



# WINDSONG NEWS

*Windsong Child and Family Services Authority*

Quarterly Update, Fall 2001

## Message from our CEO

### OUR VISION

*All children and their families are valued and supported in a safe, nurturing community that meets their needs*



1st prize (6-10 yrs):  
Evan Alexander Hunter, Exshaw



1st prize (11-14 yrs):  
Tonisha Wesley, Exshaw



2nd prize (6-10 yrs):  
Allie Middleton, High River



2nd prize (11-14 yrs):  
Alana Twayoungmen, Exshaw

During the Authority's first year of operation the challenge for the Board and staff was to develop the ability to deliver mandated services. The Board and Staff are very proud that we have done much more than this. Children and Families in the rural area are beginning to have the same type of access to services as families in urban centres. The growth in the number of families opening their homes to foster or adopt children in the future will provide the Authority the ability to provide permanency and less restrictive placements for children.

Early Intervention Programs in the Region (which are already starting to demonstrate outcomes for children), are an investment in Alberta's children. The Authority will continue to face significant challenges ahead. The increased accessibility and responsiveness has resulted in more children and families being served in each of the mandated program areas. This growth requires the Authority to be a learning, thinking organization that continuously seeks out strategies to help children and families achieve the best outcomes possible, in the most cost efficient manner.

The Authority continues to work toward the Aboriginal pillar, so last Spring, schools throughout the region were invited to participate in the second poster essay contest to encourage all people to "Share in the Celebration" of National Aboriginal Day on June 21<sup>st</sup>. Over 300 children from schools within Windsong geographic boundaries participated. Unfortunately, there were no entries in the 15-18 age category, so it was decided to award prizes to runners-up in the other age categories.

On behalf of the Board members, myself, and the staff of Windsong Child & Family Services we would like to thank all the participants of our poster and essay contest. Everyone did a wonderful job, which made choosing the winners a difficult task.

We were very pleased by the number of entries and impressed by the quality of work submitted. Each of you did a fine job making this National Aboriginal Day -- a special celebration!

*Larry Mathieson, CEO*

The Winners of the Poster Contest are showing left

The Winners of the Essay Contest are:

1st prize (6-10 yrs) Braden Johns, Longview School      Runner up: YooBin Noh, Longview School  
1st prize (11-14 yrs) Emma Wight, Longview School      Runner up: Tyler Surina, Vulcan H.C.E.

**Congratulations to the Winners and best wishes to all!**

## Greetings from the Board

September is a month of new beginnings for the Windsong Board. The appointments for 2001-2004 have recently been announced by Iris Evans, Minister of Children's Services. The current governance body is comprised of five returning board members and two newly appointed board members (see the following page for a compilation of board members with biographies).

All board members and our C.E.O. attended a provincial orientation at Edmonton in September, which provided information around the structure of the Ministry, the provision of mandated services, and local governance.

Look for our 2001 Annual Report, as it will be available this fall. Board minutes can be located on our web page and at each of the three district offices. We always value input to aid us in our decision making and look forward to receiving input from our communities during our upcoming consultations around the 2002-2005 Business Plan.

We anticipate the development of a strong working relationship, as a board and together with our partners in our communities, that will enhance the delivery of services to children and families in Region 3.

**Dodie Gaudry Sharon Davis Toni Garlock Al Hagan Marie Poelman Cathy Thompson Kerry O'Conner**

# Board Members

September, 2001

## ***Dodie Gaudry, Aboriginal Co-Chair***

Dodie is a member of the Metis Nation of Alberta. She has served as President of Metis Nation of Alberta Local 333 – Foothills and also as a member of the Regional Council for Zone III of the MNA. She was a member of the Foothills Association to Aid the Handicapped, Black Diamond Recreation Committee and was a former Steering Committee member for Region 3. She has two sons, Ken age 25 and James age 19. Dodie lives on a farm outside of Longview with her partner Murray Bokvist.

## ***Sharon Davis, Co-chair***

In addition to serving as Director of the Nanton Quality of Life Foundation, Sharon has served as Chair of the Nanton Interagency and as a Board Member with the Community Education Advisory Committee, Project Read and the Alberta Regional Mental Health Advisory Committee. She has also been a Steering Committee member from the inception of the planning process. She lives in Nanton.

## ***Toni Garlock, Board Member***

Toni is a teacher with a special interest in literacy. She is past Chair of the Rainbow Literacy Society and former Director of the Family Literacy Action Group. She has a master's degree in Adult Education and Literacy and has volunteered on a number of community boards and associations including the Vulcan Day Care Board. Toni is married to Ken and has three sons, Andrew 12, Marshal 9, and Alex 6. She lives in Vulcan and is serving a second consecutive term with the Windsong Board.



From left: Marie Poelman, Sharon Davis, Dodie Gaudry, Larry Mathieson CEO, Cathy Thompson, Kerry O'Conner, Toni Garlock, Al Hagan, Jan Pistawka—Executive Assistant

## ***Al Hagan, Board Member***

Al, a retired Social Worker currently resides in Okotoks. He was formerly the Chair of the Michener Centre Board. Currently, Al is a member of the Alberta College of Social Workers Council. Al was also a member of the Region 3 Steering Committee and is currently serving his second consecutive term as a Board member of Windsong.

## ***Marie Poelman, Board Member***

Marie, whose background is in the health profession, is a Registered Nurse. She continued her education, achieving a Bachelor of Nursing and Masters Degree in Science Administration. Marie has worked for over 25 years in health care administration in Calgary and the surrounding area. She lives in High River and has volunteered on a number of community Boards and Associations while raising her four children in this area. Marie is also serving her second consecutive term as a Windsong Board member.

## ***Kerry O'Conner, Board Member***

Kerry has lived and worked within the Banff area for several years and possesses a great deal of knowledge on the issues faced by children and youth in the surrounding area. Kerry is the mother of three children, one with special needs. Kerry is serving her first term as Board member for Windsong.

## ***Cathy Thompson, Board Member***

Cathy is the mother of three children, one adopted and has also acted as guardian for two other children. Catherine's experiences with Child and Family Services has given her insight into many of the services being delivered. Catherine also holds a particular interest in the welfare of Aboriginal children in the community. Cathy lives in Mossleigh and is serving her first term as a Board member on Windsong CFS Authority.

## Authority's Core Businesses:

*Children, families and individuals who live within the boundaries of Windsong Child and Family Services Authority have access to the following services:*

**Child Protection Services**

**Early Intervention Services**

**Protection of Children Involved in Prostitution**

**Adoption Services**

**Day Care Programs Services**

**Handicapped Services**

**Family Violence Services**

## Gerry Bowes

Gerry is the Administrative Support person for the Claresholm office and has a multi-faceted workload. She answers the telephone, files papers, types reports, prepares Day Care licenses, operates the DAP's system, issues payments, prepares post adoption agreements, greets people as they come through the door, and in general – runs the office. When we asked Gerry what she enjoyed most about her job, she said “everything”.

Gerry has been with Windsong for 1.5 years but has been a Government employee since 1975. She was initially with the housing department (10 years) and then with Social Services (11 years) before joining our team at Windsong. She will be eligible for retirement in 2.5 years, but is not sure she will be ready at that time.

Gerry has 3 daughters; one in Claresholm, one in Grand Prairie and one in New Brunswick. They, in turn, have given her 9 grandchildren. She often has said that she always wanted a baseball team, and now she has one.

Gerry enjoys gardening, crafts and golfing and rollerblading with her grandchildren. She used to be an avid baseball player but is now content to sit on the bench and watch the grandkids play. She volunteers, on a regular basis, at the Knights of Columbus' Bingo.



## Karen Berg

Karen Berg is the Foster Care Supervisor for Windsong Child and Family Services. The supervision and support that she provides to Foster Parents, allows them to maximize their ability to care for their children. She is also responsible for assessing potential foster parents, acting as intermediary between foster families and child welfare workers, co-ordinating training for foster families, and providing appropriate placements for children.

Karen has been in this position for one year but was previously involved with Windsong in a contract position to develop a report, “Prevention of Children involved in Prostitution” (PCHiP). Prior to her employment with Windsong, she worked with Big Brothers and Big Sisters of Lacombe, the Alberta Hospital in Ponoka, and Catholic Social Services in Red Deer. She was also a Youth Development Worker and an In-Home Support Worker.

Karen also has a busy “volunteer” life that has involved working with Women's shelters, organizing workshops for immigrant women, and serving on the executive committee for the Sylvan Lake Youth Justice Committee. She has also published an article in the Social Work Journal and has fostered children.

Karen enjoys building relationships with foster families and helping them to meet their unique challenges. She finds great reward in receiving thanks for her assistance and seeing the foster families “do whatever it takes” to help a child. She has a good working relationship with her co-workers and supervisor at Windsong and appreciates the team approach to assisting children and families.

On a personal note, Karen has been married for 11 years “to a great guy” and has two beautiful children, a son, 10 years old and a daughter, 9 years old. They have 2 dogs and 1 cat. She was born and raised in Saskatoon and “moved West” in 1995. She “sure doesn't miss those cold prairie winters”!

She loves to spend time with her family – her home is her sanctuary. Her “de-stress” hobbies include decoupage and painting whiteware. She loves everything Victorian and is always on the lookout for cute cherubs and Victorian collectibles. She also loves elephants and has been collecting them for years. She finds it touching and beautiful that these gentle giants are so family oriented and show such care and protectiveness for their young, and for each other.



## Shawn Carr

Shawn works out of the Canmore office and has been with Windsong for 1.5 years. His position as Community Social Worker involves a number of duties which include: Screening and Investigations, Case Management, View to Adopt, Post Adoption Services and Community Development activities, such as attendance at Inter-agency meetings and participation with a steering committee to address drug and alcohol concerns.

Prior to his work with Windsong, Shawn was employed with “Closer to Home” in Calgary for approximately 4 years and had summer employment as a Youth Worker with Calgary Parks and Recreation during his University years.

Shawn believes that the most satisfying aspect of his job is assisting families to make good decisions regarding their children.

Shawn and his significant other, Cassandra Boutcher, have recently purchased a home in the Canmore area and enjoy many of the outdoor activities that the mountain areas offer. Shawn has been training for the “Iron Man” and was a competitor in Penticton on August 27, 2001.



# Foster Care Services:

*Foster care has the mandate to provide stability and safety for children who are unable to remain within their natural families. The foster family acts as a substitute or extension of the natural family when the natural family is unable or unwilling to assume responsibility for its children. Foster families provide appropriate family and parental role models, while working as a part of a team, which includes social workers and other professionals.*

Foster care is based on the following guiding principles:

- The natural family is the preferred relationship and best environment in which to raise a child.
- When a child's basic survival, security and developmental needs are not being met, and the child's family or extended family is not able or willing to care for him or her, then foster care is the preferred initial service to the child and family.
- Foster Care tries to reunite children and families as soon as possible according to a casework plan, which is agreed on at the time of placement. When returning home becomes impossible, adoption then becomes the option of choice for the child's future.
- Foster Care is supportive of maintaining the child's ties with the birth family, culture, social and religious heritage, and home community when it is in the best interest of the child.
- The child is the primary client in the foster care process. All decisions are made with the best interest of the child in mind.
- Foster Care requires teamwork between foster families, social workers and other professionals to achieve security and stability for the children and families involved.

Foster care is viewed as temporary, supplemental care when the child's birth family is unable to provide the care the child needs.

Foster parents must be at least 18 years of age. They receive ongoing training, which prepares them to best meet the needs of the children they serve.

For more information about Foster Care, contact Karen Berg, our Foster Care specialist.

**Service Sites Toll- Free 24 hrs: 1-888-652-8922**

**High River Base Office**  
 (CEO, Admin, Services)  
 2nd Floor Provincial Bldg  
 129 - 4th Ave West  
 Box 5147  
 Phone 403/652-8360  
 Fax 403/652-8365

**Canmore Base Office**  
 (Services)  
 3rd Floor Provincial Building  
 #301, 800 Railway Ave  
 Phone 403/609-6414  
 Fax 403/678-6730

**Claresholm Base Office**  
 (Services)  
 2nd Flr, Claresholm Corner  
 4901 - 2nd Street  
 Box 2079  
 Phone 403/625-1472  
 Fax 403/625-3771

## Rainbow Literacy Society Wins Canada Post Award

The Vulcan County Rainbow Literacy Society was chosen as a winner in the 2001 Canada Post Literacy Award, Community Leadership category for the province of Alberta.

A panel of 28 judges from across Canada selected 33 winners in 4 categories from among 319 submissions across Canada.

Representatives from the Rainbow Literacy Society attended an award ceremony on September 7 at Edmonton, where they received a \$2000.00 cash award and a certificate of achievement.

The Rainbow Literacy Society provides a number of literacy programs to residents of Vulcan County including the Building Blocks family literacy program. Windsong supports Building Blocks as one of its Early Intervention initiatives.

***Windsong Board and  
 Community of Residence:***  
***Dodie Gaudry - Longview***  
***Sharon Davis - Nanton***  
***Toni Garlock - Vulcan***  
***Marie Poelman, - High River***  
***Al Hagan - Okotoks***  
***Cathy Thompson - Mossleigh***  
***Kerry O'Conner - Banff***

