



A Word from the Executive Director

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An End of an Era

Although it hardly seems likely given his youthful physique, Stuart McIvor has retired after 21 years of employment with Family and Children's Services. And with his retirement party still fresh in our minds, his departure marks the end of an era for child welfare services in the Rainy River District.

I think it is safe to say that Stuart became an icon for child welfare services in this area. Apart from a five year stint as a therapist, Stuart devoted his career to the protection of children in our district. From his initial position as Family Service Worker through to his final nine year stint as manager of Protection Services, Stuart has not only experienced several pendulum shifts in child welfare policy in Ontario, he has been an architect of child welfare services in this part of the province. In addition, in his role as supervisor, he has had significant impact on numerous social workers who began their careers as Family Service Workers for our agency.

Given the high staff turnover rates in child welfare, it is truly an

accomplishment to have made a career in this field. I had occasion recently to ask Stuart what key factors contributed to his longevity. First and foremost, he identified the integrated nature of our agency set us apart from most child welfare agencies in the province and provided more synergistic opportunities for staff to exercise their social work skills and effect positive changes in the lives of children and families in this district. Secondly, Stuart cited several pivotal clinical experiences that validated his work and provided motivation to continue.

For example, there was the very emotional meeting with a 21 year old young woman, who returned to the area to thank Stuart for rescuing her from a very dysfunctional and dangerous family situation and placing her at the age of 8 with a very loving and nurturing adoptive family. And of course, there was the time while on an After-Hours call, that Stuart inadvertently stumbled upon a young man who had hung himself in his apartment. Stuart, with the assistance of an accompanying police officer, got the unconscious man down and revived him with CPR.



In my conversation with Stuart, he spoke about his time with the agency with great passion and fondness. He also spoke very positively about the future of our organization in light of the new case management system we are about to implement which he described as the "meat and potatoes" of an integrated system, and the new provincial policy of differential response which will enable us to be more strength based in our approach with the people we serve.

As an agency we were blessed to have someone of Stuart's character, integrity and skill for so many years. On behalf of everyone at the agency, I would like to extend our best wishes to Stuart as he begins the next chapter of his life. Knowing Stuart, I'm sure it will at least be as rich and rewarding as the last chapter. Good luck and all the best Stuart. You earned it!

Feature—Adopt An Angel



Adopt an Angel tree at Wal-Mart

Family and Children's Services is proud to announce the launch of the 5th annual Adopt An Angel program in the Rainy River District. This program was developed with the intention of helping children and families involved with Family and Children's Services who could use extra support at Christmas time.

Each child involved with the program is given a pseudo name that is placed

on an angel ornament, along with their age and a gift suggestion. The pseudo name is given in order to protect each child's confidentiality. Thanks to Mark Pruys from Pruys Direct, the program has new and wonderful angel ornaments to use. This year the angels will be placed on Christmas trees at Wal-Mart and Taggs Source for Sports in Fort Frances, and at Tompkins Hardware in Emo. The idea is that citizens and community members will select the angels from the trees and will purchase Christmas gifts for the children.

As someone recently said at our agency, "children are our greatest gift". It is my hope that this program provides an opportunity for our community members to give back by making some children's Christmas much brighter. I also hope that it will

teach other more fortunate children and families the value of giving.

Thank you to those who help and support the program and to those who purchase gifts. Also, when you see Mark Pruys from Pruys Direct and the management and staff at Wal-Mart, Taggs Source for Sports, and Tompkins Hardware, please thank them for their dedication to the program and their assistance.



Adopt an Angel tree ornament

Merry Christmas everyone and thank you for adopting our angels!

Jacquie Loerzel
Children's Mental Health Therapist

Developmental Services

Multi-Sensory Room Grand Opening

On October 10th and 11th, Family and Children's Services hosted a grand opening of our Multi-Sensory Rooms in Fort Frances and Atikokan. Nuala Reid, Occupational Therapist from the Lake of the Woods Child Development Centre, gave an excellent presentation at both locations on sensory issues. I would like to thank Nuala for taking the time out of her busy schedule. People had an opportunity to view the room and find out

more about how to use it.

I would like to acknowledge and thank the Moffat Foundation for their financial support of our Multi-Sensory Room in Fort Frances. We received \$2500.00 through a proposal to the Moffat Foundation to assist with the purchase of the Interactive Bubble Tube. We have placed a framed Certificate of Appreciation beside the Multi-Sensory Room.



Carolyn Skirten
Manager of Developmental Services

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@facrr.ca

We are on the Web!
www.facsrr.ca

Children's Mental Health

Singing the Christmas Blues?

The Holiday Season is often considered to be a joyful time of celebration, family gatherings, delicious meals, and yuletide carols; however, it may also be the cause of stress for many individuals. It has been estimated that 1 in 4 people experience what can be referred to as "the Christmas blues".

The Christmas season can be a time of physical, financial and psychological stress. Although Christmas is a "holiday", it often entails facing a demanding schedule in an effort to celebrate with all of our loved ones, not to mention an abundance of holiday feasting which can take its toll on our bodies. Financial stress is often a factor for families during this season with traveling to reunite with

family and friends, and a sense of obligation to purchase expensive gifts. In addition, we may find ourselves revisiting "the ghost of Christmas past" as Ebenezer Scrooge did in the movie. This can be especially difficult for those of us who have lost loved ones, or have had unpleasant past experiences.

If you find yourself singing the Christmas blues during this season, consider the following tips to ease you into 2008:

- Pay attention to physical cues. Your body will tell you that it is full, or needs rest...listen. Try not to overdo it just because it's the holidays. Schedule some time for peace and quiet during this busy season.

- Budget! Set financial limitations that are affordable to you and stick to them. Many of us cannot spend what we'd like to on gifts; do not allow yourself to feel guilty.
- Be realistic. Don't set overly high expectations, acknowledge feelings of sadness and don't repress them. Rather, seek out social support and companionship from loved ones. Seek professional help if these feelings are severe and persistent.



Krista Smith
 Children's Mental Health Therapist



Children's Services

YouthCAN Retreat



We are pleased to announce that Family and Children's Services will be hosting its first YouthCAN retreat on December 9 & 10, 2007.

You may be wondering what is YouthCAN? YouthCAN stands for Youth Communications and Advocacy Network. It is a group made up of youth in foster care all across Ontario. It gives the youth a voice to ensure that their concerns and issues are being addressed. At our retreat we will have youth from Thunder Bay, Kenora, Young Star House, Atikokan and Fort Frances. We are really looking forward to this fun experience.

Look for our article in December's newsletter for an update on the retreat!!!

Child Protection Services

The Child Protection Team would like to welcome Kevin Campbell. Kevin has been hired as a contract Child Protection Support Worker for the next few months. He is originally from Alberta where he built an impressive background in the Mental Health field. He has a degree in Outdoor Education specializing in Adventure Based Counseling for Teens. He has also worked in a Treatment Facility as a

Supervisor and Frontline worker for 10 years. Kevin previously worked with Alberta Alcohol & Drug Coalition with the focus being on Addiction Counseling for Teens and doing presentations at schools to educate students and teachers on the signs of drug use such as crystal methane. On a personal note, Kevin has published one novel and is trying to finish his second "Sci-Fi" novel. Welcome aboard, Kevin!



Safe & Healthy Lifestyles Committee
 Is pleased to sponsor

Atikokan Health & Safety First Fair

DATE: WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 21, 2007
TIME: 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM
PLACE: NORTH STAR SCHOOL

Transportation will be available by booking in advance.
 Deadline: Mon. November 19, 07. Call 597-6871

Participant Highlights

2-3-4 Playgroup/Rainbow Daycare & Sun Dog Early Years Centre- Safety Game/ Activity for Children
 Employment Centre: WHMIS self study Info
 Car Seat Inspectors: Car Seat Systems
 Community Counseling: Safe Gambling Game
 FACS: Wheel of Misfortune Game
 Health Unit: Knowledge is the Best Medicine Display and Hazard & Safe Symbols Identification
 OPP: Child Identification Kits
 North Star School: Cyber bullying/ Cyber safety

Also: Atikokan Native Friendship Centre, Atikokan Parks & Rec, Crisis Centre, EMS, RR District Substance Abuse Team, OSAID, and Youth Action Alliance (Information Displays)

Contact for more information
 Diana Elleff - 597-2700 or
 Anita Lyons-597-6871

Video's....Contests....Draw Prizes.... Games....Refreshments, Information booths... EVERYONE IS WELCOME...SOMETHING FOR ALL AGES- JOIN US!

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



Community Services & Quality Assurance



Volunteering is the lifeblood of our community, and provides us with a sense of connectedness and well-being. Aside from the satisfaction that you are making a difference, it allows us to participate in nurturing our agency and our community.

Volunteering brings people together—in our agency, in people's homes, in schools, and in board rooms—for good reasons and common purposes. It develops within us as an understanding of people who are different—people with disabilities, people in financial distress, children or the elderly.

This past year, we had over 30 volunteers assist us in our agency in many different facets, ranging from tutors, drivers, special friends/mentors, special occasions volunteers and advisory committee members.

Volunteers are an integral part of Family and Children's Services, and as such, we need to show them how much they are appreciated.

December 5th is International Volunteer Day, a day in which we plan on showing our gratitude. We are planning an evening filled with hot coffee, warm stories, snacks, door prizes, and so much more...



We are still in need of volunteers to fill various positions. If you would like to give of yourself and share your time, or you know of someone that does, call me at 274-7787 ext. 270. Together let's build a better, stronger, healthier workplace and community.

A prize will be given to each volunteer that signs up a friend to become a volunteer, before December 5th. It's not too late....sign up today!

Jeanne Pasch
 Volunteer Coordinator