



CFS Matters!

Hello friends of the Agency,

The summer has started with a big change. June saw the retirement of our Agency's long-time CEO, Dave McGregor. Dave served as a model of passionate dedication to the work of the Agency in supporting children and strengthening families. He will be missed and we wish him well in his very well deserved retirement!

Our vision and values continue to guide our services and practices. We are maintaining a focus on providing trauma informed care within all of our programs. One of our goals is to see children supported safely within their natural family and community networks of care. Families, as the experts of their experiences and needs, will be further engaged in planning for how these support and safety needs will be met.

We feel strongly that this focus is closely in line with the priorities of the government to reduce the number of children in our of family care and to improve the overall outcomes for children who are involved in the child welfare system.

We will be presenting on our current practices as well as our Agency's long history of prevention and family strengthening programs at an annual, international Family Engagement Conference in November of this year. This is a great opportunity to highlight the work of our Agency and our appreciation for the collaborative work with our community partners.

Thanks for taking an interest in our Agency and in our community's children.

Arlene Stewart
Chief Executive Officer

Kris Tufts
President, Board of Directors

Annual Conference



On April 10th, our Agency held our Annual Staff Development Conference. This year, we were fortunate to partner with Dr. Gordon Neufeld of the Neufeld Institute. Dr. Neufeld discussed the importance of understanding trauma and resilience and how these concepts hold the answers to emotional health and well-being, mental illness, healing, and recovery.

This event brought together nearly 300 helping professionals in the Westman area for a day of learning. A big thank you goes out to Dr. Neufeld for partnering with us on this day and sharing his knowledge with us!

Based on feedback from those in attendance, participants valued:



strong theoretical perspectives for case planning with children



practical and useful information from the speaker that can be directly applied to their work



a clear understanding of how 'play' holds the answer to wellbeing and communication



having a Canadian-based speaker with years of experience

Looking forward to next year's conference, our team is already hard at work! Stay tuned for more information on our guest speakers, our topics, venue, etc.



AGM Highlights

On June 4th, our Agency held it's 120th Annual General Meeting to discuss our Agency's successes, challenges, and outcomes for this past year.

Specifically, Dave McGregor discussed:

- Child Welfare Reform in Manitoba and what this means for our Agency
- How we are adhering to the quote, "Do the best you can until you know better. Then, when you know better, do better."
- Outcomes associated with Family Engagement, Safe and Together, Differential Response, and Building Lifelong Connections, among others.



Kris Tufts spoke highly of the work the Agency has done in the past year and also shared her confidence in Arlene Stewart as the Agency's new Chief Executive Officer. Arlene also discussed the next steps for the Agency as we look forward., including:

- Deepening our understanding of Trauma-Informed Care,
- Redeveloping our group care model,
- Fully implementing Intensive Permanency Services,
- Better capturing the voices of the people we serve, and
- Taking advantage of our upcoming presentation in San Diego

Dave and Arlene also took time to reveal the 2019 Annual Report as well as to recognize staff with long-service achievement plaques and speeches. This included Darlene Kirkup's 25 year recognition and Eileen Czerkawski's 35 year recognition!



Change in Leadership



With the news of Dave McGregor's retirement, the Board of Directors began their search for a new CEO. In May of this year, the Board of Directors selected Arlene Stewart for this role. Arlene brings 28 years of experience in child welfare work, extensive leadership experience, and experience representing the Agency on many Provincial and local community committees and coalitions. Perhaps most importantly, Arlene is passionate about the work of the Agency in supporting and strengthening families while working collaboratively to keeping children safe.

In her presentation to the Board of Directors, and subsequently, Agency staff, Arlene discussed her vision for the future of child welfare and what our Agency should focus on moving forward:

- Safety and Stability* — Children are safe within their families and natural supports wherever possible. When this is not possible, true permanent connections are established as quickly as possible.
- Prevention and Reunification* — Strengthening and supporting families translates to children being protected. Family Finding and permanency services will aim to have children in care reunified or reconnected with their families of origin.
- Healing and Trauma* — Trauma-effective interventions to have families reunified in a healthy way. Reconciliation of our relationship with Indigenous families and communities will continue.
- Community* — Working with collaterals to wrap around families and share accountability. Families' needs are recognized and stabilized.
- Outcomes* — We are more likely to receive funding when our work translates into positive outcomes for children and families.

In her presentation, Arlene also spoke about her plans moving forward. Specifically, Arlene described building on the existing strengths of the Agency (including our long history of successful and financially responsible prevention programs), to continue on our path of creating safety within families and to work in collaboration with our community partners, and to continue to build on the resiliency of our staff at all levels (i.e., promoting a culture of learning, safety, support, and leadership).



Beginning in February of this year, our Support and Access Unit began working on what they call the 'Voice Teddies' project. The process involves modifying teddy bears to include a Velcro pouch, capable of holding a small recording device. Mothers then record a voice message for their children who are in Agency care.

The process is rather straightforward (in that, the concept is rather intuitive and that there is little cost associated with the process), however this project has had profound positive outcomes for children and their mothers. Having a soothing and direct voice recording from mom has been shown to help children regulate their emotions in a safe way. In fact, the concept of using voice recordings to promote emotional regulation is supported in the literature.^{1,2}

So far, the Support and Access Unit have implemented 12 Voice Teddies and will continue to use more in the future.

- 1.The Journal of Perinatal & Neonatal Nursing; October-December 2008 - Volume 22 - Issue 4 - p 307–316
doi: 10.1097/01.JPN.0000341362.75940.f2
- 2.Journal of Music Therapy, Volume 45, Issue 3, Fall 2008, Pages 273–306, <https://doi.org/10.1093/jmt/45.3.273>

Youth Celebration



On Wednesday, May 29th, our Agency held it's annual Youth in Care Celebration. The purpose of this evening was to honour our 13 youth in care who reached a major milestone in their lives - turning 18 and officially entering into adulthood! The event was held at the Prairie Oasis Senior Centre where there was great food, entertainment, speeches, and gifts for our youth.



What's New at the ERFRC

Lisa Ramsay, ERFRC Coordinator



We will be hosting our Anniversary Celebration at the ERFRC on the September 5th. For more information, check out the poster (right) or visit the ERFRC website!

Recently our Sun Fund Coordinator, Brittney Fortier, has been working with our Summer Program. Brittney and the ERFRC team put together the 'Fun Fest' event. It's a team effort to pull off this event - big thanks to all staff and the volunteers who helped out.

Congrats to all the grads this month – another important milestone in family life. Also big congrats to the parents who supported these children to succeed at school!

Lastly, we are grateful to the agency for the fresh new paint inside and outside our building - looks great! Wishing everyone a safe and fun summer of family memories.

Goodbye and thank you to Brittany Kalmakoff. Brittany has been with us for the past year on a term position in child care. She has been a wonderful addition to the FRC team! We wish her all the best.

Congrats to Lory George who is now in the permanent position as our Community Liaison worker with the Centre! Lory brings years of practice wisdom and is an asset to the team!

Congrats to Terry Keen for 20 years of services with Child and Family Services of Western Manitoba. Terry wears many hats at the ERFRC. Thank you Terry for your dedication.

Congrats to Mhairi on becoming a Grandma! Important milestone and role in family life!

We were saddened to hear of the passing of Jenelle Whyte, who volunteered in Child Care at the Elspeth Reid Family Resource Centre for many years. She was a ray of sunshine and will be dearly missed. Our hearts go out to her parents and brothers.



Recent Stories



Over the past few months, our Agency received support from the following groups:

- Through the Community Support Small Grant Program, the Elspeth Reid Family Resource Centre (ERFRC) received a small grant to purchase much needed furniture
- Through the Healthy Together Now! program, our group homes were able to purchase several bikes, helmets, and bike locks. This support will translate to more structured exercise, safety, and independence for our youth.
- Our family strengthening programs received financial support from the Brandon City Council as well as the Youth in Philanthropy groups. This support will result in boosting our Agency's capacity to deliver these much needed programs.
- Recently, the Thomas Sill Foundation made a significant contribution to help us make much needed exterior renovations to our McCutcheon building. This support will improve the energy efficiency and aesthetics to the building that hosts our Preschool and Daycare programs.
- Lastly, Leech Printing and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers both contributed to costs associated with transportation for the Preschool Enrichment Program. This kind of support allows for our Agency to continue to offer free transportation for families attending this program.



Road Rebels

- As many of you know, the Road Rebels Car Club has long been a strong supporter of the Elspeth Reid Family Resource Centre. This year, they've invited our Foundation Board to run the BBQ stand on Rosser Ave. during the Cruise Nights. With the assistance and guidance of Heather Manuliak, you'll find us on the road (literally) the first Thursday of every month, until September comes and the cruising season closes.

Week of Caring

- Recently, the United Way Brandon and District sent a group of volunteers to the ERFRC to lend a hand at The Store. For a few hours, volunteers sorted and cleaned items. This work truly made a difference for our staff and the people that will access the store!

White Gift

- On December 17th, our Agency held our annual 'White Gift' / 'Christmas Shopping' event. Donations from staff and members from the community were put on display for staff to bring to children in Agency care. It was heart-warming to see the many books, clothes, toys, etc. donated for this cause. Have a look at the result:



The Foundation Forum

Joe Ball, On behalf of the Foundation

As we all know too well, summer time flies by. And the older we get, the quicker it seems to go. Many of us have vacation plans. For myself, it's a canoe trip followed by flights to the Yukon, to visit friends. But for many of the families supported by our Agency, summer is not so relaxing. In fact, with school out there may be more stress on families.

When my family first moved to town to start new jobs, in July of 2008, there was no vacation time to be had – and no child care to be found. We had no family in town, and didn't know anyone in the new neighbourhood. That first summer, our two kids stayed at home alone every day, while my wife and I went out to work. We left them our phone numbers in case of emergency, instructions to look after each other, and not answer the door. They were bored and lonely until school started in September, when they got to meet people and make friends.

So when our Foundation was told that, once again, the Sun Fund needed support to help send kids to camp, we were eager to step up. The Sun Fund is what makes it possible for many kids to avoid what my kids endured: summer days spent alone, without friends or fun. Many parents – even working parents - can't afford the costs of camp. It's that extra cost that's often out of reach.

Through your generous support, our Foundation can reach those kids. Camps ensure that the summer days are full of fun and friendship. We can't stop the time from flying by, but we can make that time, brief as it is, better for children and families.

Your support enables our work, which seeks to strengthen families around this region. Together, we're stronger. Thanks for your support.



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