



CFS Matters!

Spring/Summer 2017

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Child and Family Services of Western Manitoba

strengthening families and protecting children since 1899

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Dear Agency friends,

Hopefully as you read this, you are enjoying a beautiful summer day! It has been a great summer so far—an opportunity to get some rest and to become recharged for the fall.

Our newsletter highlights many different happenings going on at our Agency lately—all which come together to tell a great story!

I hope you are inspired when you read about:

- Albert's story of giving back to the community.
- The community partners working with the Agency in various ways to support children and families.
- Youth in care coming together at our ***Because You Matter*** youth conference.
- The progress being made implementing leading child welfare practices within the Agency.



It has been an eventful—and busy—year! Enjoy the rest of your summer!

Dave McGregor

Dave McGregor, MSW, RSW
Chief Executive Officer

Phil Shaman

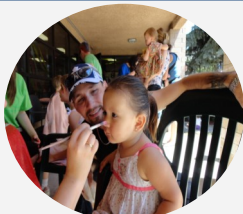
Phil Shaman
President, Board of Directors

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



2017 Annual General Meeting Highlights

Over 160 staff, partners, stakeholders, and community members attended CFS Western's 118th Annual General Meeting, held June 6, to hear about the many significant innovations and changes the Agency has been applying over the past several years.



Room decorations and artwork were made by the children who attend the Agency's Preschool Enrichment Program, Victoria Day Care Centre, and Elspeth Reid Family Resource Centre

"We have been on quite a journey learning about leading and best practices in child welfare and putting them into action," said **Dave McGregor**, Chief Executive Officer.

"Research and evidence show these specific practices can lead to better outcomes for families, children, youth, and communities."



One of these is called **Safe and Together**, which provides a plan for partnering with survivors (mothers) and intervening with perpetrators (fathers) in order to enhance the safety and well-being of children.

Through that model, the Agency learned there was a lack of services and supports for Westman dads. So they brought in the **Caring Dads** intervention program. It is designed for men who have physically or

emotionally abused their children, exposed them to domestic violence, or who are at high risk for these behaviours. The Agency recently finished their first offering of the program, with seven dads successfully completing the 17-week process. (*Caring Dads* was profiled in our Winter 2017 newsletter, page 5.)



Table centrepieces were made by children of our Preschool Enrichment Program. Each bottle had 10 items hidden in the rice, and were for our field workers to take with them.

Just like the book "Giving Tree," the 'branches' can be taken off. The 'people' on the branches represent our diversity in the programs delivered by the Agency.

McGregor then went on to talk about **Intensive Permanency Services** and **Finding Families**.

"The **Intensive Permanency** approach believes that each child or youth entering care has connections to people important in their life, and we need to do all we can to make sure these kids don't become isolated and lost from them."

Family Finding's goal is to connect each child or youth in foster care with family or someone close to them so that they can benefit from the lifelong connections that only these relationships can provide. It can also help give the child or youth a sense of their roots, culture, and heritage. (*Family Findings* was profiled in our Winter 2017 newsletter, page 2.)

The **Youth Engagement** program involves current and former youth in care in various activities and events intended to strengthen their relationship with Agency staff and the broader child welfare system. They also get a chance to offer feedback about the services that impact them.

"Nothing about me, without me" guides our work with youth," said McGregor.

McGregor was also very excited to say that CFS Western has been chosen as one of four sites across Canada to implement a new program called **Bright Starts** this fall.

Bright Starts is an employment training and support program for current and former youth in care up to age 29. It is funded by The Royal Bank of Canada in partnership with the Children's Aid Foundation. The program will offer these youth training, job placements, internships, and practical supports to help them move into employment.

"The goal is to serve 100 Westman youth per year from all four child welfare Authorities," said McGregor.

"We are thrilled about the potential **Bright Starts** has for improving outcomes for youth in care."



Foster parents **Frieda and Jake Driedger**

AGM highlights...continued

McGregor then spoke about the Agency's many community partnerships and how they help provide early supports to families in need and financial support for the Agency's prevention programs and services.

"We believe these services—and making them easily accessible—is the best way to prevent child maltreatment.

"Without our broad base of support through community engagement, we simply couldn't offer all that we do."

Debbie Besant, Chief Executive Officer of the General Child and Family Services Authority (Winnipeg), also spoke about CFS Western's 'incredible' commitment to community engagement.

"Your strong value in community shows in your work with family networks, and in your daily connection with parents and families.

"Your great relationships with community partners ensure support and outreach for your region's most vulnerable families, and it has meant that most of your caseloads involve children still able to live at home."

92% of the children CFS Western works with in protection family services live safely in their own home.

'Commitment' was also a highlight of Board President **Phil Shaman's** opening remarks.

"The English dictionary defines commitment as 'a willingness to give your whole time and energy to something you truly believe in.'

"That statement sums it up for CFS Western, and I believe this is what stands our Agency above others."

City of Brandon's Deputy Mayor **Jan Chaboyer** also brought greetings. She said that CFS Western brings to Brandon and Westman thriving communities of caring people that support families.

"You are on the top of the list for creating the back bone for healthy communities by strengthening families and protecting our children—the future of Brandon—from neglect and abuse."

Data shows that 58% of the kids who left CFS Western's care last year were there for less than one month.

The **Canadian Tire Jumpstart Charities** program and the **United Way Brandon and District** were honoured for their long-time financial support to CFS Western.

Jumpstart provides funding across Canada so that children from financially disadvantaged families can take part in sports and recreation.

"We have been proud to partner with **Jumpstart** almost since their 2005 inception," said **Bob Ferguson**, 1st Vice-President, CFS Board of Directors.



(l-r) **Bob Ferguson** with **Canadian Tire Brandon Store General Manager Stuart Cruse**

"Over the years, they have given us more than \$105,000 so hundreds of Westman kids could participate in a sport or activity that they otherwise wouldn't have been able to."

The **United Way Brandon and District** has been supporting some of CFS Western's family strengthening programs for nearly 80 years.

"We truly value our partnership and are lucky to have such an important

resource as part of our community of caring people, and as a partner that helps us strengthen families, protect children, and build strong communities," said **Phil Shaman**, President, CFS Board of Directors.



(l-r) **Phil Shaman** with **United Way's Scott Preston**, Vice-Chairperson, Board of Directors, **Janis Evens**, Director of Operations/Gifts Officer, and **Cynamon Mychasiw**, Chief Executive Officer

CFS Western also recognized several staff for reaching milestone years of service anniversaries. They included 25-year veteran and Director of Programs **Arlene Stewart**, and Leading Practice Specialist **Nancy Hunter**, who celebrated 35 years with the Agency.



Nancy Hunter (left) with a group of volunteers who sewed pillows and 'people' for our **Heartful of Memories** project (see story on page 11)

As well, acknowledgement was made to **Lynn Galbraith**, who recently retired from CFS Western's Board of Directors after serving for nine years.



(l-r) **Phil Shaman**, **Lynn Galbraith**

Elspeth Reid Family Resource Centre by Lisa Ramsay, Coordinator

The Elspeth Reid Family Resource Centre is located at 255—9th Street in Brandon, telephone 204-726-6280 (or toll free 1-800-483-8980) and is open Mondays through Fridays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The Resource Centre gratefully acknowledges the financial support of its many donors, including the:



and



As with each season, there are many special moments to savour.

One of my favourites early this summer was when I had a chance to visit with our children in our yard at the Centre. Together we planted flowers and had a great play!



I continue to marvel at their imagination and creativity as they tell colourful stories during their playtime. I learn from them every day. Children's ability to focus on the task at hand (building a robot out of logs) is interrupted only by a time to laugh and declare pride in their own accomplishments. Brilliant and wise souls!



It Takes a Village!

Our Centre is fortunate to have a safe clean green space for our community to enjoy. It is well known that outdoor family playtime is one very important part of healthy family life. Play is children's work and it is our role as the adults in their life to provide an enriching play environment to help their growth and development.

After decades of use, it became clear that our outdoor space was due for a refresh to enhance the play value and invigorate interest for our families. Our child care staff had many wonderful ideas about how to add play value to our space.

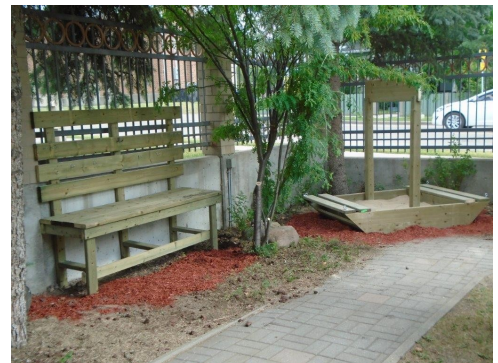
Over this past year, I was approached by Brandon University to take on two nursing students for a field placement. We were fortunate to have two enthusiastic students, Krista Czarnecki and Iulia Zvierieva, who undertook the project of doing a needs assessment and all the research required to allow us to move forward on our yard renovation project.

The students toured other sites, sought feedback from staff and parents, and pulled together the most current research about natural play and its value to family life and, more specifically, to child development.

By the end of their placement with us, they had produced a document that allowed us to move forward.

Then in June, we had the good fortune to be selected by Home Depot to receive free materials and labour to create three new play stations within our yard.

'Team Depot' staff and volunteers contributed to Phase 1 of bringing to life the yard changes we wanted.



Elspeth Reid Family Resource Centre...continued

('Team Depot' is a group of Home Depot Associates who give their time to help with various projects. They voluntarily take a day off to build, paint, or do whatever needs doing to help organizations. In 2016, Team Depot painted and renovated a basement game room and built an outside deck at one of our Agency's group homes.)

Our Centre is all about partnerships and to me this project has been a fine example of how it takes a village to make positive changes for children. Our parents, staff, Brandon University, and Home Depot all worked together to improve the play experience for children and families who attend our Centre.

Stay tuned for more news as we keep on developing our 'new' green space!



Purse Project

In early March, two ladies from Minnedosa put a call out to the public for donations of gently used purses and backpacks, new unopened self care items for women and men, and school supplies for children. Their intent was to donate filled purses to our Resource Centre, Samaritan House, and the Women's Shelter.

Many beautiful purses arrived for us in May, filled with self care items for the women we work with. The ladies also donated a few school supplies and some men's self care items too. I distributed them to our support group moms, our youth, and various other programs.



A day to change lives

On May 12, our Resource Centre was lucky to have help from three ladies from the Bank of Montreal lend us a hand to tidy up *The Store*, our onsite thrift shop.

The gals joined **Brenda Lacerte**, our Volunteer Coordinator, and a couple of Centre volunteers to sort books and toys, hang clothing, and reorganize household items.

It was all part of the United Way Brandon & District's annual **Day of Caring** community project. They recruit volunteers from local businesses to help non-profit organizations across the city for a day.

Janis Evens, UWBD's Director of Operations, said they partnered three groups of volunteers (32 people) with different agencies to offer help with yard and office work.

"There are many not-for-profit groups in our city that have a lot of little tasks that need doing, but they don't have the time, resources, or manpower to do it," she explained.

"Our Day of Caring is a chance for these folks to get out and help those people who are helping our community."

The BMO volunteers started by touring the Resource Centre to learn more about the important work we do to support and strengthen Westman families—work that is in part funded by the United Way Brandon & District.

Families' Deputy Minister praises ECE's

April 23 to 29, 2017, was the 26th Annual Week of the Early Childhood Educator (ECE) in Manitoba.

The week was dedicated to celebrating ECE's for their expertise, creativity and energy and for their commitment to creating healthy and safe learning environments for children in their care.

Children are precious and their early years of growth and development are especially important. Those who choose to nurture and care for young children and foster healthy and safe early learning opportunities for them take on a tremendous responsibility and play an important role in supporting Manitoba's families and communities.

ECE's enable parents to go to work or school with comfort in the knowledge that their children are well cared for and supported in their development.

It is important to recognize the Annual Week of the ECE. It allows us to reflect on how much we rely on and value the dedication and commitment of those who have chosen a career in the ECE profession.

It also gives us the opportunity to let these individuals know how much their efforts are appreciated by the children, families and communities they serve.

We recognize and thank ECE's across our province for the important work they do.

Sincerely,

Jay Rodgers, Deputy Minister



CFS Western's CEO **Dave McGregor** (standing) addresses many of the Agency's ECE's from our Elspeth Reid Family Resource Centre, Preschool Enrichment Program, and Victoria Day Care Centre during a recognition event in their honour held April 25

Youth pays it forward by Lisa Ramsay

We first met Albert, now 13, in the summer of 2013. He was one of a group of neighbourhood children and adults who came to help spruce up Westaway Bay Park and join in activities and games (*CFS Matters!* Fall 2013, page 7). Albert also came to the Westaway Bay Family Centre as soon as it opened in December 2013.

Right from the start, we saw a young person who demonstrated kindness and a sense of responsibility to his community. Albert was one who always offered to lend a helping hand as we came to know him.

(Albert was featured in our summer 2016 newsletter (page 5), as one of three youth from the Westaway Centre who attended a youth conference in February and as part of their conference 'homework', wrote an essay with several project ideas to win a grant that would bring their idea to life. One of their ideas was to hold their own cultural festival on Westaway Bay. The trio won the grant and through their hard work, efforts, and visions they planned, organized, and led a successful festival. Albert, along with the other two, were also presented with a recognition award and a gift to honour the positive leadership they showed.)

Albert also got involved in the City of Brandon Youth Centre Program, where youth leader Justine also noticed his leadership qualities. As recognition for his volunteer contributions there, Albert was chosen to receive a \$500 Sobey's gift card as one of 149 youth across Canada who were given Sobey's, Safeway, or IGA cards. It was all part of Sobey's June event to empower these kids to Pay It Forward during the stores' Celebrate Canada 150 summer.

Each youth rewarded with the gift card was to donate it to—or 'treat'—a community cause that had helped their family, neighbour, or friend. Here, in his own words, is what Albert decided to do with his gift card:

My name is Albert. I am giving this \$500 gift card for groceries to the Westaway Bay Family Centre because they have inspired me to work with youth, help the community and give back! They have also helped a lot of families on Westaway Bay and bring peace to the Bay! They have set up programs for all children to attend with their family and have lots of fun!!



Albert was presented with his gift card on July 14 in Brandon during the grand opening of the city's new Sobey's Extra store. He spoke in front of hundreds of people telling them his story and his plan for his card.



I also talked to the crowd and expressed our gratitude on behalf of the many organizations who collectively offer the programs and services at Westaway. I thanked Sobey's for being a community minded business, and the City of Brandon Youth Program for their recognition of Albert. As well, I shared our thankfulness and appreciation to Albert's mother, Chantelli, for being the kind of mom who is raising children to understand that we all have a responsibility to contribute back to our communities.

It was a very proud day for us. One child at a time—we nurture our future leaders and encircle their families to support their children's development and leadership.



Partnering with families means best outcomes for children

Our Agency's primary mission is to ensure safety, well-being, and permanence for children of all ages. We believe the best way to do this is to partner with their family—and the people who support that family—and work together to help create and maintain a safe home that is free from abuse and neglect.

"We have been working hard over the past few years to make our practices more collaborative, strengths-based, and safety focused," said **Dave McGregor**, CFS Western's Chief Executive Officer.

"Our main goal is to always create and maintain safety for a child.

"One way we do this is by putting more focus on involving a family and their supports in crafting a safety plan for their child."

To strengthen their approach, CFS Western recently created a two-year pilot position to help further that joint partnership with families and their support networks.

Taking on the new role of *Collaborative Practice Facilitator* is long-time CFS Western social worker **Marnie Wallis**.



"These kids are some of the most vulnerable around and often face a range of complex challenges," said Wallis.

"Together with their parents, family and the family's support networks—all of who become the 'family group', we will come up with a care, safety and well-being plan to help deal with some of these challenges and the safety concerns that have been identified for the kids."

The process turns into an active partnership between the family group and the worker where everyone involved gets to be part of the decision making about the safety of the child.

During what's known as a *Family Engagement Meeting*, the worker invites the group to share their views on how things are going for the family, what is going well, what the worries are, and what needs to happen next for the safety and future of the child. Before the meeting ends, together with the social worker everyone will come up with a safety goal and a plan of how to reach and maintain it.

"Engaging the family group helps motivate and empower a family to recognize their needs, strengths, and resources," said McGregor.

"It also helps them take a more active role in changing things for the better.

"It's about the power of families and how they—and we—can all work together to make sure children are kept safe."

Wallis will also guide social workers to help them give clear information to the family group about what our Agency is concerned about and why we are involved with them.

Wallis said her role as *Collaborative Practice Facilitator* is unique and the first of its kind in Manitoba. Other provinces have similar positions and Manitoba agencies are looking at developing them soon, although they do currently offer family engagement. She also said this type of facilitation role and program run in other countries with great success.

"With this role and this process, we hope to give families a chance to have a voice in their case planning.

"We want them more involved in the decision making because it means they will be more invested, and we will see better outcomes for children."

In her research on family engagement, Wallis found many agencies who already practice



various family meeting programs have seen a great reduction in formal foster care and long term child welfare services to the family. She learned families expressed feeling less controlled and more involved in the decisions affecting their child.

Another important part is bringing the child's voice to the table—"nothing about us, without us."

Wallis believes the Agency's new collaborative practice process will mean reduced time spent monitoring the families our Agency works with and less years of service for them—which in turn could result in reduced case loads for social workers.

"The most important part of our collaborative practice and family engagement program is that they will positively affect how families feel.

"Listening to and hearing the voice of the families can help them feel more engaged, supported, respected, and involved in their child's care.

"We will learn what they want and need to feel meaningfully connected to their

child's care, and work together toward the common and positive goal of that child's safety, care and well-being."



Youth conference huge success by Breanna Dick, Youth Engagement

On May 27, 2017, we held our first ever Youth in Care Conference—***Because You Matter***—and it was a great success! About 200 people attended, 165 who were youth in and from care in Manitoba.

We have had a dream of hosting a big event like this for a while. But this type of day can be a major financial endeavour and we did not have the resources to do it. Then, our Agency was fortunate to be one of four Canadian recipients of The Home Depot Canada Foundation Orange Door Award for 2016-2017. And that award helped finally turn our dream into a reality. We are so grateful to them for giving us this opportunity!



The major theme of the day was inspiring the youth to use their voice and to know that their voice does matter. They got to hear many messages of inspiration, motivation, and empowerment towards building a positive and successful life. They also had an opportunity to be in a room filled with other youth also in and from care. As well, most of the guest speakers shared their own personal experiences of being in the child welfare system.

During the day's breaks, the youth were encouraged to visit 16 service provider displays set up outside the conference room. They included (but were not limited to) the Addictions Foundation of Manitoba (AFM), Sexuality Education Resource Centre Mb. (SERC), Canada Cadets, CEYS (Career & Employment Youth Services), Office of the Children's Advocate, Voices—Manitoba's Youth In Care Network, and the Brandon Friendship Centre. And every display

the youth went to, even if they went to the same one more than once, they were given a ballot to enter their name to win a draw prize.



Our Agency also had a table focusing solely on the youths' voices where we asked them to answer the questions "what is working within the system?" and "what can we improve on for you?" Over 70% of the youth attending responded.

The day began by giving each youth that came in the door a drawstring backpack filled with donated goodies from local businesses.

Our MC was **Jason Gobeil**, a local speaker, volunteer, and member of various committees. He describes himself as a non-status Indian with a cultural background of Ojibway, Scottish, and French. Jason is a true advocate for change and brought a ton of positive energy to the event. He also shared his own personal stories of hardship to triumph which focused on the importance of having and using your own voice to advocate for yourself.



Following Jason's opening, two Brandon community elders welcomed everyone with aboriginal and cultural prayer, stories, and

music. They had the youth on their feet participating in the stories and singing along.



Next was our keynote speaker **Josh Shipp**, a former at-risk foster kid turned teen advocate.

"Statistically, I am supposed to be dead, in jail, or homeless. At 14, I'd been kicked out of so many foster homes that it became a game to me. I acted out because I didn't trust anyone, and I didn't expect that to change any time soon. So, how come I didn't end up yet another statistic??"



Josh Shipp

Youth conference ...continued

Josh shared his personal—and often troubling—stories and offered the youth really motivating messages. Josh was exceptionally captivating, charming, witty, and through telling his real-life experiences, he shared inspiring message of hope, perseverance, and success in a way that had the youth sitting on the edges of their seats wanting more.

After Josh's morning session, four trained youth 'Speak Out' members from *Voices—Manitoba's Youth in Care Network*, participated in an on-stage panel and shared their experiences of being in the child welfare system. Each talked candidly about what brought them into care, what their current struggles are, what is going well for them, and answered audience questions.



While the youth were hearing from the Speak Out panel, Josh was in another room presenting to 25 foster parents. His theme with them was "every kid is ONE caring adult away from being a success."



Just after lunch, a community resource panel gave the youth information on the various services available to help them. The panel included representatives from

Building Futures, Manitoba's Tuition Waiver Program, Office of the Children's Advocate, Voices and U-Turn Housing.

Josh then rejoined the youth and ended the day with energizing activities and more inspiration. He took questions from the audience and the youth were eager and active in asking many great ones such as "Were you ever bullied in school?" and "How did you get to this point that you are at in your life?"

The air was so positive and full of energy, those of us watching on the side could tell the youth were feeling inspired, connected, and most of all, excited about their experience!



Conference comments...

...The teens had a lot of fun and really enjoyed listening to Josh Shipp and the Voices panel. We appreciate all the work by everyone involved in making such a great youth conference—thank you!

...Thank you for putting on an excellent youth conference! It was so nice to see all of those young people, listening intently, connecting with the speaker and with one another.

...It was incredible—thank you! We were so honoured to be there and so thankful to meet other young people in and from care from across Manitoba.

...Thanks for all your work making this plan a reality! The youth that I brought really enjoyed the day.

...My staff had rave reviews for the conference you hosted. The youth that attended had a fabulous time, and many of them had never had the opportunity for such a great experience.

...It was a great day—one of the best things I have been part of in my 33-year career! Lots of fun, impactful presentations—kids seemed totally engaged and enjoying themselves.

...An awesome conference! The young women I brought certainly enjoyed it and felt that they got a lot out of it. I also felt that I was challenged in how I do my work.

...It was a great experience all around!

...Josh was fantastic. The kids enjoyed hearing his inspirational stories and his humour too.

Foster Family Accolades

by Megan Murchison,
Foster Family Recruiter and Trainer



Every day there are so many wonderful things that our foster parents do for our children in care to make amazing things happen for them.

Here are just some of the ways these extraordinary and unique people have left memorable and positive imprints on the lives of the kids they've opened their homes and hearts to.

- This foster family travelled with two children in their care to England for a family trip.
- Two foster children graduated high school in June 2016 and are now attending university. They are still in contact with their foster parents even though they don't live at home anymore.
- This foster mom drove over an hour and a half in the middle of the night to pick up a child and they weren't even on the emergency list.
- This foster mom drove from Manitoba to Las Vegas and camped with all of their children along their journey.

- This foster family continues to support a biological dad by helping him get his driver's license. They also have had him working with them to use his skills to build a barn.
- This foster parent rode in an ambulance with a child in care and wouldn't leave the child's side despite having a funeral to attend and business out of town.



- This foster mom bought flowers for this child's birth mom on Mother's Day.
- This foster family invited their foster child's birth mom to spend the day with them on Mother's Day.



- This foster family purchased a larger camper so they could take all of the children to Alberta.
- This foster dad gave up his bedroom to have a child come into his home.

- This foster family has welcomed this girl into their home and made her feel like she fits into a family now. She said "They actually want me!"



Occasionally I get requests from our workers seeking help with a variety of sewing projects. Here I share with you some stories of the incredible volunteers that helped with six such requests.

Heartful of Memories Pillow Project

This past January, a group of women from Neepawa took on our Heartful of Memories Pillow Project. The ladies sew characters and pillows that children in our care choose to symbolize the people in their lives that they love and who care for them.

Since the women first heard about the initiative last fall from our Leading Practice Specialist worker **Nancy Hunter**, they have become an enthusiastic and reliable team. So far they have worked for over 70 hours, preparing fabrics, tracing, sewing and cutting out over 100 little figures. Each have said that they are pleased to be a part of something so real and tangible for children and their families—*"It is a good feeling... to be needed."*



Birthday Bags

Mother and daughter volunteer team Heather and Katrina took on the project of recycling old material from sheets and pillowcases and turning them into drawstring birthday bags for our Preschool Enrichment Program. Preschool staff fill the bags and give one to each student on his or her birthday. This family affair duo worked hard together to make about 100 bags.

Cot Sheets and More

Jerry is a professional upholsterer and offered his expertise to help sew sheets for the Preschool Enrichment Program cots. He toiled away at this project after his regular work hours and supplied the Preschool with sheets that are far stronger and durable than store-bought ones. Preschool staff couldn't be happier! In the past, Jerry has also sewn many drawstring bags that have been shared between the Preschool and our Parent Child Home Program.

Safety Vests

Karen is also a pro seamstress who spends most of her working hours making dance and skating costumes and doing alterations. In her 'off' time, she took on the task of making adult and children's sized safety vests for the Preschool staff and children. These items are important as they are worn on outings and field trips to help everyone stay safe, accounted for, and visible when they are away from Preschool. Karen made sure the vests were durable and skillfully sewn so they can be used often. And they are!

'Soaker' Collars

Ladies of the Brandon Hills Sewing Club were instrumental in completing several Velcro 'soaker' collars for a child attending our Victoria Day Care Centre. They also mended a



beloved dress-up gown for the Preschool that had begun to fall apart after being played with by so many children. We look forward to having the Brandon Hills Sewing Club to take on more projects in the future.

Honouring A Legacy

Our Chief Executive Officer **Dave McGregor** was contacted by a gentleman whose wife had recently passed away.

She enjoyed making cloth dolls and had five dolls left unclothed at the time of her passing. Her husband wished to honour her memory by having the dolls completed and he asked Dave if we had any volunteers that would be willing to help. I reached out to Sylvia and Darlene and they very quickly embraced the project.

Sylvia said "It was my pleasure to sew these clothes to honour the lady who made the dolls. I hope her husband takes pleasure in their completion and in knowing that lots of little kids will now be able to enjoy playing with them."



Thank you for your support!



Books and toys for
our **Preschool
Enrichment
Program** library



Programs and services
at our **Elspeth Reid
Family Resource
Centre**



MANITOBA COMMUNITY SERVICES COUNCIL INC.
Programs and services at our
**Elspeth Reid Family Resource
Centre**



IODE Diamond Jubilee (1960) Chapter
Baby layette sets and knitted 'Izzy' dolls



For Good. Forever.
Parent-Child Home Program

Order of Eastern Star shines gift on Resource Centre

The Queen Mary Chapter #3, Order of the Eastern Star, Brandon Chapter, recently gifted the **Elspeth Reid Family Resource Centre** with a donation of \$1,000.

"We chose the Resource Centre as a beneficiary because of one of our members' positive experiences there," said **June Dauphinais**, Worthy Matron of the Brandon Chapter.

"This member brought it to our attention because of its great programs and services, and its setting that makes families and children feel safe and secure."

The Brandon Chapter raises money for charities with their annual soup and sandwich lunch held each September at the Masonic Temple. They also cater for various events, and have held a pancake breakfast fundraiser at Applebee's. As well, the group has provided yearly scholarships to local high schools.

The Order of the Eastern Star is the largest fraternal organization in the world to which both men and women may belong. There are over 10,000 Chapters in Canada, the United States, and 18 other countries. The Brandon Chapter has been around for 101 years and is comprised of 92 women and men.



Lisa Ramsay (centre), Coordinator of the Resource Centre, accepts a donation from Order of the Eastern Star Brandon Chapter members (l-r) **Lori Thomson, June Dauphinais, Ann Reid, Sandra Worley**

Celebrating Administrative Professionals

May 3, 2017, was our day to celebrate and honour the ladies that make up our clerical unit—Marilyn, Kerry, Marie, Shayna, Korina, Chantal, Donna M., Mallory, Donna L., Leandra, Bev, and Patty (missing from photo). These gals work tirelessly to help our workers in supporting the services and programs our Agency offers to Westman children and families. Here's what some supervisors and their units said about this important group of dedicated and hard working Administrative Professionals:



- On behalf of our unit, I can say that we'd be lost without Donna L.—as would several other workers because she does such a fantastic job of organizing all of us and our information that so many people rely on. When we ask her for help, notes, etc., Donna always works quickly and efficiently—sometimes I'm actually shocked at how fast she gets things done! She has done so much work for our unit organizing files and piles of notes over the last few months to keep our work consistent and efficient, which has been so valuable. I don't know what we would do without you Donna!
- I could not do my job without Korina. She is fast, efficient and always there to help me with whatever I need, and I cannot say how much I appreciate her hard work and commitment to keeping things running smoothly!
- Shayna M. runs the ship around here with grace and gentility. Her efficiency and competence is irreplaceable; she supports the work we do to better serve the families and children in our community.
- Our Agency is very lucky to have such a dedicated conscientious team of Administrative Professionals who always perform their duties with professionalism!
- Marie is my—and several other peoples'—right arm. I could not do what I do every day without her!
- I can't stress enough how lucky we are to have such hardworking, dedicated, organized clerical support. Without them, we would be one big, hot mess. They are a HUGE help to everyone and are SO appreciated!