

June 2009

Dear Caregivers:

I would like to take this opportunity to send Minister Tom Christensen our best wishes as he moves back to being a regular citizen. His dedication and true caring for children and youth in BC has made a difference in their lives. Thank you for your support of the BCFFPA and children and youth in this province.

We look forward to a continued positive working relationship with the new Minister, Mary Polak. Your Vice President Heather Bayes and I will be setting up a meeting with her in the near future in order to voice concerns we have receive from the general members throughout the province. We invite members to provide fact-based information you would like us to bring forward. All information must be received in the Federation office no later than June 30th.

This past year has been very busy. One focus has been development of the document outlining the rights of foster parents such that these are in harmony with the new rights for youth and children. Despite many struggles over the past few years, we are very happy to report that these new rights should soon be included in the Caregivers Support Service Standards document when the final edits are completed. We will be taking the Foster Parents Rights document forward as a private members bill when the legislature resumes in August.

Another good news item to report is that through the diligent efforts of the BCFFPA and the value the Ministry places on its foster home resources, the BCFFPA Insurance Rider coverage has been **increased from \$300,000 to \$500,000** per occurrence effective May 1, 2009.

Other projects the BCFFPA continues to work on are:

- A BCFFPA Representative sits on the International Foster Care 2011 committee. Victoria BC is the venue for this conference which will take place in the summer of 2011. Delegates from the committee will be attending IFCO in Dublin Ireland in July of this year. This should prove to be a real boost for our Retention of Foster Parents as we welcome Foster Parents from all over the world to beautiful Victoria BC.
- The Provincial Recruitment and Retention Committee continues to meet to work at ways to better recruit new homes and to retain current resources. Several issues including Protocols are being worked on at the Retention Committee, and there will be a forum to showcase the work of the Recruitment Committee held May 22<sup>nd</sup> at the AGM and Conference. The work of this committee is funded through a grant from MCFD.
- The BCFFPA has applied for a grant from the Law Foundation to develop written materials and provide workshops outlining the legal liability Foster Parents undertake in caring for Ministry children. In addition we will be developing a booklet of information and providing training and workshop materials to the agencies out of this grant should we be successful. Look for more information as it becomes available.
- As part of our contracted services with MCFD, the Federation continues to provide insurance training to foster parents and Ministry staff throughout

the province. There are several training events planned for the next few months. Some areas we have gone to include, the East and West Kootenay, Central interior, and the North Island.

- A new service planned to begin in the next several months is the Serenity Program. The objective of the program will be to provide a safe and positive environment for individuals and their families with special needs. The program will be run by a group of professionals who specialize in a diverse range of behaviors. The services offered will include Learn and Play Support, Behavioral Consulting, Busy Bees Play Group (2-4), Mini Boppers Social Club (5-12), Youth Connection Club (13-18), Summer Day Camps, Family Support Services and Workshops, FASD, FAS, FAE Training & Workshops and Art Therapy

(13-18) Program topics for older youth will include social skills, self esteem, budgeting, hygiene, friendships, relationship, and Job Preparations Support.

(5-12) Support and education for pre teens, dealing with everyday challenges both at home and in their communities. Some topics may include bullying, budgeting, hygiene, friendships, and relationships.

Summer camps will also be provided for children and youth to help support families with out of school care during summer holidays.

Please contact Joanne Wilson-Project Coordinator for further information. [serenity@bcfosterparents.ca](mailto:serenity@bcfosterparents.ca) or 1-800-663-9999.

Finally, I would like to say to those of you who have become a significant part of the youth or children in your homes, a big "THANK YOU" for the positive influence you have had on the lives of our future generations. When the paths of other persons cross ours, we have to be there no matter what has happened. Remember that the charity and care that you have given them will speak volumes about the vitality of this gift that you freely gave to others.

I wish you all a tremendous spring & summer. Remember the Federation is your voice and your organization. We are here to support all caregivers including Foster Parents, CLBC caregivers, Youth Adjudicated Homes, Grandparents, Kith and Kin, and Child in the Home of a Relative care providers. When we as caregivers gather once a year we benefit from each other's support and collective wisdom.

Sincerely,

Melanie Filiatrault