THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ALBERTA FOSTER PARENT ASSOCIATION
THE BRIDGE

October 2015

FEATUREING...
• Letter from the Minister
• A Dozen Ways to Connect with Teens
• Aboriginal Headstart: Cultural Preschool Program
• 2015 AFPA Bursary Winners

National Foster Family Week
October 18-24, 2015
Celebrating Foster Families!

This is a very special time to be thankful for the commitment of foster families to the care they provide for children and youth in care ~ now and every day throughout the year!

NOTICE
Deadline for submissions for next BRIDGE
December 1, 2015
RETURN UNDELIVERABLE CANADA ADDRESSES TO:
Alberta Foster Parent Association
9750 - 35 Avenue NW
Edmonton, Alberta T6E 6J6
Hello Foster and Kinship Parents,

What a beautiful summer and crazy weather. For the most part it was fairly warm with the odd cold front coming in to remind us that Fall is just around the corner. One morning I was watching for the possible sighting of a tornado from my back deck, my wife wanting me to go to the basement like they were suggesting on the television. With a new knee I did not feel like going to the basement. Besides, I was more interested in the tornado which did touch down just a few kilometres away, but I missed it all.

The week of October 18th to the 24th is Foster Family week across this great nation called Canada. I believe it was in 1988 when we were down in the Maritimes for the Canadian Foster Family Conference that we passed a motion to make the third full week in October “National Foster Family Week” in Canada, which is recognized by the Prime Minister and the Governor General of Canada.

The Board of Directors and AFPA staff thank you for your commitment and compassion in working with Alberta’s children and youth in care. Enjoy the week and take part in the activities in your local fostering community.

The AFPA children’s summer camp programs provided a great opportunity for children to enjoy themselves, learning about caring for horses and even getting to ride them. Lots of other activities such as crafts, swimming, paddle boats, games and singing songs at the bonfire. A special thank you to Brian & Joyce Golding, who brought their horses to camp from Edson, AB. I also thank the many other volunteers who took part in making it a fun place for children!

The Aboriginal Awareness Weekend saw a large crowd (approximately 180) participate in many workshops and activities. It was unfortunate the dancers had to cancel at the last minute. They are wonderful to watch and people love to get up and participate when asked to join in. The weather was also nice and warm. A special thank you to Karen & Ray Tweedle who ran the program with their supporting staff. To all the other volunteers, you were wonderful in making everything happen and keeping everyone happy.

On October 16-18 we are holding another work bee to create more positive changes to the grounds, thank you to all the volunteers who help make the children’s retreat a nicer place.

The 42nd Annual training conference and AGM is drawing near, the dates are Nov. 5-8. If you are planning on taking in the conference, please call the office to get your registration in as soon as possible as the workshops are filling up fast.

Keep up the great work you do on behalf of children and youth who need your help.

Wishing everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays.

Have a great Fall and maybe I will see you at conference.
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT
Katherine Jones

I cannot believe that it is time for another Bridge Report. Time just seems to fly by.

I am happy to report that our President, Norm Brownell, Vice President, Sylvia Thompson and I had the honour of meeting with our new Minister, Honourable Irfan Sabir. It was a great opportunity for us to share information about our Association and the various programs we offer, as well as to bring up some of the issues and concerns brought to us by you, our members. We are very excited about working with this new Ministry in doing all we can to provide supports to you, the families, who are caring for Alberta’s Children and to help in any way we can to ensure the health and safety of children and youth in care.

We are very busy in the office preparing for our upcoming 42nd Annual Training Conference and Awards Banquet being held in Jasper, Alberta at the Sawridge Hotel and Conference Centre. I am sure it will be yet another great conference. We have a wonderful lineup of training for people to choose from and some fun and exciting entertainment. I am really looking forward to attending this year, as I was unable to last year due to health concerns.

The AFPA would like to hear of any experiences you have with OBSD or any other areas of practice, in addition to any ideas you have on how to make improvements in the area you find troubling. In order for the AFPA to be able to ensure that things are going as they should, or to have improvements made, we need to hear from you, our members. We meet on a quarterly basis at a provincial table with Child Intervention Agencies, Align, and Department staff to discuss concerns, things that are working well, and to suggest ways in which things might improve. With your input we can accomplish a great deal more as we will have the voices of many to take from. Please send emails to myself or in a general format through the contact page on our website, www.afpaonline.com. If your email is something we can share on our web page, please provide us with permission to post it. Not only do we wish to hear about concerns, we really want to hear about the positive things, as well. We know there is a great deal of positive work being done by many of you and the department, which is truly important to share with one another.

The AFPA has been involved in many new and ongoing committees in order to provide a voice and to gather information. Some of the areas we have been involved in are as follow:

• Transitioning Youth in Care Committee
• Outcomes Based Service Delivery Leads Committee
• Child Intervention Service Quality Framework Advisory Committee
• Child Intervention Practice Framework Steering Committee
• Youth in Care and Mentoring Advisory Committee
• Psychotropic Medication Project Steering Committee
• Provincial Core Training Working Committee

If you have any questions about the above mentioned committees, please feel free to email Melissa Gee, Assistant Executive Director at melissa@afpaonline.com. She is more than willing to help when she can.

Our Provincial Mentorship Program is available to all regions within Alberta, with the exception of Calgary Region as they have their own mentorship program. If you, or someone you know in the foster and kinship care communities, would like to either become involved as a mentor or would like to receive support through this program, please either visit our website or contact Melissa Gee for more information. This is a very valuable program where caregivers can support one another, especially during times like these where there are many changes happening for everyone.

I hope to see many of you in Jasper. Please come and introduce yourself to me. I love to meet our members.

Vice President’s Report
Sylvia Thompson

It’s hard to believe summer is almost over. However, it is a beautiful sight to look outside and see all the colors. Enjoy them, as soon it will be white! Although, Winter also has its own beauty.

We just returned from the CFFA Conference in Niagara Falls, Ontario. We spent many days in meetings starting on the Monday and finishing on Thursday with an AGM in the morning. We had the Thursday afternoon off, followed by training sessions on Friday and Saturday.

Summer camp again, this year, was awesome. Many, many thanks to all our volunteers. Without your help, camp would not be possible.

I am looking forward to seeing you all at conference in Jasper!
CENTRAL REGION (West)
Heather Guard

Wow has time ever gotten away from me! Summer is over, first month of school has come and gone, and Halloween is on its way. So many things have taken place since I have talked to you last.

Many of the local offices have had fun at their local picnics and are busy planning a Fall activity. Foster family appreciation week is coming upon us quickly. This year the region has decided to have local activities for this event. Some are doing afternoon tea, some are having potluck suppers, and some of the offices are putting on barbecues. So, whatever is happening in your local area I hope you have a great time!

We had our first regional council meeting via video conference so that those unable to travel the great distance were able to attend. I felt it was a great success. I am looking forward to the next regional council meeting held on the third Thursday of the month, as we will now be able to deal with the region as a whole.

As time seems to be speeding up, I would encourage all in Central Region to get your registration for the Jasper conference in as soon as possible.

I would like to encourage all to enjoy our Friday Fun Night by dressing up in their favorite Halloween costume. Let’s show that people of central region know how to have fun!

EDMONTON REGION
Linda Krauskopf

Not much has happened in Edmonton Region seeing as the NDP have not yet set the budget. No contracts have been given out to Regional Council to date. We hope that a meeting with Russ Pickford, happening on October 13, 2015, will lead to receiving some contracts for the new year. We send in three different budgets for them. These contracts are Foster Parent Appreciation, Jasper Conference, CRCC Conference, and Citation Awards.

Edmonton regional council is still going to both Foster Care Linkages meetings and Kinship Care Linkages meetings, which meet every second month. These meetings are a great forum for us to be at. This is where our input is given and information is shared about regional issues and events.

The Alberta Foster Parent Association’s summer camp program went extremely well this summer. Horseback riding was included as an activity this summer, which was a huge success with the children. It was great to see the smiles on those little faces as they experienced horseback riding for the first time.

The AFPA has been working hard in organizing and preparing for our 42nd Annual Training Conference and Awards Banquet being held in Jasper, Alberta from November 5th to 8th, 2015. They have a great lineup of courses to choose from and some fun entertainment planned for Friday Fun Night. We have already received many registrations and believe it will be another full house this year. Regional Council has been given money for Jasper Conference and for a bus. For more information on booking your seats on the bus, contact Regional Council or the AFPA.

I have participated in a committee working toward developing a new information package around Psychotropic medication, which is called Pathways to Mental Health. This package helps you with questions you need to ask your doctor before or after your child is on medication. We also have an on call nurse to help you around this topic. Please contact me, or the AFPA office, if you’d like further information.
FOSTER ALLEGATION SUPPORT TEAM MEMBERS (F.A.S.T.)
Alberta Foster Parent Association is responsible for the F.A.S.T. Program.

Alberta Foster Parent Association

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NORTHEAST REGION

Northeast Region is currently being serviced by FAST Reps from other Regions.

If you are interested in becoming a FAST representative for your region, please contact the AFPA for more information.
Message from Honourable Irfan Sabir
Minister of Human Services

The third week of October is recognized annually as National Foster Family Week. On behalf of the Government of Alberta, I want to acknowledge the dedication of Alberta’s foster and kinship caregivers to improving the lives of so many young people.

You offer safe, caring homes to vulnerable children and youth during very trying times. You put these children first. You often go above and beyond to connect children to their family and community, and to help them gain stability and a sense of identity.

This summer, I met a number of people working in roles that support caregivers and children. I have also had the opportunity to meet with Alberta Foster Parent Association (AFPA) staff. I was touched by their passion and look forward to meeting more foster parents and caregivers in the months ahead.

We know foster and kinship parents are our best recruiters. I hope you can share the joys and challenges of fostering with others. The mentorship program offered through the AFPA is an excellent way of reaching out to potential foster and kinship parents. Regional and AFPA conferences are another.

No matter how you celebrate this week, please know we value the work you do. On behalf of Premier Rachel Notley and our government, thank you.

Irfan Sabir

224 Legislature Building, 10800 - 97 Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta T5K 2B6 Canada  Telephone 780-643-6210 Fax 780-643-6214

Printed on recycled paper
October 18th, 2015

To Foster Parents of Alberta,

On behalf of the Board of Directors and staff of the Alberta Foster Parent Association, I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the hard work, compassion and commitment of foster families across Alberta during National Foster Family Week from October 18th – 24th, 2015. We commend the work that all caregivers do on a day to day basis in opening their hearts and their homes to children and youth. We applaud you! We hope that you will have the opportunity to take part in local community events where your community can recognize and thank you for the incredible work that you do throughout the year. We also hope that by your shining examples you may motivate or influence others who may be thinking about becoming a foster family.

If you or someone you know is interested in finding out more about becoming a foster parent in Alberta, please contact our office toll-free by calling, 1-800-667-2372 Monday – Friday 8:15 AM – 4:30 PM; we will be more than happy to provide you with some great information.

Wishing all foster families across our fine province a wonderful Foster Family Week and thanking you for all that you do.

Sincerely,

Norm Brownell
AFPA President
AFPA’s 42nd Annual Training Conference and Awards Banquet

The moment you’ve all been waiting for!
Download your 2015 It’s All About Kids Conference Brochure today!!
www.afpaonline.com

November 5-8, 2015
Sawridge Inn & Conference Centre, Jasper, Alberta

Opening Ceremonies
Thursday 5:45 pm
“Voice, Choice, Respectful Partnerships”
Scholar in Residence/Keynote Speaker ~ Mr. Phil Goodman

Workshops
Friday - Saturday, All Day
See Online Brochure for Details

Friday Night Entertainment
Friday 7:00 pm

Pulse Entertainment
Pulse entertainment brings a professional DJ, amazing lighting and to capture the memories of your amazing costumes there will be a photo booth with a professional photographer, backdrop, props & professional photography lighting.
Come out with your best Halloween Costumes and dance the night away! Prizes for best costume, best dancers & more. Visit the photo booth to capture your great memories!

Banquet & Awards
Saturday 6:00 pm

Annual General Meeting
Sunday 9:30 am

Join us for a conference you won’t want to miss!
AFPA Meets with Alberta’s new Minister of Human Services, Honourable Irfan Sabir

Homemade Turkey Soup Recipe

Ingredients
1 leftover turkey carcass (from a 10- to 12-pound turkey)
2 quarts water
1 medium onion, cut into wedges
1/2 teaspoon salt
2 bay leaves
1 cup chopped carrots
1 cup uncooked long grain rice
1/3 cup chopped celery
1/4 cup chopped onion
1 can (10-3/4 ounces) condensed cream of chicken or cream of mushroom soup, undiluted (if desired)

Directions
Place the turkey carcass in a stockpot; add the water, onion, salt and bay leaves. Slowly bring to a boil over low heat; cover and simmer for 2 hours.

Remove carcass; cool. Strain broth and skim fat. Discard onion and bay leaves. Return broth to the pan. Add the carrots, rice, celery and chopped onion; cover and simmer until rice and vegetables are tender.

Remove turkey from bones; discard bones and cut turkey into bite-size pieces. Add turkey and cream soup to broth; heat through. Yield: 8-10 servings (about 2 quarts).

Originally published as Homemade Turkey Soup in Quick Cooking November/December 2005, p23
http://www.tasteofhome.com/recipes/homemade-turkey-soup

Congratulations!
AFPA’s Bursary Winners 2015

Nicholas Oudshoorn
Nobleford, AB
University of Lethbridge

Kimberly Harder
High Level, AB
Northern Lakes College

Zachary Harder
High Level, AB
Northern Lakes College

Rebecca Dyck
Camrose, AB
University of Alberta

Shyla Rajotte
Wainwright, AB
University of Alberta

Chase Buhler
Grande Prairie, AB
Grande Prairie Regional College

NORTHWEST REGION
Mary LeGeyt

In the region, we have had a busy year. Over the last year we’ve had Christmas parties, Easter egg hunts, and summer picnics at all sites. Each gathering different in their own way to suit the homes in that area.

Foster Care Forums are on the go now, so foster parents can have their say on what our region is doing, what is working, what isn’t working, and what we can change. We held a forum eight years ago and some of the changes that resulted from this have helped a lot especially in foster care, advisory committees, and Northwest Council Regional meetings.

As we are not having a conference this year in our region, we are looking at training that we can put on for foster parents. All our core training has been planned for this year.

We would like to congratulate our Foster Parents of the Year, Andrea and Phil Kolodychuk, and Aboriginal Foster Parent of the Year, Jackie Sander. Our Human Service Workers of the Year are Zaiiell Robiclaud and Beverly Ferguson. Our kids succeed with people like these working hard for the children.
ABORIGINAL HEAD START

Cultural Preschool Program
for 3 1/2 to 5 year old Aboriginal children.

Why choose Aboriginal Head Start?
* No cost to your family
* We welcome Aboriginal children from all over the city of Edmonton
* Free bussing is provided to families living within site specific boundaries
  * Daily Snacks are provided at each site location
* No Status Card needed—Family just needs to self-identify as having Aboriginal Ancestry
* Access to Elder and Culture/Language Instruction
* Access to specialized services (Occupational Therapy, Speech Therapy…)
  * Parent Education Groups (PAC)
  * In-Home Family Support

Program Operates: September to June
Tuesday to Friday ~ 1/2 day classes
Morning Class: 8:30am – 11:30am
Afternoon Class: 1:00pm – 4:00pm

Head Start Site Locations

Abbott School
12045 – 34 Street
Phone: 780-477-1596

Amiskwaciy Academy
101 Airport Road
Phone: 780-448-9632

Belmead School
9011 – 182 Street
Phone: 780-930-4215

This Early Intervention program is funded by both the Public Health Agency of Canada and Alberta Education.

Please contact the Family Support Worker Coordinator @ 780-640-9799 or fax 780 4523072 to learn more about why Aboriginal Head Start is the right choice for you and get your child enrolled today!!

c/o the Amiskwaciy Cultural Society
13235-146th Street, Edmonton AB T5L 4S8
Funding the Future

Foster parents and kinship caregivers have many reasons to be proud of the youth in care they supported. For those who support youth who find post-secondary success through the Advancing Futures Bursary, we are pleased to share these youth successes.

Kira Marks
Kira completed two certificate programs at Marvel College over the last two years – hairstyling and esthetics. Kira demonstrated outstanding commitment to her studies, which resulted in her completing programs early. While attending the esthetics program, Kira also worked part-time as a hair stylist to build a stronger resume.

Tyler Ludwig
Tyler graduated from Concordia University with a bachelor of management in April 2015. Tyler was involved in several extra-curricular activities, including playing competitive volleyball and being President of Concordia Students Association. Tyler also owned a successful small business while he was at university.

In addition to providing post-secondary funding and support with their transition out of government care, the Advancing Futures Bursary funds educational fees, monthly living allowances, child care and supplemental benefits during post-secondary. The bursary can fund academic upgrading, a degree, diploma, certificate or trade program.

In 2014-15, the Advancing Futures Bursary funded education and supports for 553 students at 94 institutions and campuses. Eighty-four per cent of this year’s bursary recipients have completed their studies.

Students can apply by February 1 to begin studies anytime between May and August of the same year.

Received from and printed with permission by Human Services, Government of Alberta, October 2015

A Dozen Ways to Connect with Teens

1. Before-bed chats. Maybe you don’t have a talkative teen, but making time and being available for this is an important part of the process. Who knows? One night, they may talk your ear off!

2. Do something together: Choose a way to volunteer together, do a project you’re both interested in or simply one your teen finds interesting.

3. Have inside jokes. Sharing laughter is a relationship builder!

4. Affirm what’s going well. Too often, the parts of our teens we know need maturing fill our hearts and minds. Remember to generously compliment what they’re doing right!

5. Make your relationship a priority. Schedule time just for you and your teen.

6. Enjoy social media together. You can learn a lot about their worlds in these conversations!

7. Think small. Small and simple gifts that is … little items you know will make them smile.

8. Play together. Definitely don’t make it all about the work – homework, housework, jobs, etc. Find ways to relax together. If you’re unsure what those are, ask your teen!

9. Treasure their thoughts and ideas. Listen intentionally and with care to all they choose to share.

10. Take a coffee break together … or a tea, latte, cocoa break. A few minutes prepping their favourite hot drink and offering conversation is a great connector. It doesn’t have to be serious or long, a few minutes goes a long way.

11. Hug them. Regardless of what they say, it’s true we all, including teenagers, need human touch. Go for quick squeezes, a side hug, or whatever seems comfortable. Definitely steer away from a public display if this bothers them.

12. Tell them something important. Our teens are no longer little kids, and while we still need to protect their hearts, they’re ready for more. Share a bit of your story or history, a lesson you’ve learned, or how you wrestled with a decision.

Relationship-building isn't always easy work, but honouring our teens' place in the family and in our lives will certainly help.

Shared from Newfoundland & Labrador Foster Families Association Newsletter, Fall Edition, October 2014
AFPA Membership Application
January 1, 2016 - December 31, 2016

NAME ____________________________
NAME ____________________________
ADDRESS __________________________
CITY _____________________________
PROVINCE ______ POSTAL CODE ______
TELEPHONE ________________________
EMAIL ADDRESS ____________________
DATE ______________________________

PLEASE COMPLETE ALL AREAS TO ENSURE ACCURATE INFORMATION (TYPE OR PRINT)

PLEASE MARK “X” IN THE APPROPRIATE BOX:
☐ NEW ☐ RENEW

INDICATE CLASS OF MEMBERSHIP WITH “X” IN THE CORRECT BOX:

☐ DEPARTMENT FOSTER/KINSHIP HOME
Regional Authority Name _______________________
Regional Authority Number ______________________
Classification ______________________________

☐ AGENCY FOSTER/KINSHIP HOME
Name of Agency ____________________________

☐ ASSOCIATE MEMBER

☐ LIFETIME MEMBER

METHOD OF PAYMENT
☐ MASTERCARD ☐ VISA
☐ CASH ☐ CHEQUE

Credit Card Number _______________________
Expiry Date ________________________________
Authorized Signature _______________________

CLASS OF MEMBERSHIP
1. Foster/Kinship Home Member: an individual who is licensed by Alberta Human Services or equivalent
2. Associate Member: an individual or agency that is not a licensed foster parent
3. Lifetime Member: appointed lifetime members of the AFPA (fee waived)

The membership fee is $50.00 per household per year (one card for each parent will be issued). A fee of $10.00 will be charged for all NSF cheques. If you would like your membership card laminated, please enclose an additional $0.75 per card.

By providing your email address on this application form, you are providing consent for the AFPA to initially add you to their email list in order to send information and updates related to Child Intervention in Alberta, caregiver training, and AFPA events. Individuals can unsubscribe at any time by visiting www.afpaonline.com.

Canadian Foster Family Association
Donor Membership Application
April 1, 2015 - March 31, 2016

Name(s): ____________________________
Address: ____________________________ City/Town: ____________________________
Prov./Terr.: __________________________ Postal Code: ____________________________
Phone: ( ___ ) __________ Email: ____________________________

Family Membership Fee: $20.00 OR $100.00 for 6 years
Method of Payment:
☐ Cheque ☐ Money Order

Mail this form and membership fee to:
Canadian Foster Family Association
c/o Sharon Joyal
Membership Chair
Box 1 Group 25 RR2
Ste Anne, Manitoba R5H 1R2

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