



CFS Matters!

Winter 2017

in this issue...

Family Finding.....	2
Celebrating Foster Families.....	3
Resource Centre	4
New <i>Caring Dads</i> program begins February 2017	5
Thank you for your support	5
Foundation Forum.....	6

Child and Family Services of Western Manitoba

strengthening families and protecting children since 1899

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Dear friends,

In this newsletter, we are excited to share with you two new practice initiatives we are making at our Agency. Both are designed to improve the outcomes for children and families.

The first is called **Family Finding**. This approach creates urgency within an agency to find and establish family connections for children who are in agency care. Children need these connections to be successful in life following their time in care. Where this approach has been adopted (often mandated in legislation), it has led to improved permanency outcomes for children in care.

The other innovative practice is the introduction of the **Caring Dads** program. As part of our *Safe and Together* framework for working with families where there is domestic violence concerns, we realized that we do not have many evidenced informed interventions to offer the fathers. **Caring Dads** allows us to work effectively with the men who are often the perpetrators of the violence. We recently had two staff trained as facilitators and we'll be offering our first session in February.

I've always been proud of the work of our Agency, but I am particularly proud of where we are today and some of the

innovations we are taking in our practice with children and families. Stay tuned for future updates!

Dave McGregor
Dave McGregor, MSW, RSW
Chief Executive Officer

Phil Shaman
Phil Shaman
President, Board of Directors



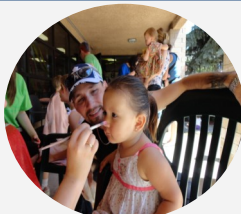
If you prefer to receive our newsletter via email, please send your email address to commed@cfswestern.mb.ca

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.

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



Family connections key for kids in care

by Heather Forsyth, Rural Resource Development

A few months ago, I was fortunate to attend a week long training workshop called **Family Finding**—a set of strategies, tools, values and beliefs designed to establish lifelong supports for youth in foster care.

Kevin A. Campbell, an internationally known youth permanency expert and former long time social services worker, created *Family Finding* to offer methods and approaches to locate and engage relatives of children currently living in an out-of-home care system. The model's goal is to connect each child with a family, so that every child may benefit from the lifelong connections that only a family provides.



Kevin led the workshop and started with identifying the model's four core beliefs:

- Every young person has an immediate and extended family who can be found if we try.
- Loneliness can be devastating—even dangerous—and is experienced by most children and youth in a care system. It is also felt by parents, who may finally lose hope and stop investing in their child's life.
- A permanent, meaningful connection to family and caring adults helps a youth to develop a sense of belonging and hope.

"Our purpose in Family Finding is to restore the opportunity to be unconditionally loved, to be accepted, and to be safe in a community and a family."

- Kevin Campbell



- The single factor most closely associated with positive outcomes for young people is a meaningful, life-long connection to a family and community of support.

Kevin challenged us attendees to grasp that child welfare is a human rights issue. His model intends to give each and every person involved in a child welfare system the connections that will make a difference. He suggested that while family may not be the primary caregiver, they are the ones who will have some desire to make a lifelong connection. Kevin flushed out the idea of permanency vs. lifetime networks, and built on the design of 'original soil' being required so a person has a sense of their roots, culture, and heritage.

During the week, Kevin showed us several videos that challenged the core beliefs we had and how important relationships are to each individual. He suggested we see a child as one that needs support networks rather than protection or systems that prevent adversity.

The workshop offered us hands-on activities using Kevin's *Family Finding* model. We heard stories of connections, and people who willingly came back to work with their families in some role. One attendee shared her role of being brought into care and said she had a brother she had not seen since their apprehension. By the next

morning, Kevin had used his networking tools and found the brother living in the United States. The siblings then had their first phone call in over 30 years.

This powerful discussion about the need for at least 40 healthy, reciprocal relationships to keep a human healthy stirred all of us to challenge how we do our work. I encourage everyone to watch several of the YouTube videos shown during our training: *Lemn Sissay—A Child of the State*; *Chimamanda Adichie—The Danger of a Single Story*; and the documentary *Place to Place*.

For more information or videos on Family Finding, visit their Facebook page or website www.familyfinding.org.

This training reinforced for me that lifetime networks are important and they help a person connect to their past and present and have hope for their future. I am very thankful for having the opportunity to attend such a hope filled workshop.



Celebrating Foster Families by Megan Murchison, Foster Care Recruiter and Trainer

Thirty-seven foster parents, five Agency board members, and 25 staff attended our annual *Foster Family Appreciation Dinner* on Thursday, September 29.

Seven families were recognized for their years of fostering, with two of them being honoured for 30 years each.

To show their appreciation and gratitude to our foster parents for all they do for our community, **David's Tea** graciously donated packages of tea for each of them. Everyone else received a coupon for a free cup of tea.

We gave recognition plaques to each foster family to honour their years of being a licensed foster home. Made by **Dundee Designs**

in Alexander, the plaques showed each families' incremental year to help signify the work that they put into their role, the dedication they show, how they have opened their homes, hearts, and own families, the love they give to our children in care, the journey they take with these children, and the gratitude that we and the children have for them.

Every day there are so many wonderful things that our foster parents do for our children in care and amazing things that happen for them. We displayed stories of APPLAUSE to highlight the positive events, supports, connections and achievements that happen for them every day.

On the back of the evening's program was a quote that only touches on the amazing things our foster families do for our children in care:

To our foster families...

Thank you for the inspirational risks you take in opening your hearts and homes to children of all ages... for your persevering through tough times and crisis...and for rejoicing with us when the healing process begins.

We applaud your visions of change and your uncanny ability to see the potential in every child—which both leads us to joyfully celebrate when together, we have made a difference in a child's life.

We thank you for your commitment to being here for the kids, whether for a day or a year or a lifetime, and for your partnership with our staff who depend so much on your tireless energy.

You give hope to the future... thank you for giving kids peace!



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



Happy New Year from all of us at the Elspeth Reid Family Resource Centre!

As I write this, it is the end of November and we're drawing near the end of our fall season of programs. There is no snow on the ground and yet we are well aware that the holiday season is fast approaching.

Last fall we had the privilege of working with so many hard working and kind hearted families. Every day we see parents who are doing their very best to meet the needs of their children. We witness parents who are so devoted to helping their kids be healthy, happy, young adults who will soon be running our community.

Hundreds of parents come to the Centre each season—many for our programs, but many come just to connect with us. They proudly share stories about what their children are doing and share tears and frustration about family life. By the end of those one-on-one conversations, we both feel better for it.

We are so proud of the programs we offer because we know and see the impact they make on strengthening parental capacity. I am equally proud of all the many other ways we make ourselves available to parents who need a kind and gentle ear so that they can resume their parenting work.

The holidays seem to bring out so many 'traditions'—some we cherish and some we vow not to bring forward into the New Year. The commercial pressures are real and felt by many parents. We remind each other that decades from now our children are not likely to remember each parcel they opened, but rather what they did through the holidays and who they spent time with.

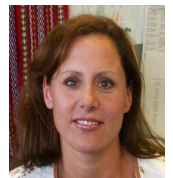
As adults, they're likely to remember the way the holidays made them feel and special activities they did as a family. Many of us are challenged to keep this at the forefront of our minds at this time of year.

That being said, we want all children to be able to have good food and a special gift on Christmas morning. As a staff, we are busy coordinating our donors and matching the needs for some of our families. Each year, we see relief in parents' eyes when we are able to help them ensure their child has something to open. Truth is, as donors, it makes the holidays for us too!

As always, my door is open and I welcome the chance to speak with you.

We hope you had a peaceful holiday that will long be remembered as special!

Lisa Ramsay



(l-r) Leslee McKee, Shawna Munroe, Renee Mekish, Jill Nesbitt, SANTA, Brenda Lacerte, Raelene Croker, Lisa Ramsay, Tammy Phillips, Darlene Antonation, Terry Keen

New program helps dads better value their children

Starting February 2017, Child and Family Services of Western Manitoba will launch **Caring Dads**, an intervention program specifically designed for abusive dads.

"There is a huge gap in services and supports for fathers—biological, step, and common-law—who have physically or emotionally abused their children, exposed them to domestic violence, or who are at high risk for these behaviours," said **Dave McGregor**, Chief Executive Officer of CFS Western.



"This program will help ensure the safety and well-being of these children by working with the dads whose actions have put the kids in unsafe situations."

Over 17 sessions, *Caring Dads* will help participants:

- develop skills to cope with frustrating situations in healthy ways;
- understand how different fathering strategies and choices affect children;
- increase their awareness of controlling, abusive, and neglectful behaviours; and
- provide them with various approaches to strengthen their relationship with their child/ren.

Caring Dads is the first program of its kind in Manitoba. It has been successful internationally including in Ontario and Alberta. It was the first—and is still one of the only—intervention programs

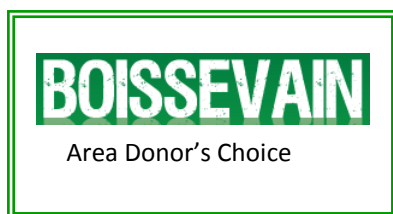
worldwide that is designed to particularly address the needs of fathers who have been abusive to their families. As a result, the program has gained substantial national and international attention.



"Research shows that when fathers are positively involved with their families, children benefit cognitively, socially, emotionally and developmentally," said McGregor.

"*Caring Dads* is a unique opportunity for dads to help put that into action by connecting in a healthy and positive way with their kids."

Thank you for your support!



Our appreciation also goes to the Victoria Landing Knitting Club, Diamond Jubilee (1960) Chapter IODE, Brandon Hills Congregation, Holy Trinity Anglican Church, Newdale Community Christmas Concert Committee, and the many other organizations and individuals who made gift or financial donations to our Agency in 2016.

Welcome to the first instalment of the **Foundation Forum**, a new section of *CFS Matters!* to help keep you updated on our Foundation's efforts to raise funds in support of the family strengthening programs and services carried out by the Child and Family Services of Western Manitoba Agency. The **Forum** will tell you about the Foundation's fundraising events, when and where they'll be visiting in your community, and how you can play a part in their financial efforts to protect children, strengthen families, and promote safe and healthy communities.

CFS Foundation 2016-2017 Board of Directors

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Katie Bonk Vice-Chairperson
Dave McGregor Secretary

Gloria Gulliver Director
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The Foundation's Board of Directors held a recognition event in early November to personally thank its donors for their continued support of the Foundation and The Sun Fund for Kids.

Event attendees heard how their support and partnerships with the community are critical to supporting CFS Western in achieving its mission and goals of keeping children safe while strengthening and supporting families.

"Our goal for this event was to provide our donors with an opportunity to meet our Foundation Board members, to receive our thanks, and to see the Elspeth Reid Family Resource Centre which is one of two programs supported by our Foundation," said **Joe Ball**, Foundation Chairperson.

"As a Board, we want to know the community that supports our work *and* we want the community to know our Board who receives and spends their generous offerings— hosting this event is one way to connect the givers with the results of their giving."

The Foundation also wanted to send the key messages that Child and Family Services of Western Manitoba is a **community** agency, led by a community-represented and community-elected volunteer Board of Directors. Joe emphasized that the Agency's work is not only child protection but family enhancement which leads to better outcomes for vulnerable families. As a result of this approach, more than 90 percent of the Agency's caseload are children living safely at home with their family.



Dave McGregor, CFS Western Agency Chief Executive Officer, addresses the audience

"The Foundation works exactly in those areas which are 'value added' for healthy families—the Elspeth Reid Family Resource Centre and the Preschool Enrichment Program," said Joe.

"These are the places where we are building groundwork for healthier families—that's where we can get the best leverage for better outcomes for the children in our communities.

"Our Foundation is very proud of our work in support of the Agency, and we want our donors to also be proud of that work.

"Because it is, in every sense, *their* work that we are about in these communities."