



# AFKA Board Reports

REPORTING PERIOD: APRIL 1, 2021 – JUNE 30, 2021

# **ALBERTA FOSTER AND KINSHIP ASSOCIATION**

## **QUARTERLY REPORTS**

**REPORTING PERIOD: APRIL 1, 2021 – JUNE 30, 2021**

### **A. EXECUTIVE REPORTS**

1. PRESIDENT.....SYLVIA THOMPSON
2. VICE PRESIDENT.....RENE RAJOTTE
3. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR.....KATHERINE JONES

### **B. DIRECTOR REPORTS**

1. TREATY 7.....JANET DELORME
2. TREATY 8.....CARLY MORTON
3. SOUTH REGION.....MARLIN MEYER
4. CALGARY REGION.....MONIQUE MCCARDLE
5. CENTRAL REGION.....HEATHER GUARD
6. EDMONTON REGION.....LINDA KRAUSKOPF
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## **A. EXECUTIVE REPORTS**

## **AFKA PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

**Sylvia Thompson**

Welcome to Summer. The warmer weather has arrived and it looks to be a great summer.

Planning for our fall provincial training Conference is now well underway. The scheduled dates are October 28 – 31. This year will be a bit shorter timeframe as Foster and Kinship Families and Social Worker of the year awards will be given out at Zone Training/Appreciation events. We plan on presenting only supplemental training. We will also have an update from the Ministry about all the changes that have happened. Friday evening will be a time to get together. This will allow for you to spend time visiting with old friends, make new ones, play some card or board games or whatever you choose to do for relaxation. I am looking forward to spending time with all of you.

The AFKA is currently in the process of doing a Governance Review. This is an opportunity to review our bylaws, policies and procedures and to ensure we are following both.

Our Board of Directors is responsible for providing direction for our association. Because of this and a desire for more input, we are discussing increasing the number of directors on the board. More information to follow. At the same time, we are looking at Board training to help our current and any new members to do the best we can do.

We continue to work on having a local association/group with a president or delegate in every community that has a local Children's Services office in rural Alberta. Many of the larger centers have great streams of communications now. Ideally all of the local presidents/delegates attend regional council in their regions which share information about what is happening in Children's Services and our world. The provincial presidents have regular meetings to discuss concerns, and happenings to improve the fostering experience. This information is then passed on to our office who meet regularly with the ministry. If we can continue to bring issues forward, the ministry has an opportunity to solve them. You cannot solve something you are not aware of. We use this time to also report good things happening and there are many. Thank you to all who participate.

As you can see, important topics that need your input.

Please consider becoming involved in any way that works for you. You can reach out to me at 780 621-7815 or the office at 780 429-9923 with any question or to provide input and interest.

I am looking forward to more input and communication with all in the future.

Have a great summer

Your president,

Sylvia Thompson

## **AFKA VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

**Rene Rajotte**

Hello to everyone and I hope that everyone is managing through these more difficult times. Our warmer weather is definitely here. The trees finally look like they have come into full leaf. We finally got a much-needed rain, as we have had no precipitation since last November. The ranchers are just starting to put cows to pasture as the grass has started to grow.

A bit of an update on the camp. We had plans to open the campsite area for the long weekend in May, but that did not happen, as the insurance company wanted a much larger premium for us to open the park. As of right now we are still working on that and hopefully have that resolved sooner than later and have the camp open to Foster and Kinship Parents to enjoy.

As many of you know, Katherine Jones our Executive Director is stepping down at the end of the year to move into her retirement. All the best Katherine. We know it won't be easy as AFKA has been such a big part of your life. I remember thinking of what it would be like when you retired and to me you have been there forever and it would be hard to imagine you not being there. Thanks for everything you have done and will get done until your last day at work.

I hope that everyone has a great summer as it does look like Covid restrictions will ease up a bit, so play safe and enjoy your summer.

All the Best,

Rene Rajotte

## **AFKA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

**Katherine Jones**

July is here and it brought with it the sun and some very warm weather. I hope you managed to stay comfortable during the extreme heat. If you didn't have air conditioning I imagine you spent a great deal of time in your basement where, at least in my house, it was much cooler than the rest of the house!

Before I begin to get into AFKA business, I would like to acknowledge a few very special people. We were very sad to see Kelland leave as she was such a valuable employee. We wish her all the best in her new position with a former employer. I want to thank the rest of the staff for jumping in and taking on work that Kelland use to do in order to keep things moving. Melissa, Amey and Shelly, you are extraordinary people and I am honoured to have the pleasure of working with such dedicated people. Thank you!

I would also like to thank our President, Sylvia Thompson for her leadership. It is not an easy job being the President of such a large not-for-profit organization. The amount of time and work you put in every day as a volunteer, to better the AFKA, should not go unnoticed! Thank you, Sylvia, for your guidance and your friendship. I appreciate all you have done and continue to do.

I also want to thank a very special man, Norm Brownell, our Past President. Norm has been a very strong supporter and one of the founding members of the AFKA and although he has retired as President, he continues to stay involved and offers support in any area needed. He has been Chair of the Brownell Children's Retreat and ensures things run as smoothly as possible at the camp. Norm, thank you for all you do!

In addition, I would like to thank our Vice President and our Board of Directors for the work they do. In case you are not aware, the Vice President and your Board of Directors are also volunteers with very busy lives, however they find the time to do all they can to support you, our members. I thank you all for doing your best to support the caregivers in your regions.

I would like to commend caregivers for the flexibility you have shown during this very difficult time with the Covid 19 pandemic. I can only imagine the impact of the lifting of the restrictions has had on many of you and your families. You are amazing people who do all you can to protect the children in your care, to keep them connected to family in whatever way you can and to prepare them to reunite with family at some point during their journey. A big thank you to all of you!

The AFKA has arranged with IntegralOrg to perform a Governance Review of the AFKA. This review will be helpful in ensuring the AFKA is working the way it should be and will recommend any changes to the way we do business that may be needed. It will also highlight the areas that we are proficient in.

Nominations for the Bursary applications are in and we are in the process of selecting the winners. We will announce the winners at a later date.

The nomination packages for the AFKA Annual Awards were sent out. The nominations are sent to the point person within the regions who will work with the selection committee to have the names of the winners back to the AFKA by August 1, 2021. This year the AFKA will present the awards to the winners at the Regional events, not at the AFKA Conference. I look forward seeing many of you at these events.

The AFKA Policies and Procedures Manual have been update and approved by the Board of Directors. The AFKA Bylaws have been updated and will be presented at the AGM for approval by the members.

The AFKA is involved with the newly created Supplemental Training Committee. This committee consists of department staff, Ministry staff and the AFKA. They are to organize and provide options for approved supplemental training virtually to caregivers provincially through the AFKA. We will provide updates in the future.

I am happy to announce the CAST and Mentorship programs have both grown over the past few months, allowing us to provide better supports to our members. I believe we have the Edmonton and South Zone Leadership to thank for their help in supporting the AFKA and getting the word down to staff and caregivers about the AFKA's supports and services for caregivers.

The 2021 AFKA Conference Planning Committee is well on it's way to organizing and planning our conference in Jasper this year. The conference will be held at the Sawridge Hotel and Conference Center from October 28<sup>th</sup> to the 30<sup>th</sup>. We hope to see many of you there. It will be such a nice treat to be able to get together as a group of individuals from across the province, sharing and learning from each other.

The AFKA has increased the amounts available to caregivers under the Legal Assistance Program. These changes will come into effect July 1, 2021. Please check the AFKA webpage for more details.

The AFKA has been in discussions with the Ministry Working Group regarding caregiver retention and recognition. Watch for update on our webpage.

The AFKA has also been in discussions with the Placement Concerns Response Working Group regarding the new policy and practice guidelines for assessments of caregiver concerns. The updates to these policies and practice guidelines were released in May 2021 within the updated Enhancement Act Policy Manual release.

Edmonton Zone workers are connecting with the AFKA to provide information sessions with their new caregivers both individually and in small groups.

The AFKA did virtual presentations to caregivers in both the south Zone and the North Zone regarding the programs, services, and membership provided to caregivers by the AFKA. They were very well received and have opened the door to more caregivers being supported through membership, as well as the mentorship and CAST programs.

We continue to update our website, as required, to ensure links are live and information is relevant. Please contact our office if you do happen to notice that a link is not working.

In closing, I would like to welcome Janet Delorme to our Board of Directors as Treaty 7 Director. I look forward to working with you Janet. Welcome!

I wish everyone a very peaceful and relaxing summer. Enjoy the warmth!

Katherine Jones

Executive Director



## **B. DIRECTOR REPORTS**

## **AFKA DIRECTOR – TREATY 7**

### **Janet Delorme**

Oki, my name is Janet Delorme. I am a Blood Tribe member from Treaty 7 area. I am also a mother of three and grandmother of four including my kinship child. I am currently a kinship parent and in the process of adoption. I have been a kinship parent for over 3 years. I have actually been actively seeking kinship role from 2012 from being a support for other friends and family. Having children stay in my home for overnights and weekends.

A little background information on my skills and experience, I have over 20 years working as a public servant as well as customer service. With my knowledge I worked many positions in administration such as Administrative assistant, Executive Assistant, Customer Service representative and Administrative Coordinator and receptionist. I have financial background as well working many years as a bookkeeper, accounting technician and data entry clerk in both accounts payable and receivables.

As an urban indigenous person, I try to maintain a traditional lifestyle and attend many cultural events as well as ceremonies. Since the pandemic it has been put on hold but I do try to maintain the traditional connection especially with my current employment. I find the importance of the cultural connection is being lost within our indigenous children such as language, teachings and knowledge holding with that brings disconnection to their tribe or nation. As indigenous people a sense of belonging is very important but sometimes it's very difficult when they do not know where to start or do not have the adequate supports in place to even start especially when it comes to traditional dancing. One may not know the protocols or how to even start on how to learn to pow-wow dance.

I am a crafty person and very creative. I know how to bead, caribou tufting and sew which I make regalia. I constantly challenge myself and try something new currently trying my hands-on approach with painting. I am not a Van Gogh but tend to enjoy designing using different mediums.

What I would like to bring in this position is a voice or connection with treaty 7 nation. As a kinship parent I found it very difficult with my adoption process and it has not been easy transition. Not to post blame but the bureaucracy within Children Services and the Federal government can be overwhelming. As well as the advocacy piece for indigenous children especially when they leave their current foster home and branch out to live independently. I find the financial support in place should be addressed. Taken from experience most children who turn 18 are not aware what is the next move? This adds stress and pressure on them thinking they are going to become homeless. Again, it comes down to the communication issues within the caseworker to child.

Thank you and I look forward to meeting everyone. Since this is my first time, I will try my best to bring ideals and topics to each meeting.

Sincerely,

Janet

**AFKA DIRECTOR – TREATY 8**

**Carly Morton**

*No submission as of time of release.*

**AFKA DIRECTOR – SOUTH REGION**

**Marlin Meyer**

Now that the world is getting back to some sort of normal, things are happening again.

The Lethbridge Association has booked the Pavan Park picnic area for a Back to School BBQ on September 9. We have booked bouncy castles for the children to play on. This year we are starting at 4pm and ending at 8pm. The cost is free!!! We look forward to seeing as many as possible there.

We are talking with the Foster Care Unit about hosting a Citation Awards Banquet in October. This is still in the works and we will send out notices when a day has been confirmed.

**AFKA DIRECTOR – CALGARY REGION**  
**Monique McCardle**

The CFPA held our annual general meeting June 21, 2021 over zoom. We welcomed a new Vice President, treasurer and AFKA rep. We currently have 2 director positions open.

Over the last couple of months, we've been busy working on the finishing touches of our 7 visit room updates. The rooms received a new coat of paint along with all new furniture, rugs and toys for families to enjoy. These 7 visit rooms are located in Calgary region children services offices across the city.

We have launched the Take me home toys website. An online space where CFPA members can browse new and gently used toys and items for children, collect them in your online cart and arrange a pick-up time. All items are free. There is a huge variety on the website!

Our fireside virtual chat has been well attended over the past several months. We have a knowledgeable therapist joining us in August and September to share the benefits of Theraplay both in theory and in practice.

Lastly, we have decided to celebrate our Foster and Kinship banquet virtually this fall, hopefully for the last time! We look forward to seeing everyone in person for our celebration banquet in 2022.

**AFKA DIRECTOR – CENTRAL REGION**  
**Heather Guard**

Hello Everyone,



I would just like to say what a pleasure it is to be representing Central Alberta again. Summer is a time to relax and make memories. This summer is made a little sweeter because Alberta has gone back to Pre Covid, so we can once again go back to doing all the things we love doing. I hope everyone has time to watch the sunset after a wonderful fun filled day

Yours sincerely,

Heather Guard

## **AFKA DIRECTOR – EDMONTON REGION**

**Linda Krauskopf**

Not too much happening, except COVID 19 doing its number on us all. I am still doing Zoom meetings for Linkages (foster care) and Kinship Care. Hot topics are private guardianship applications and how they are done. We have about 45 being done in the Edmonton Region. We have the biggest PGO number - 1,500 some bands are sending lawyers, and some are not, and they are getting granted.

We have a new timeline for PCR, look at the chart for the timelines. We will start getting back to regular training for the region with some very interesting topics. The region is letting other regions take training as long as it's not full.

Look for things to change around how STM are done. It has been made a part of the STM to have support work stay after, and make sure you understand and feel like you have been heard. Hopefully making you more part of the team, also, in the region all new Foster or Kinship homes will be connected with the mentorship team to advise them of what they do and about the AFKA.

I am also in discussion around the Jasper Conference in Oct 28 – 31; hope to see some of you there.

Yes, Foster or Kinship homes are short, but it seems different ages, sex, and babies' homes (baby homes need Baby Safety) and at different times. We do have a lot of girl homes right now.

If you need any information or any help please feel free to contact me at:

Phone: 780-940-4465 or

Email: [paulind@shaw.ca](mailto:paulind@shaw.ca)

Sincerely,

Linda Krauskopf

## **AFKA DIRECTOR – NORTH REGION**

**Joyce Golding**

So much has happened since my last board report, that there has been a shift in how we foster from this point on. We had a caregiver assessment, and have never felt so helpless. It didn't matter what detailed records we kept or that we had done everything within our power to help a child. It didn't matter that we had requested in writing exactly how much supervision this child required (keeping in mind we are not a group home and we had to sleep sometime) The process took over 6 months.

I would remind everyone to keep detailed daily logs. Make any requests for counseling in writing with copies to office manager, supervisor, worker, and support worker and of course one for yourself. This may be time consuming but, in an investigation, it can save you.

I am happy to be back as I missed the contact with foster and kinship homes and being a CAST rep in others investigations as I know how important that support is.

Thank you to Terri Forseille from the West Stream who stepped in to make sure our voice was still heard. Thank you to Sylvia Thompson as my CAST rep.

We have an incredible team at the AFKA office thank you to everyone who called, messaged and texted, your support was appreciated during this difficult time.

The AFKA is there for you with supports to help you through difficult times and to answer concerns or questions.

Joyce Golding

780-723-2855