



Metis Child, Family & Community Services

Annual Report | April 1, 2019 - March 31, 2020



Vision Statement

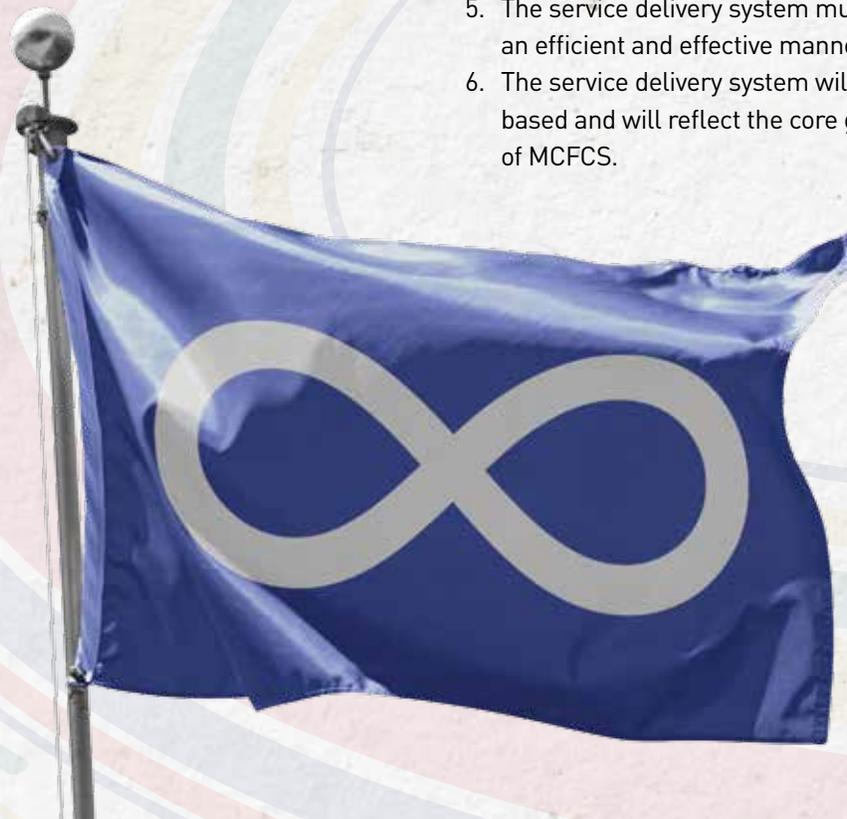
The Metis family and community is the cornerstone of our Nation and is built upon love, respect, honour, strength and heritage.

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.





Greetings from the **President**

For centuries, the Metis Nation has stressed the importance of family and kinship. For us, keeping Metis families together is the ultimate goal. When families are kept together our Nation's culture, values, and strengths are more likely to be instilled in future generations.

To support Metis families and communities to be healthy, vibrant and well your Manitoba Metis Government has been working to develop our own laws in respect of child and family services (CFS). As the democratically elected representatives of the Manitoba Metis, one of the most important tasks your government has undertaken in the past year is the implementation of the *Federal Act Respecting First Nation, Inuit, and Metis children, youth and families*, (the "Act") formerly known as *Bill C-92*.

In Manitoba, we have led our CFS for decades under provincial legislation, but the Federal Act gives us a unique opportunity for Manitoba Metis to exercise full jurisdiction and authority over our Manitoba Metis CFS. We can now draft and implement our own culturally appropriate laws, based on traditional Metis family practices and our own customary laws. Now, we as the Manitoba Metis can design a CFS program that takes into account the well-being of all of our Metis children, youth and families.

To develop these laws, we had been planning consultations with Citizens, to help us envision what these policies might be. Unfortunately, due to the COVID pandemic, we have had to postpone these consultations. But rest assured, we will still conduct these consultations as soon as the timing is right and safe. As your Manitoba Metis Government, it is critical that we receive input from staff and Citizens on what our future laws and CFS system will look like.

I would like to thank all staff and volunteers at our Metis Child, Family and Community Services Agency. You provide an essential service to our Metis children, youth and families. I would also like to thank the agency's Board of Directors and Chairperson Shirley Langan, for her exemplary leadership throughout these difficult past few months.

Finally, I would like to commend the Minister of Metis Child and Family Services Mona Buors, and Associate Minister JoAnne Remillard, for their leadership in pushing the Manitoba Metis vision of Metis CFS into the future.

Meeqwetch,

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



Message from the Minister and Associate Minister of Metis Child and Family Services

This has been a year of both unprecedented opportunities and enormous challenges in Child Welfare.

While our Manitoba Metis Government is working hard on behalf of our Metis CFS Authority, our agencies and Metis Citizens to maximize the opportunities presented by the Federal Government's *An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Metis children, youth and families*, we, like our Metis CFS System, have been doing so at a time unlike any other in recent history.

I am so proud of how Metis Child, Family and Community Services and our entire Metis CFS System is evolving and shifting their practices to be ready for the exciting changes that will be coming as a result of the new Federal Act. They have been doing this while simultaneously working hard to successfully overcome the many challenges COVID-19 placed upon them. Through much hard work and creativity, they continued to provide seamless service to the children, youth and families who rely upon them to always be there for them.

Furthermore, they were able to launch and expand on some very important initiatives that can benefit the Metis Citizens who need our assistance to be able to move forward in their lives in a better, healthier way. The launch of their Metis Community Addiction Response Team Program, (Metis CART), for example, will provide assistance and mentoring for parents struggling with addictions in ways that will allow their children to live with them safely. We are especially pleased with the success they have had with their Metis Connect Program. It is connecting children and youth to their extended families and community as well as making it possible for mothers to get the extra support they need to go home safely with their babies at birth and/or reunify safely with their children again.

I, along with my Associate Minister Joanne Remillard, am pleased that Metis Child, Family and Community Services has been able to do so much during these COVID-19 challenged times.

I commend Executive Director Greg Besant, his executive management team, and every Metis agency staff member who have worked with dedication, professionalism, courage and passion to ensure that our children, youth and families are not only safe, but receiving ever-increasing opportunities to be supported in overcoming their challenges and improving their lives.

Thank you to the Metis agency Board of Directors for their leadership and the valued time they give to support and guide Metis agency as they work with our families and ensure our practices reflect our Manitoba Metis culture and traditions.

Let us move forward together with pride in what we have achieved and with confidence that this can just be the beginning of what we can accomplish for the betterment of our families and communities.



Mona Buors
Minister of Metis CFS



JoAnne Remillard
Associate Minister of Metis CFS





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

On behalf of the Metis Child & Family Services Authority and our Board of Directors, I proudly commend the Metis CFCS agency for the hard work and developments that are highlighted in this annual report.

Our Metis Child, Family & Community Services Agency is one of the largest agencies in the province based on caseload numbers, and the growth continues as more families identify with their Metis roots and culture. The services and programs that our Metis agency provides and continues to develop are reflective of what our families identify they need.

The services such as their LIFE (Live-In Family Enhancement) services, which allows at-risk families to remain together while they live full-time with a family mentor and support, is unique to our Metis agency and continues to receive national recognition. The Metis Connect Program continues to work as a Metis family finders program to help identify important and healthy family and community links who can assist in reclaiming those family members who have become disconnected from their community and their extended family identity. These family and community connections allow our Metis agency to locate kin who can welcome children into their homes who have come to the attention of child welfare and are requiring a safe place that the child can connect to and remain supported through family and culture. These important services are reflective of the Metis Sash that wraps around our Metis people and keeps us connected as a Nation.

Thank you to Greg Besant, Executive Director, and his staff, management and Board of Directors who continue to work tirelessly with passion and the shared vision of our Metis Nation.

Respectfully,

Billie Schibler, Chief Executive Officer
Metis Child & Family Services Authority



Message from the Board of Directors

On behalf of the Board of Directors I am proud to present the 2019 – 2020 annual report of the Metis Child, Family and Community Services Agency. The report reflects the ongoing development of the agency in a time of tremendous change and reconciliation.

The Board wishes to thank and acknowledge all of the agency staff and the agency Executive Management Team as led by Executive Director, Greg Besant. You have all demonstrated flexibility and innovative thinking to keep children safe and help families become healthier in very challenging times. With the passing of federal child welfare legislation and an anticipated federal mandate, we know that the staff of the agency will bring creative new initiatives for the betterment of Metis children and families. In particular, we would like to recognize the work they do to ensure that when children must come into care, they are placed within their family. This is central to the vision of the agency and is in keeping with Metis traditions. The fact that most every part of the agency is involved in pursuing this practice highlights how central it is to the agency. This begins with the family's or child's worker, may involve the Metis Connect program and then end with the Kinship Care Team in supporting extended family to care for their children. We are pleased to say that this practice will be reinforced even further as part of the agency's strategic plan going forward.



Shirley Langan
Southeast Region
Chair



Beverly Webb
Interlake Region
Vice Chair



Florence Lamoureux
Interlake Region
Secretary



Marcella Vezina
Southeast Region
Treasurer



Eric Chartrand
Winnipeg Region
Member



Barbara Lavalley
Ex-Officio Member



Lorraine Laramée
Ex-Officio Member

We would like to thank the Manitoba Metis Federation, the Metis government and President David Chartrand for leadership and advocacy, especially in regards to the development of a federal mandate. A special thank you to Minister Mona Buors and Associate Minister Joanne Remillard for your dedication to Metis children.

The Board would also like to recognize the hard work of the Metis Child and Family Services Authority and their Chief Executive Officer, Ms. Billie Schibler for their continued focus on service improvement and a vision of a child welfare system working towards reconciliation.

I also need thank to our Board of Directors as well; Beverly Webb, Florence Lamoureux, Marcella Vezina, Eric Chartrand and our ex-officio members Barbara Lavallee and Lorraine Laramee. The outstanding contributions of Florence Lamoureux and Eric Chartrand, long-serving board members whose terms are ending, is especially recognized as we bid them farewell. Their many years of dedication to the agency is truly inspiring. We would also like to recognize Marcella Vezina, as she transitions from being the long-serving Treasurer to become the Board Elder. Board service is one of the toughest volunteer roles of all. We perform these tasks with dedication and tenacity and never flinch in the face of difficult decisions. As such, "Wisdom is knowing what to do next, Virtue is doing it".

Miigwetch,

Shirley Langan
Chairperson

2019-2020 Board of Directors

Chair:	Shirley Langan, Southeast Region
Vice Chair:	Beverly Webb, Interlake Region
Secretary:	Florence Lamoureux, Interlake Region
Treasurer:	Marcella Vezina, Southeast Region
Members:	Eric Chartrand, Winnipeg Region
Ex-Officio Members:	Barbara Lavallee Lorraine Laramee





Message from the **Executive Director** of Metis Child, Family and Community Services

As anticipated, the past year has been a momentous one for child welfare in Manitoba and Canada. Federal legislation was passed and rapidly came into force which has the potential to entirely re-align Indigenous child welfare for decades to come. Provincially, the funding model changed in the last fiscal quarter of 2019/20 – at the same moment as the federal legislation came into force. This change had been anticipated and negotiated for several years, but has never been, and still is not fully settled. There has been a yearlong silence on provincial child welfare legislative reform – including on changes to help support children in ongoing care to be supported in leaving care. As the fiscal year ended we were in the grips of a global pandemic which required changes to how we all work and live.

So when the present and the future both are largely uncertain, it is perhaps best to look back to what has worked well this year as an agency and to rely on the values and principles we hold as we move into new realities.

A major highlight for the year was the announcing of funding for the Metis Community Addictions Response Team (Metis CART). As an agency, together with the Authority, we had been pursuing further resources for parents struggling with addictions for about 2 years. Although the pandemic has delayed the launch of this initiative we will now be able to provide a wraparound response to ensure child safety while the parent deals with their addiction issues. A particular focus will be on expectant or new mothers, thereby meeting the requirement in the federal legislation to provide preventative services to expectant mothers.

Our emphasis on reaching out to extended family to help care for not only their grandchildren, nieces and nephews but also to care and support their struggling adult children, siblings and cousins has moved from pilot to practice with great speed and success. Staff have deepened their practice with the support of the Metis Connect program.

As I always do when preparing the annual report and strategic plan, I reflect on the struggles of the families and children we serve and I ask staff about the greatest success stories they have experienced this past year. This serves two functions, it reinvigorates staff as they recall the possibility of change and their role in helping families achieve it; and it tells me in a very direct way, whether we are practicing in the way we aspire to practice.

This year, the stories that were told to me in person or through written submission, all highlighted the importance of the networks of supportive family and friends as a key element to creating safety and keeping children in their families. A story I heard so often this year was the story of expectant mothers who had lost their previous children to “the system” and their fear and expectation of losing yet another child. It would be hard to imagine a more hopeless and sad situation as an expectant parent.

Time and time again workers told me of how the networks came together, the newborn stayed with their mothers or were reunified after being removed prior to the agency becoming involved. One mother commented in her closing meeting, “CFS changed my life for the better.” Another mother who had 5 children in the care of the agency already, kept her newborn and is now working on reunifying the 5 other children. Stories like this were so common I kept on having to check that they were indeed different cases!

These stories serve not only as evidence that people can overcome problems but more importantly as a demonstration that “the system” can change, we can overcome our own institutional biases. Not only is there hope for the families and

children we work with, there is renewed hope for the child welfare system itself. Today, there is a unique opportunity to re-orient child welfare towards prevention and support in strong and meaningful ways. The system will change in governance, legislation and operation in the near future. We need to stay on this path towards reconciliation.

It is my pleasure to present the annual report for 2019/20 of Metis Child, Family and Community Services. I would like to thank and honor the staff of the agency for holding to our Guiding Principles and for their hard work and dedication. I also wish to thank the Metis Government, President Chartrand, Minister Buors and Associate Minister Remillard. The work they have done regarding the federal legislation is very much appreciated. I wish to thank our Board Chair, Shirley Langan, and our Board of Directors for their guidance and support. And finally I wish to acknowledge and thank Billie Schibler, the Chief Executive Officer of the Metis Child and Family Services Authority, for her wisdom, advice and leadership in our ever changing landscape.

Thank you

Greg Besant
Executive Director

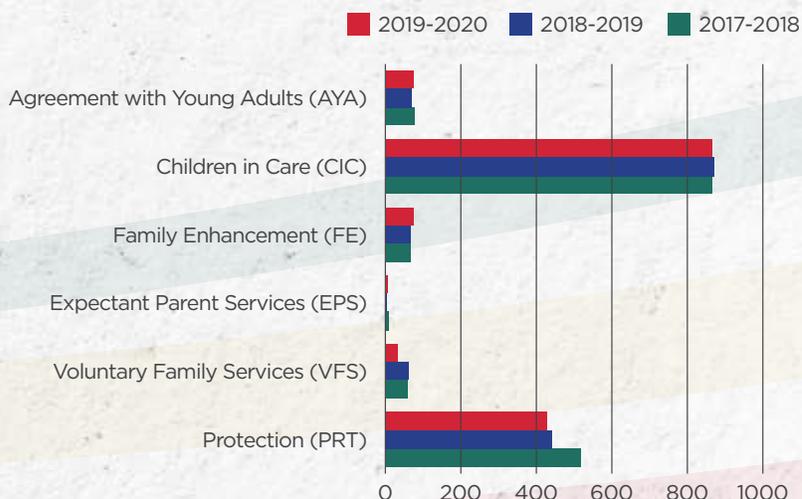
Year at a Glance 2019-2020 Stats

The Year at a Glance 2019-2020 STATS

Region	Protection	Voluntary Family Services	Expectant Parent Services	Family Enhancement	CIC	Agreement with Young Adult	Total Cases
Eastman	11	1	0	0	144	6	162
Interlake	24	6	0	0	168	23	221
Winnipeg	390	24	4	72	548	44	1082
TOTAL	425	31	4	72	860	73	1392

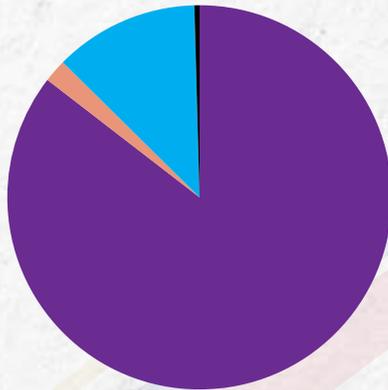
Caseload numbers continued to be consistent year-over-year with a slight trend in a positive direction in various categories. This slight trend did lead to approximately a seven per cent reduction in total file numbers on March 31, 2020. Going forward, we hope that the effects of the federal legislation and the Single Envelope Funding Model will combine to achieve more significant reductions in the overall case counts.

Year at a Glance - 3 Year Comparison



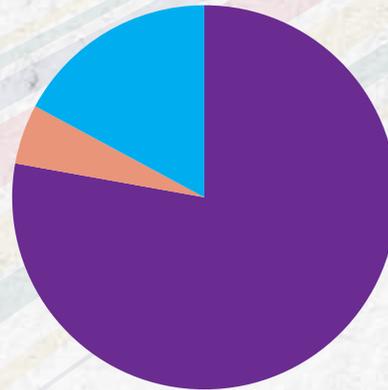
Year at a Glance 2019-2020 Stats

Supporting Families to Care for their Children



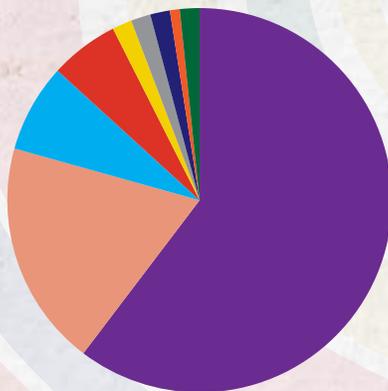
Children at Home	794	
Voluntary Placement Agreements	18	
Temporary Ward/Petition for Further Order	113	
Apprehension	4	

Number of Children Being Supported in their Family by Case Type



Protection	618	
Voluntary Family Services	40	
Family Enhancement	136	

Number of Children Reunified April 1, 2019 to March 31, 2020



Mother	73	
Father	23	
Both Parents	9	
Legal Guardianship to Grandparent(s)	7	
Legal Guardianship to Aunt/Uncle	2	
Legal Guardianship to Extended Family/Friend	2	
Private Arrangement with Grandparent	2	
Private Arrangement with Aunt/Uncle	1	
Adoption	2	

Family Enhancement

Since its inception, the Family Enhancement Team has been the testing ground for the evolution of our family preservation services. This team was the first to systematically implement Structured Decision Making© tools, Signs of Safety© practices and Family-Led Decision Making. These practices are now well established within the broader agency.

Family Enhancement involves approaching families from a supportive perspective, recognizing that all families have strengths as well as struggles. The importance of maintaining children within their family is emphasized. This allows the agency to provide a supportive service focusing on both the overall needs of the family and the well-being of children. Services are goal-focused and time-limited (up to 270 days). This builds on identified strengths and focuses on needs through an assessment process with the family used to broaden families' support networks, sharing circles, with the support of the program's cultural worker, and planning meetings with extended family members.

Metis CART

In the 2019/20 fiscal year, it was announced that the agency would be receiving further pilot funding for the Metis Community Addiction Response Team (Metis CART). Although the launch of the program has been delayed by the global pandemic, the program will launch in the 2020/21 fiscal year. The Metis CART pilot is being run as part of our Family Enhancement Team.

Metis CART pairs an experiential family mentor and case worker with the support of in-house counsellors and addiction specialists to help parents whose addictions have led to child safety issues. Addictions are the single most common factor for families to come into contact with child welfare and the resulting safety issues often lead to children coming into care. By providing robust interventions early in the case opening process, we hope to keep children in the care of their parents while they deal with their substance use issues. CART will not be subject to the time limits of other Family Enhancement services.



Family Services

Family Service teams deliver the core child welfare prevention and protection services through four Winnipeg teams, as well as an Interlake region team and a team for the Southeast region. A continued emphasis within Family Services has been an ongoing shift away from paternalistic practices, where the professionals take sole responsibility for analyzing the problems and creating solutions, with families simply having to “comply”. Instead, family services is focused on achieving a partnership approach, where both the worker and family cooperate and make efforts to achieve specific, mutually created and understood goals. In this approach, respect and trust are the foundation that we begin with, and the strengths of the family are the building blocks that we work with to create further planning and safety. Keeping the power and responsibility to make family decisions within the family is a cornerstone of both our practice model as well as our Guiding Principles for the agency.

One of the central tenets of this work that we have continued to build upon and develop is the use of the “network”, or the important people who surround, support and care for the family. Through a continuous emphasis on incorporating family and community, we have seen more robust safety plans, reduced the time that children spend in care or avoided having children coming into care at all, and most importantly, have had the opportunity to hear the voice of the family who are the real experts on their own lives. Hearing the voice of the family helps us to further understand that family group brings with it its own traditions, beliefs, and values regarding raising children and that we can and should incorporate these into our case planning and our work with the family.

“Entering into the new decade of 2020, our commitment toward reconciliation in Metis Child Welfare services is to create a path for healing, through the delivery of practices that strengthen and restore the well-being of families and the safety of children.”

—Billie Schibler, CEO
Metis Child and Family Services
Authority

“Reconciliation is about listening, acceptance of the truth and making change.”

—Greg Besant, Executive Director
Metis Child and Family Services
Authority

Metis Connect Program

Metis Child, Family and Community Services established the Metis Connect Program in October 2018.

The goal of the Metis Connect Program is to support staff with a shift in practice where MCFCS staff will consistently include family and community as partners in planning and decision-making for their children. This will decrease the number of children coming into agency care and for children in care, will increase children's connections to family, community and culture and ensure the children have a sense of belonging.

The role of the Metis Connect workers is to coach and mentor MCFCS workers in a participatory practice approach which includes searching for, engaging with, and involving family and community as partners in the planning and decision-making for their children. The approach involves authentic and humble engagement practices.

Since the launch, many staff have participated in training and conferences, experiencing firsthand the power of the approach. Many staff are now conducting their own searches and engaging with and inviting family to participate in planning and decision-making on their own. Most importantly, families who have been involved report feeling valued and honored.

Below are two stories about families who were involved in the planning for their children:

1. Alongside an expectant mom and her Network, we were able to engage in a collaborative planning process during which the parent was able to identify what she needed in order to address her challenges while ensuring her baby was safe and connected to family. This parent (who experienced a significant history with child welfare including having older children who are not in her care) became involved with our agency as she wanted to parent. She was fearful that judgement of her past would over shadow her current circumstances and she would not be given an opportunity. Framed by honest and transparent conversations, the Network lead the planning process, which has resulted in this child celebrating his first Christmas and now his first birthday in his mother's care. The Network continues to come together to support this mom and her little one on an ongoing basis, in ways that mom identifies as helpful.

“Allowing families to make decisions about their own families is so important to reconciliation in child welfare.”

—A.B. Kinship Care Supervisor

“Acknowledging wrongdoing in the past and making the future a corrective experience for all to learn from.”

—S. H. Family Support Supervisor

2. A sibling group of three, ranging from ages 13 to 17, was referred to Metis Connect with the goal of locating and re-connecting the children with their maternal family. The children had been in care a large portion of their lives, and sadly when their mother past away in 2012, contact for the children with their extended maternal family was lost. There was little known at the time of referral about who the family was or how they could be contacted. However, by reviewing the files, searching 411, and social media, we were successfully able to connect with some of these family members. The children's grandmother and adult half-sister were found to be living out of province, as well as an aunt who was living in northern Manitoba. The family was beyond happy when the agency reached out to them, and said that they were extremely eager to have the children back in their lives. A network meeting was quickly scheduled and facilitated. Through this network meeting, as well as further communications, the children have now met their aunt, along with a cousin who came into Winnipeg to see them. In addition, the grandmother and sister have begun to have contact with the children through video chats, with plans in the works to have them come to Winnipeg to spend time with the children in the near future. These family members will now be the link for the children to other extended family, as well as a source of stories, memories, and pictures for the children about their mother that they would have never otherwise had. The grandmother has said, that although they lost many years with the children, she was happy that they now have the rest of their lives to spend together.



From April 1, 2019 - March 31, 2020, MCFCS case managers referred 79 families with a combined 139 children to the Metis Connect Program.

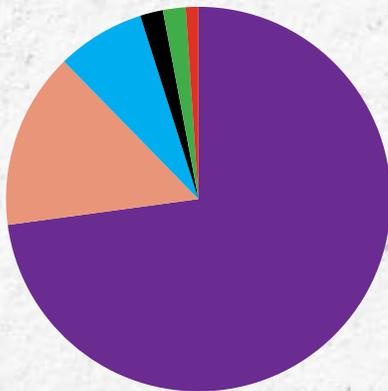
Children in Care

The lifelong impact of being raised in care and apart from your family can never be understated. In addition to the impacts on the child and immediate family, there are also lasting impacts on the Metis Nation itself. When children are in care, the agency diligently works to mitigate these impacts within the constraints of the child welfare system. Having children under Permanent Orders raised within their family or, if family is not an option, within a culturally appropriate home, is a primary way to mitigate these lifelong impacts.

“Knowing their community, background and heritage is important for children and families for reconciliation”

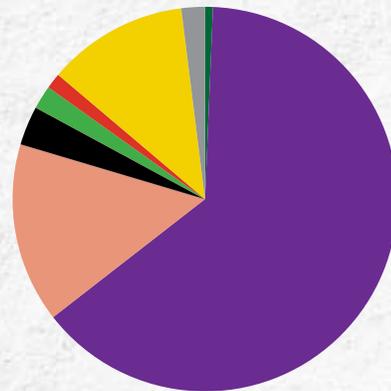
—D. A. Family Support Worker

Legal Authorities of Children in Care



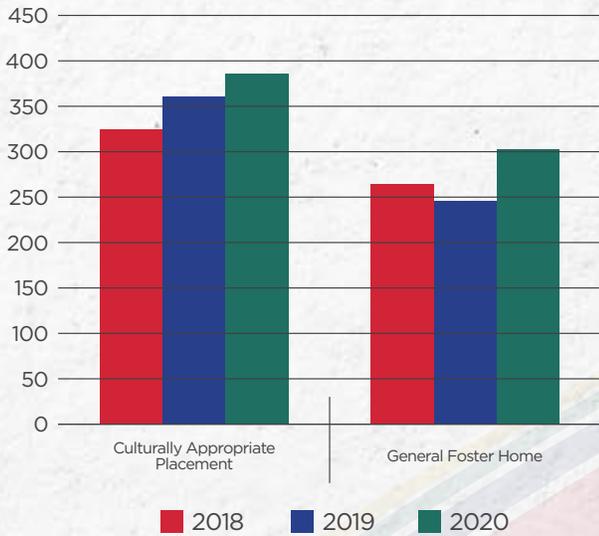
Permanent Ward (PW)	687	
Temporary Ward (TW)/ Petition Filed for Further Order (PFFO)	140	
Transitional Planning (Agreement with Young Adult)	70	
Voluntary Placement Agreement (VPA)	18	
Apprehension	18	
Supervised for Other agency	10	

Placement Types for Children in Care

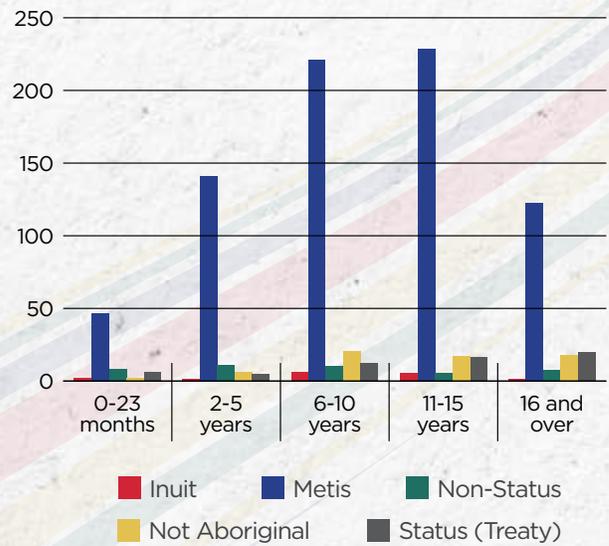


Foster Homes	490	
Specialized Foster Homes	81	
Health, Mental Health	2	
Independent Living	47	
Out of Province	16	
Own Home/Relative	15	
Place of Safety	206	
Residential Care	68	
Select Adoption Probation	1	
Not Known (AWOL)	3	
Correctional Facility	4	

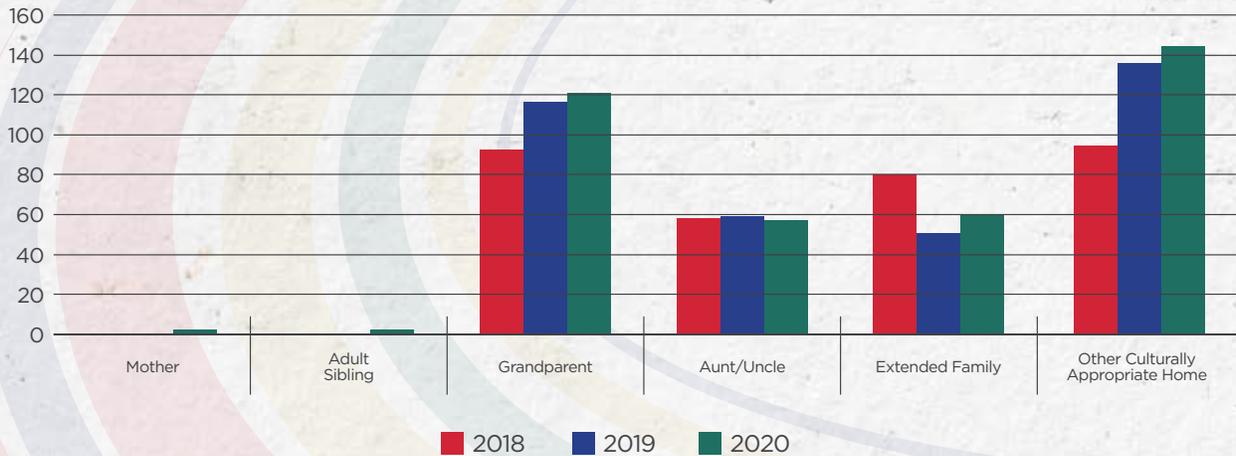
Permanent Wards Placed in Culturally Appropriate Foster Homes vs General Foster Homes as at March 31, 2018 vs March 31, 2020



Children in Care by Indigenous Status and Age



Permanent Wards Placed in Culturally Appropriate Foster Homes/Kinship/Place of Safety as of March 31, 2020



The Cornerstone Project

The first Guiding Principle of Metis Child, Family and Community Services recognizes that family and community is the cornerstone of the Metis Nation. The agency is committed to achieving a practice model that is focused upon moving towards reconciliation between Indigenous families and the child welfare system. To this end we have created the Cornerstone Project. The Cornerstone Project intends to identify parents who have children under permanent guardianship orders with whom the children can be safely re-united. Cornerstone will also identify extended family members who are in a position to become guardians of children under Permanent Orders and assist in formalizing these arrangements so the child can – in the words of one of the children returned home – “quit being a foster child”.

Finally, for children under Permanent Orders who are in non-culturally appropriate third party care, Cornerstone will seek to re-engage or enhance the meaningful involvement of the child’s biological family and ensure they know themselves as members of the Metis Nation. Methodologies include creating a lifelong network of support around these children as discovered and detailed through family conferencing, the accurate rating of the child’s relational and legal permanence through a proprietary rating scale and the participation in Metis cultural activities.

These arrangements maximize the legal and relational permanency for that child. We have committed specialized staff positions to this project for fiscal year 2020/2021 to assist in achieving the re-connection to family and community.

“We call upon the federal government to enact Aboriginal child-welfare legislation that establishes national standards for Aboriginal child apprehension and custody cases and includes principles that...

Establish, as an important priority, a requirement that placements of Aboriginal children into temporary and permanent care be culturally appropriate.”

—Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada
calls for action

Permanent Ward

The agency has two Winnipeg teams solely dedicated to serving the needs of children under Permanent Orders as well as the Southeast and Interlake teams which predominantly serve these children. Metis Child, Family and Community Services has long been recognized for continuing ongoing and meaningful contact for children with their families after a Permanent Order has been granted. This contact is imperative for healthy development and positive outcomes for children. It is also important so parents do not lose hope of ever parenting. The newly proclaimed federal legislation recognizes the importance of this perspective.

Staff working with permanent wards continue to focus on supporting youth to achieve success in all parts of their lives. Every life requires some adventure. Prior to the pandemic children were participating in student exchanges and travelling with foster parents within and outside of Canada. Youth in care performed in cultural celebrations in Ottawa recognizing the 150th anniversary of Manitoba becoming a province. Youth in care achieved in sports by participating on Provincial and Western Canadian teams. A youth in care's art was recognized with it being displayed at the Canadian Museum of Human Rights. The gifts carried by our youth in care bring great pride to the agency and are often hidden by the struggles many of these same youth face.

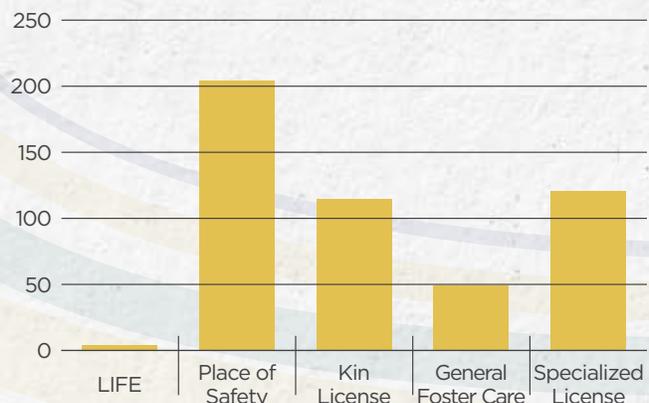
A key outcome for reconciliation within child welfare is for us to help the children we care for be healthy, successful and connected to their Nation. In the coming year, we hope to create greater focus on this part of the path to reconciliation.

Infinity Resources

Alternative Care Program

Our Alternative Care Program consists of 4 sub-units, each with a unique mandate. While our emphasis is on keeping or placing children within their families, there is an ongoing need for general and specialized caregivers – especially Metis caregivers. Far too many of our Metis children in care are being raised outside of their own family and culture.

Alternative Care Licenses



LIFE Program

The Life (Live In Family Enhancement) Program offers a unique option to keep the family together while children are in care. Families are matched with a trained LIFE mentor who acts as a role model and supports, advocates, guides and mentors the parent in order to promote the health and well-being of all family members. The family resides in the LIFE home for 8 months or as long as needed. They coach the parents toward increasing parenting and life skills, attachment, structure and routine and ensure the safety and well-being of children in the program. In the last year, we have been slowly expanding the program and are ready to open a new home with others in process.

Our coordinator has been busy restructuring the program starting from the process of parents moving in, ensuring families have all the information necessary at the move-in date to ensure smooth transition in and out of the program. We want to help our parents complete the program successfully, and avoid the unknown, which is where they seem to struggle the most.

Foster Care and Specialized Foster Care Program

The Foster Care and Specialized Foster Care programs are responsible for the recruitment, screening, training, licensing and ongoing support of foster parents who are providing care to children of all ages, with a variety of needs. For youth needing highly skilled, specialized caregivers to help them through life, the Specialized Foster Care Program provides customized homes selected for or designed around a child or youth's particular needs. These homes receive enhanced support and training from highly experienced staff.

Kinship Care

Kinship care is a living arrangement in which children who cannot reside with their parents live full time with a relative. Kinship care is focused on minimizing trauma to children and parents while enhancing the existing skills and connections within the family. Strong families raise strong children.

The kinship care program offers support, training, advocacy and resources to approximately 300 kinship homes. Collectively, the child's worker, the child's family and the Kinship Care Worker, work side-by-side to assist in keeping children within their family networks, while maintaining and developing an awareness of the strengths and challenges faced by these families. By doing so, our kinship care program is able to utilize the valuable wisdom and knowledge that a family possesses and build on it to provide the families with a strengthened ability to deliver the quality of care that all children need in order to experience future success and happiness.

Consistent with federal legislation, every effort is made to have children entering care placed with their family.

In the coming year we have dedicated further staff resources to strengthen the Kinship Care Program.

"It means everything. I don't know what I would do if my mom didn't have my kids right now."

—Parent speaking about the importance of kinship care

Group Care Resources

Gladys Cook and Eagles Nest

Gladys Cook House and Eagles Nest are our agency operated short and long term placement resources. The staff have been busy building relationships and giving the youth a feeling of stability and commitment. If a youth comes to live in our home during the school year, staff drive them to their school, so that they experience one less change in their lives and so that we keep them connected to their teachers, friends and community. Our Youth Care Workers offer cultural and recreational opportunities such as community centres, YMCA, fishing, MCFCS Cultural Camp and many others. There is also a greater focus on what the youth want, which allows them to be a part of their Care Planning. With increased focus on life skills such as shopping, cooking, meal planning, cleaning and budgeting, our youth will have a greater chance of success moving into adulthood.

“Reconciliation is about bridging the gap between our authority as workers and our clients and not using our authority in an unjustly manner.”

—M.Y. Metis CFCS Family Services worker

RAILS

Rosedale Adolescent Inter-dependent Living Services (RAILS) is a 7 unit/9 bed inter-dependent living program. It supports youth aged 16-21 to live on their own with the support and guidance of staff available on site 24 hours a day. Staff mentor the youth in areas such as: budgeting, proper nutrition, smart shopping, educational support, personal health, and hygiene, as well as other independent living skills.

Staff provide educational, employment, recreational and cultural activities in the Common Area. Youth have been participating in the Metis in Motion workshop series provided by our Infinity youth program staff. When a youth or young adult leaves RAILS, they are able to receive outreach from staff for up to 3 months as they move on their own to independent living.

“Reconciliation is the strong commitment to enhancing our understanding of historical issues which impact today’s family dynamics and functioning is crucial to change and healing as a whole.”

—M.C. Metis CFCS Family Services Supervisor

Child and Youth Programs

Circle of Life

The lives of children involved with child and family services are often filled with trauma and loss whether they are in care or if they are living with their family. It is of the utmost importance that they are supported in every aspect of their lives to build resilience and heal from the traumas they have faced. The Circle of Life Program provides one-to-one support for children both in and out of care for those between 7 to 15 years. Staff are goal-oriented and strength-based when working with the unique needs of each child or youth. They help develop better communication and conflict resolution skills. The programming promotes resilience and the development of positive and healthy relationships. Not only do children and youth participate in healthy and fun activities, the team also focuses on cultural and educational components. Children and youth are guided in discovering their culture and heritage and have taken part in sweats, smudging, sharing circles and lessons of the sash. They are taught the benefits of incorporating those teachings into their everyday lives while instilling positive values and respect for themselves and others.



Little Bears

Little Bears adds a group element to children and youth receiving services from the Circle of Life program. Little Bears group provides bi-weekly programming to children ages 7-14. The group has participated in Metis games, played the spoons, learned to jig and learned about Metis history, visited The Forks and St. Boniface Museum. This group participated in a "Metis Night" where they made their own bannock dogs from scratch and enjoyed many different traditional foods including stew, pickerel, pea soup, wild rice and blueberry pie. At each gathering they have a meal which helps them to focus and enjoy the planned activity. Each evening includes a component related to Metis history and culture which has included smudging and sharing circles when possible. This time together also allows them to form relationships that are not only supportive but also trusting. Through this relationship building they are able to create a stability that is critical in helping in other areas of their lives.



Skills for Life

The Skills for Life Team provides one-to-one and group supports to youth ages 15-21. They are goal-oriented and focus on the needs of the youth to prepare them for adulthood. Using cultural, educational and recreational components, staff are able to foster the learning of life skills needed such as budgeting, banking, resume building and job search, nutrition, cooking, personal care and safety. This program assists youth by helping them develop problem-solving skills and navigating other services through nonprofit or government programs.

This year the Skills for Life team have developed a survey tool consisting of 217 questions covering the areas of hygiene and health, substance use and mental health, nutrition, residence stability, medical, financial, education & career, transportation, baby preparation, child rearing, justice, daily life skills, healthy relationships, family connection & adult support, sexual awareness, community & networking, social interaction, independence and goal achievement, personal aesthetics and self-actualization. Alongside youth, staff work to determine which areas their work should focus on to prepare our young people for independence when they age out of care.

Through funding received from the Children's Aid Foundation, we were able to engage the services of Finding Freedom to deliver the REACT (Recovery Education for Addictions and Complex Trauma) Series to a group of 15 youth ranging in age from 15 to 25 years. They also provide programming alongside the Metis Spirit program. The Children's Aid Foundation and the MMF UPIP program provides financial support for our staff to prepare and present mental health and job readiness programming.

Cultural Craft Night

The Infinity Circle of Life and Skills for Life teams work together to provide opportunities to learn crafting weekly at the McGregor location. We try to ensure that there is an educational and cultural component to each session. Children and youth make cultural crafts, learn lessons of the sash, learn Michif words and phrases and share a meal. They have worked on beading projects – earrings, key chains, moccasins and mitts. They enjoy painting rocks, canvases and talking sticks; as well as making drums and dream catchers. Our program room holds many examples from our talented artists.

Spirit Helpers Committee

The Spirit Helper Committee is made up of staff members from throughout the agency. With the support of Children and Youth Programming Staff, the committee has organized sweat lodge ceremonies, sweet grass, cedar and sage picking for youth and agency staff, giving them the opportunity to learn about medicines and Ceremony for those interested in exploring the First Nation's side of their culture.

The agency has been diligent in ensuring that the culture of our children has been considered in every case plan. We have launched a new cultural planning bundle that will be a primary focus for our new Cultural Worker who will be working with children placed in non-culturally appropriate homes. This will be an inclusive document for families, youth and staff.

Cultural Camp

Cultural Camp was offered over two weeks in July and August, 2019 by the Spirit Helpers Committee, Metis Spirit Program and Children and Youth Program Staff. Youth visit historical sites, go medicine picking, enjoy Metis games, participate in ceremonies, listen to teachings and get to sample a traditional Metis food.



Fiddling and Jigging Groups

Through IPIP (Urban Programming for Indigenous Peoples) we have been able to offer fiddling and jigging lessons to children in care and non children in care associated with the agency. Utilizing agency owned fiddles we have five youth who attend lessons on Wednesday evenings. Due to an increasing demand we hope to be able to provide a second fiddle class in the coming year. This group is followed by a group of 20 youth who are enjoying an hour long jigging lesson.



Metis Spirit Program

The Metis Spirit Program is a unique funding partnership between the agency and the MMF. The Metis Spirit Worker engages with youth between the ages of 18 to 25 that do not have an Agreement with Young Adults and are no longer receiving any agency supports. Youth often think they don't need or want help from the agency, such as the financial assistance with an Agreement for Young Adults. Youth can find themselves struggling when they realize they are having difficulty navigating life and systems on their own. Although the Metis Spirit Worker is not able to help financially, they are there to assist the young adult to voluntarily engage with this program and receive ongoing support, advocacy, and connections to community resources, homelessness, employment and job readiness. The Metis Spirit Worker helps the young adult identify their goals and assists them in their achievement. We can even help explore adult education and post-secondary opportunities.

Even those young adults that received assistance from the agency until the age of 21 may still require supports and advocacy. Those youth would still be eligible for support from the Metis Spirit Worker for 4 more years. The demands are great. It is hoped that one day the agency could host 2 Metis Spirit Workers to meet the ever increasing demands as entering into adulthood become more complex.

Metis Spirit Program

New Referrals	
Male	18
Female	4
Total	22

Total Participants in Program

Category	Ages 18-25
Male	32
Female	40
Total	72



Family Support

Family Support Program

In keeping with the vision to have families be better supported rather than have children come into care, Family Support has been shifting its focus in the past year to focus on doing more preventative work. By building relationships and offering that added level of support, we hope to resolve problems earlier and reduce trauma to children and families.

With that being said, it is still extremely important that children be actively connected to their families of origin if they are in care. The majority of the Family Support Program service is still focused on Supported Family Time. This past year we had a total of **3321** family visits occur. Over half of those visits occurred outside of our main office. This means we are slowly shifting family times away from the office and into community locations, our other offices, or family homes. This always provides a more natural, less stressful environment for families.

The Family Support team was busy providing more Parent Education to families this year. Family Support Workers met with parents **1687** times this year. This past year we have also started to work more with Kinship homes. Supports are greatly needed in Kinship homes too.

Butterfly Program

This program is offered to our families that are actively in the reunification process or in the LIFE Program. If reunification is no longer possible, we focus on how do we make each family time meaningful and strengthen their existing attachment.

Family Support staff are assigned to a family for a duration of 12-20 weeks alongside a Heart Stories Attachment Therapist. During this time the family works along with their family support worker and therapist to build and strengthen their attachment with their child/ren. Each week the family is recorded, with the parent, family support worker, and therapist watching the video immediately afterward. The family support worker leads the discussion with guidance from the therapist and provides feedback about the family interaction in the video. Then activities are introduced that will enhance and promote attachment between parent and child. These activities are worked on throughout the week as "homework".

The whole basis of the model is to be strength-based and provide parents with positive feedback. We always want to build off the existing strengths of the parents and continue to encourage parents to work on their parent/child attachment.

"I really learned a lot and I really enjoyed it. Vic was a lot of fun and he helped me focus on certain things that I hadn't even thought of as I was so focused on other things. I am going to miss Butterfly and didn't want it to end."

—From one Mom who had completed the Butterfly program

Parent Support Group

The Family Support team has begun a parent run support group from the Portage Ave office. The “Building Connections over Coffee” group is geared towards parents that have involvement with Metis CFCS. It’s a place where they can connect with other parents and help reduce the feelings of isolation and loneliness that tend to come when trying to navigate the child welfare system. It also builds on developing life skills as we take a hands-on approach with cooking while the conversations occur. It is a drop-in group that occurs once-a-week. Parents have expressed that they really enjoy it and find it to be supportive of their needs.

Christmas Hampers

In partnership with the Manitoba Metis Federation for the last 4 last years, the Family Support program works every December to provide Christmas hampers to families that receive services from our agency.

This past December the Family Support Program delivered 27 hampers to unsuspecting families. This is an activity that is a favorite of staff and families alike. Being able to provide families and children with items to make their Christmas’s a little bit better definitely makes our jobs that much more rewarding.



Infinity Child and Youth Programs

Metis Child and Family Services runs programs all year long for children and youth of all ages focusing on health, culture and personal development. New programs are added or expanded as funding allows.

The Child and Youth Team highlights all the different holidays by preparing food and activities to mark the occasions and youth from all programs come together to share in the holiday spirit. The 2 weeklong cultural camps which gives up to 15 children each week an opportunity to learn about their Metis history and culture as well as participate in fun activities is an annual highlight. This year they visited Seven Oaks House, the St. James Museum, Lower Fort Garry and The Forks. The team also organizes cultural activities such as sweat lodges, sharing circles, sweet grass, sage and cedar picking.

Youth Celebration

The Child and Youth Team is responsible for one of the agency's most important events - the Age of Majority Celebration. This year 29 youth were celebrated at our 35th and 36th Youth Celebrations. Acts that provided entertainment included Krista Rey who performed the Metis Anthem, Martha Chartrand who provided a jigging demonstration, Michael Audette (fiddle) & Brad Moggie (guitar and vocals), Fiddling Duo Double the Trouble and Metis Youth Jiggers Peyton Habinski & Savanna Anderson.

Each celebration offers youth the opportunity to bring together family of all types, friends and people who have supported them on their journey. No one leaves the celebration without being touched by the experiences of these young people and being struck by the closeness of the relationships they share with family and professionals alike.

"CFS agencies need to trust families to manage themselves where possible."

—K.S. Metis CFCS Family Services Worker

"Believing our clients are capable of change and empowering them to make this change on their own."

—M.Y. Metis CFCS Family Services worker

Youth Recognition

High School Graduates

Kobe M
Samara V
Kylie L
Nathan E
Angus L
Kandra D

Hailey K
Angel K
Tianna R
Nicole S
Trevor S
Brooke A

Johnny G
Alyssa S
Glenda H
Mercedes D
Bernice R

Acknowledgements

This year, we would like to give special recognition to Children's Aid Foundation of Canada, a leading national charity dedicated to improving the lives of children and youth who have experienced abuse or neglect. The agency has had a long relationship with Children's Aid Foundation of Canada which has been steadily deepening over the past number of years. Most recently the Foundation allowed us to vary the funds they provided for the Comfort Kits for children entering care to also be used towards building activity kits for children forced to stay home due to the pandemic. They also provided us new funding for mental health services for youth who have aged out of care, funds for our Back to the Land canoe trips for children in care and funds for recreational activities for low income families.

Manitoba Metis Federation
Metis Child and Family Services
Authority
Ted and Loretta Rogers
Children's Aid Foundation
Royal Bank of Canada
Winnipeg School Division
Park Avenue Vending
Old Dutch Foods
La Cocina Foods
City of Winnipeg Parks and
Recreation Department

Winnipeg Fire and Paramedic
Services
Martha and Trayden Chartrand
Pat and Lloyd Vermelyn
St. Johns Ambulance
Dreams Take Flight
Pemmican Publications
The Assiniboine Park Zoo
The Manitoba Museum
Winnipeg Public Libraries

Donations

Springhill Lumber
Rainbow Stage
Winnipeg Goldeyes
RCMP
Cuddles for Kids
Winnipeg Blue Bombers
Winnipeg International
Children's Festival
Redboine Local
Associate Minister JoAnne
Remillard
Princess Auto
Payworks
Cochrane Saxberg, Barristers
& Solicitors





"The road we travel is equal to the destination we seek. There are no shortcuts. When it comes to truth and reconciliation we are forced to go the distance."

—Justice Murray Sinclair



Healing

Healthy Nation

Supporting

Healthy Families

Prevention

Healthy Children

