

Altogether better.

Annual Report 2008-2009



THE FEDERATION
of COMMUNITY SOCIAL SERVICES of BC

WELCOME

The theme for this year is best described as Leadership in Uncertain Times. The global state of affairs has shifted dramatically in the past year and we have all been affected in some way, as have the people we serve, our agencies, and our communities. We are being called upon as organizational and community leaders to be resilient, creative and responsive to emerging challenges, needs and opportunities, and there is no blueprint or roadmap for our work. The Federation exists to support its members to be effective and successful community based organizations that deliver high quality services to children, youth, families and adults who are vulnerable. Our responsibility to our members is to nurture and model responsiveness, creativity and resilience. While we are proud of the work that we have done in this past year and look forward to sharing highlights in this report, we are continually reflecting, learning, improving and sometimes simply stepping into the abyss and hoping that we land safely. In these times, there is great power and potential in collectives such as what the Federation members have created and we look forward to continuing our work together.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT - Nanette Taylor

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This has been a productive and fruitful year for the Federation. We have a new name, new look and new website. This was a goal on our strategic plan and a particular goal of mine as President. After many years on the Board and involvement with the first logo, I felt we needed to enter the 21st century with an up-dated presence. I am very pleased with the results and hope the membership embraces our new look. Our mandate of quality services to children and families in BC remains the same.

We have seen another MCFD minister move on and are awaiting new relationships with new ministers and new ministries. Minister Christensen was very open to meeting regularly with us and very knowledgeable about the industry. Our hope is that we can forge similar communications across the social ministries, CLBC and the Premier's office.



training



meetings



advocacy



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services

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Several projects have continued to move forward thanks to the hard work and creativity of our Executive Director and staff team. The Recruitment and Retention initiative has progressed from the data collection phase to the planning stage. We are participating fully in the Government Non-Profit Initiative with several Board Members and our ED chairing committees. This significant work has broken ground on forging new relationships with government that recognizes the importance of the community-based contracted sector.

The Board Voice project has taken on a life of its own as dedicated Board members across the province have come together to voice concerns and successes that their agencies and communities collectively experience. Applied Promising Practices projects provided us with needed data in several service areas. The project was a catalyst for service providers who have continued to meet to discuss practice issues. Our Research to Practice Network has been launched with four articles already and demonstrates our commitment to professional development and continuous learning in the sector. CoreBC - our new Centre for Dialogue and Learning on Child, Youth and Family Practice is set to launch. It has been our hope for a number of years to establish a 'go to place' for shared promising practice information. All this would not have happened without the support of our members and the funding grants and opportunities that have been garnered to augment our finances.

The Board of Directors has been a strong and hard-working group. We had consensus among the Board for the name change as a result of a united vision for the future of "The Federation". We are working towards public education and political recognition of social services as a key ingredient in community health. Many of the initiatives in the strategic plan are set to achieve this goal.

We are going to have some funding challenges in the coming year and may need to prioritize our activities, even though they are all relevant and exciting. We have a brilliant and committed office staff to appreciate, and enjoy a strong and respected profile with government thanks to the integrity of our Executive Director. Our membership is diverse and accomplished and recognized through accreditation for client-centered services. Having come a long way, I believe we really are based in community and can speak to community needs. We are in a new and strong place to advocate for clients, service delivery and operational sustainability.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

One of the highlights for me this year was having the opportunity to expand our staff team. Susan and I welcomed Amy Woodruffe in March 2008, Donna Francis in May 2008 and Doug Hayman in July 2008. With this increased talent pool and capacity we have been able to embark on important work in a number of areas. I have provided detailed information on a number of our initiatives and projects in the ED Reports to Members that have been distributed three times this past year so in this annual report I will take a step back from the details and provide an overview of what this year has meant and what we've learned.

The re-branding process that we engaged in not only led to a beautiful new logo, visual brand and website – it also enabled us to reflect on and get clear about our identity - who we are as a Federation, who we serve, what we stand for and how we can do this impeccably well. It was as a result of these deliberations, informed by the results of the comprehensive member survey, that the name change was proposed to members. In this next year, we will focus on 'living into our new name' and fulfilling our promises to

members. The re-branding process has also taught us about what it will take to more effectively 'brand' our sector in the public domain as an essential element of and contributor to community and economic well-being, and as a desirable field to work within and contribute to.

We have been fortunate to connect with members in many more BC communities this year through Doug's outreach visits to the Northeast, Northwest, Prince George area and the East and West Kootenays, and through Amy's and my recruitment and retention focus group sessions. This has been invaluable learning and enabled us to appreciate the diversity of member agency needs, challenges and strengths. Over this next year we will be experimenting with some new ways to support all members but particularly those that practice in rural areas or that find it difficult to attend general meetings due to travel costs and time issues. This will include pre and post meeting teleconferences, webinars and an enhanced website with a broader array of resource material.

The Applied Promising Practices (APP) Project, that we undertook jointly with Canadian Outcomes Research Institute, with funding from HRSDC was particularly exciting work for us. Four clusters of agencies have come together to create communities of practice around family preservation, residential care, integrated youth service sites and early childhood development in a family resource context. Results and resources arising from these projects will be posted to the Federation website shortly. Although HRSDC funding is finished, we are committed to sustaining the current APP projects, and anticipate some additional funding that will enable us to develop several more communities of practice. This project has taught us that there is great wisdom and understanding about what constitutes quality practice within our agencies and our job is to illuminate this and challenge each other to keep getting better at what we do.

The Recruitment and Retention Project has also been a positive undertaking. Although the labour market has shifted dramatically in the past year, and some of project funding partners have not been able to sustain their contributions, we are continuing our work as we have evidence that suggests that our agencies continue to be in dire need of skilled staff and volunteers. We also want to plan for the future when labour shortages will loom large again. In this past year we have focused on understanding the phenomenon through research, focus groups, consultations with advisors and most recently a 2-day planning Summit on HR capacity building that we did jointly with the Government Non-Profit Initiative (GNPI). Over the next few months we will distribute a draft plan of action and begin to move into the 'experiment and evaluate' phase of the project where we will support implementation of some of the suggested initiatives to see what difference we can make to both recruitment and retention efforts. Through our work in this area and active involvement in GNPI, we have informed MHSD's decision to invest over \$5 million in our sector over the next 3 years to build HR capacity. I will be serving as the co-chair of the GNPI's HR Working Group.

One of the recruitment and retention suggestions that was made by members at the outset of our work on this project was to develop a bursary program for young people who are or were in government care and who wanted to pursue a career in our field. We didn't wait to act on this suggestion and our general meeting 'silly fundraising' activities led by Jeanne Faith and her team raised over \$4000. Glenn Hope chaired a scholarship committee and they selected 5 amazing young people to be our first recipients. Sometimes it is the

relatively small things that inspire us the most, and this has been one of those projects that has reminded me of what matters.

Core work for us is relationship building. Strong relationships within the Federation and between the Federation and our colleagues in other organizations and government ministries and departments enable us to access and share information, uncover issues and concerns, have meaningful conversations, work through differences and discover solutions. As this year has unfolded we have been able to sustain our relationships with MCFD and forge a number of new working relationships with the Ministry of Housing and Social Development, with our GNPI colleagues in all the social development ministries, with many other provincial organizations, within the community living field and with the volunteer community governors that sit on boards throughout BC. I do anticipate some challenges ahead but believe that we have an opportunity to inform and influence decisions based on the strength of these relationships and the respect that is held for the Federation and its members.

There is no doubt that we are in for some challenging and unpredictable times but we believe that the Federation has a very important role to play to ensure that community based services for children, youth, families and vulnerable adults are valued and supported.

REGIONAL DIRECTORS' REPORTS

Fraser Region

Director: Lynda Edmonds, SHARE Family and Community Services
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Three ½ day meetings were convened this year. A wide variety of topics were addressed but in particular we discussed the impact of the economic downturn on our agencies and concerns that government funding may be reduced in light of declining revenues. We considered what social service agencies might do to prepare for this possibility and how best to inform government decision makers to prevent further erosion of community social service capacity, especially in light of increased demands for service.

As well, Ian Mass from PCRS and Teri Nicholas from FSGV convened a meeting with other organizations that work with youth in the Vancouver Coastal and Fraser regions to discuss alternative ways to deal with youth who are involved with crime and gangs, beyond the prevalent punishment and incarceration approaches.

Interior Region

Director: Dennis Dandeneau, The Bridge Youth and Family Services
Contact: Dennis. Dandeneau@thebridgeservices.ca Telephone: 250-763-0456

It has been a pleasure to serve the interior region members of the Federation during the past year.

In my role as interior region director, I co-chair the Interior Region MCFD/Sector Table composed of senior Ministry regional staff and Executive Directors of agencies from across the region. The majority of these agencies are also members of the Federation. The other

co-chair is the procurement manager for the MCFD Interior Region. This is a working group and consultation table to the Ministry on areas such as contracting practice, outcomes development, annual contract review procedures, information management and provincial initiatives tracking. This Table takes a highly proactive approach and plays an important role in fostering a high quality working relationship with the Ministry.

This year I also assisted the Ministry of Children and Family Development with planning the Interior region's Strong, Safe and Supported Congress held in Kelowna in November 2008. I represented the Federation as chair to the event which was attended by two hundred Ministry and agency staff from across the region. This was a celebration of the many examples of fine work being done in the Interior.

I sit on the RED/FED Working Group and currently discussion regarding residential redesign is high on the priority list. This discussion is concerned with improving the quality of care to children.

There have been two teleconferences with members across the region during the past year. I look forward to the remainder of my term as regional director and welcome any feedback on how to best serve the needs of the interior region members.

Vancouver Coastal Region

Director: Teri Nicholas, Family Services of Greater Vancouver
Contact: tnicholas@fsgv.ca Telephone: 604-731-4951

Three regional meetings were held this year, on October 7, 2008, Feb 10 and May 21, 2009. The MCFD Regional Executive Director and/or Director of Contract and Residential Services attended each meeting. A presentation from the Representative for Children and Youth's Office by Fred Milowsky and Melanie Mark was given to the members.

The following topics have been discussed during the meetings and reflect areas that require our ongoing attention and action:

- Transfer of responsibility for children receiving community living services from CLBC to MCFD
- Pressures on residential services and the plans for Residential Redesign
- Impact of the economic downturn on our clients and agencies
- Lack of a mechanism for compensation negotiations for non unionized agencies
- Move to multi-year contracts (implemented)
- Recruitment and retention issues for agencies and MCFD
- 2010 Olympics

A major issue for agencies in the Vancouver Coastal region and for MCFD is the 2010 Olympics. Agencies will participate on a joint Olympic planning committee with MCFD.

Vancouver Island Region

Director: Ralph Hembruff, Boys and Girls Club Services of Greater Victoria

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This past year we have held both a members only teleconference (facilitated by Jennifer) and a combined in-person/teleconference session with our MCFD Regional Director Chuck Eamer.

The areas of greatest interest/discussion included:

- Pension plan possibilities
- Operational sustainability
- Aboriginal Transformation

In addition, there was discussion about an apparent North-South discrepancy with some of the South Island service providers having to “give back” substantial “unearned revenues” while North Island service providers did not experience similar expectations. This is being reviewed with MCFD.

Chuck Eamer also brought us up to speed on Comprehensive Assessment and Planning as well as the Integrated case Management project.

Of particular interest (as of this writing) to members from South Island is the “soon to be released” results and implementation of the South Island Contract review.

We would like to thank Jennifer for her comprehensive ED Reports – they are a great source of pertinent information. Also kudos to all the staff at the Fed Office - you guys is wonderful.

Of course we are all awaiting an opportunity to learn more about the new Ministers and their priorities, as well as the release of the new budget in September and hope that many of the challenges we have raised over the last four years will be recognized.

North Region

Director: Daryl Goll, Cariboo Action Training Society

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MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

Chair: Michelle Fortin, Watari Research

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Over the past year, the Federation has experienced a substantial increase in interest in our organization that has translated into 6 new full members and 2 new associate members. We believe that it is in part a reflection of the outreach provided by the office to communities in the north and east, increasing our relevance and presence.

We met on a couple of occasions with the support of Doug Hayman, to review the categories of membership, expectations of membership and member services. In addition, the committee had an opportunity to use some of the information held within the first member survey to identify directions that will best support members and their needs.

There is recognition that with our name change, the new Federation of Community Social Services of British Columbia may be appealing to a greater number of community organizations providing services across the province. As a result, there are proposed changes to our constitution that reflect this broader spectrum and encourage new membership growth.

To guarantee that increased membership does not mean minimizing standards, the application package was reviewed and additional steps were put in place to ensure that new members are aligned with the Federation's vision and values and that we are more responsive to their needs. There is an expectation that new members fill out our long form survey, agree to meet specific Federation expectations and are able to identify their connection to the community served.

Thank you very much to Vicki Dobbyn, MacLynne Bourquin and Doug Hayman for lending their experience, expertise and time to this work; as well as the Federation office crew who have spent a substantial amount of time fielding calls about the organization. Looking forward, we are excited about the vibrant growth opportunities for the Federation and welcome the energy new members bring.

STAFF TEAM REPORTS

Doug Hayman, Director of Strategic Development

Contact: doug@fcssbc.ca

The Director of Strategic Development position was established in July, 2008. A key focus for this position has been to develop and implement strategies to enhance the understanding of and support to the social services sector in this province. This has been most evident in the work of developing a new organization called Board Voice, whose mission is to bring the voice of community governors to both politicians and the public on behalf of community-based social services. This is a substantive undertaking and the Federation has been supporting the development through planning, advisory and secretariat services. The Founding conference for Board Voice is on November 6th and 7th.

Another strategic development has been the work of bringing provincial level social service organizations together in the province to determine common interests and to plan how we might work collaboratively in the future. A second Summit meeting scheduled for the fall aims to develop a Memorandum of Understanding to guide joint communication and action. On another front, the Federation has been asked to support the new CEO network in meeting some of the challenges they are having with funders. We will be providing research, planning, advisory and secretariat support for this group over the next year.

The development of the Research to Practice network got underway in January and the network has already developed a number of articles for distribution to members. We will be undertaking an evaluation of this process over the next few months to determine how best to transmit the knowledge put together by this accomplished team of academics and researchers from post secondary institutions across the province. Eventually, we hope that these articles will provide an opportunity for more interactive responses.

Some time was spent this year in reaching out to members and other agencies across the province to listen to their issues and successes and to keep everyone posted on what the Federation has been doing and why membership is important. This involved meetings in communities such as Terrace, Prince George, Ft. St. John, Cranbrook and Castlegar as well as conference calls and work with the membership committee of the board and individual agencies.

In addition to the above, initiatives such as election planning, the Federation name change and a host of other initiatives have made this an interesting and dynamic year with the Federation.

Amy Woodruffe, Policy and Practice Analyst

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2008/2009 marks the first year that the Federation has had a Policy and Practice Analyst (Analyst) position. This position functions to support the work of the Executive Director and Director of Strategic Development and general FCSS membership. Throughout the year, my focus was on supporting the Recruitment and Retention Project and the Applied Promising Practices Project and responding to various membership requests regarding policy and practice questions.

Unique to the Analyst position was an opportunity to connect with numerous frontline workers around the province and grow the Federation network amongst younger generations of employees in the sector. The position also afforded the opportunity to co-create a provincial Advisory Committee for the Recruitment and Retention (R&R) Project that included expanding the Federation network to recent and established immigrants, Aboriginal communities, the South Asian community on the lower mainland, and other sector stakeholders that previously would not have had contact with the work of the Federation.

Overall, it has been a full, exciting, and productive year that has produced new relationships with diverse stakeholders. 2009/2010 will be an opportunity to continue to nurture these valuable relationships that will undoubtedly bolster the work of the Federation and contribute to the growth and development of the Community Social Services Sector.