



# Foster Parent Program



## **FOSTER CARE SUPPORT PROJECT WHEATLAND COUNTY**

In October of 2004 you received information from our CEO Bonnie Johnston about an exciting project that Calgary and Area Child and Family Services Authority (CFSA) and McMan Youth, Family and Community Services were introducing as a different approach to providing support services to Authority foster families in the Wheatland County community (which includes Ardenode, Careseland, Cheadle, Cluny, Gleichen, Hussar, Langdon, Lyalta, Nightingales, Rockyford, Rosebud, Standard and Strathmore).

McMan has now hired a Placement Coordinator, Jennifer Reiger, to provide support to Authority foster families in that area and will work with Authority Foster Care Workers who are responsible for licensing these homes. These workers will be located at the Dover MST.

Jennifer has now been able to meet with all the Strathmore Authority foster families, has attended a Support Meeting and has now started to attend Matching meetings. She has also started to complete the agency section of the Foster Home Annual Evaluation. McMan and Calgary and Area continue to sort out areas of responsibilities between Regional staff and Jennifer.

Jennifer works out of McMan's Pineridge office located at #5, 6208 Rundlehorn Dr. N.E. She can be contacted by telephone at 508-0435 and/or e-mailing her at [jennifer.rieger@mcman.ca](mailto:jennifer.rieger@mcman.ca). It is important that all caseworkers and their team leaders be aware of how support is being provided to the Authority foster families in this project and contact Jennifer if there are issues that impact support for these families.

One of the exciting aspects of this project is the introduction of a foster home mentoring program. Two or three mentoring families will be selected to provide support to new foster families in the Wheatland area. Existing foster families will also have the opportunity to access the support of the mentor family if desired. The purpose of the mentoring program is:

- To increase the retention rate of foster parents
- To promote and encourage support and guidance for new foster parents
- To foster a sense of community among foster parents

The mentoring family will provide bi-weekly phone and/or face-to-face support to all new foster families for the first six months. They will help the new families navigate through the Children's Services system and assist with behavior management strategies and other day-to-day challenges facing new foster families.

Mentoring families will be compensated at a rate of \$150 per month and will be reimbursed for their mileage at the current rate.

More information about the mentoring program including the criteria to become a mentoring family will be communicated in the near future.

Communication  
February 1, 2005