



AFKA Board Reports

Reporting Period: October 1 – December 31, 2021

ALBERTA FOSTER AND KINSHIP ASSOCIATION

QUARTERLY REPORTS

REPORTING PERIOD: October 1 – December 30, 2021

A. EXECUTIVE REPORTS

1. PRESIDENT.....SYLVIA THOMPSON
2. VICE PRESIDENT.....RENE RAJOTTE
3. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR.....MELISSA JONES

B. DIRECTOR REPORTS

1. TREATY 7..... JANET DELORME
2. TREATY 8 CARLY MORTON
3. SOUTH REGION..... MARLIN MEYER
4. CALGARY REGION..... MONIQUE MCCARDLE
5. CENTRAL REGION.....HEATHER GUARD
6. EDMONTON REGION.....LINDA KRAUSKOPF
7. NORTH REGION – ASSOCIATE: EAST STREAM..... BEV TOWE
8. NORTH REGION – ASSOCIATE: WEST STREAM..... TERRI FORSEILLE
9. TREATY 6 – VACANT

A. EXECUTIVE REPORTS

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Sylvia Thompson

Welcome to Winter!

Thank you to those who joined us in celebrating Katherine's retirement. While we will miss her dearly, we wish her the best going forward. Katherine has greatly contributed to the success of the AFKA and we would not be where we are without her guidance. Again, thank you Katherine.

I would like to extend a very warm welcome to our new Executive Director, Melissa Jones. Melissa will bring new ideas and initiatives to the table. I look forward to working with her for many years to come.

The Governance Review is now complete. This was an opportunity to review our bylaws, policies and procedures and to ensure we are following both. We were pleased with the review and will continue to review our policies and bylaws and amend, as needed.

Our Board of Directors is responsible for providing direction for our association. We are looking at Board training to help our current and any new members do the best we can do. One of our main focuses going forward will be to look at what and how we can provide more and better supports to the caregivers. Please keep bringing these ideas forward.

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 large 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 foster and kinship 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 who have joined us. As you can see, there are 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 questions or to provide input and interest.

Your President,

Sylvia Thompson

VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Rene Rajotte

Christmas has come and gone, which is one of my favourite times of the year. This is when our family and friends get together to celebrate the birth of Christ. We are very fortunate to be able to do this. Let us remember those that are less fortunate and be there to give a helping hand at any time of the year, as so many of you do.

Last year I mentioned I was getting more comfortable with Zoom meetings. While this is great technology and definitely has its place, there is nothing better than a face to face meeting. Oh, and I am still not that comfortable with Zoom! I love computers, but they just don't understand me.

It has been quite busy trying to put a plan together for the Brownell Children's Camp, as we have had very few functions to generate income. Covid-19 has made it very difficult. We are currently looking at a possible sale or lease of the camp.

I would like to thank all of you that do make a difference in the lives that you touch, not just the children but their families, too.

I hope everyone had a wonderful Christmas season with their families and would like to wish you all a very Happy New Year. All the best in 2022.

Rene Rajotte

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Melissa Jones

Happy New Year, everyone! I'd like to take this opportunity to introduce myself as the Alberta Foster and Kinship Association's new Executive Director. Katherine Jones, our previous Executive Director, has chosen to retire after having committed to 27 years with the AFKA. The changes the association experienced through supports and advocacy over her time with the association have been quite incredible and would not have happened without the leadership and dedication Katherine demonstrated. I'm very honoured to have the opportunity now to continue the work she was doing and to continue moving the association forward.

I have been with the AFKA for almost 10 years in various roles; my last one as the Associate Executive Director. I look forward to continuous work on relationship building with all our stakeholders, working collaboratively to do what's best for kids, and to advocate for and provide supports to caregivers so they are able to also continue doing their best to provide optimal environments for the children in their care to thrive.

In this last quarter, our association staff have been focusing on what the AFKA is doing well, how to continue doing those things well, what we could improve within our scope of ability, and making adjustments along the way to do them better. We have a very skilled, passionate team in the association and I am very grateful for the insights and commitment they bring to their work and the work we do collectively for caregivers. Thank you to Shelly, Amey, Rolly, Cassandra, and Yvonne for what you have brought to our discussions, as well as your amazing dedication to do the best work possible.

The Board of Directors have been focusing on the suggestions provided through the Governance Review; working through these thoughtfully and with intention. I appreciate the insights brought forward from each region regarding the successes and challenges they are seeing. Working collectively will help bring about clarity and change where needed. Thank you for your support in my new position; I am grateful for the working relationships we are building and the sense of teamwork moving forward.

The AFKA continues to meet with Children's Services Ministry staff, which will be happening quarterly with the start of this new year. We have had opportunities to share the challenges caregivers are facing with items brought forward to us recently, such as: childcare rates, special rates, basic maintenance rates increase, late payments, shortage of workers, and training. We will continue moving forward with these conversations and others as the need arises, in addition to sharing successes and areas that have improved for caregivers. Any information we receive from the ministry for caregivers is shared with caregivers through our website and email, as well as with the AFKA Board of Directors and Presidents.

We are involved in various other working groups and partner meetings with ministry, department and agency leadership. Through these groups we are able to continue bringing the caregiver's voice and experience forward, make recommendations when required, and work together to try to make things better. The AFKA Board of Directors receive summaries of the information from these stakeholder meetings, which is then shared by the Board of Directors with the presidents of their local and regional associations.

With a new year, we are excited about the possibilities for continuing to support caregivers in ways that are relevant and help to address some of the challenges they face. We will be asking for information from you in a variety of ways, so please help us with participating when the opportunity presents itself. Through your membership, your voice, we can have a clearer, stronger voice with what is happening provincially; the challenges and the successes, both very important to be shared and heard. Other ways

to have your voice heard is to attend your local and regional association meetings or to contact the president of these associations and share what is happening for you.

It may be a new year, however every new day throughout the year presents an opportunity to learn and grow, to choose to do the best we can with what we have in the moment, and to continue to create more of what is good. I wish you all good health and many happy moments throughout 2022!

With gratitude,
Melissa Jones

B. DIRECTOR REPORTS

DIRECTOR – TREATY 7

JANET DELORME

Winter time has come. I would like to reflect as an Indigenous person, during this season comes Winter Solstice. A changing of time and weather, with few daylight hours in Alberta. Where we take time for self-care, and time to reflect on family such as kinship and be with loved ones. This could also be the time to take care of our body, mind and spirit to prepare for longer days.

In October I was able to be a part of the AFKA conference which I finally was able to meet and greet people in person. This was such a wonderful, glorious, humble and gratifying experience. Since we took extra caution to ensure everyone's safety during the training sessions we still had time for laughs and sharing stories. It was a remarkable experience to be able to meet foster parents and many other community members as well.

As for reporting, I am still getting familiar with becoming Treaty 7 - Board of Director. With all the meetings it has brought me a better understanding of my role. I look forward to being able to travel and meet other delegates within Treaty 7 territory in the near future. Having the ability to share my knowledge as well as, learn the teachings of my culture and traditional ways, and build the community connection.

During this season I hope all families do take time for fun activities such a tobogganing, skiing, ice fishing or whatever the sport or activity may be as we are seeing the COVID-19 numbers somewhat be reduced

due to vaccine directives, mandates and restrictions. With all the safety protocols and measures, may we still have family time and enjoy each other's company. Keep the connection strong, if it cannot be in person, let it be through a phone call, text, video meeting such as zoom or google chat. Also, bring the children to places where they can have fun and enjoy activities that were put on hold. I really love to take my children to the indoor play places or enjoy a movie night with lots of popcorn and snacks. I hope everyone can do the same as we need to focus on maintaining a balance with whatever it may be such as school, work, life in general. Take time for you and the children, learn a new hobby or skill, enjoy life and everyone who surrounds you.

Sending many blessings to your family from mine. Thank you everyone and as always, be safe.

DIRECTOR – Treaty 8

Carly Morton

Not yet submitted

DIRECTOR – SOUTH REGION

Marlin Meyer

Well it's winter! How do I know that? My truck said -15 as the family and I went Christmas tree shopping. By the way, did anyone notice the price of fresh Christmas trees this year? Yikes! A Charlie Brown tree cost me \$70, outrageous, time to buy an artificial one I guess.

I have some very distressing news for all in the South, the CFSA has seen fit to cancel the contracts with both Lethbridge and Medicine Hat Societies. These were the dollars that were provided to each Society to provide functions, training and networking for caregivers. The events that we held each year like the summer bbq, corn maze, bowling, morning at the movies and Citation Awards banquet will no longer be held. So much networking happened at these events and we would provide learning materials for caregivers to avail themselves of. Also, there was an allotment to assist sending folks to the AFKA conference in Jasper, all has been cancelled.

Andrew Kippers has sent letters to all levels of the department, all to no avail. I also found out, at the last AFKA Board of Directors meeting, that this is happening to other Associations and Societies that received funding in the same manner. I urge all, if this is important to you, write the Minister and tell her that this decision needs to be reversed.

Hope you had a very Merry Christmas and wishing you a Happy New Year!

DIRECTOR – CALGARY REGION

Monique McCardle

Happy New Year! We hope you enjoyed lots of time with your family and friends over the holidays. We are hopeful that this year will provide more opportunities to gather as a membership and enjoy the events that our members having been missing. Look forward to new information around our event gatherings on our website!

Our new FosterTalks/Fireside chat series starts this month. Watch or listen to the FosterTalks session and At your convenience and then join us for a live Fireside Chat on January 20 at 7 pm. You can register for this event on FosterTalks.com. This is a free training session available to all foster and kinship care providers with a new topic every month. We are looking forward to seeing you there!

DIRECTOR – Central REGION

Heather Guard

Not yet submitted

DIRECTOR – EDMONTON REGION

Linda Krauskopf

It's the start of a new year, so if COVID could please leave! We need to start the new year fresh without you! Let's start the new year doing something different. How about thinking about helping foster parents through a PCR Assessment of Concern, or help a new foster or kinship home with the ins and outs of the government policies and procedures? The AFKA would love to see some new faces as volunteers, so please think about it. We are now trying to get back to normal as best we can. One thing that has come out of COVID is how foster and kinship caregivers are each other's best resource, helping each other when we need it.

CRCC had a Saturday night out. Husbands and wives talking about what's new in our lives and, of course, the children in our home, the good, the bad and the ugly. We all seem to need the face to face meetings again! We hope to do this more, Maybe just have coffee and talk. I don't think we need to have real heavy conversation, more in person is needed for sure, hope this happens soon! Also, please become more involved with your local association, even if it is just to get out and have face to face with another human!

Lots of changes at the AFKA offices, Melissa Jones is the new Executive Director! She is young with lots of neat and new ideas! She sees the need for more supports for foster and kinship families!

She has new ideas around training and supports for us. We have been busy as a Board coming up with ideas around what can we do to support the fostering and kinship care community; please feel free to text your ideas.

The Canadian Foster Parent Association has been affected by COVID. The last two conferences have been cancelled, but they plan on having one in 2022 in Yellowknife, NWT, September 25-28, 2022. Everyone is looking forward to having a face to face connection. Not too much has been happening because most provincial offices have been closed, so looking forward to getting together with the other provinces and talking about the changes that have been happening in the last couple of years.

The CRCC is here and want to hear from the foster and kinship parents in the area:

Joanne Crowley 780-939-2576 Cell 780-966-9942

Stacey Van Cingel 780-484-8958 Cell 780-887-4211

Carly Mortin 780-863-5838

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR - NORTH REGION, EAST STREAM

Bev Towe

Happy New Year! I am the AFKA Board Representative for the east stream for the north region.

This coming year will be exciting getting the east zone up and running.

We are going to try and have support groups throughout the east stream from Fort McMurray down to Vegreville, including the 4 settlements.

If you would like to help or have questions, please email or call me.

bev.towe@hotmail.com

Cell: 780-207-1041

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR - NORTH REGION, WEST STREAM

Terri Forseille

Here we are at the end of another interesting year. Winter has officially landed in the Northwest. For some of us this is a joyous time of snowmen, sledding, ice fishing and other winter activities. And for others like myself it means lost mittens, frozen hands and feet and snow being outgrown before winter ends. Unfortunately, we have not been able to return to having Children's Christmas parties this past year, hopefully next year!

Watch your emails for upcoming training opportunities. There has been a lot of training offered lately.

Important dates coming up:

Grande Prairie Support group meetings are held at Mr. Mikes @ 7pm
Dec 14, Jan 11, Feb 8 (second Tuesday of every month)

High Level Support Group meeting Nov 20th

High Prairie Foster Parent Association Meetings are in the process of finding a new location.
Meeting are held at 5:30pm
Jan 3, Feb 7 (first Monday of the month)

Northwest Council Meetings are held via zoom, everyone is welcome and encouraged to attend.
Next meeting dates are Jan 11th, March 8th and June 14th @ 9:30am for Caregivers and 10am
for CS staff. If you would like any more info about any of these meetings please contact me @
(780)536-7421

May you all have a wonderful holiday season and a happy and, hopefully, more normal New Year!!