



# AFKA Board Reports

REPORTING PERIOD: JULY 1, 2021 – SEPTEMBER 20, 2021

# ALBERTA FOSTER AND KINSHIP ASSOCIATION

## QUARTERLY REPORTS

**REPORTING PERIOD: July 1, 2021 – September 30, 2021**

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2. VICE PRESIDENT.....RENE RAJOTTE
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# **A. EXECUTIVE REPORTS**

## **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

**Sylvia Thompson**

Welcome to Fall

I hope everyone had a great summer.

Planning for our fall provincial training Conference is now almost complete. The scheduled dates are October 28 – 31. Our regional and district presidents or delegates are joining us this year. This year will be a bit shorter timeframe as Foster and Kinship Families and Social Worker of the year awards will be given out at Zone Training/Appreciation events. We plan on presenting only supplemental training. We will also have an update from the Ministry about all the changes that have happened. Friday evening will be a time to get together. This will allow for you to spend time visiting with old friends, make new ones, play some card or board games or whatever you choose to do for relaxation. I am looking forward to spending time with all of you.

The AFKA is currently in the process of doing a Governance Review. This is an opportunity to review our bylaws, policies and procedures and to ensure we are following both.

Our Board of directors is responsible for providing direction for our association. Because of this and a desire for more input, we have increased the number of members on the board. At the same time, we are looking at Board training to help our current and any new members to do the best we can do.

We continue to work on having a local association/group with a president or delegate in every community that has a local Children's Services office in rural Alberta. Many of the larger centers have great streams of communications now. Ideally all of the local presidents/delegates attend regional council in their regions which share information about what is happening in Children's Services and our world. The provincial presidents have regular meetings to discuss concerns, and happenings to improve the fostering experience. This information is then passed on to our office who meet regularly with the ministry. If we can continue to bring issues forward, the ministry has an opportunity to solve them. You cannot solve something you are not aware of. We use this time to also report good things happening and there are many. Thank you to all who participate.

Welcome to our new presidents and associate directors who have joined us.

As you can see, important topics that need your input.

Please consider becoming involved in any way that works for you. You can reach out to me at 780 621-7815 or the office at 780 429-9923 with any question or to provide input and interest.

Your president

Sylvia Thompson

## **VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

**Rene Rajotte**

Hope this finds everyone having had a great summer and had a chance to take a break from the hustle and bustle of the real world. I know in the Wainwright area it was HOT! With this hot weather came very little rain, so the grass in the pastures are not very good and the grain land will probably be about 30% of what it has been the last 3 years.

I had a fairly busy summer with the AFKA. I believe that most people know that Katherine our Executive Director is retiring this year after about 30 years with the association. Katherine has done so much over those years, from where they started to where it is today. I cannot Thank You enough for what you have done for Foster Care in Alberta! With that I would like to wish all the best to you in your retirement.

With the retirement, came the process of selecting a new ED. The Personal Committee, which consisted of four people, had the task to go through approximately 40 resumes and pick six to eight of those before we got together in person to narrow it down to 4. Then a panel of 4 interviewed and selected our new ED. Through this process Melissa Jones was chosen and accepted the position. Even though she is not new to the office, we welcome her into her new position.

Next, we go to Brownell's Children's Camp. We were not able to get the campsites open, for which I apologize. We were not able to secure insurance for campsite rentals until quite late. Then the province opened restrictions and we were able to meet our commitments to groups that had booked the Lodge and campgrounds. From now until the end of September the Brownell's Children's Camp is quite busy. The people that were looking to lease the camp are going through budget numbers right now and should know shortly if that will go ahead. Thanks to all volunteers that continue to go out to the camp work bees! It is very much appreciated!

All the best,

Rene Rajotte

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

**Katherine Jones**

I can't believe that with my retirement approaching, this is the last Quarterly Report that I write for the AFKA.

I have begun reflecting on my years here at the AFKA and the amount of work that has been done over the years to enhance the foster and kinship care programs. We went from little to no training then to a full spectrum of training that addresses some of the most challenging needs of the children placed in our care. Training is something both the AFKA and the Ministry feel is so vital to the retention of caregivers and the wellbeing of the children and youth in care.

Our province has added some of the P.R.I.D.E. training modules for our caregivers. This is amazing training and I am sure many of you will be happy to participate in it. The other training modules have been updated to make them more relevant to current practice.

First Aid training is available for all caregivers through the AFKA and considered a required training.

Our CAST Program is coordinated by Yvonne Smits, (welcome to the team Yvonne). It is a vital program offering support and guidance to caregivers faced with an allegation and going through an assessment. CAST was already a program when I came on board. It was developed by Marie Brownell from Calgary and team of individuals who realized how traumatic it was for a family undergoing an investigation. They decided to look for a way to help these individuals so they don't feel all alone at a time when their whole life felt upside down. The CAST program has grown over the years to be a very substantial part of our association.

Our Legal Assistance Fund offers support to caregivers who have been charged with a criminal offence against a child or youth in their care. If you want more information about this program, please contact the AFKA office or check it out on the AFKA website [www.afkaonline.ca](http://www.afkaonline.ca).

Our Mentorship Program is now being coordinated by Amey Carey, here in the AFKA office; this program offers caregivers just starting up a mentor to support them during their first year of fostering. The mentor will introduce the caregivers to their local association and the AFKA will help them navigate the various policies and procedures they must be aware of; ensure they are aware of their rights as caregivers and to be there when they need someone to talk to. Additionally, a mentor can now be provided to a family who has fostered for more than a year, but still needs support through difficult times in their journey.

Our insurance rider is also a critical support to caregivers. It provides for caregivers who have experienced a loss over \$10,000.00 caused by an act of a child or youth in their care. If you would like additional information on the Insurance Rider, please contact the AFKA office or visit our webpage at [www.afkaonline.ca](http://www.afkaonline.ca).

We have been extremely busy at the AFKA office. We are preparing for conference which is always a busy time. We have had people coming and going with the hiring of two new staff and interviews for Executive Director's position.

I welcome Sarah Alber as our Executive Assistant and Cassandra Bencz as our Administrative Assistance, Program and Events Promotion. Although they are still fairly new here at the office, I believe they will be an asset to the AFKA. They are looking forward to meeting you and working to ensure your needs are met.

The elections for our President and Vice President are now over. Sylvia Thompson will continue on as President and Rene Rajotte as Vice President. Congratulation to you both! I look forward to working with you until my retirement on October 31. I think it is important for caregivers to know that our President and Vice President are volunteer positions. These people should be commended for the amount of work they do.

I have had the privilege of working alongside Sylvia for few years and I am amazed with the amount of time and effort she puts into her role. I am sure it is equivalent to the hours of a full-time job. I believe we all owe her our gratitude for what she does to support caregivers and to improve the foster care system in Alberta. Sylvia, thank you for caring enough to put your heart and soul into your position as President of the AFKA! You rock!

In closing, I would like to thank my staff for a job well done. I thank the AFKA Board of Directors for their work in supporting you, our members. I hope to see many of you at conference again this year. Now if we could lower the number of Covid 19 cases in Alberta, I would feel a lot better! Hopefully, it will improve with the adherence of rules regarding wearing masks and social distancing.

I wish you all a very warm and peaceful fall.

Respectfully,

Katherine

## **B. DIRECTOR REPORTS**

### **DIRECTOR – TREATY 7**

**JANET DELORME**

Summer time feels like it was short lived due to restrictions being lifted July 1st. I sure hope all families were able to enjoy the sun and some vacation time to reflect on the year of being isolated or not.

The past months I was able to meet the wonderful Presidents, staff and Board of Directors for AFKA. Finally seeing people in person, I was able to attend a meet and greet and a board meeting. Since I am new to this position I am in the learning stages. Everyone is so patient and willing to help me out to better understand policies and procedures. I hope to bring ideals and any issues that may arise to AFKA for discussion.

Until then, I will keep communication open through my phone or email. I am hoping to venture out to treaty 7 territories and build community. Upon hearing some concerns as well as myself being a kinship parent, I hope to have a good relationship with the bands and/or nations so I can address any needs of the families and bring any awareness if need be. As well as share more information to our AFKA board on indigenous topics or issues.

Therefore, lots of changes are going on with this pandemic hoping we can see some light at the end of this dark tunnel. With children returning back to school or continuing with online learning, I wish all families to be safe and continue the practices so we can return to normal life again.

We will be successful in our fight against this virus. I do believe. Take care and be safe. Thank you.

### **DIRECTOR – SOUTH REGION**

**Marlin Meyer**

September 9 saw the Lethbridge area hold its' first activity in more than a year. A BBQ, with bouncy castles for the children, was held at Pavan Park in Lethbridge. Almost 100 parents and children attended. It was good to see so many familiar faces after such a long haul. The kids had a blast and the burgers were yummy. Chinook Country Society is also planning a Citation Awards Banquet for Foster Family week, in October.

## **DIRECTOR – CALGARY REGION**

**Monique McCardle**

We've had a quiet summer with no in person events. We haven't started planning any in person events at this point as we're not sure where the pandemic will take us. Covid 19 numbers are rising in Calgary so we have decided to celebrate our AFKA award recipients virtually again this year. We are hopeful to have an in-person Christmas party for our caregivers and children.

The Fireside virtual support chat will be hosted September 9 at 7pm. We have Aspen Growers, Registered Psychologist joining us to talk about the different therapies available to children and caregivers. We host our Fireside virtual chats the second Thursday of every month.

## **DIRECTOR – Central REGION**

**Heather Guard**

Not yet submitted

## **DIRECTOR – EDMONTON REGION**

**Linda Krauskopf**

Not much has happened since my last report. Summer was a hot one, and I am sure that everyone enjoyed going to the lake. Now we sit and wait to see if school will go ahead, or if we will be back pulling our hair out. This COVID needs to stop soon!

We had a zoom meet with the CRCC about the next year and what it looks like. We plan on just getting together to talk about some of the things happening. I think everyone will enjoy the face to face.

So, we plan on meeting for coffee, and see what comes out of the meeting.

I still will go to all the meetings with upper management for Foster Care and Kinship Care, and bring back any information that I get.

I am working hard on the Conference in Jasper. We will for sure have a great time like always, Great topics with some great trainers!

Hope to see everyone there! We all need to just get out, and enjoy life again face to face!



## **DIRECTOR - NORTH REGION**

**JOYCE GOLDING**

I would like to extend a huge welcome to Beverly Towe as the Associate Director and her team for the East Stream.

There is a Regional Council meeting set for September 3 via zoom with citations and finances on the agenda.

September 21 is set for the NACC meeting with the department.

We have selected a Foster Family of the year but had no submissions for workers or kinship home throughout the entire North region. We will need to get on this earlier next year. We did have discussions on carrying on the tradition of acknowledging individuals or groups who have gone the extra mile working with our children.

COVID is still a big concern for some families and facilitating visits.

### **North Regions Associate Report**

Hi everyone in the North, I will be your AFKA representative for the East Zone of the North.

I have been a foster parent for 24 years, had many long-term placements and took private Guardianship of 3 lovely daughters.

Vince Artymko and I will be setting up a support group for the east zone. There have been a couple emails sent out by the department to introduce ourselves.

You can contact be at [bev.towe@hotmail.com](mailto:bev.towe@hotmail.com) or my cell 780-207-1041

Hope to connect with all caregivers in the east zone.

Bev Towe