



Child and Family Services  
of Western Manitoba

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# CFS Matters!

## Winter 2024 Newsletter

Hello and welcome to the winter edition of our newsletter. We hope that the start to this new year has been peaceful, compassionate and kind.

Following a busy holiday season, we are keeping up the momentum with ample programming at the Elspeth Reid Family Resource Centre, staff training, and working steadily on meeting our strategic planning priorities.

Many of these priorities relate to the ongoing changes in our provincial child welfare system. To improve outcomes for children now and in their adult lives, we are making every effort to keep children together with their parents, family or network. We look forward to working with more Indigenous Governing Bodies (IGB's) as they become involved in providing services to their community members. This is an important step in supporting the path towards reconciliation. Changes to the Child and Family Services Act are continuing to reflect the involvement of IGB's as well as prioritization of preventative focused supports to families.

While we are working to ensure children are surrounded by safety networks and their natural supports, we also rely on our dedicated group of foster parents and resource families. We want to honour and celebrate them as they help care for children and make them feel safe and supported, following the trauma of being removed from their homes.

This work in our current realities is taxing for all service providers who are striving to have impact into the safety and well-being of our community. We are grateful for all collaterals and supporters who share the same vision and goals. Let's continue to work together and support each other in our efforts.

Thank-you for taking some time to read about just some of the efforts of our agency staff, board and volunteers.

Until next time,

**Arlene Stewart**  
Chief Executive Officer

**Joe Ball**  
President, Board of Directors



*Restoring*  
**RESILIENCE**

**with Dr. Michael Ungar**

Looking at the Systemic Approaches to Nurturing  
Resilience among Children, Youth and Families

**15 MAY, 2024**  
**09:00AM - 4:00PM**





# ELSPETH REID FAMILY RESOURCE CENTRE

## Where community meets children & families

Hello! Manitoba winter has arrived! We hope you all had a wonderful Christmas with lots of warm and memorable moments with your loved ones. Christmas is always enjoyed at the Centre. We host many fun and educational playtimes with parents and children to celebrate the season.

Each year, we also have Santa come for family photos. It has become a much-enjoyed tradition over the years. Thanks to many community donors, we were able to help parents to provide their children with all they need to celebrate the holidays. Gifts and food were donated by Golf Brandon Wheat City, Meyers, Norris and Penny as well as Brandon's Big Brothers and Big Sisters. We are so very grateful for their generosity and kindness. I am very proud of the ERFRC who do all the work for sorting out the family needs and ensure a parcel for each.

Additionally, we are pleased to partner each year with the United Way Christmas Tree program as well as the Christmas Cheer program to ensure that basic needs are met for every family. Out of deep respect for the privacy, dignity and love we have for our families, gifts are always given to the parents anonymously and discreetly so that they are the ones meeting the needs of their children. We are proud to be part of a circle of folks who honour the spirit of the season.

As always, we have a wide range of programs and services to support families each season. Parent education classes, a variety of support groups and a dynamic fun menu of parent-child activities are easily accessible to all.

In addition to programs, we offer community presentations, an enriching childcare experience and often we meet with parents one on one to give that special care needed. The renovation of our Store continues to bring in new shoppers weekly. Community partnerships are picking up once again and we appreciate a chance to collaborate with agencies to build a stronger community for our families.



Storytime at the Family Resource Centre



## Need help parenting your tween?

Tuesday 1:30 - 3:15pm starting February 6 - March 12, 2024  
Elspeth Reid Family Resource Centre | 255-9th Street

Call 204-726-6280 to sign up





# ELSPETH REID FAMILY RESOURCE CENTRE

**Where community meets children & families**

One of the programs I can highlight for you is the Positive Discipline course. It is an evidence-based parent education group for parents of children any age. In the program, parents learn how to develop that beautiful balance of structure and warmth in their relationship with their children. Parents are encouraged to reflect on their short- and long-term goals as a family.

Parents self evaluate their parenting and how it fits with their goals. This program is delivered over 10 weeks, so we have time to delve into the complexities of family life. The outcomes are positive for child safety and family wellness. We are pleased to hear the program is evolving to weave in more trauma informed care elements. As a Centre we evolve with the needs of our families.

Wishing you all a peaceful winter season. Enjoy some quiet and cozy time at home with those who love and need you. Know you are welcome to call or pop in to share any thoughts or feedback you have. Take good care of one another.

Respectfully,

204-726-6258



Follow us  
@ERFRC



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@cfswesternmb



**Road Rebels Trivia Night and Cruisin'  
Winter Style Social Evening**



**Seniors For Seniors (Don-Glen Salon)**  
311 Park Avenue East.

**Saturday, March 2, 2024**

**Doors open 6pm, Trivia 7-10pm**

Email [roadrebels.net](mailto:roadrebels.net) or call 204-729-5808 for more info



## CHANGE A CHILD'S LIFE: BECOME A FOSTER PARENT

We are seeking foster homes and parents due to our community still healing from the impacts of the residential school system and the pandemic. This can appear as substance misuse, mental health issues and family violence. The result of this crisis is that there are children in need of a safe place to stay. Family members are always the first option; however a safe family option is not always available, and sometimes can take time to be identified.

There are many reasons why children can come into care including children who are in need of protection include being physically, sexually and/or emotionally abused; neglected or abandoned. Some families are simply not able to meet the needs of their children, and those children need our help.

One of our current foster families see the benefits of fostering as, "Knowing that I tried to make a difference even if it was a small one in a child's life." Child and Family Services of Western Manitoba is looking for individuals and families who are able to help by providing a warm, caring home for children in need on a temporary basis.

The process can be a lengthy one with multiple background checks including criminal records, vulnerable sector check, child abuse registry check, prior contact check with child welfare, a driver's abstract and a home assessment. If you have room in your home and in your heart to care for a child and there is no concerns with the background checks, a home study would be completed. This process allows us to learn about you, your family, how you were parented and how you parented if you have raised a child.

One of our current foster families sees the process of fostering as, "The children are our future. This is our greatest resource and biggest responsibility. The most important job there is is the raising of our children! The raising of our future!" Children coming from hard places will go through a grieving process and take time to adjust to a new routine and environment in addition to missing their family, friends, room, pets, school, etc.

They will need patience and kindness from you to help them settle in. For one of our foster families its, "Watching the children grow and change physically, mentally and emotionally," that makes their journey fostering important and worth it. Throughout this process, you will not be alone as your foster care worker will be there to help guide, support and educate you about the impacts of trauma and provide you with tools to help along the way. The child's social worker will be there to help support the child through the transition and facilitate weekly visits with them and their family members. "We believe that foster families are an extension of the birth family rather than a replacement," says Brenda Paziuk, Foster Parent Recruiter at our Agency.

One of our current foster families says that "Being able to provide a stable and loving home to the child and establishing relationships with the biological family so the child feels connected," is their reason why they foster children.

If you think that fostering may be for you or may be for someone you know, please contact Brenda Paziuk at 204-726-6103 for more information.



**IT TAKES**  
**100%** *Heart*

## LOOKING FOR FOSTER PARENTS

They don't have to have your  
genes to have your heart

**BECOME A FOSTER PARENT**





## COMMUNITY HIGHLIGHTS

### Gift Trees and Toy Drive

Through generous giving from individuals, Canadian Tire and the community, we were able to support over 200 children and youth with gifts this past holiday season.

Canadian Tire in Brandon and Home Hardware in Virden hosted CFS Holiday Gift Trees over the season as well as trees at our offices and we received overwhelming support from those communities.

We also hosted a toy drive day on December 8 to increase awareness with Pure Country and Bounce FM helping to promote our need. Thank you to all who donated, stopped by and opened their hearts to those in need.



Arlene Stewart, Robbie Lawson, Kris Tufts, Joe Ball at the Toy Drive Day December 8.

### Road Rebels Continued Support

For many years, the Road Rebels Car Club has been a proud supporter of our Elspeth Reid Family Resource Centre and an advocate for us out in the community.

The Car Club, has worked closely with our staff and Foundation board to support each other. According to Dave Burba, Car Club President, "I can see a shift in the way you and the organization approach the challenges that children face, keep up the great work."

This year, their donation is supporting families that attended the Family Resource Centre with program supplies and transportation costs.



Members of the Road Rebels Car Club and Lisa Ramsay, Family Strengthening Coordinator at the Elspeth Reid Family Resource Centre accepting a donation.



SAVE THE DATE

Rotary Westman Wine  
Festival



GALA DINNER

Thursday,  
May 9, 2024  
Victoria Inn

PUBLIC TASTING

Friday,  
May 10, 2024

For tickets or more  
information contact:  
Tracy Baker at 204-724-6576



## YOUTH WORKS

The Children's Aid Foundation Youth Works Program is for youth in or from care between the ages of 16 and 29 that provides pre-employment skills, helps to reduce barriers to employability and improves the likelihood of successful independence.

Young adults exiting care and those without on-going supports can be more likely to exit into poverty and homelessness.

There are many employment services programs designed to help youth in Brandon, "However, YouthWorks is unique in the fact that we go the extra mile. We work with every individual at their own pace and at their level to achieve the common goal of making them ultimately employable," says Youthworks Employment Mentor, Afolake Ajadi.

There are many skills that this program helps to foster and provide for youth and young adults. The benefit of being a part of the program includes eligibility for funding for a number of things that aid employment. "Apart from helping with resume building, job search, and interview preparation, we also cater for employment related individual needs like record checks, sourcing for scholarships for post secondary education, CPR or first aid training, forklift training, driver z enrollment and additional driving lessons as needed and so on," says Ajadi.

The wonderful thing about this program is that it is constantly evolving with the needs of our youth within the community.

Ajadi says that the partnership with Huddle has helped to expand the scope beyond the youth who are or have been in CFS care. Being part of the Huddle model helps to reach a wider range of youth.

As the program evolves and the partnership with Huddle grows, new initiatives are added to improve the youth's skills that participates in the program. For example, letters have been sent out to twenty employers in Brandon in collaboration with Huddle to get employers to provide feedback on what they expect of youth interviewing. "This idea came out of a few reactions I have received from most of the youth after a few interviews. Getting the employer's perspective will help them know what they are doing wrong when they attend interviews," says Ajadi.

The Agency is one of six sites across Canada that offers the Youth Works Program providing employment readiness skills, training, job placement and support. The Agency is in the seventh year of delivering the Youth Works program to youth from CFS agencies in Brandon and surrounding areas.

**"I'M LEARNING HOW TO TAKE INITIATIVE AND AM GETTING SUPPORT IN MANAGING ALL PARTS OF LIFE SO I CAN BE READY FOR A JOB."**

-Feedback from participating youth





## BOARD OF DIRECTORS ANNUAL STRATEGIC PLANNING

Every year our committed Board of Directors engages in a review of our goals and priorities. At this year's annual strategic planning event, the Board reflected on the social issues impacting child and family wellbeing and our agency's role in responding to these. These 5 main goals drive the work that we do and guide us in fulfilling our mission

### Our Goals



Strengthen and support families



Protect children from neglect, abuse, violence and exploitation



Ensure children in our care are nurtured and supported in ways that promote their well-being



Work in partnership with the community



The health and wellbeing of children and families of Western Manitoba will continue to drive our Agency's commitment to improve the services we deliver

### Guiding Principles

#### Collaboration

Building safe, caring  
respectful relationships

#### Connection

Supporting, strengthening  
and developing a sense of  
belonging to community  
and culture

#### Accountability

Being responsible for our  
words, our actions and our  
impact

#### Innovation

Encouraging diverse ideas  
and adaptability

### JOIN OUR CFS SERVICE TEAM



Ready for a new challenge this year?

We're looking for passionate individuals  
to join our CFS Service Team.

**APPLY TODAY!**



## THE FOUNDATION FORUM

### Joe Ball, On behalf of the Foundation

In recent years, the 'busy season' for our Foundation Board has been the summers, when we partner with the Brandon & Area Car Enthusiasts and our friends from the Road Rebels to run the Cruise Night BBQ stand. Winter, by contrast, seems like a time of hibernation. On the far side of Christmas, the weather conspires to keep us inside.

Just as in nature, however, there is a lot going on beneath the still, snowy surface of this season. Winter is also a time for planning ahead, and anticipating the activity that will take place at the first opportunity. At the Foundation, we're aware of the ongoing prep work of a number of community partners who contribute in any number of ways in support of our programming at Elspeth Reid.

The Road Rebels? Well, the cars may be parked until the snow clears; but on March 2nd, they are hosting a get together event they call the "Winter Cruise." It's a social event featuring a Trivia Contest (yep, with prizes) and some music and dancing that will go on until it's technically March 3rd. It's still January as I write this, so you can use the time to put together a team. The real winners are the families at Elspeth Reid, and the students at Crocus Plains, who are supported by the Car Clubs that night.

Another of our long-standing community partners is the Rotary Club of Brandon. For decades they have put together a Gala night, with fine-dining and wine tasting – the proceeds of which find their way into our work at the Elspeth Reid Family Resource Centre. This year's Gala will take place on May 9th, at the Victoria Inn. The Gala brings together people from all corners of our community, with the goal of getting help to where it is most needed. Rotary's support over the years has enabled CFS Western to provide needed programming, to families most in need of support.

A Gala event may seem to be worlds away from the situations our Agency staff encounter in their work with families, but the truth is of course that whether we are givers or receivers of CFS Services, we're all part of one and the same community here in Westman. Our Foundation is grateful for community partners, like the Road Rebels and the Rotary Clubs, who see this connection and commit to partnership, with a goal of making this region a great place to raise a family.

So whether your tastes run to trivia and tunes, or to fine wines and dining, these are some fun ways you can come out to support the work we are doing. Please plan on joining us and our partners at these events. I hope to see you there!

On behalf of the CFS Western MB Foundation Board,

Joe Ball, Chair



255 9th Street, Brandon MB R7A 6X1  
204-726-6122  
[www.cfswestern.mb.ca/foundation](http://www.cfswestern.mb.ca/foundation)