



METIS CHILD, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES



ANNUAL REPORT
APRIL 1 MARCH 31
2012^{TO} 2013



The graphic cover design symbolizes renewal and revitalization. The shapes are layered on one another and coloured in a way so that they reflect the elements of life: wind, fire, water and earth. The feathered shapes are similar to a mythological creature known as the Phoenix which symbolizes new beginnings and revitalization.



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 PRESIDENT



For the Metis, family has always been the center of our Nation. Family is part of a larger community that can help our best efforts to raise our child. We are all responsible for ensuring that children are raised in our Nation that doesn't just talk about family values, but acts in ways that value the family. It was the vision of our Elders and our past leaders who wanted to see us look after our children. They understood that strong families create a strong nation.

Believing in yourself, your family and the Metis Nation is very important. It is with this philosophy that the Metis Government provides services to the Metis Citizens. Supporting our children as they participate in our culture and teaching them to grow into respectful, thoughtful and energized young adults is something we all want to see. Listening to our Elders as they provide advice, guidance and wisdom is something we must always remember. It is the knowledge that we have family support through our grandparents, our uncles, aunties and cousins. This is the foundation to the strength for our Nation. Of course, it is also the ability for our families to provide for themselves and those in need that will keep our Nation strong.

This is why the services the Metis Child, Family and Community Services (MCFCS) Agency provides are so vital to the Metis Nation. They provide strength as the cornerstone of our Nation and why the quality of services MCFCS provides is surpassed by none in this country. MCFCS has achieved such success that both the Province and stakeholders in other countries are looking at us and how we managed to be more successful in five years than any other agency. We've been able to do this thanks to our innovative approach made possible by the passion and skills of MCFCS staff, volunteers, and our families. I am especially proud of the Age of Majority program which helps bridge gaps and empowers our young adults who would otherwise be unsupported after they leave the Agency's care.

It was a very proud day when we took control of our children through the development of child and family services, but we must remain vigilant and never take our achievements for granted. It is with hard work and dedication that we must protect the future of the Metis children, just as our forefathers did. It is the Metis children that will carry the fire of our beliefs into the digital age and beyond.

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 Youth for their willingness to learn, our volunteers and Agency Board Members for their dedication and commitment, and the staff for their outstanding service.

Under the management of Andrea Klyne-Lavallee, Executive Director, Metis Child, Family and Community Services Agency has excelled and exceeded by providing culturally appropriate services and resources for our children and families.

Our Agency case load is great and unfortunately that means our families are struggling. We will continue to support and guide them through this difficult time in their lives. Our staff have been very creative with limited resources and have successfully created and delivered culturally appropriate programs and services that help reunite and keep our families together. Today these programs are being recognized provincially and nationally.

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 our children and families are justified in receiving.

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

Respectfully,

Judy Mayer
Minister



MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD



It has been another successful year for the MCFCS Agency! On behalf of the Board of Directors I would like to thank our front line workers for all the hard work they do dedicating themselves to the Agency and the children and families we serve.

I would also like to thank the Executive Director and her management team for continuing to do an amazing job. The Agency is truly blessed to have such a great team working for us!

The Agency Board will continue to work alongside the Authority Board to support the Agency's staff, programs and resources. With our Vision and Mission statements always in mind, we will continue to be the Agency of choice in Manitoba.

Respectfully,

Brandi Braun
Chair

2012-2013 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Chair

Brandi Braun, Southwest Region

Vice Chair

Steve Racine, Southwest Region

Secretary

Beverly Webb, Interlake Region

Treasurer

Marcella Vezina, Southeast Region

Members

Shirley Langan, Southeast Region

Florence Lamoureux, Interlake Region

Eric Chartrand, Winnipeg Region (Missing)

Marc Boyer, M. Sc., Winnipeg Region (Past)

Patricia Millar, Interlake Region (Past)

Ex-Officio Members

Marguerite Bagley

Barbara Lavallee



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 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



On behalf of the staff I am pleased to present the 2012-2013 annual report which provides an overview of the work of MCFCS that occurred over this past year. This annual report highlights the continued efforts of staff and volunteers to meet the Agency's Mission, Vision and Guiding Principles.

The last year certainly was not without challenges and change in the areas of staffing and operations. As a result of these challenges the Agency implemented a recruitment and retention strategy that focuses on orientation and training. This new initiative has been well received by all staff especially new social workers.

The Agency experienced office space and parking issues which have an overall impact on working conditions however, we are glad to report about our new office located in Beausejour. This team provides services to children and families in the Eastman Region. The Interlake team was relocated to our Sutherland Avenue office to be nearer three other teams which provided an opportunity for this team to reconnect to a larger support network.

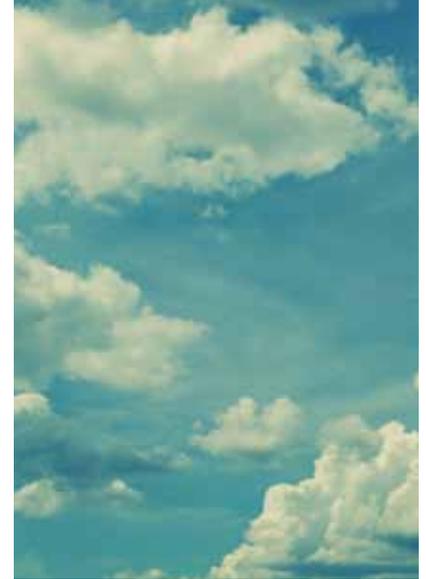
Various ongoing efforts to support all Agency staff continued to be developed by the Wellness Committee. With the changes and challenges that surfaced our Agency has continued to develop our skills and expertise in our practice model with Signs of Safety (SOS) which is mentioned throughout this report. At the beginning of this year we participated in a SOS conference which provided an opportunity for most, if not all staff, to participate and learn beyond the basics. Since that time the management team has worked diligently above and beyond their regular duties to develop an Agency-specific SOS curriculum. We are very proud of this work. As we build our capacity within the Agency with SOS, our services will only improve.

In closing, acknowledgement and recognition needs to be extended to our Metis Leadership, President Chartrand, Minister Judy Mayer and the Board of Directors. Thank you for being the visionaries you are and for your commitment and dedication to children and families. Thank you also to exiting Board members Marc Boyer and Patricia Millar for their tireless service and welcome to new Board members Shirley Langan and Florence Lamoureux. Lastly, I would like to extend a huge thank you to our Metis Authority for their guidance and support.

Respectfully,

Andrea Klyne-Lavallee
Executive Director

THE YEAR AT A GLANCE



MCFCFS case numbers consistently increase from year to year. In the previous year approximately 340 files transferred out of the Agency and approximately 350 were closed. This past year however the case numbers remain significantly higher at 1,688. The funding model is based on a caseload size of 1:25. The Child Welfare

League of Canada recommends a caseload size for child protection workers of 1:17. There are considerable challenges in meeting the provincial case management standards and many other competing priorities when carrying a caseload of 25 or greater. Other variables that may need to be taken into consideration when

determining the caseload size for child protection, would ideally include the complexity of a case, the geographical location within the province and the number of members in a family.

Regions	Protection Cases	Voluntary Family Cases	Family Enhancement	Total Family Cases	Children In Care Cases	Total Cases	ANCR Intakes
Central	16	2	n/a	18	26	52	n/a
Interlake	15	1	n/a	16	99	118	n/a
Eastman	8	1	n/a	9	66	75	n/a
Western	66	10	n/a	76	47	128	n/a
Winnipeg	557	40	77	674	619	1315	260
Total	662	54	77	793	857	1688	260

CFSIS COMPLIANCE April 1, 2013

CHILD IN CARE	Assigned to Social Worker	Assigned to Supervisor	Provincial Jurisdiction	Current Legal	All Criteria
# of Cases	856	856	856	856	856
# of Cases Meet Criteria	855	856	849	833	832
% that Meet Criteria	99.9%	100%	99.2%	97.3%	97.2%

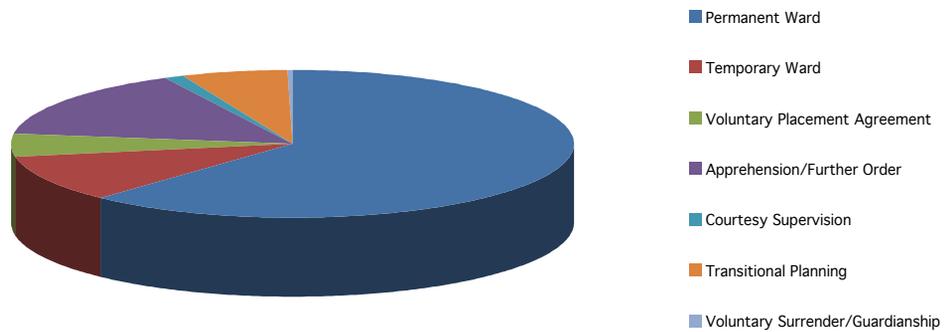
FAMILY SERVICE	Assigned to Social Worker	Assigned to Supervisor	Rec < 90 Days	Provincial Jurisdiction	All Criteria
# of Cases	782	782	782	782	782
# of Cases Meet Criteria	776	780	712	771	699
% that Meet Criteria	99.2%	99.7%	91.0%	98.6%	89.4%



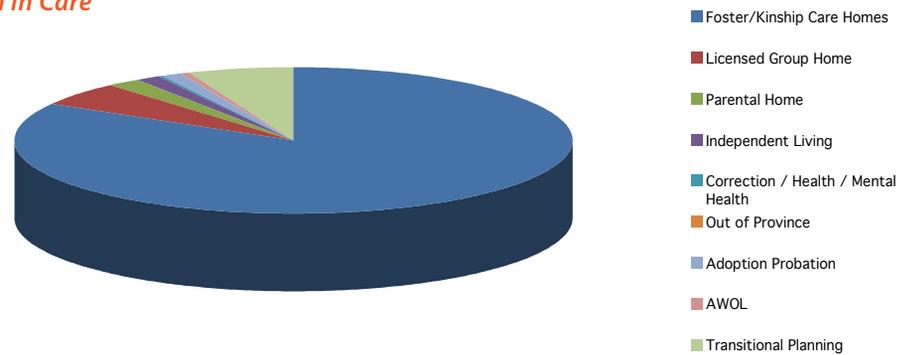
CHILDREN IN CARE STATISTICS



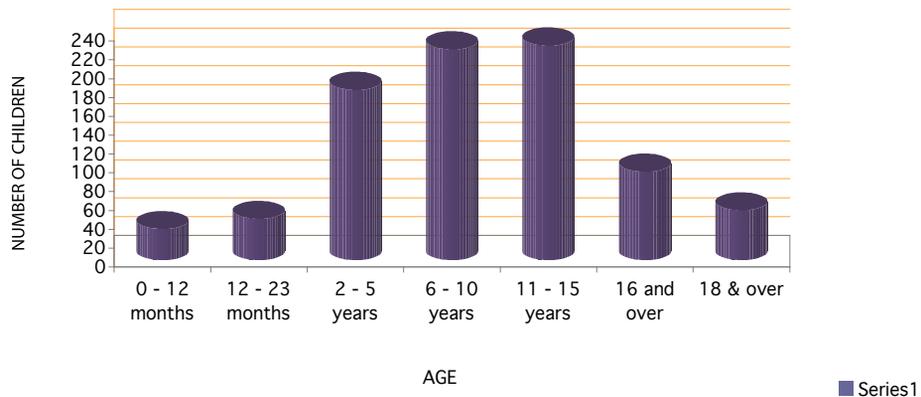
Legal Status of Children in Care



Placement Information for Children in Care



Ages of Children in Care



SIGNS OF SAFETY



The Agency continues to actively transition from traditional social work practice to the **Signs of Safety (SOS)** model in all areas of service. Andrew Turnell, co-creator of the **SOS** model, states in the April 2012 **SOS** Briefing Paper that, "Traditional child protection practice tends to lean toward paternalism, meaning professionals believe they know, or believe they need to be able to figure out, what's wrong in the lives of the families they serve then tell them how to solve their problems. This approach disenfranchises families, creates dependence and enables victim thinking and behaviour."

The **SOS** model integrates Appreciative Inquiry and Solution Focused Brief Therapy (SFBT) to create a strength-based, solution focused practice that honours and engages families and workers to collaborate to discover their own solutions to the issues that brought them into contact with the Agency. This approach liberates workers and families to expand on positive qualities and attributes to address safety concerns.

To develop a greater understanding of the **SOS** model it is essential to investigate its foundations. Appreciative Inquiry (AI) is an approach of discovery leading to positive change; it is a way of being and seeing.

It is both a worldview and a process for facilitating positive change. Its supposition is simple; every human being, group, community or system has something that works right. The discovery of what is vital, effective and successful is energizing and life affirming. The AI process begins by identifying this positive core and helps people connect to it in ways that heighten energy, sharpen vision and inspire action for change. The Solution Focused Brief Therapy model is future-focused, goal-directed, and concentrates on solutions rather than on the problems that brought the person into contact with the Agency. By focusing on the positive core and solutions to safety concerns people are able to take manageable steps towards achieving their goals.

To continue moving forward the management team is focused on creating a Signs of Safety education series. The purpose of creating the series is to increase knowledge and confidence to apply the model. The series consists of 10 workshops varying in length from 1.5 to 3 hours. Directors and supervisors have teamed up to choose a topic area and develop a session. Workshops are then presented to the management team, evaluated and adjusted to ensure content and delivery

methods meet the goals and learning objectives set out for each session. Based on evaluation feedback, sessions have assisted participants to deepen their understanding of each element of the model. By October 2013 the first workshop series will be complete. Simultaneously the **SOS** Committee is working on a plan to ensure all staff members receive this training as well as other opportunities to learn and practice using this model.



CONGRATULATIONS!!

The following youth celebrated significant achievements this year!

Amy

Attending Yellowquill College, Social Work Diploma Program

Matthew

Attending Horizon College, Saskatchewan

Jasmine

Attending University of Manitoba; YMCA scholarship

Jessica

Accepted to the University of Manitoba

Natasha

Accepted to the University of Manitoba

Zoe

Recipient of Most Improved Student and Art Awards

Tonya

High School Graduate, Honours; attending Red River College 2014

Kirk

High School Graduate

Nicholas

High School Graduate

Selena

High School Graduate

Soul

Noted Acting and Singing Performances in "Blood Memory" by Kane

Lily

Grade 6 School Spirit Award

Kaily

Grade 7 Female Athlete of the Year

Special Mention:

Congratulations to Kane, 2012 Winnipeg Aboriginal Film Festival winner for Best Student Film, Best First Film and Best Short Film for his film "Blood Memory". Kane also won Best Director and Best Film at the April 2013 Cowichan International Aboriginal Film Festival. To view the trailer for Kane's film please visit

<http://aff.cowichan.net/?blood-memory,268>



DREAMS TAKE FLIGHT



Disney World 2013!

This year 10 of our children participated in this amazing trip to Disney's Magic Kingdom in Orlando, Florida! Thanks to the very special volunteers from the Dreams Take Flight organization the children enjoyed fast pass access to all the rides and shopping for precious souvenirs before heading home. An exciting, whirlwind of a day!

DIFFERENTIAL RESPONSE FAMILY ENHANCEMENT (DRFE)



The DRFE program began in 2009 as a pilot program aimed at prevention and early intervention with families. DRFE, like the whole Agency, uses a strength based, solution focused approach to working collaboratively with families. The DRFE workers utilize the (SOS) signs of safety mapping and three houses exercise with families. During this year we have worked with 122 families. The program evaluation

showed that many of the families reported feeling hopeful, respected and like a part of the team while being engaged with the workers in the program. There are 5 social workers, 1 cultural worker and 1 family mentor. The family mentor works with families and children to reach their identified case plan goals, which could range from parent coaching to one on one work with the children and youth.

Our cultural worker often takes families as a whole or individually takes parents, children or youth to cultural activities in the community including connecting them with community Elders. She has been requested by family members to provide emotional support, house cleansing and smudging.

CULTURAL PROGRAMS & SERVICES

Our Cultural programming provides services to a diverse population. This year the Agency engaged the ongoing support of a group of Elders who are available to provide traditional forms of healing and teachings to staff as well as to our children and families. The Agency is pleased to have an Inuit Elder included in this initiative as we continue to work on developing services for our Inuit children and families.

At the request of some of our parents, this year the Agency also entered into a partnership with the Louis Riel Institute for the provision of cultural education and planning kits specific to Metis history and culture. These kits provide an additional tool in teaching youth about their heritage and in cultural education to both caregivers and children.



FAMILY SERVICES



This past year the Family Services Units grew from 4 to 5 teams, in an effort to keep pace with the steady increases in workload demands from year to year. Due to the need to re-align and re-balance positions within the Agency, the unit Social Work Assistant positions were phased out part way through the year. This change was immediately felt and worries existed that it would impact service delivery. However, through the collaborative efforts of Agency staff at every level, creative solutions were discovered and utilized to ensure that we maintained the level of service that our families have come to expect from us.

Although the Phoenix Sinclair Inquiry cast a shadow on the involvement of agencies with vulnerable children and families, supervisors and workers sought to be more mindful and focused on the lessons from the inquiry and made efforts to incorporate that learning into our

practice to the benefit of our families. We also embraced and commenced use of the provincially mandated SDM (Structured Decision Making) Risk Assessment tool, which has assisted workers in more effectively assessing a family's functioning, and when used in conjunction with Signs of Safety (SOS), has helped us to determine when it is safe to discontinue and close out our involvement or where to focus our ongoing service and support.

All units have remained faithful and diligent in the use of SOS to deepen our practice as we work towards full integration of the model in our work with families. Early indicators are that we are on the right track, given the presence of SOS references in our family's communication with us, such as when a mother recently wrote to her worker advising that she planned to "put much thought into responding to the family Map" that they had created.

Despite the challenges that staff are confronted with now, and will encounter in the coming year while we move through the inevitable transitions, we continue to be guided by the Agency's Vision and Mission statements to work towards strengthening the capacity of our families and community to provide safe care to their children. We will endeavor to continue to do work with a spirit of appreciation, honouring and humility.

PERMANENT WARD & ADOPTION SERVICES



Permanent Ward

The permanent ward department at MCFCS consists of two permanent ward teams providing services to children and youth residing within the city of Winnipeg; one team consists of seven permanent ward social workers and the other team has five permanent ward social workers and two adoption social workers. While each team functions independently with separate supervisors, there continues to be a spirit of togetherness and cooperation as well as some joint activities and shared work amongst the teams.

The permanent ward teams work diligently to ensure that all children and youth receive the services and resources necessary to help them attain optimal overall development. In addition to working directly with children and youth, the permanent ward teams continue to also work with birth parents and extended family members towards ensuring that families remain connected in a safe and meaningful way. Some of the work done with birth parents has resulted in reunification for permanent wards and ultimately in having some permanent orders rescinded.

It is widely recognized that youth are not always ready to transition from their caregivers at age 18. MCFCS strongly supports this perspective; as such, many

of our youth aged 18+ remain in agency care via an Extension of Care to pursue educational goals or to gain valuable life skills that will help them transition successfully. We are also pleased to note that both permanent ward teams have youth attending post secondary education via the Tuition Waivers for Children in Care offered by the University of Winnipeg and Red River College.

We are thankful for the excellent year we've had and we look forward another year of change, challenge, vision and promise!

Adoption Services

This has been an exciting year for the MCFCS Adoption Team. The Adoption Team has two adoption workers that specialize in processing adoptions.

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.

This year the Adoption Team had the honour of attending extremely valuable and insightful three-day training presented by Dr. Gordon Neufeld in Brandon, Manitoba. As the Adoption Team is still fairly new, training and development in many areas is ongoing.

Most of the adoptions completed by the Adoption Team are child-specific or Division 1, however, Division 2, Defacto, and Inter-Country adoptions are also accepted.

Although each of the children who become permanent wards of the Agency come from different situations they all have one thing in common; they deserve a loving and safe forever home and the MCFCS Adoption Team is proud to be a part of securing this for our permanent wards through adoption.



REGIONAL SERVICES



Eastman Region

This past year has been filled with some significant changes for the Eastman Unit as the Interlake/Eastman Unit was restructured into two separate units. Several new staff were added to the team which now has a total of eight employees, consisting of a supervisor, an administrative assistant and 6 social workers. It was an exciting time in December when the unit took possession of their new office space in Beausejour. The benefits of relocating into the region have been widely praised by both staff and families. Some challenges were presented with the logistics of a rural office location and staff continue to work diligently at finding rural resources and familiarizing themselves with the communities that we serve.

The Eastman Unit has embraced change and developed a positive environment. They recognize that the team's strength of relationship building will continue to enable them to provide services and build strong relationships with our children and families. We are currently planning a grand opening of the new office which will celebrate our commitment to our children, our cultural identity and the strengthening of our relationships within our communities.

Interlake Region

The Interlake team has gone through significant changes over the last year. Formerly this team was a joint service team with Eastman, but separated into its own unit in the fall of 2012. The team consists of 4 social workers, an administrative assistant, a full time Skills for Life worker, supervisor and 12 casual support workers. Up until March 2013, the unit was housed out of McGregor Avenue, however, in the spring of 2013 the team relocated to 100 Sutherland Avenue and is enjoying the opportunity to be working alongside the Permanent Ward Unit, DR, Finance and HR. The Interlake region is vast and workers often have great distances to travel, however, over the last year case numbers have been reduced so workers are finding that their caseloads are becoming manageable.

The team primarily provides services to permanent wards in the Interlake region in addition to supporting and working with families who can benefit from our services. The team actively embraces the use of SOS with families and children and is pleased with the positive difference it has made in our approach to families and ultimately the results. The Interlake team coordinates 12 casual support workers

to assist with families throughout the Interlake and Eastman regions. These staff support children and families by providing parent support/education, one-on-one work with children, supporting family visits and driving.

Our Skills for Life worker is dedicated to approximately 16 teens between the age of 15 and 18, assisting with their transition into independence and adulthood. This has been a welcome and much needed addition to the Interlake/Eastman units. One-on-one work is done with each youth to develop a plan for what is best for their future. The Skills for Life worker travels throughout the Interlake and Eastman regions, so additional plans are for groups to be developed to bring several youth together for training opportunities.

The Interlake team has many long time dedicated staff who have persevered through ups and downs and remain with the unit. We also enjoy having students on our team, sharing our knowledge, experience and commitment to working with MCFCS. Every member of the team is essential and works hard to support one another, while delivering strength-based services to our children and families.



Western and Central Regions

The Western Team continues to provide supports to 132 families and children in care. This team consists of three social workers, one Kinship/Resource Worker, two full time support workers and one full time Administrative Assistant. This year the team welcomed a full time Family Support Coordinator to work along side of the support workers in creating valuable supports to our families and children in care. The team continues to work with the Signs of Safety and Structured Decision Making practice models to provide positive outcomes for our children, youth and their families. The team continues to work on building programs in the Western region to build and strengthen and honour our families.

The Central team continues to provide services to 70 families and children in care that reside within the Central region of the Province. The team consists of two full time Social Workers and one Social work assistant. The team welcomed a casual support worker for their area this year. The support worker continues to work with the families and children in care. This team continues to work on developing their own programming to implement Metis and Inuit culture. The team continues to work with the Signs Of Safety and Structured Decision Making Practice Models.

Human Resources

The MCFCS Human Resources department works hard to attract, retain and nurture a professional, committed and compassionate workforce. The department is dedicated to ensuring a respectful and nurturing environment for the employees of the Agency. Within the last year MCFCS has a staff group of approximately 157 full time employees of which 55.5% have self declared Metis or Inuit heritage. As our directive we will continue to improve upon those numbers while ensuring that children and families are provided professional care.

MCFCS Human Resources department works to build relationships with the universities and colleges within the community to attract new people to the Agency. We have provided 6 co-op placements; of those, 5 of the students became employees upon completion of their schooling. As an Agency our reputation within the community shows the good work that we do with children and families and helps to attract new talent to continue that work.

Human Resources will continue to work with our employee group, the union and external partners within our communities to enable us to build a strong workforce and move into the future.

Executive, Operations and Finance

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

The Operations and Finance teams are responsible for the daily operational needs of the Agency and provide a vital support role in the fulfillment of the Agency's mandate and its provision of programming.



Resources: FAMILY SUPPORT PROGRAMS



The Family Resource programs continue to grow and provide valuable resources and supports to the families involved with MCFCS. This year all the programs grew in staff, mentors, numbers of families served and transportation provided. The programs continue to provide families with creative, strength-based, focused support services using the Signs of Safety approach.

Family Support Program

The Family Support Program staff work diligently with the families to help them to stay united as a family, reach goals, strengthen their parenting and connect to community resources. On average, the Family Support Program provides approximately 125 families a month with parent education or supported family times. Our staff average over 1,200 hours a month working with families. Our support worker team focuses on finding the existing strength in every parent or caregiver and helping them build on the belief that they can make positive changes.

This year with the support and encouragement of the program staff, a parent who had 5 children in care with the Agency made a decision to leave a highly volatile relationship. Through the program supports provided the court plan was changed from a permanent order to a supervision order and ultimately all 5 children were reunified with their mom. The parent acknowledged the programs' supports by saying *"Thank you to Metis CFS for helping me see what was going on in my life; if it was not for you I would not be where I am today"*.

Supported Family Time

MCFCS offers parents a positive, healthy environment for families to spend quality time in our Supported Family Time program. This program consists of staff offering support, guidance and mentorship to families through positive interaction and age appropriate play. Staff are trained to understand attachment and to mentor parents in developing these skills.

This is a very busy program that is in high demand. The Supported Family Time program hosted 3,130 family time visits over the last year. This brought in a total of 5,470 children into the building to spend quality time with a parent or caregiver. One parent commented *"she feels safe and happy coming to 2000 Portage for her visits. The staff are always friendly and helpful"*.

Transportation Program

Our Transportation program is a valuable asset to both MCFCS staff and families. Our drivers are dedicated and committed to ensuring the children make it to family times, therapy or appointments in a safe positive environment. The program consists of 5 paid drivers and 23 volunteer drivers. The drivers have completed 1,059 city drives and 1,936 rural drives in the last year. The following example demonstrates how devoted our drivers are to the children and families. This past year one of our driver's vehicles broke down on the highway. The driver did not want a child to miss their family time so he rented a car solely to ensure the family time occurred.



Family Mentor Program

The Family Mentor Program is a unique program that matches community based volunteers with “lower risk” youth or families. This past year the program achieved the goal of increasing the number of male mentors. Our coordinator partnered with a local business whose goal was to have all of their staff become volunteers in the community. They are now volunteers with our program and successfully matched to youth in the community. Currently there are 20 active mentors. There were 18 youth and 6 families mentored over the course of the year.

Community Partnerships

Connecting families and children to community based services provides them with key supports right within their community. All resource programs are successful in helping families by partnering with various community based agencies. Just a few of the agencies that

we have worked with over the last year are: Urban Circle Training Centre, Red River College, University of Manitoba, Nine Circles Training Centre, Sleep Country Canada, Canadian Mental Health, Project CHOICES, Graffiti Art Programming, North End Women’s Resource Centre, Native Women’s Transition Centre, YMCA’s Win Gardner Place, B & L Homes and Addictions Foundation Manitoba. Our agency fully believes in working as a team with our families, agency staff and collaterals to get the best for every family. It helps to strengthen our community.



Resources:

CHILDREN & YOUTH PROGRAMS



Circle of Life (COL) – Children and Youth Support program 6 to 17 years of age

This dynamic program uses the Signs of Safety, solution focused and strength-based approach when working with youth on a one to one basis. COL workers help the 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 the 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, ice fishing first ever derby and sweat lodges every two months. The activity based approach supports the youth with building self confidence, 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 Circle of Life Program provided services to 80 youth throughout the 2012/2013 year.

SASH Program (So Adolescents Stay Home) – Youth Outreach Workers 10 to 17 years of age

The SASH program is an outreach program that supports youth who are having difficulties resulting in high risk behaviours. The SASH program has three phases implemented to work with youth on an

individual basis. The first phase is safety which is designed for the outreach worker to assess levels of risk, to develop safety plans and to respond to critical situations. The second phase is stabilization which is 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 which is 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 services were provided to 62 at risk youth.

Skills for Life program (SFL): Interdependent Living program 16 to 18 years of age

(*plus youth on extension of care)

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,

addictions, housing, banking and just fun activities. This year we hosted a workshop on suicide that 14 youth attended and enjoyed. SFL workers encourage youth to recognize that they are not alone and they assist the youth 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 39 youth received services from the Skills for life program.

Metis Spirit Program: 18- 21 years of age

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 43 young adults.



Life Long Connections

Life Long Connections Program seeks out birth parents, extended family or significant others for children in care with a goal of expanding their circle of supports and providing long term healthy life connections. 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 connecting Metis children in care with their families. The Life Long Connections worker participates on the Agency's Permanency Planning Committee and actively assists the workers to find family connections for our children in care. This year the program provided services to 46 families.

Nobody's Perfect

This is a government program which provides parenting skills development for parents of children up to age 5. Five mothers successfully completed the program and received certificates.

Young Mothers and Kookums

This is an Infinity Program which uses the SOS approach to mentor mothers and grandmothers to address long term issues resulting from residential schools, poverty and social isolation. Activities include smudging, sharing circles, grief counseling and helping to support the service plan that is expected of them. Mothers learn short and long term outcome based goals that are focused on building trust and rapport in a nonjudgmental environment. It ultimately strengthens the children.

Residential Resources

The Residential Resources Program includes Eagles Nest Emergency Assessment facility for boys aged 12 to 17 years, Gladys Cook Home for Level V girls aged 12 to 17 years and RAILS which provides co-ed apartment living life skills program for youth aged 16 to 21 years.

This year the youth in the programs participated in a winter of hockey, music, youth group meetings, employment and school. Cultural activities such as medicine picking, circles, sweats, gardening, harvesting and assisting with the preparation of feasts were key ongoing activities that the youth participated in. The programs are all relationship and strength-based and the staff focus on developing bonds with the youth and give them an opportunity to be heard. Staff teach youth how to advocate for themselves and develop self esteem and belief in their abilities.

From its inception Eagles Nest has provided emergency care for 180 youth. Gladys Cook, our long term resource has provided care for 15 youth and RAILS has cared for 44 youth.

ROADS is an employment program for youth 16 years and older. The program staff work beside youth to provide mentorship on job skills, work ethic, attention to detail and preparedness for transitioning to regular community based jobs. In the upcoming year the program is exploring partnerships with companies to facilitate the youth's transition to other full time jobs. To date 53 youth have participated in the ROADS program and a number of them have found full time employment outside of the program.

This year 4 youth from the program have entered university and one youth completed her Health Care Aide certificate.

LIFE (Live In Family Enhancement)

LIFE is a unique program that reunites birth parents and their children in a foster home. The program strengthens families through mentorship, modeling and coaching from the LIFE foster caregivers. The birth families are committed to participating in this opportunity to be reunited with their children and to make the changes to transition out of the LIFE home to their own family home. To date 29 children have been successfully reunited with their family.

The youth cultural program provides opportunities for all youth to develop an understanding of their Metis and Inuit culture with a strong emphasis on harvesting, traditions, history and use of the land. Children and youth have a chance to participate in cultural camps, fishing, hunting, gardening, medicine picking, arrowhead hunting, sharing circles and cultural dinners and to be provided with cultural teachings. This year the Agency is pursuing a goal to develop cultural plans for all permanent wards.



FASD PROGRAM



ALTERNATIVE CARE

During the 2012-2013 fiscal year 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 789 consultations. There were 194 formal case consultations in which the FASD specialist communicated with a caregiver, staff person or collateral and a case note was generated and 595 informal consultations during which time questions were answered or information provided that did not require formal documentation.

Education

There were 14 foundational FASD workshops offered to staff, caregivers and collaterals in Winnipeg, Brandon, Ashern and Steinbach. Of the 14 workshops offered 4 were cancelled due to lack of registration. Winnipeg workshops were held September 11/12, 2012, November 6/7, 2012, February 5/6, 2013, and May 8/9, 2013. The Brandon workshops were held January 15/16, 2013.

Community Networking

The majority of community networking occurs through the Manitoba Coalition on Alcohol and Pregnancy. This year the Metis FASD Specialist chaired the MCAF

Conference November 21, 2012 and the Speaker's Bureau project which will continue into the 2013-2014 fiscal year.

Policy Development

In 2012 the FASD specialist completed a 2 year project in collaboration with the Directors of Services and Supervisors to create an FASD Manual containing agency specific FASD policy, procedures, and information to assist case managers. This resource is intended to strengthen MCFCS staff and alternative care givers as we continue to build our knowledge of the affects of prenatal alcohol exposure. Consistent informed practice enables us to provide the best care possible to the children and families.

The Alternative Care, Residential and Resource programs continued to provide unique supports and services to children, youth and families in our agency. These distinct programs walk beside families using a strength-based, non judgmental approach towards the goal of keeping families together. Using the Signs of Safety approach, parents are encouraged to commit themselves to recognizing and developing their strengths to care for their children in a safe and secure way.

Alternative Care

The General Foster Home Program continues to focus on recruiting Metis and Inuit homes. This year 99 individuals inquired about fostering with our agency. Of these, 38 identified themselves as being Metis, Inuit or First Nation. The program staff make presentations to the Agency's Permanency Planning Committee and work closely with caregivers to ensure that they include birth parents in plans for their children.

Specialized Foster Care Program

Our Agency is pleased to report that currently the majority of our high needs children are in Metis CFCS specialized resources. Children in the program are experiencing stability in ways many of them have not previously experienced. Advanced training opportunities and

Alternative Care Statistics

Region Homes	Foster Homes (General & Specialized)	Kinship Care Homes	Total Homes
Western	12 (19 children)	8 (16 children)	20
Winnipeg (including Interlake & Eastman)	151 (191 children)	168 (242 children)	319
Total	163 (210 children)	176 (258 children)	339 (468 children)

regular support meetings are an integral part of the success of the program. One of the caregivers participated in the PRIDE training for trainers.

Our agency formed a partnership with the Louis Riel Institute to provide Metis Cultural Awareness training for foster/kinship caregivers, and the Agency will be making available to all caregivers and staff several Metis Educational Resource Kits.

RECOGNITION - One of our caregivers was singled out by a presiding Judge after her testimony under oath regarding the permanent order proceedings for one of our children in care. His remarks were:

"In my 23 years as a judge and prior to that, I have never come across a more committed and loving person as this mother. Her unconditional love for her child came through. Her devotion came through, she is his guardian angel! And if there is a bright light in this very sad, sad case, it is the foster parent's connection to the child and his attachment to her. It actually blew me away. It's one of those cases I will always remember because of her unconditional love and devotion."

Another caregiver has joined the Manitoba Foster Family Network's 'Peer Support Team'. As a peer mentor she is open to receiving calls and providing support or guidance to other caregivers province wide.

On a very sad note our team lost some wonderful staff this year, many of whom moved on to other opportunities. Our hearts are still heavy on the loss of one of our excellent Metis staff who passed away in March. This individual's dedication and commitment to our Agency's Vision and Mission, as well as her foster families, was witnessed and cherished by all. She is sorely missed.

Kinship Care

The Kinship Care Program provides supports to familial caregivers when birth parents are unable to care for their children. In keeping with MCFCS' Mission and Vision, children entering care are placed within their family and/or community whenever possible. This allows for the least disruption for the children and maintains the family connection. The program offers resources and supports to enhance and build on the strengths within the family. Training, networking, referrals and culturally appropriate ceremonies, especially circles, are an integral part of the kinship program. The kinship program is growing on a continual basis. 'It takes a community to raise a child' and our kinship care providers, grandmothers, great grandmothers, aunts, uncles, siblings, cousins etc. show a selfless commitment and go above and beyond to be a part of that village.

The kinship team is proud to be working with families in caring for their family

members. Their strength and dedication is uplifting, encouraging and rewarding. Many life lessons, morals and values are learned from our kinship care providers. The program and our kinship care providers are valued by our agency.

"The beauty of the kinship program is that the kinship family feels like an integral part of the care of their extended family member who has come into care. There are many strengths to this type of care; children are not placed with strangers, cultural connectedness is maintained and the child does not have to deal with another type of home. As we all know, the trauma of the child coming into care is significant and some of that is ameliorated with a placement with someone who they know and with whom they have some type of bond. This type of program is an extremely positive statement in how the Metis Nation is stepping forward and opening their homes for their families. This is not easy for our kinship families as many have little to no understanding of the requirements that govern the child welfare system. This can cause a challenge for our kinship homes however, in all my years the challenges have been overcome and the homes are filled with love. This is the best of how children in care are cared for! With Family!"





METIS
CHILD, FAMILY
AND COMMUNITY
SERVICES