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A Word from the Executive Director

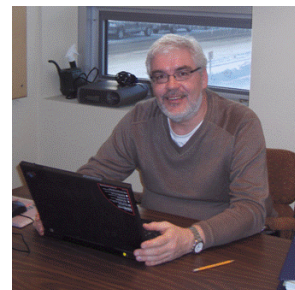
THE GOLD WRAPPING PAPER— An Inspiring Christmas Story

Once upon a time, a man punished his five-year-old daughter for using up the family's only roll of expensive gold wrapping paper before Christmas. Money was tight so he became even more upset when on Christmas Eve, he saw that the child had used the expensive gold paper to decorate a large shoe box she had put under the Christmas tree. Nevertheless, next morning the little girl, filled with excitement, brought the gift box to her father and said, "This is for you Daddy!"

As he opened the box, the father was embarrassed by his earlier

overreaction, now regretting how he had punished her. But when he opened the shoebox, he found it was empty and again his anger flared. "Don't you know, young lady," he said harshly, "when you give someone a present there's supposed to be something inside the package!" The little girl looked up at him with sad tears rolling from her eyes and whispered: "Daddy, it's not empty. I blew kisses into it until it was all full."

I have always found this to be a very inspiring Christmas story, made more wonderful because it is the pure unadulterated innocence of a young child that is able to grasp the true meaning of Christmas. It's not about



things, it's about love and caring. A concept that's simple but very powerful if we truly embrace it.

On behalf of all the Board, Management and Staff at FACS, I would like to wish everyone a peaceful, safe and love-filled holiday season.

Vik Nowak

Community Services & Quality Assurance

Project Safe Halloween

2008 has been a special year for safety at FACS. Through the Rainy River Valley Safety Coalition (RRVSC), **Project Safe Halloween** has not only gained local and provincial recognition, but also has gained national attention, winning the **2008 Award of Excellence from Safe Communities Canada**.

As a member of the RRVSC, we are proud to say that the program has reached provincial recognition, with other regions in the province starting to use the school-based distribution system.



RRVSC partners accepting the Safety Award.

Locally, and in the same week as the Safe Communities

announcement, FACS was the proud recipient of the Fort Frances Chamber of Commerce Safety Award—for Businesses sponsored by Abitibi-Bowater. The announcement was made at the annual Business Awards on November 8th presented by Bell.

FACS has been distributing glow sticks every year since 2003. With the assistance and support of the RRVSC, we have been able to make glow sticks available across the District, with yearly enhancements:

- Year one, 250 night lights were given out by staff at our office on Scott Street.
- Year two, 1,200 night lights were handed out at Kitowski's Trucking "Spooky Trailer."
- Year three, we distributed 1,300 at the Scott Street Scare in Fort Frances and at our Atikokan Branch office.
- Year four — District-wide expansion with 2,500 night lights being distributed through the schools (JK to Grade 6) and for younger children at the FACS offices and municipal offices.
- Year five — Expansion to include Grade 7 & 8. Approximately 3,000 glow sticks were distributed to schools and municipal offices.

- Year six — Development of the theme "Safe Routes" through sponsorship of the CN Police. Thirty presentations made to the schools by OPP Constable Anne McCoy and FACS employees/Board members to deliver the safety message. Approximately 3,500 glow sticks were given out. We are supplying younger children through municipal offices, nursery schools, preschool programs and day care centres.



Area children dressed in costume wearing glow sticks.

Yours in safety,
Betty-Anne MacKintosh
Manager of Community Services & Quality Assurance

Children's Services

The Children's Services program at FACS is busy preparing for Christmas celebrations. Christmas parties will be held in both Fort Frances and Atikokan for the children involved with the Agency. The Fort Frances office is hosting a Christmas party at the Memorial Sportsplex Swimming Pool on December 12th. The Atikokan office is working in conjunction with the Atikokan Labour Adjustment Action Centre and many other community agencies, to host a

"Community Christmas Party" to be held on December 13th at the River-view United Church for anyone who wishes to attend. At this party, FACS will host a Christmas Bingo for the children, as well as many other activities.

Again this year, employees of both offices are donating new items for the re-gifting program where children in care come to the office, choose gifts for loved ones and have them wrapped. This program enables the



children to experience the opportunity of giving to others.

The Children's Services Program wishes all a Merry Christmas and a safe and Happy New Year!

Linda Goose
Family Service Worker



If you would like to receive this newsletter electronically; or to provide feedback about the newsletter, please notify us by sending an e-mail to: Information@facsrr.ca

Developmental Services

All Kids Deserve to Play - Canadian Tire JumpStart can help



Parents in financial need looking to get their kids involved in physical activity programs are encouraged to ask about financial assistance available through the Canadian Tire JumpStart program.

Launched in 2005 by the Canadian Tire Foundation for Families, JumpStart is a charitable program to help kids in financial need participate in organized sports and recreation such as dance, martial arts and swimming as well as team sports such as basketball, hockey and soccer.

Funding is available for qualified applicants to offset registration fees, equipment and transportation costs. It helps tighten the financial gap by

providing funding of up to \$300 per child, per session.

National in scope but local in focus, JumpStart is delivered through a Canadian-wide network of local chapters, made up of a variety of community leaders committed to helping kids get active, such as Family and Children's Services, the Town of Fort Frances and the Rainy River District Social Services Administration Board. These community partners are joined by Canadian Tire Associate Dealers and Petroleum Agents, and together the chapters identify children in financial need who would benefit from the program.

Research has proven that participation in sports and recreation increases a child's chance of success in life through:

- A healthier lifestyle.
- Increased self-esteem and confidence.
- The opportunity to learn important leadership skills.
- Improved school performance and future education expectations.



"Canadian Tire JumpStart believes that no child should be denied the life benefits of organized sport and recreation; however, the reality is that one in three Canadian families cannot afford to enroll their children in these kinds of activities," said Dan Thompson, President, Canadian Tire Foundation for Families. Since its inception, JumpStart has provided more than 123,000 financially disadvantaged children across Canada with an opportunity to get in the game.

For more information on applying for funding through the program, please contact Carolyn Skirten at 274-7787 ext. 248.

Children's Mental Health Services

Theraplay



Theraplay is a style of play designed to enhance the attachment and positive relationship between children and their parent/caregiver. It enhances a strong sense of self-esteem, feelings of self worth, as well as develops increasing trust between the child and the parent/caregiver. Through Theraplay, the child begins a process of learning about him/herself and the world that is positive and hopeful, which promotes a powerful

influence for the remainder of his/her life.

Children ranging in age from infancy to adulthood, including the elderly, respond to Theraplay. It can help with a variety of behavioral problems which include acting out, defiance, impulsiveness, being withdrawn, timid, frightened, depressed and suicidal. As well, it is effective in dealing with autistic children but particularly suited to children with attachment difficulties.

Attachment theory is the underlying theory of Theraplay. The first relationship with the primary caregiver is the most important

relationship. The Theraplay goal is to bring the child and parent/caregiver back to the roots of the attachment and replicate normal parent/child interactions

Joan MacGibbon
Children's Mental Health Therapist

In January 2009, Family and Children's Services staff Patty Wirtanen and Krista Smith will be facilitating a parent group called "Positive Parenting with a Plan". For more information about the group, please call 274-7787, Patty ext. 225 or Krista ext. 277

Child Protection Services

Parent Awareness of Children's Needs

One of the tenants of Child Protection is that all children regardless of their circumstances have the right to life in a safe and secure environment where their needs are met. However, in many circumstances, this is not taking place and we need to ask ourselves as parents, grandparents, extended family members and as a society as a whole, why this is the case.

I would like to suggest that one of the reasons is that there is not a full understanding of the "needs of children". We all know and accept the fact children "need" a place to live, food on the table, clothes on their

back, etc. However, these are physical needs and while attention needs to be paid to them, there are other "needs" of our children which are just as important, if not more so. For example, all children "need" to know and feel they are loved and accepted; they "need" to know they are important; they "need" to feel good about themselves. In order for this to take place, parents and all caregivers need to be aware of these "needs".

As a result, one of the goals of Child Protection is to work with parents and caregivers to assist them in developing their awareness of "all the needs of their children". By doing this, the level of risk of harm



(physical, emotional) will be lessened and will ensure that children are provided with the safe and secure environment they require so that they are given the opportunity to develop to their full potential. This should be the goal not only of parents and caregivers, but all of us who work with children and their parents.

Garry Billings
Family Service Worker



Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

We are on the Web!
www.facsrr.ca



Call your local office of Family & Children's Services
24 Hours a day,
7 Days a week
Or visit us on the web www.facsrr.ca

