



# METIS CHILD, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES



ANNUAL REPORT

*April 1, 2013 — March 31, 2014*



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### ***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.

## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

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*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, parents, uncles, aunties, cousins and community.*

*Metis Child, Family and Community Services Agency (MCFCS) provides strength to our Nation and the quality of services that MCFCS provides is surpassed by none in this country. MCFCS has achieved such success that both the Province and stakeholders in other countries are looking at us and how we have been effective in the services we provide.*

*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 who will carry the fire of our beliefs into the digital age and beyond.*

*Believe in yourself, Believe in Metis!*

President David Chartrand, **LL.D.(hon), O.M.**



## MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER

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*On behalf of the provincial Board of Directors of the Manitoba Metis Federation (MMF), I am pleased to offer a message to all those involved in our Metis Child, Family and Community Services Agency.*

*As I write this message I do so with great honour in having been the Minister of Metis Child and Family Services for a dozen years. In that time I have been privileged to witness the tremendous gains and strides the Agency has made in providing services to Metis, Inuit and families of many cultures. The Agency is widely known in the community for its reputation of working with families to keep them together, reunifying families and providing family supports.*

*As there is no real mechanism in the provincial system for funding prevention and the system is one of protection-based funding, the Agency has to be very creative and efficient in doing this important work with little financial support. The MMF is also pleased to support the Agency by funding a Metis Spirit worker to assist youth and young adults who need our support after they leave the CFS system.*

*Looking back, we have done great work, but the rising number of children in care of the Metis CFS System and all systems reminds us that we still have much work left to do until the day our families won't have any need for a CFS system. I look forward to doing my utmost to support and advocate for the Agency's important work and would like to take this opportunity to commend them for their continuing dedication to our Metis and Inuit families.*

*Meeqwetch,*

Judy Mayer  
**Minister of Metis Child and Family Services**



## MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD

*It's hard to believe another year has come and gone already! It has been an eventful year with many changes but also with new and exciting ideas to explore! Despite the decrease in funding, the Agency has continued to provide excellent programs and services to our children and families.*

*On behalf of the Agency Board of Directors I would like to thank our Executive Director, Andrea Klyne-Lavallee and the Executive Management team for all their hard work and dedication. We would also like to acknowledge all the front line workers for the amazing work they do for our families and communities and most of all for the children in Manitoba. It is because of you that MCFCS is the Agency of choice for many people, so we thank you.*



*The MCFCS Agency Board looks forward to working alongside the Executive Director, as well as the Authority in the upcoming year to provide support for the MCFCS Agency.*

*Respectfully,*

Brandi Braun  
**Chair**

### 2013-2014 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

#### **Chair**

Brandi Braun, Southwest Region

#### **Vice Chair**

Steve Racine, Southwest Region

#### **Secretary**

Beverly Webb, Interlake Region

#### **Treasurer**

Marcella Vezina, Southeast Region

#### **Members**

Shirley Langan, Southeast Region  
Florence Lamoureux, Interlake Region  
Eric Chartrand, Winnipeg Region  
Loretta Boulard, Winnipeg Region

#### **Ex-Officio Members**

Marguerite Bagley  
Barbara Lavallee

*"...MCFCS is the Agency of choice for many people, so we thank you."*

## **GOVERNANCE: REGIONAL LEADERSHIP TRAINING PROGRAM (RLTP)**

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To ensure a governance structure that is based in community representation, the Regional Leadership Training Program (RLTP) was created. The goal of the program is to develop a pool of qualified, educated and prepared Metis and Inuit candidates to serve on the Board of Directors of regionally appropriate Metis and Inuit Child and Family Services Agencies.

RLTP members are appointed by the Manitoba Metis Federation Regional Vice Presidents (4 members) and the Metis Women of Manitoba Board of Directors (1 member per region). Training relevant to leadership, Board governance and child welfare in Manitoba is facilitated by the Metis Child and Family Services Authority. RLTP members are not responsible for reporting to any individual or organization. The Metis Child and Family Services Authority is the reporting body.

RLTP members appoint from among themselves, individuals to sit on the Board of Directors. Appointment terms for Directors are staggered to ensure continuity of leadership for the Agency.



## MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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*Welcome everyone. I hope you enjoy reading what MCFCS has accomplished this year and learning about the different program areas we all continue to enhance. I am always excited to share stories about the work being done by the families and staff together.*

*The goal of the services provided by MCFCS is to enhance and improve the capacity of the family unit using a safe, respectful and strength based approach. As mentioned in previous reports, our agency practices the Signs of Safety model. This approach is very much inclusive of family and community. Because our families are so diverse the Agency implemented new initiatives to support our children, youth and parents which are highlighted below.*

*Action Therapy provides individual and family counseling mostly geared toward high risk youth. This service is quite unique as the work with youth happens in their home, community or anywhere the youth feel most comfortable to engage in a therapeutic way. Traditional Aboriginal forms of healing and spirituality complement this process. Youth have access to their counselor beyond structured sessions and can call them if need be during evenings and on weekends.*

*"As the worker what I appreciate most about working with Action Therapy is the hands on approach in working with families & children in the home which allows the children to feel safe which in turn make therapy more impactful for them"*

*Our agency partnered with Aulneau Renewal Centre to enhance our Supported Family Time Program by complementing it with the Aulneau Dragonfly Treatment Program. Prior to implementation training was provided by Aulneau to a diverse group of Agency staff. Parents identified to participate in the program attended a half day orientation at the Agency. Dragonfly was just recently implemented onsite at our Portage Avenue office, in our LIFE homes and with a small number of participants at Aulneau. Most parents agree to be videotaped which is truly a learning opportunity for them as they do their work. Staff are provided with mentorship on a ongoing basis throughout the attachment work with parents and children. MCFCS honours all the parents for their bravery in the work they are doing.*

*"I really liked the information and I was able to use it and do it with my child." "The training was very positive and helpful."*

*MCFCS ratified its first collective bargaining agreement in February 2014. The staff and union representatives worked diligently for many months to complete this work. Through this process both positive and collaborative working relationships developed.*

*The management and staff completed projects this year that include, but are not limited to, developing a child in care assessment tool and a child in care planning map, conducting an internal file audit, revising our cultural training manual and terms of reference for the Cultural Committee, as well as developing various policies and procedures in social work and human resources.*

*Our strategic plan, completed in May 2014, set our goals for the upcoming year. We are always striving to improve and enhance our services therefore a major theme in our plan for 2014 – 2015 is to evaluate our program and service areas. As an agency, we are always aware of how critical it is to the success of our children, families and community that the services they receive meet their needs.*

*Many thanks to the tremendous efforts of all MCFCS staff. You are amazing! Thank you also to our Board of Directors who provide direction and support for the work we do, to the Metis Government and our Metis Authority for supporting our initiatives and to our Elders, Betty Rodway and Gerald Scharien for sharing your wisdom.*

*Respectfully,*

Andrea Klyne-Lavallee  
**Executive Director**

*"We are always striving to improve and enhance our services..."*

## THE YEAR AT A GLANCE

Regions	Children In Care	Extensions Of Care	Voluntary Family Services	Protection	Expectant Parent Services	Family Enhancement	Total Cases	ANCR Intakes/CIC Transfers
Central	34	n/a	n/a	11	n/a	n/a	45	
Interlake	84	8	n/a	16	1	n/a	109	
Eastman	107	6	1	13	n/a	n/a	127	
Western	31	2	7	66	n/a	n/a	106	
Winnipeg	599	43	33	503	6	67	1251	
<b>Total</b>	<b>855</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>609</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>1638</b>	<b>324</b>

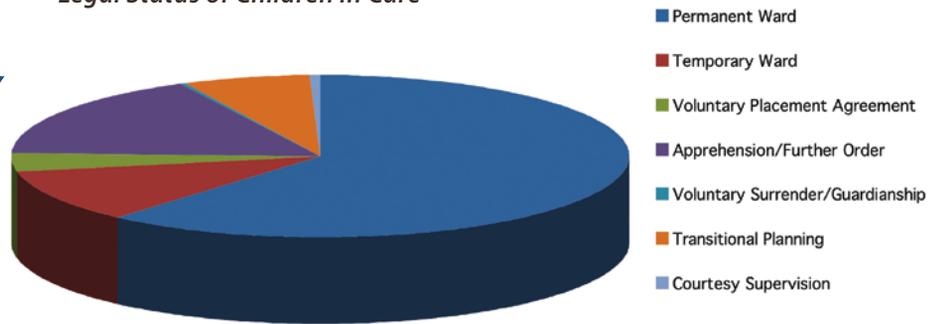
### CFSIS COMPLIANCE April 1, 2014

	Jurisdiction Compliance	Legal	Recording Compliance	All Criteria
CIC	99%	97%	94%	91%
Family Services	99%	n/a	86%	83%

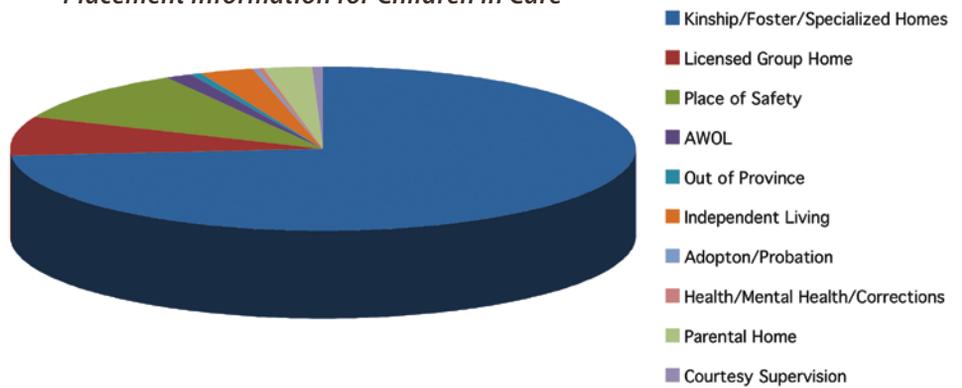


# CHILDREN IN CARE STATISTICS

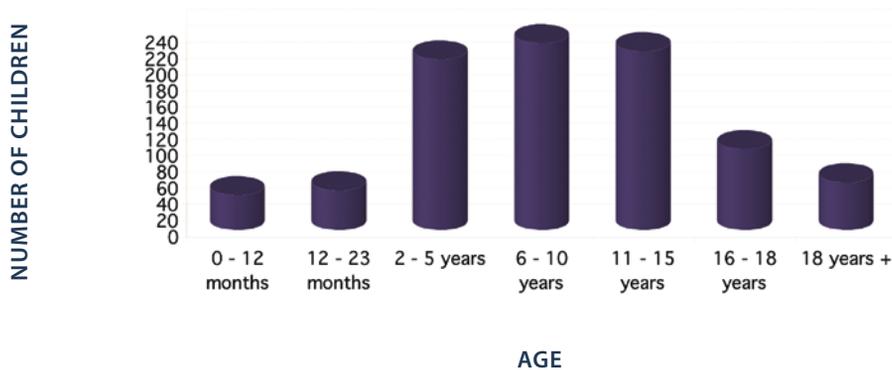
*Legal Status of Children in Care*



*Placement Information for Children in Care*



*Ages of Children in Care*





## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Metis Child Family and Community Services would like to acknowledge the kind and generous donations made to the Agency in support of some of our special events such as our Youth Celebration, Foster Care Appreciation and Agency Day. These events would not have been such a success without the kindness of the following:

- |                                     |   |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Assinboine Park Conservancy         | Maria Santos                              |
| Boston Pizza                        | Metis Child and Family Services Authority |
| City of Winnipeg                    | MTS Future First Tickets for Kids         |
| Clarion Hotel                       | Office of the Children's Advocate         |
| CN                                  | Park Avenue Vending                       |
| Duboff, Edwards, Haight & Schachter | Players Cup Care of MF1 Marketing         |
| Family Foods                        | Powerland Computers                       |
| Fort Garry Fire Trucks              | Rainbow Stage                             |
| Giant Tiger                         | Tapper Cuddy LLP                          |
| Gus & Tony's at the Park            | The Wah-Sa Gallery                        |
| Investors Group                     | True North Sports and Entertainment       |
| Louis Riel Institute                | University of Winnipeg                    |
| Manitoba Foster Family Network      | Victoria Inn                              |
| Manitoba Metis Federation Inc.      | Viscount Gort Hotel                       |
| Manitoba Museum                     | Volkswagon Canada                         |
| Manitoba Theatre for Young People   | Winnipeg Goldeyes                         |

## DIFFERENTIAL RESPONSE (DR)

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Differential Response is a program that has been within our agency since 2009. The primary focus of this program is to engage in preventative work with families from a strength based, family centered and holistic approach with the intention of family preservation. Families are referred to this unit from intake based on a risk assessment rating using the SDM tool, or they can also be referred from family services units within the Agency.

Families referred to the program typically acknowledge that there are worries within their families that are affecting their children and they agree to accept services to increase safety in their families thereby decreasing the need to have longer term, more intrusive protection services from the family services stream. The unit's goal is to work together with families to increase safety by building on the family's capacity to care for their own children while including existing family supports or other community supports in service planning. To meet this goal, family safety network meetings with extended family members, friends and other community service professionals present take place to discuss openly the worries and how each person present can contribute to the plan to keep children safe and in the family home. Workers aim to assist families in connecting with community resources that can best serve the family's needs, thus eliminating the need for MCFCS services to the family.

The team consists of a supervisor, administrative assistant and 5 social workers as well as a mentor and cultural worker. Together they strive to offer a wraparound and holistic strength based approach to children and families. Some of the challenges faced in doing this are of course the limited prevention funding afforded to the unit as well as the requirement that families cannot be in this unit for more than 270 days.

The past year presented a number of challenges for both the Family Services and Differential Response Programs with respect to funding changes which create ongoing challenges as the needs of families continue to grow and the expectations to always meet Standards create additional demands for our front line staff and supervisors. Families in need of services and choosing MCFCS continue to grow and face more complex needs than ever before. We continue to see an overwhelming number of families affected by domestic violence as well as parents and children struggling with addictions. More recently it appears that families and children are also facing struggles with addictions to prescribed medications. More and more we are challenged to help parents who have learning disabilities and cognitive limitations to meet the needs of their children in a safe manner without community supports available to help them. Families facing these and many more worries are often referred to MCFCS when other community resources appear unable to meet their needs. Meeting the needs of Metis, Inuit and other nations continues to grow more and more challenging and the situation has continued to require MCFCS staff to meet the ever growing needs of children and families within minimal preventative funding.

As a way to meet the ever growing needs of children and families, as well as meeting Standards and providing quality services, the program has looked at ways to work with families differently and more respectfully. The focus continues to be on working with families in a way that they understand the worries, fully engage and become part of developing plans with their workers. Consistent with our Agency's practice of using a Signs of Safety approach we have increased our use of family conferencing, sharing circles, engaging with Elders and mapping out strengths and worries alongside, and with, children and families. Workers also continue to expand on their use of the Three Houses exercise which allows children to talk about things that they are happy about, worried about or wish for. These tools are often instrumental in helping parents understand how their family dynamics affect their children and move them to take action. When, as a last resort, children have to come into Agency care, our goal continues to be to place children with extended family when possible and our efforts are demonstrated by the large number of Kinship placements our children reside in.



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In addition to improving the way we work with families so that they feel involved in their family's plans, we have also been mindful and cognizant of The Phoenix Sinclair Inquiry recommendations and focused on case management standards and compliance, specifically with case documentation. A tremendous focus has been on ensuring that all contact with children and families is well documented and accessible when needed. This required developing tools to aid workers in completing case notes as well as ensuring that training was provided so that workers understood the importance of clear case notes and file documentation in general. Presently we can confidently say that our efforts have dramatically improved our file documentation both in the physical and electronic files. This is reflected for us when we hear from our Authority, after hours workers and children's advocacy workers who, when needed, can find documentation on children and families, which expedites responses when children may be at risk.

As a pilot project for the last two years the Agency has had a Training and Development Leader position to develop training specifically for new workers as well as a refresher for all workers. The subjects offered in the training ranged from an orientation to the child and family services systems to working with other community resources and collaterals. The Child and Family Services Act was reviewed as were Standards and the risk assessment tools. Special attention was also paid to the requirement of seeing children face to face at least monthly and case documentation was a central piece for both groups of staff.

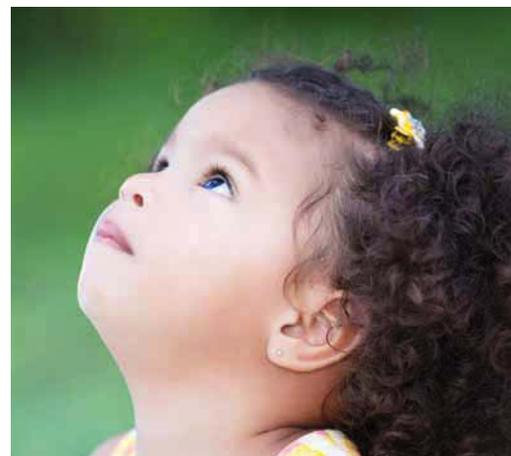
The above and more was accomplished this past year and yet we recognize that these improvements would not have been possible without the hard work and dedication of our staff who embrace our Vision and Mission Statements and strive to walk alongside children and families in a sensitive, mindful and respectful way; always looking for strengths and ways to support families to grow stronger and stay together.

Below are some messages from workers about the feedback they received from families:

*When I met with the mother I asked her about her experience with the DR program and what was helpful and what was not in order to gain an awareness and understanding about her perspective. The mother shared that she felt extremely supported by her previous worker and cultural worker and she was glad that her file reopened to our program. The mother said that the workers took the time to listen and she felt that they genuinely cared for her, her children and her circumstance. The mother felt that she was treated with respect and that her strengths were acknowledged.*

*I am proud of the work I have done with one family and very proud of the work mom has accomplished during the 6 month temporary order we had on her 4 children. This family had an open protection file for years with many concerns from schools and many visits to home. . . She has, since apprehension, worked cooperatively with the Agency and exceeded Agency expectations by attending doctor appointments regularly for mental and physical challenges, securing housing, solving financial issues and addressing her addiction issues. She is now caring for all her children while ensuring they continue to attend school regularly. This mother is thankful for the Agency's assistance and is now talking about going to school in her future to become a social worker.*

*As we receive a new file our Supervisor will provide us with a SOS map. When I meet with the family for the first time I will go over the SOS map with the family and will ask them if the statements are accurate, and usually they do agree with all the statements or just want me to change a word here or there. I will then create a new SOS map with the family and leave a copy with them so they know the case plan. I have received very positive feedback from families. They enjoy that they get to be part of the case plan and that they know exactly what and when they need to complete their goals. When I leave these meetings I get a lot of positive feedback from the family and they are also happy because we touched base on some of their strengths in the SOS map so it leaves them feeling hopeful and knowing that they are capable of accomplishing their goals.*



## CULTURAL PROGRAMS & SERVICES



MCFCS believes in the inherent strength of our families and children and in the need to preserve their cultural identity. As a result, our agency offers a very dynamic and vibrant cultural program for our families, children and staff. Culturally relevant themes and practices are intertwined into all Agency programs and services.

Three times a year a Youth Celebration is hosted to honour our youth turning 18. The Agency gifts each youth with a Metis Sash presented by an Elder who also provides the youth with a brief teaching on its significance. The Agency's Spirit Helpers Committee is in place to support a strong, committed cultural component within the Agency practice. This is achieved by guiding and supporting the philosophy and mandate of the Agency as it relates to intertwining culture into our work with children and families, staff and caregivers.

This past year the Agency purchased individual cultural kits for each permanent ward. These kits include

age appropriate, Metis specific reading material and other cultural information. The kits are hand delivered by social workers to each child and the significance is discussed with the child and caregivers. More recently the Agency has implemented a plan to develop cultural plans for all permanent wards in care.

The Agency continues to employ a cultural worker who is responsible for engaging with children in a culturally relevant manner through activities including cultural crafts, cultural feasts, gardening, harvesting, canoeing, rod fishing, etc. In addition, the Agency's cultural worker plans and oversees 2 cultural camps per year for children and youth. Caregivers are recruited to assist.

This past year the Agency held an ice fishing derby where a total of 22 youth participated. The staff worked diligently to seek out prize donations so each



youth received a prize and had a ton of fun. Youth and staff are also provided with an opportunity to participate in approximately 5 sweats per year. Last year 40 youth participated and were provided with teachings about sweats.

The Agency has offered tobacco to Elders to assist with cultural teachings and especially to facilitate circles for families, children and staff. These circles result in a much more positive approach and results.

The Agency, in partnership with Louis Riel Institute, provides all caregivers, volunteers and potential adoptive parents with a 1 day cultural training workshop. Agency staff also deliver cultural training to all staff.

Overall MCFCS is strongly committed to the inclusion of culture in all services and programs we deliver.

*"...our Agency continues to have a positive reputation..."*

## FAMILY SERVICES



### **Winnipeg**

The Winnipeg Family Services Program currently consists of 5 units each comprised of a supervisor, administrative assistant and 6 social workers. The family services teams provide services to families living within the city of Winnipeg. While the majority of families are Metis and Inuit, a great number of families are also First Nations as well as other ethnicities.

This year presented a number of funding challenges for the Agency as a whole, but also family services' ability to engage in preventative work with families. In addition, many new expectations have been placed upon family services workers including the implementation of a new child in care assessment tool. This, along

with continued efforts towards improving case documentation and the use of the SDM risk assessment tool, means that social workers have increased expectations combined with fewer resources available. Despite this our Agency continues to have a positive reputation within the community for engaging families in a meaningful and respectful manner. Family services teams also continue to utilize the Signs of Safety Model of engaging with families. This perspective focuses on involving families in the case planning process and openly discussing worries and strengths, and together, creating the next steps.



Workers also continue to expand on their use of the Three Houses exercise which allows children to talk about things that they are happy about, worried about or wish for. These tools are often instrumental in helping parents understand how their family dynamics affect their children and move them to take action. When, as a last resort, children have to come into Agency care, our goal continues to be to place children with extended family whenever possible and our efforts are demonstrated by the large number of Kinship placements our children reside in.

## PERMANENT WARD & ADOPTION SERVICES



The Permanent Ward department at MCFCS consists of 2 permanent ward teams providing services to Metis and Inuit children and youth residing within the city of Winnipeg. One team consists of 7 permanent ward social workers and the other team has 5 permanent ward social workers and 2 adoption social workers. While each team functions independently with separate supervisors and administrative assistants, there continues to be a spirit of togetherness and cooperation as well as some joint activities and shared work between the teams.

The permanent ward teams work diligently to ensure that all children and youth receive the services and resources necessary to help them attain optimal overall development. In addition to working directly with children and youth, the permanent ward teams continue to work with birth parents and extended family members towards ensuring that families remain connected in a safe and meaningful way. We are honoured to

say that this year again has seen some reunifications for permanent wards and ultimately in having some permanent orders rescinded.

The philosophy and direction we follow within the permanent ward teams is one that incorporates a strength based approach using the Signs of Safety model. Exciting work is being done using Signs of Safety mapping and the Words and Pictures and Three Houses exercises. There is a strong and enduring emphasis on maintaining cultural connections for all our Metis and Inuit permanent wards and in 2014 we began the distribution of individual, age-relevant cultural kits to each child and youth. We are also working jointly with birth families and caregivers through the creation and implementation of cultural plans to guide and support our children and youth in their lifelong cultural growth and development and pride in their heritage.

It is widely recognized that youth are sometimes not ready to transition out of agency care at age 18 and MCFCS proudly supports many of our youth aged 18+ to remain in agency care via an Extension of Care. Extensions of care may be granted up to age 21 and allow youth to pursue educational and career goals or gain additional valuable life skills that will help

them move forward into a successful future. We are also pleased to note that both permanent ward teams have youth graduating from high school and attending post secondary education via the Tuition Waivers Initiative for Children in Care.

We are thankful for the excellent year we've had and we look forward another year of positive growth and change, vision and promise!



### **Adoption Program**

It has been another busy year for the Metis Child Family and Community Services 'Roots' Adoption Team. The 'Roots' adoption team has a supervisor and 2 adoption workers who are certified to conduct home studies in the recognized SAFE format. We are also skillfully supported by our administrative assistant.

*"...they all have one thing in common; they deserve a loving and safe forever home."*

2014 was another year of fast paced growth and development and we are happy to say that many of our children in care have been adopted into forever families. Our Agency has always worked with the belief that all children need a strong foundation and roots that allow them to feel a sense of belonging, love and attachment. The vision and direction we strive to follow is supported by a strength based approach that incorporates and respects birth family connections and fosters the cultural roots of our Metis and Inuit children. This year we are proud to say we have completed our new Openness Agreement template that guides the post adoption contact between those people who have meaningful relationships with the child being adopted and his/her new adoptive family. Individualized cultural plans are a meaningful way to support and guide the adoptive parents with the adopted child's lifelong cultural growth, development and pride in his/her Metis or Inuit heritage. Most of our adoptions are finalized with a celebration ceremony and a Life Book that honours the child's birth family and Metis or Inuit culture while embracing the child's new path with their forever family.

The Agency's adoption program focuses on Division 1, Division 2 and Defacto adoptions and we look forward to providing adoption

services with Inter-Country adoptions in the future. Although many of the children who become wards of the Agency struggle with some challenges and limitations,

they all have one thing in common; they deserve a loving and safe, lifelong forever home.



## REGIONAL SERVICES

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### ***Eastman Region***

The Eastman Unit had an exciting first year in their new office. An official Grand Opening Celebration was held in August which was well attended by our Elders, Authority, Agency Executive, Agency Staff, Eastman General Authority Staff, Foster Parents and several of our Children in Care. Although the weather did not cooperate, the rain did little to dampen the spirit of the celebration. We enjoyed fiddling, crafts and a wonderful barbeque.

The Eastman Unit also hosted a children's Christmas party in the region which had a record attendance. Children enjoyed crafts, hot dogs, road hockey and of course a visit from Santa.

The unit, which now consists of a supervisor, an administrative assistant, 6 social workers and 8 support workers

continues to increase visibility in the community by connecting with our local resources, partners and supports. Their dedication continues towards building positive relationships and support to our families and children in care.

### ***Interlake and Central Regions***

The Interlake team consists of a supervisor, 4 social workers, an administrative assistant and a several casual support workers. This past year the Interlake team had the opportunity and privilege of including the 2 social workers from the Central region to our team. It has been a great experience that created new working relationships and community contacts for both offices.

The Interlake and Central regions are vast and workers often have great distances to travel however, over the last year case

numbers have been more manageable so workers are finding that they are more able to focus on supporting children and families. The teams primarily provide services to permanent wards in the regions, in addition to working with and supporting families who can benefit from our services. The teams actively embrace the use of SOS and are pleased with the positive difference it has made in our approach to families and ultimately the results.

The Interlake and Central teams have many long time dedicated staff who have persevered through the ups and downs and remain with their units. Every member of the team is essential and the team works hard to support one another while delivering strength based services to our children and families.

### ***Western Region***

The Western Region Team consists of 4 social workers, 1 Kinship/Resource worker, 2 full time support workers, an administrative assistant and 3 casual support workers. The team continues to support 120 children and families through the Signs of Safety Model. This year the Western Region team would like to acknowledge the hard work and achievements of some of the individuals in the care of the Agency.

Natasha is a wonderfully talented young lady who remained with the Agency through an extension of care as she was the recipient of the Tuition Waiver



*"...we continue to build relationships within the community..."*

Program. Natasha enrolled in Kinesiology and attended the University of Winnipeg. Natasha made Team Manitoba (badminton) for the North America Indigenous Games which will be held in Regina, SK in July 2014.

Daniel is a young man who has worked very hard in his education. He is enrolled in a carpentry apprenticeship program and is currently employed. Daniel continues to expand his skill levels in his chosen field.

Jessica is a young girl with many dreams and talents. She loves to camp and be outdoors and she was recently the recipient of a tent trailer camper granted from the Children's Wish Foundation.

This past year was certainly not without its challenges. To ensure the safety and wellbeing of families and children, the Western Region team was assisted by the Interlake team for a short period of time to provide ongoing services and support. We were very grateful for their support.

The Western Region Team will continue to move forward in supporting, engaging and working alongside the families and children we encounter through the next year.

### **Human Resources**

The Metis Child, Family and Community Services (MCFCS) human resources department works hard to attract, retain and nurture a professional, committed and

compassionate workforce. The department is dedicated to ensuring a respectful and nurturing environment for the employees of the agency.

Within the last year MCFCS has a staff group of approximately 200 full time and part time employees of which 45% have self declared Metis or Inuit heritage. As our directive, we will continue to improve upon those numbers while ensuring that children and families are provided professional care.

MCFCS signed their first collective agreement effective February 1, 2014. To date we have held 4 informational sessions collaboratively with the MGEU to provide information to staff around the workings of a newly unionized environment. With our positive working relationship with the MGEU, we have worked together to solve issues as they arise.

As always, we continue to build relationships within the community with the universities and colleges to attract new people to the Agency. We have provided 4 co-op placements; of those 1 of the students has become an employee upon completion of their schooling. As an Agency, our reputation within the community shows the good work that we do with children and families and helps to attract new talent to continue that work.



Human resources will continue to work with our employee group, the union and external partners within our communities to enable us to build a strong workforce and move into the future.

### **Executive, Operations and Finance**

The Executive Management Team is quite small, only comprised of 5 people. The team has a great deal of knowledge and experience in Aboriginal child welfare that helps guide our practice from a strength based approach and promotes culturally relevant and sensitive practices.

The Operations Team is made up Finance, Administration, Quality Assurance, Legal, Office Manager and Executive support staff. They provide daily support to all staff and truly make our work easier.

## RESOURCES: FAMILY SUPPORT PROGRAMS

Another year has come and gone and again the Family Resources programs have been very busy ensuring the needs of the families are being met. Our team works from the belief that every family has the strength to succeed. Believing our families grow and succeed fits well into the Signs of Safety model. We have seen the success families can achieve with support walking beside them.

### **Supported Family Time**

The Supported Family Time program has been extremely busy this year with 3,311 family times. 5,594 children have come into the office for a family time. Several children have their family times monthly so this number may reflect the same child over multiple visits. With a shortage of family rooms scheduling was a bit tougher at times but we always managed to find somewhere for families to have time with their children.

This past year MCFCS support staff were trained by Aulneau Renewal center in the Dragonfly Attachment training. The main purpose of this training was to have staff competent and able to teach and mentor families to develop and build on existing attachment with their children during family times. The support staff will now be mentored by Aulneau staff in the upcoming year and this training will be implemented in all family times.



and are very excited to meet with her in the future to create some more beautiful spaces.

### **Volunteer Transportation Program**

Each year the Volunteer Transportation program proves to be a valuable asset to the Agency. With 21 volunteers and 4 paid drivers they are able to ease the transportation burden for children in care. Drivers assist with taking children to therapy, family times, medical appointments, sports, etc. Over the past year drivers have provided 2,676 drives for MCFCS children.

Without the transportation program social workers, foster parents and support workers would be expected to provide transportation and this would deeply impact the number of families they could see in a day. The drivers are a committed group who appreciate every child they transport. Drivers play a critical role in children's lives. You can see the bond that each driver has created with the child. We even have a couple who drives for the Agency on weekends and holidays and our drivers will rearrange their schedules to accommodate the children so they do not miss that important family time.

### **Family Support Program**

The Family Support program provides support to the families and children of MCFCS. This program is demanding and very busy. The needs of the families vary from day to day and because of this each



Another exciting gift MCFCS received this past year was having our snack room painted by the very talented Wanda Luna from the Dream Room Project. Wanda painted a beautiful mural of polar bears on the walls. She felt the importance of having families feel safe and protected during their snack time. In just a few short days she was able to transform the room from cold and stark to warm and safe. We truly appreciate her hard work

support staff has to be flexible and able to meet the demands of the program. We currently have 8 full time, 6 permanent part time and 9 casual staff who work in the family support program. The family support team advocates, assists and mentors each family. They are able to build trusting relationships and work with each family and social worker closely to address the needs identified.

We have seen a huge increase in requests over the last year. On April 1, 2013 we had 124 families receiving a total of 1,075.5 hours. On March 31, 2014 we had 214 families receiving 2,376.5 hours of support. This program has doubled in service provided in 12 months. There are 98 families receiving parent education and 119 families receiving support during their family times.

All the permanent part time and full time family support staff have now taken the Dragonfly Attachment training. Staff are slowly mentoring these tools into their family times.

The support staff have seen numerous successes by families over this past year. We have also had a mom complete the Urban Circle FASD/Family Support Worker program at the urging of her support worker who had completed the same program 2 years earlier.

Recently we had a mom state "You really care! And when I first saw you; I thought you were going to be judging me, now I wish you were my kid's foster mom"...

#### **Family Mentor Program – Success Story**

The Family Mentor program had a very exciting recruitment opportunity this past year. The Family Mentor Coordinator was listening to a radio program and happened to hear about a new barbershop, Hunter & Gunn, starting up in Winnipeg. An expectation from the owner is that each



employee volunteers a minimum of four hours a month. MCFCS was able to recruit four talented and gifted men to come and volunteer their time with some youth. The Hunter & Gunn volunteers have made strong connections with each of the youth. They provide the youth an opportunity to attend community activities, sporting events and some

one on one mentoring. The Hunter & Gunn volunteers all have busy professional and personal lives yet they make time for these youth. They have become a voice and positive influence to each and every person they work with. These youth have made a lifetime relationship with these generous men. We, as an agency, are very fortunate to have them on board and are thankful for the positive rewards they give to our Metis youth.

Follow this link for more information:  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mEDJoqsHHvg>



#### **DREAMS TAKE FLIGHT – DISNEY WORLD 2014!**

This year 7 of our children in care made the trip to Disney's Magic Kingdom in Orlando, Florida for the most exciting day ever! We are deeply grateful for the ongoing dedication and hard work of the many very special volunteers whose work with the Dreams Take Flight organization provides this opportunity for our very special children.

## RESOURCES: CHILDREN & YOUTH PROGRAMS

### **Circle of Life (COL) Children and Youth Support Program: 6-17 years of age**

The Circle of Life (COL) program is a dynamic, individualized program that uses a solution-focused, harm reduction and strength-based approach when working with youth. The COL program has evolved from the Family Support Worker (FSW) program to address the needs of youth in regards to daily and ongoing life challenges. Youth are referred to a Circle of Life worker who helps them to find their own way through daily life challenges by providing guidance, support and encouragement. Some of the daily struggles facing our youth are addictions, peer pressure, cultural identity, academics, grief, bullying, cyber bullying, suicide and overall trauma. The



youth have many opportunities to build a healthy relationship and rapport with the COL worker who helps them to process and understand the challenges, self esteem issues and worries that they are constantly faced with. Youth also have the opportunity to participate in many city and rural activities with a group called Little Bears. This group meets bi-weekly and includes activities such as life skills coaching, rod and ice fishing, seasonal camps, swimming, exercise, crafts, arts, music, sports, sweat lodges, medicine picking, teachings

about suicidal behaviour and dealing with peer pressure and other life challenges. These activities, relationships and teachings help youth with their confidence, positive self image, understanding their roots and history and give them a better chance at mastery and success. Having a youth supported by a caring, genuine and nonjudgmental Circle of Life worker helps the youth to internalize their own strengths and gifts and enhance their self esteem.

The COL Program provided services to 86 youth throughout the year.

### **SASH Program – Youth Outreach Workers: 10-17 years of age**

The So Adolescents Stay Home (SASH) program is an outreach program that supports youth who are having difficulties in their personal lives, which result in high risk/at risk behaviors. These youth struggle with trauma and abuses which lead them to a pattern of running, drug and alcohol use, sexual abuse and exploitation and violence. The SASH program has three phases and works with youth on an individualized basis. The first phase is safety. This phase is designed for the SASH worker to assess the youth's levels of risk, to develop safety plans and to respond to critical situations. The second phase is stabilization which is designed to progressively



activate resources and to implement team planning while developing action plans for reducing instances of at risk behaviours. The final phase is prevention which is designed to support the youth and caregivers in maintaining working strategies that they have developed in order to enhance the connections and relationships. The team support assists in identifying at risk behaviours using the Signs of Safety model

to decrease the behaviours. The SASH program develops partnerships with numerous agencies and organizations such as StreetReach, Child Find Manitoba, Sexually Exploited Youth Coalition, Manitoba Justice and many more too many to name. This year service was provided to 57 youth who were considered high risk victims within our agency.

### **Skills for Life Program (SFL) – Interdependent Living program: 16-18 years of age**

The Skills for Life program works with youth to coach and mentor them to gain skills for interdependent living. The focus of the program is to have SFL staff provide opportunity, on an individual and group basis, for youth to gain skills through the provision of education, resources, training opportunities, employment, budgeting,

healthy relationship building, housing and appropriate recreational and cultural activities. There are many challenges, barriers, and hurdles the youth face as they try to prepare for interdependence and transition from care. The SFL workers walk beside the youth to help, support, advocate, guide and encourage them to make choices that are positive and healthy for their well-being. The program offers a bi-weekly evening program in partnership with Metis Spirit called Running Bears. This group, along with the individual work with the staff, provides youth with opportunities and teachings to address challenges such as: mental health, addictions, housing, banking, budgeting, suicidal behaviour and activities to simply let out some energy in a fun way and to learn how to relate to peers in a considerate way. SFL workers help the youth to see and understand they are not alone. The worker's approach is to assist but not do the tasks or give youth the answers. This helps the youth to develop their own problem solving capacity and style. This year two focus groups were held with youth to give them an opportunity to use their voices to tell our agency what they need in order to be better prepared for interdependence. The program also hosted a workshop in partnership with the Authority called Finding Hope, which looks at the effects of suicide. This year the SFL program provided services to 53 youth.



### ***Metis Spirit Program (MS): 18-21 years of age***

The Metis Spirit program is a very dynamic service program that works with young adults 18 to 21 years of age after they have left the care of MCFCS. The MS program is funded by the MMF to assist young adults with ongoing resources, programming and supports. The MMF maintains the funding for this program in recognition that the young adults need additional support to address many issues and challenges they are faced with after leaving care. Daily challenges for our young adults are numerous and include being single parents, seeking education, employment, poverty, addictions, exploitation, mental health issues, housing and budgeting to name a few. Housing, which is a huge hurdle, is very limited and hard to attain as young adults usually do not have a credit or rental histories. The young adults have the opportunity to participate in our Running Bears program every Tuesday evening with the SFL program. The MS program has been growing steadily and gaining ground with more young adults accessing the program. Many referrals come to the program through word of mouth from youth who are involved. The MS program has one worker and in the future hopes the Province funds another, based on the recognition that our young adults still

need services and resources to continue after leaving care. The MS program has maintained connections to our young adults who reach out for assistance even when they have moved to a rural location or out of the province or are incarcerated. The MS program has provided ongoing and consistent services to 41 young adults during the past year.



### ***Life Long Connections (LLC) Program***

Life Long Connections is a program that does research on children of all ages in MCFCS to assist social workers to locate birth parents, extended family members or significant others. The focus of the LLC program is to do research on files and other avenues to find healthy connections for our children in care with family members and significant individuals that will lead to long term life connections. This provides children in care with a supportive circle of family, friends and community members. Individuals who are committed to being there for a child as a Life Long Connection may sign a declaration of commitment which is usually done at our Honouring

## RESOURCES: CHILDREN & YOUTH PROGRAMS *continued*

our Youth Celebrations which are held every 4 months. Using tools that include genograms, the LLC worker helps to build a family tree to assist children to get a picture of their roots and heritage. The program acknowledges that all children have a right to know “where they come from, as they determine where they are going”.

### **Rosedale Adolescent Interdependent Living Services Program (RAILS)**

The RAILS Program offers a unique hands on approach; an interdependent program that allows youth to grow within a structured, supportive living environment. Important aspects are teaching our youth, by example and providing support programs; the basic life skills needed to best prepare them for today’s challenges. Two of our youth are employed while attending post secondary education while the remaining youth are completing their high school education. Staff support youth in their daily challenges while still allowing them space to grow and learn. The youth have had many personal successes and allow us the opportunity to participate in their lives through advice and mentorship. Of the 12 youth who have completed the RAILS program this year, 8 have moved on to an apartment of their own, reunified with family or found other living arrangements. After transitioning from RAILS the youth continue to be supported by RAILS staff. The RAILS program has an ongoing capacity for 9 youth ages 16 to 21.

### **Gladys Cook Home Shelter (GCH)**

Gladys Cook Home is a level 5, long term licensed facility for 3 female youth between the ages of 12 and 17. GCH works to improve and support the resilience of youth by providing opportunities to reconnect with both their families and community and the home’s shelter staff. Staff support and facilitate youth’s goals, such as completing high school, obtaining their driver’s license, acquiring the skills to obtain and maintain a job, developing special abilities and handling struggles with peers and family members. Staff mentor youth on the development of life skills, financial planning/budgeting, transportation, managing medical appointments and personal hygiene, and monthly recreation including, cultural activities, swimming, trips to museums or community attractions in Winnipeg, and in-house activities such as arts and crafts, “spa days”, movies, etc. GCH has cared for 7 youth this year.

### **Eagles Nest Assessment Unit Shelter (EN)**

Eagles Nest is a licensed shelter for 4 male youth 12-17 years of age. The expected stay for youth at EN is 90 days. During this time trained staff prepare ongoing assessments on each youth in all life domains including school, hygiene and personal care, routine, health, mental health, peer relationships,



family connections, etc., to assist in future placement in care or for reunification with their family. EN is a strength based program dedicated to supporting youth to maintain their health, wellbeing and safety. Youth are provided guidance, mentoring, development of self-esteem and confidence, and a sense of family and culture in a safe home-like setting. EN encourages youth to continue their education, providing transportation if they are no longer in their catchment area. EN provides youth with many fun filled recreational, cultural and athletic activities and access to other community programs. This can include alternative education programs, organized sports, sweats, pow wows, and other cultural activities. EN is a warm, relaxed, respectful and safe environment attentive to life skills, mentoring, and nurturing for each youth who enters. EN is a place where a youth can begin their healing process and receive the compassion and empathy that starts this process. In the past year EN has cared for 25 youth.

### **Live In Family Enhancement Program (LIFE)**

The LIFE Program is a unique foster care program which received Provincial approval as a pilot program this year. The children are placed with their parents in a licensed foster home. The LIFE caregiver cares for the child together with the parent and takes a significant role in mentoring and teaching the biological parent parenting skills and parental responsibility. In this program parents are mentored in life skills in areas such as budgeting, cooking, proper nutrition, cleaning, hygiene, healthy attachment, the importance of routine, as well as learning about community resources and traditions that are relevant to their culture. This year the LIFE program partnered with Aulneau Renewal Centre to

deliver Dragonfly training to enhance the attachment skills of all LIFE parents. The LIFE caregivers are trained in Dragonfly training and support and mentor the LIFE parents on their journey to better attachment with their children over a ten week period. In the past 12 months 12 families have entered the LIFE program.

### **Youth Cultural Programming**

The Youth Cultural worker works with youth on a one to one and group basis to provide opportunities for youth to learn about and practice their cultural traditions. The program organizes two summer overnight cultural camps at Norris Lake so youth can explore cultural teachings, practices and fun. The program also maintains two garden plots where

youth can learn planting, caring for a garden and harvesting as well as how to store and use the harvest for winter. Youth explore culture and fun through a variety of field trips including berry picking, ice fishing derbies, rod fishing and scooping, swimming and canoeing, visits to the old stone church, medicine picking, the Forks, Louis Riel's grave, Lower Fort Garry, etc. The youth cultural worker arranges for the youth to have fishing licenses waived and conducts workshops on cleaning geese, ducks and fish. These were often used for the bi-monthly cultural dinners that are open to MCFCS youth. Metis crafting teaches youth how to make slippers, mitts, medicine pouches and mukluks from hides. Youth receive daily cultural support and incarcerated youth receive visits and court support from this program.



### **CONGRATULATIONS!!**

**The following youth celebrated significant achievements this year!**

**David:** completed first year of Red River College; currently enrolled in the Mechanics Trade Program

**Shante:** graduated high school; entering Red River College, Introduction to Trades Program

**Leargo:** graduated high school; continuing studies at Pastoral College, Saskatoon

**Brittany:** graduated high school; entering Red River College

**Taylor:** graduated high school; continuing studies at Red River College Culinary Arts Apprenticeship Program

**Cheyenne:** completed second year studies at the University of Manitoba

**Kyler:** Woods Award recipient, Grade 11/12; won the high school football championship for the first time in the school's history

**Blaze:** graduated high school through Adult Education Centre; accepted at the University of Manitoba

**Aimee:** completed first year studies at the University of Manitoba, Business Program

**Kevin:** graduated high school; accepted at the University of Winnipeg, Educational Assistant Program

**Chianne:** Vision Catchers recipient; participated in an arts program trip to New York City

**Mai-Lien:** accepted to Red River College, Dental Assistant Program

**Keysha:** graduated high school

## ALTERNATIVE CARE

### **General Foster Care Program**

The General Foster Home Program continues to screen, train and support caregivers throughout Winnipeg and Southern Manitoba. One of our staff is now certified in the SAFE home study model, which is an internationally recognized, comprehensive home study tool. This year we have increased our efforts to recruit homes from the Metis and Inuit community, and to encourage all of our foster parents to become aware of the cultural needs of the children in their care. This year 249 individuals inquired about fostering with our agency and 90 were invited to attend our Orientation series. Of these, 31

identified themselves as being Metis, Inuit or First Nation. The program staff continue to be involved in the Agency's Permanency Planning Committee process and they work hard to help caregivers understand the importance of forming a positive, respectful relationship with the children's birth parents. Our program continues to enjoy a strong partnership with the Louis Riel Institute to provide Metis Cultural Awareness training for foster/kinship caregivers, volunteers and adoptive applicants. This past spring, MCFCS and the LRI partnered in an initiative to create and distribute Cultural Kits to each of our 550 Permanent Wards!

### **Specialized Foster Care Program**

The staff of the Specialized Foster Care Program continue to provide strong clinical support to those foster parents who are caring for our highest needs children. Many of these children and youth have been supported to recover from serious trauma within the context of a therapeutic relationship with a compassionate foster parent, and to thereafter make significant gains emotionally, socially and academically. Training and regular support meetings continue to be an important part of the success of the program. Two of the staff of the Specialized Program are certified trainers in the attachment-based Circle of Security Parenting Program, and we are happy to report that 58 of our General, Kinship and Specialized caregivers have already participated in this intensive, 10-week program. Caregivers report that they have learned much about themselves through this process, which has enabled them to respond in a more sensitive, effective way with their foster children.

Recently, a youth in our care was appearing in court in the hope of being released, however the Crown Attorney was planning to ask for 6 months more incarceration. One of our Specialized Foster Parents was at court that day, as the plan was for the youth to be placed with him if released. When the Crown Attorney noticed him there, and was advised of the Agency's plan, he changed his recommendation to the judge and the youth was released. The Crown Attorney stated that the stellar reputation of this experienced Metis caregiver was the reason for his change of heart.



*“Our program continues to enjoy a strong partnership with the Louis Riel Institute...”*

### **Kinship Care**

Over the past year Agency staff increased their efforts to locate familial placements for our children in care, believing that children are always better off within their own family network provided that safety is ensured. We are confident that in the coming years this part of our program will expand as we reach out and encourage members of the Metis community to be part of the circle of caring for our children in care. The Kinship program offers resources and supports to build on the strengths of the Kinship family. This includes one-

to-one support, training and referrals to culturally appropriate support services.

Our agency is grateful beyond measure for the grandparents, great grandparents, aunts, uncles, siblings and other family and community members who stepped forward to open their hearts and their homes to care for a relative. The difference this has made for these children is tremendous, as they experience less disruption and distress and can continue to feel that they are a part of their family, even while in care. As beneficial as it is for these children, we want to acknowledge

that the role of a Kinship caregiver is often not an easy one. We truly admire those Kinship caregivers who persevere in the face of significant challenges to care for family.





METIS  
CHILD, FAMILY  
AND COMMUNITY  
SERVICES

