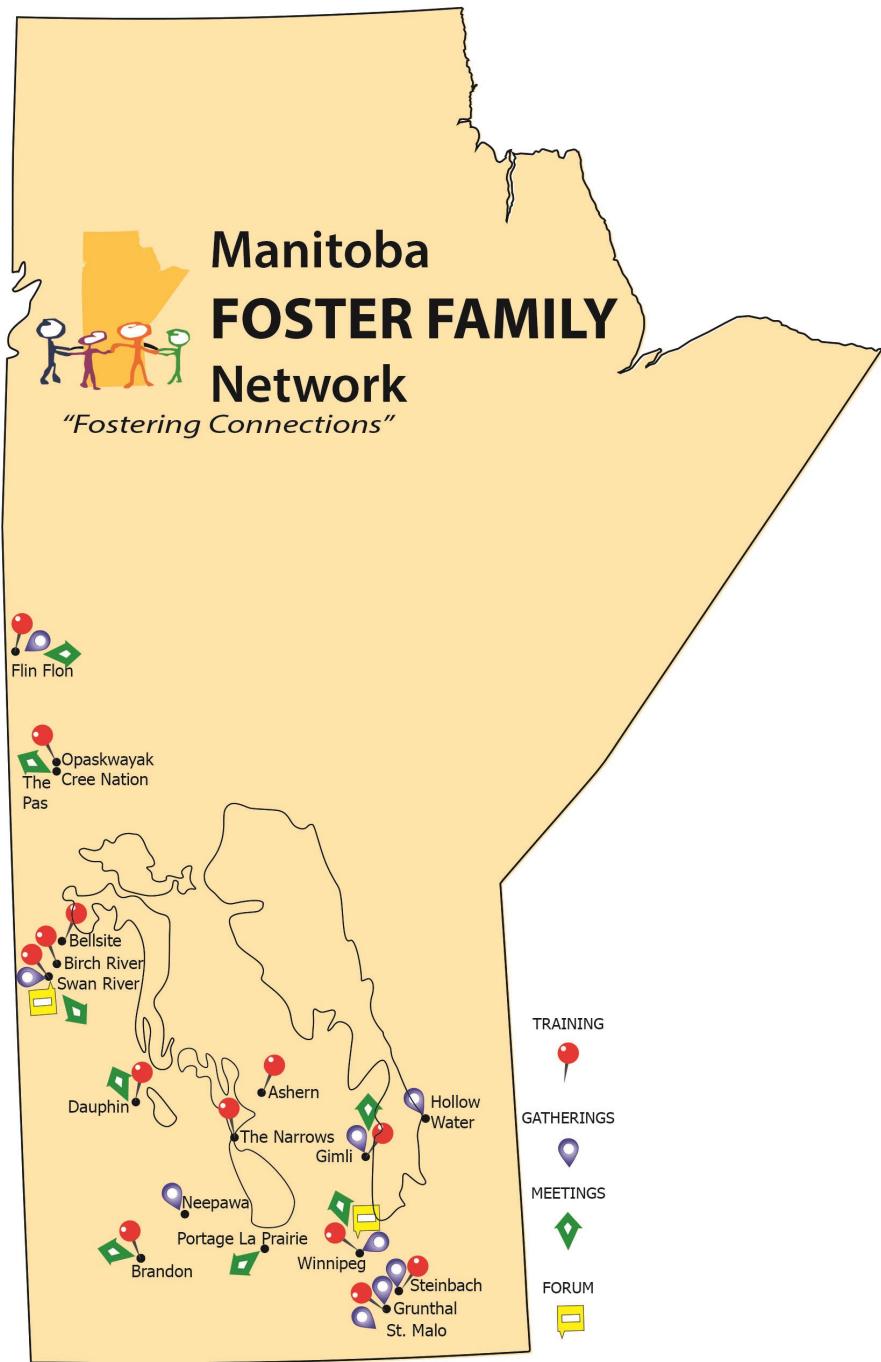


ANNUAL REPORT

2016-2017

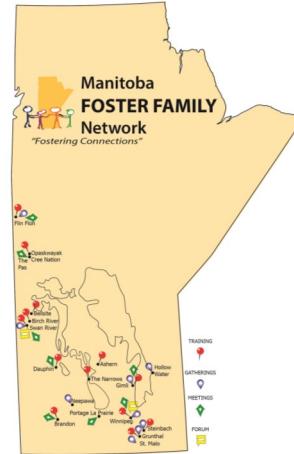


Our Year In Review

This year marks 17 years that Manitoba Foster Family Network has been operating and it was a truly busy and exciting time of growth for the organization. The Board and Staff have worked tirelessly to bring the highest quality of service possible to the Foster and Kinship Parents of Manitoba.

We have made great strides in our Education Department and have been all over Manitoba many times delivering our made in Manitoba curriculum. To help show you where we have been and what we were doing this year we created the image on the front cover of this report. We have a full report on Education on page 6.

Another of our biggest achievements this year has been to strengthen our presence in the North. We welcomed back Charlotte Sauder as our North Community Development Worker. Charlotte lives in Swan River and originally joined the Network in July of 2013. After taking a break to further her education, she is rejoining us with even more skill and experience. Charlotte previously worked out of a home based office but, with a recent partnership between Manitoba Foster Family Network and The Canadian Mental Health Association, in March we opened a sub office located at 621 Main Street in Swan River. We will now be able to offer even more programming to people in the region. A grand opening is planned for June 9th. We hope to see you there!



The mission of Manitoba Foster Family Network is "***To encourage, promote, assist, and educate foster and kinship homes to enhance the quality of life for children in care***". As we continue to grow it is important to examine the foundations of Manitoba Foster Family Network and ensure we are maintaining our grassroots. In February, the Board and Staff came together for a full day of discussion and planning on this topic. We accomplish our mission through Community Development. All of our programs exist to strengthen and support the Community of Foster and Kinship parents. Some of the ways we ensure you have a voice that directs programming are:

- Having a Board comprised of Foster Parents
- Having a Peer Support line answered by trained foster parents that allows us to identify system wide trends in fostering
- Delivering training within your home community
- Gathering your feedback on all training, and using it to direct curriculum changes
- Hosting Foster Parent Focus Groups across the Province on issues related to fostering, and generating reports that are shared with collaterals
- Using email and social media to gather and share information
- Creating and distributing a Newsletter on topics Foster and Kinship parents have expressed interest in

Our Year In Review ...

We would also like to share with you some of our identified Organizational Beliefs. At Manitoba Foster Family Network we believe in the:

Empowerment of Kinship and Foster Parents to be respected members of the professional team, and we strive to provide training and supports that will assist you in achieving this goal.

Kinship and Foster Care works best when following the Principles of Addition:

- Always add rather than subtract people from a child's life.
 - Adding people always expands the circle of support.
 - The birth family always remains at the center of the circle.
 - A kinship or foster family is not the center of the circle but a valuable complementary addition to the birth family.

On behalf of all of the Board and Staff of Manitoba Foster Family Network we would like to thank all Foster and Kinship parents for the work you do every day.

Jennifer Karaim and **Cathy Wiebe**
Executive Director President

Board Members who served in 2016/17

Member	Region
Cathy Wiebe - President	South
Sharon Joyal - VP South/Secretary	South
Linda Ens - Treasurer	South
Patti Skirzyk	South
Doug Gerrard - VP Winnipeg	Winnipeg
Norm Johnson - VP North	North
Robyne Gilfillan	North
Danae McCullough	North
Marion Brading	North

Message From The President

As mentioned earlier this marks Manitoba Foster Family Network's 17th year, and I have served as a Director at The Network since it was first opened. This year I made the decision to retire from the Board. This has been a wonderful time and experience in my life that I will treasure always. I am leaving knowing that the organization is strong and moving forward. I was honoured to work for you, and plan to remain connected to the Network.

Cathy Wiebe

Message From The Executive Director

Hello everyone,

This has been a year of change for me at The Network. I was hired at Manitoba Foster Family Network six years ago. Over the years I held various positions that have given me a solid understanding of its operations. In July of last year I became Acting Executive Director and in February I became Executive Director. It has been very rewarding to lead this dynamic staff team. The energy and dedication shown is inspiring.

I believe we have had such a great year because of our strong teamwork approach. When faced with challenge we came together to find solutions and identified actions that would lead us to achieve them. The Network and the Foster and Kinship Parents it supports are critical to the Child Welfare system and we should be recognized as such. The coming years will be focused on building upon our foundation, and expanding our existing programs.

My hope is that MFFN will become a leader in the child welfare community which models teamwork, effective communication and good strategies that help create best outcomes for children.

Jennifer Karaim

MFFN Staff

Jennifer Karaim

Executive Director

Ashley Prefontaine

Executive Assistant

Lisa Moxam

Community Development Worker

Charlotte Sauder

Community Development Worker

Brad Wright

Curriculum Writer/ Community Development Worker

Terri McNaughton-Wright

Education Coordinator

Larissa Wilton

Accounting

Peer Support Update

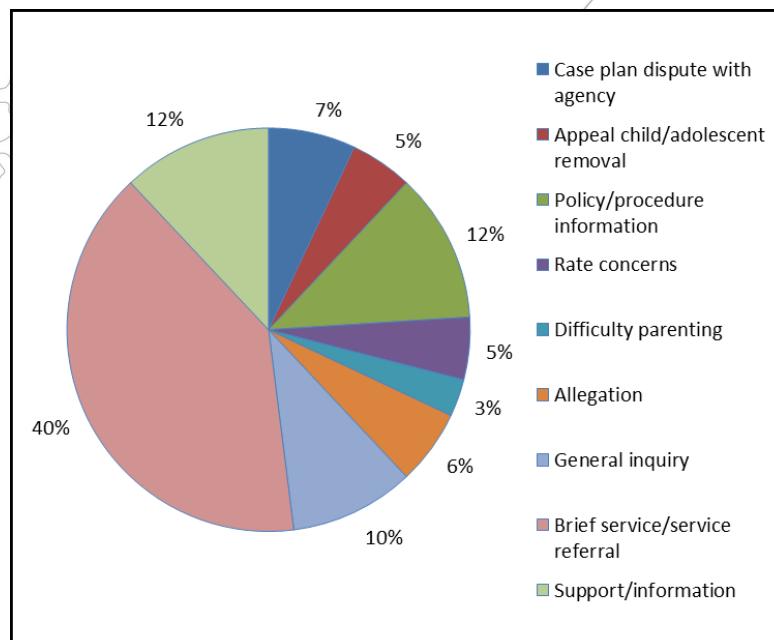
Our Peer Support team has had a good year. The providers do a phenomenal job managing the calls that come into the line. We are always seeking to increase our number of providers. We hold regular recruitment meetings in our office and are looking forward to expanding our team.

We have actively worked to increase our quality of service by working toward standardizing our providers' training. At this time we have 8 providers. They attend monthly staff meetings to discuss some of the challenges of direct service as well as to provide information about upcoming events, training and changes to the system. Every second month the providers are offered training to increase skill and the capacity to take challenging calls. This spring the Peer Support team met in The Narrows for team building and training. It was a good way for them to connect for support and encouragement in taking calls of difficulty in a confusing system.

The Peer Support team continues to take calls from the Community of Care line. The office sends written information for review and then a call is placed to a provider so questions can be answered. In addition we have been holding information sessions for people interested in fostering. We offer the session once per month, and there are on average 20 people in attendance.

Our providers are seasoned foster parents and answer all kinds of questions. In addition to their own personal knowledge, they also have access to the standards and laws that govern fostering. People will call if they are experiencing a difficulty in their foster home or if they are feeling they could use a neutral person to help them manage difficult situations. Sometimes foster parents will call if they are facing an allegation or if they have experienced the removal of a child from their home. Peer Support Providers are great leaders and role models for being a strong part of the professional team. We are ever so proud of the time they each take from their own lives to help others.

Peer Support calls by type

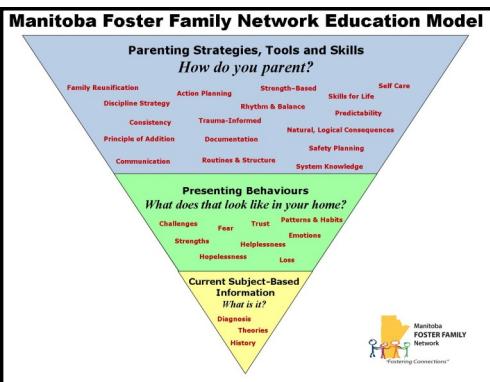


Education Update

During the past year we provided our basic level training series in 9 locations and our advanced training in 7 locations. That meant almost 60,000 kilometers travelled to provide training to Foster and Kinship parents of Manitoba. Some of our collaborative training agreements included:

- West Region GGK Program in Winnipeg and Brandon
- Northern Cree Nation in The Pas/OCN and Winnipeg
- Ma Ma Wi Chi Itata

The training sessions and print material MFFN provides has a clear focus on parenting. We cover understanding of theories relevant to parenting, understanding the complexities of presenting behaviors and the development of parenting strategies, tools and skills. The focus is to guide the development of strong and healthy outcomes for children.



The three tiered parent strengthening curriculum MFFN has developed emphasizes the value in skilled professional interactions with agency staff, professional resources, justice programs and, most importantly, natural or biological families. We guide foster and kinship parents to enhance their role within the child's team with confidence and clarity. Cultural proficiency is encouraged throughout our trainings. Foster and Kinship Parents are guided to discuss the specific cultural needs of the children in their care with the agency staff and whenever possible with the child's family.

In order to create awareness of the parent education MFFN provides, during the fall of 2017, we will be offering to agencies and their staff, a half-day information session on our basic level training material. The focus will be upon how to engage the foster and kinship parents with the parenting strategies, tools and skills they have experienced through MFFN trainings.

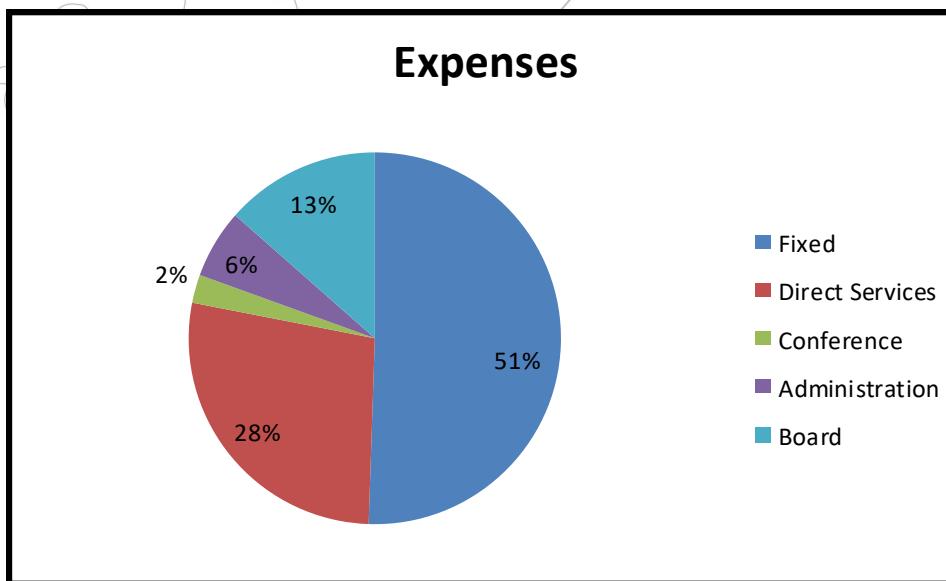
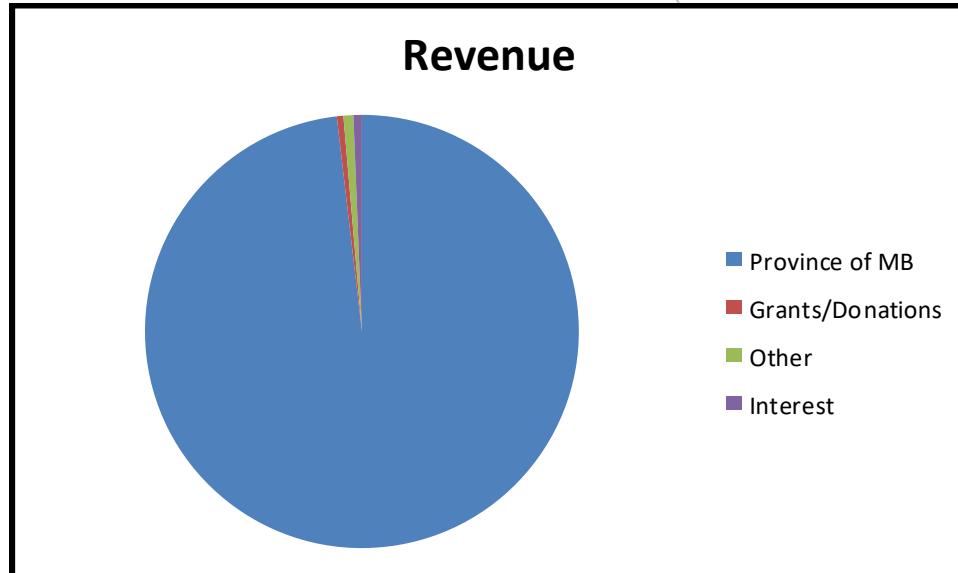
Ongoing discussion, feedback, recommendations and requests for additional training material from foster and kinship parents and system collaterals will be considered as our education program grows and manages changing needs and expectations.

Lastly the Introduction to Foster and Kinship workshop continues to be a pilot program that uses staff volunteer hours. The program is well attended. Participants who complete the process to become foster and kinship homes return for additional training and support. The Network currently offers one Introduction to Foster and Kinship session per month at the Winnipeg office. The session is offered the first Saturday of the month and is offered to callers from the Community of Care line. Plans to provide this session in the Swan River office are underway. While we have received requests for this program in other regions of Manitoba; currently we are not funded to provide this service.

Over the past fiscal year MFFN has provided 55 Basic Level and 34 Advanced level training sessions to a total of 754 participants.

Financial Information

Each year this organization is subject to a financial Audit. This process is designed to ensure we are held accountable for all financial revenues and expenses. Below you will find some of the highlights of that audit. If you wish to read the audit report in full, it can be accessed on our website in the Resources section under Audited Statement.



Conference/ Focus Group Update

This year we decided to try something new. In years past we held a 2-3 day conference. We would rotate and change locations throughout the province on a yearly basis. That meant we were only visiting each region –North, South, Winnipeg -once every 3 years. We heard from participants that attending a 3 day conference was difficult, mainly due to the costs and availability of respite. In response to this we decided to host one day workshops instead, and visit all three regions every year.

In an exciting collaboration for this new venture The Manitoba Foster Family Network is partnered with the Office of the Children's Advocate to present their latest report, **On the Edge Between Two Worlds: Community Narratives on the Vulnerability of Marginalized Indigenous Girls**. Following a presentation on the report in the morning a focus group is held which allows Foster and Kinship Parents to lend their voice to this important topic. The third and final presentation of this topic is set for May 25th in Ste. Anne Manitoba. When that has concluded MFFN will be creating a report to capture the voice of Foster and Kinship Parents on this important issue, and sharing with collaterals within the Child Welfare System.

Things have been going very well so far and we are very pleased to announce we will be continuing to work in collaboration with The Office of The Children's Advocate in 2017/18. We are currently planning the next round of focus groups and getting ready to travel the province together again! We will share more details as soon as they are available!

Thank You To The Following For Supporting Our Focus Groups and Family Fun Events!

Adventure Outdoors

Bee Gee's

Buds and Blossoms

Fit 24/7

Swan Valley Co-op

Westwood Inn

Red River Co-Op



Red River

Choir! Choir! Choir!

Addictions Foundation of Manitoba

Office of the Children's Advocate

Canadian Mental Health Association

Voices

First Nation's Education



Manitoba
FOSTER FAMILY
Network

"Fostering Connections"

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