



Roundtable Feb 28th 1899

*Regular meeting of Directors and
Executive Committee of the Children Aid
Society held in the W. B. Hall*



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Society was held on the 1st of
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*After a general discussion as to
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*Ed Wilson
President*

THE HISTORY OF OUR FIRST 100 YEARS 1899-1999

**Child & Family
Services of Western
Manitoba**



Acknowledgements

This publication was made possible through the combined effort of individuals, businesses and organizations in Westman. Worthy of special mention is Ms. Margaret Goodman, without whom this book may have never been completed. The many hours Ms. Goodman put into research and writing is afforded our greatest appreciation.

We would like to thank all those who have participated on the Centennial Committee. Their vision and guidance was greatly appreciated.

In part, through the generous sponsorship of The Westman Foster Parent Association and Redfern Farm Services, this book will carry the history of Child and Family Services of Western Manitoba into the future.

We also acknowledge the individual outlets of Redfern Farm Services who have agreed to be distribution sites for our book.

Recognition is also due to Shirley Lloyd-Davies from Avenue Four Graphics for the layout and design of this publication.

Last but not least, we would like to thank our volunteers, past and present board members, contributors and all of those who have assisted us in our mission to protect children and strengthen families.

Centennial Committee Members

John Russell (Chair)

Betts McKenzie

Jan Fraser

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Joanne Butler

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1899-1999 The Beginnings

The Western Sun: Thursday, Jan. 12, 1899

"Children's Aid Society. A local organization started in Brandon yesterday. Yesterday afternoon there was a goodly attendance of those interested in the Children's Aid Society, although the meeting was called at very short notice. Inspector S.S. Ross was appointed chairman and G.W. Wilson, secretary of the meeting. The chairman called upon Mr. Sifton, Superintendent of Neglected and Dependent children to explain the aims of the Society. He referred to the old idea of maintaining children after they had got past reform and the newer idea of protecting the children from the evil influence of neglect and so preventing them from becoming criminals. The results of the latter system have been very favorable in Ontario and in the States and the Manitoba government has adopted legislation under which Children's Aid Societies might be formed. The Winnipeg Society has done very effective work and if thought advisable, a similar Society might be formed in Brandon. After a number of questions had been satisfactorily answered, it was moved by Reverend C.C. McLaurin and seconded by Rev. Macadam Harding that the meeting proceed to organize the Children's Aid Society of Brandon. This motion was carried unanimously and all present were enrolled as members. The bylaws of the Winnipeg Society were then adopted and a committee composed of Rev. Harding and Mr. McLaurin was appointed to nominate nine directors. The following were elected: Madams Harrison, Nation, Murray, Kavanaugh and Messrs Wilson, Coleman, Darrach, Irwin and Finlay".

So began the Children's Aid Society of Brandon.

This service was only within the city of Brandon. Neglected children in the rest of the area were served by the Children's Aid Society of Winnipeg, which was incorporated in August 1898.

At the first meeting of the board of the Children's Aid Society of Brandon, G. D. Wilson was elected president. An advisory committee of 20 men and women were selected and a temporary foster home committee was appointed. The board moved quickly to apply for incorporation. An article in the Western Sun on March 30, 1899 stated:

"The Brandon Children's Aid Society is applying for incorporation — the Children's Aid movement has already had a good effect in Brandon in keeping children off the street and acting both as a warning and as assistance to parents in their guidance of children".

Incorporation, November 10, 1899.

The official date of incorporation was Nov. 10, 1899.

While the primary concern of the new agency was neglected children in the city of Brandon, this first Children's Aid Society board was also concerned about the welfare of children in general. In June 1889, one of the early activities of the board was to initiate a petition to the legislature for an amendment to the Manitoba School Act. This would make education compulsory throughout the province for all children of such age as deemed advisable. This petition grew out of a number of referrals of boys who were known truants and whose education was being neglected.

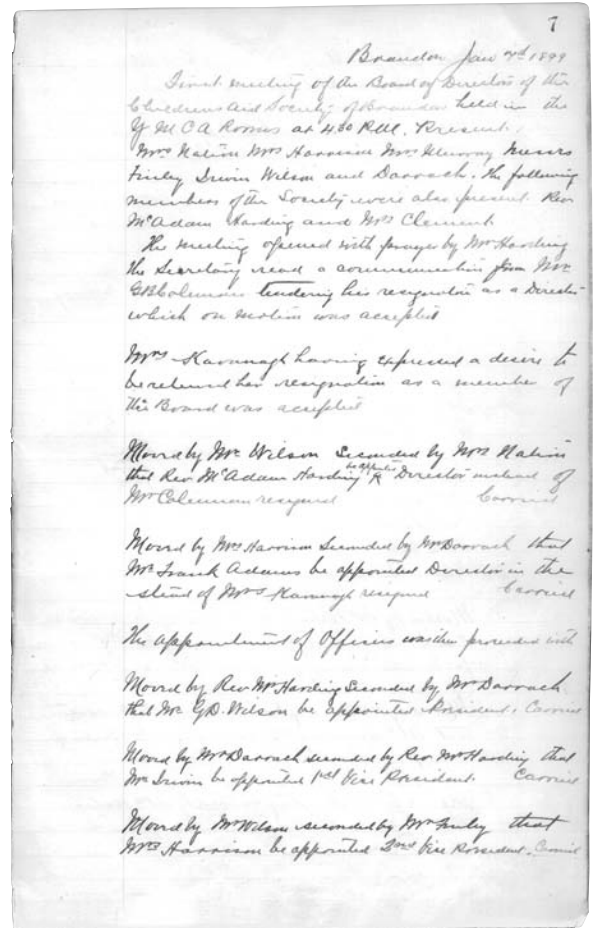
In February 1901, the board secretary was instructed to write city council asking them to pass a bylaw prohibiting the sale of tobacco to minors and making it an offence for a minor to have such on his person.

On Oct. 27th 1900, the board adopted its own constitution. In Article II, the objectives of the agency were stated as follows:

"Its object shall be:

- To protect children from cruelty;
- To care for, and protect neglected, abandoned or orphaned children;
- To provide such children as may be lawfully committed or entrusted to the Society with

*The first minutes are dated Wednesday, Jan. 4, 1899



Minutes from
January 4th, 1899
meeting.

suitable homes in private families, and to watch over and guard their interests and protect their happiness and well-being;

- To secure the enforcement of laws relating to neglected and dependent children or juvenile offenders;
- To take the part of a friend towards any child accused of offenses against the laws of the Province or the Dominion;
- To provide free summer excursions, temporary residence in the country, or other means of benefiting poor children;
- And generally, to advocate the claims of neglected abandoned or orphaned children upon the sympathy and support of the public”

Families referred to the agency were discussed at the regular board meetings and reported in the newspaper.

Brandon Sun, May 18th, 1899:

“the Children’s Aid Society has taken over the young lad, Vernon Franklin and have sent him to Mr. Hughes of the Beresford district, who will look after the young fellow’s future interests”.

Brandon Sun, January 4, 1900:

“A distressing case was dealt with this week by the Children’s Aid Society. A woman addicted to morphine was living with her three children, a child four months old, a girl of 10 and another of 13 and the home conditions were of an unfavorable and evil character. The case was investigated by the Children’s Aid Society and the children were brought before Magistrate Campbell. The children were handed over to the Society and the mother consented to go to the Rescue Home in Winnipeg. The children and their mother were taken to Winnipeg on Thursday. The two girls are placed in the home established by the Winnipeg Society as it is not advisable to maintain a home in Brandon”.

The Agency Grows 1903-1928

At this point the agency had no funds other than the \$1.00 membership fee collected from each member of the society. They therefore appealed to the city for a grant to cover the cost of the care and transporting of children to Winnipeg.

Until the appointment of the first paid staff member in 1929, members of the board assumed responsibility for the investigation of complaints of neglect and the placement of children. There is no record of their activities for the period 1903-1913 but the board was reorganized in 1916. At that time,

By 1921 it was evident that it would be preferable to have some form of shelter in the city instead of sending children to institutions in Winnipeg.

board meetings took place in the mayor’s office and the city was very involved with the agency. The board established a committee to investigate complaints and a foster home committee to supervise the children in care of the agency. By 1921 it was evident that it would be preferable to have some form of shelter in the city instead of sending children to institutions in Winnipeg. On Feb. 14, 1921 a Brandon Children’s Shelter was opened at 610 Victoria Ave. The city provided the building, the Kiwanis Club furnished it, the Salvation Army ran it, the Children’s Aid Society placed the children and the City of Brandon provided maintenance of \$10.00 per month per child.

Because of concern about juveniles appearing in adult court, a Juvenile Court Committee was formed in 1921. The board minutes record a motion that the chief of police be requested to notify the convenor of the Juvenile Court Committee as soon as cases came under his supervision.

Another committee was formed in conjunction with the YMCA to explore the need to establish a juvenile court and probation service within the area. The agency’s interest in this had been stimulated by their investigations of complaints of truancy where the family situation did not appear to warrant removing the children from their homes, but some form of reprimand was needed. On the Feb. 25, 1925, based on the recommendation of the joint committee, the board moved that a probation officer be appointed for the area and a juvenile court be established to deal with offenses of minors.

1924 The First Welfare Act

The first Child Welfare Act for the province of Manitoba was passed in 1924. Among the provisions of the act were:

- the establishment of a juvenile court;
- allowances for bereaved and dependent children;

- the protection, guardianship, maintenance and care of children born out of wedlock; adoptions;
- the financial, moral and social rights of children;
- the general administrative organization.

The Children's Aid Society was responsible for the investigation of complaints of neglect and the guardianship and care of children in need of protection. The Provincial Department of Welfare provided other services under the act. This included services to unmarried mothers, allowance for bereaved and dependent children, (generally known as Mothers' Allowance), and adoptions.

In September 1925, the Juvenile Delinquents Act was proclaimed and A.C. Fraser was appointed as juvenile court magistrate. R B. Hunter was appointed as probation officer and Inspector of child welfare for the district in 1927.

Several committees needed to be established to meet the needs of the organization. The minutes of the board meeting of March 5, 1928 gave a description of the committees and their duties:

- Finance: their duties shall be to organize schemes for raising funds and to generally advise upon expenditures.
- Foster home: their duties shall be to keep records of all children committed to care of the Society as wards; to seek out and place such children in suitable homes or institutions; to receive and act upon all applications for adoption of children and to endeavor to provide a real link between the child and the Society.
- Juvenile court: their duties shall be to attend the sessions of the juvenile court and to render such aid as is possible to offenders who are brought there
- Neglected children: their duties shall be to watch out for the interests and supply the needs of children of destitute families and to work as closely as possible with the city relief committee. To report to the Society any cases of "neglected children" as they come within the meaning of the Act
- Publicity: to prepare and circulate propaganda of such a nature as will arouse the sympathy of the people in the work of the Children's Aid Society Records: to prepare a file index of all wards of the Society
- Shelter: two ladies who shall visit the Shelter and shall report at each regular meeting about the well being of our charges".

In 1928, Charlotte Whitton, from the Canadian Welfare Council, was commissioned by the Province of Manitoba to conduct a study of child welfare in the province. As a result of this study, the province requested the board of the Children's Aid Society of Brandon to agree to the expansion of their boundaries to that of the area covered by the juvenile court. This was an area of 10,000 sq. miles, which included 38 rural municipalities, 18 incorporated towns and villages and Brandon. It was recognized that it would be impossible for a volunteer board to provide the services for such an area. The province asked the board to hire a full-time field worker. This worker would undertake responsibility for children from the area presently cared for by other child welfare agencies, until such agencies had discharged their legal responsibility toward them. The province agreed to provide a grant of \$1,500.

A great deal of credit must be given to Brandon community members who founded the Children's Aid Society and worked so energetically to see it established and grow. Their concerns for the welfare of children were reflected in the time, energy and commitment that they devoted to developing a viable service to protect children. Their vision enabled the agency to go on to the next chapter in the history of the Children's Aid Society.

1929 -1948 The Consolidation of the Agency

The first worker hired by the board was Margaret McClung, a nurse from Pine Falls. Before this time, the agency had not required an office. They had met at the YMCA, at the mayor's office or in each other's homes. The board now had to search for affordable office space. They also had to find funds to provide mileage (5¢ a mile) in order that their newly hired a staff person could travel outside Brandon. (McClung was expected to provide her own car). Therefore, much of their energy was directed to fund raising to support the work of the agency.

Until this time, the Children's Aid Society of Winnipeg ran financial appeals throughout western

Manitoba, on behalf of their work. There followed many months of negotiations between the Children's Aid Society of Winnipeg and the Children's Aid Society of Brandon. Two of the main issues raised was having the Brandon agency accept the cost of maintaining children from western Manitoba who were under the care and supervision of the Winnipeg agency. The other issue was the wish of the Winnipeg agency to continue campaigning in the rural area and the Brandon agency's natural objection to this. The two agencies were able to resolve these issues and Brandon accepted responsibility for wards from western Manitoba while Winnipeg gave up campaigning in the Brandon area. Board members then had to develop a campaign extending outside Brandon. At the January 1931 annual meeting, the president spoke of the need to establish branches in the rural area so that people could become more familiar with the work of the agency and be encouraged to support it financially.

In 1930 the City of Brandon purchased the house at 122 18th St. which had been built originally by Mayor Thomas Mayne Daly. It became known as "The Maples".

In 1928, the board agreed that the agency would benefit from having their own receiving home rather than continuing to place children in the Salvation Army shelter. They entered into negotiations with the city for the provision of a receiving home. In 1930 the City of Brandon purchased the house at 122 18th St. which had been built originally by Mayor Thomas Mayne Daly. It became known as "The Maples". The city hired the staff but placements were made by the agency. (This arrangement continued until 1967, when the supervision and operation of The Maples was transferred to the Children's Aid Society).

As the number of children in care increased the need for additional funds required more campaign activities. To meet this challenge the number of board members was increased to 30 with an advisory committee of 20. At some point later, representation on the board was changed to include 30 members from Brandon and

20 from the rural area. The advisory committee had ceased to function by 1939.

The 1930's was the Depression era. One-third of the rural part of western Manitoba was classified as "dried out". Many municipalities were in arrears on their maintenance orders and grants. The costs of maintenance therefore, came out of the agency's general revenue and consequently the agency became very stressed for funds. The city asked them to try to keep The Maples at full capacity to keep the costs down. From the beginning, the board had always sponsored garden parties, silver teas, bake sales and annual concerts as fund-raising endeavors and had also made general appeals for donations. To increase community awareness of the work of the agency, they had manned an information booth at the Brandon Summer Fair each year during the 1930's.

McClung resigned in April 1931. B. McKittrick was hired from 1931-1935. He was a graduate in Sociology from the University of Toronto. Board members continued to be active in much direct service. The committees discussed cases and planning for wards was done at board level.

One municipality responsible for the maintenance of a 14 year old girl refused to pay maintenance for her since she was of school leaving age. The board wrote to the municipalities urging the importance of education and persuaded them to agree to pay maintenance until June of that school year.

A brother and sister who were wards received a sizable legacy that was held in trust by the agency. It required a board motion to purchase a violin for the girl, Alice, who was considered quite musical. When Alice wished to take her grade 12, an older sister was opposed to the agency using any part of the legacy funds for her maintenance. They looked for a home where she could work for her room and board. When no home was located even after advertising, they agreed to take \$12 a month from her trust funds.

During the changes of executive secretaries, R B Hunter who was the probation officer for the entire area as well as a board member, provided child welfare services in the rural areas in addition to his own work. When Meta Mischpeter, a social worker from Montreal, was hired in 1936, there were 393 open cases, including 969 children. Two hundred children had become wards of the agency in the period between 1925 and 1935.

1936 was also the first time that the minutes mention joint meetings of representatives from all the Children's Aid Societies in the province. These meetings provided an opportunity for board members to share concerns and to become informed about the work of the other agencies. The comparisons of level of staffing with the Winnipeg agency made it clear that the Brandon agency really required additional social workers, but a lack of finances delayed the acquisition of staff and additional office space for several years. An Association of Children's Aid Societies of Manitoba was formed in 1943.

It is not clear whether this was a continuation of joint agency meetings or if the association was a somewhat more formally organized version of them. It did continue to provide an opportunity for board presidents and appointed representatives to meet to share common problems and to negotiate with the provincial government.

While the provincial Department of Welfare was responsible for adoption, the agency was responsible for planning for their wards. In an endeavor to find adoption homes for their permanent wards, there was a motion at the board meeting in 1925 that they should advertise the availability of their children in order to recruit adoptive families. Some of the wards were placed in free homes.

In 1938, at the request of the deputy minister of Health and Welfare, the Children's Aid Society agreed to accept responsibility for the Unmarried Mothers' Program in the area. The Department agreed to supply a social worker and pay a salary in lieu of a grant. Mary Lowe, the additional worker, had no car and was expected to reach her clients in the area by bus or train. This was later amended to cover the cost of a car and chauffeur at 8¢ a mile.

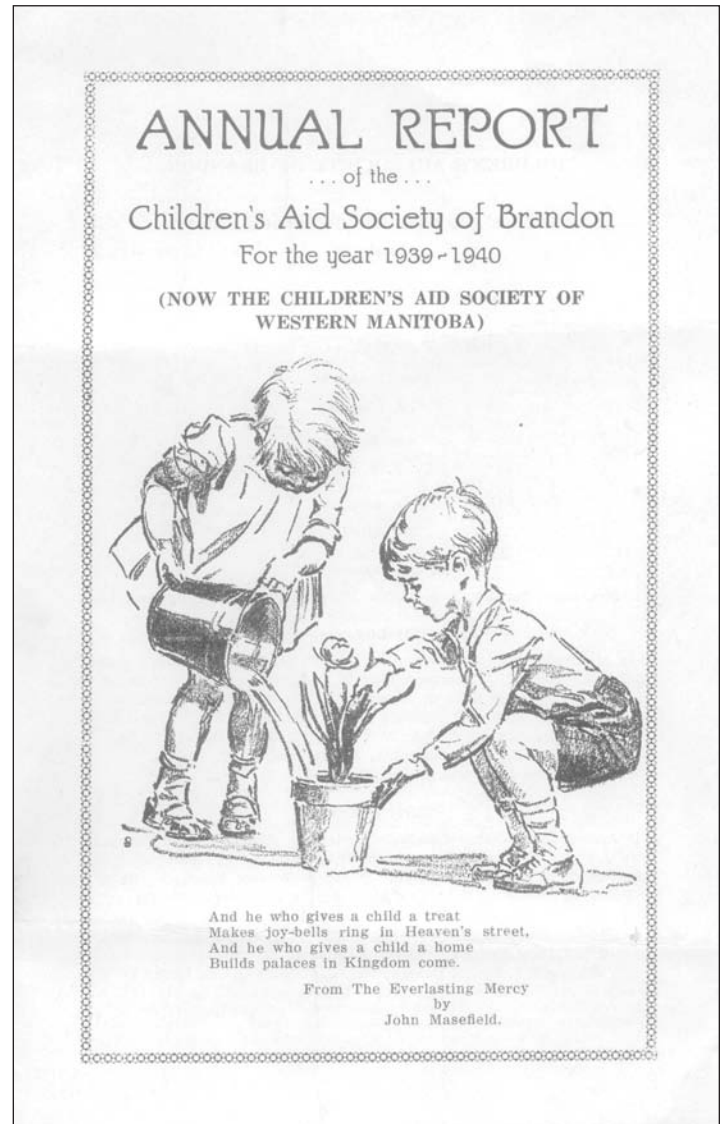
At the annual meeting in May 1940, the name of the agency was formally changed to the Children's Aid Society of Western Manitoba. This much more adequately describe the area of service. K.O. Mackenzie became the Executive Secretary of the agency in 1941 and later that same year Sid and Dorothy McArton were hired. (Subsequently both Mackenzie and McArton became Directors of Public Welfare with responsibility for child welfare at the provincial level). These two men played a significant part in the growth of the Children's Aid Society of Western Manitoba and in the development of its basic philosophy of service.

As early as 1942, there were discussions about the agency assuming responsibility for the total adoption program. When the Unmarried Mothers Program was added to the agency's responsibilities, the division of service, where one agency knew the mother and infant and the other agency knew the adoptive parents, often led to delay in placement for the child. During a period when the department adoption worker was on sick leave, the Executive Secretary negotiated authorization to place some of the children waiting for adoption in homes which the department worker had studied. In 1946 the agency assumed full responsibility for adoption services.

During the war years, the Children's Aid Society supervised the placements of 12 war refugees placed with families in the area. Child welfare agencies across the country had been ready to plan for additional children from Britain but the lack of ships to bring the children meant that fewer than were expected ever came to Canada. One thing learned from the war experiences in Britain was that children, even under frightening circumstances were less distressed if they were with or near their own family.

In addition to the supervision of the refugee children who did arrive, there were other requests for service. There was agreement with the federal government in 1939 to complete investigations for the Dependent Allowance board and a further agreement in 1942 to undertake special military investigations for the Dependents board of Trustees. There was no accompanying increase in staff and no one recognized more fully than the staff at that time, that service, particularly to children in care, was less than adequate.

At the annual meeting in May 1940, the name of the agency was formally changed to the Children's Aid Society of Western Manitoba.



Annual report reflecting formal name change of the agency

In a report to the board shortly before he left the agency in 1943, Mackenzie stated that there were approximately 650 cases open at any one time. Therefore, each of the three staff carried a caseload of over 200.

In a report to the board shortly before he left the agency in 1943, Mackenzie stated that there were approximately 650 cases open at any one time. Therefore, each of the three staff carried a caseload of over 200. This created an impossible situation. He suggested that one of the reasons the agency was not adequately staffed could be attributed to the system of financing employed by the society and encouraged by the Provincial Government. This system was based on the assumption that if the agency could show the value of the work done, then the community and the public would financially support them. He suggested that because the society could not do the work of interpretation of the services in addition to working with families, the logic of the whole financing system was faulty.

Sid McArton, in his report to the board in January 1944, reflected on the service that the agency had provided in the past and on the obligations that had been assumed by the Society.

“The Society has come to perform a function and a wide variety of duties for which no other agency existed in the area. In the four decades since it was formed, it has had to broaden and deepen its role with the increasing enlightenment of public opinion, the awakening and development of the community conscience, and the birth and recognition of new needs”. To quote further from the report: “here is a group of Brandon citizens, a self-governing, private, non sectarian Society feebly subsidized by the provincial government, finding itself through the years growing to a tremendous size, collecting and distributing hundreds of dollars, acting as the legal guardians, (and much more), to 160 future Canadians who are its wards, providing services to children born out of wedlock and to their mothers over territory covering one-third of rural Manitoba, providing family and protection work in the same area, undertaking special work at the request of Department of Pensions and National Health, and serving as the center for every type of social family problems which comes to the Society for attentions and solution. This community, mainly with its own support, with very little leadership from the provincial government, often acting on its own, feeling its way, meeting problems as they arose, establishing its own standards, developing its own techniques and system of organization and management, has served its own needs and achieved a measure of family and child services, far ahead of any other prairie province, ahead indeed, of more than one older province of the Dominion”.

In 1945, the federal government established the Family Allowance Program. This was of major benefit for low income families. Rather than create a separate agency, the federal government negotiated with the provinces to have the local child welfare agencies assume responsibility for any investigations of abuse of the family allowance. So the Children’s Aid Society of Western Manitoba was delegated to undertake investigations where there was a complaint about abuse of the family allowance in their area. There were many discussions at board level of about what should be done with the family allowance received for a child in care. The final decision was for a portion of the family allowance to be included in the foster parents’ cheque and that the balance should be held in trust as long as the child remained in agency care. If a child was in temporary care and returned to the parents, then the family allowance balance held in trust would be returned to the parents. If the child was a permanent ward, the trust funds might be drawn upon for special needs not covered. Otherwise the balance would be given to the child when he or she reached the age of majority.

In his February 1946 report before resigning from the agency, Sid McArton told the board that they had been

“successful in building a reservoir of goodwill among the citizens, municipal groups, organizations, persons in positions of trust or authority, and in a position to help you in your work. Together with this, there has been built a general knowledge of the function, place, purpose and structure of this Society, among the people in general. So that the people of the various communities know in what instances to call upon the Society and what they may expect in terms of service and assistance. The tangible evidence of the support is the fact that the rural community raised \$4,000 in the past year, which equals the amount raised by the newly established community chest in Brandon. And a network of foster homes has been developed throughout the area, (but never enough homes of varied character to meet the different needs of children requiring foster home placement)”.

Funding continued to be an issue. The municipalities were charged only the cost of room and clothing plus a nominal fee for supervision and the society picked up any additional cost out of their general revenue. The provincial government's financial involvement in 1945 was \$2,745, and the municipalities paid \$15,500 in maintenance for the children in care. Some of the municipalities were creative in developing less costly means of providing for a family.

In 1944, there was a family in the town of Virden where the children had been committed to the guardianship of the Children's Aid Society. The town felt that they could look after the family more economically by renting a house in Virden and hiring a housekeeper to care for the children, while the town provided monies for living expenses. They were most fortunate in their choice of housekeeper and the children were cared for quite adequately. In a situation where the agency had guardianship but none of the responsibility for the planning, it seemed wise to let guardianship lapse and maintain just a supervisory role with the family. While for this family there was a positive outcome, a similar solution tried by other municipalities was not always as successful.

It is amazing to reflect how much had been achieved in the consolidation of the vision of service to children through the Children's Aid Society in the 15 years since the first paid staff was hired. Much credit has to be given to the leadership of Mackenzie and McArton with the board of Directors of the time, for the maturing of the agency.

1948 - 1976 Expansion of the Children's Aid Society

In 1948, Dr. Helen Riesberry became the Executive Secretary of the agency. This title was changed two years later to Executive Director, as a title more accurately reflecting the expectations of the position. At the time of her first report to the annual meeting, the staff included the executive secretary, a supervisor, three social workers and the clerical staff of four. The Society received \$9,000 from the Brandon Community Chest and the rural and municipal campaigns. The grant from the Province of Manitoba was for \$10,850. There were 125 children in care. When Dr. Riesberry retired in 1976, the staff included the executive director, an assistant director, two case work supervisors, a supervisor of community relations, 27 social workers, an accounting staff of three and six clerical staff plus the staff at the Maples, 11 homemakers and three resource workers. The agency received \$37,000 from the United Way and community campaigns and the provincial general grant was \$550,980. There had been 832 children in agency care during that year.



*Children enjoy
some music
time.*

When a child became a ward of the Children's Aid Society, a maintenance order was made against the municipality where the family had residence. In order to establish the municipality responsible, it was necessary to prove that family had lived in the municipality for at least one year. As families moved around increasingly, it sometimes required considerable time to prove residence. Where it was possible that two or even three municipalities might be contesting residence, a lawyer at the guardianship hearing might represent each of them, which often meant a very protracted hearing. In 1953, a Rate Establishment Committee was formed by the Provincial Government to set a per diem rate for the maintenance of wards. The first rate set was \$1.14 per day, which allowed \$25 for room and board, \$4.50 for clothing, \$1.50 for health and 60¢ for allowance and school supplies per month. In 1960, this committee was abandoned and the government established the Welfare Advisory Committee, which met for the first time in January 1961 and set the per diem rate at a \$1.72. Members

of the board, as well as staff, made annual presentations to the welfare advisory hearings to show why an increase in the rate was necessary.

Until 1958, when the provincial government assumed responsibility for financial assistance, (other than short-term), municipalities were responsible for providing relief to needy families in their area. There was no common standard of assistance. Some municipalities were co-operative, but some also had few resources and welfare could be a sack of potatoes and a load of coal.

A family of Metis children came into care when their mother was admitted to the sanatorium with the diagnosis of tuberculosis. Their father had been unable to find a relative or neighbor who was prepared to come into the home to care for the children since everyone was fearful of tuberculosis. He was therefore obliged to stay home. The municipality granted him assistance of \$25 a month. He could not provide adequately for the children on this amount and requested that they be admitted to care.

In 1962, the provincial government assumed responsibility for ward maintenance. The Welfare Advisory board continued to set the per diem rate for each agency and there was a considerable variation in the rate from one agency to another. The Children's Aid Society of Western Manitoba was fortunate to have a large number of foster homes available for placement of their children.

That same year, 1962, the agency entered into an agreement with the federal and provincial governments, and the band chiefs to deliver child welfare services on the seven Indian reservations within the area served. This was a pilot project. In 1964, the Children's Aid Societies of Eastern and Central Manitoba entered into similar agreements.

In 1973, when the province wished to develop similar boundaries for all services within the Westman region, the agency was asked to assume child welfare responsibility in the eight municipalities on its eastern boundary. Fortunately, in the transfer of the geographic area, the province also made provision for funding additional staff.

In 1966 the agency adopted the "Helping Hands" motif, which had been commissioned from Richard Halliday, director of the Brandon Arts Center, as its official logo. It has appeared on the cover of most of the annual reports since that time as well as on the agency letterhead.



Logo adapted in 1966

"The agency tried to find adoptive homes for older and aboriginal children... using pictures to advertise these children."



This same period saw the development of many preventive programs. The camping program, homemaker services, foster day care, the Preschool Enrichment Program, and Victoria Day Care Center and family life education, all were developed to provide supports for different client groups.

The Mothers' Day Out and the Mothers Are People groups both began at this time. The agency organized foster parent seminars, and from that the Foster Parents Association formed in 1973. As the number of adopting applicants increased, the agency began to hold group intake meetings with prospective adoptive parents. This proved beneficial not only as a means of decreasing the time spent in intake but also in the interactions, information sharing and support that developed in the group.

The first group homes were established and The "New Maples" was built specifically as a receiving home for children.

The agency continued to take an interest in issues beyond their own mandated services in the Westman area. Presentations were made to the provincial government:

- in 1966 with respect to the Marriage Assistance Act;
- in 1967 with respect to adoptions and religion to

- enable more flexibility in placement;
- in 1968 with respect to foster home regulations and housing
- in 1970 with respect to preventive services to be included in the Child Welfare Act
- in 1971 with respect to family life education and a concern for detention facilities for young people;
- in 1973 on child abuse protocols
- in 1975 to the law reform commission, foster home licensing procedures and social security in Canada
- in 1976 with respect to Young Persons in Conflict with the Law and to the Ryant Report on Child Welfare

The Association of Children's Aid Societies became active again in 1968. Glenn Lawson, a past president of the CAS of Western Manitoba was elected president of the association.

The agency took advantage of every opportunity to use press, radio and television to tell their stories, interpret the services that the agency offered and to encourage community involvement. CKX television had given the agency one half hour a week to talk about the various programs. When the agency was trying to find adoptive homes for older and aboriginal children, television was a powerful tool to advertise these children, using photos as well as words to describe them. There was also a weekly column in the newspapers featuring children waiting for an adoptive family.

This was a period when there was an expansion in the number of organizations offering service to specific groups within the community. The Executive Director was one of the prime movers in the formation of the Community Services Council, which was organized to provide an opportunity for communication and coordination of services.

The image of the agency was changing. As the age distribution of the children in care changed, the typical "Children's Aid foster child" was no longer the appealing infant or toddler. The majority of children in agency care were over 11 years of age and many of them had come to the agency's attention as children out of control or emotionally troubled. Where at one time in the 1960's, some school districts had welcomed a school-aged foster child as an aid to keeping up their enrollment, in later years an agency foster child might prove to be a major problem in the classroom.

Yet during this period there was a very strong sense of community support for the work of the Children's Aid Society. Dr. Riesberry had built on the foundations laid by her predecessors and expanded their vision. The demands for service grew enormously during this period. So did the conviction that a large portion of the agency's energy should be devoted to preventing family breakdown by developing preventive programs.

1976-1999

Two Executive Directors have served during this period: Bruce Fraser from 1976 until 1992 and Kenneth Knight from 1992 until present. One aspect of this period has been an emphasis on normalization. Treatment institutions were closing or changing their focus as the thrust was to use a more "normal" setting such as a specialized foster home as an alternative placement and to keep the children in their home community. No longer were the majority of physically and developmentally delayed children lodged in institutions. Consequently, community resources have had to be developed to meet their needs. This meant that the community needed to be aware of existing services and ensure that there is cooperation and as little duplication as possible. It also increased competition for scarce dollars to operate the programs.

Treatment institutions were closing or changing their focus.

This period also stressed individual rights. Consequently more court cases have been contested, more decisions have been appealed and more rights have been demanded. The kind of publicity that child welfare agencies across the country have received in the media has frequently been quite negative. As a judge in another jurisdiction remarked, an agency is in a no-win situation. They are criticized if they remove children from a family and equally criticized if they leave children in what is perceived by the media to be a neglectful situation. It continues to be a challenging time to deliver the services that the Children's Aid Society was formed to provide.

In 1977 the Children's Aid Society of Western Manitoba defined its missions as follows:

The Purpose of the Society shall be to protect and promote the well being of children and to strengthen family life

To fulfill this purpose, the Society's goals are:

- To investigate allegations, or evidence, that children are being neglected, abused or exploited; and if necessary, to remove them to a place of safety;
- To provide counseling, guidance and other family support services to those who are referred by way of community complaint; as well as to those who voluntarily seek such assistance;
- To provide counseling and related services to unmarried parents.
- To develop, and support the development of placement resources for those children whose needs cannot be adequately met within their own family
- To provide appropriate planning, nurture and supervision for those children entrusted to its care, custody or guardianship
- To place for adoption those children who are legally and emotionally free to become part of a new family
- To provide and encourage the development of family life education programs
- To see, promote and advocate improvement in conditions and standards affecting children and families
- To be accountable for its service results and for the responsible management of its resource
- To operate in a manner consistent with the above within the meaning of the Child Welfare Act of Manitoba, or any other act affecting its work
- To anticipate change

At the 1991 annual meeting there was a vote on a bylaw change to condense the agency goals as follows:

- To protect children from neglect, abuse and exploitation
- To ensure children in its care are parented appropriately
- To strengthen families

...the agency's name was changed to the Child and Family Services of Western Manitoba in 1986.

The Child and Family Services Act was passed in 1986. For many years prior to that, there had been discussions within the agency about changing the name to one that more accurately reflected the focus of the agency. So it was with satisfaction that the agency's name was changed to the Child and Family Services of Western Manitoba in 1986. The name was legally changed in 1991.

1988 saw the beginnings of the annual board workshop weekends. The first one was held at Elkhorn Ranch and was funded by the province. The board established the Service Review Committee that same year to provide a means of appeal for any client who might have concerns about the service received. To emphasize the fact that this agency serves all of southwestern Manitoba, board meetings were held in the rural communities of Melita and Souris in 1990 and in Carberry in 1991. Local representatives of each community were invited to attend and share their local concerns at the meetings.

In 1989 the Children's Aid Society of Western Manitoba was accepted into joint associate membership in the Canadian Child Welfare Association and in the Child Welfare League of America. They were the first Manitoba agency to take a joint membership in these organizations. Acceptance meant they had met the criteria for membership in both organizations, which was an affirmation of the quality of the agency

programs. Membership provided access to the development of standards being set and the changing trends in the full field of child welfare.

With the change in the governance process in 1997, the title Executive Director was changed to Chief Executive Officer. Kenneth Knight presently holds this title.



*Executive Directors
Bruce Frazer,
Helen Reisberry,
Kenneth Knight
taken at the 1999
AGM.*

Dollars have been tight within the province of Manitoba during most of this last period. In 1999 the board met with representatives of the Family Services Ministry at two board meetings and with the Minister at a special meeting. Despite the limited increase in funding, and therefore the inability to hire additional staff to bring staffing to the accepted staff/caseload ratio, the expectations for service have continued to increase.

The agency has been able to raise funds through a public campaign, to build the Elspeth Reid Family Resource Centre. It provides a facility out of which many of the preventive programs operate.

In 1998 the agency moved out of the provincial building into its own new office building. This provides tangible evidence of its status as a private agency rather than being another government department.

There have been many joint undertakings with other agencies. One very successful partnership has been with several of the rural school divisions, in the shared worker projects. Brandon Youth Services Committee, an informal partnership of organizations in Brandon that have an interest in children and youth began in 1988. One of its projects, the Multi agency Preventive Program (M.A.P.P.) has co-funded a coordinator to assist in ensuring that the goals of the projects are met. Two other western Manitoba communities have adapted this project to their local situations. The Westman Child Abuse Committee, which is required by legislation, has operated since 1981. The Fresh Start program for abuse offenders, which began over 10 years ago, out of one staff member's interest in child abuse treatment, has gradually developed into a partnership between probation services, mental-health, corrections and the Children's Aid Society.

This has been a brief overview of the history of the Children's Aid Society but the story is largely contained in the activities through which this agency has contributed to the community it serves.

Offices

The first office that can be identified as a Children's Aid Society office was in the courthouse in 1935. The office was moved to the old post office in 1938 and then in 1940, to the second floor of what is presently the Chamber of Commerce building.

As the number of staff increased, larger accommodation became essential. In 1958 the Children's Aid Society moved to their own building on the corner of 18th Street and Rosser Avenue.

In 1970, after a supervisor's office had been divided to add additional interviewing space, and the clothing room had become an office for four staff, it was obvious that the agency was outgrowing the space available in this building. When The Maples moved to its new home, one social work team and their supervisor moved into the old Maples. Three years later the agency moved to the main floor of the newly built Provincial Building on 9th Street. They remained there for 25 years.

In 1998 the agency moved to their own office building at 800 McTavish Avenue, on the corner of McTavish and 8th Street. This building was financed through a mortgage repayable by the rent allocation in the agency's provincial grant, and a \$40,000 grant from the Manitoba Communities Services Council. The new office provides improved facilities for both staff and clients. As in 1958, the office building clearly reflects the agency's identity as a private independent agency and not a government department. (There was no music at the official opening).



*Construction of
the new office at
800 McTavish
Street.*

The Board

The board of Directors of the Children's Aid Society has always been a volunteer board, elected at the annual meetings. As indicated above, for the first 30 years of the existence of the Children's Aid Society, members of the board of directors provided direct service to children, as well as establishing policy and raising funds to support the work. Members of the committee on neglected children visited the family homes and made an assessment as to whether children should be removed from the family.

The foster home committee sought for foster homes, placed the children and supervised the placements. When the shelter was established in 1921, a board committee worked with the City Welfare Committee on behalf of the children placed there. They purchased clothing and Christmas and birthday gifts for the children. They arranged for fresh air camps at the Elks Lodge camp at Lake Clementi in the 1930's.

Gradually as the agency acquired trained social workers, the work of the board changed from direct service to the development of policies and the monitoring of service. And for some board members there was a sense of loss as the focus changed. The foster home committee continued to purchase and wrap Christmas gifts for all of the children in care until 1964. At that time the decision was made to include a set amount, dependent upon age of the child, in the foster parents' cheque so they could purchase the Christmas gift for their foster child.

In 1965 the foster home committee took responsibility for drafting and collating a major survey among foster parents about the actual costs involved in providing foster care. This provided documentation for an application to the province for a revision of foster home rates. When the agency decided to develop a group home for adolescent boys, a board committee took major responsibility for choosing the furnishings for the home. Another committee spent many hours looking at houses that might have potential to be developed as the Family Resource Centre.

In 1954, the numbers of rural members of the board increased to 25 members. The Brandon board members were expected to attend meetings on a regular basis, and in reality, was the operating board. Rural members were a contact for area workers about problems and resources in their community. They were also key people in organizing the campaigns for funds in their area. Only a few attended board meetings regularly.



Board and staff reviewing work done at a workshop.

In 1986 the board developed a board Members' Manual to formally define the duties of a board member. In June 1986, members of the board who attended meetings regularly became known as the Governing Council, and rural members who didn't attend regularly became known as rural representatives. The term of office for a governing council member was three years. Rural representatives were welcome to attend governing council meetings, but were not required to do so. When they did attend, they were considered full members of the council.

In June 1992, the size of the board was reduced to 30 members plus an appointed representative from Brandon City Council, should one be appointed. Half of the members were to be from Brandon school division/Shilo school District and half from the rest of the area. The use of school division boundaries was due to the increasing involvement in Shared Services Programs with school divisions other than the Brandon division. All board members are expected to attend all the board meetings and to participate on at least one committee. The terms of office continued to be three years to a maximum of nine years. The only exception was for the past president, if this position should take a person over the nine years. For former rural representatives accepting full board positions, the nine years were deemed to start in 1992. In general the operating style of the board was largely unchanged. The board set policy and acquired a lot of background information in the committee process.

Ends Policy

At the boards annual workshop, they considered John Carver's Policy Governance model and decided to pursue it further. This culminated in further changes to the board at the June 1997 annual meeting. The board size was reduced to 15 members, one half from Brandon and one half from the rest of the area, with the rural positions generally assigned along school divisions lines. Most of the standing board committees were eliminated. The board was to meet twice a month as a Committee of the Whole.

In accepting the Policy Governance model, the board's primary role is to set "ENDS" policies or

desired outcomes for the agency and ensure that the appropriate processes are in place to carry them out. The means of getting the desired outcome are left to the staff. This model also expects the board to keep in touch with the “stake holders” to insure that the ENDS policies are still what they want. This is an evolving process.

1. Child and Family Services of Western Manitoba is committed to providing mandated and preventive services to the residents of Westman in each of the following areas:
 - Children at risk and in need of protection
 - A. Children will live in settings that are physically and emotionally safe
 - B. Parents, relatives and /or caregivers will provide the physically and emotionally safe setting.
 - Families in Crisis
 - A. Families will receive resources to resolve the crisis.
 - Families in need of support or strengthening
 - A. Agency programs will enable families to function better.
 - B. Families will have knowledge to better enable them to function.
2. Agency services are accessible to all citizens of the Westman region except those residing on the First Nations Reserves.
3. These services will be offered where and when need is identified and as soon as resources can be made available.
4. The services will be accessed on a voluntary or non-voluntary basis dependent on the nature of the need.
5. Agency services may require a fee contingent upon the specific services offered and/or the client's ability to pay.

Staff

Expectations on staff were considerable. For instance, Mischpeter duties were stated as follows in the minutes of the April 6, 1936 board meeting:

- To investigate complaints with respect of cruelty and neglect of children;
- To make adjustments in the family life, or if necessary, to apprehend children and have them committed as wards;
- To do all other casework in connection with the wards of the Society
- To place and supervise all such wards in boarding homes, free foster homes, adoption homes or wage homes, and endeavor to provide a permanent home for each ward, where it shall be absorbed into the home and receive character training and education, and where its physical and mental health will be carefully supervised;
- To conduct correspondence in connection with all cases and to keep careful records of all wards of the Society;
- To perform all duties of the executive officer of the Society
- To report at each monthly meeting of the board of directors on the work done during the previous month

Children's Aid Society display for recruitment of people into social work.

An additional worker was hired when the agency assumed responsibility for the Unmarried Mothers program. In 1941, there were three trained workers on staff. When the school of Social Work at the University of Manitoba was established in 1943 the board hired two graduates from the first class. The board was responsible for hiring staff until 1949 when that responsibility was delegated to the Executive Secretary.

As the staff size increased in the 1950's, and there were not enough social workers graduating from the School of Social Work to meet the demands for trained staff, it was necessary to employ untrained workers. These were usually university graduates, many of whom planned to enter the field of social work. For several years the Children's Aid Society of



Western Manitoba provided a summer training course for untrained staff coming to work at the agency. Most worked for two years and then attended the school of Social Work on a bursary funded by the provincial government, conditional on their commitment to work at the agency for two years following graduation. In 1966, because of a continuing shortage of trained social workers, the Assiniboine Community College developed a one-year Welfare Services Course and a number of excellent graduates from that program were hired.

Gradually, by the 1960's, staffing had diversified to include Case Aides who spent a lot of their time transporting children for family visits, to doctors' and dentists' appointments or court hearings. As services to Aboriginal people increased, there was an effort on the part of the agency to hire Aboriginal workers to work with the social workers to help increase the understanding of the culture. The first Aboriginal worker was hired in 1973. By 1976 there were five Aboriginal workers on staff, one on each of the three teams and two serving as indigenous workers on the reserves.

In the 1980's a program of Family Aides was developed. The aides were frequently mothers who had been known to the agency in "protection families" and who were now, with the support of the coordinator of the program, able to work with vulnerable families.

In 1989, the Family Support Worker Program began with three full time workers who worked in the home with the family to model parenting skills and enhance communication between parents and adolescents. From a small staff compliment, the agency has grown to such an extent that the 1999 annual report lists a staff of 180. This includes management, social workers, family aides, family support workers, homemakers, day care staff, group home staff, case aide drivers, staff at the Family Resource Centre, a volunteer coordinator, plus clerical and accounting staff.



At the opening of the Kinsmen House, Executive Director Helen Riesberry wore the required dress.

When Miss McClung was hired, a half time stenographer was hired as well. The number of clerical staff grew as slowly as the social work staff. With the changes in technology, they have moved from a Gestetner to a photocopier and from the manual typewriter to a computer. In 1999 there were five full-time and four part time clerical support staff. The accounting staff of one has grown to the comptroller plus two accounting staff.

Dress expectations were more formal until the late 60's. When a female worker appeared in court, she was expected to wear a hat, at least elbow length sleeves, and white gloves. A couple of hats were kept available in the office for workers who forgot to bring their own. There was an audible gasp of surprise the first time a worker appeared at a staff conference in a pantsuit. Things had changed considerably by the 90's!

Agency social workers have many a tale to tell about their experiences in the field. In the days before roads were graveled, much less paved, they got stuck in mud in the spring and in snow in the winter. They were met with barking dogs, hissing geese or hostile clients. They worked with foster parents who fed them, offered a bed when the roads were impassable and plied them with homemade goodies. They were also exposed to contagious diseases.

One English social worker, coming to the agency directly from England, planned to spend Christmas with his sister in Montreal. Not long before he was due to leave, the doctor in his area referred a family he considered so neglectful that their children should be apprehended. When the doctor and the worker visited the home, the mother said she thought the children were coming down with chicken pox. The doctor pooh poohed her diagnosis and the children were apprehended. Shortly after, the worker left on the train for his holiday in Montreal. Later the agency received a postcard from him to report that he had developed chicken pox on the train. His sister who had two small children was not happy to see him.

The Preschool Enrichment Program began when a social worker, concerned about children on her case load who had very little stimulation in the home, persuaded a foster parent to open her home three

mornings a week for a play time with four preschool children from families on her caseload. As this program grew, volunteer drivers from an IODE group, using their own cars, picked up the children from their homes, drove them to the program site and returned them to their families two hours later.

One of the drivers even asked her husband to come home from work to look after their own two sick children while she picked up the children for play school!

Volunteers

The mothers' groups that began in the 60's relied on volunteers as drivers and as babysitters for the children while the mothers were meeting. Volunteers have also been involved as leaders of many client groups. The Mother-Child program functioned thanks to the commitment of volunteers who visited each child with whom they were involved twice a week as well as meeting with the program supervisor once a week. These are only a few examples of the many ways in which volunteers have been of assistance to the agency's preventive programs.

In 1967 the agency was able to recruit university students as volunteers to work with children at the Maples or in their own homes who needed a Special Friend. (This was before the Big Brothers and Sisters program was organized in Brandon). Even after that organization was formed, the agency recruited special friends for children whose families did not fit the criteria for the Big Brothers and Sisters programs. Many of the students were also involved in-group leadership. Some of the groups were recreational. In one group, the girls were taught to sew and cook. For several years they organized a special tea at which the girls could show off their finished creations. Others were tutors. Many of the students have shown real creativity in the volunteer tasks to which they were assigned.



*Staff and
volunteers helping
the children at the
Preschool
Enrichment
Program.*

With the position of the Volunteer Coordinator being secured on a part time basis, the program was able to develop a more formalized recruiting, screening and training process. Volunteers must undergo a criminal reference check and a child abuse registry check, complete a formal volunteer application, undergo an interview process and have a reference check. After applicants pass all checks, they receive an orientation session and additional training sessions are offered on an on going basis.

At present, volunteers continue to offer their services in many different ways. For example, they can be a special friend to a child, teen or mother. They transport children to and from medical appointments, or families to and from the Resource Center. They perform clerical and reception duties at the resource center, tutors to a child or teen requiring just to name a few of the volunteer roles help all provide individual help to families.

The statistics for March 31, 1999 show that there were 71 registered program volunteers. It is estimated that program volunteers provided 4667 hours of assistance to children and families. They are, indeed, a vital part of the agency service.

Protective Services

The Children's Aid Society's reason for being was for the protection of children. For the first 30 years that was the chief area of concentration and it continues to be the primary mandate of the agency. Societal changes, particularly after the war, have created many more pressures. The moves of families from the farm to the city, the greater mobility of families across the country, the increasing rates of

separation and divorce, technology, the influence of television and changing values have all had their impact on the family.

For many families, the supports offered by the extended family and the closely-knit neighborhood have disappeared.

For many families, the supports offered by the extended family and the closely-knit neighborhood have disappeared. In the late 60s, the agency began to see an increase of referrals of physical abuse and a decade later the emphasis seemed to have changed to referrals of sexual abuse cases.

This increase may be as much due to a greater readiness to make complaints as to an increase in actual abuse incidents. These are the cases that have frequently received much media attention, and the professional

literature seemed dominated by sexual abuse issues. In order to coordinate services within the community, the agency took an active part in developing the Child Abuse Committee, both in Brandon and in some of the rural areas. In 1999 the agency Child Abuse Committee received 118 reports of child abuse investigations, involving 108 children in 92 families. Of the 118 abuse investigation, 46 were for physical abuse and 66 for sexual abuse. (Several children were the subject of more than one investigation and several alleged offenders abused more than one child).

We would like to be able to:

Help more parents by providing temporary care for their children in foster homes, when illness, desertion, marital problems, or unmarried parenthood make it impossible for them to be cared for at home . . . until the family can be re-established or other permanent plans made.

IT COSTS

99 CENTS A DAY

FOR BOARD,

CLOTHING

AND

MEDICAL CARE

for one child. Therefore we would need approximately \$30.00 to care for one of these children for one month. Yet there are many more children who need this service (last year a total of 59) many of whose parents are unable to pay for their care.

Provide a substitute mother in the home when the home itself remains, but mother is absent through illness, desertion, or death. A housekeeper service would do this.

THE SALARY



FOR ONE HOUSEKEEPER

FOR ONE YEAR

WOULD BE

\$720.00

The Board of your Agency in co-operation with the staff has accepted the need for these services and has already worked out administrative details. But to carry through these plans we need the support of all who gave so generously last year and also of new friends.



Many families have come to the attention of the agency because of a complaint of neglect. A member of the community, a school, or a family member might have made such a complaint. As the services of the Children's Aid Society became better known there was an increase of requests for help directly from families. Upon receiving a referral, social workers attempted to obtain an accurate understanding of the problems, needs and strengths of the family and how they impacted on the child. Planning with a family often involved the coordination of many services and resources. Frequently social workers become advocates on behalf of clients to effectively mobilize community resources.

In 1958, when the provincial government took over the majority of the responsibility for welfare assistance, there was a decrease in the number of families brought to the Children's Aid Society's attention.

In the 1990's, there are many more agencies involved with families. Social workers coordinate the communication between these various agencies. There are still times when it is necessary to remove a child from the family home in order to protect that child. This may be for a temporary period when there is a possibility that the family can be strengthened sufficiently to enable the return of the child, or where the neglect is so severe, and/or the motivation to parent so limited, the child may come into permanent care.

Taken from The Children's Aid Society of Western Manitoba Annual Report 1948-1949.

Over the 100 years of service to children, different philosophies have prevailed. Sometimes, the philosophy seemed to be that the best interests of a child was served by removal from the home, and other periods when the emphasis was on keeping the family intact as a unit, almost regardless of the well-being of the child. With the benefit of hindsight, a review of agency files would, in one decade, raise a question of whether it had been necessary to admit a child to care, and yet in another decade, question how a child could have been left in an obviously neglectful family situation. More than once an older sibling has commented to a worker that the younger sibling had so much better care than those older members who had been left in the family home.

There have been a number of times when the agency has gone to some lengths to keep a group of siblings together in their own home. In 1984, in what became known as the Family Reunification project, the agency actually bought a house and retained a homemaker full time to look after five siblings until the mother could get her life in order to resume parenting. In an earlier situation, where the family owned their home but the father had died and the mother was diagnosed as mentally ill, the

agency placed a homemaker in the home to care for three siblings until the youngest had reached eighteen.

Reflected in the annual reports of the agency's work in the last 50 years, there has been a steady development of preventive programs designed to intervene before situations have reached a critical point.

By 1976 some of the social work staff were living and working in area's outside Brandon. The Shared Services Worker Project began in September 1984 with a social worker hired jointly by the Children's Aid Society and the Souris Valley school division. The agency's goal for the program was to identify children with major problems through earlier intervention and so reduce the need for a child to come into agency care. The worker was expected to live within the school division area. This worker carried both the Child and Family Services mandate as well as a role similar to that of the school social worker in urban areas. An advisory committee of volunteers was established to provide input to both the school board and to the Children's Aid Society's board of Directors. This committee was responsible to set certain project priorities and to help publicize the project and interpret the worker's role to the community. Teachers and principals who evaluated the program identified the following as its benefits:

By 1976 some of the social work staff were living in the area in which they worked.

- The worker provided support and linkage with the family, which helped to alleviate situations that worked against the students' academic progress.
- The worker was empowered to investigate child abuse or neglect allegations and many teachers noted a prompter response to referrals;
- The workers provide special assistance to the school's staff, for example, with students struggling with social and emotional adjustment.
- Because the worker worked and lived in the area, local agencies saw them as part of the community and someone to be involved in the decision making.
- Partnerships between agencies, which provide help to the same clients, are important both economically and in the quality of service provided.

This project expanded to include a shared worker with the Antler River school division the following year, with the Pelly Trail school division in 1987 and with Fort La Bosse school division in 1989. Fort La Bosse School division withdrew from the project in 1997 and Pelly Trail withdrew in 1998. Turtle Mountain School also had a shared worker from 1991 to 1996 and Birdtail River school division began sharing a worker in 1996. The school divisions who withdrew did so because they found their provincial education department funding would not allow them to continue. In his report to the 1997 annual meeting, the president comments " we feel that it is ironic that the two divisions found it fiscally necessary to withdraw from the program, at a time when Manitoba's Child and Youth Secretariate is recommending that services be provided where children are, with schools as a primary contact.

Children in Care

In 1922, a two-week-old infant was found on the steps of the monastery in Brandon. The mother was never found and that child came into agency care.

In 1998, Baby Daniel was left at the Brandon hospital. The mother of that child was also never located. He became a permanent ward of Child and Family Services of Western Manitoba and was subsequently placed for adoption.

These two examples of the children admitted to care are fortunately very rare situations. However, many children are admitted to care through temporary or permanent guardianship, whereby the agency has had to establish that the children were neglected within the meaning of the act. This has meant that the agency has been able to prove to the satisfaction of the court that the child in question is in need of care and protection as a " neglected child ".

A non-ward care program, developed in 1942, made it possible for the parent to sign an agreement that the child be admitted to agency care but the parent retained guardianship. The parent contributed financially in accordance with his means. The agency paid the balance of the cost out of their private funds.



Outside Patrick House.

Statutory non -ward care (Temporary Contract Placement agreement) was a provincial government program under the amended Child Welfare Act, which came into effect in 1974. It was basically a non-ward agreement with the parent, but the province guaranteed the balance of the funding. The parent was expected to contribute financially dependent on his level of income. This meant that a child who required a high-cost treatment placement, did not have to be committed as a ward simply in order that the agency, rather than the parent, would meet the high costs of such a placement.

In the early years, the alternatives for placement were either in a foster home, often where the foster family received no remuneration other than the child's labor, a wage home for the older ward, or an institution in Winnipeg. The opening of the shelter in 1921 provided a temporary home until a plan could be made for the child. When

The Maples was established in 1930, it functioned both as a receiving home for children coming into care on an emergency basis and as a long term home for children for whom a foster home was never located.

Leona and Hilda were two sisters who came into care when they were just beginning school in the 1950's. They were placed at the Maples and after several temporary orders of guardianship became permanent wards. They continued to live at the Maples until they became independent. For many years after, they have continued to maintain contact with the matron they knew at the Maples. .

There were also a good many long-term foster home placements. In an era when a child over three was seldom considered for adoption, a permanent foster home was the next best alternative. Many permanent wards grew up in a foster home and considered themselves a part of that family save in the legal sense.

1935 was the first year the mental hospital held a clinic in downtown Brandon and provided psychological testing of children in care. The following year an annual physical examination of every child in care was recommended. The local Medical Association did the examinations without charging a fee. There were usually between nineteen and twenty-four children at the Maples in this period. One of the highlights of their summer was a three-week Fresh Air camp at Lake Clementi.

In 1946 there were 126 wards in care. In 1965, 521 children had been in care during the year. Thirty-seven percent of these children were under four years of age. In 1970, just five years later, only fourteen percent of the children were under four years and thirty- seven percent were between 11 and 14 years of age. When, in 1962, the agency agreed to undertake a pilot project of child welfare service delivery to the seven reservations within the area served, the number of Aboriginal children in care increased markedly. (There had been a few Aboriginal children in care prior to 1962 on non-ward agreements through the Aboriginal agent). By 1968, forty percent of the children in guardianship care were Status Indians or Metis. In 1999, 44% of children in care are aboriginal. (Included in this figure is Status, Non Status and Metis children).


Another group of children coming into care in the late 1950's were the children of Inuit mothers who came to the sanatorium in Ninette for treatment for tuberculosis. Whenever possible, the small children were placed in nearby foster homes so that the parents could maintain contact. Before the family was ready to return to the North, the agency always tried to make arrangements for the mother and child to be together for a little time before their departure. In 1958 there were six Inuit children in care.

In 1971, the age of majority was changed from 21 to 18 years of age. Some of the permanent wards were not ready for independence at 18, frequently because of physical or mental handicaps. For some years it was possible to extend guardianship beyond the age of majority in order to ensure that an

adequate plan was in place for the child before he or she left guardianship care. As a greater proportion of children in care became teen-agers rather than preschoolers, there was a need for alternatives to a foster home placement. To meet the need, the agency developed group homes. By about 1971, they were also organizing ward seminars to provide both learning and social group experiences for the teenagers in care. Later these developed into preparations for independent living workshops.

One of the tools used in the preparation of older permanent wards for adoption was a Life Book, which included as many pictures of the child over the years as the agency could find as well as pictures of the caregivers and homes where the child had lived. It was recognized that this was equally relevant for the child who remained in long term agency care. Hence the life book project became a part of the agency's responsibility to their wards.

The statistics for March 31, 1999 show that there were 170 children in agency care. Of these, 61 were between 14 and 17 years of age and 27 were under four years of age.



Our Children

Wards

When a home is inadequate and the parents are not able to make the necessary changes, the Agency asks the Juvenile Court for a transfer of guardianship of the children to the Agency. It may be granted for a temporary period or permanently. The Agency then becomes the parent of the child, responsible for his home life, his education and happiness. He needs help with the fears and worries he has about leaving home, and consistent care and guidance. Above all he needs to know he is wanted and loved.

125 children looked to us as parents during the past year.

13 of these were new members of our family.

15 children who are wards of other agencies were also cared for by us.

44,904 days of "paid for" care were given.

*Taken from the
Children's Aid
Society of Western
Manitoba Annual
Report 1948-1949.*

Placement Resources for Children

Foster Homes

For the majority of children who could not live with their own parents, placement in a foster home was the next best alternative. The agency has been fortunate to have a supply of foster homes available. There was a time in the late 1960's, when there were many more infants in the care of the Winnipeg Children's Aid Society than that agency had either adoption or foster homes available. Consequently some of these babies were remaining in the hospital for six to nine months. The Childrens Aid Society offered to place them with foster parents in its area. To compare the development of an infant who had been in hospital care for six months for no other reason than the lack of a home and that of a baby placed directly in foster care at two weeks of age, vividly demonstrated the value of a family setting to meet an infant's need for nurturing.

At the 1956 annual meeting, the agency honored the Michies who had been foster parents for 14 years. This was done to recognize the importance of foster parents to the work of the agency. In later years those foster parents who had been part of a foster parent program for 5,10,15 or 20 years have been recognized at the annual meetings. It is amazing how many of them there are.

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Foster Families Are



Love in Action!

*Current logo developed by the
Westman Foster Family
Association*

Until 1945, foster homes in Brandon had to be investigated by the public health authorities with respect to health and space requirements and licensed by the City Health department. This responsibility was then transferred to the Children's Aid Society. However it would appear that the city had not amended their bylaws. A new medical director, having read the bylaws, decided that the Health Unit should be issuing the foster home licenses and he had a motorcycle policeman deliver them to the foster parents' door! Needless to say many foster parents were quite upset and the agency was quickly in touch with Dr. Koszakiewicz, the medical director!

In 1948 the board planned a Foster Parents Tea. This was an opportunity for the foster parents to see The Maples where many of the children had stayed before moving to their home, for the agency to recognize the contribution of foster parents and for foster parents to meet one another. The first teas were held at the Maples but as the number of foster parents attending increased it was necessary to move to a larger space at Knox United Church.

Gradually the focus of these gatherings changed to become a seminar, with an educational component as well as the social time. As an outgrowth of the seminars, the Foster Parents Association became organized in 1973. Foster parents from the Western Manitoba Foster Parents Association took an active part in the provincial association and representatives from the local association attended at least one conference of the Child Welfare League of America in Vancouver. In 1999, the Foster Parents Association of Western Manitoba is the only active Association in the province.

A foster parent training series for all new foster parents were instituted in 1973. A foster home coordinator was appointed as the number of children coming in and out of care grew to over 700 in a year and it was necessary to have one person aware of the foster home resources of the agency and able to coordinate placements.

Group Care



Kinsmen House opened in 1964.

As has already been mentioned, the first group care facility used by the Children's Aid Society was the shelter established by the city in 1921. Then in 1930, the Maples, also owned by the city, became the agency receiving home. Boys from three to twelve years and girls from three to sixteen years were placed there. Some of them were there only a brief time and others remained for years. In 1971, the "new Maples" was built on Brandon Avenue. It had been made possible by a very generous bequest from Mr. Frank E. Jacques, a farmer from the area.

As the age distribution of children in care changed to be a larger proportion of adolescents, many of whom were in conflict with their own parents, alternatives to placement in a foster home were developed.

The first agency group home, Kinsmen House opened in 1964. It provided accommodation for six teenaged boys plus the House Parents, Hugh and Kay Allen. 1968 saw the opening of Kinette House, a group home for adolescent girls. Both these houses were purchased with funds provided by the Kinsmen Club of Brandon and members of the club donated many hours of labor renovating and redecorating before the houses were opened as group homes. Two additional houses were initially rented (and later purchased) as short-term assessment units. Patrick and Frederick House opened in 1975 and 1976 respectively. Garwood House, to be used as girls' unit, was built by the agency in 1971, thanks in large part to a bequest from Mr. J.W. Bissett. The agency also built a home (Victor House) at Oak River in 1975. It functioned as a group home for eight Aboriginal boys.

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Patrick House in the 70's.



As placement needs changed, the roles of these facilities also changed. Patrick, Frederick and Kinette became coed units. The "new" Maples was closed as a receiving home in 1980, to be replaced by a new Assessment unit, Cypress House, which opened in October, 1980 as an 8- bed placement centre for pre-adolescent school aged children. It was designed to care for children for three to four months, while the agency got to know the children well enough to assess what type of specialized care they needed and then to locate that resource.

By 1995, Cypress House was accommodating children within the developmental ages from six to seventeen years, for a longer time

period. Children admitted to this unit are mainly those with emotional, behavioral, or developmental problems in which extensive observation is necessary to determine the specialized care the child will need. The Maples had provided an assessment function, along with its role as a receiving home but it had been designed to accommodate 20 children.

As the number of children being admitted to emergency care reduced, the agency developed emergency foster homes to assume much of the receiving home role. The emergency foster home received \$1.00 a day to hold a bed and a \$3.00 a day for each child placed. Five emergency foster homes were developed and served on a rotating basis week about. The home on duty was expected to be available any time within the 24-hour period. Kinsmen House closed in 1984 and Kinette House became a four-placement bed resource in 1991 and was finally closed in 1997. As needs changed, the other three units, Garwood, Frederick, and Victor Houses have all been closed, and the houses sold. The Patrick House program was moved to another house, and became a level IV treatment centre for four adolescents. With the thrust to normalization, its' only name is its street address.

There have always been some children in agency care who have required specialized treatment resources. In 1981 a specialized resource home to care for three mentally handicapped youngsters had been developed. In recognition of the extra care that these children demanded the foster parents received a special grant as well as provision for respite. Different strategies have been developed to meet the needs of particular children such as those older teenagers who could not relate within a family but could tolerate a parent counselor whose focus was to prepare them for independent living.

Placements have been made in treatment institutions in Winnipeg, and in the case of a very few, at a considerable distance away, one in Warrendale in Toronto and another in the United States. As costs of institutional care skyrocketed it was imperative that the agency concentrate on developing treatment placements within its own area. The thrust to normalization also focused on keeping children closer to their home community.

In the 1975 annual report there were 408 children in full-time care of the Children's Aid Society.

On March 31st, 1999 there were 141 children in full-time care of the agency.



*Helen Riesberry
receives the key
to Victor House.*

Services to Aboriginal Children & Families

As early as 1956, the Department of Northern Affairs and Immigration had initiated tentative inquiries about the possibility of established agencies taking over the social services on the reserves. Helen Riesberry, the Executive Director, had been involved in the Indian - Metis Conferences being held provincially at this time and in the establishment of the Indian and Metis Friendship Centre in Brandon. There were seven reservations within the area served by the agency. These were: Oak River, (later to be called Sioux Valley), Oak Lake, Birdtail Sioux, Waywayseecappo, Keeseekoowenin, Rolling River, and Lizard Point (later known as Gamblers).

The Executive Director made visits to two reservations that same year. Members on the reserves expressed a good deal of concern about inadequate and overcrowded housing and about the inadequacy of the schooling on reserves. The agency had already been cooperating with the Department of Indian Affairs for placement of some of their children.

- A deaf child from Sioux Valley who required special schooling was placed at the Maples from Monday to Friday on a non ward basis and returned to her family each weekend. .
- A family of nine children came into guardianship care because they did not have Indian status, (their treaty Indian mother had married a non treaty

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Indian, by virtue of which she lost her treaty Indian status). She established a common-law relationship with a treaty Indian man on her home Reserve and he was the father of all nine children. However in the eyes of the Indian agent, the children were non-treaty and had no right to live on the Reserve. He threatened to evict them to the road allowance unless the agency apprehended them immediately.

In 1960, discussions began again between the federal and provincial governments and the child care agencies with respect to the transfer of child welfare services to local agencies. In March 1962, a formal agreement for services on the seven reserves in this area was signed in the legislative buildings by the two governments, the Indian chiefs, and the agency. Prior to this agreement, Dr. Riesberry had visited every reserve within the area. The Children's Aid Societies of Central and Eastern Manitoba entered into similar agreements in 1964. (In hindsight it can be recognized that the staff had a very limited understanding of Aboriginal culture as they began to offer service on the reserves).

The very first referral from one of the reserves was from a family of an unmarried mother who wished to place her expected child for adoption and did not want her home community to be aware of her pregnancy. Shortly after, two band counselors from one of the reserves brought two women into the agency office. They had applied to the Band for financial assistance because their husbands were in jail. The band counselors had decided that their problems were not just financial and that they could benefit from other help and so brought them to the agency.

In 1964, joint meetings with the health nurses on the reserves and the Aboriginal agent were arranged for mutual cooperative action. In the first year of service eighty- one cases were opened. This was a much higher intake than normal for the size of population served, but it was necessary to recognize the great backlog of need on the reserves. In 1965 the agency initiated the search for homes on the reserves recognizing that when children were moved to a home of a different culture, and often language, it was very difficult for the child to adjust. On most of the reserves the houses were small, the families were large and there was simply insufficient room to accommodate more children.

The agency did succeed in finding a number of homes, particularly on the Sioux Valley Reserve. By 1968, 40% of the children in guardianship care were Treaty Indian or Metis. In 1969 the Department of Indian Affairs handed over more control to the reserves. They were able to appoint their own band administrators and new training courses had been instituted to develop the skills to run more of their own affairs. They took over responsibility for welfare payments within their budget.

In 1970 the Residential Schools were closed by the Department of Indian Affairs with little advance warning to either the families on the reserves or to the agency. While the closing of the residential school program was a positive step, it meant a great deal of overloading for some families. Often the parents were no longer in the area and children were returned to grandparents who simply could not cope with several additional grandchildren. Fourteen children immediately came into care that summer and many more followed until the proportion of Aboriginal children in agency care grew to be more than half of the child care population. In the first years the agency was working on the reserves, many of the children who were apprehended were committed on a temporary order of guardianship which was extended year by year for three or four years. After that length of time, many became permanent wards. Children who came into care at a young age had often bonded with their foster parents. Quite a number of foster parents applied to adopt their foster child once the permanent guardianship order made the child legally free to be adopted.

The Adoption Resource Exchange of North America, (ARENA), was a program that developed at the Child Welfare League of America office in 1968. It was developed in response to research that showed that there were children waiting for adoptive homes in some areas of the country, while in other areas there were families ready to adopt black, Aboriginal and Vietnamese children as well as older children and sibling groups. Coinciding with the imbalance between children legally free to be adopted and the availability of adoption homes, was a philosophy in the child welfare field that an adoptive home was the best plan for any child who was legally free to be adopted.

The agency had attempted to find families on the reserves that would be prepared to adopt. However many had large families already and some were anxious about the potential interference of the biological parents. The Department of Welfare had developed a program of recruiting adoption homes at Island Lake in the North in particular. The agency did place a few children in that area. But the major resource for adoption placements, particularly for older children and for sibling groups was with

families in the United States. Before an out-of-country placement could be considered, a search was made to find an adopting home within the local area; if unsuccessful, then the child was listed in the Manitoba Adoption Bulletin for two months, and then listed with the National Adoption Desk. Only after that process had been followed could a child be referred to ARENA. While some of the placement with American families had bad outcomes and have received a good deal of media attention, many others have succeeded as well as the placements made locally.

In 1974 the Dakota Ojibway Tribal Council was organized. In 1981, child welfare services, (apart from adoptions), on the Birdtail Sioux, Oak Lake and Sioux Valley Reserves were transferred to the Dakota Ojibway Child and Family Services (DOCFS). The agency transferred twelve active foster homes on reserves to DOCFS at this time. The adoption program was transferred the following year. Three years later, in 1984, West Region Child and Family Services assumed responsibility for child welfare on Gambler, Keeseekoowenin, Rolling River and Waywayseecappo reserves. There has been a pattern of movement back and forth from the reserve to the city. Some children have had to be apprehended, ensuring a need for good communication and cooperation between the agencies.

Unmarried Parent Services

The Society accepted responsibility for the provision of services to unmarried mothers in 1939. An illegitimate pregnancy was unacceptable in many families at that time and for the young expectant mother a time of stress and indecision. For many, where marriage to the baby's father was not considered, the only option seemed to be placement for adoption. It was quite common for girls to leave their home communities to keep their pregnancy a secret. All the maternity homes were situated in Winnipeg and girls from the western Manitoba area would often go there. As travel across the country became more common, frequently an expectant mother from Vancouver or Toronto would choose to come to Winnipeg to have her baby. Girls entering the maternity home who were from western Manitoba were referred to the Children's Aid Society of Western Manitoba for service.

As the numbers of unmarried mothers entering the maternity homes escalated in the sixties, out-of-province girls were also referred to the agency. A social worker from the Children's Aid Society of Western Manitoba would maintain contact with them while they were in a nursing home to assist in planning for their baby. If the unmarried mother signed a declaration of paternity, the putative father would be contacted to obtain a social history and if possible, a financial agreement to cover the costs of the girl's stay in the nursing home. Should she decide to keep her baby, an attempt was made to obtain an agreement for maintenance until the child reached the age of majority or the mother married.

As social attitudes changed in the late 60's, at least two trends were observable. An increasing number of the expectant mothers were young teenagers, some as young as thirteen years, and at least half of the new referrals were under 17. There was also much less secrecy about their pregnancy and considerable peer pressure to keep the baby. An increasing number of single mothers did plan to care for their child. In 1982, 60 percent of young single mothers were keeping their baby and in 1999, 70 percent had chosen to parent their child. As a result of this shift in attitude, fewer unmarried mothers sought placement away from their home during their pregnancy.

One social worker on staff gradually became a specialist in working with single parents. She and a public health nurse developed weekly prenatal classes designed especially for the single mother, to offer her emotional support and to help her understand the changes she was undergoing and to

UNMARRIED MOTHER COMMITTEE

This work has been done by the Children's Aid Societies for not quite two years and so is quite new to us. As far as the Board, or even the Committee is concerned, names are never used, or any personal contact established. Only the Executive Secretaries really know the girls. A matter of policy may be brought before the Board, or the question of a legal action to be taken decided by the Committee.

It may interest you to know that there are open, 108 cases, of these 16 are really in other districts but interviewed here. In 34 cases the girls wished no action taken and with look after the child themselves. In 3 cases the girls had their own lawyer. Usually our lawyer is used unless the putative father agrees to pay without going to court.

The committee suggested that we inquire as to how Grace Hospital in Winnipeg looked after the girls, to see whether or not facilities in Brandon could be similarly arranged, with the idea of saving some money.

It was found that that problem is still definitely a problem and that financially, girls, made to work for their board and hospitalization were a burden, not a help. It was felt also that an institution is a poor solution as it puts girls of all types together which is often not desirable. A better idea would be to board the girls in private homes where sympathetic handling would help in rehabilitating the girl and her baby.

Respectfully submitted,

MARION H. DOIG, Convenor.

*Taken from the
1939-1940
Annual Report.*

emphasize the care she must provide for herself in order to achieve a healthy birth outcome.

They also focused on helping prepare her for labor and delivery. An opportunity was provided to discuss the alternatives regarding planning for the baby and to share ideas with other members of the group. Increasingly, counseling young single parents came to involve a lot of discussion around issues relating to parenting. And a number of single mothers keeping their babies required extensive support services from the agency as well as other community services.

The changes in title of the service from “unmarried parent service:” to “expectant single parent service” reflects some of the social change. Now, whenever possible, the single father is involved, and offered an opportunity for counselling about his feelings about the pregnancy, his relationship with the unmarried mother and its future implications. As well, he is advised of his responsibility to his child and encouraged to fulfill these responsibilities, depending on the decisions made regarding the child. Changes in legislation and provincial policy over the last few years have given single fathers the right to be more involved in the planning for their child’s future.

Prior to the amendments in the Child Welfare Act in 1974, when an unmarried mother signed consents to the adoption of her baby, she still remained the legal guardian until the adoption order was signed. Since at that time, the adoption probation period was a year and it was frequently another year before the final papers were processed, the unmarried mother would not be advised of the finalization of the adoption until at least two years after the child’s birth. When the legislation was changed to allow a voluntary surrender of guardianship, the mother’s responsibility ended with the signing of the surrender.

A part of early counselling with a single mother had been to encourage them to put the experience behind them and “get on with their life”.

A part of early counselling with single mother’s had been to encourage them to put the experience behind them and “get on with their life”. When the Post Adoption Registry was established, (which permitted the birth parent to register her desire for contact with the child she had relinquished for adoption), it became very evident that the act of signing the consent had not closed the chapter for her. Many young women told of remembering their child on each birthday and wondering what the outcome of her decision had been. In the 1980’s, a greater openness in adoption had developed and in some cases the

birth mother and the adoptive parents met at the time of placement. In some cases, contact remained after the first meeting. The craving to know, or to have some control over the kind of family, in which her child might be placed, has led some single mothers to choose a private placement rather than an agency selected placement.

Adoptions

The experience of one family caring for a child born to another family has been a part of history through the ages. It was not until 1924 that adoption legislation was included in the Manitoba Child Welfare Act. The following year, in a desire to find adoptive homes for their permanent wards, there was a motion in the Board minutes that they advertise the availability of children in their care who were legally free for adoption.

Until 1945 adoption applications were made to the Department of Welfare. In that year the Children’s Aid Society accepted responsibility for all adoption placements. At about this time, the prevailing philosophy of adoption stressed confidentiality. The adoptive parents were given non-identifying information about the baby’s family background.

In one instance, when the adoptive family, on hearing the history felt sure that the birth mother was their niece (and it was), it was mutually agreed that the baby would not be placed in their home. The birth name registered by the birth mother appeared on the adoption decree, but when the adopting parents signed the final papers, they completed a birth registration in their names, which replaced the original registration. They could apply for a new birth certificate in their name after they had received the final decree. Adopting parents were assured that there would be no future contacts with the birth mother.

The adoption field had generally assumed that any child over three years of age could not be considered adaptable. Hence many children grew up in foster care. Unless complete social histories

on both birth parents had been obtained even an infant would remain in a foster home, until he or she could be psychologically tested at nine months of age. Some years later, it was decided that a reasonably valid assessment of intellectual ability could be established at six months of age.

A great deal of faith was placed in the accuracy of the psychological test. There was an expectation that an agency placement almost guaranteed a normal child. A great deal of staff time was taken in staff conferences trying to choose the best adoption home for the infant. There was an attempt to match the child with the adoptive parents physically and intellectually insofar as that could be predicted on the basis either of the two social histories and/or the developmental assessment.

In the 1950's, there were more families applying to adopt than there were children legally free for placement. Therefore there was a backlog of approved adopting homes waiting for a baby. Consequently when, in the late 60's, there were fewer adoption applications and more babies relinquished for adoption, it was some time before agencies realized that the pendulum had swung and that there would be babies waiting until an adoption home was available. At this time, adopting parents were quite specific about what they would accept in a baby's background. They often specified a child of an ethnic origin similar to their own (usually British). They felt they could not accept one of French, German or Ukrainian background and certainly not one of mixed race. Faced with a lengthening wait before a child would be placed with them, many adoptive applicants were encouraged to look again at what characteristics were really important to them. Many were able to broaden what they could accept.

As the number of infants waiting for adoption grew more quickly than the adoptive homes available, the Department of Welfare established an Adoption Council that included adoption workers from all the child welfare agencies in the province. This proved valuable not only in making all agencies aware of the children waiting and the adoption homes available but in developing trust and a common adoption focus throughout the province.

In 1975 the Central Adoption Registry was established by the Department because there remained a marked disparity in the length of time adopting applicants were waiting for placement from one part of the province to another. All children in Manitoba under two years of age who were legally free for adoption were registered with the Registry, as well as all adoptive applicants whose homes had been studied and approved.

This meant that an infant who was the responsibility of a Winnipeg agency might be placed with a family studied and approved by the Children's Aid Society of Western Manitoba. It also meant that much less emphasis was placed on matching the child and the family. By 1980 there was a marked increase in the number of families applying to adopt right across Canada and fewer babies available. Consequently the length of time between an adoption application and placement of a baby with a family gradually lengthened. In 1999, the average waiting period is 10 years.

The adoption field had developed a conviction that any child who was legally free for adoption had a right to a permanent home through adoption.

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*Through adoption
services many
families were
happily expanded.*



Therefore, much of the focus was placed on finding families who were prepared to accept a child older than an infant. In addition to the Central Adoption Registry in Manitoba, Canada had established the National Adoption Desk, which made it possible to search for adoption homes right across Canada. When no home was forthcoming through these resources, then the Agency could register with ARENA. In 1978, 37 of the 99 children placed for adoption by the agency through ARENA were over two years of age; and 24 of that 37 was over six. All were of aboriginal origin. In 1982, the province placed a moratorium on adoption placements in the United States. In 1986, only three children over six years of age were placed for adoption by the agency.

Some of the failures in the adoption placements of older children have led to a better understanding that not every child is emotionally able to make a commitment to a new family. There were adoptive families who would not give up on the child they had adopted but there were other placements where the child was returned to the agency. Gradually agencies have come to accept that an adoption placement may not necessarily be the best plan for every child. There is also an increasing recognition

In the 1970's there was growing publicity about adopted adults who were searching for and finding their birth parents.

of the ongoing support is needed and deserved by adoptive parents especially those who had adopted older or handicapped children.

In the 1970's there was growing publicity about adopted adults who were searching for and finding their birth parents. While initially this was threatening to many adoptive families who had been assured there would never be contact with the birth family, gradually there has developed an understanding of the natural need of the adopted adults to have some form of contact with the birth parent. The Post Adoption Registry was established in 1987, allowing any member of the adoption triad to register their desire for contact with the other members. By 1999 there were 562 post adoption service requests registered with the agency.

The Post adoption registry was established in 1987.

In addition, the agency has also provided service wherein one parental spouse is adopting the other spouse's child; and in de facto adoptions. The latter are cases where the child has lived with, and been maintained by the family for at least seven

years, since reduced several times, where the adoption can be finalized without the consent of the birth parent. Where adoptive parents have chosen to adopt a child privately, the agency was charged with responsibility to ensure that adoption arrangement met requirements of Manitoba law, that the birth parents' rights were protected, and that the adoptive parents were able to provide a safe and appropriate environment for the child. The agency has also assisted families who were planning to adopt internationally by completing the home study and assuring that the family is approved within the guidelines of the Child and Family Services Act.

A new Adoption Act was passed in 1998. This Act recognizes that adoption and child protection issues need different sets of guidelines. The Act permits adoptive applicant and birth parents to choose to receive services from either a licensed adoption agency or a child and family services agency, for the adoption of children who are not permanent wards of an agency. The services provided by both kinds of agencies must follow the same rules for the same types of adoption. Consents to adoption cannot be signed until at least 48 hours after the birth of the child, compared with seven to 10 days under the old provisions. The Act allows 21 days for the withdrawal of a voluntary surrender of guardianship or of the consent, by the parent.

The child must be immediately returned to a person who withdraws that consent or voluntary surrender of guardianships even if legal proceedings have begun. In a private adoption, agencies must complete the home study before a child has been identified for the adopting parents. The adoptive applicants in a private adoption may make application to court for an Order of Adoption as early as one month after the last consent to adoption has been given by the birth parent. The Post Adoption Registry is to be handled by the Child and Family Services Branch of the Department of Family Services and is now fully active. Under the new Act adoptive applicants are required to pay for home studies and other services on a sliding scale linked to the income of the applicants. It is too early to know all the implications this will have for the future adoption services of the agency.

Preventative Programs

As the Children's Aid Society developed, the conviction grew that offering supports to children in their own homes was a more effective way of protecting children than bringing them into care. Many of these programs began out of an individual worker's concern about an identified group within his or her caseload. Other workers with a particular interest in some aspects of child welfare started a group or treatment intervention in that area. The administration of the agency, as well as the Board of Directors encouraged and supported the staff and out of this grew many of the preventive programs, which the agency has offered over the years. More than one staff member has said that because of the agency's willingness to encourage staff ideas, one does not make a suggestion for a new program under the preventive programs umbrella unless one is prepared to carry through and get it started. Among the programs that the Agency has offered are:

Camping

Children living at the Maples in the 30s had enjoyed a three weeks summer camping experience at the Elks Fresh Air camp at Lake Clementi. An attempt to have The Maples children attend community camps, and finding them sent home because of behavioral problems such as bed wetting, led the agency to establish its own summer camp at Camp Shanti, the Baptist church camp site at Clear Lake in 1950. The first camp was staffed entirely by volunteers. It provided a 10 day camping experience for 42 campers and five staff. The following year there were 70 girls and boys, seven to 14 years of age and 15 staff. The Rotary Club of Brandon provided the funds to rent the camp and a motorcade of Rotarians to get the children to the camp and home again. The camp expanded to include primarily children living in their own home. It provided a summer holiday for the children and some respite for the parents who could not afford to take or send their children on a holiday.



Camping 1965.

By 1978, the camping program had changed. Out of the normalization thrust, more of the children were registered for community camps. Through summer grant programs, the agency was able to hire students who provided transportation to the various camps. In 1978, 20 different camps were used and 45 agency wards and 55 children living in their own homes were able to attend. Many of the community camps provided "camperships" which enabled the agency to send children to camp when the parents had no money for camp fees. In addition to the community camps, several mini-camps were held at Lake William.

This was an outdoor tent camping program where the children experienced the outdoors and learned to live together in a small group and to co-operate under the supervision of responsible knowledgeable staff. Forty-eight teenagers participated during the three to four weeklong camps. A family camp was held at Clear Lake and in 1978, six families with 18 children attended. Beginning in 1984 and each year thereafter, a summer camp coordinator has been hired through one of the summer grant programs.

When the Rotary Club withdrew their support of the camping program in 1988, and the provincial government had cut back their funding, Brian Marshall, editor at the Brandon Sun began a Sun Fund for Kids column to raise funds to support the camping program. With his encouragement, the Optimist Club donated \$10,000 each year for two years to keep the program going. Mr. Marshall has continued

his column through 1999. The generous response to it has enabled many children in the area to attend a summer camp. (Brian Marshall was a camp leader at one of the Children's Aid camps when he was a high school student).

Most children in their own homes who are referred for a community summer activity program, are those who can benefit from programs such as church or wilderness camps. Grant programs have enabled the agency to hire students as drivers to and from the



many camps. In addition to the residential camps, the agency started a summer day camp program in Brandon. The summer grant students provided leadership for the day camps during the week since most of the community camps started and finished on the weekends. As many as 100 children were involved in the day camp program. The YMCA began its own day camp program in 1985 and some of the children known to the agency were referred to that program. However, the agency continued to run two day camps: one for children six to ten who could not be accommodated in the community program and another for children eight to twelve years who were high-risk children likely to come into agency care.

The Victoria Day Care Centre has also operated a day camp for pre-school children, many of them children who are part of the Preschool Enrichment Program for the rest of the year.

Homemaker Service

The agency was able to develop a homemaker service in 1952 when a former Board President donated funds to cover the salary for a homemaker for the first year. This service was designed as a short-term intervention.

Having a homemaker in the family home so that the children were in familiar surroundings seemed a less distressing way to provide care than to place them in a foster home. There was a charge for the service based on a sliding scale dependent on family income.

In 1958, the annual report records that during the year, 88 children had been able to remain in their own home because a homemaker had been placed with the family.

As well as the staff homemaker, the agency developed a list of homemakers available to be referred to a family. In 1958, the annual report records that during the year, 88 children had been able to remain in their own home because a homemaker had been placed with the family. The initial program had been available only to families in Brandon. In 1967 a government grant of \$4,000 made it possible to place homemakers in neglect situations in rural areas. It has expanded so that in 1999, there were 11 homemakers, only two of whom were based in Brandon. Unfortunately, it is difficult to retain homemakers since the agency cannot afford to pay a retaining fee and frequently there is either no need for their services or they could be in three places at the same time.

Home Support Services

Home Management Trainer

A pilot project that began April 1, 1980 established a position called a Home Management Trainer. The purpose of the home management trainer was to teach ineffective parents basic homemaking and parenting skills. The trainer taught by “doing with” the parent in such areas as meal planning, shopping, budgeting and child-care. She provided a role model, a friend, a supporter and an advocate for the parent. When the first trainer requested a leave of absence, rather than replace her immediately, the agency took time to review the needs of client and staff in order to devise a program that could achieve the goal set without creating impossible demands upon the staff involved.

Family Aide Program

The Family Aide Program began in 1982. Its goals were: to assist vulnerable families to attain a more acceptable level of functioning; to help prevent family breakdown; to reduce the number of pre-adolescent children admitted to care and/or reduce the length of stay in care. Like the home management trainer, the family aide works with their family to “do with” rather than “for” the parent.

Many of the family aides have been involved with social agencies on a personal basis and know firsthand what the families with whom they work have been experiencing. Initially while they could alert the worker if the family seemed to be disintegrating, a commitment was made that they could not be called as a court witness, should the children have to be apprehended. This has since been amended and they can be called to court.

The personal growth of the family aides has enabled many to attain full time employment or return to school and has been as much a benefit of the program as the outreach to the clients with whom they have worked.

An evaluation of the program indicated high satisfaction with the service received. For many families, the aides are a life line from which they can be shown respect, receive support, gain knowledge and learn skills until the lifeline is no longer needed.

In 1999, there are 24 family aides, (now known as In Home Support Workers) listed in the annual report. Five of them are based in Brandon and the rest of them live in the rural area served by the agency.

Family Support Workers

This program began to operate in October 1989. The primary goal of the program is to reduce the need for children and/or adolescents to come into care. The service is provided in the client's home environment and can include children in foster and/or group homes. There are four family support workers on agency staff in 1999 and three of them have been with the program since its inception.

Family Life Education

In 1971 the Children's Aid Society, the YMCA and the Public Health Unit joint planning committee presented a family life education series for parents of preschoolers. The first evening of the series, 100 people showed up when the expectation had been that there might be 25. The second night 166 parents attended. It was obvious that there was a need for this kind of program! The agency developed an observation nursery program and held sessions for the general public as well as a separate program for the parents of children attending the Preschool Enrichment Program. Dr. Betty Gibson, an early child development specialist and teacher contributed generously to the leadership of these programs for a number of years. This was the beginning of a wide variety of parenting programs that are held today.

In 1974 the agency added a family life educator position to the staff. The goal of the program was to help parents develop their potential as effective parents. Children's needs, child development, ways children learn, ways to discipline, different styles of parenting, money-management, and communication skills have been some of the topics for discussion in the groups. Referrals came to the family life educator from all family service workers who, in their contact with families, met many parents who had limited understanding of their children's needs and of the skills required to fulfill their role as parents. As the program became better known, referrals also came from other agencies, friends of participants and increasingly self-referrals.

In the early days, Gwen Crook, who was the first family life educator, picked up the volunteers who were going to baby-sit the children of the parents involved in the group, picked up all the parents, provided leadership for the program, prepared and served lunch, then took the parents and children home and finally delivered the volunteers to their homes!

In addition to the mothers' groups, much of the initial focus was with teenagers and their parents, as well as with the parents of children in agency care. The family life educator had taken a training course in the STEP (Systematic Training for Effective Parenting) program and used this model working with parent and teen groups. The STEP program gives parents a practical and effective method of raising confident and responsible children by emphasizing mutual respect and cooperation.

Today the parenting programs have grown until over thirty parenting courses are offered each year mostly at the Elspeth Reid Family Resource Centre but some are also held in rural communities where a need has been identified. Some of the courses offered in 1999 are How to Talk So Kids Will Listen, Strengthening Step Families, Stepteen, Nobody's Perfect (for parents of preschoolers) and Ready or Not (for parents of Pre-teens). As well as the parenting courses which run from 5-10 sessions, the Resource Centre also offers 7 or 8 ongoing groups every year that provide support to parents. These groups mostly run weekly from September to June.

Lifeskills programs like Cooking and Sewing, Stress management, Self-Esteem, Assertiveness training and Consumer Education are offered as the need is identified and staff are available. One of the newest programs is the Mother Goose program that offers parents, babies and toddlers a chance to enjoy action rhymes songs and stories together.



Dedication of Family Resource Centre to rename it as the Elspeth Reid Family Resource Centre.

Childcare if available while parents attend family life education programs and transportation is provided for those who require it.

Family Resource Centre

For many single parent families, especially those who had just moved into the city and had few social contacts, isolation and loneliness contributed to the inadequacy of their parenting. The reality of having to take their preschool children with them when they were shopping or going to the doctor, because they knew no one to baby-sit, could be overwhelming for some parents. The Family Resource Centre grew out a wish to support such families and to offer them an opportunity to relax, chat with other parents and enjoy a little respite from childcare.

The first Centre was established in 1984 at 354-11th Street, in what had formerly been Kinsmen House. A conscious effort was made to create a homey, welcoming atmosphere. Childcare was provided for

preschool children so that the mothers could relax, have coffee, attend a course or just visit. Children could be left at the Centre while the mother was keeping a doctor's appointment or some other commitment. Access to a phone to contact workers, doctors or hunt for an apartment was of benefit to many.

There has been a lot of positive feedback from many that have used the centre. One woman said she didn't know how they would have made it through the month without the support of the centre. By 1988 so many were coming to the resource centre that it was bursting at the seams. It was also freezing cold in winter and very hot in summer especially on the upper floors. The following year the agency purchased the former Bethel Temple building and the adjacent lot with a view to building a new office building and resource centre. In the meantime the Annex, as the building became known, was used as

an overflow space for some groups. Whenever it rained there, the program participants dodged a variety of buckets set to catch the many leaks.

In 1991 the Centre was renamed in memory of Elspeth Reid and became the Elspeth Reid Family Resource Centre. A successful 3 year campaign to raise \$950,000 provided the funds to build the new Elspeth Reid Family Resource Centre on the site of the old Bethel



The new Elspeth Reid Family Resource Centre, 1995

Temple. The new building was officially opened in November 1995. As the building was specifically designed to meet the needs of the various activities held at the Resource Centre, it has retained a comfortable welcoming atmosphere. The majority of the preventive programs, family life education, support groups, and sexual abuse treatment programs are held at the Centre. The Resource Centre is also the home of the STORE which receives donated clothing and household items from the community and makes it available to families at little or no cost. During the summer a recreational activities program for parents and children to enjoy together. Families taking part are those who for financial and accessibility reasons would not be able to access other community resources. Throughout the year special occasion family activities are also held.

In 1998-1999 the Elspeth Reid Family Resource Centre provided service to about 800 families.

Family Support Groups

The first Mothers Day Out group was organized in 1964 by two of the social workers for mothers who were primarily in "protection families". The group was designed to give them the opportunity to meet together, to socialize, share concerns, and learn to gain a greater self-confidence. Transportation and babysitting were provided. The group met wherever the leaders were able to find space that was large enough and free of charge.

The Mothers are People (MAP) group began in 1974 and has met regularly every week since from September to June. The membership changes from year to year, as participants feel ready to move on. The overall goal is to strengthen family life. MAP gives the participants an opportunity to interact with others with similar needs in an environment of acceptance. Members are primarily mothers who are raising their children with limited extended family or other social support, limited income, sometimes-inadequate housing and often limited education. Some have very low self-esteem and feelings of inadequacy. Activities include recreational, social and educational events.

By trying to meet the mother's personal needs for attention and support, the hope is she may be better able to concentrate on finding energy to understand and try to meet some of her children's needs. Summer camping experiences were a part of the Mothers Are People group for many years.

Family camps at Curran Park were planned by the leader, who found the tents, saw that they were erected, picked up all the families who were camping and made sure that they had adequate food supplies and checked with them everyday to make sure everything was going well.

Day outings to Winnipeg with the Mothers Are People groups could be almost as hectic! Once again the leader did all the planning, driving and keeping track of her group. Many of the mothers had never been to Winnipeg before, had never ridden on an escalator and delighted in all the new experiences.

When the Mothers are People group celebrated their 25th anniversary, one of the members made a speech:

"I joined in 1992. At that time, I was a stay-at-home mom to one and expecting my second. I was afraid as to how I was going to manage two kids. The group taught me many coping skills. I learned I was not alone at the time that I was going through the "terrible twos" with my daughter. I learned many effective parenting techniques. Soon my third child was born. Thursday afternoons were a lifeline. A chance to be out with other moms, sharing experiences, as our children were cared for in another area. I have gained the self-confidence to be able to move on with my life and enter the work force."

Another mother who spoke at the anniversary recalled how the child care people used to transport the moms and children in their own vehicles. "Now there are nice vans and drivers to do the transportation. We used to meet in the crowded quarters of 354-11th Street. Now Mothers are People meet in spacious surroundings at the Resource Centre". She goes on to say "the importance of the group stays the same. It is the socializing, the sharing of ideas with others in the same situation, and the parties that mean so much. It was so good to get out of one's house and have a couple of hours with no children involved. We always knew that children would be well cared for and fed."

Other groups have been formed as a need was identified. A support group for single parents of teens functioned in 1986. "CONTACT" was another group for mothers of young children, who had recently moved to Brandon and were finding it hard to get to know other mothers. It was also for moms who had recently left employment to be home with their children and felt shut in.

Activity groups for pre-teens and teenagers have been developed, flourish for awhile and then seem no longer needed. Such groups have met at the resource centre or at the YMCA.

Several more support groups now meet on a regular basis and give parents an opportunity to share concerns and benefit from the experience of others. Parents Are Special Too (PAST) was developed when MAP became too large and PAST became the support group for young parents. Parent Talk is an evening support group for parents who have taken a parenting course previously and want to continue to meet. Baby Club is a support group for parents of newborns. Positively Parenting is a series of workshops for parents who are waiting to get into a parenting course and need some assistance right away. These support groups are a lifeline for many parents.

C h i l d A b u s e T r e a t m e n t P r o g r a m

Increasingly there was public and professional acknowledgment that many children were abused not only by strangers, but also by caregivers and relatives. The effects of sexual abuse to the individual and community are devastating with long term damaging results unless help is given. Staff early identified the need and in 1985, the Child and Family Services of Western Manitoba began developing its sexual abuse treatment program. The design of the program is to provide treatment on an individual and group basis to victims of child abuse, their families and to child abusers.

Fresh Start is now one of the offender treatment groups operating under the umbrella of the Sexual Offender Treatment Advisory Group which is composed of several community organizations.

The first group was for adults who were sexually abused as children. Some participants of this group later formed the AMAC (Adults Molested As Children). Next in 1986 a group for adult sex offenders was created. This group, called "Fresh Start" expanded until there were 30 participants. It was the first treatment group for offenders of this kind in Manitoba. An evaluation done four years after "Fresh Start" began showed that out of the 56 participants, who completed the program, none of them had reoffended sexually. Fresh Start is now one of the offender treatment groups operating under the umbrella of the Sexual Offender Treatment Advisory Group which is composed of several community organizations. Staff and volunteers work to ensure treatment is provided to offenders in the community. In 1987 a support group for spouses of offenders began, followed by groups for pre-teens and teenaged victims in 1988. Groups for

juvenile male offenders and victim and female offenders were next to be introduced. Family reconstruction involving groups and individual treatment for all family members was the final step in creating a comprehensive treatment program.

As with many programs, one person who had a particular interest in the program pursued it and made treatment possible. Another staff member became part of the team in 1988 and now is the present coordinator of the program. Work is done with other community organizations and groups to help provide an integrated comprehensive service

Parent - Child Home Program

This program began as the Mother-Child Home program and has been offered by the agency since 1984. It is a certified replication of the Head Start program that originated in 1967 in Long Island, New York (It began because a worker felt it would make an interesting practicum for her Master's in Social Work degree). The purpose of the program is to help strengthen the relationship between parent and child and to assist the parent in helping his/her child learn. Volunteers are trained as toy demonstrators and they make a two-year commitment to visit their family, in the family's home for two half-hour visits a week, for 23 weeks each year. They use books and toys to model behavior with the young child for the parent.

The program began because the agency saw a need for an intervention that would reach children at an earlier age, be more concentrated and involve the parents more effectively in their child's learning. It was also hoped that the interaction of parent and child over a concrete activity with books and toys would facilitate the development of a positive relationship for families where abuse and neglect had occurred. Research completed in the first year of the program showed the intervention to be statistically significant and a write up of the programs first year was published in the Child Welfare League of America's journal. After the first year the agency made it one of their preventive programs. Response to the program has been enthusiastic and positive. Parents who have never read to their children or played with them became excited when they found out how much they enjoyed spending time with their children. When they saw how positively the children responded to them they learned that they could indeed help their children learn. The deepening of the relationship between parent and child and the cognitive stimulation went hand in hand. The program just celebrated its 15th anniversary.

The purpose of the program is to help strengthen the relationship between parent and child and to assist the parent in helping his/her child learn.

Day Care Programs / Preschool Enrichment Programs

The Children's Aid Society became concerned with the very inadequate babysitting arrangements being made by some families where both parents found it necessary to work. With the need identified, the agency applied for a start-up grant from the Brandon Area Foundation to develop a Day Foster Care program. The program began in 1967 and in the first year had recruited and approved day care families and had placed 58 children in foster day care homes. By 1975, there were 192 foster day care

homes under agency supervision. The Provincial Day Care program began in 1973 and in 1980 the agency transferred their foster day care program to the province.

The Preschool is a nursery school setting for children in need of stimulating, enriching experiences vital to their healthy growth and development. We know that child's environment is crucial in his overall growth and development. The more new things a child sees and hears, the more things he is interested in seeing and hearing. The greater the variety of experiences he has the more the child is able to use his abilities. Preschool attempts to provide some of this for the children. This program was modeled on the Head Start programs that had developed in the United States. It began in 1966 as a playgroup for four children living in their own homes, who spent most of their day watching television. A foster mother agreed to take these children into her home three mornings a week, to play, read and spend time with them. A local IODE group volunteered to drive the children to play group. Agency staff provided the back up and did whatever else was needed. It was this combination of community involvement, volunteer participation and agency staff that has enabled the program to develop to where it is now. It is seen in all its areas of operation. Gradually the numbers of children increased so that a new meeting place had to be located.



*Snacktime at
the Preschool
Enrichment
Program*

The program met for several years in a variety of settings, including what had once been the agency's conference room in the provincial building. Finally the program was settled in the second floor of what had been the "new Maples" in 1981. There it has its own space and outdoor play area.

The first paid staff was hired in 1974. Volunteer drivers using their own vehicles came from all parts of the community and transported 32 children to and from the half-day program, which met for four sessions a week. In 1975, a mother whose children had been involved in the preschool program was hired as the driver. She used her own car to carry six to eight children. In the early days there were no restrictions about seatbelts or car seats! In 1999 there are two part-time driver aides who drive agency vans. All the drivers have stories of icy roads, storms and the breakdowns of the vans, especially at intersections!

If the van broke down at the intersection, the driver had to get out and take all eight children with her to find a phone call for help. Each van has a cell phone now.

When the Preschool Enrichment Program came under the provincial day care umbrella in 1975, it then had a more secure funding base. The program expanded to operate for 10 months of the year. There are morning and afternoon sessions from 9 to 11:30 a.m. and 1 to 3:30 p.m. There are 24 spaces for children three to five years of age. There is always a waiting list for admission to the program. Some of the children from the program are referred to the Victoria Day Care Centre for the summer months.

The program emphasis is on meeting the individual needs of the children and helping them to become confident, competent persons. Special programming exists in such areas as language development and enhancement, sexual abuse prevention and treatment. Parenting programs are offered to help parents develop their skills in becoming more effective parents. The program director, Evelyn Isaac, has been with the program since 1980 and has been instrumental in guiding it to its present form. In 1996 Evelyn Isaac received the Direct Service Award from the Child Welfare League of Canada for her work in Preschool.

The parents of the preschool children are an important part of the program. Every effort is made to make the parents feel comfortable and accepted. If they can be helped to feel better about them and helped to gain knowledge about their children's needs they will be able to be better parents to their children. They are involved on the parent committee and with special occasions such as the fall open

house, the Christmas party, the spring picnic as well as with an observation nursery for several weeks in the winter. Parents are also invited to become involved in supervising field trips, in coordinating toy and book lending libraries, making bannock or perogies, bringing pets to visit or demonstrating a special skill such as beading or guitar playing.

Volunteers have always been an important part of the preschool program. Service clubs have been generous in contributing funds for special equipment.

One parent summed it up at his child's graduation from preschool, when he said, "perhaps if someone had cared for me and treated me so nicely I would've been a better person."

At the Preschool's 30th anniversary celebration in 1996, the response of the children and families reaffirmed what preschool is all about. Grown men and women came to say hello and to see if preschool was the same as when they attended. One parent summed it up at his child's graduation from preschool, when he said, "perhaps if someone had cared for me and treated me so nicely I would've been a better person."

A 10 year-old boy who attended the preschool program spoke at its 30th anniversary. He said, "I went to preschool from the time I was three to six. During this time at the preschool, staff helped me to overcome a speech delay. They read to me daily, we sang songs, played games and crafts. Because of all their help in getting me to talk; my mom works every day trying to make me be quiet for a while! Preschool had many field trips, but my favorites were McDonalds and Little Cactus Farm. I'm in grade four now and we haven't even had a field trip this year.

The Preschool Enrichment program is one of the programs participating in the pilot project of the Provincial Early Start program. Early Start is a community based early childhood intervention with children ages two to five aimed at increasing school readiness and decreasing the need for specialized education, health and social services interventions in the child's future. This fits in well with the philosophy and goals that Preschool has developed over the years. It provides extra funding for the implementation of the program and to research the outcomes.



*Victoria Day Care
20th Anniversary*

Victoria Day Care Centre

The Victoria Day Care Centre opened in April 1972 in the Jeff Umphrey Building at Brandon University. This was in response to requests from students who were single parents and faculty members who wanted a day care facility close to where they were studying. They were looking for a childcare situation that would provide a nurturing and stimulating environment. This was the first group day care organized in Brandon. The University supplied the building space and some financial assistance, as did the city of Brandon, the IODE, the Kinsmen Club and others.

In 1980 the Victoria Day Care Centre moved to 2227 Brandon Avenue, the former Maples, where it is still located. This site provided increased indoor and outdoor

space that enabled the Victoria Day Care Centre to increase the number of children served from 30 to 42. The centre is licensed to care for forty-two children from two to kindergarten age, between the hours of 7:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. The children may attend on a full-time or part-time basis, depending on the family's needs. It too is under the provincial day care umbrella. The centre and the parent, along with Child and Family Services and the Provincial Day Care officials work together to provide a nurturing and stimulating child care setting for children from all families.

First priority is given to the children whose parents work or study and for children with special needs. Special emphasis is placed on: preparing hot nutritious meals, including breakfast, teaching sexual abuse prevention to preschoolers; providing a summer program which operates for six weeks in July and August to provide enrichment and summer fun experiences for children at risk who would not have access to this needed stimulation.

Children are encouraged to take part in a wide variety of activities including art, sand and water play, housekeeping, dress-up, stories, music, games, puzzles, blocks, outdoor play, and field trips. Through the balance of individual as well as group activities, qualified early childhood educators strive to

enhance the children's learning experiences.

Parents are essential members of the team in providing quality care for their children. Together, parents and staff discover, share, and contribute to the child's growth. Parents may volunteer to be a part of the management committee, which deals with the policies, and financial aspects of the program.

Children at risk are referred to the centre and attend two or three days per week. Transportation may be provided by Child and Family Services under certain circumstances. It is a program belief that it is the right of all children, including those with special needs, to enjoy every aspect of this program. With the added support of staff provided from the Children with Disabilities program, there is a focus to include children with disabilities in the program. The centre has two staff members who use sign language and there have been several hearing impaired children in attendance at Victoria Day Care.

Funding of the Agency

The agency has always depended upon support from the community and the community has always responded generously. One outstanding example of the support is that of the Hamiota Committee. It celebrated its 100th annual concert and sale on the first weekend in December 1998. J.H. McConnell founded it in 1898 to support the newly formed Children's Aid Society of Winnipeg. Until 1930 the funds raised were forwarded to them. When the Children's Aid of Brandon became responsible for delivering service in western Manitoba, support from the Hamiota Committee was transferred to this agency. The Friday night concert showcases local talent. On Saturday afternoon a wide variety of goods donated by the community are auctioned and purchased back by members of the community.

As one rural board member went out his door with a turkey he was donating to the sale, his wife warned him that he had to buy it back if he wanted a turkey for Christmas dinner! It cost him \$100 to put turkey on his table that Christmas!

In 1998 the concert and sale raised over \$7,000.

Service Clubs have also contributed generously and the Brandon Sun, and particularly its editor Brian Marshall, through the Sun Fund for Kids and the Christmas Cheer Fund, have benefited many of the families with whom the agency works.

The Quota Club of Brandon has responded generously to appeals over the years to provide much of the special equipment at the Preschool Enrichment Program.

Service clubs have provided seed money or equipment for many of the agency's private programs. Church groups and Women's Institutes have donated baby layettes and children's clothing. And the list is far from including all that have contributed.

Over the years funding patterns have changed.

- In 1930 the provincial government gave a grant of \$1,500 to enable the agency to hire their first paid staff.
- In 1943 the provincial government grant was \$2,775. The Brandon Community Chest grant was \$3,000
- In 1960, the provincial grants had increased to \$47,197 and private funding through the community chest, and the fall campaign and donations for special projects was \$23,000. In 1960 the provincial government had taken over the responsibility for the maintenance of wards of the agency. The costs of agency services that year was at \$186,796. Their income was \$180,656.
- By 1976, the year Helen Riesberry retired as Executive Director, the service costs for the year totaled \$1,974,208 while the revenue totaled \$1,958,760.00. Payments from provincial, federal government and other agencies for children in the care of the Children's Aid Society of Western Manitoba totaled \$1,137,465. The provincial government grant was \$550,980. Monies raised through the Community Chest, rural campaign and donations for special projects totaled \$45,000.

The financial statement at the 1999 annual meeting showed that the total cost of operating all the Agency's programs has now reached \$6,925,655. The provincial government contributes \$3,030,826



*Display at the
1961 Summer
Fair.*

coordinator, became responsible for organizing the rural fall campaign and ensuring that the services the agency could offer were known throughout the area. Just as in the 1930's, the agency had a publicity booth at Brandon Summer Fairs. They also set up information booths in the Mall.

The Child and Family Services Foundation (CFS) was created in 1991. It is legally a separate entity. As of April 1, 1998, the Foundation assumed responsibility for charitable fund-raising on behalf of the Agency.

It is through the money raised in public campaigns, private donations and the agency's share from the United Way, that the agency has funds to operate its private programs and seed money to initiate pilot projects as further needs are identified. Sometimes out of the knowledge gained through the pilot project, its value may be demonstrated and it may go on to become a publicly supported program.



*The Child and Family
Services Foundation Logo.*

Conclusion

In an overview of the first 100 years of the Children's Aid Society, now the Child and Family Services of Western Manitoba, several things stand out:

- The commitment of the community to the welfare of children as it has been expressed in the establishment of a formal agency and the support that the agency has received down through the years through board involvement, foster parenting, volunteerism, and financial support.
- The quality of staff that the agency has been able to attract, who through their loyalty, initiative and creativity have carried out the commitment of the agency.
- The growth of a conviction that many families who are viewed as neglectful, are greatly in need of support through preventive programs and counseling and have the right to receive such.
- The increased expectations of the community of what should be involved in child welfare delivery, which challenges the agency when the funding does not equal the expectations.

The last statement in the 1977 Purpose and Goals was "to anticipate change". As can be seen as one reviews the agency's service over the years, this has been agency practice. There has been a readiness to begin a new program as a need was identified and a willingness to give up or change a program when the need was no longer there.

Child and Family Services can be proud of the service it has offered to the Westman community in the past 100 years.

Presidents of the Children's Aid Society

1899-1986

1899 G.D. Wilson	1943 D.E.R. Ewer	1968 S.A. Dickens
1900 Rev. E.A Henry	1947 H.T. Nordin	1970 Robert M. Rae
1903 . . . Dr. John McDiarmid	1950 Joseph Sector	1972 Gordon B. Sefton
1912 Rev. R.S. Laidlaw	1951 Tony Burneski	1974 J.E. Purdie
1916 Kenneth Campbell	1953 R.A. Clement	1976 Terry Little
1921 J.H. Kilgour	1954 A.A. Harris	1978 Barry Diller
1927 H.L. Patmore	1956 James A. Greaves	1942 T. Matheson
1928 Rev. H.P. Barrett	1957 W.G. Chapman	1980 Elinor Cristall
1930 J.F. Cumming	1958 . . Dean B.O. Whitfield	1981 George Flay
1930 Rev. P. Duncan	1960 S.W.K. Stevenson	1982 Elspeth Reid
1931 Rev.C.H. Best	1961 Dr. D.J. Mills	1983 James Brereton
1932 F.R. Longworth	1963 Glen W. Lawson	1984 . . Dr. Barbara Gfellnor
1938 T.T. Rodge	1965 Peter Luba	1986 Mrs. Bea Jolly
1941 A.J. Courtney	1966 . . E. Murray Simpson	

Presidents of Child & Family Services of Western Manitoba

1987-1989

1987 Bea Jolly	1993 Lyn Fefchak	1997 Maggie Ramsay
1988 Mary Shillington	1994 Katherine Furber	1998 Neil McDonald
1990 Anna Cliplef	1995 Ray Redfern	1999 Rick Oakden
1992 Wes Drysdale	1996 Jamie Sterling	

Children's Aid Society of Western Manitoba

Executive Directors

1929 - 1931 Margaret McClung	1946 - 1947 David Stevenson
1931 - 1935 B.J. McKittrick	1947 - 1948 Mildred Crawley
1935 - 1936 S.W. McCullough	1948 - 1976 Helen C. Riesberry
1936 - 1939 Meta Mischpeter	1976 - 1992 Bruce Fraser
1939 - 1941 E.G. Morrison	1992 - Present Kenneth Knight
1941 - 1943 K.O. Mackenzie	
1943 - 1946 S.P. McArton	

Chronological Summary 1899-1999

1899	Incorporation of the Children's Aid Society of Brandon
1924	Manitoba's first Child Welfare Act
1929	Expansion of area served to include all of Southern Western Manitoba
1938	The agency assumed responsibility for services to unmarried mothers from the province
1940	Name change to Children's Aid Society of Western Manitoba
1946	The Agency assumed responsibility for adoption services from the province
1948	Helen Riesberry became Executive Secretary of the Children's Aid Society
1950	First Children's Aid Society camp at Camp Shanti, Clear Lake
1952	Homemaker service established
1958	Children's Aid Society office moved to their own building at 18th Street and Rosser Avenue
1962	Child welfare services extended to the seven Indian Reserves in the area
1964	Kinsmen House, the agency's first group home opened
1966	Agency's "Helping Hands" logo was adopted Preschool Enrichment Program began with four children
1967	Day Foster Care program was initiated
1968	Mothers are People, a self help group was formed
1972	Victoria Day Care Centre opened
1973	Children's Aid Society office moved to the Provincial Building, 340 - 9th Street Territorial boundaries enlarged with the addition of eight municipalities Family Life education program developed
1976	Bruce Fraser became Executive Director of the Agency
1981	Child Abuse Committee of the Western Judicial District was organized
1982	Family Aide program developed
1984	First Shared Social Worker initiated with Souris Valley School Division Family Resource Centre was opened at 354 - 11th Street
1986	Passage of the Child and Family Services Act. Agency changes its' name to Child and Family Services of Western Manitoba
1987	The Agency becomes the first Child and Family Service agency in Manitoba to use the provincial information system on a computerized basis
1989	Family Support Worker program initiated
1991	Creation of the Child and Family Services of Western Manitoba Foundation Inc.
1992	Kenneth Knight became Executive Director of Child and Family Services of Western Manitoba
1994	Child and Family Services Information System developed further so each worker has a computer station
1995	November 10th, 1995 the opening of the Elspeth Reid Family Resource Centre at 225 - 9th Street
1998	Agency moves to new office building at 800 McTavish Avenue



**Child & Family Services of
Western Manitoba**

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*This book has been made possible through the
generous assistance of Redfern Farm Services and the
Westman Foster Family Association.*