



CFS Matters!

Summer 2014

Inside this issue...

2014 AGM highlights	2-3
Programs celebrate 30 years....	4-5
Celebrating youth in care.....	6
Building Futures	7
In the middle a great place.....	8
CFS Foundation	Insert

Child and Family Services of Western Manitoba



800 McTavish Avenue
Brandon MB R7A 7L4

204-726-6030 or
toll free 1-800-483-8980
fax 204-726-6775
info@cfswestern.mb.ca

www.cfswestern.mb.ca

*D*ear Friends,

As the school year comes to an end and people start planning summer holidays, the work of the Agency continues. Early in June, we held our 115th Annual General Meeting. As a private, community based Agency, the AGM is an important opportunity to report to our community of stakeholders on the outcomes of the work of the Agency, look at the significant developments in the past year, and see what some of the challenges and opportunities are that we face in the year ahead. Our theme was "Making a Difference" and we highlighted several examples of the work of Agency staff and how they have made a positive difference in the lives of the children and families they served.

June also represents the time of year when the "Sun Fund for Kids" swings into full gear. The Sun Fund raises monies in the community to support financially disadvantaged children so they can experience summer camp. Our Sun Fund Coordinator Jaimee has been busy accepting and processing referrals for almost 200 children. As part of the fund raising efforts, a successful golf tournament was held. Sponsored by AIA Canada, the event raises approximately \$10,000 annually to support the Sun Fund. We had a total of 44 hole sponsors representing many of our partners and suppliers of the Agency and

a total of 55 golfers. And, as an added bonus this year, Jason Dueck, a supervisor at the Agency, even had a hole in one!

Planning and preparation for the summer program at the Elspeth Reid Family Resource Centre is also well underway. It provides fun opportunities for about 90 families to stay connected to the Resource Centre and to enjoy family-based activities throughout the summer. The program offers families an affordable way to access many of the recreational opportunities that exist in the Westman region.

So enjoy your summer. Have fun and be safe!

Dave McGregor
Dave McGregor, M.S.W., R.S.W.
Chief Executive Officer

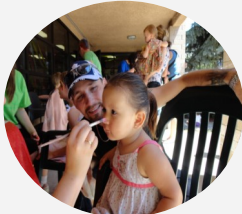
Ramona Coey
Ramona Coey
President, Board of Directors

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.

Elspeth Reid Family Resource Centre

255—9th Street
Brandon MB R7A 6X1
204-726-6280

Open 9 am—5 pm weekdays



Preschool Enrichment Program

2nd Floor
2227 Brandon Avenue
Brandon MB R7B 0S9
204-727-6650



Family and Community Development Centre

Unit 4, 613—10th Street
Brandon MB R7A 4G6
204-726-7033



Victoria Day Care Centre

1st Floor
2227 Brandon Avenue
Brandon MB R7B 0S9
204-728-9845



2014 AGM Highlights

The theme was *Making A Difference* and it was showcased throughout the 2013-2014 Annual Report and through the centrepiece decorations on each table. Tent cards held stories written by staff about how they make a difference to the families they serve and to each other.



Table centrepiece made by children who attend the Preschool Enrichment Program.

It was all part of CFS Western's 115th Annual General Meeting, held Tuesday, June 3 at the Brandon University Dining Hall.

To highlight the work of the Agency, Chief Executive Officer **Dave McGregor** chose to do it within the context of the Hughes Report, released in January 2014.

"The Hughes Report is the report of the Phoenix Sinclair Inquiry that has been the focus of the child welfare system for several years," said McGregor.

"In the Report, Commissioner Ted Hughes makes 62 recommendations to the Manitoba government that, if fully implemented, will improve the child welfare system throughout Manitoba."

The government of Manitoba has already accepted all the Report's recommendations. As such, it will become the blueprint for further changes and improvements to the child welfare system for the next several years. The General Authority played a significant role in the Inquiry itself and had an influence on the recommendations made by the Commissioner, who was impressed with the practise transformation which has been underway in the General Authority for the past several years.

Several of the recommendations focused on Differential Response and outlined that:

- The goal of child welfare system is to keep as many children safe at home as possible.
- The key to supporting families and protecting children is offering early intervention through both universal and targeted services.
- Agencies provide child welfare services on a continuum, focusing on protection in the face of an immediate threat to a child safety, but almost always working with a differential response approach to keep children at home.

"CFS Western, in partnership with the community, has been able to successfully offer a full range of family strengthening and support services for a number of years which are focused on enhancing parental capacity to meet the needs of their children," said McGregor.

"Over 92 percent of the children CFS Western works with are in the care of their families when they are receiving services."

He particularly noted that over 92 percent of the children CFS Western works with are in the care of their families when they are receiving services. As well, services and supports from the Agency's community outreach and prevention programs reach over 1200 families and their children. The Agency's In-Home Support program provides services to 613 children who are living in their homes and who are considered vulnerable to becoming in need of protection.

McGregor also said that 36 percent of children in care are in care for less than one month and 52 percent of children

in care are in care for less than six months.

As well, as part of CFS Western's differential response approach, the Agency was able to create a Community Liaison position that provides early intervention support and services to families who present at the Agency's community-based programs either in crisis or looking for further supports – basically the Agency provides supports at the time that the family identifies the need.



(l-r) CFS Western staff member **Sheena Jackson**, Coordinator, 13th Street Residence; **Darlene MacDonald**, Office of the Children's Advocate; **Laurie Jackson**, CFS Western's Director of Programs

Other recommendations McGregor noted revolved around the Safety Organized Practise Model, Youth Engagement, Community Engagement, and Early Childhood Development.

"The Report recommended that the province extend the availability of services to youth to age 25 from the current age 21, and that Agencies implement Youth Engagement programs to ensure ongoing supports and services to youth to support their successful transition to the community.

"CFS Western began its Youth Engagement program in 2010 to provide supports and connections for its youth in care with a focus on engaging them in their own care plans and developing networks of support for them as they transition into independence.

"Two significant programs we are involved in, and that were developed by the General Authority in partnership with other community agencies, are the

Continued on page 3...

Continued from page 2...

Tuition Waiver program that provides opportunities for youth to attend post-secondary education, and the **Building Futures** program that offers support to former youth in care to ensure that they have a connection to an Agency even after they leave its care."

In Westman, Brandon University and Assiniboine Community College are partners in the *Tuition Waiver* program. Supports for youth through the *Building Futures* program include advocacy, systems navigation, referrals, counselling, money management, etc.

Community Engagement and partnering with the community to support and strengthen families is one of CFS Western's primary goals and has been from its beginning.

"Our Agency is very active in Community Engagement in the Brandon and Westman areas," said McGregor.

"Our staff represent us on over 60 coalitions, advisory groups, and committees which are involved in sharing information about community needs, resources and creating partnerships to help meet those needs."

One of the newer examples of this community partnership is the newly created *Westaway Bay Project*, which is a mini resource centre in a Manitoba

Housing development area that provides accessible supports and services to a vulnerable population right in the neighbourhood. Partners in the initiative include CFS Western, Brandon Healthy Families, Samaritan House, Brandon Friendship Centre, Manitoba Housing, Brandon Police Service, the City of Brandon, and the Brandon School Division.



Neighbourhood children help rebuild and repaint a fence in Westaway Bay Park.

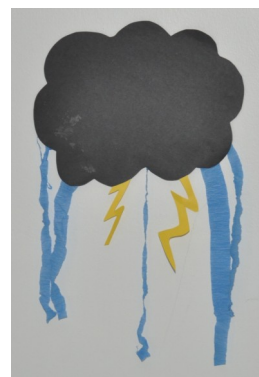
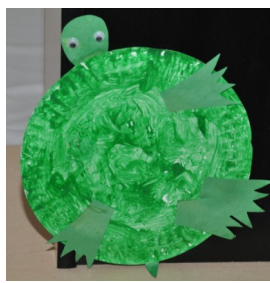
"This model has significant potential to build trust in the community and to raise the positive awareness of the Agency and the services it provides.

"We still have a lot of work to do," said McGregor, "but we take seriously the challenges we face and the trust we have earned."

Over 150 social work professionals, Agency staff, and community members attended the 2014 Annual General Meeting. Greetings were made by The United Way of Brandon and District and The Child and Family Services of Western Manitoba Foundation Inc. as well as The General Child and Family Services Authority in Winnipeg. As well, long-service staff were recognized for their contribution to the Agency and for making a difference in serving Westman families and children. CFS Western also presented their 2013-2014 Annual Report and announced their 2014-2015 Board of Directors.



*30-year service award recipient **Eileen Czerkowski** (second from left) is flanked by (l-r) **Marie Wotton**, Supervisor, Family and Community Development; **Dr. Peter Hechler**, Board of Directors; and **Dave McGregor**, Chief Executive Officer*



The room was decorated with artwork prepared by the children who attend the Preschool Enrichment Program, the Victoria Day Care Centre and the Elspeth Reid Family Resource Centre

Programs celebrate 30 years



Families came out in droves on Tuesday June 10 to help celebrate the 30th anniversaries of CFS Western's **Parent-Child Home Program** and the **Elspeth Reid Family Resource Centre**.

The festivities included refreshments, family activities, display boards and a 45-minute magic show by local duo Evolution Entertainment.

"It's awesome to see that the Resource Centre, which began operating in a little house on 11th Street back in 1984, has evolved 30 years later to what it is today," said **Lisa Ramsay**, Coordinator of the Elspeth Reid Family Resource Centre.

"The Centre operates on the philosophy that parenting is one of the hardest jobs people will ever do with the least amount of training available.

"Our goal is to support and educate parents in their very important role.

"And our programs are available to all families."

Parenting education programs are offered for all stages of the parenting journey, from learning about life with a new baby to guiding a teenager toward adulthood. All programs are based on the core belief that honest, open communication and mutual respect are the foundations on which the parent-child relationship is built. There are also ongoing support groups which provide an opportunity for weekly or monthly get-togethers where parents can discuss a variety of topics relating to family life.

While parents attend programs, their children are well-cared for in the child care room. The bright and comfortable space includes a room for children under age two, a large playroom for preschoolers and an enclosed courtyard space for outdoor play.

The Centre also offers programs for parents to do with their children. These include Family Circle for parents and babies under two years, Drop-in Playtime for parents and preschoolers, and Mothers & Daughters in Touch and Mothers & Sons Connect for parents and preteens or teens. There are also special parent-child activity workshops. Transportation to and from daytime programs can be arranged if it is a challenge for people to attend.

In 1984 when the Family Resource Centre first opened, it quickly became known as a safe, welcoming place where parents could come for support.



Family strengthening program group facilitators (l-r) Tammy Phillips, Raelene Croker, Brenda Lacerte and Korinne Bullee

In 1995, it moved to its current location at 255 - 9th Street and was renamed after community member Elspeth Reid, who was a long-time community volunteer and who served for nine years on CFS Western's Board of Directors. It is now well-known as *the* place for families in Brandon.

"We are also very grateful for our partners such as Westman Immigrant Services, Brandon School Division, Brandon Friendship Centre, Prairie Mountain Health and the Learning Disabilities Association of Manitoba,

Here are some things parents have had to say about the Family Resource Centre:

- "Thank you so much for all the information/awareness. I find every topic very interesting and so helpful in my life!"
- "Amazing, really enjoyed the hands-on learning."
- "I like the laid back environment. We can be open with our concerns without being judged."
- "I really like the Elspeth Reid Centre. I will come back as much as I can."
- "Having childcare is awesome; otherwise I probably wouldn't be able to come to groups."
- "I really enjoyed coming to this class and learning things to help me out at home."
- "It helps me feel more confident in my parenting."
- "Very safe and non-judgmental environment."
- "Love the Centre. Very grateful for everything you guys do for us!"

who help us offer programming in the community," said Ramsay.

The Elspeth Reid Family Resource Centre is open Mondays through Fridays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. For more information, call 204-726-6280 (toll free 1-800-483-8980) or visit www.cfswestern.mb.ca. Better yet, drop in to the Centre at 255 - 9th Street, Brandon, and visit and meet the friendly and knowledgeable staff. They are always willing to listen and help parents find resources within the Centre or elsewhere in the community.

Continued on page 5...

Parent- Child Home Program

Just like the Elspeth Reid Family Resource Centre, CFS Western's **Parent-Child Home Program** (PCHP) has also been around for 30 years.

It began as the Mother-Child Home Program and was introduced in Brandon by then social worker Lorraine McLaren who delivered the program through CFS Western. Since 1984, hundreds of families in Brandon and Westman have benefited from this unique early literacy program.



PCHP Coordinator **Barb Martens** (left) looks through photo albums with past PCHP participants.

"PCHP's main purpose is to strengthen the relationship between parent and child and to support the parent in their role as their child's first and most important teacher," said current Program Coordinator **Barb Martens**.

"It is a two-year program that begins when the child is between the ages of 18 to 36 months.

"A trained volunteer, called a Home Visitor, delivers the program right in the family's home for a half-hour twice a week for 23 weeks between October and April."

Each week the Home Visitor brings a different book or toy and models for the parent by playing, talking and reading with the parent and child. These tools help the parent and Home Visitor to enhance the child's development. Talking about and playing with books and toys promotes positive communication and interaction and allows learning to be FUN. At the end of the program, the toys and books are 'gifted' to the family so the learning can continue.

The PCHP has many locations in the US, and several in other countries around the world, but the Brandon site is the only one in Canada. It is also one of very few sites that uses trained volunteer Home Visitors rather than paid employees. This not only allows the program to run on a small budget, but provides a wonderful volunteer opportunity for many people, including retirees and university or college students.

PCHP is also unique in that it runs based on the number of volunteers available to deliver the program. For example, if there are 20 volunteers, the program can be offered to 20 families; if there are 10 volunteers, it can only be offered to 10 families, etc.



The Brandon PCHP is currently recruiting new volunteers for September. If you are interested in learning more about becoming a volunteer Home Visitor, please contact Barb Martens at 204-726-7143 (toll free 1-800-483-8980) or CFS Western's Volunteer Coordinator, Brenda Lacerte, at 204-726-7178.

Funding to operate the family strengthening programs offered at the Elspeth Reid Family Resource Centre and through the Parent-Child Home program come from public, private, community and organizational donors as well as grants and sponsorships.

A recent letter from a former PCHP Home Visitor beautifully sums up the power of the program:

"When I was home this winter, I went to visit my former PCHP mom and child. The child is growing so fast and her English is quite impressive! When she first saw me (I thought she might be somewhat shy – not a chance!), she yanked me into the living room and said she wanted to read me a story. We curled up in a chair and she proceeded to read me "Five Little Monkeys" perfectly. When she finished (and I had tears in my eyes), she asked if I thought she had done a good job, and if she could read another one. For the next half hour, she went through every book she could find from the PCHP, singing the songs and using all the actions I had introduced her to. When she had read everything, she said, "Thank you for teaching me English. I love reading!" Mom was beaming, I was teary-eyed; it was a proud moment for me."

Celebrating Youth In Care

Tyrrel said that he experienced positive opportunities in his life of being in care that would not have otherwise occurred had he not come into care. He spoke about feeling supported by his foster parents and his CFS Western worker and that he was able to maintain a strong family connection at the same time.

Darren spoke about feeling supported by CFS Western and the 'perfect strangers' who rescued him from a bad situation and who offered him supports and positive relationships. He also said that, had he not received the help he did from the Agency, he wasn't sure what type of negative path his life would be on. He talked about his positive experience, constant support and the guidance from his workers that he said helped change his life for the better.

Both were telling their story of being a youth in care during CFS Western's 3rd annual Age of Majority celebration. Darren's speech was as a former youth in care who was invited back as a guest speaker, while Tyrrel was one of 14 youth in care being celebrated for turning 18 and moving forward into independence.



But reaching legal age doesn't mean they're now done with CFS Western.

"Even though they turn 18, CFS Western will continue to offer them supports," said **Breanna Dick**, Youth Engagement Specialist for the Agency.

"Reaching the age of majority doesn't mean we as an Agency are through with these kids.

"We will keep helping them as they transition to adulthood and independence."

That support from Agency workers, foster parents, and even birth families goes a long way in helping the youth remain successful in their future. Personal and heart-warming stories about each of them from their workers showed the connection and great relationships that exist between the two. The workers spoke of the wonderful aspects of each of the youth's personalities and the accomplishments and triumphs they'd had so far.

Through the sea of youth smiles, it was obvious they were touched to hear what their support person said about them. They were also surrounded by their invited guests such as foster parents, friends, teachers, community resources, and birth families in some cases.

"The night was about coming together to recognize and celebrate the youth's achievements and their transitioning into independence," said **Dave McGregor**, Chief Executive Officer of CFS Western.

"This represents a significant milestone in their lives and as an Agency, we are so proud of all of them.

"My wish for these youth is that as they transition into adulthood, they do so with a sense of hope and optimism about their futures.

"Part of our role as an Agency has been to instill this in them and try and support them by believing in their abilities to navigate what lies ahead for them.



*Betty Taras presents **Christopher Lubkey** with one of his Agency gifts*

"When they think about where they have come from, what they have overcome to get where they are and where they are heading, they can be confident in their ability to succeed."

The celebration event is a chance to mark a milestone in the youth's lives and honour how far they've come, their strengths, and their potential for a bright future. And with ongoing support from CFS Western, even though they're 18, they can continue to hone life skills, plan for a secondary education or gain employment.

Each youth received a gift bag, a suitcase, and a disposable camera so they could capture the evening on film. The event also featured a live band, decorations and a slide show that highlighted each youth individually, and a catered dinner. Over 100 people attended.

Building Futures



Breanna Dick, Youth Engagement Specialist

It may take a village to raise a child, but it also takes a community to help offer them a future. That's where the **Building Futures** program comes in.

A two-year initiative launched in May 2013 by the General Child and Family Services Authority (GA) in Winnipeg, **Building Futures** is a community partnership that targets youth ages 16 to 25 who are presently or formerly in CFS care.

"These youth need to be and stay connected to resources that can help them thrive on their road to independence," said **Breanna Dick**, Youth Engagement Specialist for Child and Family Services of Western Manitoba (CFS Western).

"**Building Futures** offers them specific support relating to money management, debt counselling, relationships, employability and post-secondary education."

Along with the GA, community partners involved in the program are Community Financial Counselling Services, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Winnipeg, the Canadian Mental Health Association Winnipeg Region, Youth Employment Services, and the Royal Bank of Canada who provide financial support to the program.

In Brandon, **Building Futures** enhances CFS Western's Youth Engagement Program, which already offers many of these services to their youth in and from care.

"It's another avenue for supporting these youth," said Dick.

"**Building Futures** helps give the youth opportunities to achieve their goals and build the future they want through courses and training services."

Services are offered free and are tailored specifically to the youth in and from care. It covers some major areas of struggle – e.g. money, relationships, jobs, - for them and is a direct way for them to get help. Access to the program is easy and non-intrusive – a youth just needs to call the hotline rather than meet with someone face-to-face if they don't want to.

"**Building Futures** can help the youth reach their personal goals in regards to building self-esteem, attaining and maintaining work, sorting out relationship issues, etc.

"In the long run, hopefully it will help build stronger, more self-sufficient young adults who will become more resilient and be able to conquer the challenges that life may bring them."

For CFS Western, the benefit is that there is one more resource to tap into and turn to for supporting youth in and from care. **Building Futures** offers all sorts of resources and can aide in directing the youth onto a positive path. It gives them a safe place to reach out for assistance and support.

One of the workshops offered through **Building Futures** is résumé building, which CFS Western hosted in Brandon late last year with six youth in care. The presenters from Winnipeg brought a day full of helpful, relevant and useful information for the youth on how to properly build a résumé and cover letter. The presenters also incorporated fun and lively games to keep the kids' interest while they were learning.

"**Building Futures** is an extremely positive program for these youth in and from care," said Dick.

"The job of parenting and looking after these kids does not stop once they reach the age of 18 and this program was built with that in mind.

"It allows the agencies to continue giving them a place to turn to for guidance, direction, counselling and to meet any other needs the youth may have.

"Our child welfare system recognizes that these youth need support, even after they leave care, and this wonderful program offers just that."

"The Building Futures initiative is important because it brings together the strengths of many community organizations to form a network of support and resources that youth in and from care can access without barriers."

Marie Christian, Program Coordinator, VOICES (Manitoba's Youth In Care Network)



Being 'in the middle' a great place

As *Community Liaison Worker*, **Jenna Cameron** is quite happy to be the 'woman in the middle.' That's because her role is to reach out to families in crisis and connect them with appropriate Agency and community resources and services.

Cameron sees many clients, all on a voluntary basis. Her office is located within the Elspeth Reid Family Resource Centre and she does a lot of outreach to the Preschool Enrichment Program and Victoria Day Care Centre.

"I make myself familiar to the participants of our family strengthening programs," said Cameron, "so that when they require additional supports, I am often already known to the family."

Her position is part of CFS Western's Differential Response approach and was created in response to the number of people that would present at the Agency's different centres in crisis. Before the position was in place, the directors of these centres were often filling their time by talking to these clients and trying to connect them with Agency and community services.

"It is incredibly valuable to be able to provide services to families at the time of crisis when they are requesting support," said Cameron.

"In doing this, we are able to assess the family's needs sooner than if they came into our system formally, and we can refer them to needed services immediately.

"Having this position not only benefits the families and staff at our family



strengthening programs, but also all our frontline workers – if we can work with these families immediately, it might help their situation from escalating to the point where a child may need protection."

Cameron is very excited about the opportunity to work so closely with families. She'd spent one summer at the Elspeth Reid Family Resource Centre as the summer program coordinator so she knows firsthand how valuable family strengthening programs and services are to the families the Agency serves.

Before taking on the role of *Community Liaison Worker*, Cameron also worked as a frontline protection worker so she knew that most families experienced

stress for a long time before CFS Western was made aware and became involved.

"What I like most about this new position is that families can get information and resources as soon as they identify the need for support.

"It is very rewarding to see families engage with Family Enhancement (another program created as part of CFS Western's Differential Response approach) workers and various community programs as a result of this position being in place."

Families have also expressed a great deal of appreciation for this position being available. Cameron said that lots of participants have noted that they are grateful simply to have someone to talk to. She's met with numerous families who have relocated to Brandon from other provinces and countries and are unsure of the resources available to them. She says they are appreciative to have a starting point where they can learn of the existing services.

"As well, the staff at our family strengthening programs have already built meaningful and trusting relationships with families - some of which have been over decades.

"It is through the work of our staff that participants can see my role in a positive light and are able to engage with me comfortably."

"What I like most about this new position is that families can get information and resources as soon as they identify the need for support."



255—9th Street
 Brandon MB R7A 6X1
 Telephone..... 204-726-7141 or toll free 1-800-483-8980
 Fax 204-726-6775
 Website..... www.cfswestern.mb.ca/foundation
 Email..... foundation@cfswestern.mb.ca
Margaret Schonewille, Development Officer

Donate online! It's easy, safe, secure and convenient. Just visit our website at www.cfswestern.mb.ca/foundation.

Nature buffs will love it for the ***PICTURES!***

Everyone will love it for the ***PRIZES!***

The Foundation's Lottery Calendar is the perfect gift for family, friends, colleagues and even yourself.

Enjoy the beauty of Westman all year around!

Your calendar purchase buys you a chance to win up to \$12,000 in cash prizes. It also supports The Child & Family Services of Western Manitoba Foundation Inc. Only **3000 calendars** printed and all winners' names go back into the draw for the rest of the draws.



Calendars run from September 2014 to August 2015

Prizes: September 2014 and January 2015—\$75 each day, Monday to Friday except holidays

Remaining months—\$40 each day, Monday to Friday except holidays

PLUS three other large draws throughout the year!

There are FOUR ways you can order your calendar today!

1. Visit the Elspeth Reid Family Resource Centre, 255—9th Street, Brandon.
2. Call 204-726-7141.
3. Fax this page along with your credit card details to 204-726-6775.
4. Mail this form along with your payment to The Child & Family Services of Western Manitoba Foundation Inc., 255—9th Street, Brandon MB, R7A 6X1.

CASH CALENDAR ORDER FORM		
Please send _____ Cash Calendar(s)		
Name:		
Address:		
City:	Province:	Postal Code:
Daytime Phone:		Evening Phone:
Calendars are \$20 each plus \$2.75 each for postage and handling. (No handling charge if picked up at the Elspeth Reid Family Resource Centre, 255—9th Street, Brandon, MB.)		
Total Amount \$ _____		
<input type="radio"/> Cheque, payable to Child & Family Services of Western Manitoba Foundation Inc. <input type="radio"/> Visa/Mastercard		
Credit Card # _____	Expires _____/_____/_____	
Authorized Signature: _____		