



METIS CHILD, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES



ANNUAL
REPORT
APRIL 1
2011
TO
MARCH 31
2012

THERE EXISTS WITHIN METIS CHILD, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES AGENCY A STRENGTH IN OUR CHILDREN, YOUTH, FAMILIES, COMMUNITIES AND STAFF THAT IS UNSURPASSABLE. IN OUR 2011-2012 ANNUAL REPORT STRENGTH IS PORTRAYED BY USING BOLD GRAPHICS AND IMAGERY. THE DIFFERENT COLOURED THIN LINES, WRAPPED AROUND THE INFINITY SYMBOL ON OUR COVER AND COMMON THROUGHOUT THE REPORT, ARE A REPRESENTATION OF THE THREADS THAT MAKE UP THE METIS SASH. OUR FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES ARE LIKE THREADS WOVEN INTO THE FABRIC OF OUR AGENCY; WHEN WE ALL WORK TOGETHER WE CREATE A STRONG, UNIFIED BOND.



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

Metis families and communities are the cornerstone of the Metis Nation and the service delivery system must reflect this vision.

Responsibility for decision-making regarding Metis children and families lies with the family, extended family and community whenever possible.

The organizational structure promotes and supports community governance at all levels.

The service delivery system will encompass both formal and informal elements.

The service delivery system must be operated in an efficient and effective manner.

The service delivery system will be outcome based and will reflect the core guiding principles of MCFCS.



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



Welcome to everyone who is interested in the future of our children.

I would like to thank and remember our Elders for they have taught us the importance of family.

Metis have fought for decades to gain the responsibility back for our own families and children. It is important to recognize the foresight of those who knew our future was being robbed when the 60's scoop happened. We could never let this happen again. We have much to be proud of in how we operate. We are a role model for others to follow.

From the very beginning of our Nation, our children were the most important part of our lives. The children of voyageurs and First Nations mothers became the ancestors of all of us today. The care and instruction they received from both European and Indigenous cultures became a unique culture and heritage in the world.

Today, we can do no less than to provide the best future we can for our own children and grandchildren. When the responsibility to care for our own became a reality several years ago, we knew there would be challenges. We also knew that the responsibility always was our own, passed on from our ancestors.

Today, I thank all of our partners, stakeholders, grandmothers, grandfathers, mothers, fathers, aunties, uncles, brothers, sisters, cousins and friends for the countless hours of hope and prayer. We are on a path that will hopefully not only heal our children but also heal some of the wounds of our people as a whole.

The Child and Family Services we now provide has taken years of blood, sweat and tears. As we move forward on this journey, please remember with me the sacrifices of those who worked for this vision in the past. And let's unify our strength to carry forward in the future.

I also want to take this opportunity to thank all of our CFS Staff for their hard work and dedication for helping us have one of the best Child Care agencies in Canada and the World.

For if the history of the Metis Nation has taught us anything, when we are united, the Metis people can withstand anything.

Believe in yourself, believe in Metis!

Meeqwetch.

David Chartrand
President

MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER



On behalf of the President and the Provincial Board of Directors, I am honoured to send you a message on behalf of the Metis government.

As always, we must acknowledge our Elders for their wisdom and guidance, our Agency Board members, staff and volunteers for their commitment, dedication and the outstanding services that are provided for our Metis children and families.

Under the management of Ms. Josie Hill, Executive Director, Metis Child, Family and Community Services Agency has excelled and exceeded everyone's expectations by providing culturally appropriate services and resources for our children and families across the province.

On October 1, 2011 the Michif Child & Family Services Agency became a reality. The northern Metis Child and Family Services will provide culturally appropriate services and resources to Metis children and families from the Parkland to the Thompson region. We would like to acknowledge and thank Ms. Heather Edinborough, past Michif Executive Director, who retired from our Agency in May, 2012. We welcome Ms. Josie McIvor who will no doubt bring with her a wealth of experience in the field and allow us to continue to provide the exceptional service to which our clientele have become accustomed to receiving.

The Metis government continues to be committed to our efforts in lobbying the provincial government for funding allocations that will enhance and expand our services, programming and resources to the level that our clients are justified in receiving.

In closing, I would like to once again thank our Agency Board Members, Regional Leadership Training Program and our volunteers for their dedication and continued support.

Respectfully,

Judy Mayer

Minister of Metis Child and Family



GOVERNANCE: REGIONAL LEADERSHIP TRAINING PROGRAM (RLTP)



To ensure a governance structure that is based in community representation, the Regional Leadership Training Program (RLTP) was created. The goal of the program is to develop a pool of qualified, educated and prepared Metis and Inuit candidates to serve on the Board of Directors for Metis organizations including regionally appropriate Metis and Inuit Child and Family Services Agencies.

RLTP members are appointed by the Manitoba Metis Federation Regional Vice Presidents (4 members) and the Metis Women of Manitoba Board of Directors (1 member per region). Training relevant to leadership, Board governance and child welfare

in Manitoba is facilitated by the Metis Child and Family Services Authority. RLTP members are not responsible for reporting to any individual or organization. The Metis Child and Family Services Authority is the reporting body.

RLTP members appoint from among themselves, individuals to sit on the Board of Directors. Appointment terms for Directors are staggered to ensure continuity of leadership for the Agency.

MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD



It's hard to believe that another year has come and gone. We would like to welcome all of our new Board members as well as our new Executive Director Josie Hill! As our agency continues to grow, we, the Board, feel it is our duty and obligation to work alongside the Agency's wonderful staff and families as well as the Authority to promote and provide useful resources and tools to our Metis/Inuit families. Funding continues to be an issue for the MCFCS Agency however we will not stop until the proper funding amounts become available to us. Once again, a great big thank you goes out to our staff and families who dedicate their time and efforts to ensure that MCFCS Agency continues to be a great success.

Respectfully,
MCFCS Board of Directors



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

CHAIR

Stephanie Eyolfson (Past)

ACTING CHAIR

Steve Racine
Southwest Region

VICE CHAIR (VACANT)

SECRETARY

Brandi Braun
Southwest Region

TREASURER

Marcella Vezina
Southeast Region

MEMBERS

Marc Boyer, M.Sc.
Winnipeg Region

Eric Chartrand
Winnipeg Region

Bev Webb
Interlake Region

Patsy Millar
Interlake Region

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

Rita Cullen (Past)

Marg Bagley

Barb Lavallee

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



As I reflect on my first year as Executive Director of the Metis Child, Family and Community Services Agency (MCFCS) I am reminded of the many achievements I have had the opportunity to be a part of. This time has been filled with a great deal of learning, many rewards and a growing sense of pride.

I am incredibly grateful to the many people that make this agency strong and who remain committed to providing effective, timely services that meet the needs of our children, youth, families and their respective communities. It is important to acknowledge that we have the most recognized Metis leader in Canada, President David Chartrand, as a champion of our mission. In addition, we are further sustained by the Minister of Family Services, Judy Mayer, who advocates strongly on behalf of our agency and its stakeholders. The MCFCS Board of Directors offers wisdom and guidance with a focus on those who ultimately benefit from what we do day to day. The Metis Authority also works on our behalf, thus providing us the time to focus our energies on service and program delivery. Thank you to all for your leadership.

The Executive Management, Management and staff teams are made up of skilled and knowledgeable individuals who do their very best to assist those we have the honour to serve. I have heeded the wisdom of our veteran staff; I have appreciated your time-tested advice during the early months of my tenure here and will continue to rely on you. At the same time, I have enjoyed the energy and enthusiasm of the recently promoted and younger staff. Thank you all for your creativity, insights and dedication.

This year we celebrated the birth of Michif Child and Family Services Agency; serving our families and children in the northern regions of the province. As always, we take solace in knowing you will continue to provide the best of services and care. In terms of services and support, we refuse to accept that a restructure took place and we continue to think of us as one big family.

As is our custom, this year has been filled with exciting opportunities for our families. As an example, children and youth have had opportunities to attend cultural camps and learn the traditions and cultural practices of our ancestors. They have learned to skin a deer and fillet a fish and, safe to say, they enjoyed the rewards of their efforts – eating these delicacies! Thank you to our Cultural, Resources and Shelter staff who so readily signed up to assist with the camp experience.

Youth reaching the age of eighteen years have celebrated this important milestone in the company of many dignitaries, family, friends and MCFCS staff. The Manitoba Metis Federation has once again provided the Agency with the resources to continue the Skills for Life program that offers practical supports beyond the age of majority. Thank you for your continued help in ensuring our young adults have access to this vital program that ensures they are best prepared and empowered with the tools they will need to stand on their own.

Caregivers were celebrated last fall with an adults only evening; a combination of fun and recognition. Dinner and entertainment were provided to convey a special heartfelt thank you to those who provide nurturing and safe care for our children and youth. Our numbers of Metis and Kinship homes have increased significantly again and we encourage everyone involved with the Agency to get the word out that we need more caregivers. Thank you to our MCFCS Caregivers for sharing your hearts and homes with our little ones.

This spring a Signs of Safety (SOS) Conference was held, offering the opportunity for Management and staff to learn more about the model in practice. The SOS model has proven its value and is one we embrace as an agency. SOS focuses on family strengths and encourages inclusivity, family participation, honesty and respect. We are fortunate to have a Director of Culture who honours those who are involved with the Agency by holding sharing circles where family members and staff have the opportunity to have a shared voice in resolving challenges and strengthening family relationships. A knowledgeable team that includes the Directors of Services and Resources, along with a Supervisor, are leading the way within the Agency to ensure the model is fully implemented. Thank you to all staff who participated in bringing the Mission, Vision and Guiding Principles of MCFCS to bear in real terms.

I believe the entire Metis child and family services system has demonstrated the greatest of strengths in its capacity for family-centered innovation and best practices. It has been my honour to walk with you these past several months. In keeping with our mandate and always mindful of our obligations to the people of the Metis Nation, we can take a moment to celebrate our achievements on their behalf while we gather ourselves for the journey ahead. Together we have set a standard intended to honour and strengthen our Metis children, young adults, families and communities. Our task now is to exceed that standard.

Respectfully,

Josie Hill
Executive Director



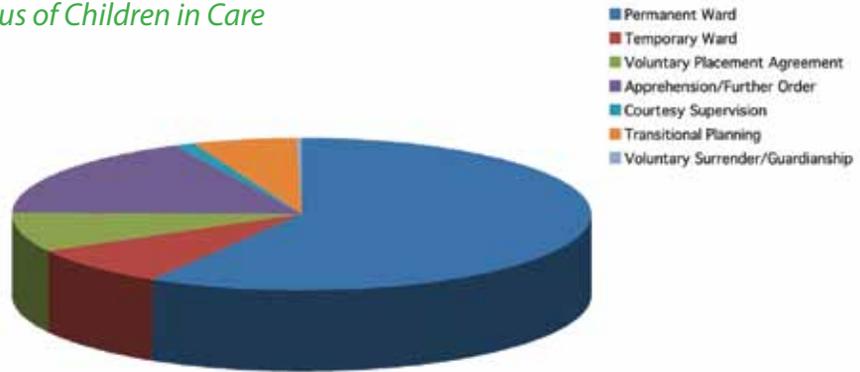


THE YEAR AT A GLANCE

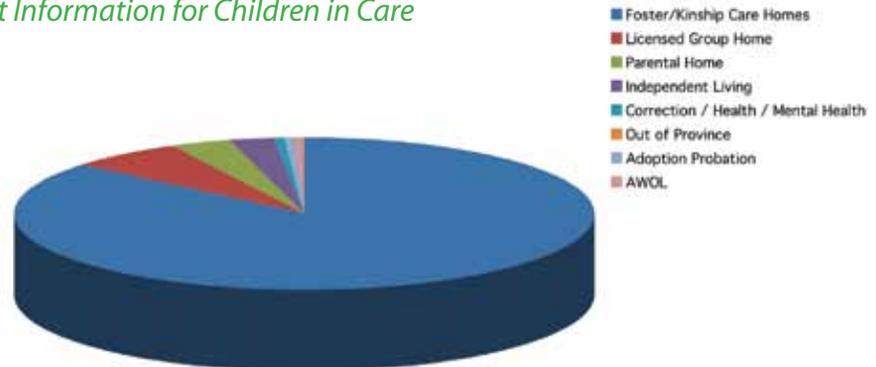
The number of cases we see coming to the Agency continues to grow each and every day. Our ANCR intakes come to us at an average rate of 30 per month, which is a full caseload for a social worker. The reality however is that our staff resources do not come to the Agency on an as needed basis. We are grateful to the MMF and the Metis Authority for securing the new funding model and we very much look forward to a time when our resources can meet the needs of our children and families. This year a total of 343 cases, 162 children in care, 1 child in care supervision file, 144 protection and 36 voluntary family services files transferred to Michif Child and Family Services Agency in the fall.

CHILDREN IN CARE

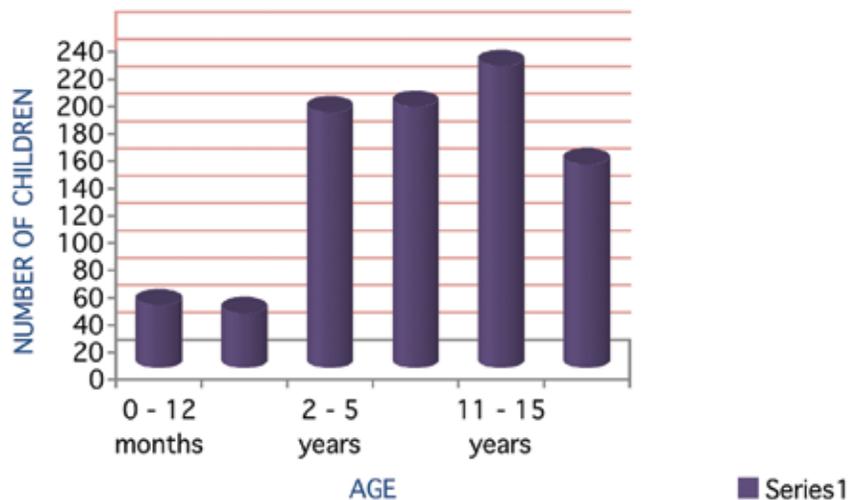
Legal Status of Children in Care



Placement Information for Children in Care



Ages of Children in Care



SIGNS OF SAFETY

Over the past few years the Agency has been integrating Signs of Safety approaches into every day practice. Signs of Safety is a strengths-based, safety-focused intervention developed by Andrew Turnell and Steve Edwards. This approach is designed to provide child welfare practitioners a framework for working with and building relationships inclusive of everyone in the family, including the collaterals involved in a child protection case. The main purpose of Signs of Safety work is the safety and well-being of children.

While the Agency is in the beginning stages of our implementation journey with the Signs of Safety model, learning and training opportunities continue to be provided to all Agency staff. In April of 2012 the Agency, in partnership with the Metis Authority, hosted a Signs of Safety conference which provided an avenue for most (if not all) Agency staff to become more familiar with the model and to meet Mr. Turnell. There is a great deal of interest from staff, supervisors and managers to improve our practice in order to become more effective in learning and practicing Signs of Safety tools and techniques. In-house training will include case consults via Skype with Andrew or

members of his team. Individual units will continue supporting each other through case consults, appreciative inquiry and learning the children's tools with the guidance of their supervisor and the Metis Authority Trainer. While this article is not intended to provide an in-depth overview of Signs of Safety, it is an opportunity for the Agency to share with families and partner agencies a glimpse of our practice. The Signs of Safety model can be adapted to be culturally relevant and has worked well in the form of sharing circles. The view of family and community involvement as being part of the solution to ensuring children are safe is also in line with our Vision and Mission statements.

One of the tools familiar to the Agency is a signs of safety map. Basically, when meeting with families their existing strengths and safety is explored in the middle of the map known as the "what's working well" column. Discussion of past harm, future danger and complicating factors populate the first column called "what are we worried about." Finally, finding out from the family and their supports what future safety looks like is in the third "what needs to happen" column. Everyone involved in the case is asked to rate safety on a scale of 0 – 10.

SIGNS OF SAFETY MAP

WHEN WE THINK ABOUT THE SITUATION FACING THIS FAMILY:		
What Are We Worried About?	What's Working Well?	What Needs to Happen?
On a scale of 0 to 10 where do we rate this situation?		



THREE HOUSES

The other exciting process in the Signs of Safety model is the involvement of children as illustrated below with the use of “three houses”. The key questions in the three column map “what’s working well”, “what are we worried about” and “what needs to happen” are placed in the three houses only worded differently for children as: “house of good things” “house of worries” and “house of dreams & wishes”.

Additional information about Signs of Safety can be found online.

1

HOUSE OF GOOD THINGS

- I love my family & being with them.
- Mom’s boyfriend plays guitar.
- Playing together with toys.
- My paintings are hung in the living room. I like painting.
 - Going to the park as a family.
 - Cooking.
 - Not getting lost.

2

HOUSE OF WORRIES

- Worried my family will get separated or lost.
- Getting stolen.
- Worried about getting lost.
 - Losing my family.
 - Being grounded.

3

HOUSE OF DREAMS & WISHES

- Sleep with my mom.
- Cuddle and hug with my mom.
- Going to the park more often.
- Going to the store with my mom.
- Being happy with my mommy.



CONGRATULATIONS
TO OUR YOUTH WHO CELEBRATED
SIGNIFICANT ACHIEVEMENTS THIS
YEAR! YOU CAN BE VERY PROUD
OF YOUR SUCCESSES!



BRITTANY

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE;
UNIVERSITY OF WINNIPEG APPLICANT

DORIAN

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE

JUSTIN

JOB WORKS PROGRAM GRADUATE

MEI LEIN

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE;
ATTENDING UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

SAFARI

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE;
PLANS TO ATTEND RED RIVER COLLEGE

STEPHANIE

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE;
PLANS TO ATTEND POST SECONDARY TRAINING

"I WISH TO EXPRESS MY GRATITUDE FOR THE DAILY QUOTES AND WORDS OF STRENGTH AND INSPIRATION. I HAVE NOT PREVIOUSLY WORKED IN AN ENVIRONMENT WHERE SPIRITUALITY AND PERSONAL GROWTH IS SUPPORTED DIRECTLY FROM WITHIN THE ORGANIZATION. I FEEL COMPELLED TO SPEAK TO ENCOURAGE AND SUPPORT THIS AS I HAVE BENEFITED GREATLY FROM IT. I UNDERSTAND THE SILENT, YET POWERFUL, JOB OUR ELDER DOES IN CREATING A SUPPORT FOR ME AND ALL STAFF. I WISH FOR YOU GREAT JOY AND A LIFE TIME OF GOOD THINGS".
~ AGENCY SOCIAL WORKER

CULTURAL PROGRAMS & SERVICES

Our culture, traditions and heritage continue to be vital elements of the programs and services we provide to our children and families in our daily work.

Our Cultural Services include staff development and foster parent training provided through our Aboriginal Awareness training as well as cultural ceremonies such as smudging and sharing circles. Critical incident debriefing offered to families, foster parents and staff provides culturally relevant support. Families and extended

family members are given the opportunity to participate in family group decision making to assist the Agency in developing case plans for their family. Family and youth programming offered encompasses Aboriginal awareness programs, sharing and healing circles, feasts, individual support and counselling and

various cultural activity programs that allow youth to experience and learn about their heritage such as jigging and fiddling classes, drumming, sash weaving, making dream catchers and attending our seasonal Metis Culture and Heritage camps throughout the year.

FAMILY SERVICES

With the addition of another Family Services Unit, MCFCS now has four of these teams; each comprised of a supervisor, seven social workers, two social work assistants and an administrative assistant. These teams receive referrals to provide on-going services to families from ANCR, the Winnipeg Designated Intake Agency. This addition of another Family Services team has enabled MCFCS to provide more effective services to our families by reducing caseloads for previously existing teams.

Moreover, MCFCS has begun planning to create a fifth Family Services team for the near future. Services teams continue to provide timely, culturally relevant, effective supports and services for our families. Reaching out to extended family to become part of the support network for ensuring safety of children also continues to be an important aspect of service. They strive to build upon utilizing the Signs of Safety model by integrating it into various aspects of our service. As a result, feedback from families

receiving services from our teams has been positive, highlighting a more inclusive approach in the development of service plans to meet their needs. They continue to seek out ways to respectfully and collaboratively engage with families by increasing the use of sharing circles, traditional teachings and other cultural ceremonies toward reaching mutually agreeable resolutions.



PERMANENT WARD/ADOPTION SERVICES

There have been necessary and exciting changes in the permanent ward area this past year. The existing single permanent ward team expanded to become two teams with separate supervisors; one team has seven permanent ward workers and the other has five permanent ward workers and two adoption workers. While each team functions independently, there uniquely remains a spirit of togetherness and cooperation as well as some joint activities and shared work. These two permanent ward teams provide services solely to children and youth residing within the city of Winnipeg.

In addition to the ongoing daily work with children, youth and families there have also been permanent orders rescinded, ongoing and vital support provided to youth on extensions of care and collaborative work with other agencies through the acceptance of Metis children to our agency through Section 42 transfers.

Our strong commitment to maintaining and honouring the connection that the children and youth have to their families, as much as possible, remains our priority in keeping with the Agency's philosophy; we believe that nurturing this connection has provided positive outcomes in many ways for the children, youth and their families. Thank you to all the moms, dads, grandparents, sisters and brothers, supports and lifelong connections for allowing us to walk alongside you as we all care for the children.

This has been an exciting year as the Agency has formed a new Adoption Team. Although the Agency has always supported adoption for our children in care, we now have two adoption workers that specialize in processing adoptions.

MCFCs believes in the inherent strength of our families and the need to build on the capacity of our communities to care for and nurture Metis children. Our Agency has always worked with the belief that all children need strong roots, nurtured within a secure forever family, to feel a sense of belonging, love and attachment. The vision and direction we aim to follow is one that incorporates the Signs of Safety model allowing for the biological family members of a child to be honoured and involved in the process of adoption as much as possible. We want to ensure the child maintains close biological family ties when the adoption is complete by encouraging ongoing contact and openness agreements.

The Agency's adoption program will be able to complete Division 1, Division 2, Defacto and Inter-Country adoptions. Although each of the children who become permanent wards of the Agency comes from different situations, they all have one thing in common; they deserve a loving and safe forever home.

REGIONAL SERVICES

INTERLAKE AND EASTMAN REGION

The Interlake Eastman team has consisted of 7 social workers, 2 social work assistants, an administrative assistant and supervisor all based out of 408 McGregor in Winnipeg. This office space is shared with the MMF and as a result there are opportunities for staff to connect and share information. The joint potluck lunches are especially enjoyed!

The team primarily services Permanent Wards who are placed in the Interlake and Eastman regions of the province. Ongoing birth family contact and cultural connections are strongly promoted by staff and sharing circles are utilized frequently in our work with birth families as well as foster families.

Staff have dealt with many challenges in the last year in terms of staffing and workload; however, have persevered as a team and maintained their commitment to the children and families that they service. There are some significant changes to the Interlake/Eastman team in that it is restructuring into two teams, one Interlake Unit and one Eastman Unit, both of which will be moving out to their respective regions. Staff are looking forward to having a presence in the regions and being closer to our children, families and collaterals. Additional staff are also being hired in order to manage

high caseloads and the travelling required over these vast regions.

The Interlake/Eastman team now also has its own Family Support Coordinator who manages 23 casual support workers. These staff support children and families by providing parent support/education, teaching life skills, supporting family visits and driving.

WESTERN AND CENTRAL REGIONS

The Western team continues to provide services to 120 families and children in care while the Central team continues to provide services to 73 families and children in care. The Western team is comprised of three social workers and one social work assistant while the Central team has two social workers and has grown this year to include one social work assistant. With the addition to the team it became clear that the Central team needed to establish a service site of their own. The team relocated their office from within the Child and Family Services Central office to a new office space within the Red River Communities College. Both teams have been very busy and

continue to work along side of families to continue to develop programming to assist with strength-based supports. Both teams continue to embrace the Signs of Safety and Structured Decision Making practice models. Although both teams are very busy, they continue to work on expanding and developing programs to strengthen families and empower our children and youth.

EXECUTIVE, OPERATIONS AND FINANCE

Our Executive team provides leadership for the Agency and is responsible for ensuring all services and programs reflect the Agency's Vision, Mission and Guiding Principles.

The Operations team is responsible for the daily operational needs of the Agency and provides a vital support role in the fulfillment of the Agency's mandate and its provision of programming.





FAMILY SUPPORT PROGRAMS

FAMILY RESOURCES

The Family Resources team consists of the Family Support Program, Supported Family Time Program, Transportation and Family Mentor Program. The staff deliver services that are community based and assist families and youth to build on their inherent strengths.

FAMILY SUPPORT PROGRAM

This program works effectively with the families that are involved with MCFCS. 6 full time and 25 casual staff work to advocate, mentor and support parents while they are addressing a range of challenges. Every family has an existing strength and the family support team works closely with each family to draw out these strengths and build upon them.

In the past year we had 302 files referred to the program. This is a significant increase from 157 families from the previous year. Some of the families may receive more than one service from the

program. 127 families received parent support and education, 127 families were supported by an Agency staff during their supported family times and 54 families received respite. We were able to close 129 files throughout the year; evidence that some of our families are strong enough to be reunified and parent without the Agency's involvement.

"We had a support staff work with a young mother that presented as extremely hostile when she first came into the agency to see her child. The family support worker and the mother worked hard to teach her to control her emotions in a positive manner. This mom then went from "couch surfing" to securing an apartment, enrolling in counseling, and has now returned to school. Mom was reunited with her child and the family support worker had her involvement decreased from two times a week to once bi-weekly. This is a huge success for the mom, support staff and social worker."

SUPPORTED FAMILY TIME PROGRAM

This program encourages parents to actively engage in play, crafts, reading and snack time with their children. The space allows families to interact in a manner that is conducive to positive parenting and attachment. The program has also seen a huge increase in families utilizing the service. This year we had 4,841 children attend over 1,392 family times.

TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM

The transportation program is an integral part of MCFCS which transports children to family visits, therapy, school and many other necessary appointments. The program is guided by a coordinator who oversees 24 dedicated volunteer and 4 city drivers. An annual Volunteer Appreciation event is held to honour the drivers and their dedication to MCFCS' children and families. In the past year

DREAMS TAKE FLIGHT

DISNEY WORLD HERE WE COME!



The Agency first became involved with Dreams Take Flight in 2008 when we eagerly put four of our children in care on the plane for a magical day in Disney World in Orlando, Florida. Six children in 2009, 4 in 2010 and 8 in 2011 flew with Dreams. This year we were beyond excited to have 9 of our children go on this amazing trip to the happiest place in the world! The Dreams flight is the first flight out on the day of the trip, taking off at 5:30 a.m. and landing in Orlando around 9:00. Wearing their souvenir t-shirts and Crocs (graciously donated by Crocs Canada), the children disembark directly to a waiting bus that transports them directly to The Magic Kingdom. While there they enjoy 'fast pass' access to all the rides, more food and fun than they know what to do with and even money to pick out some precious souvenirs before heading back to the plane that will take them home to their families. After the trip each child is presented with a personalized souvenir photo book to keep those precious memories alive. Many thanks to the Dreams team for all they do to make this trip such an incredible event every year.

the program has continued to grow. The drives completed increased from 2,012 drives in 2010-2011 to 3,016 this year; an overall increase of 1,262 drives. This demonstrates how vital this program is to meeting families' needs.

FAMILY MENTOR PROGRAM

This is a unique program that is offered to "low risk" families. The program aligns closely to the Agency's Mission Statement as it strengthens the families' capacity to care for their children through community based programs and services. The trained mentor has a unique advantage to gain a meaningful relationship with the family or youth because they are community members, participating voluntarily and present not for any financial or personal gain, but out of genuine interest and caring. The program has 18 active mentors. This year 14 youth and 8 families were mentored through the program.

"A mentor this year had an opportunity to work closely with a youth that was living with his mother whom has schizophrenia. The mentor was able to establish a trusting relationship with this young person. Both the mentor and the youth attended the "Name That Feeling" program. From this the youth was able to share his concerns and worries and address how his mother's illness affected him. The youth displayed more positive behavior and his school attendance improved moderately. This demonstrates the difference one volunteer can make in someone's life."



CHILDREN AND YOUTH PROGRAMS



CIRCLE OF LIFE

(COL) – CHILDREN AND YOUTH SUPPORT PROGRAM AGES 6 – 17 YEARS

This program is a dynamic, individualized service that uses a solution-focused, grassroots and strength-based approach when working with youth. COL workers help youth find their own way through challenges with guidance, support and encouragement. Some of the daily struggles facing our youth are addictions, peer pressure, cultural identity, grief and bullying. The youth are given opportunities to build a healthy relationship with the staff to help process and understand these challenges, feelings and worries they face constantly. Youth are given the opportunity to participate in many city and rural activities including: rod fishing, seasonal camps, swimming, exercising, crafts, arts, music, sports, dancing, laser tag, etc. The activity based approach supports the youth with building self confidence, a positive self-image and to feel better about their self identity. When a youth is supported by a caring, genuine and nonjudgmental worker, it helps the youth to internalize the praise in a positive and healthy manner. The program provided services to 85 youth throughout the year.

SASH PROGRAM

(SO ADOLESCENTS STAY HOME) – YOUTH OUTREACH WORKERS AGES 10 – 17 YEARS

This is an outreach program that looks at supporting youth who are having difficulties in their lives that can lead to high risk victim behaviours. The program has three phases implemented to work with youth on an individual basis. The first phase is Safety; designed for the outreach worker to assess levels of risk, to develop safety plans and respond to critical situations. The second phase is Stabilization; designed to progressively activate resources and to implement team planning while developing action plans for reducing instances of “at risk” behaviours. The final phase is Prevention; designed to support the youth and caregivers in maintaining working strategies which they have developed to enhance the connections and relationships and reduce at risk behaviours. The SASH workers use a team approach to identify at risk behaviours within the Signs of Safety model to decrease the youth’s risk. SASH partners with numerous agencies and organizations such as StreetReach, Child Find Manitoba and the Sexually Exploited Youth Coalition. This year service was provided to 47 at risk youth.

SKILLS FOR LIFE PROGRAM

(SFL) – INTERDEPENDENT LIVING PROGRAM AGES 16 – 18 YEARS

SFL is a program that works with youth to gain skills to become interdependent in areas such as education, resources, training opportunities, employment, budgeting and healthy relationship building. SFL workers are paired with youth to help with the many challenges, barriers and hurdles they face. The workers assist, support, advocate, guide and encourage making choices that are positive and healthy for their well-being. A bi-weekly group support program, which brings in speakers, helps youth with challenges from mental health issues, addictions, housing, banking and just fun activities. SFL workers encourage youth to recognize that they are not alone and assist them to develop their own problem solving style. The support program is offered in collaboration with the Metis Spirit Program and includes older youth who have aged out of care alongside the younger youth. This gives the younger youth an opportunity to discuss with the young adults some of the challenges they may face when aging out. This year a total of 45 youth received services from the Skills for Life program.



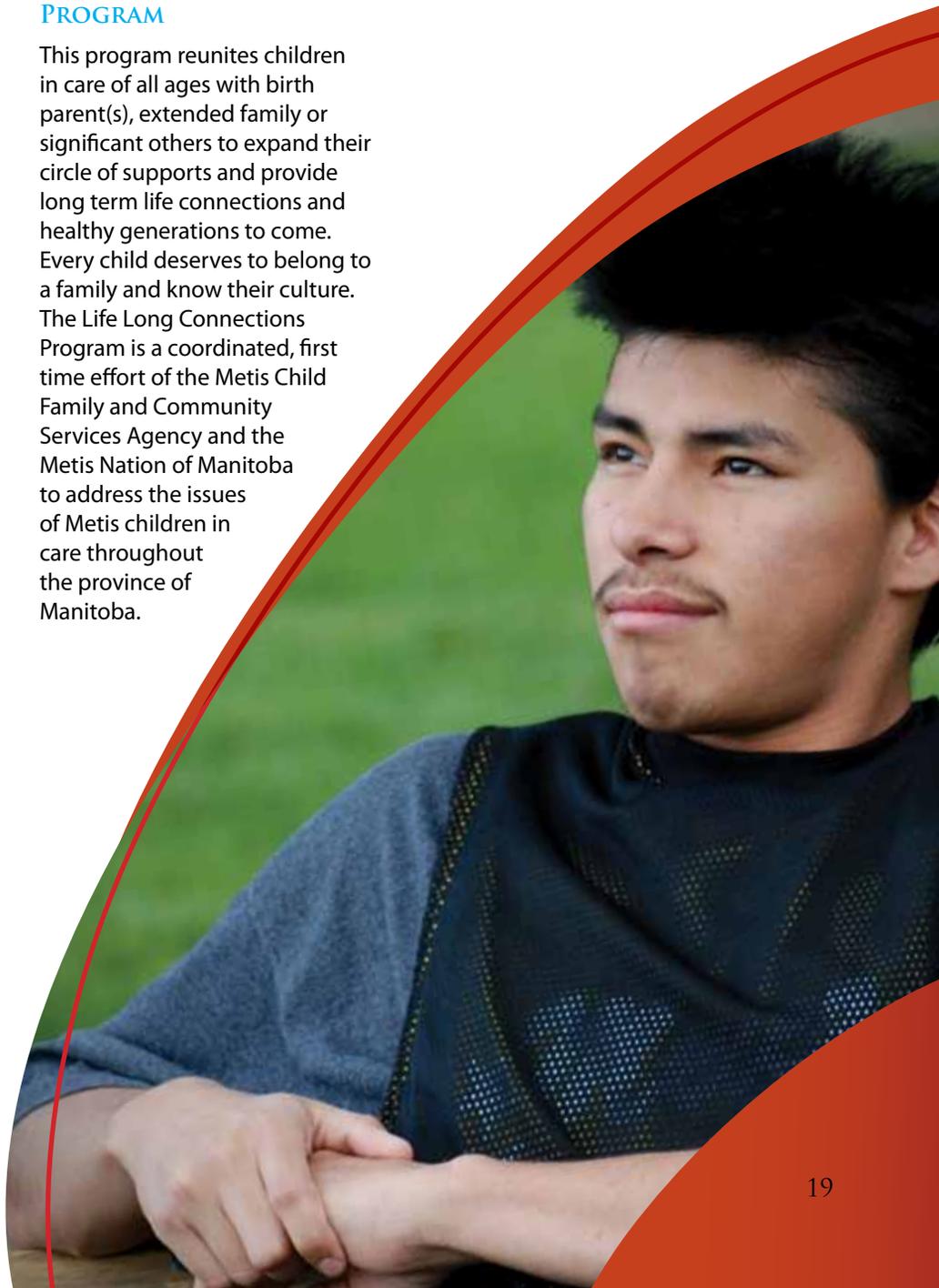
METIS SPIRIT PROGRAM

AGES 18- 21 YEARS

Metis Spirit is a very unique and dynamic program which addresses the needs of young adults leaving MCFCS' care. This program is funded by the Manitoba Metis Federation as they recognize that our young adults need ongoing support to address many daily issues. Daily challenges for our young adults include: being single parents, seeking education, employment, poverty, addictions, exploitation by individuals in the community and housing. Inability to access appropriate housing, because of limited vacancy and our youth's lack of credit history, is an extraordinary burden for them. The program is growing steadily with more demands for supports from our young adults including some who have moved outside of the Province. With only one worker, the goal is to acquire funding for an additional worker to meet the demands. The program currently provides active services to 41 young adults.

LIFE LONG CONNECTIONS PROGRAM

This program reunites children in care of all ages with birth parent(s), extended family or significant others to expand their circle of supports and provide long term life connections and healthy generations to come. Every child deserves to belong to a family and know their culture. The Life Long Connections Program is a coordinated, first time effort of the Metis Child Family and Community Services Agency and the Metis Nation of Manitoba to address the issues of Metis children in care throughout the province of Manitoba.





FASD PROGRAM

In 2011-2012 the following activities were undertaken by the FASD specialist; consultation, education, and community networking.

CONSULTATION

At the close of this fiscal year the FASD specialist performed a total of 250 formal case consultations and 720 informal consultations with social work, and resource staff, alternative care givers, birth families, and agency collaterals.

EDUCATION

The foundational FASD workshops, FASD The Basics and Becoming a Behaviour Detective for staff, caregivers and collaterals were held in Winnipeg, April 20 & 21, November 16 & 17, 2011 and in Steinbach, January 26 & 27, 2012.

COMMUNITY NETWORKING

The majority of community networking occurs through the Manitoba Coalition on Alcohol and Pregnancy. This year the Metis FASD Specialist completed a 2-year term as Winnipeg co-chair, and began a 1 year terms as website chair. In addition to chairing the website committee she also chaired the Celebration of Accomplishments committee and participated in the Burntwood FASD Coalition conference.

A Circle of Support Works

A circle of support is the working model for the adage, "It Takes a Village to Raise a Child". A circle of support is defined within MCFCS as a group of people who make a commitment to support a person with FASD. Although the term is used mainly in the disability community it isn't unique to this group. Most people have a circle of friends and/or family they can lean on when needed however when you have a disability you may need a special kind of help and you may need it more frequently. Over the past 2 years the FASD specialist has been working closely with Londa Green

a social worker from the Portage la Prairie office to build a circle of support around two adolescents diagnosed with ARND living in a rural community. Success came easily to the teens once everyone became knowledgeable about the disability and their role in supporting the pair. Members of the circle of support included the social worker, school staff, foster parents, birth mom and the FASD specialist. The birth mother and foster parents attended the FASD training through MCFCS, the school staff attended professional development through their Division and the social worker

utilized the resources available through the Agency. In addition to the FASD training the birth mom also attended the FASD Infinity Education and Support Group. Over the past 2 years circle participants have become more confident applying interventions. With each success it became easier to try new strategies. The application of FASD strategies during visits and in the school has reduced stress for the teens, birth mom and school staff and has increased the teen's enjoyment and success in those environments.

“CHILDREN WILL NOT REMEMBER YOU FOR THE MATERIAL THINGS YOU PROVIDE BUT FOR THE FEELING THAT YOU CHERISHED THEM.”
 ~ RICHARD L. EVANS

ALTERNATIVE CARE

The word in the community is that “Metis Child & Family Services is the Agency to work for, as they take pride in caring for their foster children and foster families”.

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, respects their culture and their connection to their family, and allows the child to flourish and achieve their full potential. The Agency continues to seek those community members who can embrace our philosophy while working as part of a collaborative team in supporting both the child and their family.

We, in turn, support the valuable contributions that all our caregivers give by way of regular support by our Alternate Care Workers - individually, in groups and in training. Our Annual Caregiver Appreciation Dinner attempts to show in one small way, how much we honour and celebrate caregivers that open their heart and home to our children and families.

GENERAL FOSTER CARE PROGRAM

The General Foster Home Program continues to grow as the program is constantly recruiting new general foster parents from the community to care for Metis and Inuit children coming into care. This year 96 individuals contacted us to inquire about becoming part of our Fostering Family. Of these, 40 identified themselves as being Metis, Inuit or First Nation. In response to this, five Information Sessions were offered to inform prospective foster parents “of the challenges and rewards of fostering and the things they need to think about if they are considering this type of commitment”.

Our Resource Development Workers make every effort to advocate for and support the caregivers through the wonderful times and the difficult times of fostering. They also assist with the children’s needs by working collaboratively with the foster parents, the children’s workers, Supervisors, Directors and collateral agencies. The program also offers various training opportunities and support groups throughout the year for all caregivers. The success of the General Foster Program is the dedication, commitment and relationships that are formed between the Resource Development Workers, Foster Parents, biological families, Agency staff and the Metis Community.

SPECIALIZED FOSTER CARE PROGRAM

The Specialized Foster Care Program continues to grow with the introduction of two new Clinical Case Managers, bringing the team to 6. These positions support the development of new homes and lowers case loads to provide more direct clinical support. Caregivers in the specialized program receive specialized training that enables them to provide care for a wide variety of children and youth who usually come with significant emotional or behavioural problems. The caregivers in this program receive increased one on one support by our case managers through a variety of ways such as on the spot telephone support and face to face support in the foster home or community. Caregivers are supported through ongoing training opportunities and bi-monthly support meetings that offer a chance to connect and share experiences with other caregivers. This program continues to be a success offering a safe and nurturing community home for children who would normally face a more institutional setting.

REGION HOMES	FOSTER HOMES (GENERAL & SPECIALIZED)	KINSHIP CARE HOMES	TOTAL HOMES
Western	11 (18 children)	6 (13 children)	17
Winnipeg (including Interlake & Eastman)	156 (321 children)	147 (225 children)	303
Total	167 (339 children)	153 (238 children)	320 (577 children)



KINSHIP CARE PROGRAM

The Kinship Care Program is a unique service that provides support to families in assisting with the transition and preservation of children within their family circle. Children who are currently in care are placed within their family and/or community as alternate care providers when their own parents are unable to care for them. The Kinship Care Program offers resources and supports, assesses the needs of the children and families and builds on their strengths within the family placement. The program also offers training, networking, referrals to collateral organizations and culturally appropriate ceremonies, such as sharing circles.

As of March 31, 2012, there were 147 Kinship homes in the Winnipeg area, with 238 children in these homes. This is 29% of the total children in care within the Agency. Kinship continues to grow with more and more children being cared for within their familial network. The goal is to have the majority of all children in care placed within the Kinship Care Program.

Our families demonstrate heartfelt commitment when caring for their kin. Grandmothers, grandfathers, aunts, uncles, siblings, cousins and community come forward to care for the children because they are either related or know the child/children through the community and they care about their well-being. Our Kinship families often struggle with the child welfare system and all the requirements that are legislated in order to provide care for children and families.

It is heartwarming as workers to have committed families who are willing to care for extended family in their home; a place that reflects the culture and values of the child. We have heard numerous times that “my grandchildren will not go to anyone else to be cared for!” It makes us proud to work with these families and provide the information and assist in guiding them through the child welfare system to provide the best care possible for their children. Kinship families exemplify the “heart work” that goes into caring for children. It is a journey that we, in Kinship, are very proud to be a part of.

RESIDENTIAL RESOURCES AND LIFE PROGRAMS

These programs provide supported, culturally responsive living arrangements for youth and families. They are designed to build capacity, strength and positive self-reliance through relationship and strength based practices. Service recipients include youth who need additional supports, interventions or skills development and families who have made life transformations that bring them to the juncture of being reunited with their children.

LIFE

(LIVE IN FAMILY ENHANCEMENT):

The LIFE program, began in June of 2008, is a family reunification program. In the first phase families and their children live together in a foster home for a period of eight months to a year. The foster family mentors, guides, supports and role models for the parents to improve their attachment to their children, develop routines, build confidence in their parenting and develop new skills and a new direction for their parenting future. In the second phase, the parent continues to be mentored for a few hours per week, for another eight months to a year. Once this phase is completed, a celebration is held and the orders surrounding the children who are in care are rescinded or they have lapsed. Since inception, 18 children, including a long time permanent ward, have been reunified with their families and 8 other children were prevented from coming into care. One mother is in college, a second mother has registered for college and another has secured full-time employment.

EAGLES NEST

Eagles Nest is a 0-90 day emergency assessment unit for four male youth ages 12-17. All youth are supported to

attend their individualized day program. This includes school or a community day program if applicable as well as recreational activities. Staff and the team leader are in close contact with police, the community, ISSP workers, probation workers, school staff and the youth's own worker. In some cases they have daily contact with the youth's family. Families of the youth are welcome at the facility. From the date of opening Eagles Nest has provided emergency refuge and placement for 173 youth.

GLADYS COOK HOME:

The facility holds a license to conduct and maintain a Level V Facility, designed for female youth, ages 12-17, who have very complex needs. To date 9 female youth have lived in this home. The cultural worker is also situated out of this facility, so youth who live in this home have ample opportunity to learn about their culture first hand.

RAILS PROGRAM

RAILS is an apartment complex for nine youth and it opened in February of 2010. RAILS is a program that strengthens life skills towards interdependence. It is facilitated under the guidance, mentoring and programming of

trained support staff, mentors, elders and other professionals. The program is strength and relationship based and youth are supported daily to learn and practice their skills for living interdependently. Since opening, 36 youth have been assisted to live on their own. More than 70% of those youth continue to remain in contact with RAILS staff, drop into to the Common Area or call RAILS staff when they were struggling with housing, money or food.

MISKINAWS OR ROADS PROGRAM

ROADS has been operational since October of 2010. It is a 4-phase employment program for youth, including volunteerism, work experience, casual and part or full-time employment. Applicants are over the age of 16 and in care of MCFCS. Since the launch of ROADS 37 youth have used the program. In the first year youth were employed for two months and were paid \$690.00. In 2011 youth were paid \$9,207.00. In the first five months of 2012 youth were paid \$5,992.00. To date, 5 youth have secured full-time employment and one has a variety of part-time jobs.



FAMILY SERVICES



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FAMILY SERVICES



EXECUTIVE



OPERATIONS



FINANCE



PERMANENT WARD



PERMANENT WARD



DIFFERENTIAL RESPONSE



RESOURCE PROGRAMS



RESIDENTIAL CARE



ALTERNATIVE CARE

METIS
CHILD, FAMILY
AND COMMUNITY
SERVICES

