involved with families and getting very good at hearing stories, connecting with extended families and resources, fostering cultural pride and creating plans to increase safety for children.*

Here are a few quotes from staff to give a sense of their experience of using the DRFE approach:

“The families are not used to hearing about their positive qualities and what makes them a good family or parent but in this approach I have seen families with stunned looks on their faces when I tell them that we can talk about the concerns but first I want to talk about who they are and all of their strengths.”

“After encouraging the mom to at least meet with the cultural worker and finally holding a sharing circle, the mom has expressed a desire to continue to meet with the cultural worker to help her find ways to ground herself and stay strong.”

“The approach has created a shift for a parent that had her back up against the wall and was very apprehensive, to one that looks forward to our meetings.”

“Connecting people to supports in their area has proven to be very helpful for families and I have seen them utilize the supports more easily.”

“It is great to have mentors and the cultural workers working alongside the FE workers. It promotes more communication and more effective planning.”

Signs of Safety (SOS) has played an important role in the DRFE program this year. Families have indicated that they feel respected and supported through this process, even when significant concerns and worries need to be discussed. SOS offers a number of tools and a perspective that increases the capacity for everyone involved to focus on child safety. We are indebted to practitioners in Carver and Olmsted County, particularly Dan Koziolk, Sue Lohrbach, Rob Sawyer and Connected Families who have shared their experience around using Signs of Safety.

We are also fielding the use of Structured Decision Making (SDM) tools as developed by the Children's Research Centre. Raylene Freitag has been generous in sharing her time and energy in training and supporting our use of these tools.

The Winnipeg Unit has opened 52 cases to the DRFE program. Thirty five of these cases came directly from ANCR and would normally have been transferred to a family services unit. Sixteen of the cases were transfers from existing family service caseloads where the families were requesting prevention service; and one case was opened by the unit.

We're off to a good start with much work to do. When we get discouraged we can turn to traditional teachings, map our successes and concerns, remind ourselves of the resiliency we see in our families, use actuarial tested tools to help in decision making, listen and learn from our colleagues and families.

Here are a few quotes from families to give a sense of their experience of using the DRFE approach:

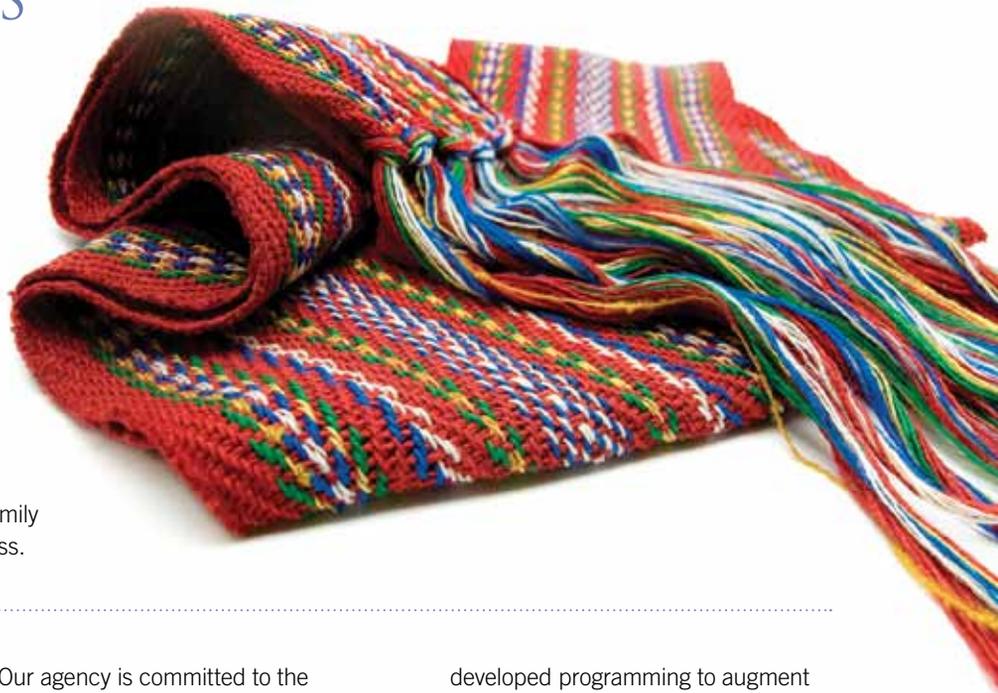
“I felt like a good person.”

“I loved the binder that I received with resources, recipes and use it all the time.”

“I feel as though I am going to succeed and never have another open file.”

SUPPORTING OUR FAMILIES THROUGH OUR PROGRAMS

MCFCS continues to develop a range of programs that serve families by focusing on strengthening their capacity to care for their children. The programs are largely unique to MCFCS and are being recognized as innovative and thoughtful throughout the child welfare system in the province. MCFCS services, as well as the Agency's staff teams, strive to maintain focus on families in a strength based practice model, emphasizing the importance of culture in the delivery of all programs and services. The goal of each program is to strengthen families, enhance family functioning and maintain family connectedness.



Family Support Program

The Family Support Program is designed to provide in-home support services to families in order to enhance their ability to provide care to their children, strengthen family functioning and prevent possible family disruption. The program focuses on the unique needs and challenges of each family and walks beside them to support and build on their existing strengths in order to allow children to remain safely in their own homes or to be reunified with their families. The family support program works in conjunction with the family service worker, the family and the extended family to strengthen the parents' competencies, their parental capacity and build on their existing strengths as individuals and as a family. Parent education and support, respite and supported family time are the key service components of this program.

Our agency is committed to the ongoing professional development of our staff and we have developed a training curriculum for our family support staff that includes non-violent crisis intervention, suicide intervention, attachment issues, impact of abuse and neglect on child development, general observation and documentation skills, responding to abuse disclosures, FASD and inclusive model of care. This program is currently being extended to all other regions served by the Agency.

Parent Education and Support

MCFCS believes that at times parents need to come together with other parents in a supported learning environment. Although families are regularly referred to community based parenting programs, MCFCS has

developed programming to augment the services offered in the community. The Agency regularly offers parenting support and education programs such as Triple P Parenting, Nobody's Perfect and Young Mothers and Kookums Program.

The Young Mothers and Kookums Program provides parents and grandparents an opportunity to come together in a safe, non-judgmental environment to discuss issues and challenges related to parenting. The program encourages positive learning experiences for young mothers and Kookums using a strength based approach and provides an opportunity for participants to learn a number of practical "tools for change" such as budgeting, cooking, setting structure and routine.

Supported Family Time Program

MCFCS Supported Family Time Program networks with parents and assists them during supported family time that is office based. The role of the worker is to provide supportive teaching, coaching and mentoring to families to respond to their children's distinct needs using strengths that are inherent in the family. The Supported Family Time worker is available for parents to discuss issues or debrief before, during and after their supported family time. The program offers up to 10 comfortable, well decorated rooms for age appropriate activities during family times. The families are also provided with nutritious snacks. The Supported Family Time worker listens to the struggles and successes of each family and helps to find solutions or celebrate the successes of each family and child. The program facilitates an average of 150 supported family times per month for 40 to 45 families.

Family Mentor Program

The Family Mentor Program provides the Metis and Inuit community with the opportunity to fulfill their traditional roles by allowing community involvement in



strengthening and supporting families. Many families and youth may be isolated within their communities and do not have an adequate support network to rely on. The program matches a trained mentor with a family or young person to develop a supportive relationship which builds upon the family or youth's strengths. The Mentor is guided by the family to provide support and assistance toward developing long lasting strategies to overcome existing and future challenges. The Mentor coaches, guides, role models and advocates using a non-judgmental, solution focused, supportive approach. Mentors strive to identify and focus on the existing strengths of youth and families throughout their relationship. Family Mentors volunteer with families 3-5 hours per week and receive ongoing training, support and supervision. MCFCS currently has 12 Family Mentors who are actively engaged with youth and families. They have clearly demonstrated the positive impact of the gift of their time.

If you are interested in becoming a Family Mentor please contact Melanie Murray at 927-6987.

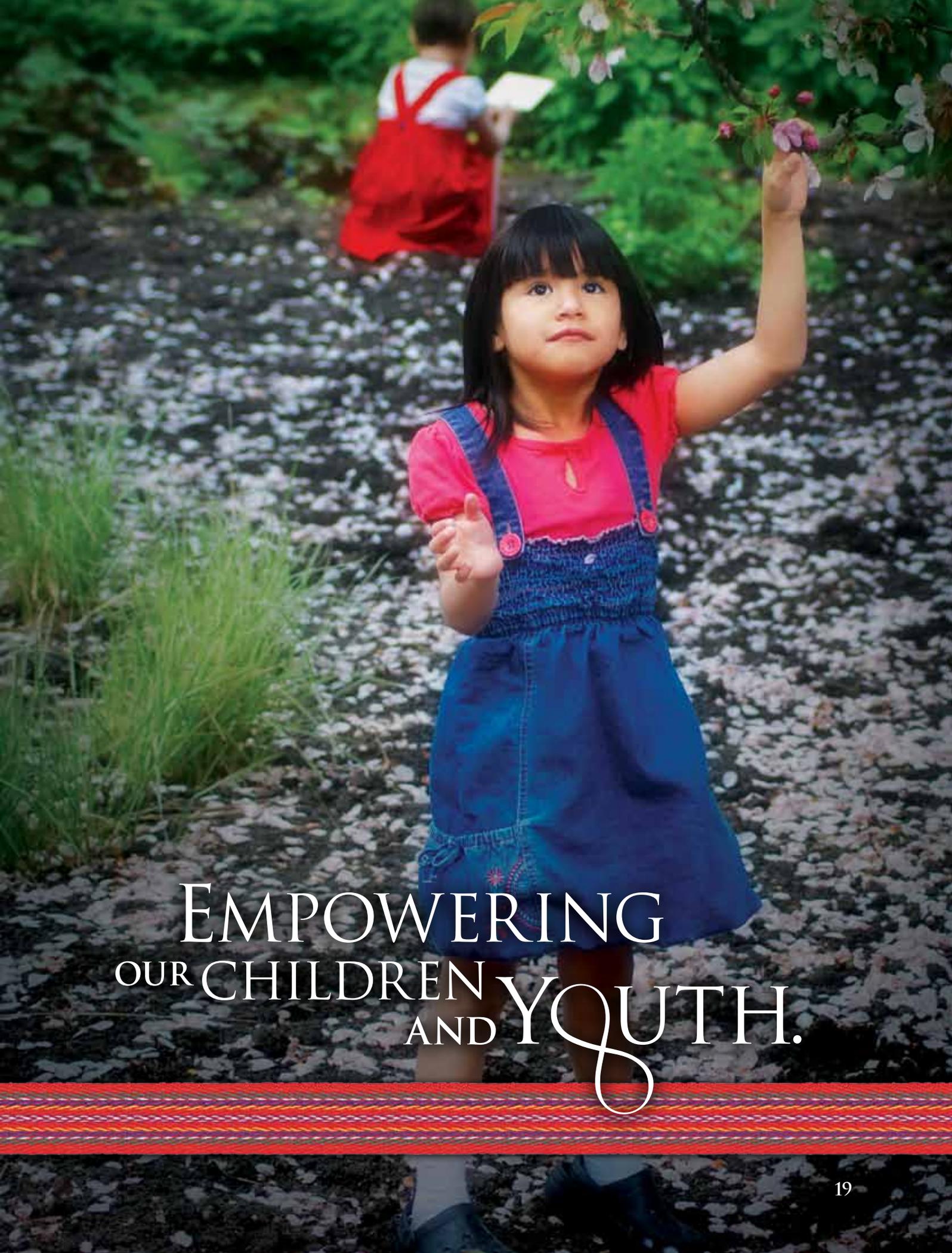
Volunteer Program

This program is another opportunity for the Metis and Inuit community to fulfill the vision of the Agency of empowering the community to support children and families. The volunteer drivers help to safeguard the continuations and maintenance of family relationships by facilitating an increase in the frequency of family contact when children are unable to live with their parents. They also support family attendance at therapy, recreational activities and other important appointments.

The program has continued to grow and currently has 24 volunteers who fill a critical gap within the Agency and are an incredible resource. During the past year the volunteers completed 1754 drives to facilitate children and youth's attendance at family times and appointments. This is an overall increase of 515 drives from last year.

Partnership with Community Financial Services

Within the past year the Agency established a partnership with Community Financial Services to assist our families and youth with appropriate and helpful banking and budgeting services. Many of our families previously had no means of becoming members of a financial institution to complete basic banking transactions. This partnership allows the Agency to refer our families and youth to Community Financial Services who facilitate the acquisition of identification necessary for membership.



EMPOWERING
OUR CHILDREN
AND YOUTH.



EMPOWERING OUR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

MCFCS currently has 797 children and youth in the care of our agency province wide. We share a tremendous responsibility along with our caregivers and the community to ensure our children and youth are afforded every opportunity to develop to his or her fullest potential. MCFCS takes a holistic approach to our service delivery and believe we need to provide resources that help nurture the mind, body and spirit of those who have been entrusted into our care. We have continued to further expand and develop our resources and programs to support our children and youth as new needs are identified and opportunities are presented.



SUPPORTING OUR CHILDREN AND YOUTH THROUGH OUR PROGRAMS

FASD Infinity Education Support Program

As a result of the recommendations from the Changes for Children Report each of the four Authorities were funded for a Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) Specialist. Unique to MCFCS the position is embedded within the Agency as opposed to the Authority. This has resulted in an opportunity for increased collaboration between our Specialist, our staff, and caregivers of children with FASD with a number of positive outcomes. The Specialist was actively involved as a consultant in 31 children in care cases.

In January 2010 the MCFCS FASD Infinity Education and Support Program was launched. The 8 week program is designed to educate and support caregivers of children and youth with FASD. Plans are under way to bring the program to the Parkland Region in the upcoming year. In addition, the Specialist has provided a number of foundational workshops for staff and caregivers in a number of regions of the province. Two advanced training workshops have also been provided this year.

Circle of Life – Children and Youth Support Program

This program provides individualized, one to one services to children and youth who are in the care of the Agency or who are residing with their parents. The program is relationship based in order to support children and youth to develop positive healthy relationships with adults and peers. The program is responsive to the unique needs of each child and youth.

Children and youth are encouraged to participate in establishing the goals and the focus of the services. The program promotes the resiliency in the young person and builds on their existing strengths. The staff engage in activities with the children and youth to assist with the development of the relationship; this includes swimming, fishing, gardening, canoeing, movies, attendance at cultural activities and sports.

Little Bears

In addition to the individualized Circle of Life programming, this program hosts regular group sessions that promote the development of positive peer relationships, social skills and life skills development. This year the children and youth from the Little Bears program participated in two specific support based activities which resulted in the development of a documented storybook and a painted mural.





SASH Program – Youth Outreach Workers

This program provides outreach services to identified high risk youth who are engaged in 'at risk' activities and behaviours that may jeopardize their safety. The SASH staff actively seek out and engage with youth in order to promote their safety and stability. The SASH staff establish relationships with the youth and their family so that they can support them in the development of safety plans and assist the youth in positively reconnecting with their family and community resources. The SASH program is non-judgmental, flexible and responsive to the needs of the youth while still promoting safety and stability. The program focuses on prevention, intervention and stabilization. The program staff currently participate on the Tracia's Trust Committee, a provincial committee dedicated to working collaboratively on behalf of high risk youth who are being sexually exploited. They are also members of the Winnipeg Outreach Network, a collaborative street outreach group.

Skills for Life Program

This program provides support, assistance, education and training for youth in the development of life skills necessary to transition successfully into adulthood. Staff utilize structured learning sessions to promote the development of life skills. The program provides one to one support services to youth leading up to entry into interdependent living and offers ongoing support and mentoring while youth are on their own. The program supports youth in developing strong family and community ties in order to ensure long term support networks are available as they transition into adulthood. Program staff also support and mentor caregivers to assist youth with their skills development.

In collaboration with the Metis Spirit program, bi-weekly group sessions are provided that include the youth from the Skills for Life program as well as young adults who have aged out of the care of the Agency. These groups provide a positive, supportive networking opportunity for youth and young adults and afford them the opportunity to learn from each other. The group offers educational information as well as opportunities to practice skills development. The Agency has facilitated the development of these groups within other regions.



METIS SPIRIT PROGRAM

MCFCS is fortunate to continue to receive funding for this critical program from the Manitoba Metis Federation. The program provides support services to young adults who have aged out of the care of the Agency.

Over the course of the past year the Metis Spirit program continued to provide outreach and support services to young adults through various means consisting of one to one support, phone calls, text messages, emails, and support groups. The number of young adults in the program continues to grow as young adults are transitioning out of Agency care on an ongoing basis. Many of these talented, amazing young adults provide support and encouragement to other youth who are or will soon be aging out of care.

“ The Metis Spirit is one of helping others.
It lives on through us and is ongoing.
It is who we are as a proud people.”

~ ELDER BRIAN NORMAND ~

The program provides support to youth in a variety of ways including advocating on issues such as housing and employment, income assistance, assisting with accessing employment and educational opportunities, helping connect our youth to a multitude of community resources, assisting with transportation for youth to attend a variety of day to day appointments and supporting youth who are experiencing a crisis in their lives. We have been able to significantly increase the number of other service providers and community resources involved in providing the network of support to our young adults.

In addition, the program provides monthly support groups for youth and young adults. The success of the groups is evidenced by the fact that many have requested the groups be held bi-weekly. Focus groups were held in Winnipeg and Brandon this year to provide an opportunity for our youth and young adults to use their voice and share their experience of their time in care with MCFCS as well as their experience with transitioning out of care. The information received from our young people is invaluable and enables us as an agency to better provide for their needs.

Over the past year the program has received an increase in self-referrals from our young adults who declined the support at the time they aged out. The Metis Spirit Program currently has 81 files on young adults who have transitioned out of care since January 2007. Of the 81 young adults, outreach has been provided to approximately 62. The program continues to try to locate the remaining 21 young adults to offer outreach services.

Hi, my name is Mickiella.

I attend the Metis Spirit group which allows you to meet new people, make life long friends, build a support team for yourself and if you ever need someone to talk to they are just a phone call away.

As young adults coming of age it can be scary. I know for me it was. All my life I was told I won't go anywhere, I will be a nobody. Coming out of care I was dropped off at my first apartment and was told good luck. And I was scared, confused...I felt lost and abandoned. I did not know what to do.

So, I partied. I did not have my reality check till I was pregnant with my son... and that was the scariest for me. At the time I was going from couch to couch and I couldn't keep a job because of my drinking. I didn't know if I was going to keep him, if I was able to financially support him and myself. I had no one. I had never asked for help ever and it was hard but I did. I felt embarrassed at first especially when I had asked Dianne to be there for me when I went into labor which meant a lot. But thanks to these support programs I now have a really strong support team for my son and I.

Responsibility is the biggest. At 18 you're considered to be an adult, which means you're supposed to act mature, be responsible for your own acts, make decisions for yourself. Most people still think of you as a "teenager" and you're not taken seriously.

Don't ever let circumstances, events, or other people tell you you can't do something. You deserve to experience a life of joy, freedom and completeness. The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams. You're not alone. So don't be scared to reach out and ask for help.

Mickiella

10th Youth Celebration January 21, 2010

YOUNG ADULT MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

During the past fiscal year MCFCS received funding from the MMF Winnipeg Region to pilot a new initiative where a young adult who was formerly a child in care of MCFCS would be mentored to develop skills in mentoring and supporting youth still in the care of the Agency. The Young Adult Mentor Program was coordinated and supervised by the Metis Spirit worker. The program provided the young adult an opportunity to actively participate in many aspects of the Agency's programs and afforded him an opportunity to interact with other youth currently or formerly in the care of the Agency. As an agency we learned a great deal from our young adult mentor. The following is an excerpted summary of his time with us.

The past 11 months have been an amazing opportunity for me. I feel like I learned a lot about MCFCS, the child welfare system in general, as well as a lot about myself. Throughout my time here I was given the opportunity to participate in many of the programs MCFCS offers. I have spent a lot of my time shadowing the Metis Spirit and Skills for Life program staff. I enjoyed working in the Metis Spirit program because it was with a lot of young adults that are around my age group so I felt like I could relate to them. I am going through a lot of the things many 19-20 year olds are going through these days (peer pressure to do drugs, join gangs, have children). I particularly enjoyed tagging along with the Skills for Life workers. It was neat to see the other side of things as just a couple of years ago I was the youth sitting in the back seat with my Skills for Life worker. I think it was very beneficial for me to take part in this because now I see how much work gets put into something that seems as easy as going through a book. I got to watch how these workers worked together with their youth and the strategies they used to get around problems such as hydro bills, eviction notices or even lack of food.

I also spent quite a bit of time shadowing Cultural workers and workers from Kinship Care. I really enjoyed working in this area because it deals more with the foster families. This program really pushed for kids to stay within their biological families which I very much agree with. It was nice to see both sides of the spectrum (foster parents-foster kids). I learned so much from our Cultural workers which really helped me at home with my brothers who are starting to really fancy our Metis heritage. From just picking sage and sweet grass to learning how to drum taught me a lot about myself and the feelings I have towards spirituality.

Through my time here I was also fortunate enough to attend a number of training workshops. All these workshops I think should be absolutely mandatory if you are going to work in this field. They teach you so much and most of them, people have to deal with on a day to day basis. I know at home this helped me out lots with helping my brothers and I grow up.

I also got to do many other "cool" things as well. During my first week as the Young Adult Mentor I was sent to Montreal to

attend a Youth in Care Conference. I had an amazing time. It was amazing to see such a big conference on Kids in Care. I think it's great for us youth and young adults that have aged out of care to see conferences like this because it opens our eyes to see that people are doing something for us. We aren't just the forgotten kids hidden under the rug. It was an awesome, eye opening experience for me. I also participated in our Youth Celebrations as well as our Youth Focus and Support Groups. I had a big role in planning and facilitating all three. I particularly enjoyed our celebrations because it is like a big birthday party and you can see the excitement in all the youth. It was very interesting to see the new initiatives being taken to help Manitoba's Youth in Care.

My time here did not always feel so smooth. I came into this position expecting to be able to jump right into things and expecting a lot out of myself. It was not as easy as I had expected it to be. Like I said I learned a lot about myself during the past 11 months. It has taught me how to deal with stress and disappointment but also how to overcome both.

I think this training opportunity was originally designed to mostly help the youth that are starting or are currently transitioning out of care but I found that this opportunity has helped me mature as a person and has helped me to start looking at the child welfare system differently. I know at one point even as short as a year and a half ago I wanted nothing to do with the child welfare system. To me CFS was designed to see kids fail at life. I had no idea of what to expect before my first day. 11 months later I have the utmost appreciation of what is going on in MCFCS. From day one I saw the dedication that all these workers put into all of our children to try and make this a whole, new, strong, Metis family. I just want to say thank you to everyone for this opportunity and I appreciate all the patience and dedication that went into making this possible.

Ryan

Life Long Connections Program

This program actively searches for family and community members who are willing to make a commitment to become a part of a long term support network for children and youth who are permanent wards of MCFCS.

The program seeks to ensure that all permanent wards have the opportunity to maintain positive family relationships and that no youth leaves the care of the Agency without an adequate support network. Too frequently extended family members have not felt that they had a role in the lives of the children once they were in the care of a child and family services agency. This program seeks to reconnect children and youth with their family members and ultimately to expand the circle of supportive individuals in their lives.



Corporate Support

The Agency would like to acknowledge the contribution made by the IBM Kidsmart Early Learning Program. Four Kidsmart Young Explorer computer units were graciously donated and are being enjoyed by our children and youth in our Parklands, Brandon and Winnipeg offices.

“...this computer is a welcome tool in our office. The children are excited to play the games and are reluctant to leave it. They have a great sense of pride when they complete a task and hear the praise for it! This is truly a wonderful software program.”

Honouring Our Youth

MCFCS hosts quarterly celebrations to honour our youth in care when they turn 18 years of age. Each celebration offers the youth an opportunity to celebrate this significant milestone with their friends, family and support network. Each youth is honoured and their individual accomplishments are recognized through speeches. Each celebration includes entertainment, a dinner and a youth motivational speaker. Recently these speakers have been young adults who have left the care of MCFCS and are participating in the Metis Spirit Program. Over the past year the Agency has celebrated a total of 35 youth with approximately 400 family members and friends in attendance. It is significant to note that the majority of those who currently attend celebrations are family members of the youth.

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR YOUTH WHO CELEBRATED SIGNIFICANT ACHIEVEMENTS THIS YEAR! YOU CAN BE VERY PROUD OF YOUR SUCCESSES!

- Brandi *Lieutenant Governor's Youth Experience Certificate of Achievement recipient*
- David *promotion to Master Corporal Cadet Corp.; participated during the Queen's visit*
- Fergus *"Yes I Can" Award recipient*
- Heather *Third Place Northern Provincial Science Fair (Grade 4)*
- Gill *High School Graduate; additional credits from Heavy Duty Mechanics Program*
- Candace *High School Graduate*
- Chantelle *High School Graduate*
- Christine *High School Graduate*
- Dylan *High School Graduate*
- Matthew *High School Graduate*
- Prentice *High School Graduate*
- Shelley *High School Graduate*
- Troy *High School Graduate*
- Veronica *High School Graduate*



INFINITY CARE PROGRAMS

“As caregivers we have the benefit of knowing the family history; the traditions; the mores; the positive expectations of the Elders. The children benefit from being in the loving and secure home of blood relatives. We grow together and learn together. We are a family.”

~ MCFCS KINSHIP CAREGIVER ~

Kinship Care Program

Kinship care is a living arrangement in which children who cannot reside with their parents live full time with a relative, or a close non-relative, who has a long standing relationship or attachment with the child. Kinship care is focused on supporting and developing traditional connectedness between children, caregivers and community. The program provides the child with a continuing role in the family, community and culture, which in turn intensifies the child's sense of belonging as well as a heightened level of stability.

The Kinship Care program currently offers support, training, advocacy and resources to the more than 150 kinship homes in the province. Collectively, the child's worker, the child's family and the Kinship Care worker, work side by side to assist in keeping children within their family networks, while maintaining and developing an awareness

of the strengths and challenges faced by these families who care for their children in a kinship care arrangement. By doing so, our Kinship Care program is able to utilize the valuable wisdom and knowledge that a family possesses and build on it to provide the families with a strengthened ability to deliver the quality of care that all children need in order to experience future successes and happiness.

This fall the Kinship Care program in Winnipeg Region will introduce a Kinship Care Specific Orientation Session that will address any kinship specific concerns, questions or thoughts. As well, there will be an opportunity to attend a monthly Kinship Care Support Group to provide our kinship care providers with an opportunity to take part in open discussions related to their roles and strengthen ties within the Metis Kinship community.

A Letter from a Kinship Caregiver:

I am writing this letter to express how great it is to have the kinship program working with me and being there to help and listen. My Kinship Care worker has been there for me when I needed someone to help me during mediation meetings, when I was feeling overwhelmed during these meetings, he helped me get respite and has been there if I have had any questions or concerns. He has been a big part of my 2 years with my niece and nephew and has made the transition easier for everyone. I am glad to have the kinship program as I don't think I could have done this with as little stress as I did, without my worker and the kinship program.

Our Kinship Care Workers:

Parkland Region

Wanda Guimont: 638-7896 or 734-3974

Brandon Region

Chris Logan: 725-8505

Winnipeg Region

Don Smith: 927-6800

Cheryl Lee-Ranville: 927-6988

Eileen Sanderson: 927-6895

FOSTER CARE AND SPECIALIZED FOSTER CARE

It is inspirational to see the changes in our general and specialized foster care program at MCFCS in the last four years. We truly believe that it is the very simple, concentrated and thoughtful way we work to build our foster care program that has brought great changes in the difference a foster family can make in the life of a child and that of the child's family.

It has always been the vision of our agency to build on the strengths of the Metis community to provide support and assistance to Metis children and families through Metis children and families. It is clear our foster care program is showing much progress in attaining this vision. It has been the Agency's focus to develop a comprehensive foster care program that ensures individuals and families who are interested in fostering children are well informed and understand that there are three essential and unique components to our Alternative Care program that must be understood and honoured. Those who inquire about fostering will hear from us that foster parents are most successful when they become an extension of a family and not a substitute to a child's family. In essence, all those who inquire about fostering learn that a key element of fostering is being as inclusive as possible of the child's birth family to

ensure that children remain connected to their family of origin, whether they are reunited into their family of origin or not. Those exploring fostering with our agency also learn that the Metis culture is another foundational element to our program. Foster parents who are Metis as well as those who are non Metis, learn that our agency has ensured that all families caring for our children understand the unique historical journey of the Metis people and the issues and challenges they have faced. Through Elder Brian Normand's Cultural Awareness Training, foster parents have the opportunity to be equipped with a better understanding of the connection between Metis history and the journey of Metis people into their present day community. Our caregivers are provided with some essential tools of understanding that highlight the beauty of the culture, its range, and the many strengths of the Metis people to be active participants in planning together with families and communities for a healthy future.

This year, not only have we seen a marked increase in foster parent inquiries (people calling to explore fostering), but we have also seen an impressive increase in the number of those callers that have identified themselves as Metis. "Good News" spreads, "Good Work" spreads the



news. Many callers when asked why they have chosen our agency to explore fostering with, have proudly announced "because I'm Metis!" Others have commented, "...I have heard good things about your agency.", or, "I've been told you're 'the best.'". This agency has been chosen by people who want to become active and involved. The end result is the development of homes that truly reflect our vision as an agency.

The types of "bridges" our foster families have become for our children and their families have stretched far beyond a stated "ideal" into an amazing, magical and meaningful reality that has had a life changing impact not only for our children, but also their families.

Our goal continues to need to be an emphasis on increasing the number of Metis families that choose to foster with our agency throughout our province.

"Never underestimate what a simple gesture can do. It is the little things that you do that make a big difference in other people's lives."

~ CATHERINE PULSIFER ~

In the past year MCFCS has delivered approximately 4,866 hours of training to 332 participants in Winnipeg, Brandon, Interlake, Eastman and the Parkland regions.



Region	(General & Specialized) Foster Homes	Kinship Care Homes	Total Homes
Thompson	1	5	6
The Pas	2	7	9
Parkland	9	17	26
Western	7	6	13
Interlake	24	15	39
Eastman	26	14	40
Central	4	3	7
Winnipeg	49	91	140
Other	-	1	1
TOTAL	122	159	281

General Foster Home Program

This program continues to recruit new general foster parents from the community to care for Metis and Inuit children when they are unable to reside with their family. Of the 88 calls the Agency received from callers interested in exploring fostering during this year, 42 identified themselves as Metis or First Nation. The word is spreading because our agency foster families are proud of what fostering has become and what has been possible with proper training, support, and a clearly stated vision.

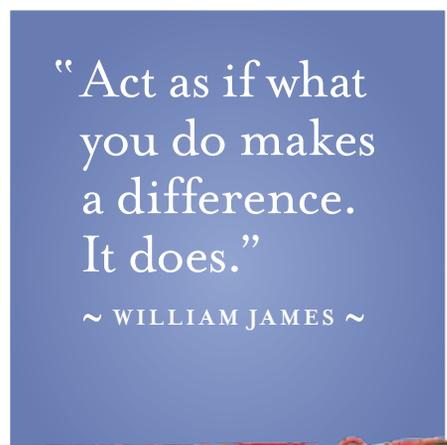
When callers reach out to learn more about fostering, they are not just told of our needs; they are told of our commitments and our expectations. In the Winnipeg Region, Foster Parent Orientation runs approximately every second month for groups of between 20-30 participants. Participants learn that fostering is so much more than caring for the child; it involves a commitment around being a part of a team, extended family and the Metis community.

If you would like more information about fostering please contact:

- Michele Brown (Winnipeg, Interlake & Eastman Regions) 927-6958
- Kisty Argue (The Pas Region) 623-6575
- Barbara Nelson (Thompson Region) 677-6570
- Daisy Chartrand (North Parkland Region) 734-3974
- Nina Crawford (South Parkland Region) 622-3536
- Chris Logan (Western & Central Regions) 727-8540

Specialized Foster Home Program

The Specialized Foster Home program has grown significantly in the last year with the addition of a staff position to support the development and support of specialized foster homes. The foster parents in this program are given intense clinical support and advanced training. The majority of our high needs children in care are in MCFCS resources. The success of this program is evidenced by the fact that there are almost zero foster home placement breakdowns and as a result the children in the program are experiencing stability in ways many of them have not previously experienced.



LIFE Program

(Living in Family Enhancement)

The LIFE program is a foster care program where the children in care are placed with their parent/s in a foster home. The foster parent provides care to the child but more so mentors the child's biological parent in parenting skills, setting limits and parental responsibility for approximately one year. In the second year of the program the biological parent lives on their own with their children with intensive support. This program is used both as a reunification intervention as well as a prevention strategy. The program continues to grow both in Winnipeg as well as in some rural areas. MCFCS is proud to report that this summer the first participant successfully completed the program. This success was celebrated with a graduation lunch for the family.

Emergency Placement Resources

In previous years the Agency has developed three emergency assessment units: Sunrise House in Swan River, Four Winds in Dauphin and Eagle's Nest in Winnipeg. The units have developed an assessment process that allows for positive placement planning for the children that come into emergency care.

With the emergence of the Specialized Homes program, the resource department has also been able to respond to some emergent placement requests through placements in this program. Although not identified primarily as an emergency placement resource, this program has allowed the Agency to provide specialized care to high risk children in a timely manner.

The Agency continues to assess the need for emergency placements and develop resources that meet the needs of the children coming into care.

RAILS Program

(Rosedale Assisted Interdependent Living Services)

MCFCS identified a need for a supported living environment for some of our youth in care who are transitioning into adulthood. While this is a time when many youth have a great desire to become fully independent and "live on their own", most adolescents lack the skills and maturity to succeed on their own as they are nearing or just surpassing the age of majority. Traditional independent living programs provide some support for youth while living on their own but aren't able to provide the intensive supports and adult availability many youth need to truly succeed. MCFCS has leased a number of apartments in a building on Rosedale Avenue. Youth in care live independently in their own apartment or share with another youth who is also working towards independence. Each youth has a staff person or team assigned to them to help support them towards independence. MCFCS has an office space in the building and staff available onsite 24 hours a day to provide support to any of the youth who may need it. We currently have youth occupying four of the apartments in the building. Two of the youth are young moms who are parenting for the first time.

A Family Enhancement Adventure

Patti's Story

In October 2008 I was assigned the case file for Patti and her children. I was somewhat familiar with her file as other workers on my team had worked with the family prior to my involvement. When I received and reviewed the file and saw they were in the Family Enhancement Program, I thought "this is a mistake". I was a very reluctant to take the case and thought "there is no way this family will be able to finish this program". Then I got to meet Patti and her children in person.

Patti had a reputation of being very 'in your face' and at times difficult to work with since she doesn't mince words and lets you know her opinion at all times. She certainly lived up to her reputation at our first meeting, but what really struck me was not only her dedication to wanting to parent her children, but the bond she had with them and the true desire to make their lives better as a family. As time went on we formed a very good working relationship and she always let me know where we stood and what she was going to do to get her children back in her care. It was not an easy road for her as the Family Enhancement Program was in its infancy and lots of ideas were "tested" on the family. Despite the struggles Patti continued to amaze me with her dedication to the program and to getting her children back. The more I got to know her the more my opinion of her changed. I began to see her as a mother trying to do her best, not because we were telling her she had to, but because she wanted to make things better for herself and her family.

One of the best things I got to witness in my time with the family was the children as they matured and their relationship with their mother continued to flourish. The children went from having difficulties in school and behavior at home to being typical children with some ups and downs, but a lot more ups! Here we are almost two years later and the children are back in Patti's care with their file being closed. Working with Patti has made me a better social worker and I thank her and her children for all they have taught me and for letting me be a part of their journey. At a recent celebration we had for them Patti told me of her goals to finish school, go to college and then come to work for the Agency. I have no doubt Patti will accomplish her goals and I look forward to working with her again, but this time as a colleague.

OUR REGIONS AT A GLANCE



Winnipeg Region

Office: 2000 Portage Avenue 927-6960 • 1261 Main Street 697-1118

Winnipeg is the largest service centre for MCFCS. In addition to all of the Winnipeg based service and infinity care teams all of the executive management and operations teams are located in Winnipeg. Our 1261 Main Street location houses our finance, human resources, I.T. and DR/FE staff. Our remaining executive, operations and service teams are located at 2000 Portage Avenue.

Executive and Operations Teams

The executive management team provides leadership and support to the Agency and its staff to ensure we continue to move forward in meeting the strategic planning goals that have been set for the Agency and we remain true to our Vision, Mission and Guiding Principles.

The team is committed to ensuring we have an agency that values our staff, seeks their input, hears their concerns and works towards solutions. We recognize the tremendous challenge our staff face in meeting the ever increasing demands of this critical work and challenge ourselves to find creative means to better support them.



Executive Team

Back Row: Lou Beaugard (Director of Finance),
Bev Wiebe (Director of Resources)

Front Row: Janine Sartoris (Director of Human Resources), Penny Smith (Acting Executive Director), Andrea Klyne-Lavallee (Acting Director of Services)

Missing: Heather Edinborough (Director of Services), Elder Brian Normand (Director of Cultural Services)

Our operations team includes the many individuals who ensure the day to day operations of the Agency are effective and efficient. They provide a critical service to the Agency and support staff in a variety of ways to meet our mandate and achieve our goals.



Operations Team

Back Row: Lyn Chartrand (Receptionist), Michelle Beaudin (Office Manager),
Kathie Gagnon (Paralegal), Allyson Wutke (HR Administrator)

Front Row: Beth Benoit (HR Coordinator), Carol Sparling (Executive Assistant)

Missing: Dave Kabestra (Cultural Worker), Alex Kozelko (Administrative Assistant),
Karen Love (Admin. & Quality Assurance Coordinator)





Finance and I.T. Team

Back Row: Lana Daniels (Payroll/HR), Lou Beaugard (Director of Finance), James Poirier (I.T. Administrator), Tristan Gabriel (Network Technician), Pat Donaghy (Finance)

Front Row: Ivy Reyes (Finance), Doreen Hood (Child Maintenance), Louise MacKinnon (Finance), Julie Higgins (Finance), Jennifer Nishikawa (Finance), Heydy Hernandez (Finance)

Service and Resource Teams

MCFCS has three family services teams; each comprised of a Supervisor, six Social Workers, two Social Work Assistants and an Administrative Assistant. The social workers in Winnipeg receive their cases from ANCR, the Winnipeg designated intake agency. Despite the continued increase in caseloads the service teams continue to find innovative ways to provide timely, culturally relevant, effective supports and services for our families. Many of the front line staff received training this year in the Signs of Safety model and are actively using the tools learned as a way to respectfully and collaboratively engage with families in developing the case plans. They continue to reach out to extended family to become part of the support network in ensuring safety for children. An increasing number of families are accessing the services of our Cultural Program through sharing circles, individual support, and participating in ceremonies and teachings.



Winnipeg Family Service Teams

Family Service Team

Back Row: Ian Fontaine (Social Worker), Shawna Bowler (Social Worker), Amy Sanderson (Social Work Assistant), Jennifer Michaluk (Social Worker), Cheryl Hudson (Social Work Assistant)

Front Row: Laura Rowbottom (Social Worker), Kara Abraham (Social Worker), Greg Besant (Supervisor), Dana Gauthier (Summer Student), Melanie Schellenberg (Social Worker)

Missing: Amanda Wutke (Administrative Assistant)



Family Service Team

Back Row: Lilah Demerais (Social Work Assistant), Danielle Wedlake (Summer Student), Jennifer Maffiola (Social Worker), Tanya Handel (Administrative Assistant), Josh Krongold (Social Worker), Natalie Sanderson (Social Worker)

Front Row: Laura Orvis (Social Work Assistant), Amber Teichroeb (Social Worker), Sharon Spinks (Supervisor), Stacy Sherlock (Social Worker), Claudia Colosimo (Social Worker)



Family Service Team

Back Row: Devyn Nelson (Social Worker), Julianne DeFehr (Social Worker), Trisha Fontaine (Administrative Assistant), Michael Taylor (Supervisor), Sandra Waldmo (Social Worker), Jennifer Rye (Social Work Assistant)

Front Row: Grace Micklefield (Social Work Assistant), Angie Hillcoff (Social Worker), Nadine Trimble (Social Worker), Ashley DeVries (Social Worker)

Missing: Donna Ranville (Administrative Assistant)

Permanent Ward Services

The Permanent Ward team is comprised of a Supervisor, 8 Social Workers, 2 Social Work Assistants, and an Administrative Assistant. This team provides a full range of services to 295 children and youth in care who are permanent wards of the Agency. The permanent ward team develops and implements plans collaboratively with foster families and extended family members involved with children and youth. Through the commitment, dedication and hard work from the permanent ward team many of the children have reconnected with their birth families in Winnipeg, communities in Manitoba and in other provinces. In doing so, this has provided a great opportunity to begin reunification planning and implementation for some children and youth.

In the past year the team has implemented the Looking After Children assessment tool. As previously reported the tool is a collaborative assessment process that involves the child and caregiver in the development of a comprehensive plan of care. The social workers reported positive responses after completing the assessment and action records. For example, Looking After Children is helpful as it is a comprehensive approach that includes all development areas of life; it's exciting, informative and helpful. Although lengthy and time consuming to complete, the tool provides useful information, teaches things about the children that you didn't know, teaches caregivers things about the child that they didn't know and provides good structure for developing care plans that are innovative and holistic.

The Permanency Planning Committee, established in 2007, continues to assist the social work staff in developing permanent plans for children in care. These plans may include adoption, guardianship or long term care. The planning process provides an avenue for the committee and social worker to assess the needs of children and assess suitable long term placement with a forever family. The long term plan centers on the best interest of the child taking into consideration family contact, cultural beliefs and practices. Ideally whenever possible long term care plans include birth family in order to provide opportunities for children to maintain their identity.



Permanent Ward Team

Back Row: Candace Harris (Social Worker), Norma Lagimodiere (Social Worker), Majola Vergara (Acting Supervisor), Adrienne Madden (Social Worker), Kiersten Nord (Social Worker)

Front Row: Erica Edinborough (Summer Student), George Reis (Social Worker), Jason Carriere (Social Work Assistant), Trish Bedard (Administrative Assistant)

Missing: Olivia Chubb (Social Work Assistant), Nicole Duhamel (Social Worker), Jenny Edwards (Social Worker), Catherine McAuley (Social Worker), Suelynne Yewchyn (Social Worker)

Infinity Care Teams

The Infinity Care team is comprised of two teams. One team is primarily responsible for the development and delivery of resources. The other team is responsible for the development and delivery of specialized programs and services for children, youth and families.

Resource Team

The resource team focuses on developing and supporting a continuum of quality placement resources that ensures the safety, well being and development of children and youth when they are unable to reside with their parents. This team prides itself on providing quality support services and an inclusive teamwork approach with all of our care providers. This team is responsive to the needs of the various care providers and has worked diligently in developing training curriculums, support groups and appreciation events. This team actively recruits and develops new placement resources and provides regular orientation sessions for individuals

interested in becoming foster parents. This team strives to identify the best possible placement resource for children and youth and creatively seeks solutions and innovative programs to fill existing gaps.



Resource Team

Back Row: Sharon Abgrall (Resource Worker), Karolina Rylka (Resource Worker), Cheryl Lee-Ranville (Resource Worker), Sandra Friesen (Placement Coordinator), Vanessa Bodie (Administrative Assistant), Sharon Welty (Resource Worker), Craig Collins (Foster Care/Resource Worker), Ingrid Inglis (Residential Resource Coordinator)

Front Row: Eileen Sanderson (Kinship Care Worker), Melissa Prescott (Family Enhancement Worker), Barbara Magnowski (Supervisor), Shanlee Scott (Family Enhancement Worker)

Missing: Michele Brown (Resource Worker), Leilani Buschau (FASD Specialist), Crystal Moshenko (Mentor/Supervisor), Vivien Watson (Resource Worker), Don Smith (Kinship Care Worker)

Programs Team

The service and programs team is responsible for developing and implementing the auxiliary programs and services that are required to effectively support our families in enhancing their functioning and empowering them to provide safe and nurturing care to their children. All of our services are strength based and promote active family engagement. The programs build the capacity in our parents, so that families can be maintained or reunified. The team develops responsive programming that can be adapted to the unique needs of our families.

The team also develops and implements the programs and services available to support the health and wellness of the children and youth in care of the Agency. The team has developed individual and group programming that builds on the inherent strengths of our children and youth and supports the development of a positive sense of worth and identity that is embedded in their sense of family and culture.

This team embodies the creative and innovative spirit of the Agency and utilizes the direct experiences and feedback from families, children and youth to inform our programs and services.



Resources Team

Back Row: Robin Genaille (Family Support Worker), Arlie Link (Family Support Coordinator), Patrick Desjarlais (Family/Youth Care Worker), Michelle St. Laurent (Administrative Assistant), Rick Presonka (Skills for Life Worker), Minnie Budge (Volunteer Coordinator), Lyle Massan (SASH Program), Joanne Nobess (Skills for Life Worker), Lary Fiddler (Family/Youth Care Worker), Dianne Cross (Metis Spirit Worker), Janice Petit (Supported Family Time Worker)

Front Row: Melanie Murray (Family Mentor Coordinator), Rabia Harb (Family/Youth Care Worker), Pat Alphonso Cox (Supervisor), Vern Dano (Circle of Life Coordinator), Robin Stone (SASH Program), Suzanne Chartrand (Life Long Connections Worker)

Missing: Linda Fleury (Family Support Worker), Larry Friesen (Family Support Worker), Shelly Normand (Family Support Worker)

Interlake and Eastman Region

Office: 2000 Portage Avenue, Winnipeg, 927-6960

The Interlake and Eastman team is located in Winnipeg's main office at 2000 Portage Avenue. They provide services to families and children in a large geographic region in both the north and south of the Eastman region, and in the Interlake region of the province. The team continues to operate out of the Winnipeg office as the Agency has insufficient operational funding to afford an office site in the regions.

The team is comprised of five Social Workers, a Social Work Assistant, two dedicated Family Support Workers and the team's Administrative Assistant and Supervisor. They have a unique set of challenges in that most of their clients live a substantial distance from Winnipeg, thereby necessitating significant numbers of hours spent travelling. The team is presently managing 122 cases.

The Interlake and Eastman team is quick to embrace new programs and training within the Agency. Led by the supervisor, they have actively engaged in the Signs of Safety approach and are excited by the response and progress it elicits in families.



Interlake and Eastman Team

Back Row: Therese Denoyer (Social Worker),
Camille Reid (Social Worker), Karen LeVasseur (Supervisor),
Allison Buffie (Social Worker), Larissa Ryle (Administrative Assistant)
Front Row: Michelle Plett (Social Work Assistant),
Lilian Bonito (Social Work Assistant), Sandra Ovid (Social Worker),
Bridget Mwanza (Social Worker)
Missing: Heather Pappin (Family Support Worker)

Western Region

Office: 141 Rosser Avenue, Brandon, 727-8540

The Western Region team relocated to a new office space over the past year in partnership with the Manitoba Metis Federation Southwest Region. The new space has been renovated to provide a large kitchen area and family meeting room. The team has taken every advantage of the new space and has hosted many meetings and events for families and community members.

This team provides services to children and families residing in the Western Region of the province. The four social workers have been busy with cases over the past year and have provided services to 63 families, 156 children and 37 children in care cases.

The team continues to work on developing and expanding the programs and services that are available to strengthen families and promote resiliency in children and youth. The further development of these program areas has allowed the Region a greater capacity to provide in-home support services to families that reinforce the existing strengths of families and provide them with the needed supports to resolve issues that are impacting on their parenting. A full time Family Support Worker joined the team to help achieve these goals.

The Agency has continued to expand the services available to youth in care in the region and regularly hosts a Youth Focus Group. We have partnered with Winnipeg and the 2 groups met regularly in both locations. Our group has expanded to include young parents as well as youth in care or who have been in care in the past. The team is now looking at developing programs to meet the needs of the younger children in care.

The team has one staff position that is responsible for developing kinship care and foster care placement resources in both the Western and Central Regions. The team has offered several training sessions for existing foster parents and plans to continue to expand the resources available in the community. The Resource Development worker is responsive to the needs of the families and children in care and has been working on developing new projects to better meet these needs.

Central Region

Office: 25 – 3rd Street S.E., Portage la Prairie, 857-8751

This team provides services to children and families residing within the Central Region of the province. The team is made up of one full time Social Worker and a half time Social Work Assistant. The social worker is responsible for providing services to 19 families, 33 children and 14 children in care cases.

MCFCS continues to partner with Child and Family Services of Central Manitoba to support and assist our staff team in this region. The Central and Western teams work closely to increase their connectedness with the Agency as a whole. Regular team meetings are held to provide networking opportunities and find other ways to partner.

The Agency continues to work on developing our own programs and resources within this region in order to reduce our dependency on CFS Central and to implement Metis and Inuit specific programming. Youth from this region have been participating in the youth focus groups as well.



Western and Central Team

Left to Right: George Ducharme (Social Worker), June Ruckle (Social Work Assistant), Kristy Chartrand (Social Worker), Sara Murray (Social Work Assistant-Central), Chris Logan (Kinship Care/Resource Worker), Christine Richardson (Supervisor), Janet McGregor (Family Support Worker), Londa Green (Social Worker-Central);

Missing: Katriana Miller (Administrative Assistant), Sheri Elton (Social Worker), Crystal Genaille (Social Worker)

Parkland Region

Family Services Office: 13 – 1st Avenue, S.W., Dauphin • 638-7896

Intake Services Office: 611 Main Street, Dauphin • 622-3520

After Hours and Emergency Services: 866-834-4242

Resource Services Office: (108-110) – 220 Whitmore Avenue Dauphin • 638-4003

Family & Intake Services, Resource Office: 605 Main Street, Swan River • 734-3974

The Parkland Region is the second largest service provision area for MCFCS. The region provides both ongoing family services as well as intake and after hours on behalf of the other child and family service agencies in the region. In addition, MCFCS has very recently begun a Family Enhancement/Differential Response program in the region. With the significant growth that continues in terms of service requirements, all the programs have experienced staffing changes, many new training initiatives and other adjustments that come with rapid growth.

The intake office at 611 Main Street in Dauphin houses both the Intake and Family Enhancement teams. The Intake team responded to 749 intake referrals in the past year. They concluded 644 of the intakes with 224 cases being closed and 420 cases transferred for ongoing services.

The family service office on 1st Avenue in Dauphin is where the Ongoing Service workers endeavour to provide culturally appropriate child protection interventions. They work closely and cohesively with many community service providers in order to best meet the families' needs. The same is true of the MCFCS office in Swan River. That office houses an Intake worker, a Family Enhancement worker and Ongoing Service workers and serves the larger surrounding community as well as the town of Swan River.

All of the front line service teams are supported by Administrative Assistants, Social Work Assistants and Resource Development staff.

Programs to support parenting, help youth to live independently, educate caregivers about children with special needs, and other specialized areas of learning continue to be offered and improved in the region.



Dauphin Intake and Family Services Team

Left to Right: Chantel Teichrow (Intake Worker), Charlene Sheremet (Emergency Assessment Unit Team Leader), Janice Wood (Intake Worker), Clairette Zaleski (Administrative Assistant), Nina Crawford (Resource Worker), Betty Caruk (Social Work Assistant), Marli Brown (Social Worker), Jill Roy (Social Worker), David Mansell (Social Worker), Lisa Monych (Supervisor);
Missing: Michelle Chaychuk (Administrative Assistant), Angie Kruk (Family Enhancement Worker), Audrey Stoski (Intake Worker), Charlette Wain-Clarkson (Social Worker), Wanda Guimont (Kinship Care Worker), Annette Choquette (Intake Worker), Ken Levandoski (After Hours Worker)

Parkland Resource Development

The Resource Development Workers in Parkland have expanded the resources available to the Agency in the Parkland Region. The number of foster homes has increased and our kinship homes continue to be a valuable placement option for many of our children in care. This year the Resource Development Workers provided the first foster care appreciation dinner in the region.

Sunrise House and Four Winds are emergency assessment units that are a valuable resource particularly since the Parkland Region is also the Designated Intake Agency (DIA) for that area. Child and youth care staff have received training and the programming in those facilities has developed in a way that meets the developmental needs of the children placed in them.

This year we are in the process of hiring staff that will allow us to provide some services for adolescents that include One-to-One support and Skills for Life. These additional staff will also provide family support for the region.

Parkland DIA Statistics		
Authority	Agency	Cases Transferred
First Nation North	Cree Nation	47
	TOTAL	47
First Nation South	DOCFS	1
	Sandy Bay CFS	2
	SouthEast CFS	1
	West Region CFS	96
	TOTAL	100
General Authority	CFS Western	4
	Parkland Regional Office	49
	Winnipeg CFS	3
	TOTAL	56
Metis Authority	Metis CFCS	217
	TOTAL	217
TOTAL Cases Transferred		420



Swan River Intake and Family Services Team

Left to Right: Olive Kowalchuk (Supervisor), Beverley Polon (Social Worker), Amanda Amorim (Social Worker), Farrah Langan (Intake Worker), Lori Plesh (Social Worker), Deanna Sabiston (Administrative Assistant), Lesley Sembaluk (Social Work Assistant)

Missing: Daisy Chartrand (Resource Worker)

The Pas Region

Office: 456 Fischer Avenue, The Pas 623-5897

The Pas Region provides comprehensive services to families in The Pas and many surrounding communities. The three staff on this team have all been there for almost the entire time that we have been housed in the beautiful Manitoba Metis Federation building at 456 Fischer Avenue. This partnership has certainly increased the community's knowledge of MCFCS.

In the past year the staff continued to provide culturally relevant services to children and families. There are plans to hold a larger cultural camp for youth this summer, expanding on the cultural camp that started last year. Our agency's Elder, Brian Normand led the camp, and the youth who attended enjoyed it so much that they want to return and bring their friends! Youth are currently contributing to the planning by compiling their lists of what they wish to do at camp and writing them on the board in the MCFCS office.

The Agency has expanded in space thanks to the accommodation of the MMF in The Pas. Staff have moved into a much larger room in order to have them all together, and have turned one of the former offices into a much needed family room for visits and play therapy. It has been enjoyed and appreciated by families.

Like the rest of the Agency, the social workers have begun learning the Signs of Safety approach in their work. They will continue to attend training and incorporate this exciting learning into their work.

The two social workers share responsibility for case management of 48 family and children's files. The social work assistant has been very busy assisting our Elder, Brian Normand with the Agency's continuing Aboriginal Awareness Training. She travels with the other trainers to all areas of the province providing the training to families, staff, communities and foster parents. She continues to deliver anger management, domestic violence and parenting training to groups and individuals in The Pas and surrounding areas. All three of the MCFCS staff in The Pas are involved in their community.



The Pas Team

Back Row: Kisty Argue (Social Worker), Elsie Moar (Social Work Assistant);

Front Row: Charles Potan (Social Worker)

Thompson Region

Office: 59 Elizabeth Drive, Thompson 677-6570

This team provides services to children and families in Thompson as well as surrounding communities. The region has two Social Workers and one Social Work Assistant who provide services to 73 cases.

In November 2009 a second social worker position was created. The addition of this position provided much needed relief to the sole social worker, who had been managing a very high caseload in the region for the last 5 years.

Despite the increase in staff this team continues to manage a significant workload particularly given the lack of Agency resource positions in the region. The lack of community resources particularly in surrounding communities as well as the extensive travel required create additional challenges and demands on staff. Our staff continue to exemplify hard work and enthusiasm in their work with families. They are extremely creative and resourceful and regularly utilize extended family and community supports to assist families. They also directly provide services such as parenting education and counseling when there are no other resources available for families.

MCFCS continues to have a strong partnership with Family Services and Housing – Thompson Regional Office who provides office space, on-site supervision, administrative support and back up coverage. The supervision aspect of this arrangement will be changing in September 2010 with the hiring of an Agency Supervisor who will supervise both The Pas and Thompson Regions. MCFCS also has strong working relationships with community resources in Thompson and their assistance in working with our families is greatly valued.

In the past year MCFCS offered FASD training to approximately 20 family members, care providers and collaterals and further training is planned for November 2010. The Agency's Elder and Cultural Worker continue to visit the region regularly to provide support to our children and families as well as our staff. They have provided support to individual children and families and have held healing circles in Thompson, Wabowden and Thicket Portage. They have also provided cultural teachings and sharing circles to children and staff at the community school in Thicket Portage, which have been enthusiastically received. A first ever Cultural and Heritage Camp will also be held at Paint Lake this summer for children in care.



Thompson Team

Left to Right: Shirlene Morrisseau (Social Work Assistant),
Melissa Ryan (Social Worker), Barbara Nelson (Social Worker)

WE BELIEVE IN THE INHERENT
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LOVE. RESPECT. HONOUR. STRENGTH. HERITAGE.



METIS
CHILD, FAMILY AND
COMMUNITY
SERVICES