

# METIS CHILD, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES



ANNUAL REPORT APRIL 1, 2008 TO MARCH 31, 2009





# VISION STATEMENT

THE METIS FAMILY AND COMMUNITY  
IS THE CORNERSTONE OF OUR NATION  
AND IS BUILT UPON LOVE, RESPECT,  
HONOUR, STRENGTH AND HERITAGE.

## MISSION STATEMENT

Metis families and communities have the right and responsibility to care for children. Metis Child, Family and Community Services will work to strengthen the capacity of families to care for children through culturally relevant community-based programs. We believe in the inherent strength of our families and in the need to build on the capacity of our community to care for and nurture Metis children.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- 1 Metis families and communities are the cornerstone of the Metis Nation and the service delivery system must reflect this vision.
- 2 Responsibility for decision-making regarding Metis children and families lies with the family, extended family and community whenever possible.
- 3 The organizational structure promotes and supports community governance at all levels.
- 4 The service delivery system will encompass both formal and informal elements.
- 5 The service delivery system must be operated in an efficient and effective manner.
- 6 The service delivery system will be outcome-based and will reflect the core guiding principles of MCFCS.

# MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD

On behalf of the Board of Directors I am pleased to present our 2008-2009 Annual Report. Our Annual Report reflects the continued growth and development of our agency during the past year in all seven regions of the province.

The Board of Directors would like to thank the staff for their hard work during the past year. Our agency has provided services to an increased number of families and children over the past year without an increase in funding or staff positions. The Board appreciates that the staff have risen to the challenge and continue to provide such a high caliber of service.

Our agency continues to provide innovative programming that strengthens our families and promotes the safety and well being of our children and youth. Programs such as the Family Enhancement Program, the Family Mentor Program, the Metis Spirit Program, Life Long Connections, Kinship Care Program and the Honouring Our Youth Celebrations are unique to our agency. These programs demonstrate the commitment of our staff to develop services that fit the vision and philosophy that the Metis community had for our agency.

The Board would like to acknowledge the support and guidance we have received from our Metis Government; President David Chartrand, the MMF Board of Directors and Minister of Child and Family Services, Judy Mayer during the past year. During the past year we have continued to establish partnerships in each region resulting in a new office space at 2000 Portage Avenue with the Winnipeg Region and future office space in Brandon with the Southwest Region.

The Board appreciates the support and collaboration that has occurred during the past year between the Authority Board and the Agency Board.

*Mona Buors  
Acting Chair*



# BOARD OF DIRECTORS

## Acting Chair

Mona Buors (*Interlake Region*)

## Past Chair

Val Bird (*Southwest Region*)

## Secretary/Treasurer

Lisa Halcrow (*The Pas Region*)

## Members

Marcella Vezina (*Southeast Region*)

Yvonne Mercredi (*Thompson Region*)

Harold Delaronde (*Northwest Region*)

Karen Beaudin (*Winnipeg Region*)

## Ex-Officio

Steve Racine

Evelyn Nepinak



**Back Row:** Lisa Halcrow, Evelyn Nepinak,  
Yvonne Mercredi, Harold Delaronde,  
Karen Beaudin, Steve Racine, Marcella Vezina  
**Front Row:** Val Bird, Mona Buors

# REGIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEES

MCFCS has established a community governance structure to ensure community representation and input into the service delivery system of the agency. A Regional Advisory Committee (RAC) has been established in the seven regions of the province. Each RAC is made up of five members appointed by the Manitoba Metis Federation governance in that Region. An Elder, youth and general member are appointed by the Vice President of each region. Two additional members are appointed by the Metis Women of Manitoba. Each RAC elects a chairperson who represents their region on the Agency Board of Directors.

The RAC's meet quarterly and allow enhanced partnership and communication between the agency and the community. Through the RAC's MCFCS is able to provide the community with information about the services and programs that are available to support families and children in each region. The RAC's also provide the agency with valuable information regarding the unique service needs in their communities. The community participation of the RAC members provides the agency with the opportunity to increase the involvement of the Metis community in strengthening the functioning of our families and the well-being of our children and youth.

## Northwest Region

**Chair:**

Harold Delaronde (*Elder*)

**Members:**

Joan Church (*MWM*)  
Chrissy McNichol (*General*)  
Tammy G-Deslauriers (*MWM*)  
Celesta Church (*Youth*)

## Southeast Region

**Chair:**

Marcella Vezina (*Elder*)

**Members:**

Debra Kessler (*General*)  
Amber Leclair (*Youth*)  
Shirley Langan (*MWM*)  
Jackie Mason (*MWM*)

## Southwest Region

**Chair:**

Val Bird (*General*)

**Members:**

George Fleury (*Elder*)  
Brandi Braun (*Youth*)  
Eileen Dubnick (*MWM*)  
Vacant (*MWM*)

## The Pas Region

**Chair:**

Lisa Halcrow (*MWM*)

**Members:**

Cynthia Stephen (*General*)  
Lorraine Horechka (*Elder*)  
Francine Villeneuve (*Youth*)  
Jessica Richardson (*MWM*)

## Interlake Region

**Chair:**

Mona Buors (*MWM*)

**Members:**

Patsy Millar (*Elder*)  
Linda Lamoureux (*MWM*)  
Vacant (*Youth*)  
Vacant (*General*)

## Winnipeg Region

**Chair:** Karen Beaudin (*General*)

**Members:**

Lucy Guiboche (*Elder*)  
Sarah Schmidt (*Youth*)  
Melissa Morrisseau (*MWM*)  
Andrea Canada (*MWM*)

## Thompson Region

**Chair:**

Yvonne Mercredi (*MWM*)

**Members:**

Marlene McKenzie (*MWM*)  
Vacant (*Elder*)  
Vacant (*Youth*)  
Vacant (*General*)



# MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



This has been another exciting year of continued growth and development for our agency. We have continued to build on our strength based, family centered philosophy within all our programs and services. We have seen our new programs take shape and have been able to observe first hand the positive impacts and outcomes the programs and services have had for our families, our children, our youth and our young adults. Our agency and staff continue to strive to build an agency that does things “differently”.

Despite the enormous workload, our staff have continued to maintain their innovative spirit and their commitment to changing how child welfare services are delivered and experienced by families. Staff continue to provide services that are responsive to the needs of families, that fully engage family and extended family in a team work approach and that promotes the inherent strengths and resiliency of our children and youth.

The staff are the heart of our agency. I am continuously impressed with the level of commitment, dedication, integrity and work ethic displayed day in and day out. Their passion to support and strengthen families, to ensure the safety of children and to be true guardians and advocates for children and youth is the basis for the success of our agency. I am proud to be surrounded by such an exceptional group of individuals and teams.

I would like to take the opportunity to commend all of the staff for everything they have done in the past year, from family reunifications, to sending flowers to a parent for their first year of sobriety, to taking youth camping for the weekend, to finding beds and furniture for families, for looking for youth who are awol and for listening and respecting our families, our children and our youth.

Although caseloads have increased every year with little additional assistance, the services provided by the staff have continued to be one of the best in the province. It would be amazing to see what this staff group could accomplish with our families if they were given reasonable caseloads.

We have made significant progress in identifying and developing culturally relevant strength based assessment tools that will continue to support and guide our work. This has been a critical area of work this past year since as a child welfare system we tend to focus on deficits and challenges. It is important that we provide staff with the tools that support the philosophy and principles of the agency to guide their work with families and children.

It has been exciting to see the progress that has been made in providing comprehensive services to youth and young adults this past year. Through the support of the Skills for Life and Metis Spirit programs we have been able to watch our young adults begin to assume leadership roles and provide guidance to their younger peers. The incredible strengths and resiliency of these young people is inspiring and we are proud to have been able to take this a step further and create the Youth and Young Adult Mentor program. Many of our young adults have taken the opportunity to speak at our Honouring Our Youth Celebrations and it is a pleasure to see the progress and poise demonstrated by these amazing young adults.

Our agency has received tremendous support from the Metis Nation allowing us to continue to build our volunteer programming, the Family Mentor program and our placement resources.

Our agency appreciates the support, vision and leadership of President Chartrand, Minister Judy Mayer and the Manitoba Metis Federation Board of Directors. Our Metis Government has continued to provide incredible support to the agency during the past year, through attendance at our events and activities, funding agreements for some of our unique programs and advocacy on behalf of our agency in order to highlight inequities in funding.

I would finally like to thank our Board of Directors for continuing to provide support and guidance to myself and the agency. The Board continues to support the development of programs and services that are consistent with the vision and philosophy of the agency.



*Alana Brownlee*



# STRENGTHENING FAMILIES THROUGH ENGAGEMENT AND COLLABORATION

MCFCS provides preventative, early intervention and protection services to Metis and Inuit families in all seven regions of the province as mandated by the Child and Family Services Act and the Adoptions Act. MCFCS is committed to empowering families and the community to share the responsibility for protecting our children and youth. We are committed to ensuring that all children and youth receive safe and nurturing care that will enhance their development and well-being.

MCFCS believes that children are best served within their own family and that parents strive to provide the best possible care to their children. All families have inner strengths and resiliency. The Agency recognizes that life circumstances and challenges can impact on family functioning and interfere with parents abilities to meet the needs of their children in the way they hoped. It is at these times that the agency and the community must get involved to support families.

Our agency recognizes that being involved with child and family services is stressful and for many families involuntary. MCFCS has worked hard to modify our approach and how families experience our services so that despite the involuntary nature of our services families feel respected, empowered and supported. Although we may not always view

circumstances the same way we hope that all families will feel heard, valued and respected while we work together for the best interests of our children. MCFCS strives to become involved with families in new and innovative ways so that families feel supported, respected and empowered. Agency staff endeavor to build collaborative relationships with families and extended families so that families participate in case planning in a fully informed and meaningful way. The agency uses inclusive approaches so family and extended family members are involved in the identification of their challenges and their strengths. The goal is to establish the case plan in conjunction with the family so that it truly becomes the family's plan. The Agency has learned that the active participation of a family in the identification of their needs and the development of the case plan is critical for successful engagement and greatly enhances the family's successful achievement of their goals.

In order to further develop this inclusive practice our agency will be piloting family unity conferences in the upcoming year in our differential response projects, as well as in our family service teams. The family unity conferences will serve as the foundation for meaningful participation of families in the agency service delivery model. The family unity conferences provide meaningful

participation for all family members during the assessment process and in the development of case plans. The conferences will provide a mechanism to ensure that as an agency we consistently value the involvement of family, extended family and the natural support networks of families in supporting our families and children. We know that families are able to cope effectively when they can draw on their inner strengths and external supports.



# THE YEAR AT A GLANCE

MCFCS has continued to see an increase in the number of families, children and youth receiving services in all regions of the province. In 2004, MCFCS was estimated to have a provincial case load of 882 family and children in care cases. The agency has received provincial funding based on this estimated caseload number. These numbers have been greatly underestimated. MCFCS is currently providing services to 1479 family and children in care cases. Currently, the agency is working with 754 families and 1843 children and youth, as well as 725 children in care.

MCFCS has not received additional operational funding to correspond with the increase in the volume of cases. This has resulted in increasing workload issues for our staff each year. Although staff strive to provide

the best possible service to the children and families their ability to do so is greatly impacted by their caseload numbers. The average caseload size ranges from 28-45 which far exceeds recommended caseloads for child and family service workers. The Child Welfare League of America recommends that child protection social workers should have no more than 17 families. Within Manitoba it has been regularly identified that social workers are unable to meet Provincial Regulations and Standards when caseloads are within the range experienced by MCFCS staff.

MCFCS staff should be commended for their commitment, dedication and hard work as they continue to provide quality services to children and families despite these barriers.

MCFCS is also responsible for a hidden caseload. Cases that are waiting for closure are not included in the case load numbers. However, until the case is closed the agency and the social worker continue to be responsible for the family or child. Due to the significant workload experienced by staff they are required to prioritize their work. As an agency and as a staff team we prioritize direct service to families and children. As a result, completing the necessary paper work to close a case is often a lower priority.

If cases waiting for closure are included in the case load number the number of cases swells to 1906 with an average caseload size of 45 cases per social worker.



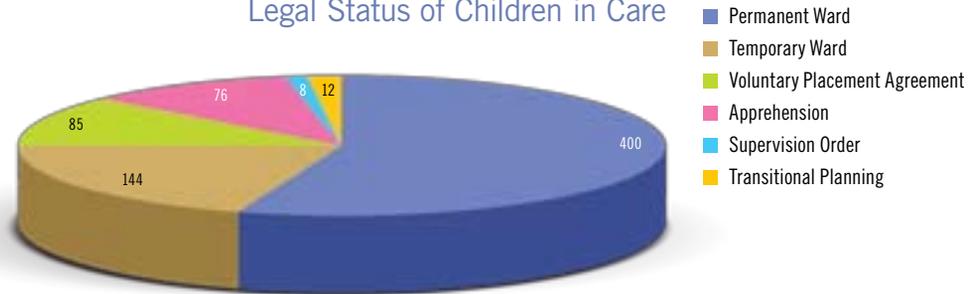
Regions	Protection Cases	Voluntary Family Cases	Total Families	Children In Care Cases	Total Cases
Central	14	3	17	11	28
Interlake/Eastman	34	14	48	81	129
North	43	5	48	36	84
Parkland	129	44	173	87	260
Western	52	14	66	36	102
Winnipeg	382	20	402	474	876
Total	654	100	754	725	1479



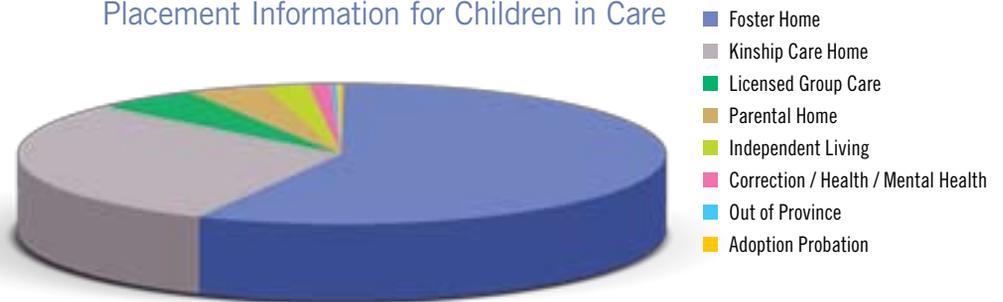
A significant proportion of children in care are permanent wards of the agency. As a result the Agency felt it was critical to establish specialized permanent ward workers who could be more responsive to the individual needs of the children and youth. Staff work hard to ensure the provision of services that will improve outcomes for children and youth so that they can realize their full potential.

The majority of children in care are between the ages of 11 - 18. As a result many of our programs and services are geared to promoting healthy development as they face the many choices and challenges of adolescence. Our agency also feels it is critical for our children in care to maintain and develop strong family relationships with immediate and extended family wherever possible. The majority of all permanent wards continue to have regular meaningful contact with their family and extended family so that they can maintain a sense of their family identity.

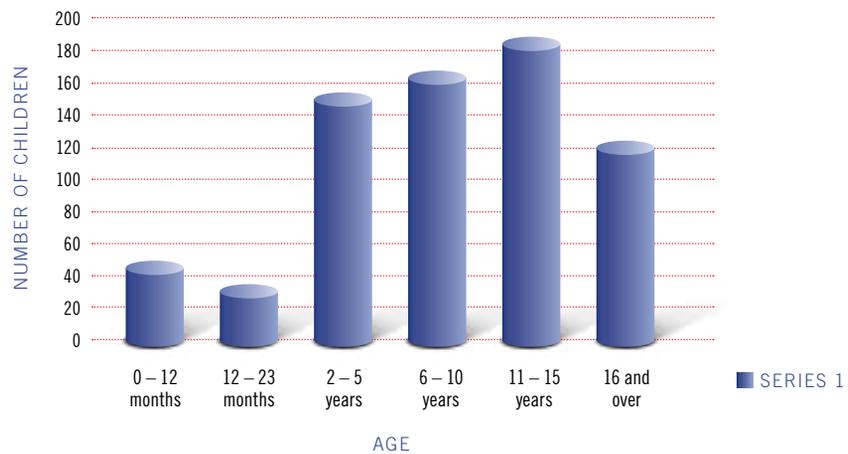
Legal Status of Children in Care



Placement Information for Children in Care



Ages of Children in Care





# KEEPING THE SASH AROUND THE FAMILY

STRENGTHENING FAMILIES  
THROUGH OUR SERVICES

MCFCS has developed a continuum of programs that focus on strengthening the capacity of families to care for their children. Many of the services are unique to our agency and have been developed as result of the innovative and thoughtful thinking of our staff teams. All our services strive to be family focused and responsive to the individual needs of each family. They all incorporate inclusive strength based practice and respect the cultural practices of our families. Our programs strengthen families, enhance family functioning and maintain family connectedness.

# STRENGTHENING FAMILIES THROUGH OUR SERVICES

## Family Support Program

The family support program is designed to provide in-home support services to families in order to enhance their ability to provide care to their children, strengthen family functioning and prevent possible family disruption. This program is a critical component in the provision of prevention services to families. The program focuses on the unique individual needs and challenges of each family and provides interventions to support and build on existing strengths in order to allow children to remain safely in their own homes.

When children are unable to remain in their own home the family support program actively engages with parents in order to support and implement a reunification plan. The program facilitates quality parent child contact so that the family bond is preserved while parents are supported in addressing their challenges.

The family support program works in conjunction with the family service worker, the family and the extended family to strengthen the parent's competencies, their parental capacity and build on their existing strengths as individuals and as a family.

MCFCS has recently developed a program to network with parents and assist them during supported family time that is office based. The program collaborates with the parents so that they are able to engage with their children in age appropriate activities, maintain a healthy relationship and

continue to actively function as parents despite children being in the care of the agency. The supported family time rooms have been modified to reflect the needs and activity levels of different ages of children within families. Families have the opportunity to review their time spent with their children and can provide the agency with direct feedback regarding what supports they require to improve the quality of their shared family time.

Our agency is committed to the ongoing professional development of our staff. We have developed a training curriculum for our family support staff that includes: Non-violent crisis intervention, suicide intervention, attachment issues, impact of abuse and neglect on child development, general observation and documentation skills, responding to abuse disclosures, FASD, and inclusive model of care.

## Family Enhancement Program

The Family Enhancement Program is an innovative program that provides an alternative to the separation of children and parents when there are sufficient risk factors requiring the removal of the children. The program provides the family with the opportunity to remain with their children in a supported living



environment. The family is matched with a specialized foster parent who provides support, coaching and mentoring to strengthen the capacity of the parent and enhance the well-being of the children while continuing to support the parent-child relationship.

The program allows intensive interventions to be provided to both the parent and children while minimizing the disruption to the family and ensuring the safety of the children. Parents are able to receive the additional support they require to make the changes necessary to resolve issues and build on their existing capacities and strengths.

The family and foster parent are supported by the Program Coordinator and a treatment worker. They provide clinical support to the parent and children and support the achievement of the identified goals of the family.

The foster parent and parent jointly attend support and training sessions focused on developing parental capacity and increasing the ability of the parent to understand the holistic needs of the children. The attendance of both the foster parent





and parent at these sessions supports the development of a parenting team and empowers the parent to actively participate in parenting decisions.

This program has been operational in Winnipeg since July 2008 and will also be implemented this summer in St. Laurent. Both program sites have been developed in partnership with the Manitoba Housing Authority.

*If you are interested in becoming a specialized foster parent please contact Ingrid Inglis at 927-6937*

## Parenting Support and Education

MCFCS believes that at times parents need to come together with other parents in a supported learning environment. Although families are regularly referred to community based parenting programs MCFCS has developed programming to augment the services offered in the community.

MCFCS regularly offers several parenting support and education programs such as: Triple P Parenting, Nobody's Perfect and Young Mother's and Kookums Program.

The Young Mother's and Kookums Program recognizes the critical role Elders play in families in providing wisdom, guidance and support to young mothers beginning their journey as parents.

*If you are interested in volunteering as an Elder for this program please contact Suzanne Chartrand at 927-6924.*

## Family Mentor Program

The Family Mentor Program provides the Metis and Inuit community with the opportunity to fulfill their traditional roles by allowing community involvement in strengthening and supporting families. Many families and youth are isolated within their communities and do not have adequate support networks to rely on. The program provides training to volunteers who are then matched with a family or a youth as part of the development of a natural support network. The family mentor develops a relationship with the family or youth and provides support, coaching, guidance, and advocacy around issues identified by the family. The mentor functions as a role model and supports the development of self efficacy, healthy coping skills and enhanced problem solving abilities. The enhanced support network allows families and youth to cope effectively with future challenges and barriers.

Family mentors volunteer with families 3-5 hours a week and receive ongoing training, support and supervision. MCFCS currently has 10 family mentors who are actively engaged with youth and families. They have clearly demonstrated the positive impact of the gift of their time.

*If you are interested in becoming a family mentor please contact Arlie Link at 927-6987.*

## Volunteer Program

The volunteer program is another opportunity for the Metis and Inuit community to fulfill the vision of the agency of empowering the community to support children and families.

The volunteer program has continued to grow and currently has 24

volunteers. The volunteers fill a critical gap within the agency and are an incredible resource. During the past year the volunteers facilitated children and youth attendance at 1239 appointments.

The volunteer driver program supports the maintenance of family relationships by allowing an increase in the frequency of family contact when children are unable to live with their parents. They also support family attendance at therapy, recreational activities and other important appointments. The volunteer activity worker program provides child care programming and activities so that parents, kinship care parents and foster parents can attend parenting support and education groups.

## Differential Response

MCFCS has been approved to proceed with implementing three Differential Response pilot projects in three regions of the province. Differential response practice involves changing the manner in which families are approached following a report of child maltreatment and the types of services that are provided to families following such a report. It allows the agency to provide a supportive service focusing on the overall needs of the family and the well being of the children rather than the traditional investigative approach. Programming is therefore preventative in nature and is strength based and family centered. The spirit of involvement focuses on family strengths, collaboration with family and extended family, identifying their resources and in addressing the areas of their parenting life that they identify as wanting to strengthen.

The pilot projects will be implemented in Winnipeg, Brandon and the Parkland regions. The following principles guide the service delivery model:

- 1 Children do best when the whole family is strong.
- 2 Children benefit from grandparents, aunts, uncles, and other parents.
- 3 Every family is unique so every family needs a different plan.
- 4 Respect for culture and beliefs.
- 5 Families can handle a lot. We get stronger through challenging times.
- 6 All people and families have strengths. Change occurs through building on our strengths.
- 7 We will work hard as a program and if we don't have an answer we will not pretend we do. Instead we will find out the answer together.
- 8 We will stop once in a while to look at what has been working and what has not been working.
- 9 We will respect families' privacy and will not talk to other people or agencies without families' consent unless there are concerns of a child being mistreated or criminal activity.
- 10 Children are important and we need to listen to what they have to say.
- 11 Children's safety is the most important focus and a referral will be made to a family service unit if there are concerns that a child is in need of protection.

During the past year a Strength Needs Assessment tool was developed that will be used to identify and highlight family strengths, as well as individual family needs. A component of the tool is the use of the Red River Cart Interactive Tool. This tool guides

the involvement of the family in the assessment process in order to empower the family and actively engage them in identifying and reflecting on their strengths and areas they want develop.

This Strength Needs Assessment tool will be piloted in the differential response projects, with the intention of using it across the agency following the evaluation of the tool.

Great things can happen when we listen and share our thoughts and ideas with each other. Families and workers can grow wiser together and find solutions to problems when respect for each other is shown. It is when we listen attentively that we are willing to adjust our positions on matters to meet the needs of the family as a whole and to allow families to guide the process with strength and respect.

Family Unity Circles offers a framework for families and workers to collaborate in developing case plans that is helpful and meaningful to the family. It also provides an opportunity to expand a family's support network through the sharing of ideas and involving family members or community agencies who may want to know how they can be of assistance. Families have strengths, are resilient, and have a natural support system which needs to be reinforced and respected. The family unity circles will provide the agency with a process that will allow this to occur consistently.

The use of family unity circles will be piloted within the differential response programs with the goal of expanding the use of family unity circles across the agency.



The projects will be part of an overall provincial evaluation of Differential Response Projects across the four Authorities. This evaluation process is being coordinated through the Office of the Standing Committee.

MCFCS is currently in the process of staffing the Winnipeg Family Enhancement Project. It is expected that the unit, comprised of a supervisor, four Family Enhancement Social Workers, three Family Enhancement Mentors and a Cultural Worker, will be opening its doors for service out of 1261 Main St. in early September 2009.

The Parkland DIA Family Enhancement project and Brandon Family Service Family Enhancement projects will be following shortly thereafter.

## Metis and Inuit Cultural Program

The agency believes that families, children and youth have a need and right to be rooted in their culture and tradition. MCFCS believes that it is critical to have culture embedded within the agency as a foundation upon which all else is built in order to ensure that the services and programs provided by the agency are meaningful and relevant. The Director of Cultural Services ensures that all services and programs are culturally relevant, provides staff training so that staff appreciate and support the importance of culture in their service delivery and

ensures that the cultural beliefs and values of children and families is respected.

## Aboriginal Cultural Awareness Training

This training is a mandatory training for all staff members in order to support the continued development of a culturally relevant service delivery system within the agency. This training has been facilitated by Elder Brian Normand and Elder Gladys Cook. During the past year, Elsie Moar, who is a staff member in The Pas, has begun participating in the facilitation of this training.

The training has been offered in Winnipeg, Dauphin, Brandon and Thompson in the past year and has been attended by agency staff, foster parents, and staff members of other community agencies.

MCFCS partnered with the Louis Riel Institute to offer two Little Metis Family Fun Nights in Winnipeg and Brandon. Both were well attended by families and foster families and provided a fun atmosphere for children and parents to learn and experience their Metis culture.

In February MCFCS conducted a three day Aboriginal Awareness training in Thicket Portage for children in grades 6, 7 & 8 at the request of the community. The community had identified that although the community is primarily Aboriginal, the majority of community members are disengaged from any sense of cultural identity.

The training was attended by the children, their parents and school staff. The training involved cultural teachings, participation in sharing circles, a jigging demonstration and contest, and a demonstration of weaving a Metis sash on a loom. The three days of training ended with a community feast that was attended by 70 community members.

## Individual Support and Counseling

The program provides individual support and counseling to children, youth and families using holistic traditional healing methods. Services are provided in a manner that is consistent with the cultural values and beliefs of the family. The support offered seeks to enhance the well being of the children, youth and families and promote pride and a positive identity as an Aboriginal person.

## Elder Gladys Cook

has significantly contributed to the development of an agency environment of pride in delivering Metis specific programs and services. Sadly, Gladys passed away this year. We would like to honour her many contributions to our agency and to our staff.

*What have you taught us Gladys?*

- Dignity in the face of prejudice
- Love in a hateful world
- Redemption in our struggles
- Respect for paupers and kings.
- Teachings in sadness
- Strength in weakness
- Peace in silence
- Joy in moments
- Wisdom in the circle
- One day at a time on a long road.

Your story tells us to be kind to each other and to ourselves. How you lived was your most powerful teaching.

You turned hate into anger, anger into knowledge, knowledge into understanding, understanding into change, change into forgiveness and forgiveness into love.

You are perched with the owls and flying with the eagles.



EMPOWERING  
OUR CHILDREN  
AND YOUTH.

# KEEPING THE SASH AROUND OUR FAMILY

As an agency with 725 children and youth in its care we feel an immense responsibility to promote and enhance the development and well being of our children and youth. Our role as the guardian of our children must be taken seriously and our services and programs must ensure that children feel valued and cared for and are empowered to realize their full potential. Our children and youth must be given hope for the future as they are the future leaders of our communities.

## MCFCS believes:

- In the inherent value of our children and youth.
- Safe family connections are extremely important for the healthy development of children and youth.
- Children and youth who have the opportunity for individual adult support, mentorship and guidance demonstrate resilience, responsibility and generosity.
- This support is critical in enhancing strengths in children and youth and their capacity to form trusting relationships with adults.
- It is important to reduce children and youth's extensive reliance on peers for their guidance and direction and to provide them with positive adult relationships instead.
- An understanding in one's history and culture is important to one's future journey and development of identity.
- Involvement in positive activities and recreation provides children and youth with healthy alternatives and is critical to building self esteem, self worth and mastery.

Our agency has developed a range of programs and services that build the individual capacity in children and youth, and strengthen their resilience and well being.

## Circle of Care – Children and Youth Support Program

This program provides individualized services to children and youth who are in the care of the agency or who are residing with their parents. The program is relationship based in order to support children and youth developing positive healthy adult relationships. The program is responsive to the unique needs of each child and youth. The staff empower the children and youth to participate in establishing the case plan and the focus of the services. The program promotes the resiliency in the young person and builds on their existing strengths.

In addition to the individualized programming, regular group sessions that promote the development of positive peer relationships, social skills and life skill development are offered.

## SASH Program – Youth Outreach Workers

This program provides outreach services to identified high risk youth who are engaged in high risk activities and behaviors. The SASH staff actively seek out and engage with youth in order to promote their safety and stability. The SASH staff establish relationships with the youth so that they can support them in the development of safety plans and assist the youth in reconnecting

with their family and community resources. The SASH program is flexible and responsive to the needs of the youth while still promoting safety and stability. The program staff will be participating on the Tracia's Trust committee which will be making recommendations related to outreach services for high risk youth.

## Skills for Life Program

This program provides support, assistance, education and training in the development of life skills necessary to transition successfully into adulthood. Staff utilize structured learning lessons to promote the development of life skills. They also provide support and mentoring while youth practice utilizing their newly acquired life skills. The program provides individualized support services to youth leading up to entry into independent living and provide ongoing support and mentoring while youth are on their own. The program supports youth in developing strong family and community networks in order to ensure long term support networks are available for the youth as they transition into adulthood.

The program provides monthly group sessions that include the youth in the Skills for Life program as well as young adults who have aged out of the care of the agency. The group program provides a positive networking opportunity for youth and young adults and afford them the opportunity to learn from each other and provide each other with emotional support. The group offers educational information as well as opportunities to practice skill development.

# METIS SPIRIT PROGRAM

This program is funded by the Manitoba Metis Federation and provides support services to young adults who have aged out of the care of MCFCS. The program engages with youth prior to reaching 18 to advise them of the program and determine if they require ongoing supportive services.

The program continues to provide outreach services to youth who have aged out of care but have not been accessing the program to ensure that they are aware of the program should they require services in the future.

The program provides ongoing life skill development, emotional support, support in managing critical incidents and crisis, advocacy, support in accessing community resources and the development of support networks. The program assists young adults in securing employment and pursuing educational opportunities.

The program also offers a monthly group which is attended by youth in the Skills for Life program, as well as young adults in the Metis Spirit program. The young adults have the opportunity to act as role models to their younger peers. Several young adults have begun to volunteer at the focus groups and the Honouring Our Youth celebrations.

## Standing Alone

February 17th, 2008. The day I turned eighteen. You ask any normal teenager, most will agree, eighteen is a milestone that is to be acknowledged, celebrated, cherished, anticipated. With little anxiety as possible, if any, it should just be the fear of getting so drunk you pass out before all of your friends. Or that you get super sick, followed by your first true hangover. Welcome To Adulthood!!!

Not for me. Turning eighteen wasn't high on my priority list. Besides the dark and spiders, aging out was something that haunted my dreams at night. Unlike my friends who resided with mom and dad, I had no feeling of support or safety from the dreaded one-eight. I had no knowledge of the real world; I had a social worker, transition worker, a foster family, etcetera. I never had to think about anything. Most, if not all of my social, medical, financial dilemmas were in the hands of these people. They coordinated my every move, absolutely flawless...Until they gave me centre stage for my solo performance. Nothing but the blinding spotlight of pressured expectations, and eyes anticipating failure.

July 1st, 2008. I moved out of my foster parents' home of four years. Standing in the middle of my one room, box cluttered apartment, on the 3rd floor of West Port Plaza, I cried. No job. No friends. No family. No experience. The fear consumed me, body and soul, and I was truly alone.

Don't get me wrong, some of my family were okay, but most were on a path that just went in a circle. My foster family said that they were gonna miss me, but by week three they had someone to take my place. And most of my friends were still intoxicated with the idea we no longer had to take notes on how Lord of the Flies related to the 2nd World War... Or they were just drunk in general.

I'm not trying to play the pity game. I did get a decent job. I was on good terms with my foster family. And I was slowly meeting people. But I still felt indifferent to them. I felt that I had to always face some sort of obstacle. I envied them. They could just waltz through life without a care in the world. If anything did go wrong they'd just flash their gold card and keep on going. To talk about the stresses in my life to any of them seemed almost a waste of breathe. They'd either brush it off or try to compare it to one time when West 49 didn't have a pair of DC's in their size.

September 25, 2008. I received an invitation in the mail from Metis Child and Family. Some kind of get together called a Focus Group... sure why not? Couldn't be any different from my celebration. It's just the "system" checking up. Trying to see how deep a hole I had run my life into. Seeing if I was strung out on crack or if

I had a fatherless child for them to apprehend. Since I fell into neither category and just had my hours at work cut back, I had the day all freed up.

I was the first “youth” as they called us, to arrive. When I say “they” I mean the staff. They weren’t stone faced, grey haired, dandruff covered black suites. These people were well... they were people, friendly, polite, casual people. I circulated the room, talking about my brief time out of care. I was vague on the detail but they still stared into my eyes with concern.

Through out the duration of the evening I received cards, pamphlets, folders, and questionnaires. We’d shake hands, and make light conversation. Slowly the room filled up. I took a seat at the back of the room trying to convince myself these people didn’t care and I was only here for the free meal.

It wasn’t the case. I was empty and alone and wanted to belong. Whenever I had been faced with a problem before someone would usually solve it for me or I’d be told how to fix it. I didn’t want or have that as an option anymore. I wanted choices, and to be encouraged in the ones I made.

That night I met Dianne Cross: Age of Majority Worker. This soft spoken bubbly caring woman changed my life so to speak. She was leading something called the Metis Spirit Program and said that these Focus Groups were to be an ongoing thing. I was intrigued to hear more. She went on to say its purpose was to get the insight from recently discharged youth to see what they liked or didn’t like in care. How their transition out was and how it could be made easier.

I was all aboard. I needed help. I needed it from an outside source. I was too proud to ask for help from my family or friends. This seemed to be my chance not to feel so judged about asking for help. In these small moments, I wasn’t alone. Dianne continued to further explain another program called Support Groups. These were focused on certain areas of adult life that the youth were having trouble coping with. The first one I attended was in the spring. It was on how to put together a healthy, low cost meal. There were also groups on Essential Skills for Life. These groups instructed us on how to construct a proper portfolio and resume.

Over time I became a regular attendant. I enjoyed my time working along side the staff. I was also making friends with some of the youth too who were regulars. I’d been approached to speak on behalf of youth who attend the focus and support groups. I’d also had the pleasure to help coordinate the Focus Group in Brandon. These experiences have taught me public speaking, organization, and cooperation skills.

Recently I am employed as a summer intern working as an administrative assistant for the Infinity Care -Resource Program with MCFCS.

I support these programs whole heartedly. I’m not too sure if I would have done as much with my life. But I know I wouldn’t feel as strong as I do now.

*I am proud to say I am a Metis youth.*

*I feel stronger as a person, as a woman, as a nation.*

Maggie Mae

# YOUTH & YOUNG ADULT FOCUS GROUPS

During the past year MCFCS has offered three focus groups for youth and young adults who have received services from the agency, two in Winnipeg and one in Brandon. Each focus group has had a central theme related to topical information, the development of life skills and networking with community resources.

The youth and young adults are asked to provide feedback to the agency on their experiences being a child in care and to identify what was most helpful and effective, as well as identify ways to improve the services being provided to children and youth in care. The youth and young adults are asked to share their experiences in aging out of care and their transition to adulthood and to identify past and current barriers to realizing their full potential.

The information provided by the youth and young adults has been used to guide the development of the Metis Spirit program, as well as other programs and services.

Our agency was excited to have been able to send two youth and a young adult to the National Youth in Care Conference in partnership with VOICES Youth in Care Network in Montreal. We were able to share a booth with VOICES and provide information about our Metis Spirit program. We hope to be able to present at the conference in the upcoming year.



## Young Adult Mentorship Program

MCFCS feels that many youth would benefit from being supported by other young adults who have had similar life experiences and can act as role models for youth.

MCFCS has received funding to provide a mentorship program as a pilot project for one young adult who has left the care of MCFCS. The program became operational in June and will be providing training and support for one year in order to develop the capacity of this individual to become a mentor with youth and young adults who are currently in the care of MCFCS or have transitioned out of the care of MCFCS.

The program will provide initial training for the young adult in order to further develop their leadership skills and to enable them to effectively function as a mentor. Following completion of the training the young adult will be matched to a youth or young adult and will mentor them in the development of healthy life skills and provide support during their transition into adulthood. The mentor will continue to receive training, supervision and support in fulfilling this role with the youth from MCFCS. The focus of the mentorship program will be on life skill development in both the mentor and the youth.



## Life Long Connection Program

This program actively searches for family and community members who are willing to make a commitment to become a part of long term support network for children and youth who are permanent wards of MCFCS. The program seeks to ensure that all permanent wards have the opportunity to maintain positive family relationships and that no youth leaves the care of the agency without an adequate support network. Too frequently, extended family members have not felt that they had a role in the lives of the children once they were in the care of a child and family service agency. This program seeks to reconnect children and youth with their family members.

## Honouring Our Youth

MCFCS hosts quarterly celebrations to honour the youth who are aging out of the care of the agency. Each celebration offers the youth an opportunity to celebrate this significant milestone with their friends, family and support network. Each youth is honoured and their individual accomplishments are recognized through speeches. Each celebration includes entertainment, a dinner and a youth motivational speaker. Recently, these speakers have been young adults who have left the care of MCFCS and are participating in the Metis Spirit program.



# INFINITY CARE PROGRAMS

I feel like I have a voice now.

I am relieved to know I am not alone.

It's good to see I'm not the only one who experiences hardships.

## Kinship Care Program

Within the Metis community there is a long history of extended family and community members providing care, nurturance and protection for children when parents were unable to provide care. The philosophy of the agency is grounded in these traditions and beliefs. Our agency recognizes that a valuable resource for our children and families lies within their own extended family support network. The agency strives to wherever possible maintain children within their own family networks and communities. The ability to maintain children within their family networks reduces the trauma children often experience when they enter the care of an agency and empowers the family to be engaged in continuing to plan for their children.

MCFCS has identified that family members require additional support in order to take on the roles and responsibilities of providing full time care to their extended family members. Although kinship care homes are assessed and licensed as foster homes, they do not view themselves as foster parents. Therefore, training and supports developed for foster parents do not readily meet the needs of kinship care providers. Kinship care homes are a specialized resource within the family that has unique strengths and needs and require programming that is tailored to their unique circumstances.

The kinship care program was developed in order to specialize the supports, services and training being provided to extended family members

in recognition of their unique value, roles and responsibilities.

The goal of the program is have a kinship care worker become involved with a family when placement of a child is considered imminent in order to reduce the likelihood of children having to be removed from within their family network. The kinship care worker and the family services worker would engage the family in collaborative planning for the placement of the child. The family would be involved in the identification of potential extended family kinship care options. The kinship care worker would complete the necessary screening and assessment processes with the kinship family and would be available to provide ongoing support, supervision and training.

# FOSTER CARE & SPECIALIZED FOSTER CARE

In the past year MCFCS has delivered 1160 hours of training to 145 foster parents in Winnipeg, Brandon, Interlake, Eastman and the Parkland regions.



Region	Foster Homes	Kinship Care Homes	Total Homes
Thompson	1	3	4
The Pas	2	4	6
Parkland	6	29	35
Western	8	2	10
Interlake	13	8	21
Eastman	23	13	36
Central	4	0	4
Winnipeg	59	68	127
Other	0	3	3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>246</b>

MCFCS believes that when children and youth are unable to remain within their own family networks they require a living environment that is nurturing, empowering, and respects their culture, their connection to their family and allows the child to flourish and achieve their full potential.

MCFCS is always seeking community members who believe in the importance of supporting children and youth, who are able to embrace the cultural and familial needs of the child and provide them with hope for their future.

Our agency strives to include foster parents as part of the team that is supporting both the child and their parents. It is critical for children in care to maintain a positive relationship

and attachment with their parent while they resolve their challenges. Our experience has shown us that a collaborative relationship between foster parents and parents supports the stability of children in their placements.

In order to support the valuable contributions made by our foster parents, our agency in addition to the regular support provided by the resource development workers, provides monthly Connector Meetings which enable foster parents to gather together for peer support, information and additional training. The agency provides child care in order to support attendance at the meetings.

Children and youth who have experienced incidents of maltreatment

will frequently process their life experiences by exhibiting challenging behaviors, utilizing negative coping strategies and testing new care providers. This can be stressful and difficult for care providers. Our agency feels it is critical to provide all of our care providers with training to increase their knowledge and understanding of the children and youth in their care and enhance their ability to support the resilience of the children and youth. MCFCS offers a continuum of training modules that are offered to care providers. A monthly schedule is developed and foster parents are able to attend the training relevant to their needs.



If you would like more information about fostering please contact:

Michele Brown <i>for Winnipeg, Interlake and Eastman at</i>	927-6958
Kisty Argue <i>for The Pas</i>	623-5897
Barbara Nelson <i>for Thompson</i>	677-6570
Daisy Chartrand <i>for North Parkland</i>	734-3974
Harriet Eryk <i>for South Parkland</i>	638-4003
Chris Logan <i>for Western and Central</i>	727-8540

### **Emergency Placement Resources**

In order to respond to the growing need for placement resources for children and youth across the province, MCFCS has developed three intake and assessment placement resources; Eagle's Nest is located in Winnipeg, Sunrise House is located in Swan River and Four Winds is located in Dauphin. These resources provide a short term placement resource for children and youth. While in this placement an initial assessment of the child and youth's needs is completed in order to assist in developing an appropriate longer term service plan.

### **Winnipeg Region**

2000 Portage Ave. 927-6960  
1261 Main St. 697-1118

The Winnipeg Region is the largest service centre for MCFCS. This region provides a full range of services and programs to families and children and provides the executive and operational support to the other regions.

During this year we have relocated to a new office site at 2000 Portage Ave. in partnership with the Manitoba Metis Federation Winnipeg Region. The Winnipeg Metis Association purchased the building and renovated it to meet the needs of our agency. The new office site has allowed us to amalgamate all of our service teams in one location which will promote enhanced communication, accessibility and collaboration across teams. Our new office space will have a Cultural Room which will allow increased cultural programming to be provided by the Agency.



### Executive Team

**Back Row:** Lou Beaugard (Director of Finance), Alana Brownlee (Executive Director), Brian Normand (Director of Cultural Services)

**Front Row:** Janine Sartoris (Director of Human Resources), Bev Wiebe (Director of Resources), Penny Smith (Director of Services) Missing: Heather Edinborough (Director of Services)

## Executive and Operations Teams

The Executive Management team provides innovative leadership to the agency and its staff in pursuing the development of agency services. The team has a wealth of knowledge and experience that they utilize to inform the decision making of the agency. The team is grounded in the spirit and philosophy of the agency and supports an agency environment that is creative, innovative, strength based, family and child centered and committed to ensuring culturally relevant services.

Our Executive Management team is committed to supporting staff members in providing the valuable but difficult work that is the nature of child welfare. As a team we challenge ourselves regularly to strive for continuous learning opportunities, ways to improve service, improve staff support and retention, and learn from our children, youth and families. Our team is fully approachable, and engages and collaborates with staff members and our families.

The Operations team is made up of the many individuals who support the daily operations of the agency. Although many of these individuals do not work directly with our children and families they demonstrate the same pride and commitment to ensuring quality services. Many individuals fulfill multiple roles within the agency and demonstrate great flexibility and work ethic.



The Operations team is comprised of: the IT team, Finance team, Human Resources team, Legal services, Office management, Quality Assurance, Reception and Executive support services.

### Operations Staff

**Back Row:** Karen Love (Admin. & Quality Assurance Coordinator); Michelle Beaudin (Office Manager); Ally Wutke (HR Administrator); Carrie Clemons (Receptionist); Carol Sparling (Executive Assistant)

**Front Row:** Michelle St. Laurent (Receptionist); Kathie Gagnon (Paralegal) Missing: David Kabestra (Cultural Worker)

# Success Story

I received Charlene's file from a previous worker in December 2006. I first met with Charlene and her children Ryan, Julian, Cheyanne, Kristin, Natasha, Naima, and baby Jasmine in March 2007. Her file came to the attention of the Agency primarily due to concerns regarding alcohol abuse and child neglect. At my first meeting with Charlene she presented as a very soft spoken guarded woman who was very mistrusting of child welfare authorities. She did not want the Agency involved with her family and as such was fairly difficult to connect with over the next several months.

By the time August rolled around I was receiving numerous community concerns that Charlene was out drinking and leaving her 14 year old son to care for his 6 siblings who ranged in age from 7months to 10 years. The school called with concerns that the children were not attending regularly and when they did it was only for a half day and they frequently had lice.

Throughout September October and November, the concerns kept coming in and I kept going out to investigate. Charlene was always willing to let me in to discuss the concerns but would minimize them at best. I offered in home supports for her which she declined and promised to change on her own.

On December 19, 2007 however Charlene's life and our relationship would change forever. That is the day I apprehended her 5 youngest children. It was a very emotional day for both of us given the obvious trauma and the time of year. Charlene was still in denial of the issues that surrounded the removal of her children however vowed to "fight" to have them returned to her care.

When I returned from holidays in the New Year, Charlene and I had our first face to face meeting since the apprehension. I could already see the change beginning. She remained calm throughout the meeting, listening to what I was saying and understanding the role of a child protection worker despite our cultural differences which at the time was a significant barrier between us. Charlene agreed to complete programming as directed by the Agency and agreed to a 6 month Temporary Order of Guardianship.

January 16, 2008 was Charlene's first "official" day of sobriety. She entered into the outreach program at Pritchard House and transitioned into the residential program. She successfully completed both programs

and became increasingly understanding of why the agency apprehended her children. Charlene and I started to talk more about her childhood experiences, how her lifestyle impacted her children (or eventually would) and what long term goals and dreams she had not only for herself but her children. Over time Charlene became increasingly trusting of the Agency and what it represented. Eventually she came to accept that the Agency was there to support her in getting her children back and that we really did care about her and her family. I would have to say that our "breakthrough" day was her 6 month anniversary of sobriety. She called me happily to report that she had been sober for six months. She was so proud of herself and I of her. She began talking of wanting to help others who struggled with addiction and had CFS involved in their life. She wanted to use her life experiences to counsel others and encourage them to work with their CFS worker and not against. She applied this principle to her own life and worked co-operatively with every Agency person she met, always being open to guidance and support.

On July 25, 2008 Charlene's children were returned to her care. Unfortunately for me I was on holidays at that time, but I was told it was an emotional reunification.

Since December 19, 2007 Charlene has not looked back. She continues to maintain her sobriety (18 months on July 16, 2009) is fiercely protective of her children and added a little girl named Samantha to her family in December, 2008.

To me Charlene epitomizes strength, commitment and resilience. She has worked hard to get where she is today, and despite her mistrust of the Agency she gave us a chance to prove that we are here to help, even when we have to make tough decisions to remove children from their families. Our relationship today is far different than it was when we first met. We talk on the phone at least once per week often times just to say "hi", and she continues to reach out for support and guidance when she needs it.

*She truly is a great success story!*

Sandra Waldmo



## Finance Staff

**Back Row:** Tristan Gabriel (Network Technician); Jennifer Nishikawa (Finance); Doreen Hood (Child Maintenance); James Poirier (IT Administrator); Lou Beaugard (Director of Finance); Lana Daniels (Payroll/HR); Pat Donaghy (Finance)  
**Front Row:** Ivy Reyes (Finance); Heydy Hernandez (Finance); Louise Mackinnon (Finance); Julie Mackinnon (Student)

## Family Service Teams

The Winnipeg Region has three family service teams each comprised of a supervisor, 6 social workers, a social work assistant and an administrative assistant. The 18 social workers are responsible for 402 family service cases, 1001 children and youth and 193 children in care cases.

This region has seen an increase in the number of children and families receiving services year after year, resulting in significant workload issues for the staff. However, despite the workload these teams strive to deliver respectful, strength based, culturally relevant services. These teams provide innovative and responsive services that are based on the unique needs of each family. The teams strongly advocate for enhanced services that will empower and support family functioning and enable parents to nurture and care for their children. The teams challenge themselves to provide services that ensure the safety of children within the context of supporting the family. The teams actively seek out the support of extended family members in developing case plans and seek kinship care providers wherever possible.



### Family Service Team

**Back Row:** Ashley Devries (Social Worker); Donna Ranville (Administrative Assistant); Grace Micklefield (Social Work Assistant); Mike Taylor (Supervisor); Sandra Waldmo (Social Worker)  
**Front Row:** Nicole Duhamel (Social Worker); Angela Hillcoff (Social Worker); Nadine Trimble (Social Worker)  
**Missing:** Julianne Defehr (Social Worker); Nancy McRae (Social Worker)



### Family Service Team

Amy Sanderson (Social Work Assistant); Jennifer Michaluk (Social Worker); Melanie Schellenberg (Social Worker); Sharon Stieben (Social Worker); Rita Racano (Social Worker); Melanie Boulette (Social Worker); Kara Abraham (Social Worker); Greg Besant (Supervisor), Christine Bissell (Administrative Assistant)



### Family Service Team

**Back Row:** Tanya Handel (Administrative Assistant); Joanne Lagasse (Social Work Assistant); Josh Krongold (Social Worker); Natalie Sanderson (Social Worker); Julie Reichert (Social Worker)  
**Front Row:** Stacy Sherlock (Social Worker); Sharon Spinks (Supervisor); Tanis Dean (Social Worker); Anoka Salisbury (Social Worker)

## Permanent Ward Services

The Permanent Ward team is comprised of a Supervisor, 8 social workers, a social work assistant and an administrative assistant. This team provides services to the 474 children and youth who have been made permanent wards of the agency in the Winnipeg, Interlake and Eastman regions.

The Permanent Ward team is responsible for developing permanent plans for all children and youth that will provide them with a stable long term placement that is able to meet their needs and develop their strengths. All plans include services and opportunities to maximize the potential of each child and youth so that they can become active and productive members of their community. The long term plans for children and youth are developed with the specific interests of each child as the priority. The team values the continued role of family in the lives of the children and youth and strive to ensure that all permanent wards continue to have meaningful contact with their extended family in order to support the maintenance of their sense of belonging, their history and their identity.

The agency has been working on identifying assessment tools that will support the development of holistic service plans for children and youth. In the fall we will be implementing the Looking After Children Assessment framework within this team. This tool supports a collaborative assessment process that involves the care provider and the child in completion of the assessment and the development of a comprehensive service plan. The assessment questions focus on developing a sense of hope and

competence in the child, as well as providing them with opportunities to grow and develop in all areas of their life. The tool stresses the importance of positive relationships with family and the incorporation of culture in the formation of the child's sense of identify and self worth. We are excited to have found a tool that supports the vision and principles of our agency and can guide our ongoing work with our children and youth.

The agency believes that all children need "forever families" in order to receive a foundation of security and stability in which to grow and flourish. For some children and youth this is long term kinship care, for some it is long term foster care and for some children it is an adoptive family. MCFCS requires that all adoptive homes agree to an openness agreement where the child is able to continue to have a meaningful relationship with their family or extended family members. Each openness agreement also contains a cultural plan identifying a commitment by the adoptive parents to continue to ensure that the child or youth is raised with strong connections to their Metis culture and heritage.

The agency has established a permanency planning committee that assists the Permanent Ward team in developing long term plans for children and youth. The agency believes that these critical life decisions need to be a shared responsibility to ensure that we are making the best and most informed decisions for our children and youth. To date the agency has approved three adoptions with Metis families from the Adoption Registry, one adoption placement with extended family and six adoption placements with long term care providers. Family and extended family have been consulted where possible in the development of permanent plans for children and youth.



### Permanent Ward

**Back Row:** Candyce Harris (Social Worker); Suelynne Yewchyn (Social Worker); Majola Vergara (Social Worker); Stacy Jerema (Social Worker); Andrea Klyne-Lavallee (Supervisor); Sherry Culbreth (Administrative Assistant); Adrienne Madden (Social Worker); Deanne Semkowski (Summer Student)

**Front Row:** Fiona England (Social Worker); Jenny Edwards (Social Worker); George Reis (Social Worker); Karolina Rylka (Social Worker); Laura Orvis (Social Work Assistant)



I work with a ten year old boy who was born in a Winnipeg hospital. His mother relinquished him following his birth and has not maintained contact with him. He was placed in a foster home and has been there ever since. Brett knows he is "different", but the family he is growing up in is full of "different". He has three foster brothers, all who have many similarities to him and his experiences. One major difference that Brett had recently started to notice was that his brothers were going for "visits". These visits were to people called Nana, or Uncle or my other mom...he had none of this. He began to question his foster mom and then myself about where his "other mom" was, and did he have brothers and sisters. The most I was able to tell him was that it was believed he had five siblings, and a bio mom and dad, but that the whereabouts of these family members were unknown. I made Brett the promise to look for them, which pleased him.

I was able to locate his sister and two brothers in another province and spoke to their social worker. They are all in their teens and the oldest sister wrote a letter, and they compiled some pictures and forwarded them to Brett. In my ten years as a social worker,

**the brightest face I ever saw**

was his when I gave him this package. Christmas morning could not compare. Brett has continued contact and will be travelling to visit his siblings this summer.

The agency helped give me my voice.

**Congratulations to our Grade 12 Graduates!  
We are very proud of all your hard work!**

Roland	Foster	Lisa
Joe	James	Kalli
Cylina	Brittney	Nadine
Danielle	Justin	Laurie
Jade	Aimee	Maggie Mae
Ryan	Tyler	Chasity

The Agency believed in me so I was able to believe in myself.

## Infinity Care Teams

The Infinity Care team is comprised of two teams that focus on resource development and specialized programs and services for children, youth families.

The resource team focuses on developing and supporting a continuum of quality placement resources for children and youth that supports the growth and development of children and youth when they are unable to reside with their parents. This team prides itself on providing quality support services and involving our care providers as members of the service team in order to maintain our valuable community placement resources of foster parents, kinship care parents and intake and emergency assessment team staff. This team is responsive to the identified needs of our care providers and have worked diligently in developing training curriculums, support group and appreciation events for all of our care providers. This team actively recruits and develops new placement resources and provides regular orientation sessions for individual interested in becoming foster parents. This team strives to identify the existing placement and resource gaps and creatively seek solutions and innovative programs so that children and youth can be matched.



### Resource Team 2009

**Back Row:** Sharon Abgrall (Resource Worker); Shari Hayles (Student); Harriet Eryk (Dauphin Resource Worker); Don Smith (Kinship Care Worker);  
**Middle Row:** Melissa Prescott (Family Enhancement Treatment Worker); Ingrid Inglis (Family Enhancement Coordinator); Vivien Watson (Resource Worker); Channing Lavallee (Student); Kelly MacKay (Eagle's Nest Coordinator)  
**Front Row:** Sandra Friesen (Placement Coordinator); Barbara Magnowski (Supervisor); Bev Wiebe (Director of Resources); Daisy Chartrand (Swan River Resource Worker)  
**Missing:** Michele Brown (Resource Worker); Eileen Sanderson (Kinship Care Worker); Karen Swain (Administrative Assistant)

The service and program team is responsible for developing and implementing the auxiliary programs and services that are required to effectively support our families in enhancing their functioning and empowering them to provide safe and nurturing care to their children. All of our services are strength based and promote active family engagement. The programs build the capacity in our parents, children and youth so that families can be maintained or reunified and promote the individual well being of our children and youth. The team develops responsive programming that is able to be flexible so that it can meet the unique needs of our families. The team also develops and implements the programs and services available to support the health and wellness of the children and youth in care of the agency.

## Interlake and Eastman Region

Office: 2000 Portage Ave. Winnipeg, Manitoba

This team provides services to children and families residing in the Interlake and Eastman regions of the province. This team covers a large geographic region of the province and spends a significant amount of time travelling to the various communities within the Interlake and Eastman regions. The team continues to be based in Winnipeg as the agency does not receive sufficient operational funding to have an independent office site in the region. Therefore, the operational costs of these two regions are covered by the operational funding provided for the Winnipeg region.

This team has a unique service delivery model as it maintains dedicated family support staff within its team, in addition to the many valuable part time family support staff that are utilized to support the families within their own communities.

This team is providing services to 48 families, 87 children and 81 children in care cases and actively utilizes intensive support services in order to strengthen families and prevent family disruption. The team utilizes family and extended family engagement in case planning and continues to demonstrate innovative and creativity in developing service plans that meet the needs of children and families.

In addition, this team has offered Triple P parenting programs for families in their regions when community resources have not been available.

The team is excited about the expansion of the family enhancement program into the St. Laurent community as this will be an additional resource to strengthen and mentor families within their own community.

### Infinity Care 2009

**Back Row:** Jody Charbonneau (Skills for Life Worker); Craig Collins (Family Support Coordinator); Larry Friesen (Family Support Worker); Joanne Nobess (Skills for Life Worker); Lyle Massan (SASH Worker); Suzanne Chartrand (Life Long Connections Worker); Patrick Desjarlais (Circle of Life Worker)

**Middle Row:** Linda Fleury (Family Support Worker); Amanda Sinclair (Supported Family Time Worker); Monica Tourand (Family Support Worker); Arlie Link (Family Mentor Coordinator); Minnie Budge (Volunteer Coordinator); Robin Stone (SASH Program); Rabia Harb (Circle of Life Worker)

**Front Row:** Ryan Flett (Youth Mentor); Pat Alphonso Cox (Supervisor); Vern Dano (Circle of Life Coordinator); Bev Wiebe (Director of Resources)

**Missing:** Shelly Normand (Family Support Worker); Dianne Cross (Metis Spirit Worker)

### Interlake Eastman

**Back Row:** Heather Pappin (Family Support Worker); Michelle Plett (Social Work Assistant); Camille Reid (Social Worker); Karen Levasseur (Supervisor); Allison Bryce-Buffie (Social Worker); Therese Denoyer (Social Worker)

**Front Row:** Bridget Mwanza (Social Worker); Tracy Oleschak (Social Worker); Sandra Ovid (Family Support Worker)

**Missing:** Larissa Ryle (Administrative Assistant)



## Western Region

1-723 Rosser Ave., Brandon 727-8540

This team provides services to children and families residing in the Western region of the province. The three social workers have seen an increase in cases over the past year and have provided services to 66 families, 132 children and 36 children in care cases.

This team continues to work on developing and expanding the programs and services that are available in the region to strengthen families and promote resiliency in children and youth. The further development of these program areas will allow the region a greater capacity to provide in-home support services to families that can reinforce the existing strengths of families and provide them with the needed supports to resolve issues that are impacting on their parenting.

This region has begun expanding the services available to youth in care in the region and hosted their first youth focus group. This provided the agency with valuable information related to the needs of youth in care and the supports they require as they prepare to move towards

independent living. The regional youth will continue to participate in the Winnipeg program until this group program can be sustained within the region. In the fall the Skills for Life training will be offered in order to assist staff in developing the knowledge and skills to deliver this program in the region.

The Agency has been collaborating with the Manitoba Metis Federation Southwest Region to assist us in developing the family support program and the youth support program in the region. It is anticipated that this collaboration will provide enhanced support services to Metis children and families in the region.

The Director of Cultural Services regularly attends the region to provide direct services to families and youth. The agency continues to seek

Elders in the Western region who can provide support services to our families.

The Western team has one staff position that is responsible for developing kinship care and foster care placement resources in the region. As this region is partnered with the Central region, this individual is also responsible for the development of placement resources in the Central region as well. The region has offered several training sessions for existing foster parents and hopes to continue to expand the resources available in the community.

This team is excited to be hosting one of the Differential Response pilot projects and looks forward to implementing this new service delivery model in the community in the upcoming year.



### Brandon

Leanne Chartrand (Family Support Worker); Crystal Genaille (Social Worker); June Ruckle (Social Work Assistant); Chris Logan (Social Worker); Lillian Cameron (Supervisor); Sheri Elton (Social Worker); Katriana Miller (Administrative Assistant)

*Maternity Leaves:* Christine Richardson, Kristy Moar

## Central Region

25 – 3rd St. SE, Portage la Prairie 857-8751

This region provides services to children and families residing within the Central region of the province. This team is made up of one social worker who provides services to 17 families, 24 children and 11 children in care cases. We have been able to increase the staff team to include a social work assistant who has been helpful in assisting with the workload within this region.

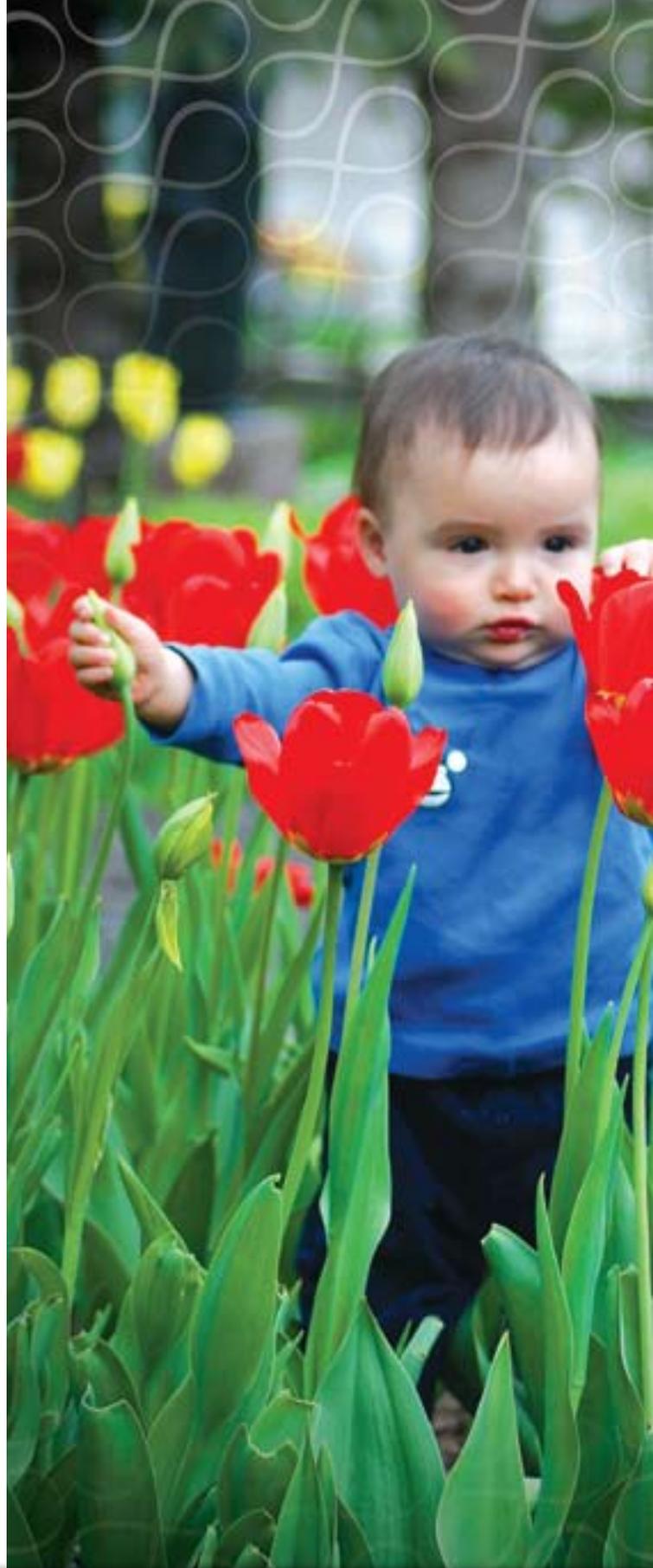
MCFCS continues to partner with Child and Family Services of Central Manitoba to support and assist our staff team in this region. The Central and Western teams have been partnered as well to reduce the isolation this team feels at times and enhance their integration into the agency as a whole.

Our agency continues to work on developing our own programs and resources within this region in order to reduce our dependency on CFS Central and in order to implement Metis and Inuit specific programming.



### Portage la Prairie

Katriana Miller (Administrative Assistant), Londa Green (Social Worker), Sara Murray (Social Work Assistant), Lillian Cameron (Supervisor)



## Parkland Region

Family Services 13 – 1st Ave.  
SW Dauphin • 638-7896

Intake Services 611 Main St.  
Dauphin • 622-3520

After Hours and Emergency Services  
1-866-834-4242

Resource Services (108-110)  
220 Whitmore Ave.  
Dauphin • 638-4003

Family Services, Intake Services &  
Resource, 605 Main St.  
Swan River • 734-3974

The Parkland region is the second largest service provision area for MCFCS. This region provides both ongoing family service work as well as providing intake and after hours services on behalf of the other child and family service agencies in this region. This region continues to demonstrate significant growth at both the intake service level and within the family service teams. The region is geographically divided and provides services out of the two larger communities in the region, Dauphin and Swan River. Due to the growth in this region and in anticipation of the Differential Response project the agency has expanded into a new office site at 611 Main St. in partnership with the Manitoba Metis Federation.

The Intake and After Hours team is comprised of a supervisor, 4 intake workers and 1 after hours worker as well as additional direct service workers. Three intake workers provide services in Dauphin and the surrounding communities and one provides intake services in Swan River

and the surrounding communities. These 4 workers responded to 923 intake referrals in the past year which is an increase of 150 intake referrals from last year. Each intake worker responded to over 260 intakes during the course of the year. They concluded 860 of the intakes with 313 cases being closed and 547 cases transferred for ongoing services. Our agency is proud that the majority of families continue to choose our agency to receive ongoing services. The After Hours staff continues to provide Triple P parenting programs directly to our families and has been travelling to the communities to deliver this program to our families in their own communities.

The Intake team participated in the Aboriginal National Canadian Incident

Study on Child Abuse and Neglect. Our agency is the first Metis agency in Canada to participate in this study and we are excited to have been able to contribute to the research being conducted on Aboriginal families involvement with the child and family service system. The Intake team has a significant workload and it was only with great commitment and extra effort that we were able to complete the work required to participate in this study.

The Parkland region will be piloting a Differential Response program in both the Dauphin and Swan River offices. It is anticipated that this pilot project will enhance our ability to provide responsive, strength based services when families first become involved with our agency.

### Parkland DIA Statistics

<i>Authority</i>	<i>Agency</i>	<i>Cases Transferred</i>
First Nation North	Cree Nation	61
	Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation	1
	<b>TOTAL</b>	62
First Nation South	DOCFS	2
	Intertribal CFS	1
	Sandy Bay CFS	1
	SouthEast CFS	1
	West Region CFS	93
	<b>TOTAL</b>	98
General Authority	CFS Central	1
	Interlake Regional	2
	Northern Regional	1
	Parkland Regional Office	99
	Winnipeg CFS	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	104	
Metis Authority	Metis CFCS	283
	<b>TOTAL</b>	283
<b>TOTAL Cases Transferred</b>		547

The family service team is comprised of a supervisor and six social workers divided between the Dauphin and Swan River offices. This team provides services to 170 families, 371 children and 87 children in care cases with an average caseload size of 43 cases per social worker. During the past year 283 new cases were transferred to this team for ongoing family services.

This team continues to be faced with significant workload issues involving high caseloads, frequency of new cases and limited community resources. Despite all of these factors this team continues to engage collaboratively with families to seek solutions and resources. This team promotes the use of kinship care as one of the most valuable resources in the community. The team continues to regularly utilize the Dauphin Friendship Centre for family group conferencing.

The intake and family services teams are supported by three administrative assistants, a social work assistant, two resource development workers and a kinship care worker.

The resource development workers and kinship care worker are responsible for the development of a continuum of placement resources for children and youth. The region currently has a range of foster homes, specialized foster homes and kinship care homes. In addition, the region has established two emergency assessment placement resources, Sunrise House in Swan River and Four Winds in Dauphin.

The region continues to work on developing programs and services that will encourage positive family functioning and provide early intervention services to prevent family disruption. The region has a family support program that supports the

development of parental capacity through education, mentoring and support. The region also provides a child and youth support program to provide individualized services to enhance the well being of children and youth in the community.

During the past year MCFCS has offered numerous training opportunities in the region for staff and care providers to increase the ability of staff and care providers to respond effectively to the needs of our families and children. MCFCS has offered Core Competency Based training Series for Child and Youth Care Staff, ASSIST Suicide Intervention, Aboriginal Cultural Awareness and a ten week foster parent training in the past year in this region.



### Dauphin and Swan River Team 2003

**Back Row:** Bonny Dumas (Administrative Assistant); Annette Choquette (Intake Worker); Audrey Stoski (Intake Worker);

**Middle Rows:** Leslie Sembaluk (Social Work Assistant); Farrah Langan (Intake Worker); Deanna Sabiston (Administrative Assistant);

Jill Roy (Social Worker); Charlotte Wain (Intake Worker); Michelle Chaychuk (Administrative Assistant); Olive Kowalchuk (Supervisor)

**Front Row:** Ken Levandoski (After Hours Worker); Angie Kruk (Social Worker); Lisa Monych (Supervisor); Lori Plesh (Social Worker);

Dave Mansell (Social Worker); Quinton Sanderson (Social Worker); Harriet Eryk (Resource Worker); Daisy Chartrand (Resource Worker)

**Missing:** Michael Gosselin (Social Worker); Wanda Guimont (Kinship Care Worker)

## The Pas Region

456 Fischer Ave. The Pas 623-5897

The Pas region provides services to children and families in The Pas and the surrounding communities. This region's partnership with the Manitoba Metis Federation has greatly enhanced our visibility in the community. This has resulted in an increased interest in community members interested in becoming foster care placement resources for our children, as well as individuals interested in becoming family and youth support staff. The responsiveness of the community as well as our staff have resulted in an increased ability to provide family focused, culturally relevant support services to our families and children in the past year.

The two social workers share the responsibility for 39 cases. In addition, Kisty has assumed responsibility for the development and support of our foster homes and kinship care homes. Elsie provides individual and group support programs and services to our families and children. During the past year she has run several group programs for parents, as well as individual groups for women. Charles and Elsie have delivered ongoing group programming for children and youth. The group programming for families and children covers a range of topic areas and has been adapted

to incorporate cultural elements and teachings.

The Pas hosted its first Honouring Our Youth Celebration where five youth celebrated their accomplishments and transitioned into adulthood with their family and friends in their own community.

During the past year MCFCS offered FASD training for staff and care providers in the community.

## Thompson Region

59 Elizabeth Dr. Thompson 677-6570

The Thompson Region provides services to children and families in Thompson and the surrounding communities. This region has one social worker, Barbara Nelson and one social work assistant, Lana Godin that provide services to 45 cases. This region continues to have a significant workload for one social worker which impacts on the agency's ability to develop resource programs and services. In addition to the case load size the staff are required to cover a large geographic region which requires significant travel to the various communities.

MCFCS continues to have a great partnership with Family Services and Housing – Thompson Regional Office who provides office space, on-site supervision, administrative assistance

and back up coverage. The Director of Services also provides regular support and supervision to this team.

This team embodies hard work, enthusiasm and resourcefulness in their work with children and families. Despite the caseload size, the team is responsive to the unique needs of the families and children. They extensively access the existing community resources on behalf of families in order to ensure the necessary supports are in place for families to progress and build on their strengths.

During the past year MCFCS offered an Aboriginal Awareness Training that was attended by staff, care providers and other community collaterals. In addition, the community of Thicket Portage requested assistance in supporting the community to reconnect with their Aboriginal heritage. The agency offered a three day Aboriginal Awareness training in this community that was attended by youth and school staff. Parents were welcome to attend and came and went throughout the three days. The training ended with a community feast that was attended by 70 community members. MCFCS has been asked to provide a follow up training for the adults in the community which we hope to deliver this upcoming year. The youth who participated made a mural of their experiences which will be hung in our cultural room.



*Back Row:* Kisty Argue (Social Worker); Elsie Moar (Social Work Assistant)

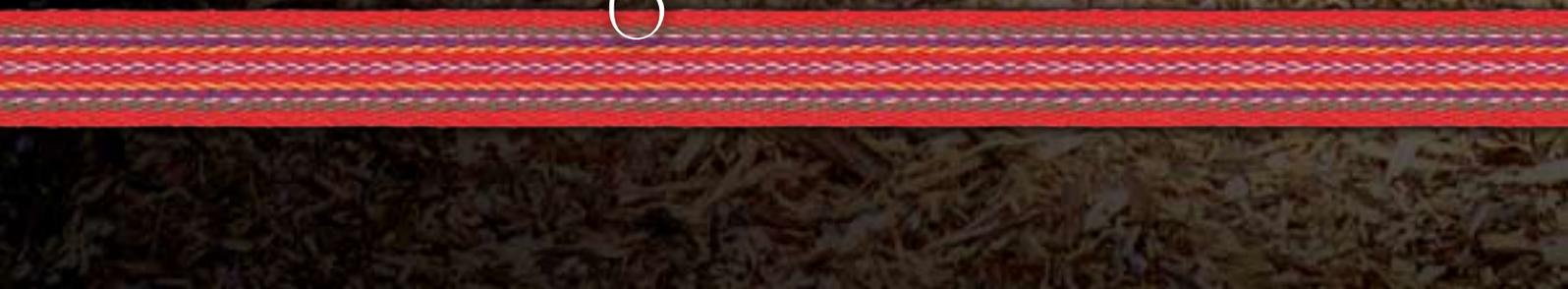
*Front Row:* Charles Potan (Social Worker)



WE BELIEVE IN THE INHERENT  
**STRENGTH** OF OUR FAMILIES AND IN  
THE NEED TO BUILD ON THE CAPACITY OF OUR  
COMMUNITY TO **CARE FOR & NURTURE**

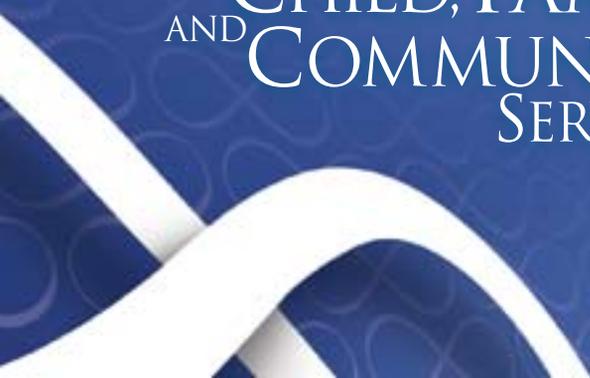


METIS CHILDREN.





METIS  
CHILD, FAMILY  
AND COMMUNITY  
SERVICES



ANNUAL REPORT APRIL 1, 2008 to MARCH 31, 2009