

NORTHERN FOSTERING NEWS



"The Foster Family Coalition of the NWT is a unified voice dedicated to improving the quality of life for children and youth in care by supporting foster families' well-being"

HAPPY NATIONAL FOSTER FAMILY APPRECIATION WEEK!!

October 16-22 2016 is National Foster Family Appreciation Week.

To all the Foster Families in the NWT, the Foster Family Coalition thanks you so much for your dedication, patience, love and support.

All of your hard work makes the world of difference in the lives of the children you foster!

Please read on in this edition of Northern Fostering News to find out how the different regions are celebrating you; foster parents, this week of appreciation!

FOSTER FAMILY COALITION OF THE NWT

PO BOX 2022
YELLOWKNIFE NT
X1A 2P5
5125 50th STREET
DENE NATION
BUILDING

PHONE: 867.766.3326
TOLL FREE:
1.866.233.0136
FAX: 867.766.3401

EMAIL:
info@ffcnwt.com
ffc@ffcnwt.com
campconnections@ffcnwt.com

WEBSITE:
www.ffcnnwt.com

OFFICE HOURS
MONDAY TO FRIDAY
8:30 A.M. TO 5:00 P.M.

 Foster Family Coalition of
the NWT

 @Ffcnnwt



PRIME MINISTER • PREMIER MINISTRE

October 16–22, 2016

Dear Friends:

I am delighted to extend my warmest greetings to everyone taking part in National Foster Family Week.



Foster families provide a place to call home for young people with complex needs, offering them a sense of safety and stability. Whether for a few days or for many years, these families make a difference in the lives of those under their care. Such dedication contributes to the betterment of communities across Canada.

I would like to commend the thousands of Canadian foster parents who open their hearts and homes in an effort to make a lasting and positive difference in the lives of vulnerable children and youth. Your kindness and generosity are truly appreciated.

I offer you my best wishes for a memorable week of activities.

Sincerely,

The Rt. Hon. Justin P.J. Trudeau, P.C., M.P.
Prime Minister of Canada



October 2016

Foster Family Associations

Dear Foster Family:

October 16-22nd 2016 is *National Foster Family Week*, and is celebrated across Canada.

On behalf of the Canadian Foster Family Association (CFFA) I am pleased to have the opportunity to send best wishes and thanks to the foster families across the country.

I recently came across a statement by jasonjohnsoblog.com that says:

Foster Care
Is the call to *love* in a cloud of
***uncertainties* but with the**
confidence of one *guarantee* – it's
always worth it. *Always.*

Foster care is about families helping families and on behalf of the CFFA I want to thank you for your dedication and commitment to the children and youth that you are providing this certainty of love while they are in your homes.

It is because of foster families such as yours that children and youth are able to have a safe, caring and nurturing home while they are not able to live with their families.

This week is a time for you to be recognized for the work you do throughout the year. I hope that you have the opportunity to take part in recognition events taking place in your community. You deserve to be recognized and thanked for the incredible work you do, and my hope is that this recognition continues throughout the year!!

Sincerely,

Kevin Harris
President, Canadian Foster Family Association
president@canadianfosterfamilyassociation.ca



Executive Director Report

I hope that everyone else is more prepared for winter than I am! This last year has really gone by in a flash! I will do my best to recap what we have been up to over the last year as well as what we are working on...

The FFC-NWT once again distributed over \$15,000 through the Stay in School Awards (Children's Aid Society) over the past school year. And we have just got word that we will have \$16,000 to distribute this year to youth from kindergarten to grade 12 for graduation, staying in school and tutoring. You must fill out application forms and submit them before the deadlines and you can only apply once during the school year. For all the details, visit our website.

Another great partnership with the Children's Aid Society is the Comfort Kit Program. We have been chosen once again to participate in the project and we will be stuffing the backpacks and getting them out to the regions this fall. If you have feedback on the backpacks and their contents from last year, please let us know. We want to make sure that we are stuffing the backpacks with items that will bring comfort to the children and youth that receive them.

As you may be aware, we moved into a new office and within the first month it flooded and we were not moved back in for 2.5 months. During that time, we worked out of a church basement and then from my house. It was great to be unpacked and settled (again). Our new office is bright and welcoming and located at 5125 – 50th Street in the same building as the Dene Nation. Stop in a see us anytime... Monday – Friday 8:30 - 5:00 pm.

Our work this year with the Department of Health and Social Services - Family Services Unit started off with a workplan for this fiscal year.



It is a detailed plan of what will happen over the year and the steps that we both need to take in order to reach our goals. We are hoping to meet yearly in order to prep for the upcoming year. We continue to meet regularly with the Department of Health and Social Services at Partnership Meetings. Although it was announced that they are not moving forward with the proposed increases to the foster care/adoption subsidy rates, we are pleased that we are moving forward with the foster parent legal defense fund.

In order to qualify, you must sign the new foster home agreement form checking off the box to release your information to the FFC-NWT, or you can just contact us directly. Once you are registered, you will be given a certificate with a policy number from the insurance company that will entitle you to legal assistance if you ever have an allegation against you as a foster parent; The FFC-NWT has been advocating for this insurance for many years. There is no cost to foster parents to have access to this insurance so make sure that you get your name in.

Camp Connections was havocked again by wildfires this summer and we had to evacuate session 2 because a fire started dangerously close to camp. Our staff was AMAZING in following our evacuation plan and volunteers stepped in to get everyone safely back to town. After the evacuation, initial reports from the media were that Camp Connections has burned down but within the next 24 hours were found out that the fire had passed right next to it and ENR was using our camp as a base station.

The next session was held at the Scout's Camp again near Folk on the Rocks. We eventually were able to go back out and finish the rest of the sessions as planned.



The support we have been given from the community has been overwhelming. We have had items and money donated as well a volunteer time. We recently started to “fire smart” for any future wildfires and will be completing the work in the spring.

We have started selling raffle tickets to raise money for the cookhouse rebuild and the deadline for the draw has been extended until January 2017. Please contact us if you are interested in selling tickets or you would like to purchase then yourself.

Last fall at the Canadian Foster Family Association Annual General Meeting, I was elected into the position of Secretary on their board. Chris DeWolf was appointed into the position of Director on the board, representing the Northwest Territories. The CFFA Conference was recently held in Saint John, NB this year and we were so happy to see social workers and foster parents from across the territory in attendance. Thanks for much to the regions for sponsoring them to attend. The workshops were so informative and I can assure you it will assist the foster parents who attended in providing the best care for the children who stay with them. Please start talking to your social worker about attending conferences in the future.

I am representing the Northwest Territories on the CanFASD Research Network Parent Advisory Committee. We continue to meet regularly via teleconference. We just hosted a Caregiver Conference in Regina, SK in August that was attended by caregivers, researchers and funders.

I also continue on the Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Diagnostic Clinic. My role is to meet with the children and parents who are attending the clinic to offer support. If you have a child that is going through the clinic, I will see you there!



Thank you to the current FFC-NWT Board of Directors for your time and guidance over the past year. I look forward to a very busy winter ahead! Remember we have some positions open on our board and would love to have you come forward or let us know if you know of someone that is interested.

HAPPY FOSTER FAMILY APPRECIATION WEEK

Tammy Roberts
Executive Director
FFC-NWT



From the President

Happy National Foster Family Appreciation Week!! We at the Foster Family Coalition feel so grateful to the foster parents across the NWT.

All of your hard work, endless love and support does not go unnoticed, although it may seem like it some days.

The patience, support, advocacy you offer every minute of the day does make a difference to the children and youth in your care.

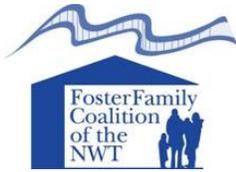
We hope that you are able to take part in the celebration of you-the foster parent, in your region this Foster Family Appreciation Week.

We've been busy at the Foster Family Coalition this fall. In September Tammy, Nicole and Chris DeWolf, one of our board members from Fort Smith and the NWT director for the CFFA attended the Canadian National Foster Family Conference in Saint John New Brunswick. They participated in a National Working Group discussion about issues foster families face, the Annual General Meeting and two days of very informative workshops.

On October 1st a group of wonderful volunteers spent the day at Camp Connections Fire-Smarting the camp for next year. This involved cutting down trees that were too close to some of the cabins and clearing a lot of brush and dead fall out of the woods. Although it was sad to see the trees come down, it is necessary to hopefully make Camp as safe as possible for next year.

P.R.I.D.E Pre-Service Training is coming up for foster parents in Yellowknife in November.

The training will be held in the FFC boardroom every Tuesday evening for five weeks from Nov. 1st-29th.



The training is free to attend and is an excellent opportunity to learn more about fostering for new and potential foster/adoptive parents.

If you are a couple fostering we encourage you to take the training together. The most important lesson of P.R.I.D.E Training is becoming a part of a professional team!

To register please contact Jenny Hudgin at jenny_hudgin@gov.nt.ca or by phone at 873-7219.

We continue to work closely with the Department on initiatives and issues that effect foster parents. If you have a concern or questions you are unclear about please do not hesitate to contact the FFC office and chat with Tammy or Nicole. They are always able to bring new items forward for discussion.

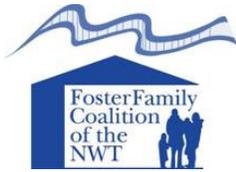
We have been lucky to receive funding from the Children's Aid Foundation for two special projects. The Stay in School awards are now available for submission, please fill out an application for your child or youth, or you can ask your social worker to do it on their behalf.

We are also pleased to offer the Comfort Kit backpacks for a second year. These backpacks are for children and youth upon coming into care. It is full of items to provide them with comfort after leaving their home. After Foster Family Appreciation Week is behind us Tammy and Nicole will begin shopping to fill the backpacks. They will be shipped out to regional authorities shortly after that.

Happy Foster Family Appreciation Week!

Yours in Fostering,

Dawn Pottinger, President



CFFA Director NWT Report



New Brunswick was the host province for the CFFA Conference and AGM September 19-25. Held in historic Saint John. The week was filled with Board meetings; workshops, meet & greets, auctions, dinners and a dance. It is one of two times a year the CFFA board gets to come together to discuss what has been happening in the past year and how to improve and move things forward in the year to come. The provinces and territories all shared their provincial stories.

Our AGM saw a changing of the guard, with Sheila Dunford retiring as president and Kevin Harris taking her place.

Kevin and his wife Lori-Lee have been foster parents for the last 16+ years. He has been the chairman of the board of directors of the Saskatchewan Foster Parents Association (SFFA) for the last three terms.

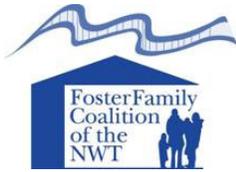
Kevin's will use his life learning and experience to find better ways to serve the membership of the CFFA and build upon the relationships that exist and forge ahead with new ones. This begins with understanding the uniqueness of the provinces/territories and what their needs are as they look to the CFFA.

He is a firm believer in good governance and a big part of that is starting with a strong strategic plan that is forward thinking but at the same time actionable. During the next few months and prior to the AGM in 2017 the board will develop a strategic plan and align our Bylaws and Policies to present to the membership for ratification. This will be a collaborative effort with the board and we all look forward to the outcomes of this important work.

The CFFA will meet again in Sundre, AB in May, 2017 and the conference/AGM is set for November 2017, when we will be hosted by the BCFFFPA in Whistler, BC.

Thanks to New Brunswick for a great week.

Respectfully submitted,
Chris DeWolf



Messages of Gratitude

Hay River Health and Social Service Authority

“National Foster Family Week is being celebrated from October 16 – 22, 2016. Hay River Health and Social Authority want to recognize the efforts you have put forth to improve the lives of children. Foster parents like you make a commitment every day to reach out to children throughout Hay River region, and your dedication has not gone unnoticed. The commitment that you have made as foster parents is not always easy and can be demanding and emotional. However, you make a meaningful difference in the lives of children and youth in this region. HRHSSA is very fortunate to have so many loving foster parents who are willing to provide a safe place for those who are unable to live with their families. HRHSSA thank you for your compassion and your commitment to ensure every child has a safe and loving home.”

Fort Smith Health and Social Service Authority

“The Fort Smith Social Services Team would like to thank our wonderful foster parents for their dedication in providing safe and loving homes to children in our community. Thank you for your commitment over the past year and we look forward to an ongoing partnership in serving the children of our community.”

Yellowknife Health and Social Service Authority

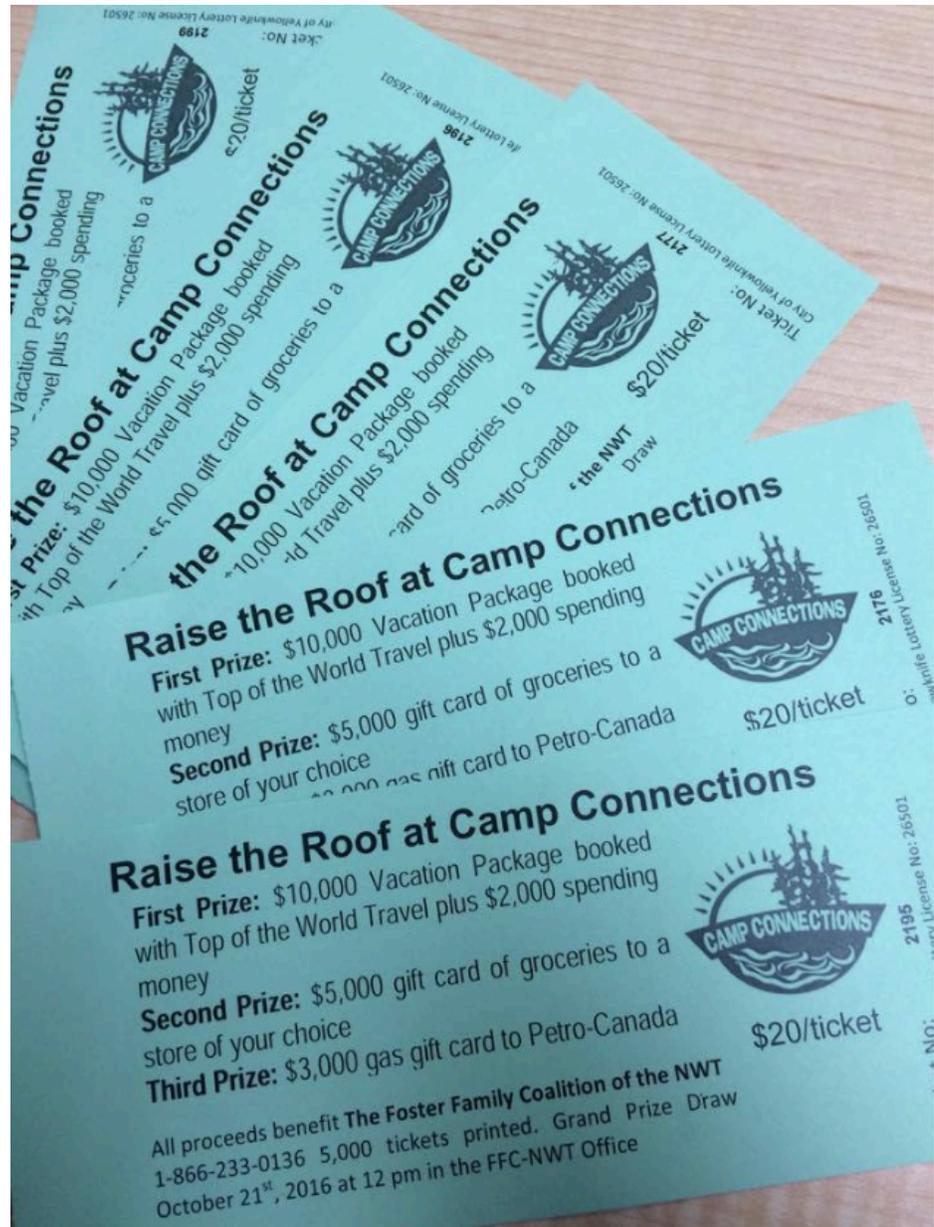
“Thank you for your words of kindness, your silent strength, your advocacy, your sleepless nights.
Thank you for all the hugs, kisses, wiping of tears, holding of hands.
Thank you for all the love that you give.
Thank you for all that you do to support our children, their families and the community. “



EXTENDED DEADLINE!

The Foster Family Coalition of the NWT is extending the deadline for the Raise the Roof Raffle at Camp Connections until January 21st! There will still be lots of time for the grand prize winner to plan a winter get-away!

Please contact the FFC-NWT office to purchase tickets!





NOVEMBER IS NATIONAL ADOPTION AWARENESS MONTH

In all the excitement of Foster Family Appreciation Week, we don't want anyone to forget that the celebration continues. The month of November is dedicated to the unconditional love, support and beauty that is adoption. There are many ways to provide permanency for children and youth and adoption is a great option for some families. We are so grateful to the adoptive families in the NWT.





WANT TO BE A BOARD MEMBER?

The Foster Family Coalition is currently seeking board members to fill some vacant positions!

Are you interested?

Requirements include:

- Being an active foster parent
- Participating in monthly teleconference board meetings
- Promoting and recruitment of foster care in a positive and active way in your region
- Offering support to foster parents in your region

Currently the positions that are open for election are:

- Vice-President
- 1 position from Yellowknife
- 2 Position from the Deh Cho
- 1 Position from the Sahtu,
- 2 Position from the Beaufort Delta
- 2 Positions from Hay River
- 2 Positions from the Tlicho.

If you are interested or know someone who is, use the nomination form on the following page and send to Tammy Roberts at info@ffcnwt.com

FFC-NWT Board Member Nomination Form

Nominations must be made by a foster parent or you can nominate yourself.

I, _____ nominate _____
(name of the person suggesting the Board member) (name of the person to sit on the board)

For a position on the Board of Directors with the Foster Family Coalition of the NWT.

The person I am nominating is from the community of: _____

Signature of Nominator: _____

Signature of Nominee: _____

Please answer the following questions about the person who you would like to serve on the Board of Directors. This will be on the voters ballot that will be mailed to foster parents in your region in late February.

1. How long have you been a foster parent and what do you like most about it?

2. What can you do for the FFC-NWT?

3. What do you feel is important for foster parents in the NWT?



Poster Contest

The annual poster contest is still on. Submit your child's poster for the contest before October 31st and mail it to The Foster Family Coalition!

Poster must be on an 8.5 X 11' sheet of paper, (standard paper size) and depict a theme of: fostering, adoption, children or family.

Please include on the back of the poster:

Child's Name

Child's Age

Community

Phone Number

Mailing Address

There are three different age categories.

2-6 yrs old

7-12 yrs old

13-19 yrs old.



A winning poster from the NWT and National Poster Contest from last year!



STAY IN SCHOOL AWARDS

LEAP TO LEARNING

HELPING CHILDREN SOAR

The FFC-NWT is continuing as a proud distributor for the Scotia Capital Stay in School Awards. This year we have \$16,000 to distribute to school aged, at-risk children and youth in the territory.

Awards Available:

Stay in School Award: \$300 cash. Deadlines are January 30th and April 30th annually

Graduation Award: \$50 cash award for graduating from Grade 8 or Grade 12.—

Deadline - July 15th annually

As part of an ongoing program, funds are available for the Scotia Capital Leap to Learning Tutoring program.

Based on a 1 hour session per week, the funds are available to support a student in need of tutoring.

To apply for a child or youth please visit our website- www.ffcnwt.com and click the link under Supports “Youth Financial Supports”



The FFC-NWT is continuing its scholarship fund for NWT residents who have grown up in foster care, through the Yellowknife Community Foundation.

Funds to start the scholarship fund were generously donated by BHP Billiton and the Yellowknife Foster Family Association. The scholarships are administered by the Yellowknife



Yellowknife
COMMUNITY FOUNDATION



From all the Staff & Board Members of the Foster Family Coalition of the NWT we wish you a very Happy National Foster Family Appreciation Week!



The Foster Family Coalition of the NWT is here to support you.

Please do not hesitate to call us if you have questions or concerns, or just want to chat.

Toll-Free Support Line: 1.866.233.0136

Phone: 867.766.3326

Email: info@ffcnwt.com

Website: www.ffcnwt.com

Drop in to our office, located in the Dene Nation Building at 5125 50th Street.