



ALBERTA FOSTER PARENT  
ASSOCIATION



July 2008

# THE BRIDGE

THE NEWSPAPER OF THE ALBERTA FOSTER PARENT ASSOCIATION

## The 9th Annual Aboriginal Awareness Weekend



... another great success!!!

### FEATURING...

- A letter from the Minister
- Pictures from the 9th Annual Aboriginal Awareness Weekend
- All-terrain Vehicles: Safety Tips for Families

#### NOTICE

Deadline for submissions for next BRIDGE

September 01, 2008

Return Undeliverable Canada Addresses to:

ALBERTA FOSTER PARENT ASSOCIATION  
Suite 102, 9622-42 Avenue  
EDMONTON, Alberta T6E 5Y4

## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

### **PRESIDENT**

Norm Brownell  
13719 Deer Run Blvd. S. E.  
Calgary, AB T2J 6L3  
(403) 271-9011 (h) (403) 271-3029 (Fax)

### **VICE-PRESIDENT**

Sylvia Thompson  
Box 7873  
Drayton Valley, AB T7A 1S9  
(780) 727-3745 (h) (780) 727-3781 (Fax)

### **DIRECTOR, ABORIGINAL CENTRAL**

Victor Bruno  
PO Box 302  
Hobbema, Alberta T0C 1N0  
(780) 585-2988 (h)

### **DIRECTOR, ABORIGINAL NORTHEAST**

Vacant

### **DIRECTOR, ABORIGINAL SOUTH**

Peter Strikes With A Gun  
Box 13  
Brockton, AB T0K 0H0  
(403) 965-2241 (h)

### **DIRECTOR SOUTHWEST, REGION 1**

Marlin Meyer  
2127 - 16 A Avenue  
Coaldale, AB T1M 1J9  
(403) 345-4128 (h and Fax)

### **DIRECTOR SOUTHEAST, REGION 2**

Ralph Welzel  
Box 118  
Scandia, AB T0J 2Z0  
(403) 362-2458 (home and Fax)

### **DIRECTOR, REGION 3**

John Starkey  
606 Oakhill PL SW  
Calgary, AB T2V 3X8  
(403) 281-4691 (h) (403) 251-7777 (Fax)

### **DIRECTOR, REGION 4**

Mike Thompson  
179 - 2nd Street W  
Drumheller, AB T0J 0Y4  
(403) 823-4771 (h)

### **HONORARY DIRECTOR, REGION 4**

Heather Guard  
RR #1  
Winfield, AB T0C 2X0  
(780) 682-2272 (h)

### **DIRECTOR, REGION 5**

Rene Rajotte  
Box 3213  
Wainwright, Alberta T9W 1T2  
(780) 842-2098 (h) (780) 842-4205 (Fax)

### **DIRECTOR - REGION 6**

Linda Krauskopf  
9505 - 95 Street  
Morinville, AB T8R 1H9  
(780) 939-5035 (h) (780) 939-5519 (Fax)

### **HONORARY DIRECTOR, REGION 6**

Vina McKee  
10112 - 171 A Avenue  
Edmonton, AB T5X 4L4  
(780) 991-5007(cell) (780) 469-2760 (Fax)

### **DIRECTOR, REGION 7**

Beverly Towe  
Box 6466  
Bonnyville, AB T9N 2H1  
(780) 826-4129 (h) (780) 826-6126 (Fax)

### **HONORARY DIRECTOR - REGION 7**

Paulette Kopp  
P.O. Box 539  
Bon Accord, AB T0A 0K0  
(780) 921-3393 (h) (780) 921-3621 (Fax)

### **DIRECTOR - REGION 8**

Mary Legeyt  
RR# 2  
Sexsmith, AB T0H 3C0  
(780) 568-2186 (h) (780) 568-2494 (Fax)

### **HONORARY DIRECTOR - REGION 8**

Andrea Kolodychuk  
Box 197  
Blue Sky, Alberta T0H 0J0  
(780) 835-2112 (h) (780) 835-2181 (Fax)

### **DIRECTOR, REGION 9**

Vacant

### **DIRECTOR, REGION 10**

Vacant

### **BRIDGE EDITOR**

Norm Brownell

### **PUBLISHER**

Melissa Johnson melissajohnson@xplornet.com

### **OFFICE STAFF**

#### **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Katherine Jones (Direct Line 780-701-4089)

#### **PERMANENCY SUPPORT WORKER**

Lavona Coutts (Direct Line 780-701-4090)

#### **ACCOUNTING OFFICER**

Rolando Evangelista (Direct Line 780-701-4091)

#### **ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT III**

Lucille Jamieson (Direct Line 780-701-4092)

#### **ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT II / Receptionist**

Ameiy Zwaan (780-429-9923)

**A.F.P.A. PHONE (780) 429-9923**

**FAX (780) 426-7151**

**1-800-667-2372**

**E-mail: info@afpaonline.com www.afpaonline.com**

# **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

## **Norm Brownell**



Hello everyone. With summer here I hope that we can get some nice weather for a change. I'm sure the farming community needs a fair amount of sunshine after all the cold rainy weather we had.

We had a number of work bees this spring at our James River camp; we accomplished a fair amount of improvements to the site. Thank you volunteers for all the hard work in improving our site

Because of the extremely wet spring it held up our schedule to build three new cabins replacing the three old cabins we had taken away. With the nice weather coming we should be getting the cabins built in the near future. I extend a very special thanks to Region 4 for making this possible.

In memory of Moe Lazarowich who passed away in April 2003, his request was for people to donate to the camp in his memory. We have now purchased over \$1700 dollars worth of baseball equipment that can be used by the children and adults to enjoy.

The Calgary Foster Parent Association has donated \$12,000 to build a fourth cabin at James River. This should be built sometime in early fall. Thank you very much for your continued support to the camp and the Alberta Foster Parent Association.

The new eight recommendations brought forward by Minister Tarchuk at the press conference in June to strengthen the Foster care system are as follows:

### **1. A provincial process should be developed to clarify expectations and improve consistency in the home assessment process.**

Action: Accepted

A new and enhanced home assessment process, including standardized tools and forms, will be implemented across the province to improve the quality and consistency of evaluations of prospective caregivers.

### **2. Standards and training for home assessment writers and relevant staff should be enhanced.**

Action: Accepted

Mandatory training on the new and enhanced home assessment process will be delivered to any individuals who conduct caregiver home assessments in Alberta.

### **3. Children and Youth Services should strengthen policy to clarify the role of alternate caregivers in the home assessment process.**

Action: Accepted

Policy will be reviewed to clarify the expectation that alternate caregivers will participate in all aspects of the approval process, including the home assessment.

### **4. Children and Youth Services should consider the implementation of an interim approval status for newly approved foster homes.**

Action: Accepted

A new approval process will be implemented that will require all new foster homes to be re-assessed six months after issuance of the initial foster home licence. Children and Youth Services, in partnership with the Alberta Foster Parent Association, will explore options to increase the support provided to new foster parents, such as a new foster parent mentoring program.

### **5. Children and Youth Services should enhance policy to ensure that no additional children or youth, beyond the maximum number permitted, are placed in a foster home with interim approval status without an assessment of the foster parents' capacity.**

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# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Katherine Jones



The Alberta Foster Parent Association continues to work in partnership with Alberta's Children's Services to ensure that foster families receive the support they need in order to provide quality care to Alberta's children and youth. The following are the increases that were negotiated for the 2008 - 2009 fiscal year:

- 4.7 percent increase in basic maintenance allowance
- \$1.00 increase to both Level 1 and Level 2 skill fees
- \$1.00 increase to the hourly childcare amount bringing it from \$4.00 per hour to \$5.00 per hour

Increases to travel expenses are automatic based on Children's Services increases. The following is a list of rates for travel for the 2007 - 2008 fiscal year:

- Mileage \$0.46 per kilometer
- Breakfast \$9.20
- Lunch \$11.60
- Dinner \$20.75
- Private accommodation; no receipts required - \$20.15 per night  
Actual accommodation costs; receipt required - please request government rates.

**Please note: All travel and expenses must receive prior approval from your support worker/case manager.**

The AFPA will be holding two children's summer camp programs this year. The first week of camp will be July 27 - August 1, 2008 and the second week of camp is August 17 - August 22, 2008. If you are interested in sending your child to camp please contact Sylvia Thompson at (780) 727-3745 as there may still be room available. I thank Sylvia and her committee for the work they have put in to making the Children's camp a reality.

The AFPA held its 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Aboriginal Awareness Weekend from June 6, - June 8<sup>th</sup>, 2008. This year's event was by far the best of them all. We are so pleased with the group who has worked so hard to provide a second to none program for our Association. We have great expectations of what is to come for our 10<sup>th</sup> Aboriginal Awareness Weekend! The planning has begun and I would encourage you to make plans to attend!

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for all the wonderful cards and flowers I received when I had my surgeries this past year. They really did help to brighten my days and lift my spirits! I feel blessed to be involved with such an amazing group of thoughtful and caring people.



I am off to Abaco with my family for a much needed vacation! I wish you all a warm and wonderful summer!

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## President's Report - Continued from Page 2

Action: Accepted

The policy regarding the maximum number of children or youth placed in a foster home will be revised to prohibit exemptions for new foster homes during the interim approval stage (i.e. prior to a positive six-month assessment).

**6. Children and Youth Services should amend its policies and procedures to enhance the assessment of the foster parents' ability to accommodate any additional children/youth over the maximum numbers, prior to any exceptions to the placement numbers being made.**

Action: Accepted

The new Casework Practice Model, which is based on a new way of working with families to ensure we make the best decisions possible as early as possible so children find permanent placements sooner, will include a consistent approval process for granting exceptions to maximum placement numbers as well as an ongoing assessment to ensure the needs of foster parents, children and youth continue to be met.

**7. The Child and Family Services Authorities (CFSAs) should take steps to increase compliance to policy regarding completion of the Placement Resource Feedback Report. This report should be completed and provided to the foster care support worker whenever a child or youth leaves a foster care placement, whether the move was planned or unplanned.**

Action: Accepted

Each CFSA will implement and report on a regional plan to increase compliance to policy regarding completion and sharing of the Placement Resource

Feedback Report. In addition, the new Intervention Services Information System will enable Children and Youth Services to track completion of the Placement Resource Feedback Report.

**8. The CFSAs should enhance their processes for sharing, coordinating and integrating information between foster care support workers and child intervention caseworkers.**

Action: Accepted

Each CFSA will implement and report on a regional plan to address any gaps in case coordination and communication.

The Board will be meeting with senior staff in September to be briefed on the eight changes.

Please look for your conference packages around the middle of August. It will not be on our website until a week after the conference registration is mailed out. The committee has put together a great training program along with some great entertainment for us to enjoy.

We look forward to having Minister Tarchuk as our guest on Thursday evening at our Opening Ceremonies, along with some of her senior staff. I also look forward to meeting many of you at conference.

Have a great summer.

Norm Brownell

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## Vice-President's Report Sylvia Thompson

It's hard to believe summer is here. I truly hope we have a warm and sunny one.

Planning for our summer camps is almost finished. Registration is coming along but we still have some room left for both dates. See Announcement in this issue of The Bridge.

Norm, Katherine, John and I attended the Canadian Foster Family Conference at the end of May. It's good to see them getting more focused on what the

CFPA wants to do. They are making a Public Service Announcement which will go a long way for recognition.

Conference Planning is also well underway with all the sessions tentatively booked. It is great that we can increase the number of registrants this year.

Have a great summer!!

Sylvia

# BOARD OF DIRECTORS' REPORTS

## REGION 1 Marlin Meyer

Well summer has finally arrived and with it thankfully some nice warm weather. It is great to see the sun again. However, due to the 'wonderful', continual rainfall we were very disappointed to have to cancel our family picnic. We will be attempting to reschedule this activity in late August as well as our corn maze and barbecue in September. Look for more information on this later in the summer.

We had a wonderful time at the Aboriginal Family Camp held at the Alberta Foster Parent Camp near Sundre on June 6-8. It was a great time to meet up with old friends and make new ones as well. The children had a great time learning and making crafts such as the shield and drum. The teachings were very interesting as well. Thanks to all who helped make this a success. I want to thank all the great hard working assistants who helped me in the kitchen to prepare the food, do dishes etc. A special thanks to all the young people who took time to help in the kitchen as well. Not to mention those willing to do the dishes and sweep the floor. We have some amazing kids.

Lastly I would like to wish everyone an awesome summer with your families. May you have a safe and fun filled holiday.

## REGION 3 John Starkey

On June 23<sup>rd</sup> we held the Calgary & District A.G.M and elections. Martin Durocher was returned as President. I will continue in my position as AFPA rep and board member for Region 3.

Our recruiter is now a full-time position. Sue O'Keefe is filming a recruiting commercial on June 27<sup>th</sup> with 65 volunteer extras!

We have had 14 applicants to foster in the last 6 weeks. Martin is working with the other agencies in our region.

We have our next casino coming up in the first quarter of 2009. Our family camp will be held in August at the James River Children's Retreat. The Calgary Association has donated \$12,000 towards a new cabin at the camp.

Thursday the 26<sup>th</sup> of June we had a laser tag night for the children. A great time was had by all. The end of May we had a rainy night at Calaway Park for the annual "Light up a Child's Life."

We also had an evening at Shakers Family Fun Centre.

HAVE A GREAT SUMMER!!

## REGION 5 Rene Rajotte

Hello everyone from region 5. We have had a great spring and looking forward to a great summer.

We had a few meetings in our region with our acting CEO Brian Holden to brainstorm on some of the things that could make fostering in region 5 better.

Carol and I had the opportunity to visit James River Camp for a work bee weekend. I was very surprised to see the facility. It has great accommodations including training rooms, kitchen, large dining area, large TV/recreation area and great little cabins outside. We had a great weekend and the food was excellent.

Hope this finds everyone well. Have a great summer.

## REGION 6 Linda Krauskopf

It seems so long since our last report, but then when I go to write what is happening it all seems like yesterday.

We are still meeting Bryan Kelly every two months to discuss the current issues in Region six. We have had one meeting of linkages to see what changes and what direction we are going in. We had an open meeting with Rick Semel at the Edmonton association office. It was attended by new and seasoned foster parents. The topics of respite care, training for biological children of foster parents, and setting up mentoring programs to assist foster parents came up. As a result, Regional council has been asked to put forth a proposal for a mentoring program and bio training.

We have had a lot of people concerned with the staff shortages in our offices lately, but we all must remember that this problem is province wide and certainly not occurring only in Foster Care.

We also have made plans for a children's camp at the James River Campground from July 27<sup>th</sup> - August 1<sup>st</sup>, and from August 17<sup>th</sup> - 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2008. I hope to see some familiar faces from region six. Finally, just to tell you the aboriginal weekend was a great time, even in the rain! We had lots of activities inside. I hope that everyone has a great summer with lots of fun and no major problems.



Board Reports - Continued on Page 8

## NOTICE

Please send any new contact information for District & Regional Associations

to the Alberta Foster Parent Association at:

Suite 102, 9622 - 42 Ave, Edmonton, Alberta. T6E 5Y4 or via fax to the office at (780)426-7151

# 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  
#102, 9622 - 42 Avenue  
Edmonton, AB T6E 5Y4  
Tel: (780) 429-9923 Fax: (780) 426-7151  
Provincial Tel: 1-800-667-2372  
E-mail: info@afpaonline.com

## CHAIRPERSON

Marie Brownell  
13719 Deer Run Blvd. SE  
Calgary, AB T2J 6L3  
Tel: (403) 271-9011  
Fax: (403) 271-3029

## Region 1

Linda Faye Campbell  
1612 - 6 Avenue S  
Lethbridge, AB T1J 1B3  
Tel: (403) 380-6528

Heather Thibault-Gurlevit  
117 Sherwood Blvd. West  
Lethbridge, AB T1K 6E7  
Tel: (403) 327-8769

David Maiers & Bev  
Tailfeathers  
Box 593  
Cardston, AB T0K 0K0  
Tel: (403) 737-2014

## Region 2

Roberta Connauton  
Box 1403  
Brooks, AB T1R 1C3  
Tel: (403) 362-6554

Ron MacNiven  
124 Stanfield Way SE  
Medicine Hat, AB T1B 4J5  
Tel: (403) 529-9224

Ralph and Loretta Welzel  
Box 118  
Scandia, AB T0J 2Z0  
Tel: (403) 362-2458

## Region 3

Marie Brownell  
13719 Deer Run Blvd. SE  
Calgary, AB T2J 6L3  
Tel: (403) 271-9011  
Fax: (403) 271-3029

Doreen Heide  
Box 562  
Cochrane, AB T4C 1A7  
Tel: (403) 637-3911

Dave & Aileen Abma  
27-2st, SE  
High River, AB  
Tel: (403) 652-4691

Lisa Jones  
87 Crystal Ridge Close  
Okotoks, AB T1S 1W5  
Tel: (403) 995-1599

Verna Isley  
RR# 1  
Airdrie, AB T4B 2A3  
Tel: (403) 948-4558

Roxanne Droppo  
Box 1048  
Crossfield, AB T0M 0S0  
Tel: (403) 946-0054

Kellie Babin  
1112 Meadowbrook Dr.  
Airdrie, AB T4A 1W9  
Tel: (403) 948-3923

## Region 4

Wade & Debbie Holland  
Box 1627  
Hanna, AB T0J 1P0  
Tel: (403) 854-2217

Charleen Leslie  
Box 5244  
Lacombe, AB T4L 1W9  
Tel: (403) 782-7503

Linda Carter  
5914 - 53 Avenue  
Red Deer, AB T4N 5J6  
Tel: (403) 346-1988

Marlene & Mike Robertson  
57 Kennings Crescent  
Red Deer, AB T4P 3M8  
Tel: (403) 346-1487

Holly Turigan  
2112 - 25 Avenue  
Bowden, AB T0M 0K0  
Tel: (403) 224-2689

Donna-Lynn Milne  
RR# 2  
Didsbury, AB T0M 0W0  
Tel: (403) 335-2350

Brenda Day  
RR1  
Sundre, AB T0M 1X0  
Tel: (403) 556-3895

Sandra Wilson  
Box 745  
Rosedale, AB T0J 2V0  
Tel: (403) 823-7820

Jeff Luxen  
203 Silverthorn Close  
Olds, AB T4H 1B2  
Tel: (403) 556-2175

Sylvia Thompson  
Box 7873  
Drayton Valley AB T7A 1S9  
Tel: (780) 727-3745

## Region 5

Rick Thornton  
Box 56  
Chipman, AB T0B 0W0  
Tel: (780) 764-2636

Ron Hillis  
RR# 1  
Ferintosh, AB T0B 1M0  
Tel: (780) 877-0172

## Region 6

Paulette Kopp  
Box 539  
Bon Accord, AB T0A 0K0  
Tel: (780) 921-3393

Vina McKee  
10112 - 171A Avenue  
Edmonton, AB T5X 4L4  
Cell (780) 991-5007

Linda Krauskopf  
9505 - 95 Street  
Morinville, AB T8R 1H9  
Tel: (780) 939-5035

Brian & Darlynn Berger  
315 Lilac Terrace  
Sherwood Park, AB T8H 1Z1  
Tel: (780) 449-6538

Kathy Kolinowski  
9705-95 Street  
Morinville, AB T8R 1J  
Tel: (780) 939-3557

## Region 7

Pat Mahe  
Box 129  
St. Vincent, AB T0E 1V0  
Tel: (780) 635-2648

Stephen & Susan Lander  
Box 96  
Cherry Grove, AB T0A 0T0  
Tel: (780) 594-0904

Brian & Joyce Golding  
Box 7078  
Edson, AB T9E 1V4  
Tel: (780) 723-2855

Joanne Ruck  
28 McLeod Drive  
Whitecourt, AB T7S 1H3  
(780) 706-7397

Judy Damery  
RR# 1  
Onoway, Ab T0E 1V0  
Tel: (780) 967-5489

Judy Pelletier  
10031-100 Avenue  
Westlock, AB T7P 1T7  
Tel: (780) 349-4290

## Region 8

Seth and Holly Barnfield  
RR 2, Site 4, Box 4  
Sexsmith, AB T0H 3C0  
Tel: (780) 568-4009

Lori & Don Potvin  
Box 268  
High Prairie, AB T0G 1E0  
Tel: (780) 523-4905

## Region 9

Region 9 is currently being serviced by FAST reps from out of Region. New reps from Region 9 are being recruited and will be trained as soon as possible!

## Region 10

Region 10 is currently being serviced by FAST reps throughout the many other Regions.





Dear Foster Parents:

The safety and love of a stable and nurturing family is something every child needs. The valuable role you play in raising our province's children ensures that some of our most vulnerable have the opportunity to grow to their full potential.

You do amazing work every day by providing safe and healthy homes to children in care, and you are vital to the work of Children and Youth Services. Your role as a foster parent comes with challenges and we are committed to helping you. This year, we increased compensation rates for all foster parents, and we will continue to improve training and support.

Retroactive to April 1, 2008, basic maintenance rates were increased by 4.7%, daily skill fees were increased by \$1 a day, and hourly babysitting rates increased by \$1. We hope these increases will help you meet the many needs of the children you care for on our behalf.

Our society recognizes that the most important job a person can hold is that of helping to raise a child. Be assured that the difference you make in children's lives every day is appreciated. Thank you for your outstanding contributions.

As we continue to build stronger communities together, we are actively looking for families like yours that are interested in providing a safe haven to children in need. If someone you know may be interested in becoming a foster parent, please have them contact their nearest Child and Family Services Authority or visit [www.FosterCareAlberta.ca](http://www.FosterCareAlberta.ca).

Sincerely,  
Janis Tarchuk  
Minister

## The Alberta Foster Parent Association's James River Children's Retreat



### Aboriginal Awareness Weekend Kitchen volunteers and others

(... just a few of the many!)

