



# CFS Matters!

Summer 2016

## in this issue...

AGM Highlights .....	2-3
Resource Centre .....	4
Westaway Bay youths host cultural festival .....	5
Annual conference.....	6
Celebrating youth in care .....	7
Thank you .....	8

## Child and Family Services of Western Manitoba

strengthening families and protecting children since 1899

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](http://www.cfswestern.mb.ca)

**D**ear Friends,  
One of the highlights of this summer issue of **CFS Matters!** is our recent Annual General Meeting. As a private, non-government Agency, the AGM is an opportunity for us to tell our community stakeholders about our past year of service.



AGM wall decorations and table centerpiece 'cakes' were made by the children who attend the Agency's preschool, day care and family resource centre programs (more artwork in the next issue)

Our 2015-2016 Annual Report (see our website [www.cfswestern.mb.ca/](http://www.cfswestern.mb.ca/)

Media), presented at the AGM, showcases many Agency specific performance indicators. We continue to increase our understanding of these results and how they connect to better outcomes for children and youth.

This is an important step to enhancing our accountability and commitment to better outcomes for the children, youth, and families we serve. Our report details our performance indicator results for supporting families, protecting children, caring for children and families, and working in partnership with our community.

As you will read, it has been another year of challenge, change and

opportunity for Child and Family Services of Western Manitoba in serving our children and families of Westman!

*Dave McGregor*  
Dave McGregor, MSW, RSW  
Chief Executive Officer

*Phil Shaman*  
Phil Shaman  
President, Board of Directors



See the next issue of CFS Matters! for details of the PEP's 50th anniversary celebration

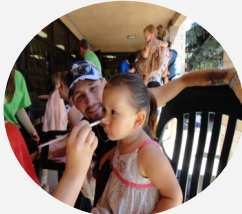
If you would prefer to receive our newsletter via email, please send your email address to [commed@cfswestern.mb.ca](mailto:commed@cfswestern.mb.ca)

*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.*

### Elsbeth 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



# 2016 Annual General Meeting Highlights

**Supporting. Protecting. Caring. Together.** Those four words were the highlights of CFS Western's 117th Annual General Meeting, held Tuesday June 7 at the Brandon University Dining Hall.

"They all represent the values and beliefs on how best we achieve our mission and goals," said **Dave McGregor**, Chief Executive Officer.

"We believe that providing early supports and services to families is the best way to prevent child maltreatment, and it's an approach that is supported by much research."

The Agency has a dual mandate to protect children and strengthen families. But most community awareness of a child welfare system is based on media coverage of the protection part, and is often negative.

"It is also critical that our communities understand and support the family strengthening role of our mandate," said McGregor.

"We try to work collaboratively with parents and their support networks, with a focus on child safety.

"Demonstrating care and compassion for these families and children is a cornerstone of building effective, helping, relationships.

"We do this work by partnering with the families we serve and the communities we live in."

**Phil Shaman**, President, Board of Directors, restated a well-known child welfare phrase—*it takes a village to raise a child*—in his opening remarks.

"Our 'village' includes every one of our dedicated staff, foster parents, volunteers, those who provide financial support for our family strengthening programs, and a wide range of service providers and partners.

*"We cannot and do not work—or succeed—in isolation."*

*Dave McGregor,  
CEO, CFS Western*

"We truly appreciate everyone's efforts in supporting the families and children of Westman."



(l-r) **Darlene Kirkup**, Supervisor, Rural Family Services; **Brynn Kirkup**, 2016 Sun Fund for Kids Coordinator and Resource Centre Summer Program Coordinator

**Debbie Besant**, Chief Executive Officer of The General Child and Family Services Authority, agreed.

"CFS Western's dedication, innovation, supportive work, and partnerships helps families flourish every day.

"And this Agency is also well known for its community engagement as evidenced by the many partners and representatives here tonight."

Besant also noted CFS Western's work in initiatives such as the Westaway Bay Family Centre—now in its third year, the Elspeth Reid Family Resource Centre, the Agency's child care programs, and with newcomer Canadians.

McGregor specifically spoke about the *Westaway Bay Family Centre*, a spin-off of the Elspeth Reid Family Resource Centre, and how it provides more accessible services to vulnerable families right in their own neighbourhood to help strengthen those families and build a healthier community. A coalition of service providers offers a small variety of programs and services for area families. The facility's users also get a say in what they want in their Centre.

"Outcomes indicate this is a very successful approach," said McGregor.

"And because of it, I am very excited to announce we are starting work with a coalition in Neepawa to begin developing a similar concept there."

*"CFS Western does a wonderful job of working in partnership with many other community agencies and organizations, making it easier for everyone to provide services. But the real winner in this collaborative approach are the children, youth and families of south western Manitoba."*

*Laura Crookshanks  
Chair, Board of Directors  
General Child and Family Services  
Authority*



(l-r) **Laura Crookshanks**, **Debbie Besant**, and **Arlene Stewart**, CFS Western's Director of Programs

A topic that McGregor stressed throughout the evening was that child welfare cannot work in isolation from the community. He particularly noted that one of CFS Western's strengths as an Agency was their ability to partner closely with the community to help protect children and strengthen and support families.

One of the strongest examples of this is the Agency's involvement on the *Westman Community Mobilization* team, which brings 10 different service providers together to identify families and individuals who may be at risk in the community.

"The program has been running for just over a year and in that time, 87% of the 140 families and individuals approached were connected to services.



## AGM highlights...continued

"One of the team's major accomplishments has been to pull the agencies together to improve outcomes for families and individuals.

"Through this outreach, fear is turning into hope for those at risk."



(l-r) Honourary Agency Life Member **Mrs. Bea Jolly** with member **Wendy Russell**

Another new initiative CFS Western hopes to launch over the next year—and in partnership with another agency—is called *Caring Dads*. This program is an intervention one designed for dads who have physically or emotionally abused or neglected their children, or exposed them to domestic violence, or are at high risk for these behaviours. It helps fathers better value their children, and helps better ensure the safety and well-being of these children.

*Caring Dads* resulted from the implementation of the Agency's *Safe and Together* model which focuses on intervention with families dealing with intimate partner violence. Through *Safe and Together*, the Agency recognized there is a lack of services and supports for dads in Westman. Offering *Caring Dads* can help address this need.

Other highlights of the meeting included recognition of long-time Agency and CFS Foundation friend and supporter **John Russell**, who retired from the Foundation Board of Directors after nearly 12 years.

Russell served on both the Agency Board, starting in 1996, and the CFS Foundation Board, which he moved to in 2004. Both stints included a few years as Chair.

"The real gift of John's service has been his understanding of our

mission—which is the nurturing of children—and the support of Westman families," said **Joe Ball**, current Chair of the Foundation.

"That understanding of the work CFS does for children and families has made John a keeper of the vision, an articulate voice for the needs of the Agency, and a steady presence through times of significant change at both the Agency and the Foundation."



Also recognized was **The Road Rebels Car Club**, who over the last number of years have raised more than \$16,000 in support of the Elspeth Reid Family Resource Centre.

"The Road Rebels are a community that has come together around cars and a shared passion for all things automotive," said Ball.

"But their vision as a car club has been to harness that hobby to help our community.

"Their fundraisers and support for us have not only raised dollars, but also awareness of our work."

Retiring from the Agency Board was long time member and former President **Ernie Bruneau**. Ernie and his wife Kathy are also foster parents of many years.



CFS Western staff who have worked for the Agency between five and 25 years were also recognized for their service.



(l-r) **Mark Gillis**, Comptroller, with **Marilyn Hoad**, Accounting, who received her 20-year service award

**Lorry Hart**, Supervisor, Resource Development, with her 15-year service award



### 2016—2017 Board of Directors

#### Executive...

- ... **Phil Shaman**, President
- ... **Ramona Coey**, Past President
- ... **Bob Ferguson**, 1st Vice President
- ... **Peter Hechler**, 2nd Vice President

#### Members...

- ... **Joe Ball**
- ... **Travis Chastko**
- ... **Joy Escalera**
- ... **Lynn Galbraith**
- ... **Dayle Hughson**
- ... **Jordan Trotter**
- ... **Kris Tufts**



# 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 the



Summer is here after a very busy spring! Our past session was full of opportunities for families and a variety of learning experiences for everyone.

We offered two separate sessions of **Positive Discipline**, which continues to show effectiveness and get good reviews from parents. Another great success was **Seeds of Hope**, our Spanish parenting course led by workers **Mercedes Avila** and **Rafael Leal**.

For the first time, we presented **Growing Up Green**—a Bookmates parent and child literacy program to encourage natural play and exploration—that was a great experience for participants. Family literacy remains a strong focus for us and we offered several different programs for families to strengthen their joy of learning together.



Growing Up Green

Another first was our hosting a spring **Grand Tea**. We know how valuable our grandparents and grandfriends are and we wanted to honour these precious relationships. So we invited children, parents, and their chosen grandparents and grandfriends. Everyone had a lovely time of crafts, play, reading, and enjoying a tea party together.



Grand Tea

We were also pleased to present **Dr. Bill Webster**, a grief counsellor, author, TV host, and well-known international speaker, for an evening workshop on the grief and loss we live with when a loved one is lost to suicide. Dr. Webster is someone who knows about grief—not just in theory, but from a very difficult personal experience. He shared his own story and gave a powerful presentation that brought family survivors together in great comfort.

Our attention now turns to summer. In mid June we welcomed **Brynn Kirkup** as our 2016 Summer Program Coordinator. Her first job was to continue our tradition of **Fun Fest**, held on Thursday, June 30. The event is family-based with crafts and activities indoors and out (weather permitting) so parents and children can enjoy time together. About 150 people attend annually.

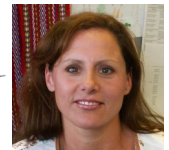
Then during July and August, Brynn will lead a fun filled summer of craft days, tours, field trips and swimming dates for parents to enjoy with their children to make long lasting memories!

Our fall 2016 Programs Calendar is set and will be available mid August. Parenting classes, support groups and parent and child opportunities will once again be plentiful!

Have a safe summer with your family—play and laugh much!

As always, my door is open. I'd love to hear your feedback—feel free to contact me at 204-726-6258 or [frc@cfswestern.mb.ca](mailto:frc@cfswestern.mb.ca).

  
Lisa Ramsay



## Congratulations to...

- ...All our children on their successful school year!
- ...All those graduating!
- ...All the parents instrumental in making these happen!

## Rural Prevention

**Val Caldwell**, Rural Prevention Facilitator, has resigned from her position after nine years of delivering parenting courses to Westman families. We wish Val all the best and are grateful for her many years of service.



# Westaway Bay youths host cultural festival *by Lisa Ramsay*

**F**ebruary 20, 2016, will definitely be a day to remember for three of our youth—**Kona Crane, Albert Bradford** and **Charity Amiotte**—from the *Westaway Bay Family Centre*.

The three—along with over 200 aboriginal youth aged 12 to 18 from across the province—attended the *Kasikikidenidung* or *Pushing the Limits* conference, held at Brandon's Assiniboine Community College. It was a daylong event designed to help the youth find their potential, introduce them to a variety of opportunities, and instil a sense of confidence in their future.

I went along with Kona, Albert and Charity, and we had an amazingly empowering day filled with a dynamic line-up of events and activities.

We listened to Elders teachings and heard inspirational and respected community leaders speak about the value of Aboriginal youth. There were breakout sessions, entertainers, social time with delicious traditional food, and hoop dancing.

Mainly, all the youth were repeatedly encouraged to speak their vision and relentlessly pursue their goals in a positive direction.

Each youth left the conference with an opportunity to write an essay with a project idea, and submit it to the conference organizers for a chance to win a grant that would bring their idea to life.

Kona, Albert and Charity excitedly took on the challenge, brainstormed many different ideas, then prepared and submitted an essay for the competition. And they were thrilled when they got notice that one of their ideas was the winning one!

Their essay included a host of great project ideas such as organizing a neighbourhood group to spend a day volunteering in another area, holding their own cultural festival on Westaway Bay, honouring and showing respect for missing and murdered indigenous women, and going on a full day summer field trip outside of Brandon.

Shortly after the competition closed, I got a call from **Jason Gobeil**, host at the youth conference and Aboriginal Community Coordinator for the Brandon Urban Aboriginal People's Council (BUAPC)—the essay committee had chosen Kona, Albert and Charity's cultural festival idea as its grant winner!

Many planning meetings later, the Westaway Bay celebratory First Nations and Métis festival came to life on June 19 in the local park. The event included all the elements our youth had envisioned for their festival and more—such as over 200 people of all ages attending!

Festival goers enjoyed traditional drummers, Tipi, Métis and traditional medicine teachings, jig music, Pow Wow dancers, food, face-painting, community displays, free draws and giveaways, and much more.

Jason emceed, and local boxing champ and former Westaway Bay resident **Noel Harding** spoke to the crowd about setting goals and the hard work it takes to achieve them.

**Mariah Phillips** from Manitoba Housing presented Kona, Albert and Charity with a recognition award and a gift to honour the positive leadership they were showing.

The festival was a great success—mainly thanks to the hard work, efforts and visions of Kona, Charity and Albert.

I also thank several organizations for their part in making the festival a winner: Manitoba Housing, Brandon Friendship Centre, the Addictions Foundation of Manitoba, Building Student Success with Aboriginal Parents (BSSAP) from the Brandon School Division, Samaritan House, City of Brandon, Women's Resource Centre, Sexuality Education Resource Centre, and the Manitoba Métis Federation.

My deep gratitude also goes to the parents of our Westaway Bay youth for all their support during the process of planning this event.

All of us are so very proud of these kids!

*The Westaway Bay Family Centre is a strength based and supportive Centre for all families that make up that neighbourhood. We know that when children feel seen, heard and acknowledged for who they are and when their parents are respected for the important role they play, good outcomes are inevitable. Our coalition of agencies at the Centre helps the parents and their precious children by bringing their visions forward. This article shares one of the many programs and experiences worth celebrating in the Westaway Bay neighbourhood. It was acknowledged by many that during our festival celebration, we had an eagle soaring above the park bringing a teaching of love.*



# Conference focuses on helping children cope with grief

Over 150 people from a variety of settings attended CFS Western's two-day annual conference in May on helping children cope with grief, loss and trauma.

There were educators, counsellors, advocates, mental health workers, child welfare professionals, foster parents, and child care, in-home support and residential care providers.

"The conference's focus was *Understanding and Skills for Working With Grief, Loss and Trauma in Children* and is a step in our Agency's ongoing practise transformation towards a more safety focused, trauma informed, collaborative and strengths based model of working with children and families," said **Dave McGregor**, Chief Executive Officer of CFS Western.

"We were very excited to present **Amelia Franck Meyer** (Chief Executive Officer) and **Mechele Pitt** (Executive Director) from Anu Family Services in Minnesota and Wisconsin, to lead us through two days of learning more about how grief, loss and trauma impacts children's lives, and how we can become more effective in responding to those children in our varied roles."



Amelia Franck Meyer



Mechele Pitt

(Anu Family Services is an award-winning child welfare agency which is producing nationally-recognized child permanence and placement stability outcomes for children, and is on the leading edge of promoting and measuring well-being.)

One of the Agency's responsibilities in child welfare is ensuring that children and youth have permanent connections in their lives. Trauma and loss, and grieving trauma and loss, have significant impacts upon children's abilities to connect to others. Trauma work is critical to a child's health and well being—it can impact their development, how they create attachments to caregivers, affect their schooling, and lead to self-harming and addictions.

Feeling unloved is traumatic to a child. The conference helped participants learn how children become disengaged to protect themselves from pain and trauma, and how children need to have safe and secure attachments to adults in order to thrive.

"Some of our staff and I first saw Amelia and Mechele at an international Differential Response conference last October," said McGregor.

"I remember coming away from that session feeling inspired, motivated and yet a bit challenged.

"The latter came from realizing that while our Agency was doing some things well and were fairly trauma informed, there were other areas where we could improve to get as trauma effective as we need to be in our work with children and families.



"Strengthening our skills and tools for working with these kids and families helps us create a trauma informed environment overall throughout our Agency with our staff, the families we work with and our community partners."



*"Children must have safe and secure attachments to adults in order to thrive...and survive."*

Amelia Franck Meyer  
ANU Family Services





## Celebrating youth in care

Family, friends, foster parents, and CFS Western staff all gathered together the evening of June 1 for one common purpose: to celebrate and honour 17 of the Agency's youth in care who, in the past year, reached the age of 18.

"Turning 18 is a major highlight in one's life and we want to ensure we acknowledge and commemorate this for our youth in care," said **Breanna Dick**, Youth Engagement Specialist for CFS Western.

"This is the fifth year we've been holding this celebration and it's always very well-received by the youth and their guests."



Each youth can bring up to five people to celebrate with and receive support from during the evening. The youth are individually recognized through a speech given on their behalf that commends them for their accomplishments. After each speech, that particular youth is presented with a gift.



The evening began with a catered dinner, music and a slideshow that gave the audience a closer look at each of the youth being honoured.

"The focus of the entire evening is to make each youth feel special, recognized, and to celebrate with them their important and memorable milestone of turning 18," said Dick.

Thirteen of the 17 youth being honoured were able to attend this year's event along with their chosen supporters.

"We always look forward to planning and hosting this particular event," said Dick.

"And by hearing about it from those who have been honoured, the other kids say they really look forward to it being their turn!"



# Thank you for your support!



Since September 2015, **Canadian Tire Jumpstart Charities** has helped our Agency send 120 Westman children to take part in sports or recreation programs.

Jumpstart is a national charity with a commitment to local communities. They help kids all across Canada whose families are in financial need participate in sports and recreational activities. CFS Western has been partnering with Jumpstart for well over 10 years.



(l-r) **Lisa Ramsay**, Coordinator, Elspeth Reid Family Resource Centre, with **Lorna Cowan**, President, IODE Diamond Jubilee (1960) Chapter



**IODE Diamond Jubilee (1960) Chapter** presented 25 new children's books to the Elspeth Reid Family Resource Centre on May 26 to help honour the first birthday of Princess Charlotte of Cambridge.



(l-r) IODE Diamond Jubilee (1960) Chapter members **Leita Paterson**, **Judith MacDonald**, Elspeth Reid Coordinator **Lisa Ramsay**, **Lorna Cowan**, **Pat Bowslaugh**



Framed certificate honouring Princess Charlotte. The certificate reads:  
In Honour of  
Princess Charlotte of Cambridge  
Born May 2, 2015  
We dedicate these books for use and enjoyment  
by the children in the  
community of Brandon.  
IODE—Diamond Jubilee (1960) Chapter

**Elton Collegiate's Youth In Philanthropy** group recently gifted the Agency with a total of \$1,250 in grants:

- \$375 for the **Sun Fund for Kids**—to help send children who otherwise may not have a chance on a summer camp adventure they're sure to remember for a lifetime
- \$500 to the **Preschool Enrichment Program**—to help provide 40 preschool children with milk for nearly 20 weeks
- \$375 to the **Elspeth Reid Family Resource Centre**—to help purchase books and toys for the children (over 4,000 each year!) who participate in Centre programs or who attend their child care centre



(l-r) **Chantelle Holander**, Elton Collegiate Youth In Philanthropy group member, with **Susan Cable**, Community Education Coordinator for CFS Western