



CFS Matters!

Spring 2018 Newsletter



Dear Agency Friends,

As we head into summer break for kids and families, and many of our programs wind down from a busy year, we look back and reflect upon what it means for the children and families we serve, and how we have been able to make a positive difference for those families. Our Annual General Meeting occurred on June 5th, where we presented to the community on the many program innovations implemented and how those have improved the outcomes for children and families.

This past year, our Agency leadership also had the opportunity to present to the Legislative Committee on Child Welfare Reform. This committee was seeking input from around the province on the proposed areas of change in the child welfare legislation. Our goal was to provide this same information to them and to demonstrate how these practice innovations support the Government's objectives of decreasing the number of children in care while ensuring safety. You can access an on line copy of the Annual Report on our website if you would like further information: <http://www.cfswestern.mb.ca/media/annual-reports>

Many of the stories that we share at these opportunities and in our newsletters, highlight the important role that the community plays in the support and strengthening of families and in keeping children safe. Collaboration, community engagement, and partnerships are cornerstones to the Agency's successful service delivery model. Thank you for your continued support!

Dave McGregor, MWS, RSW
Chief Executive Officer

Kris Tufts
President, Board of Directors

Child and Family Services of Western Manitoba exists so that children are safe and nurtured in strong, loving families within a community of caring people.

2018 Annual Conference



On April 25th and 26th, Child and Family Services of Western Manitoba hosted our Annual Conference on the Human Impact of Childhood Trauma. The conference was presented by Founder and Chief Executive Officer of Alia, **Amelia Franck Meyer**, and by Chief Knowledge Officer of Alia, **Debi Grebenik**.

The conference was split into two days with the first open to the public and the second open to Agency staff only. Over 220 people from a variety of settings attended the first day of the conference on The Human Impact of Childhood Trauma. In attendance were community partners, educators, counsellors, mental health workers, child welfare professionals, and foster parents, among others.



“The focus of the conference was to gain a better understanding of childhood trauma and the behaviours, responses, and grief that stems from it,” said Dave McGregor, Chief Executive Officer of CFS Western. All in attendance were urged to consider their own trauma and the ways in which it continues to impact their lives and the work they do. The second day of the conference was open only to Agency staff and was intended to further enhance our understanding and response to children’s trauma and that of their caregivers in many instances. “This work around becoming more aware of the impact of childhood trauma and learning the skills to address the resulting behaviours and responses is a step in our Agency’s ongoing practice transformation towards a more safety-focused, trauma-informed, and collaborative and strengths-based model of working with children and families,” said Dave McGregor.



Annual General Meeting

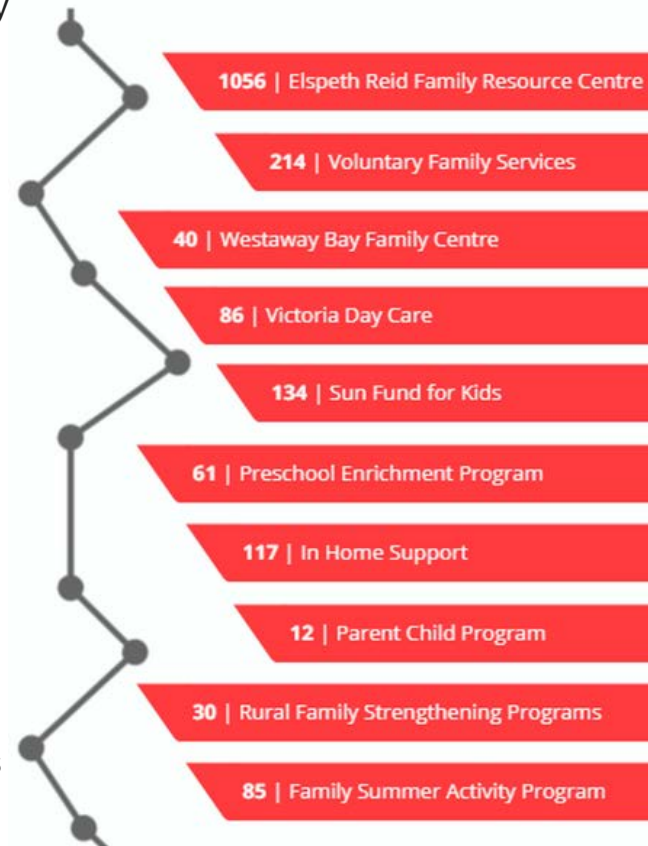


Staff, partners, stakeholders, and community members attended CFS Western's Annual General Meeting on June 5th to hear about the many significant innovations and changes the Agency has been implementing over the past year. The Agency year in review was led by Chief Executive Officer, Dave McGregor. Following the theme from our 2018 Annual Report, Dave spoke about the Agency's continued commitment to ensuring child welfare and safety through engagement. As is evident in the outcomes and success indicators found in our practice innovations, offering a broad range of services and working collaboratively with families is the most effective and ethical way of 'doing' child welfare.

"Involvement with the CFS system still unfortunately carries a certain stigma and for some is considered a risk factor for families. We need to change this. We need families to get the help they need when they come in to child welfare," said Dave McGregor, Chief Executive Officer. While our Agency has committed to several differential response programs, this work does not happen in isolation. Our Agency is fortunate to be able to collaborate with community partners to ensure that the continuum of child welfare work occurs at a community level as well as within the scope of our Agency.

With fewer children in care, increased kinship rates, more children returning to their families, and reduced placement disruptions, our Agency will continue to promote child welfare through engagement and we will continue to ask ourselves whether the work we are doing would be enough for our own children or a child we loved.

FAMILY PARTICIPATION IN DIFFERENTIAL RESPONSE PROGRAMS



Among the many long service staff who were recognized at the AGM was Heather Adam, who has been with the Agency for 30 years.



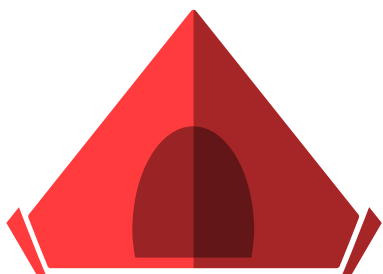
Board of Directors President, Phil Shaman was also recognized for over 3 years of dedicated work for the Agency as President..

Sun Fund for Kids



Laura McKenzie, Brandon Family Service Supervisor

Every summer, many children are lucky enough to experience a summer camp. Camp is a great chance for children to interact with people outside their immediate social circle, build relationships and get out of the house to enjoy some outdoor activities. The Agency facilitates the Sun Fund for Kids which works to give children less fortunate the opportunity to attend camp and experience all that this offers. For over 30 years, through the generosity of public donations, the Fund has helped to send thousands of kids from financially disadvantaged families to enjoy a summer camp adventure.



This year we are happy to say that the Sun Fund saw the amount of children that we were able to send to camp rise from last year. **The total number of children who have received the opportunity to attend camp is 173!** However, camp costs rise every year and so does the need. The Sun Fund strives to send as many children as possible each year but that depends on donations – usually there are more children wanting than there are funds to help. The Sun Fund for Kids needs your help to send even more children to camp next year and to make sure no one gets left behind on a waiting list.

Thank you everyone who was able to participate in the Sun Fund golf tourney this year. It was very successful, raising close to \$8000 for the Sun Fund. Special shout out to our Agency staff who both won cash prizes and graciously donated the money back to the cause! There was lots of fun, and a certain team of staff and former staff provided a great deal of entertainment. Lets see if we can get more folks out for next year! Donations are accepted anytime, all year round and can be big or small – every dollar helps. Please send your donation to the Brandon Sun, c/o 510 Rosser Avenue, Brandon, MB., R7A OK4. Your kindness will be acknowledged in The Brandon Sun, but if you prefer to be anonymous, just let us know.

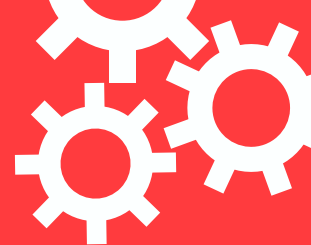


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Youth Works

Tristan Norton, Youth Employment Facilitator



Child & Family Services of Western Manitoba has partnered with the Children's Aid Foundation and RBC to kick off a pilot project to give current and former youth in care extra support in preparing and accessing the workforce. Since the launch of the Youth Works program in September of 2017, we have seen some steady growth within our community of youth being employed or even being excited about employment. To date, we have made contact with 53 individuals who have either been in care or are still in care; in and around the Western Manitoba area.

Of these 53 individuals 40 of them have continued to use our program and services, which have led to 13 of them securing employment in the Western Manitoba area. To some, these numbers may not seem overwhelming, but to us it is a success. It is a success because we know that each one of these individuals has come to us with different barriers or challenges working against them; yet they have pushed themselves past these barriers and have been able to use their skills and talents to gain employment in the communities that they live in.



A majority of these successes can be attributed to our partnership with the CEYS (Career and Employment Youth Services) in Brandon. Over the past 9 months, we have referred several of our youth to CEYS' Helping Employ Youth program and their Work Experience program. These programs aim to assist our youth with the skills needed to obtain and maintain employment and also the skills needed to communicate effectively and respectfully with other members of our society.



I can safely say that the Youth Works Program is a much needed program not just for our Agency, but for the many others we work with within Brandon and the surrounding areas. It has been great to see that staff members from Dakota Ojibway CFS, West Region CFS and Michif CFS have been referring past and present youth in care to our program and we all have one goal in mind - to help these individuals be successful as they head out into a life of independence.

What's New at the ERFRC

Lisa Ramsay, Coordinator



This spring our Board held a community consultation with those we serve at the ERFRC. We wanted to know how our programs and service were impacting families. Our agency wants to hear the voice of the families who participate in our programs and services. This Centre wants to remain connected to the grassroots community members who we are here for. Parents gave our Board members many positive comments and some feedback about future directions. Here are some of the comments that were shared during the event:

"The programs brought us closer together as a family"

"The services are accessible because of the transportation and child care"

"It provided me connection to other parents, increased socialization and decreased isolation".

Parents also shared that they'd like us to offer more programs for older children, longer respite hours and more evening programs. The Board also asked parents about what they saw as the greatest needs in our community. Feedback to this question included more parent support groups, more traditional Indigenous Parenting programs, and more programs for parents who have children with special needs.



Each year the ERFRC hosts "Fun Fest", our kick off to summer celebration. This year we had 120 folks come join in the party. Together we enjoyed many different games, crafts, a photo booth and of course some great outdoor play. This event is possible because of the wonderful collection of dedicated staff and volunteers who host the event. Families enjoyed winning many of our free draw prizes as well. Our Centre continues to create experiences for parents and their children to create beautiful memories together. A big thank you to Brittney Fortier, our Summer Program Coordinator for all her work to pull off a successful day.



United Way
Brandon & District

After 25 years of service, Diane Wells retired from the Elspeth Reid Family Resource Centre. Many current and former staff gathered to wish her well. Diane has seen many changes in the Centre over the years. She knew our families well and she managed our front reception desk which is the hub of the FRC action! We wish Diane all the best in this next chapter of her life. We also welcome Mhairi Howden to the reception position, Lory George into the position of Community Liaison, and Brittany Fortier as Summer Program Coordinator!



Recent Stories



The Preschool Enrichment Program will be receiving a brand new Shuttle Bus courtesy of an anonymous donor. The fully customized bus will allow staff to transport children more efficiently and safely over the next several years. We are certainly looking forward to hitting the road with this new vehicle!

In June, Dave McGregor, Arlene Stewart, and Jason Dueck took part in Indigenous Peoples Day. Despite the blistering heat, our group completed the Teepee building challenge and had a lot of fun in the process!



As mentioned at the Staff Conference, the Collaborative Practices Facilitator position will now move from being a pilot project to become a permanent position within the Agency. This is as a result of the process being very effective in supporting the Agency to achieving its mission and goals.



In the first 5 months of the Agency's participation in the Provincial Block Funding project (November 1- March 31), we have experienced both a decrease in days care and a decrease in the cost of care. These 'savings' will now be re-invested by the Agency to strengthen and support our prevention and reunification efforts. This re-alignment of child maintenance (placement) dollars will support the enhancement of community and family-based services which are designed to prevent children and families from needing intensive child welfare services!



Elsbeth Reid Family Resource Centre
255 - 9th Street
Brandon MB R7A 6X1
204-726-6280
Open 9 am - 5 pm weekdays



Family and Community Development Centre
Unit 4, 613 - 10th Street
Brandon MB R7A 4G6
204-726-7033



Preschool Enrichment Program
2nd Floor, 2227 Brandon Avenue
Brandon MB R7B 0S9
204-727-6650



Victoria Day Care Centre
1st Floor, 2227 Brandon Avenue
Brandon MB R7B 0S9
204-728-9845

The Foundation Forum

Joe Ball, Chairperson Foundation Board

The other night, a series of thunderstorms blew across Southern Manitoba. For most of us these summer storms are a familiar part of prairie life: spectacular displays of nature's power, and often quite beautiful. Last night's storms were also dangerous. Hail the size of baseballs fell on some of our communities. A small tornado was seen in the South West corner.

Thankfully, the Weather Office provided us with some warning. So when I came home from work, I put the car in the garage and tied down the canoes under the deck. Deck chairs and tables were stacked and braced to prevent them from flying about and causing damage. Inside, I unplugged the TV and other devices, to protect them from power surges.

We had the time to prepare – and even better, we missed the worst of the weather at my house. Our preparation was really about prevention. The work that went into preparing would have meant less damage had the full force of the storm hit us.



Joe Ball, speaking at the Agency's Annual General Meeting



We work the same way at CFS, putting time and energy into programs that prepare families to better meet the needs of children and youth. This is why our Foundation puts your gifts to work in places that prepare children for success at school, such as the Preschool Enrichment Program. This is why we support the Elspeth Reid Family Resource Centre, preparing parents to provide what their children need.

That's why, this year, we're partnering with other agencies and individuals in support of the Sun Fund, that will see dozens of our youth get to camps around Manitoba.

We think this work is worth doing, because these kids are worthwhile. If you're prepared to help us in this work, please consider making a donation by sending a cheque to the address below. Your dollars go to work in our region, and they do make a difference in the lives of children, youth, and families in our region.



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www.cfswestern.mb.ca/foundation