



ALBERTA FOSTER PARENT
ASSOCIATION

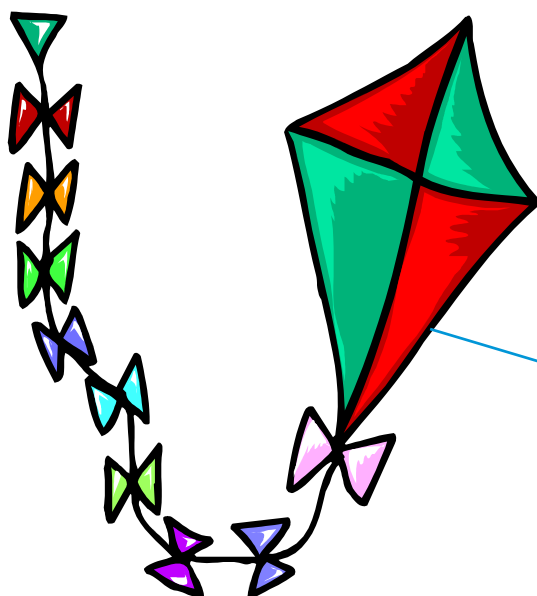
May 2009



THE BRIDGE

THE NEWSPAPER OF THE ALBERTA FOSTER PARENT ASSOCIATION

Let's Go Fly A Kite



With tuppence for paper and strings,
you can have your own set of wings.
With your feet on the ground,
you're a bird in flight!
With your fist holding tight,
to the string of your kite!

Let's go fly a kite
Up to the highest height
Let's go fly a kite
And send it soaring
Up through the atmosphere
Up where the air is clear
Oh, let's go fly a kite!

When you send it flying up there,
all at once you're lighter than air!
You can dance on the breeze,
over 'ouses and trees!
With your fist 'olding tight,
to the string of your kite!

Let's go fly a kite
Up to the highest height
Let's go fly a kite
And send it soaring
Up through the atmosphere
Up where the air is clear
Oh, let's go fly a kite!

From Mary Poppins, Written by Robert B. Sherman



FEATURING...

- 10th Annual Aboriginal Awareness Weekend Information
- James River Children's Campground Summer Programs
- 25 TV-Free Summer Family Activities
- School's Out, But Summer Experiences Keep Kids Learning

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NOTICE

Deadline for submissions for next BRIDGE

July 1, 2009

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

Vacant

DIRECTOR - ABORIGINAL NORTHEAST

Vacant

DIRECTOR - ABORIGINAL SOUTH

Peter Strikes With A Gun
Box 13
Brocklet, 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
#45 Strathmore Lakes Crescent
Strathmore, AB T1P 1R1
(403) 934-8299 (h) (403) 934-3266 (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)

ACTING DIRECTOR - REGION 7

Kim Lewis
Box 2212
Athabasca, AB T9S 2B7
(780) 675-9176 (h)

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

Brenda Rabie (Direct Line 780-701-4091)

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT III

Lucille Jamieson (Direct Line 780-701-4092)

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT II / Receptionist

Amey 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



In all my years of enduring our winters, this past winter seemed to drag on just a bit long for my liking. It's time to reflect on the past three months of our association.

Since December, we have had four work bees at our James River camp. We started by remodeling the room that our commercial dish washer was in, then moved on to installing eight large new windows in the dining hall; what a huge difference this made to the look and comfort of the dining area. We have new electrical wiring in our existing cabins and have insulated and put paneling on eight of the existing cabins. The other eight will be finished off in the near future as our casino funds become available. This last work bee, the volunteers finished the insides of two new cabins and will finish off the other two cabins in the near future.

This would not be possible to accomplish without the help of a few volunteers who keep coming and giving of their time, I appreciate your commitment to our Foster children.

Our 10th Annual Aboriginal weekend will be held on June 12th, 13th & 14th, Please check out the program on our website. We do expect around 300 people to attend this event, so please register early as we will be cutting it off at 300 due to dining space.

Our 2nd annual Children's camp program is on our website so please check out the site and register early if you are planning on sending children to camp this year.

The AFPA has held it's second meeting this year (Steering Committee) with the CEO's and department staff. These meetings will be held every two months and we will keep the fostering community updated through our Bridge.

I want to thank the many volunteers from Calgary who volunteered their time to work at our AFPA casino on April 25th & 26th. It takes in the neighborhood of 35 to 40 volunteers over a two day period and is the lifeline of our fundraising.

Have a great spring and summer!

Norm Brownell

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Katherine Jones



Fiscal Year End seems to come and go so quickly. It hardly feels like a year since we had our last audit, but here we are right in the middle of it all again.

This past year has been another productive and challenging year for the AFPA and we are looking forward to moving forward in 2009 – 2010.

We have had some changes to our Board of Directors this year. Bev Towe from Region 7 has left and is being replaced by Kim Lewis as Acting Director until Region 7 holds an election. Paulette Kopp has left as Honourary Director for Region 7. I wish both Bev and Paulette all the best in their future endeavors. It has been an honour working with you both over the past several years.

Region 8 has also seen some changes this past year. Mary Legeyt is now the Director for Region 8 and Andrea Kolodychuk has taken Mary's place as Honourary Director. Our thoughts and prayers are still with Denise and Denis.

The Provincial Steering/Negotiating Committee is back in full swing and we will be meeting on a regular basis every two months. This is such an important committee for us because this is where we take provincial issues forward to be resolved. This is also the committee we work with in negotiating rates etc. for foster families and youth in care. Norm Brownell, AFPA President and Bonnie Johnson, CEO Region 3 are the Steering Committee co-chairs.

The James River Children's Retreat is coming along very well. With the help of many wonderful volunteers, our President, Norm Brownell has managed to make many improvements to the buildings and property. The four new cabins

are close to completion and really are something to be proud of. Check out the AFPA website to see photos of the campground and new cabins at www.afpaonline.com.

The Conference Committee will be meeting shortly to get plans for the 2009 conference underway. We are looking forward to being in Jasper again this year. Hope to see many of you there.

Once again I am pleased to have the opportunity to thank the Alberta Foster Parent Association's Board of Directors for their hard work and commitment to our Association. It is an honour working with such dedicated volunteers who give so freely of their time and energy to serve others.

I take pleasure in thanking all the other volunteers who give of themselves in areas such as the James River Children's Retreat, the AFPA Casino, F.A.S.T., the Support Line and the Bridge. It is because of you that the AFPA is so successful. Thank you.

I thank my staff, who always go above and beyond what is expected of them. It is an honour working with you.

Last but not least I want to thank Norm Brownell, President and Sylvia Thompson for their support and encouragement throughout the year. I feel blessed.

VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Sylvia Thompson

As we head into summer, planning for the second year of summer camp is underway.

This year we have changed the format to better concentrate on specific age and gender groups.

While schedules and activities are still in the planning stages, some of the activities for all ages include water activities such as canoes and paddles boats, outdoor education activities such as hiking, making trails etc., indoor crafts and sports. Again this year we would like to paint more rocks for our walking trails.

For the older girls, ideas include making their own hula hoops, basic skin care, starting beauty tips and hints, cookie making, and girl's night at the movies possibly with a PJ party.

Ideas for the 10 to 12 years old boys include making outdoor shelters (possibly for a camp out), wilderness training and safety, a more focused sports program and, if wanted or because of the weather, a boys night at the movies.

There will be a small entertainment program for parents and caregivers to end each session of camp. This promises to be another fun year for all.

Many volunteers are needed to help out. If you or someone you know and can recommend is interested, please have them call Linda at 780-939-5035 or Sylvia at 780-727-3745.

Yours in Fostering,
Sylvia

After Hours Support Line

Support Line hours are (Monday – Sunday) from 4:30pm – 8:15am Mtn Time

Call 1-800-667-2372 or 780-906-3890

The Alberta Foster Parent Association Support Line Team is designed to provide after hour and week-end emergency support, and advice and referral for foster families and adoptive families. The program is delivered by volunteer foster parents who have experience in fostering, a good understanding of policy and procedures, and have taken conflict resolution training. The Support Team members work in conjunction with professional back-up support and direction.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

The Alberta Foster Parent Association Support Line Team is established to meet the following program objectives:

- To ensure foster families and adoptive families are provided with information and direction when faced with situations that do not require the support of a F.A.S.T. member.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS' REPORTS

REGION 1 Marlin Meyer

Once again winter is drawing to a close. HURRAY!! Do not mention the words Global Warming in my presence please.

The Chinook Country Foster Parent Society hosted a bowling/pizza night in Lethbridge that was very successful. Over 100 adults and children came out for this evening of fun and friendship.

The society will be hosting a two-day training session called Love and Logic. This is a parenting program that offers hope and help with humor. It is presented by Bernice Lambert M.Ed. The dates for these sessions are Saturday April 25 and May 2 from 9:00 - 4:00 at the Lethbridge Community College. To register for this course please call 403-380-3504. Registration is free. This training can be counted towards your supplementary training hours.

Keeping it short and sweet,
Marlin Meyer

REGION 2 Ralph Welzel

I don't know about everyone else but it seems that we have had one long winter. The second week of March and temperatures of -30's with snow made spring feel a long way off. I am sure everyone is anxious to get outside, including the kids.

I just came back from a work-bee at the James River Children's Retreat Camp. We tore the dishwasher apart and took everything off the walls to paint. The windows in the main lodge dining area were also replaced. There is always work to be done.

The Brooks association is starting up again after a lack of interest or time. This is really good news. Foster families have to realize that the best help and support is from foster families in their own region. When the Bridge comes out we should have a new president again. Let's get these monthly meetings going again! Medicine Hat will now have a full-time treasurer for their association. Foster homes are extremely full in the Medicine Hat region, I am told. There is also a high turnover of new foster homes in their area. It seems there is not enough time to break in new foster homes for the amount of kids in care.

Outside work and camping is on my mind and can't come fast enough. Let us hope for a long spring and summer with lots of sun and relaxation. All the best in fostering!

Ralph Welzel

REGION 3 John Starkey

Calgary and Area Foster Parent Association members volunteered at our casino at the end of February. Our last casino yielded in excess of \$100,000. Now the pooling numbers are around \$80,000 for the first quarter. We will have to budget carefully.

On March 14th the Calgary Board held a breakfast brain storming session. Discussions included such questions as:

- 1.) Why are you on the Board?
- 2.) What do you see as your role?
- 3.) What is your vision, hope or dream for the Association?
- 4.) Where do you see the Board in the next 3 – 5 years?

We had a great discussion and goal setting time!

Our member families enjoyed the following events that were covered by our casino funds:

January 24th – Telus Science Centre

February 14th – Story Book Theatre

March 21st – Lloyds Rollerskating Night

April 25th – Imax Theatre

On April 26th & 27th the Calgary Association hosted the AFPA casino at the Calgary North Casino. Thank- you to all those who volunteered.

John Starkey

REGION 4 Heather Guard

Hello Everyone!

It's time for us to put away our winter gear and bring out the gym boots. Spring is on its way. With it, come longer days and eventually warmer days. It's a great time to be outside rediscovering your yard; finding all the toys that weren't put away before the first snowfall came. It's the time of year when all of nature shows its colors and smells. Oh, and not to forget, it is also a time of love.

So to all foster parents in Region 4, do I have a deal for you! On the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd of May, you and your better half are invited to come and stay at the AFPA's James River camp for long romantic walks in the moonlight and hot chocolate with marshmallows by the fire. Did I forget to mention that all of this is offered to you for free? That's right! We'll give you accommodations, meals and will even pay for the babysitting. If it seems too good to be true, well it's not! We offer you all this and more! Along with all of this, we offer you a chance to expand your mind. We will be having core training and supplemental training. So watch your mail box closely for your private invitation to your romantic getaway. A whole staff of well-trained people and I will be waiting there for you.

Yours in Fostering,
Heather Guard

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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
Suite 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) 388-4944

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

Region 2

Ralph Welzel
#45 Strathmore Lakes Cres.
Strathmore, AB T1P 1R1
Tel: (403) 934-8299
Fax: (403) 934-3266

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

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

Ralph Welzel
#45 Strathmore Lakes
Cres.
Strathmore, AB T1P 1R1
Tel: (403) 934-8299
Fax: (403) 934-3266

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

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) 877-0182

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

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
Whitcourt, AB T7S 1H3
(780) 706-7397

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

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.

**REGION 5
Rene Rajotte**

Hello from Region 5! I hope that everyone had a great winter and is looking forward to spring. With all the cold weather we have had in our region, I am not so sure about global warming!

We are continuing to have meetings throughout the region about every three months with the last meeting in Vermillion, February 23rd, 2009. We had a great discussion at this meeting, talking about many different issues. Our next meeting will be held in Viking on June 1st, starting at 10:30 a.m. We would like to encourage people to come. We usually have some great information to bring forward and it is nice to meet fellow foster parents.

This spring, Vermillion held an Easter party on Saturday March 28th in the Anglican Church hall.

We had another set of meetings with our CEO, in Vermillion April 6th, 2009. This was held at the Vermillion provincial building on April 7th in Camrose at the Children Resource Center.

I hope this finds you all in good health!
Rene Rajotte

**Linda Krauskopf
Region 6**

The past weeks have seen many meetings attended and many more scheduled.

On February 5, 2009, elections were held resulting in a full executive team. Chair: Linda Krauskopf, Co-Chair: Vina McKee, Secretary/Treasurer: Paulette Kopp.

On February 12, 2009, the council met with Kim Miller and Joanne Wruth. Joanne presented an overview of the SAFE initiative, (Structured Analysis Family Evaluation). Joanne also led a discussion on retention of foster homes in our region.

Kim presented what is happening out of Parkington Place. Recruitment is now a provincial program and will be out of Parkington for Region 6 as of April 1, 2009. Workshops for bio-family members are in the works. Another initiative that Kim Miller presented was Alternative Care Providers.

Council members continue to attend many meetings, inclusive of Linkages with Brian Kelly, and the Placement Resource Investigation (PRIU) Advisory Board. The council is represented on the Alberta Foster Parent Association, (AFPA) Board, by Director-Linda Krauskopf and Honorary Director- Vina McKee.

Critical Incident Report forms can be accessed by going into edmontonandareacfsa.com and clicking on the link-forms. It is very important that these incidents be reported in a timely and accurate way. If you have questions about critical incidences, we encourage you to have a discussion with your support worker.

If you have any questions, issues or concerns, please contact us at region6council@gmail.com or Linda Krauskopf at 780-939-5035.

Linda Krauskopf

**Beverly Towe
Region 7**

It is with great regret that effective the first of April 2009 the President of our regional council Emile Pelletier and Honoree AFPA Director Paulette Kopp retired their post. Paulette and Emile have given many years of service to us all and we hope they realize that they will be greatly missed. As a result of this, elections were held at our AGM in March. Bev Towe was elected President.

I know all of our members wish Paulette and Emile all the best in their new endeavors.

You can reach Bev at (780) 826-4129, Vice president Steven Landers at (780) 594-0904, Secretary Robin Strome at (780) 967-2938 and the treasurer Brian Golding at (780) 723-2855.

Our annual training retreat held in Bonnyville was a great success with over 130 foster parents, adoptive, kinship and day homes attending. We would like to thank the staff and management of Child and Family Social Services for helping with our retreat. Words are not enough, but thank you all.

Gean Chouinard, President of the Edson Foster Parent Association called and would like to invite all foster families in Region 7 to a camping weekend in June. It will be the Father's Day weekend. More information will follow, or give Gean a call at (780) 723-7907.

Hope to see you all in Edson in June.
Bev Towe

**Mary Legeyt & Andrea Kolodychuk
Region 8**

Hello everyone from Region 8. We hope everyone is getting ready for spring. There are many things happening in our great region and we hope foster parents take time to get involved.

First, mark your calendars for September 25-27 for the 2nd Annual Northwest Caregivers Conference. This is a great training opportunity for all foster parents, adoptive parents and FSCD parents to come together for a time of learning and to recharge. Look for registration and brochures in the mail in May.

There are also many opportunities for core training by shared video conferences that have been going on since February. This is a good time to get your hours in for the training you need for the year. Please make this a priority, as the more we learn, the better we can help the children in our care. Contact your support worker for more information. We also want to encourage everyone to participate in your local support and caregiver groups. The Grande Prairie caregiver group has two groups active, day time and evening. They have a variety of speakers and activities going on. By attending these sessions you receive credit for supplementary training. If you want more information please

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contact Mary. There is a support group in the Fairview and Peace River area as well. There are plans for a summer camp in the Grimshaw area on August 6-11. There are also different speakers booked for the coming months. There has also been team building going on in these areas. This is a great opportunity to build communication, trust and support with workers and foster parents. We want to encourage foster parents to attend and/or start groups in their area. The more support we give and receive from each other, the better we can facilitate change.

We also want to take this opportunity to thank all the foster parents in our region for the countless hours they spend caring and advocating for the children in our care. Your hard work and dedication does not go unnoticed. Keep up the great work and if you need anything please call one of us.

Have a wonderful spring!!

Mary Legeyt and Andrea Kolodychuk

10th Annual Aboriginal Awareness Weekend

Date: June 12th to June 14th

We are proud to announce our upcoming 10th Annual Aboriginal Awareness Weekend that will be taking place June 12th through to June 14th at James River Children's Retreat outside of Sundre. This year we have three aboriginal groups joining us and performing several events such as dancing, carving, crafts and teachings. The weekend is a full program beginning Friday evening and ending Sunday after brunch.

Sandy Reynolds is a local Inukshuk carver and art dealer and brings her skills to this event. Métis elders, Elsie Giles and Debbie Robb will be teaching seed-beading. Rhonda Giroux and her son will be performing a puppet show and story telling for the younger children. Crafters will enjoy painting a mural with a theme, hanging mini moccasins, beading bracelets with hides and sinew, and shoelace beading for the younger children. Many organized outdoor games with Warren Harris and Alison Stecyk are planned. This year also includes Métis Dancers and Drummers. We welcome back Elder Dora Unl perform the Pipe Ceremony and opening circle over the weekend.



Please call Lavona to register for this event and remember to bring your toiletries and blankets.

Place: James River Children's Retreat
Registration: Call Lavona at
1-800-667-2372
or 780-701-4090



Alberta Foster Parent Association James River Summer Campground Program

Location: James River Children's Retreat
Registrations: Linda Krauskopf at 780-939-5035
or Sylvia Thompson at 780-727-3745

It's time again for summer camps for those children who would like to experience a fun camping adventure with others. Look no further! The children who have already experienced this and had such a successful adventure have made it possible for another year of success.

To download or print a registration for your children to attend the summer camp program, please visit the Alberta Foster Parent Association website at www.afpaonline.com.

The first summer camp date for girls and boys aged seven to nine years of age will be from July 12th to July 17th. The children will enjoy a variety of outdoor activities.

The second summer camp date is for girls only and will be from July 19th to July 24th. This camp is for ages ten to twelve years. The girls will enjoy girl activities such as a pajama party, facials and a girls movie night with all the trimmings!

The third summer camp date is for boys only, ages 10 to 12, and runs from August 19th to August 24th only. The boys will learn survival skills, as well as building and sleeping in their own lean-to.

If you have older children who would like to volunteer for any of the above dates, please print off a volunteer form at the APFA website and mail it into the office.

We are in need of a nurse, life guard, craft person and an individual to help with sing along. If you would like to sign up for any of these positions we would be glad to give you a discount for any of your children that would like to attend.

For more information on the summer campground programs, please call Linda Krauskopf at 780-939-5035 or Sylvia Thompson at 780-727-3745.

March 16, 2009

AR 22063

Dear Foster Parents:

Recently, a one-and-a-half-year-old child in foster care was seriously injured near Calgary. The injury of any child is a tragedy and I know that your hearts and thoughts, like mine, go out to him and all who love him.

The concerns the public has about the injury of this child are understandable. I want you to know that I have called for a special case review of this incident and will make any changes necessary to continue strengthening our system. The ministry uses special case reviews to examine specific details of a case. The goal is to understand whether our practices and processes were followed or if there is any need for improvement.

In the past, we have not publicly released the findings of special case reviews. However, with this review, the review of the death of a child in kinship care in Edmonton in January and any future special case reviews, I have committed to making the findings public. The reason we are doing this is so the public is aware of the specific actions we take to ensure the safety of the children and youth in our care and to continually improve our child intervention system.

It is important to know that the sharing of information from special case reviews will follow existing privacy requirements in the *Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act*. This means that no information or details will be made public that would serve to identify children in our care or the parties, such as foster parents, involved in a case.

We have full confidence in our system. By sharing what we can with the public from special case reviews, we will help Albertans understand the important work the ministry and foster parents do and the challenges we face when helping children and families. By doing this, it will help increase their confidence in the system as well.

.../2

Did you know...

When a dispute over the decision of a director occurs, disputants have 30 days to file an Administrative Review. A director's decision is any decision made by a caseworker or anyone with delegated authority under the Act. This 30-day period allows for the caseworker, or decision maker and the disputant to engage in alternative dispute resolution strategies to attain a collaborative solution. It is expected that caseworkers will use all methods available to them to resolve the dispute and to ensure that disputants are fully aware of all dispute resolution processes available prior to the filing of an Administrative Review.

When informal dispute resolution processes have not been successful in finding a resolution, the Administrative Review is the first step of the formalized dispute resolution processes under the legislation. Effective resolution through an Administrative Review will minimize the need to bring matters before the more formalized Appeal Panel.

The Administrative Review is a formal process that allows for an internal review of a decision of the director when a child, youth, family, or caregiver disagrees with a decision of the director. The person who is directly affected by the director's decision may request an administrative review.

Matters that cannot go forward for administrative review are as follows:

- Operational/administrative matters such as the transfer of a file or changing caseworkers.
- Matters that the director has not determined but are integral to case planning, e.g. a child's diagnosis, educational planning, probation requirements, assessment findings, outcomes of child protection investigations, court orders and decisions of the court.
- Financial matters that have provincially fixed rates attached.

An Administrative Review must be completed prior to matters proceeding to Appeal, except as indicated in legislation S.120(4)(5). An Administrative Review can be used whether or not the matter can be appealed directly.

Foster Parents
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Any time a tragedy like this happens, it is difficult for everyone involved, including foster parents. Your work is not easy, and I want you to know that I value your dedication to the children of this province, and I will continue to stand behind you. Both Premier Stelmach and I truly appreciate the generosity and compassion you have for the children in your care and are thankful to have people like you to turn to when we need help caring for Alberta's vulnerable young people.

Sincerely,


Janis Tarchuk
Minister



Government of Canada Increases Child Safety with New Regulations for Corded Window Coverings

News Release

2009-59

April 16, 2009

For immediate release

OTTAWA - The Government of Canada announced yesterday new safety regulations for corded window coverings that will make these products safer for young children. The regulations came into effect following yesterday's publication in *Canada Gazette*, Part II.

“A corded window covering” is defined as an interior window covering that incorporates a bead chain, cord or any type of flexible looped device in its operation.

The new regulations are designed to reduce the strangulation hazard posed by such coverings by limiting the use of flexible cord and bead chain loops. Although some industry members already voluntarily adhere to these standards, the new regulations will allow for enforcement by Health Canada under the Hazardous Products Act.

Since 1986, Health Canada has received 28 reports of strangulation deaths and 22 near-fatal incidents linked to these products.

“This Government continues to put in place important and enforceable measures to help prevent injuries to young children,” said the Honourable Leona Aglukkaq, Minister of Health. “This initiative is in keeping with Canada’s Consumer Action Plan, which is making Canadians safer through tougher federal regulations on food, health and consumer products.”

Typically, strangulation incidents occur when infants or young children, in cribs or beds situated near windows, become entangled in the cords of the window covering. Young children may lose their footing and get wrapped in the cords while trying to look out a window or when climbing on furniture. When the child falls, the weight of the body causes the cord to act like a noose, resulting in strangulation.

Under the new regulations, window covering products that are advertised, sold or imported into Canada will be required to meet the specifications of the National Standard of Canada CAN/CSA-Z600, *Safety of Corded Window Covering Products*, published by the Canadian Standards Association (CSA). Health Canada assisted the CSA in developing this standard.

The new regulations allow flexible loops on pull cords only if the loops are fitted with devices that either separate the loop upon the application of force, or allow the loop to be held taut once the device is secured to an adjacent surface. Cord-stop mechanisms are required to restrict inner cord loops. Safety labelling and instructions are also required, since consumers play an important part in mitigating the strangulation hazard.

Many corded window coverings currently installed in homes do not meet the new regulations or the previous voluntary standards and will not be subject to the new regulations. Health Canada reminds parents and caregivers that blind and curtain pull-cords and bead-chains must always be kept out of the reach of young children, secured taut with a tension device or cut short, as they pose a strangulation hazard.

Health Canada also reminds Canadians that window coverings found at garage sales and second-hand stores may not be compliant with the new regulations. Under the *Hazardous Products Act*, corded window coverings that do not meet the new regulations are illegal for sale as second-hand items and may not be given away.

Please visit Health Canada’s website for more information about blinds and curtain cords.

Media Enquiries:

Health Canada
(613) 957-2983
Josée Bellemare
Office of the Honourable Leona Aglukkaq
Federal Minister of Health
(613) 957-0200

Public Enquiries:

(613) 957-2991
1-866-225-0709

Dear Foster Parents,

We would like to take the opportunity to update you on the progress of the Foster Care Review Recommendations and how it relates to you.

In June 2008, Minister Tarchuk released the Foster Care Review Recommendations that resulted from the review of our Foster Care Program in 2007-2008. In March 2009, she committed to implementing policy arising from the Recommendations by the end of the month. Three policies were amended or created as a result: 10.2.1 Assessment of Alternate Child Care Providers, 10.2 Foster Care Program Requirements and 10.5 Maximum Numbers of Children in a Home.

The Foster Care Review Recommendations speaks to the need for alternate child care providers to be involved in the assessment and approval process. If you choose to have someone into your home to provide child care while you work or attend school, you need to ensure you communicate your plan to your foster care caseworker. This includes nannies or others who relate to the child in your home in a parenting capacity, have unsupervised access to the child and provide child care on a regular and ongoing basis. This **does not** apply to babysitters or respite providers.

Also addressed in the Recommendations was the need to assess a foster home’s capacity to care for additional children prior to consideration of any exceptions to maximum numbers. The Recommendations also recognized the importance of new foster parents having the opportunity to discuss their fostering experiences prior to the annual assessment. As such, a six month assessment has been developed and will be completed with all new foster parents after six months of fostering. The Foster Care Program Requirements Policy was updated to reflect the six month assessment requirement.

If you would like to access further information about the Foster Care Review Recommendations, please visit <http://www.child.alberta.ca/home/1145.cfm> or ask your foster care caseworker.

Placement Resources Unit
Child Intervention Branch
Alberta Children and Youth Services



25 TV-Free Summer Family Activities It's a beautiful day! Go outside! Do something!

by Alice E. Workman

When boredom hits (usually about two days into summer vacation), fun and interesting activities can be hard to find. So be prepared: Print off a copy of the list below and tape it to your fridge. Even if you decide not to do any of these activities, reading through them will likely get your own creative juices flowing to wash away that boredom in no time!

1. Plant a garden

If you don't have space for a large garden, you can use a large pot (or 1/2 barrel) filled with soil. Flower gardens are great, but so are vegetable gardens. Three things that seem to be the best for young children to plant are fast-growing radishes, tall sunflowers, and pumpkins for carving or mini ones for enjoying.

2. Go to the park

Bring bread to feed the ducks, if there are any to feed!

3. Pick up litter in your neighborhood or at a park

Wear thick gloves.

4. Play an old-fashioned game

Duck, Duck Goose, Ring Around the Rosies, London Bridge, etc. Your local library probably has a book or two that lists various games and their rules. Invite the neighbors over to play.

5. Have relay races

Egg toss, 3-legged race, ball (or egg) on a spoon, etc.

6. Wash the car

Especially good for a hot day!

7. Pick flowers and deliver them to a neighbor

Make their day!

8. Play reverse musical chairs

Take a chair away just before the music starts each time, just as in regular musical chairs, but no one ever goes "out." Instead, those who are without a chair to sit on must sit on someone's lap. Soon the pile-ups will have everyone laughing too much to play anymore!

9. Blow up a couple of balloons

This is an inexpensive way to have a lot of fun, and planned games are unnecessary, as they'll be tossing them around and having fun before you could say anything anyway!

10. Write a story together

Have one person start the story, then another continues, then another, and so on. You can just tell it or tape-record it instead of writing it down. To make a funny story, have each person write down just one paragraph of a story separately. Give them a subject or a few starter words, then put them together to make one story.

11. Write special notes to each other

Leave notes on the recipient's pillow for them to find at night. This is a good way to keep the kids writing over the summer.

12. Have a treasure hunt

The treasure could be something small and simple, such as stickers, candy, or even just a picture of a treasure box full of jewels. Let the kids each take turns hiding a treasure and drawing up the map.

13. Have a girls' night

Send the men (and/or boys) of the family out somewhere, or have them watch a video in one room while the girls spend time together in another (or hold a boys' night at the same time—camping out, going to a ballgame, doin' guy stuff). Have fun giggling, doing hair and nails, playing dress-up or whatever.

14. Throw a family dance party

Blow up a couple of balloons, stick in a tape or CD and have some fun! Don't worry if someone doesn't really know how to dance, just move.

15. Go to the library

Make this at least a weekly event. Get both individual books and a family book that you will read from together each day. Even older children who know how to read usually enjoy hearing stories, and you can talk about the books as a family as well.

16. Put on a family play

The kids write the script and design the costumes. Keep it simple. When the play is ready, perform it for Grandma or some willing neighbors. Be sure to pass out tickets to the event, and assign someone to be the ticket-taker.

17. Play tic-tac-toe using sidewalk chalk

18. Play "Name that Tune"

One person chooses a song that everyone knows and hums or plays the first four notes. If no one can guess the song, then five notes are hummed, then six, and so on. This can be a good travel game, provided the players can hum loudly enough for everyone to hear.

19. Hold cooking classes

Teach the kids how to follow a recipe and cook meals, but also have some fun cooking desserts. Have a contest to see who can make up the best original recipe, then let everyone enjoy eating their creations.

20. Make up a news report and tape it

Don't forget the commercials!

21. Make homemade ice cream or popsicles

22. Get a book of science experiments and try some

23. Learn something new together

A foreign language, karate, square dancing, knitting, flower arranging, etc.

20. Ride the bus

If riding the bus is not something that they regularly do, the kids will probably get a thrill out of doing it. You can entice older kids to come along if the ride includes a stop at the ice cream store!

21. Fly a kite

Go to the park or a school field.

22. Volunteer in the community

Most communities have abundant opportunities for giving service, and should have at least a few that are appropriate for younger children (as long as you are there to supervise them).

23. Make homemade greeting cards

Make a whole boxful of assorted cards for various occasions to use the rest of the year. Or make Christmas cards now to give later, or to sell in the fall to earn a little Christmas cash.

24. Have a watermelon seed spitting contest

For the brave, try a pie eating contest!

25. Build a model house

Use toothpicks and gum drops, or pretzels and peanut butter.

After trying some of these activities, if a family member says they can't think of anything to do, ask them to come up with an idea—brainstorm a list if you like. Being self-entertaining is a habit that strengthens through practice. Hopefully these suggestions will serve as exercise equipment for the imagination. Happy summer!

Alice E. Workman is the mother of three, a writer and homeschooler. She is the Editor of Love of Learning, a free email newsletter for parents and homeschoolers. Information and back issues of Love of Learning can be found at <http://edsupply.hypermart.net>

Reprinted from <http://www.thenewhomemaker.com/25tv-freesummerfamilyactivities>



Kite Flying Safety Tips

When flying a kite, it is good to remember the 3 C's of kite safety: **Caution, Courtesy and Common Sense.**

Be aware of who or what is behind you as well as in front of you and avoid other kites, kite lines and kite fliers.

If a kite gets caught in a tree or pole, leave it alone! Climbing high places can be very dangerous.

Never fly a kite:

- near electric lines or poles. For the same reason do not fly in the rain or when it is stormy (the line can also carry electricity)
- with metal parts or lines which will attract electricity
- using fishing line or wire
- near the edge of a steep hill or slope or too close to an airport
- very close to or over roads where drivers could be distracted
- near ditches, stones, trees, and traffic or animals (e.g. nesting birds).

From http://www.developmenteducation.ie/files/resources/how_to_make_your_kite.pdf

Schools Out, But Summer Experiences Keep Kids Learning

By: Kathy Bye

Boys Town External Evaluation

Summertime. The word evokes images from my own childhood; daily chores in the house, walks with my siblings on the "south road," cheese sandwiches and jarred water in the timber, preparing projects for 4-H, and laying out my grandmothers quilt in a soft, shady, grassy spot in the yard where I could read my favorite books.

Looking back, I realize my parents provided me with many opportunities that established lifelong habits. I still have the daily chores and I still love to walk. Cheese sandwiches and water are my all-time favorites. Projects are a way of life. And I have never lost my love for reading. The "wonderment and awe" (Costa & Kallick, 2000)* that were a part of my childhood have never left me.

Such is our responsibility as parents. We are instrumental in the development of habits that encourage our children to become lifelong learners. Costa and Kallick (2000) call intellectual behaviors that are advanced through knowing how to act on our experiences in life, "Habits of Mind." According to them, a "Habit of Mind is knowing how to behave intelligently when you DONT know the answer" (www.habits-of-mind.net/whatare.htm). The Habits of Mind developed during the crucial years of our childhood establish patterns and ways of thinking that remain with us throughout life. The learning opportunities we provide for our children assist them in cultivating this intellectual behavior.

According to the research of Entwisle, Alexander, and Olson (2001), students who are not provided with summer learning opportunities start each school year with a learning deficit, compared to students who enjoyed experiential opportunities for summer learning. Their work refers to these types of experiences: organized sports, day camps, swimming lessons, and trips to the zoo, local parks, and library. Recognizing that organized sports, day camps, swimming lessons, and trips to the zoo cost money, this article will focus first on summer learning experiences you, as a parent or caregiver, can provide for your children at little or no cost. Later, we'll share information and suggestions for the remaining activities.

A walk with your child is a great way to "gather data through the senses" (Costa & Kallick, 2000). A walking trip to the park could be a planned event with a simple map that shows the route you will be taking. Depending on the age of your child, the walk will allow him or her to:

- Count the number of blocks you walk or the footsteps you take, and enter the information on the map.
- Count the number of animals, houses, stop signs, etc. you see.
- Experience textures (e.g., a rough sidewalk, a silky flower petal).
- Identify objects along the way. (You can have your child write the objects names on the map or you can keep a list for later reference to help with word recognition and spelling.)
- Identify colors. (Write the appropriate colors next to the objects your child identifies.)

The ideas are endless. You know your child and his or her learning needs best. Use this valuable knowledge to help you plan summer experiences and any follow-up activities you might want to develop from the information you gather in these adventures.

The library is a great place to visit. Local libraries offer great summer learning opportunities for children that allow them to experience the world through print as well as interact with other children socially. According to Entwisle et al. (2001), children in their study who often went to the library did better in fall testing than children who made limited visits or didnt go at all. The study also found that children benefited from library visits in both reading and math.

Have your child join a local club. An Internet site (<http://kidsclubs.about.com/>) provides a wealth of information you and your child can explore together to find different types of clubs available in your area. If you do not own a computer, take advantage of your trip to the library to use one there to search the Internet for information specific to your area.

Zoo trips create excitement for children. Before journeying to the zoo, take some time to plan out the visit with your child. Work together to develop a budget for the trip. Have your child earn an allowance for doing age-appropriate tasks around the house so he or she can be responsible for purchasing some of his or her own food or a souvenir at the zoo.

As you are planning the trip, ask your child questions like:

1. What do you think we will do on our visit?
2. What animals do you think you will see at the zoo?
3. What animal would you like to see most of all?
4. Is there anything you would like to do besides see the animals?

The cost of summer day camps can range from free to beyond \$100. Once again, an Internet search will provide information specific to your area. When I typed in the name of our community along with the words "summer day camp," I found a large number of experiential opportunities for children ranging in cost from \$10 for three hours of "camp" to \$80 and up for day-long experiences. If you would like your child to attend a day camp (or take swimming lessons, join a club, or play organized sports), but don't think you can afford it, ask if scholarships based on family income are available.

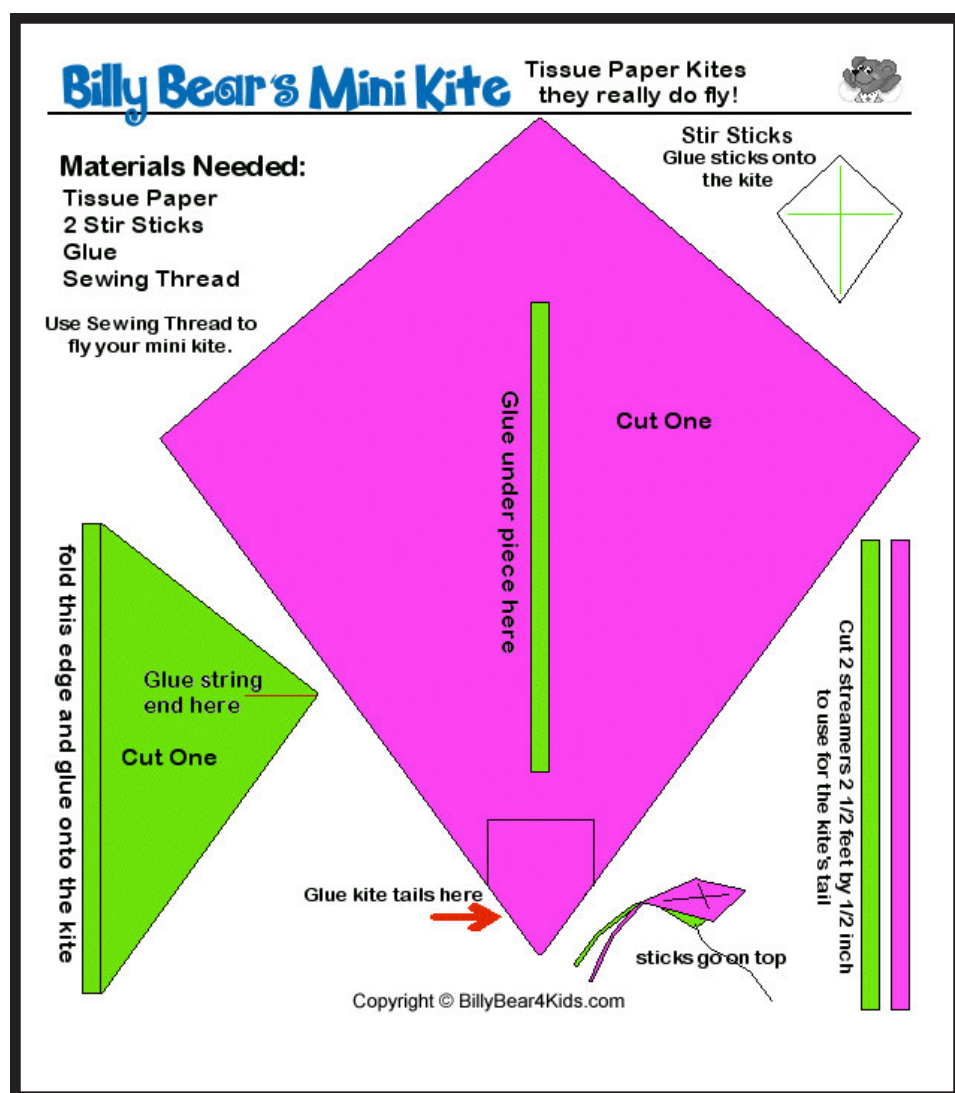
Enjoy your summer with your child. As your child's caregiver, you are the most important person in his or her life. The time you spend with your child providing summer learning experiences will create lasting memories that will last a lifetime.

*Well-known educators Art Costa and Bena Kallick provide 16 Habits of Mind, which are defined as "dispositions displayed by intelligent people in response to problems, dilemmas, and enigmas, the resolutions of which are not immediately apparent." While these are not the focus of this article, I used them as an enriching structure to share the variety of ways you can support the learning needs of your child. If you are interested in learning more about the Habits of Mind, you can find information on <http://www.habits-of-mind.net/>.

References

- Costa, A.L., & Kallick, B. (2000). Discovering and exploring habits of mind. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD).
- Entwisle, D.R., Alexander, K.L., & Olson, L.S. (2001). Keep the faucet flowing: Summer learning and home environment. *American Educator*, 25(3), 10. (Retrieved online on May 7, 2008, at http://www.aft.org/pubs-reportsamerican_educator/fall2001/faucet.html)

Reprinted from <http://www.parenting.org/school/summerlearning.asp>



Added reasons to join the AFPA:

Special pricing is available to AFPA Members at The Brick and West Edmonton Mall (Choice Passes). AFPA Members also save 5.5 cents per litre off gas at Hughes Car Wash and Gas Diesel Bar with a Hughes card.

<h1 style="margin: 0;">MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION</h1> <p style="margin: 0;">January 1, 2009 -December 31, 2009</p>		 <p style="margin: 0;">ALBERTA FOSTER PARENT ASSOCIATION</p>
<p>NAME _____</p> <p>NAME _____</p> <p>ADDRESS _____</p> <p>CITY _____ PROVINCE _____</p> <p>POSTAL CODE _____</p> <p>TELEPHONE _____</p> <p>DATE _____</p> <p style="text-align: center; margin-top: 20px;">PLEASE COMPLETE ALL AREAS TO ENSURE ACCURATE INFORMATION TYPE OR PRINT</p> <p style="text-align: center; margin-top: 10px;">RETURN FORM AND MEMBERSHIP FEE TO: Alberta Foster Parent Association Suite 102, 9622-42 Avenue Edmonton, Alberta T6E 5Y4 Local phone (780) 429-9923 Phone: 1-800-667-2372 -Provincial Fax: (780) 426-7151</p>	<p>PLEASE MARK X IN THE APPROPRIATE BOX <input type="checkbox"/> NEW <input type="checkbox"/> RENEW</p> <p>INDICATE CLASS OF MEMBERSHIP WITH X IN THE CORRECT BOX</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> DEPARTMENT FOSTER HOME Regional Authority Name _____ Regional Authority Number _____ Classification _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> AGENCY FOSTER HOME Name of Agency _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> ASSOCIATE MEMBER</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> SUPPORT MEMBER</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> HONORARY MEMBER</p> <p>Method of Payment <input type="checkbox"/> MASTERCARD <input type="checkbox"/> VISA <input type="checkbox"/> CASH <input type="checkbox"/> CHEQUE</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: right;">Expiry Date _____</p> <p>Credit Card Number _____</p> <p>Authorized Signature _____</p>	

CLASS OF MEMBERSHIP

1. Department Foster Home Member: children are placed through the department.
2. Agency Foster Home Member: children are placed through an agency.
3. Support Member: friends of foster care who are not foster parents.
4. Associate Member: individual government staff members in the Department of Family and Social Services or a staff member of a partnering agency.
5. Honorary 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.



CANADIAN FOSTER FAMILY ASSOCIATION

Donor Membership Application
 April 1, 2009 to March 31, 2010

New Member: Renewal:

Foster Family: Social Worker: Other:

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

City/Town: _____ Prov./Terr: _____ Postal Code: _____

Phone: () _____ Fax/Email: _____

Family Membership Fee: \$20.00 or \$100.00 for 6 years:

Method of payment:

Cheque: Visa/MC# _____ Expiry Date _____

Money Order:

A Receipt for Income Tax Purposes Will Be Issued
 - Revenue Canada #137467726 RR0001

Mail this form and membership fee to:

CANADIAN FOSTER FAMILY ASSOCIATION
 c/o Norm Brownell
 Alberta Foster Parent Association
 Suite #102, 9622 – 42 Avenue
 Edmonton, AB T6E 5Y4

Tel. 1-800-667-2372
 Fax (780) 426-7151