

METIS CHILD, **FAMILY & COMMUNITY** **SERVICES**

ANNUAL REPORT

APRIL 1, 2016 - MARCH 31, 2017





Vision Statement

The Métis family and community is the cornerstone of our Nation and is built upon love, respect, honour, strength and heritage.

Mission Statement



Métis 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 Métis children.

Guiding Principles

1. Métis families and communities are the cornerstone of the Métis Nation and the service delivery system must reflect this vision.
2. Responsibility for decision-making regarding Métis 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.

Greetings from the President

Metis Child, Family and Community Services Agency Inc.

This year is the 50th anniversary celebration of Métis Governance and marking of 20 years of a new era of leadership. It is a good time to reflect upon the great achievements we have made. One of the most momentous with a lasting impact in the last two decades has been the establishment of the Metis Child and Family Services Authority and our two agencies.

The Manitoba Metis Federation is committed to securing the necessary tools to build strong families and provide the supports for our Children, Grandchildren, and Great-Grandchildren. We will continue to invest in our families and support Metis Child and Family Services. We recognize your good work. Our Children, Families and Community are better because of it.

I applaud Metis Child, Family and Community Services Agency and thank you for your dedication and commitment. The Manitoba Metis Federation, on behalf of the Métis Citizens of Manitoba, is proud of you and the vital work you do.

Believe in Yourself – Believe in Métis!

Meeqwetch,

President David Chartrand
LL.D (hon), O.M.



David Chartrand

LL.D (hon), O.M.



Message from the Minister

We, as Métis and Inuit people, are living in historic times.

The Supreme Court Decision on the Daniels case in April 2016 launched negotiations between Canada and the Manitoba Metis Federation on a number of socio-economic fronts.

Your Minister and Associate Minister have worked hard with President David Chartrand this fiscal year to keep child and family services matters at the forefront of negotiations with the federal government. We remain committed to securing funding parity in areas such as staff benefits, operations, placement workers, prevention resource workers, travel, information technology and training.

This year has been one of passion and progress. These are exciting times. We look forward to working with our Metis Child and Family Services Authority, our two agencies and community members from across our great province to bring about change that can truly help our families enter a new era of hope and advancement.

In the spirit of Riel!
Judy Mayer
Carol Laramée



Judy Mayer
Minister of Metis CFS



Carol Laramée
Associate Minister of Metis CFS

A Message from the Chief Executive Officer of the Metis Child and Family Services Authority

Our babies, our Elders, our families - these continue to be the cornerstone of our Métis Nation. As child welfare service providers, our continued challenge is to move away from what existed pre-Devolution and to honour the promises made to our communities for improved child welfare service delivery.

We must undo the effects of a painful history and provide parents with the supports needed for their children to stay in their homes. We must lower the number of children in the care of our child welfare system. We must continue to strengthen our Métis families.

We also acknowledge the Inuit children and families that we have been mandated to serve. We ask for continued guidance that we will always undertake this responsibility in an honourable way.

We are proud of our Metis Child, Family and Community Services Agency for their continued diligence and hard work in these challenging times.

Respectfully,
Billie Schibler



Billy Schibler
Metis CFS Authority



Message from the Board

It has been an exciting year full of many challenges and changes that we faced, dealt with and overcome. It is our pleasure to say with pride that our Agency continues to deliver excellent programs and services to children, families and communities in Manitoba.

On behalf of the Agency Board of Directors, I truly and sincerely thank our Executive Director, Andrea Klyne-Lavallee, the Executive Management team and all the Agency staff for their hard work, commitment and dedication. You made it possible; for our Agency to move forward in exploring new and exciting ideas in 2016/2017. You can all applaud yourself because it is your excellent service that MCFCS is the Agency of choice for many people, so again we thank you for that.

The MCFCS Agency Board also looks forward to another year of working collaboratively with the Authority Board in achieving our commitment of empowering families and communities.

It's hard to believe another year has already come and gone! It has been an eventful year with many changes but also with new and exciting ideas to explore! Despite the challenges the many day-to-day hurdles and significant changes; the agency continued to provide excellent services and resources for the children and families.

The Agency Board of Directors also acknowledges all the front line workers for the amazing work they do on a daily basis for the families and communities and most of all for the children in Manitoba. It is because of you that the MCFCS is the Agency of choice for many people, so we thank you, for all your hard work, your dedication and commitments in providing a high standard of professionalism and service for the children and families we serve.

The MCFCS Agency Board looks forward to continue working alongside the Executive Director, as well as the Authority in the upcoming year to provide support for the MCFCS Agency.

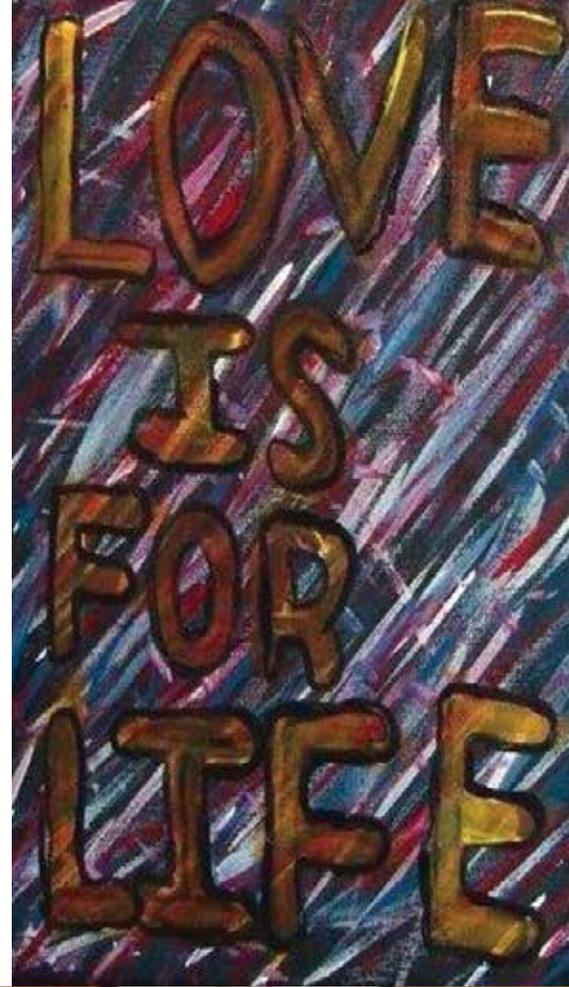
The Agency Board of Directors once again thanks the Executive Director and her management team for continuing to do an amazing and professional job. The Agency is truly blessed to have such a great team working for us and with us!

Exploring New and Exciting Ideas

The Agency Board will continue to work alongside the Authority Board to support the Agency's staff, its programs and resources. With our Vision and Mission statements always in mind, we will continue to be the Agency of choice in Manitoba. Thank you. Merci. MAY GOD BLESS YOU ALL

2016-2017 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

A/Chair:	Eric Chartrand, Winnipeg Region
Vice Chair:	Shirley Langan, Southeast Region
Secretary	Beverly Webb, Interlake Region
Treasurer:	Marcella Vezina, Southeast Region
Members:	Florence Lamoureux, Interlake Region
Gertrude Klatt	Elder Advisor
Ex-Officio Members:	Rita Cullen
	Barbara Lavallee
	Lorriane Laramée





Message from the Executive Director

I am pleased to present Metis Child, Family and Community Services 2016 Annual Report, which highlights the work and accomplishments of the Agency. First and foremost I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge the staff for their passion and creativity; their unwavering commitment to the vision and mission statements provided by our Métis Leaders and Elders which help guide our practice.

Like many other Organizations our Strategic Plan is one of our main guiding documents in our continued efforts to build positive relationships with children, youth, families and community partners. Each year we take stock in what we have accomplished and make necessary adjustments to deepen our practice. In addition to the mandated services we provide, we take pride in the work with families on reunification, attachment and cultural practices. We have entered into a partnership with Aurora and the University of Winnipeg's Master of Marriage and Family Therapy to provide clinical services to children, youth and families. We recognize this is a service not readily available to many families due to wait list, financial constraints and just simply providing the clinical service at a time and location accessible to the family. I hope you take the time to read further into the report as some results are provided. We look forward with this continued partnership. I also want to acknowledge Aulneau Renewal Center for their continued work with the Agency as we enter our fourth year with them; I leave you with a quote from a mom. "My son and I have grown in many ways, attachment, affection, listening, talking, patience, understanding him, eye contact. I am very grateful for the therapy".

We thank and honor the families in their journey it is not easy for many to open up and share their stories.

As we move into a new year we will continue to improve our practices, and stay focused on our strategic plans. In closing we thank our government, President David Chartrand, Minister Judy Mayer, Metis Child and Family Services Authority and our Board of Directors for all their support and leadership this past year.

Thank you,
Andrea Klyne-Lavallee
Executive Director

The Year at a Glance 2016-2017 STATS

The Year at a Glance 2016-2017 STATS

Regions	Protection	Extension Of Care	Voluntary Family Services	Expectant Parent Services	Family Enhancement	Children In Care	Total Cases	ANCR/DIA Intakes
SOUTHEAST (EASTMAN)	9	9	0	1	1	115	135	7
INTERLAKE	16	16	3	0	0	165	200	1
WINNIPEG	495	46	40	3	67	670	1321	294
TOTAL	520	71	43	4	68	950	1656	302

CFSIS COMPLIANCE April 1, 2017

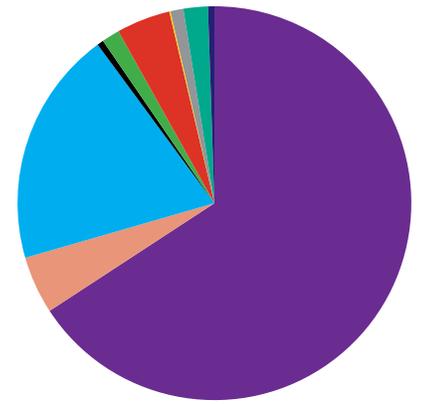
	PROVINCIAL JURISDICTION	CURRENT LEGAL	RECORDING COMPLIANCE	ALL CRITERIA
CHILD IN CARE	100%	100%	99.8%	84.8%
FAMILY SERVICES	100%	N/A	99.8%	70%



Children in Care Statistics

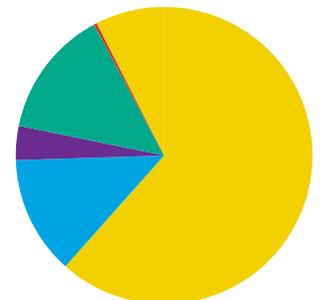
Placement Information for Children In Care

Kinship/Foster/ Specialized Homes	588	
Licensed Group Home	65	
Place of Safety	171	
AWOL	5	
Out of Province	13	
Independent Living	42	
Adoption/ Probation	1	
Health/Mental Health/Corrections	10	
Parental Home	17	
Courtesy Supervision	5	

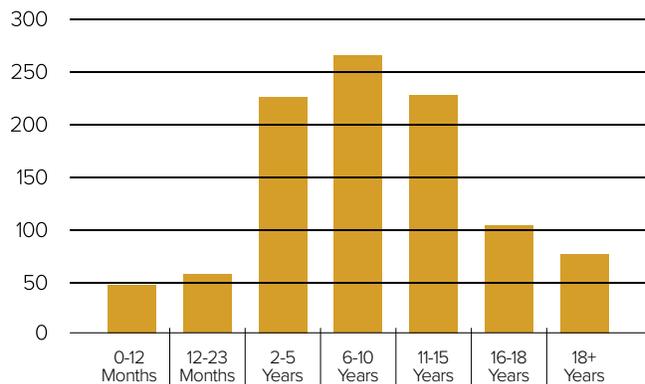


Legal Status of Children in Care

Permanent Ward	589	
Temporary Ward	127	
Voluntary Placement Agreement	31	
Apprehension/Further Order	127	
Voluntary Surrender/Guardianship	5	

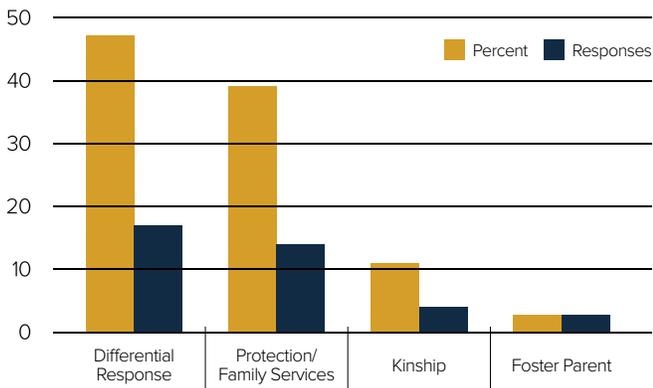


Ages of Children in Care



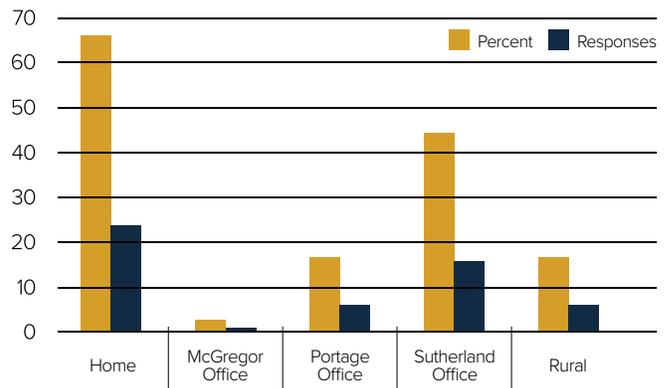
Aurora: "Families Together" Pilot Project

Team that Referred the Client



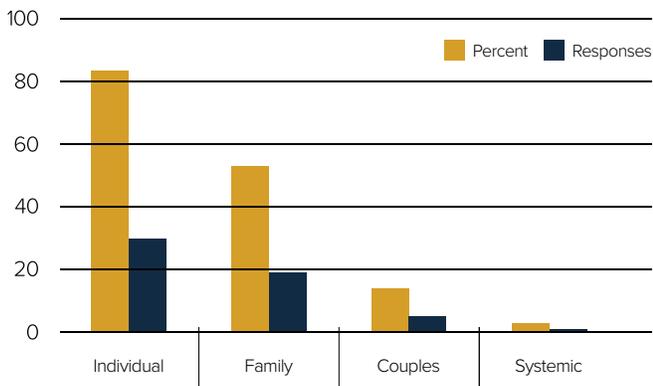
Many families in our DRFE Program had the opportunity to participate and receive free and timely counselling services that otherwise would not have been available to them.

Location



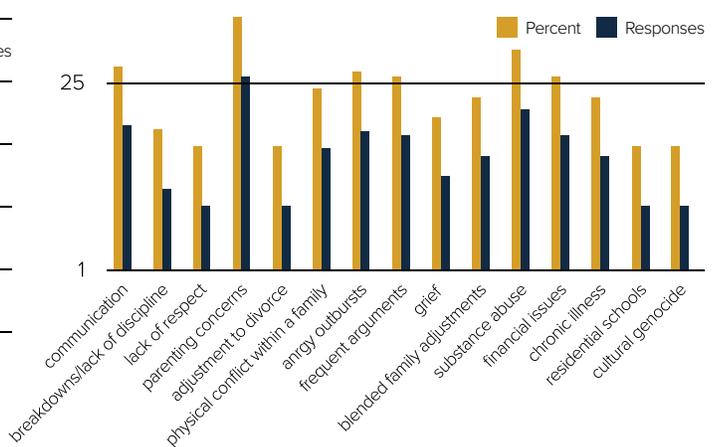
This project created the opportunity to move away from traditional models of therapy, and gave the option of families receiving sessions in their own home. Families were responsive to this option.

Type of Sessions



Although much of the work was individuals, families and larger systems were also able to participate.

Common Family Problems



Many families had complex challenges that they were facing. This chart highlights the issues they had identified as being problems for themselves.

Differential Response Family Enhancement (DRFE)

Since changing the selection criteria for the DRFE program in September 2016, the team and families have had many successes. We have seen children and parents flourish once given the support. Families have shared they appreciate being selected to work with our program, and that they find the pamphlet and introductory letter to be beneficial. Workers have shared that families are prepared and ready to meet with them after sending the introductory letter and pamphlet.

Families are selected and given the opportunity to work with the program for enhanced wrap around services that includes cultural support, mentoring, utilization of their natural resources and supports. In addition, over the past year our team referred many families to the “Families Together” pilot project, a partnership between MCFCS and Aurora Family Therapy through the University of Winnipeg’s Master of Marriage and Family Therapy Program.

In order for this to be successful the DRFE program operates from a strengths based empowerment model. Families are selected based on their:

- Openness and willing to engage in honest and meaningful conversations and activities around change
- Openness to engage with the people they feel are important to them
- Belief that change is possible

Although we’ve had a few bumps along the way and had to bring children into care workers and families were able to maintain strong supportive relationships. Some parents have said:

While at docket, one mother stated in the courtroom “I feel supported and like I can be open and honest with my worker” and expressed how this has changed for her since working with her DRFE worker.

M stated she “maintained contact” with her worker after her child was brought into care due to her crack addiction and her children were able to be reunified in a short period. M has maintained sobriety through this wrap around support for over 8 months now.

N stated that working with the DRFE Team has helped her to see CFS in a completely different light. She has 2 PW’s but now feels more supported than ever in addressing her addictions.

When K came to us she was afraid and unsure of herself. After a few months of receiving support and encouragement K took on more challenges and responsibilities and has stated she felt empowered. She has since graduated. Something she was unsure she would be able to do.

Family Services

Over the past year, the family services program has worked to enhance services to children and families. Some of the goals we had set focused on finding ways to communicate more transparently and collaboratively with families and included providing families with plans (in the form of a Signs of Safety map). The hope was that this would provide clarity to the family and staff on the goals set forth and would identify clear and measurable ways of determining when goals had been met. Our goal has been to work collaboratively with families and their supports in the hopes of increasing parental capacity and strength. An example of this involved a case where the family services staff worked collaboratively with a mother and her community supports to reunify her children to her care. Agency staff were able to share their worries with the mother and create a bottom line. The agency was clear that if the goal of safety was not met, a permanent order would need to be sought. Through consistent and clear planning, the staff, supports and mother were able to develop a safety network and begin the process of reunification. At the end of this journey with the family, the entire support network including the worker and supervisor, foster parents and friends of the family, had a celebration of the children going home. The mother thanked the Agency and staff for their support, as well as the support from her other programs. The mother acknowledged at the beginning of this journey she did not get along or agree with her previous workers and supervisors. She was thankful that her request for a fresh start with a new worker and supervisor had been honored. She now understood why the staff did what they did, and was grateful for the role they had in her life. The mother was commended for her hard work and personal growth over the last several months which had led to her children being returned successfully to her care.

Family Services recognizes the importance of working collaboratively with families and their support systems to achieve success. Support systems can include family, friends, community, other community programs and resources, as well as the agency's programs and resources. Success is most likely to occur when those support systems work together.

A young mom was wanting a second chance to parent but after conceiving her second child and her eldest already being in care, she had a whole new set of challenges to overcome. For her, this was the motivation she needed to work with the support programs available to her. After graduating from Villa Rosa, she transitioned into the LIFE program just prior to giving birth. She then spent a year in the LIFE program where she worked collaboratively with the LIFE foster parent and participated in the Dragonfly attachment program. While Dragonfly explored and promoted her attachment to her eldest son, LIFE allowed her to maintain a continuum of care for her newborn. By all these supports working together and building on the things she had learned in other programs, this mother was able to achieve her goal of parenting. "There should be more LIFE homes.....it allowed me to stay a parent, the bond was never broken". After lots of hard work, she is on her way to parenting independently. We wish her all the best as her journey continues.



Permanent Ward

Over this past year, the Permanent Ward Program, with assistance from our Lifelong Connection Worker, continued to work diligently towards the goal of permanency for the children, youth and young adults served by our Agency. Much of this work is guided by the Manitoba Definition of Permanency which includes the following markers: Knowing one's story and history; Safe and stable home; Certainty of responsibility and Lifelong connections – ensuring that our children, youth, and young adults are connected with their birth families, extended family, and community of origin as well as with other significant people in their life.

The Manitoba Child and Family Services Standards (1.1.2) state that in terms of contact with parents of Permanent Wards, *at least once a year, the case manager attempts to contact the parents or former guardians of a Permanent Ward to assess the potential for reunification or re-involvement when this is in the best interests of the child and contact is possible.*

Historically, when a child became a Permanent Ward of an Agency, parents often lost hope that they would have the opportunity to parent their child/children again. Two of the goals identified in our 2016/2017 Strategic Plan for Services to Children in Care were to ensure the completion and implementation of annual Children in Care plans as well as to increase reunification of Permanent Wards with their birth families.

As a result of the thoughtful and purposeful assessment and planning completed on behalf of our children and youth, we are ecstatic to report that over this past year, we had 10 Permanent Wards who were successfully returned to their parent's care on a full time basis and a total of **6 Permanent Orders rescinded by the courts!** The Permanent Ward Program looks forward to continued work with our children, youth and families towards achieving the markers of Permanency, as well as continuing to strive towards our goal of increasing reunification of Permanent Wards.

Post – Adoption Services

The Adoption Team works diligently to ensure that every child placed for adoption has an individualized openness agreement which is signed with birth families, adoptive families and the Agency outlining commitments regarding ongoing contact and connection to birth families and other significant people in the child's life. In addition, each child placed for adoption has an individualized cultural plan intended to support their ongoing cultural growth. The efforts to maintain family connections and cultural growth also continue post-adoption.

Adoption workers help to facilitate and support openness agreements, which often means arranging and/or supporting post-adoption visits, coordinating contact between birth and adoptive families, and providing ongoing support to birth parents and birth families. While the team always strives to have healthy communication and interaction between all parties, this sometimes presents a challenge and can often be awkward or painful for both parties. Adoption workers help to alleviate some of those challenges both for birth parents and adoptive parents, through counselling and support.

Even once the extensive paperwork is complete, each adoption can only be finalized in court once an adoption probation period is served. This probation period is generally six months, during which time the adoption worker continues to monitor the child's well-being as well (as the family's overall functioning) through monthly home visits.

Additional Post-adoption support is offered by the Adoption team is through renewal of ongoing financial subsidy to qualifying adoptive families and processing applications for special needs subsidy as they arise. Adoption workers also create Life Books for adoptees. These Life Books honour the child's birth family and Métis or Inuit culture while embracing the child's new path with their forever family.



Regional Services

Interlake

The Interlake team continues to deepen their understanding and skillful use of the Signs of Safety principles, that aides in establishing and building respectful working relationships with families. Over this past year, the Agency was introduced to the Bringing Families Together Pilot Project, which as the name suggests is a concerted effort on the part of workers to search for and engage in a child's family system with the hope of creating sustainable and meaningful connections. Our unit has realized success with a 17 year old youth who was reconnected to her birth family, who had given up searching for her over the years, believing she would remain lost in the system. The family, youth and agency staff were guided through a series of structured meetings that aided in working out many of the challenging dynamics associated with a reunion under the circumstances. It was discovered that the Family Finder's Model was very compatible and complimentary to the Signs of Safety practice model. We have heard from families that this approach has helped to create hope and optimism, as opposed to a more problem saturated perspective. Parents have also told us meetings are *"more focused, that they felt heard, and their perspective was considered"*.

Southeast (Eastman)

Over this past year, the Southeast (Eastman) team worked closely with a practicum grad student from the Aurora Family Therapy Program who was willing to travel to the Southeast (Eastman) Region in order to provide service to families in their home communities. One such family who received services from the practicum grad student was referred to the program to work on issues related to a possible reunification between the father and his son who is a Permanent Ward with the agency.

*"One of my learning opportunities came out of the Beausejour office where I was presented with a case involving the possible reunification of a child in care for many years, with his biological father. I came to learn how unique this particular set of circumstances were and how the MCFCS social worker and her supervisor worked diligently to collaborate with me as their family therapist, to consider and support reunification as a viable option. I will never forget the social worker saying to me, **"if we don't look at the possibility of reunification, it would be a disservice and we would not be doing our best for this child"**. This was an opportunity to break patterns of inter-generational trauma, create safety, work systematically and support new opportunities for healthy relationships. I have gained insight into the demands and professionalism within the child welfare system, specifically MCFCS, that will add to the quality of therapeutic care I will provide families moving into the future.*

*Arlene, Grad Student
Aurora Family Therapy Program*

Infinity Resources

Alternative Care Program

Our Alternative Care Program consists of three sub-units, each of which has a unique mandate. Our General Foster Care Program is responsible for the recruitment, screening, training and ongoing support of Foster Parents who are providing care to children of all ages, with a variety of needs. Our Specialized Foster Care Program provides this same range of services to Foster Parents who are providing care to children and youth whose needs fall into the very highest levels of care. And our Kinship Care Program provides services to individuals who have opened their homes to children with whom they already have a relationship. Many of these Kinship caregivers are Grandparents, some are Aunts or Uncles, and some are family friends or members of the child's home community. Without exception, we are grateful each day for the contribution that each of our caregivers makes, and for the sacrifices they make in order to take on these responsibilities. As of April 2017 the Alternative Care Program had 387 licensed caregiver homes.

Alternative Care staff have continued to offer the Circle of Security Parenting group to foster and kinship families. The group that was involved over the past year was particularly special in that it included one of our L.I.F.E foster parents, as well as the young mom she was mentoring. This young mom was clearly working so hard to become the best mom she could be to her two young children, and the rest of the participants really took her "under their wing" over the course of the group, encouraging and praising her, and even bringing her

donations of toys and clothing. These groups have been extremely helpful to parents, as they come to understand themselves and their children in different ways.

Alternative Care staff also took a lead role in organizing the Children's Picnic in addition to their regular duties. This involved fundraising, planning, recruiting volunteers, etc. The effort that staff made was paid off tenfold as we watched our kids having a fun, carefree day in the sun!

Life Program

The LIFE Program is an alternative foster care program that allows biological families to live together in a foster home while the children are in care, with the hope of reunification. Our biggest challenge has been recruiting new LIFE foster homes for our program. In the past year, we have reached out to numerous community organizations as well as media outlets to promote the program. The L.I.F.E. Coordinator continues to actively attend any events available, prioritizing events such as Manitoba Metis Federation Annual, Regional and Local Meetings. In addition, she has made numerous cold calls and set up speaking opportunities to promote the program. Presentations regularly occur at various foster parent meetings within our Agency in addition to the new foster parent orientation. The L.I.F.E Program was featured on CBC's national radio show "The Current" and had a story in Le Metis (Grassroots news.) Two new LIFE Foster Homes were licensed in 2017 as well as many new inquiries.

Children & Youth Programs

All our programming for children and youth was ongoing throughout 2016/17. This includes Circle of Life and Little Bears, Cultural Craft Nights, Skills for Life and one to one support and Métis in Motion.

2016/17 saw a number of general activities by Children and Youth Programs. For instance, they have made it a point to celebrate holidays with our youth. They celebrate Easter, Thanksgiving and Christmas by hosting traditional dinners at the McGregor location. Groups visited a corn maze in October, went skating at the Forks, tobogganing at Kildonan Park, celebrated Valentine's Day and St Patrick's Day, enjoyed bowling parties and had a traditional Fish Fry in Selkirk.

Other activities over the past year have included expanding our relationship with several community resources and creating a "go to" guide for youth for whatever their needs may be. For those who choose to leave care at age 18 or for those whose extensions end at age 21 we have recently assisted four young adults to transition to the Doorways Program which provides intake and referral to decentralized supports and services, including Housing First programs which support "The Plan to End Homelessness in Winnipeg".

Some of their comments include, "I've never eaten this before...this is awesome!" "I've never liked this (activity or sport) before...can we do this on our next visit?" "This is my first time swimming in a lake!" "I really missed you for our visit together; I hope you don't get sick again"

Circle of Life

The Circle of Life program provides group and individualized supportive services to both children in and out of care. Staff strives to be responsive to each youth's unique needs and assist them to develop communication and problem resolution skills, confidence, self-esteem, awareness, social skills and self-worth. This programming is strength based and promotes resiliency and the development of positive and healthy relationships. There is a cultural, educational and recreational component to both one on one and peer group visits or activities. Circle of Life Staff takes pride in guiding youth to discover their culture and identity through sweats, smudging and sharing circles as well as teaching them the purpose of and benefits of incorporating into our everyday lives, medicines such as sweet grass, sage, tobacco and cedar. Staff makes every effort to instill positive values and respect for self and others within a safe and nurturing environment.

Skills for Life

The Skills for Life Program provides one to one as well as group support to older youth with the goal of developing the necessary skills required to successfully transition to independence. Using cultural, educational and recreational components staff offers support and teachings to master life skills such as budgeting, banking, resume building and employment, obtaining identification, nutrition, cooking, personal safety, self-care and securing adequate housing.

Through this program, our young adults are encouraged to pursue post-secondary training and educational opportunities.

We have had success in this area with a young lady who completed her first year of nursing at the U of M through the tuition waiver program, a young man who completed U1 studies at the U of M, and two others who have applied for tuition waivers. One young man completed the BUILD program and is a current working member of the Painter's Union while one of our girls was able to obtain employment at Safeway after receiving services from YES by way of resume writing and mock interview practice. Others have found full time employment and have secured housing and are now living independently after aging out of our Agency's care.

This program has also assisted youth by helping to develop problem solving skills and navigate systems such as EIA, Justice and Family Services. Staff provides evening group programming alongside the Métis Spirit Program which helps to foster peer support and lasting relationships. This program hosts a suicide awareness workshop called Finding Hope through the Authority

Little Bears, a bi-weekly peer group of ten to twelve youth have formed strong, trusting and supportive relationships which are crucial to the stability of many of our youth's daily lives.



Métis Spirit Program

The **Métis Spirit Program** works with youth who have left the care of MCFCS anywhere from age 18 to 25. This voluntary program, funded by the Manitoba Metis Federation, was designed to assist young adults with ongoing support and advocacy, connections to community resources, group programming and assistance to obtain employment and pursue educational opportunities and funding. The Métis Spirit Worker strives to help young people identify their goals and then works to help them achieve these goals. This could include attending meetings and appointments to obtain housing and employment, seek out and apply for tuition waivers, student loans, bursaries and scholarships, deal with addiction and mental health matters, attain parenting strategies and programming, navigate the justice system, EIA and Child and Family Services as well as providing guidance and support with day to day living.

We endeavor to ensure that each youth who has been attached to our Agency, knows that ongoing support is available to them if and when they choose to access this resource. The Métis Spirit Program has consistently provided service to thirty-two young adults over this past year.

In addition, the Métis Spirit worker is instrumental in the organization and delivery of three Youth Celebrations per calendar year. This is our opportunity to celebrate each youth's 18th birthday. Along with their caregivers, bio families, friends, social workers and support workers we ensure this important milestone day does not go by unrecognized.

The following quotes really represent what the Métis Spirit program does for our young people.

"I was really worried about only having help for one more year I know I'm not ready to do everything in life on my own yet."

"I know I have done a lot of bad things but thank you for believing in me and thank you for always bringing my family to see me it means a lot."

"I had to try so hard not to cry when I received all of that food and presents, you know me, I can't cry in front of people. Thank you so much for putting my name in for this hamper, I am so relieved that things are taken care of for Christmas, I won't have to get groceries until after Christmas!"

"Thanks for sticking by my side and for always challenging me, I really appreciate all you do for me."

Shelter Resources

It has been a busy year at Gladys Cook Home and Eagles Nest with a number of well wishes to those we said goodbye to and warm welcomes to the new youth that have moved into the 7 beds between the two shelters.

There have been many successes between the two shelters over the past year. With respect to education, at Gladys Cook Home one youth completed all grade 8 requirements and attended the graduation ceremony; and another youth participated in a credit recovery program and successfully obtained multiple grade 9 and 10 credits and advanced to senior classes. Staff continued to transport youth to school if outside the catchment area and to work closely with educational staff to offer a variety of flexible schedules and in house options for those youth that struggled with attendance. At Eagles Nest, this resulted in all the residents attending all their classes throughout the year.

The youth in both shelters continue to be offered and attend many cultural activities, including cultural craft night, sweat lodge ceremony, Sundance, and a weeklong Agency cultural summer day camp. Both facilities strive to make their environment welcoming to the youth and have incorporated Métis Cultural aspects throughout, including a Métis specific library for the youth to enjoy.

Recreational activities are also offered to the youth on an ongoing basis. These include, sport programs with local Community Centre's, YMCA, camping, fishing, computers, or any interests a youth may want to be involved with. Eagles Nest is also equipped with a basketball court, billiard and ping pong table and exercise equipment. Staff and youth at Eagles Nest

built a half pipe skate board ramp for the youth over the summer months. There continues to be a focus on family involvement by organizing visits and providing transportation. During the past year Gladys Cook Home successfully hosted birthday barbeques for all youth which were attended by their family and friends.

Dragonfly

This past year we offered another round of Dragonfly, which is a program that aims to provide parents with strategies and techniques for enhancing and fostering the development of attachment with their children. It involves parent/child play session with both the Dragonfly therapist and a family support worker. This past session we had eight families enrolled in the program. Four of the families reunified during or after the sessions were complete. This program has continually shown that it makes an improvement in the way family's parent.



"I find the tips the therapist gave me is helping me do more different things with my child"

Partnerships and Community Support

Comfort Kits

In 2016-2017, 210 new Comfort Kits were put together by Agency staff for our children and youth for when they come into care. Each Comfort Kit is a backpack filled with an assortment of items designed to ease the difficult transition of a child coming into care. These backpacks are stuffed with toys and personal items, as well as books and cultural items. Thank you to the Manitoba Metis Federation who provided us with 50 stuffed bears which were added to the backpacks for younger children.

Christmas Hampers

We have been very fortunate to be able to have many generous donations over the past year. During the Christmas season the Manitoba Metis Federation opened their hearts to many of our families by providing monetary donations totaling \$3,500.00. This allowed the family support program to purchase Christmas Hampers for 20 families in need. In addition to this, each department at the Manitoba Metis Federation and their staff donated an additional hamper to another 7 families.

There were also a number of hampers donated by the Authority to those young adults in the Métis Spirit Program. This was a huge help to our youth and they were overjoyed at the generosity.

Those who received these hampers were very grateful and were able to enjoy the Holidays just that much more this year. A special thank you to the Manitoba Metis Federation and Metis Child and Family Services Authority for their kind and generous donations.

Two young moms in the Métis Spirit program received Christmas hampers and were overwhelmed by the generosity and kindness of others. One of the young moms was particularly emotional after the delivery she said "I had to try so hard not to cry when I received all of that food and presents, you know me, I can't cry in front of people. Thank you so much for putting my name in for this hamper, I am so relieved that things are taken care of for Christmas, I won't have to get groceries until after Christmas!" This young woman is one of the bravest souls I know; she is a true fighter and an amazing mother to her children! After the delivery of the hamper this young woman asked me why I didn't tell her she was receiving it and why did I keep it a secret, the truth was that if I had told her she was receiving this gift she would have tried to convince me that someone else might need it more than her, she has the biggest heart and always puts others first."

Cultural Activities

Spirit Helper Committee is made up of staff members from throughout the agency. The past year has seen the development of a new work plan for the committee, and the development of promotional strategy to increase participation.

With the support of Children and Youth programming Staff, the committee has been able to offer youth and staff, Agency organized sweat lodge ceremonies, sweet grass, cedar and sage picking over the last year, giving them the opportunity to learn about medicines and Ceremony.

The agency has been diligent in ensuring that the culture of our children in their care has been considered in every case plan. Staff are required to do cultural planning for our children and the Métis Spirit Committee has been available to assist staff in this if required.

Cultural Training has been offered throughout the year by the Spirit Helper Committee. This year a new partnership was formed with the Louis Riel Institute to deliver part of the training. In addition to this, Alternative Care staff, in partnership with the Louis Riel Institute, have continued to organize both the cultural training for caregivers, and the Cultural Kit initiative for Permanent Wards. Both of these programs assist our agency in fulfilling our mandate to provide a culturally relevant milieu for the children that we serve.

Little Métis Sing with me: We have had staff trained through the Louis Riel Institute to deliver the Little Métis Sing with Me program to care givers and the small children in their care. This program will be offered in an effort to ensure that children, who may not be placed in Métis homes, receive cultural opportunities and that their foster parents have an understanding of Métis Culture.

Cultural Camp was offered over two weeks in July and August by the Circle of Life program. Youth visit historical sites, go medicine picking, enjoy Métis games, participate in a sweat lodge ceremony and get to sample a traditional fish fry. Workers constantly come back with comments the children, their caregivers or social workers have shared appreciating this program and the quality time spent with youth. Most meaningful of all is to hear the laughter and see the smiles of our youth knowing that we truly are having a positive impact on their lives.

Cultural Craft Nights We offer this opportunity weekly by hosting youth to come together at our McGregor location to work on cultural crafts while visiting with their family members; be that siblings, cousins or parents or foster family members. They have worked on beading projects – earrings, key chains, moccasins and mitts. They enjoy painting rocks and talking sticks as well as making drums and dream catchers. Our program room holds many examples from our talented artists. Youth have the opportunity to share their gifts and talents at our weekly cultural craft night at the McGregor location, proudly displaying their works of art in our program area.



Youth Recognition

CONGRATULATIONS!!

The following youth celebrated significant achievements this year!

We are proud to share some of our Youth's accomplishments throughout the last year:

- Gordon:** Successfully helped his Junior High School Basketball team win the Provincial and divisional banners.
- Kevin:** Played an integral part of his grade 12 High School basketball team as they won both the divisional and Provincial banners. Kevin was selected for the AAA all-star basketball team and was awarded MVP of the "A" division Provincials.
- Katie:** Successfully completed her first year at the University of Winnipeg through the Tuition Waiver Program.
- Alex:** Received the "Yes I Can" award from the Manitoba Council for Exceptional Children
- Duncan:** Graduated High School June 2016
- Tristin:** Graduated from High School in June 2016 and went on to receive an apprenticeship through Resource Assistance for Youth
- Manie:** Valedictorian of her graduating class June 2016
- John:** Graduated from High School June 2016
- Julian:** Selected by the True North Foundation to play AAA junior hockey
- Evita:** Accepted into the Early Childhood Educator program
- Tristen:** Accomplished Pow Wow dancer ; nominated as the Brave (representative) of Opikihwawin

Dreams Take Flight

Disney World 2017!

The Agency has been fortunate to partner with Dreams Take Flight since 2008. On April 12th 7 of our children in care made the amazing trip to Disney's Magic Kingdom in Orlando, Florida where they enjoyed a whirlwind day, creating memories that are sure to last a lifetime. Many thanks to the Dreams Take Flight volunteer committee for their continued dedication to children.

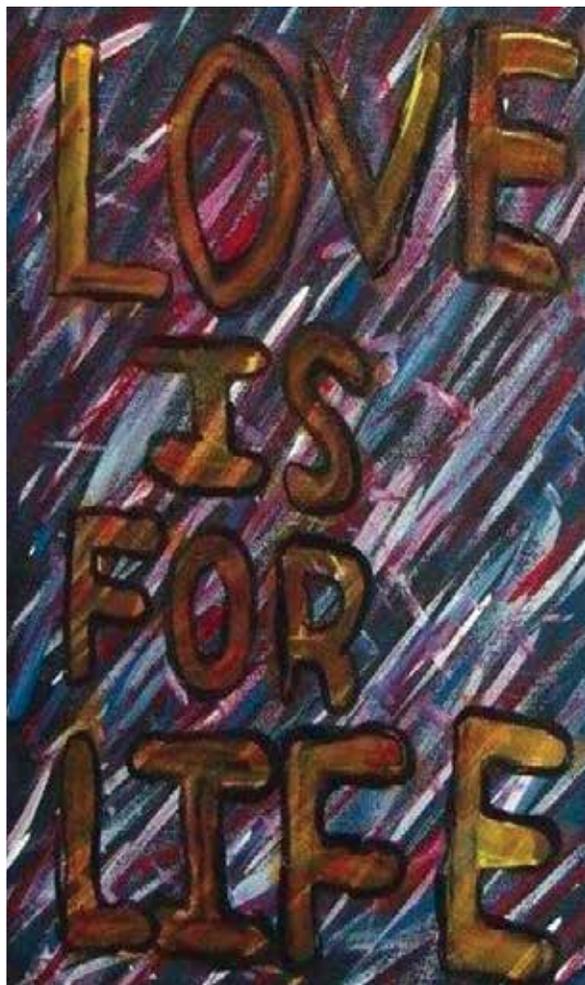
Acknowledgement

Metis Child, Family and Community Services would like to acknowledge the kind and generous donations made to the Agency in support of our special events such as our Youth Celebration, Foster Care Appreciation, Child in Care Picnic, and the Comfort Kit Program. These events would not have been such a success without the kindness of the following:

Manitoba Metis Federation
Ted & Loretta Rogers
Children's Aid Foundation
Metis Authority
Mitch Bourbonniere
Victim Services
Doorways
Art Junction
McDonald Youth Services
Springhill Lumber

Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation
Access-Henderson Highway location
Canad Inns Polo Park
Sexuality Education Resource Centre
YES Canada
North Centennial Recreation Centre
YMCA
Eldon Ross Swimming Pool
Thunderwing Team









We would like to thank
all the children and youth
who participated in craft
nights and made the lovely
artwork displayed in pictures
throughout our annual report.