



Feature Article

Office Locations:

Fort Frances Office (Main office)

240 First Street East, Suite 200
Fort Frances, Ontario P9A 1K5
Phone: (807) 274-7787
Fax: (807) 274-6646

Atikokan Office

214 Main Street
P.O. Box 2050
Atikokan, Ontario P0T 1C0
Phone: (807)597-2700
Fax: (807) 597-6920

TOLL FREE NUMBER
1-800-465-7764

FACS Undertakes Strategic Planning

Twenty-four FACS staff members from all organization levels and teams met at the Adventure Inn on February 13 and 14 to discuss and decide the agency's future direction. This is part of the commitment to undertaking strategic planning every five years as well as annual service planning.



Facilitated by Helen Wythe of Helen J. Wythe & Associates, the team developed a draft vision statement as well as strategic directions, goals, and objectives. These will be all unveiled at a later date when Ms. Wythe's final report is released. Suffice it to say for the time being, the vision statement

will capture the following three key elements:

- A Healthy and Respectful Workplace
- Valuing a Foundation of Development and Service Excellence
- Being Responsive to Community Needs

Further input from staff and Board members will be sought before finalizing the vision statement.

Three strategic directions were developed to move the vision forward over the next five years. Strategies were identified for each of the strategic directions with time frames and "champions" to move initiatives forward. These will be operationalized during annual service planning. All staff members will meet on March 27th to develop integrated agency plans as well as team plans.

The ideas and positive energy were flowing! Participants commented that

much progress has been made since the last strategic planning session in 2003. It was great to hear from new employees, whose comments were that they felt FACS was one of the healthiest agencies for which they had worked.



Submitted by:
Betty-Anne MacKintosh
Manager of Community Services & Quality Assurance

"When a team of dedicated individuals makes a commitment to act as one...the sky's the limit." (author unknown)

Developmental Services

The Family Relief Program

The Family Relief Program is a respite service for caregivers in the Rainy River District who are caring for a child with a developmental or physical disability. Parenting can be a difficult job at the best of times so all caregivers require a break occasionally. Primary caregivers of children with a disability often have a "24/7" job and are faced with additional demands and stresses in everyday life. For this reason, they are at a greater risk for physical or emotional burnout. Respite support for these providers offers them a chance to recharge their batteries.

Finding suitable workers to care for a youngster with special needs can be both emotionally and financially challenging for many families. The Family Relief Program at FACS strives to support caregivers by finding, training and matching Family Relief Workers to a particular child and family's needs. Families make the final decision about who is best

suited to care for their child. Families also have the opportunity to provide additional individualized training to their workers about the particular special needs of their child.

We believe that all families have the right to stay together and those families challenged with a family member with a disability require the support and commitment of their community. We know that families that use our service do everything they can, but there are times when some help from outside the family is necessary.

We strive to put our beliefs into action by providing a number of respite options. The respite that we offer can occur in the family home, in the worker's home or in the community. This can be a time for caregivers to spend with their other children, to catch up on errands around the house, or to just relax and do some of the things that many of us take for granted. For the youngster, respite care can be an exciting time to

participate in different activities, make new friends and practice their skills in new environments. For the primary caregiver, knowing that their family member is with a trained worker allows them to feel comfortable enough to take the break that they need.

Relief care is a fundamental service in any community to support and enhance the quality of life for children and families. Taking a break means taking good care of ourselves so that we can return to the important job of raising our children with renewed strength.

The Family Relief Program is one of the programs at FACS that endeavors to provide a vital service in our district to individuals with special needs and their families. For more information about this resource contact Mary Ellen at (807) 274-7787 ext. 258 or to refer a family member for this service contact Integrated Services Northwest at (807) 274-7787.



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

Community Services & Quality Assurance

Meet Sarah Pyzer



The Community Services Team would like to welcome Sarah Pyzer as the

new Supervised Access & Volunteer Coordinator at FACS.

Sarah had been on maternity leave from the organization, having been a Family Service Worker on the Child Protection Team prior to accepting the Coordinator position. Sarah has rich experience in social services, including as a counselor at the Lake of the Woods Development Centre, as a Case Coordinator for Employment and Income Assistance, and as

a Case Manager for Integrated Services Northwest.

For more information on the Supervised Access Program, please call Sarah at 274-0381. If you wish to learn more about volunteering opportunities at FACS, please call 274-7787 ext. 270.

Stay tuned for the Orange Ribbon Campaign in May.



We are on the Web!
www.facsrr.ca

Children's Mental Health Services

Generalized Anxiety Disorder



Anxiety disorders are becoming more prevalent in today's fast pace society. There are several types of anxiety disorders but for this article I will just talk about one; GAD or Generalized Anxiety Disorder.

We are hard wired at birth to feel fear. As we grow, this innate fear causes us to worry, which is a normal part of life and helps protect us. It becomes a GAD however, when the fear becomes inappropriate, excessive, uncontrollable or persistent and impairs our daily functioning. It may affect your ability to function in important areas of life like work, home, school and your personal relationships. Genetics,

environment, predisposition and our beliefs and experiences are also factors in whether GAD will develop or not.

Those with GAD tend to avoid situations which cause them excessive worry. They look at situations in terms of "what if" i.e. "what if I embarrass myself, what if I fail under scrutiny, what if something bad happens to myself, my friends or my family, what if I can't pay my bills," etc. Those with GAD will tend to isolate themselves to avoid situations which cause them worry. They are more hypervigilant and resort to fight or flight mode in worrying or novel situations. Some recent studies have shown differences in brain growth in those that suffer from GAD.

The following are some of the physical symptoms that you are likely to experience if you have GAD: feeling restless or keyed up, difficulty



concentrating, being easily fatigued, feeling irritable, experiencing muscle tension, having sleep difficulties, gastrointestinal discomfort including nausea and diarrhea, and sweating.

In order to be diagnosed with GAD you must spend most of your days during a six month period or more, worrying and focusing on at least two main types of life circumstances. These could be finances, health, your children, other relationships, work performance, etc. This worry must also cause you significant distress in your life.

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy is the first line of treatment for anxiety.

Shelley Dion
Children's Mental Health Therapist



Child Protection Services

Triple P Reflects Recent Changes in Child Protection



As explained in previous newsletter articles, the field of Child Protection in Ontario has encountered many changes over the past year and a half. These changes focus on the province's intent to build on the strengths exhibited by all families, to customize the approach taken throughout the course of a child protection service, and to encourage permanence at the earliest possible opportunity by accessing support from the community and extended family members. By doing this, the

agency's response to any identified child protection issue can be far less intrusive than what it may have been in the past.

When this new approach is combined with the delivery of the Positive Parenting Program (to be delivered to Family Service Workers in April of 2008, who will become fully accredited in June), the outcome of agency involvement during a child protection service will ideally result in families having a larger number of strengths and supports to draw from.



The Positive Parenting Program will enable families to benefit from tips and strategies on how to work through parenting problems at any child development stage, and there

are elements of the program that specifically relate to assisting families who may be at risk of hurting their children. In addition, the Positive Parenting Program allows families to identify what area they require assistance with and customize the approach that best suits the situation.



Regardless of the Child Protection model being used, the goal intervention has always been to improve a family's ability to keep its children safe. It is the hope of the agency that the strategies taught through the Positive Parenting Program, in combination with the recent changes in Child Protection, will make this goal easier to achieve.

Gabe Carpenter
Manager of Child Protection Services

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



Children's Services

Activities in February

February has been a busy month for Children's Services. Our agency has taken a leadership role in ensuring that children who are preparing for independence have ongoing supports to meet their future goals. We are also currently developing a brochure outlining agency and community supports to assist youth in getting the help they need. The brochure is expected to be ready for distribution by April 1, 2008 to

youth in care, ages 12 to 18 years and to former Crown Wards ages 18 to 21 years of age.

The Ministry of Labour has described Family Day as "an effort to encourage families to spend valuable time together." With that in mind, two members of our team planned a fun-filled "Family Day" on February 18. Staff and their families spent the afternoon at the Little Beaver Snow Park playing games, activities and tubing. Lunch, refreshments and

treats were enjoyed by everyone. It was a great reminder to all present to enjoy our precious time together.



A child of an agency staff member zooms down the hill.