

ANNUAL REPORT

2008 – 2009



812 Broughton Street, Victoria, BC V8W 1E4
Phone: (250)386-4331 Fax: (250)386-4301
1-877-386-4333 (Toll Free Legal Hotline)

www.bcf.it.org
email: info@bcfit.org

VISION STATEMENT

BC Families in Transition is the province's premier agency for all family members facing change and challenges in their relationships. BCFIT's professional staff combines current knowledge with training to provide a wide range of caring, timely, and effective services.

MISSION STATEMENT

BC Families in Transition helps children, youth, and adults manage the challenges of separation, divorce, or transition to a new family structure. Our highly qualified staff, working with other community agencies, provides information and practical and emotional support so people facing these challenges can make the decisions that are best for everyone. BCFIT believes all individuals can find ways to move forward in their lives when family relationships have changed or are changing.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Legal Supervisor **Clinical Supervisor**
Crystal Buchan, LL.B. Allan Wade, Ph.D., R.C.C.

CLINICAL INTERNS

Cary Wright, M.A. (in progress) Mitra Jordan, M.A.
Erin Laird, M.A. Nick Ruedy, M.A.
Gail Atkinson-Ireland, M.A., R.C.C. Susan Ilivitsky, M.A. (in progress)
Maria Melo, M.F.S.S. Tamara Knott, M.A., R.C.C.
Jillian Mickelborough-Sugiyama, LL.B., M.A.

FIRST RESPONSE SERVICES (FRONT END)

Jan Handley Craig Vaughn, B.A., Court Support
Michael Berry, M.A., M.Ed. Leigh Wilkins, Dip. Legal Assistance, Court Support
Rhoda Waddington, B.S.W. Support
Sandra Teiffel, B.A., Dip. Ed. Lisa Williams, Court Support
Melvin Klassen, B.Sc., Computer Consultant

PUBLIC RELATIONS TEAM

Laetia Reid, B.A., Public Relations Coordinator
Barbara Bronstein, B.A. Sher Snow, M.B.A.
Mary Ann Harris

PRESIDENT'S REPORT



What a pleasure to report on yet another fiscally productive and successful year. Once again, our Board has ensured and maintained the financial integrity of this agency. Our Executive Director has provided superb leadership. He and his staff continue to maintain excellence and integrity in their work. With a staff and volunteer base of 40, the comprehensive range of services continues to meet the increasing demand, especially in financially challenging times. As a mental health professional, I am honoured to be involved with this agency and am assured that our clients, both present and future, will receive the assistance they need from the professional, experienced, compassionate and supportive staff and volunteers.

I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to my Board colleagues for their hard work and commitment, and for sharing and supporting the vision.

Jane C. Taylor Lee, President

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT



BC Families in Transition is, as far as we can determine, one of only three non-profit organizations in North America that specialize in providing the range of services we do for families and family members of all ages. In accordance with our Vision Statement, we are the province's premier agency for all family members facing changes and challenges in their relationships. We provide a range of professional counselling programs, legal support services, education, and referrals for well over 10,000 people per year.

We are now in our 31st year as an organization and have never been stronger. We have doubled in size and dramatically expanded in scope in the last 2 years, with a new name and broadened mandate. We have become a thriving team of more than 40 people—half of us volunteers—serving an increasingly abundant and diverse client base. We celebrated these and other achievements in the fall of 2008 with an Open House and a 30th Anniversary Celebration, shortly after we expanded and renovated our office.

Whereas the theme for the previous 2 fiscal years was rapid growth and reorganization, this year's goal was to grow at a moderate rate while refining our programs and building sustainability for the future. Even so, our volume of business increased considerably in all departments—Legal Support Services, Counselling, and Public Education—and we have kept up not only with increasing numbers of referrals but also with the growing complexity of the family situations clients bring to us for help. This trend toward ever-increasing complexity of clients' circumstances is not unique to our agency and neither is it likely to diminish during difficult economic times. Our staff, contractors, and volunteers have worked tirelessly to adapt our programs to suit the needs of each person and family, with the result that an overwhelming **90 to 99 percent** of our client evaluations state the services were very effective and surpassed expectations. We are proud of this outcome and determined to ensure we maintain the highest possible quality of service in all programs as we continue to grow. Never has teamwork been more important.

We have also developed new partnerships and initiatives this year: notably our *Lives in Transition* program, several major extensions to our flagship *Caught in the Middle* program, and our collaboration with the University of Victoria to develop outcome measurement tools. Our web of connections in the community now includes dozens of non-profit organizations, several private corporations, various inter-office committees and advocacy groups, and

universities spread across North America. And, despite several funding increases, we have accomplished all of this on a budget that amounts to **less than \$1 per week** for each person we serve.

Simply put, all members of our team whether paid or unpaid have demonstrated exceptional dedication to our programs, putting in more hours than I could ever expect and consistently setting high standards for their work. I am deeply honoured to be a part of this agency, serving shoulder-to-shoulder with so many enthusiastic, generous, accomplished people with a common vision for our community and a shared desire to do whatever it takes for each person who walks through our door. Above all it is this attitude that makes things work in our organization. It is in large part the professionalism of our team that inspires me daily to move this organization forward.

I would like to sincerely thank our devoted Board of Directors, who volunteer their time to assist me in keeping our beloved agency on track. Their primary role is to oversee the financial health of our agency, without which none of our activities would be possible, and to help me plan for sustainable growth. An important part of their role over the last few years has been to plan for better compensation for the staff, and this year we were able to act on that by implementing a benefits package.

As we look to the future, I believe this agency has a larger role to play in helping shape new ideas in our fields of practice. It is clear to me that together we are developing innovative approaches in our counselling programs and that we have important things to say in the family legal system, as well as related disciplines such as child protection and social work. These fields need not only critical reflection but also an active voice to promote change, and we have begun to conduct research and compile articles to contribute to professional literature.

Underlying all our activities and unifying all of our thinking is a common set of values for our work. For this reason our staff and Board have worked together to compile a Statement of Values for our agency, to accompany the revised Vision and Mission Statements we introduced in 2007. A draft of our values statement is presented below.

Richard Routledge, Executive Director

STATEMENT OF VALUES

Safety and Well-being – We are committed to the ideals of safety, well-being, and justice for all family members, with the welfare of children our top priority.

Responsibility – We are committed to the highest standards of excellence in service-delivery and organizational management. This includes responsible, compassionate, and ethical care for everyone who uses our services as well as a commitment to ongoing training and support for our staff and volunteers.

Autonomy – We believe people are responsible for making decisions that are right for them in their own lives. Our role is to support this process.

Diversity – We embrace diversity, including that of culture, race, ethnicity, gender, age, religion, ability, income, and sexual orientation.

Inclusion – We are committed to creating an inclusive workplace that welcomes input from all staff, contractors, volunteers, members, and clients. As a team, we draw on the resources, skills, and abilities of our team members in order to best serve our clients.

Respect – We are committed to respectful behaviour and communication, both within our workplace and in our community.

PUBLIC EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

This department consists of 2 major programs: First-Response Services (formerly called front-end services) and Parenting After Separation. Altogether this department directly provided services to more than **11,000** people this year.

FIRST-RESPONSE SERVICES

*“Sally” called in one morning not knowing where to turn. She was on maternity leave with a 6-month-old daughter and a son in grade one, and her immediate concern was her inability to pay rent because her husband had quit his job and moved out-of-town to live with a different woman. Her son was really missing him, and Sally herself was feeling very fragile and vulnerable especially as she had no family support in Victoria. Our assistant’s first response was to assure her that BCFIT could provide assistance. Because housing was an immediate issue our assistant gave her some information about Burnside-Gorge Community Centre, as they have ample housing lists. Our assistant then told her about our Legal Support Services program, and our ability to provide personal counselling for herself and play therapy for her son. She also told her a little about Caught in the Middle. When Sally explained she had no money to pay for these services, she was immediately assured that would not be a problem and she and her son would get the same amount of service as if she could afford to pay. Our assistant also explained we can work with her family for as long as it takes to make sure they will be OK. Sally started to cry and our assistant helped her to feel calm. She asked Sally where she would like to start, and when Sally didn’t know, our assistant suggested an appointment with a legal advocate might be a good first step. Sally sounded very relieved and said she felt better knowing she had found the right place.**

*Throughout this Report, the names of actual clients are disguised to protect confidentiality.

“First-Response Services” is the new name we have given to our front-end services team, in order to accurately describe what it does. Our staff and volunteers in this department are comprehensively trained to respond to the thousands of phone calls and drop-ins we receive each year, which include many crisis calls and other urgent requests for help in complex circumstances. Like a triage team in a hospital, the first-response personnel must not only attend to the details presented but also anticipate the complications that might arise and make

decisions about how best to organize services for each person or family in a short period of time. We have come to recognize the work of this department as public education, crisis intervention, and referral.

This year the First-Response Team handled about **10,800** such phone calls, about **500** drop-ins and **89** e-mail inquiries, for a combined total of approximately **11,400** first-response contacts. This number signifies an increase of some **48 percent** over last year’s combined total of 7,700. Moreover, the complexity and variety of calls are far greater than in previous years. The calls have increasingly required an ability to identify current and potential issues, provide a support service, assist people in handling stress and strong emotions, and generate referrals to other community resources. These changes seem to reflect the nature of the referrals we are receiving and our growing visibility in the community as a front-line resource. In addition, as our client base has become culturally more diverse it has become increasingly important for the department to attend to cultural variations. Over time it has become clear that “reception” is a misnomer for the work of this team as it denotes welcoming visitors and booking appointments, which is only part of its function. Given that about 1 in 8 adults who attend our centre express thoughts of suicide, at least half have some difficulties with addiction, and about 1 in 3 of the children we see either have been abused or are the subjects of abuse allegations, we anticipate the complexity and urgency of the calls will continue to rise.

Raji Goel is the department’s full-time staff member and supervisor. He is expertly assisted by Sandra Teiffel and 3 volunteers: Jan Handley, Rhoda Waddington, and Michael Berry. Counselling intern Cary Wright and a University of Victoria student named Menny Giatsos also volunteered for part of the year.

Jan, Rhoda, and Michael are exceptional volunteers and each contributes in many different ways to the organization. In particular I wish to highlight Rhoda’s commitments as she not only commutes to and from North Pender Island at her own expense to volunteer with us, she also dedicates many hours each week to fundraising for us by writing letters and arranging public-speaking engagements, which she herself carries out, again by commuting from Pender Island. She has been doing this for 2 years. Such generosity as a volunteer surely merits an award and is very much appreciated by our staff.

I also wish to acknowledge Sandra’s important role in helping to process our counselling wait lists, and Jan’s generosity in volunteering up to 5 times as many hours each week as she had originally agreed to do. Raji too merits very special acknowledgement as it is he who handles all of our bookkeeping, and who performs our janitorial and building maintenance work on his own time before the office opens each day.

Finally I wish to thank the United Way for providing additional funding this year for this program, as well as Robin Holden from the Source Group, Marg Rose from the Victoria Foundation, and Sher Snow, MBA for consulting about further fund development.

*Richard Routledge, Executive Director
(Anecdote provided by the First-Response Services team)*

PARENTING AFTER SEPARATION

“Bob” is a single father raising his 10-year-old daughter, “Sara”. Bob’s relationship with his pregnant ex-wife, “Mona”, has been hostile and he wants more contact with Sara and the new child after he or she is born. Sara, too, would like to see Bob more but does not want to take sides. Bob and Mona have both been seeing a private counsellor outside of BCFIT, who told them about our *Parenting After Separation* workshop as a valuable resource to help them co-parent in the best interests of their children. The

counsellor explained to Bob that he and Mona can each take the workshop, free of charge, and that they would not be able to attend the same workshop session together. After his visit with the counsellor, Bob spoke with Mona and they each called and registered for Parenting After Separation, Bob in a morning session and Mona in an evening one. Later, Bob returned to his counsellor and reported that he and Mona had both attended their workshops, both found them to be useful and highly informative, and were talking with one another about what they had learned and how they might more constructively approach co-parenting.

Parenting After Separation is a province-wide program for which the Ministry of the Attorney General has contracted us since 1997. It is an intensive 3-hour information session with some group interaction and individual assistance. The program content is standardized by the province and includes an introduction to the family legal system, as well as a large amount of information about co-parenting and group discussion with a problem-solving focus. There are always two presenters—one male, one female—and on most occasions there is a guest speaker from the Family Justice Centre. To minimize any potential safety risk for participants, there is always a security guard on duty.

During the past year we recorded our highest registration and participation rates. A total of **761** adults registered for this program (**380** court-mandated and **381** voluntary), of whom **503** attended (**265** court-mandated and **238** voluntary). We are still contracted to run the session only **33** times per year, and would prefer to run more to keep up with demand. Even though half the participants are mandated to attend, over **90 percent** of the evaluations state the program was very helpful and most participants wish it could have been longer than 3 hours. This feat is in large measure a tribute to the expertise with which our facilitators conduct the sessions.

Because this program is a necessary step for people applying for (or responding to) a court order for custody, access, or maintenance of a child, we are starting to see many more grandparents and extended family members. This trend sheds light on how many children are not being raised by their biological parents, and how many families are in fact “in transition,” even when there has been no parental separation or divorce.

Raji Goel coordinates and reports on the program, and our First-Response Team handles participant registration and confirmation call-backs. Lionel Zelniker has been facilitating the program ever since 2002, and Douglas Woodall has facilitated as a back-up during the last 2 years when Lionel is away. We had 3 female co-facilitators this year: Donnarose Law, Marie-Christine White, and (as a back-up when Donnarose or Marie-Christine were away) Jane Taylor Lee. All the facilitators did a superb job and are to be commended for their skill in presenting information and managing group discussions with wide-ranging participants. In the year ahead, Paula Murphy from our counselling team will serve as the female facilitator for most of the sessions.

Richard Routledge, Executive Director
Raji Goel, Executive Assistant

LEGAL SUPPORT SERVICES DEPARTMENT

“Stanley” was facing a criminal charge in-progress within the court system, while simultaneously trying to deal with a recent and abrupt separation from his family. He made an appointment with one of our legal advocates, frustrated with persistent difficulties in trying to visit his children without violating a no-contact order with the other parent. He was very upset by the manner in which the separation occurred and felt betrayed by his partner. While answering his questions and addressing his concerns, our advocate became worried that Stanley’s presentation in the courtroom could appear antagonistic or irresponsible

when viewed without prior information about the case. Our advocate explained how the family legal system works and what might happen in his case, as well as what he would need to do to effectively and accurately communicate his case to the judge. Moreover, our advocate attended court with Stanley throughout the duration of the legal proceedings and navigated him through the process, explaining what was happening each step of the way and why. Our advocate also assisted the family, by being an intermediary to relay and convey information and to engage in discussion with both parents without taking sides. The entire family benefited because as time progressed and the criminal matter concluded, the emotional charge subsided and both parents were able to regain their parenting communication. In the end, both parents agreed they had successfully established a co-parenting relationship that was amicable and in the best interest of their child.

Last year we reported 2,019 persons served in this program through appointments, workshops, our Legal Support Hotline, and court support, and this total constituted a whopping 71-percent increase over the previous year. This year our total for the same program components amounts to **2,785**, which is **38 percent** higher than last year’s total and **136 percent** greater than the total for the previous year. When we factor in the number of people provided legal assistance over the telephone, our total for 2008-2009 reaches **4,267**. This dramatic growth has been made possible by a substantial funding increase from the Law Foundation of BC in 2007.

We have now completed our second year of operations as an expanded team of 4 legal advocates: Pam Rudy as the full-time coordinator and 3 part-time contractors, namely Marie-Christine White, Laura Luz, and Douglas Woodall. If we were to add up the number of years of experience of each advocate, the total would exceed a century. This team is proof of the saying “the whole is greater than the sum of its parts,” because through daily interaction and weekly meetings there are continuous opportunities to learn from each other’s strengths. This arrangement has resulted in numerous benefits including more effective handling of client situations. Collectively the team has worked very hard to develop efficient procedures and to support one another with both the technical and the emotional demands of the work.

For the fifth consecutive year Crystal Buchan, LL.B. provided legal supervision for the advocates. She and the team met monthly to discuss appropriate legal responses to client-related questions. These meetings also ensured that advocates were updated on family case law and family court practise directives and forms. We are very privileged to have Crystal’s long-term involvement with our agency and her commitment to providing the legal supervision necessary for this program.

An increasing amount of the work of the expanded Legal Support Services team has been off-site, both in providing court support (in Victoria and Colwood) and in conducting presentations at partnering agencies and institutions. Two of our court support volunteers—Leigh Wilkins and Craig Vaughan—deserve a great deal of credit as their work has been exceptional this past year. With some assistance from Pam and the other advocates, these 2 volunteers were largely responsible for assisting some **1,173** people. Most of their assistance involved providing procedural information and helping people consult with duty counsel.

Throughout the year all advocates actively networked and gave presentations or workshops to a variety of audiences. Collectively they gave **19** such presentations including a visit to the Justice Access Centre in Nanaimo. In the fall Douglas collaborated with Ron Schwartz, who was then the executive director of the Victoria Family Violence Project, to arrange a noon-hour presentation at BCFIT for more than 20 professionals on the topic *Fantastic Fathers: A Strength-Based Experiential Education Initiative*. Later in the year 4 more professionals provided presentations at BCFIT as part of our Legal Support Services

program: Dr. Gloria Burima (presenting a psychologist's view of parenting coordination programs), Robert Klassen (providing an orientation to collaborative family law), Wendy Walsh (presenting the Spousal Assault Victim Support Program), and Carol Sawyer (discussing infant apprehensions and financial options available to grandparents raising grandchildren).

One of the biggest highlights of the Legal Support Services program this year has been our toll-free Legal Information Hotline. We are proud to offer this hotline two days per week (Tuesdays and Thursdays) and it is expertly operated by our bilingual advocate, Marie-Christine, who is fluent in French and English. Fully **10 percent** of the calls come from French-speaking clients who are very relieved to have someone assist them in their preferred language, and we have started to cultivate some important partnerships in the French-speaking community. We received **613** hotline calls this year, in comparison with 374 last year (a **64 percent** increase). Clients who have used it have stated it has been so useful in resolving their legal issues that it ought to be called a "lifeline" rather than a hotline, and we have started to promote it in areas of the province where legal-support resources for families are scarce. We are also pursuing additional funds to provide the hotline more than 2 days per week.

Laura and Marie-Christine attended facilitator training at the Justice Institute of BC for the workshop *Separated with Children: Dealing with the Finances*, and recently we acquired United Way funding to deliver these workshops in 2009-2010 as part of a financial-planning program called *Beating the Budget*. After an intensive 2-year process Laura obtained her Comprehensive Family Law Mediation Certificate—the highest level of certification in Canada—and she was selected to participate in a Distance Mediation Project through the BC Mediation Roster Society.

We were very privileged to have the Law Foundation of BC approve all 4 advocates' participation at the Association of Family and Conciliation Court (AFCC) Conference in Vancouver. It was truly an intellectual smorgasbord consisting of 70 individual workshops presented by well-renowned judges, lawyers, mediators, and psychologists. Other professional-development activities included a 3-day Provincial Advocacy Conference in Vancouver, attended by Douglas and Pam.

As we move into our next fiscal year our focus will be program sustainability and support for each other in handling increasingly complicated client situations. Our advocates are extremely devoted individuals, whose work has been passionate and precise in providing clients with the best legal information and resources. Working with them is an inspiring and ongoing privilege.

Even though we conveniently divide our agency's programs into 3 departments, these departments work closely together and this has been particularly evident during the last year. In 2008-2009 our Legal Support and Counselling teams collaborated intently to better support one another and the clients they serve. The benefit of having the two teams right across the hall from one another can hardly be overstated as so many of the situations our clients present involve both legal and emotional issues, and moreover because the work of both departments is emotionally demanding.

Funding for our Legal Support Services program comes mainly from the Law Foundation of BC, with additional revenues from the BC Gaming Commission. In the year ahead funding from the United Way of Greater Victoria will help offset expenses for legal interviews in

connection with our *Beating the Budget* program, and we will be looking for supplementary funding sources.

Pam Rudy, Legal Support Services Coordinator
Richard Routledge, Executive Director
(Anecdote provided by the Legal Support Services Team)

COUNSELLING SERVICES DEPARTMENT

Our organization has provided some group counselling since 1979, but it is only in the last 3 years that we have developed a full-fledged therapy team to provide an extensive and highly versatile array of psychological therapy services for all ages. In 2006-2007 we provided counselling in one format or another for 577 people, in 2007-2008 we served 944 and this year our total reaches **1,086**. This new total represents a growth of **15 percent** over last year and **88 percent** over the previous one. It is also **34 times** the number of people our agency provided "emotional support" in individual appointments during the fiscal year that ended 3 years ago.

Over the past year our Counselling Services Team included staff members Paula Murphy, Susan Farr (formerly known as Susan Duffy), Jette Midtgaard, Hazel Loewen, and John Ricker; contractors Lionel Zelniker, Donnarose Law, Deborah Weis, Helen Lennie, Barbara Green, Jacqueline Nikolejsin, Susan Grady, Susan Payne, and Laurie Truant; and our experienced interns Nick Ruedy, Gail Atkinson-Ireland, Tamara Knott, Mitra Jordan, Erin Laird, Cary Wright, Susan Ilivitsky, Maria Melo, and Jillian Mickleborough-Sugiyama. Our counselling interns volunteer their time and were selected from over 100 applicants. All of our team members have done a wonderful job in meeting the needs of our clients. They are provided with clinical supervision in two formats: in individual meetings with our executive director (a family therapist in private practice) and in group meetings conducted by Dr Allan Wade, a family therapist who is internationally known and has been recently recognized for his important contributions in the therapy field. The code of ethics and practice standards for all members of the counselling team are those established by the BC Association of Clinical Counsellors.

The team provides counselling in the following formats: individual counselling for children, youth, and adults; counselling for couples and families; and groups. Some of our team members are specialists in particular areas—for example, play therapy for children or group counselling for adults—and others provide a broad range of counselling services. We have noticed a few trends in our clientele this year: more males, more families from diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds, more grandparents, and many more referrals for child counselling. Our team is versatile and work very closely together to support each client or family as well as each other.

As stated in the previous section, our Counselling and Legal Support personnel collaborate together actively. It is extremely useful for our counsellors to be able to walk across the hall and consult with our Legal Support staff on a legal issue, or arrange an appointment for a client to consult with one of our advocates after a session. Similarly, our legal supervisor Crystal Buchan has volunteered some of her time this year to consult with our Counselling Team about legal matters, and Dr Allan Wade has contributed some of his time to provide support for our legal advocates. We have established a truly effective multidisciplinary environment.

INDIVIDUAL, COUPLE, AND FAMILY THERAPY

"Louise", a young grandmother raising her 11-year-old granddaughter "Jasmine", came to our centre at her wits' end. She explained that, since Jasmine's mother (and Louise's daughter) "Nadia" had separated from "Larry", Jasmine's behaviour was "right out of control" and she appeared moreover to be depressed. "She won't speak to me, maybe she'll speak to you," Louise stated. In the next visit, Louise brought Jasmine with her to see the counsellor, who spent some of the session talking with each of them separately. Jasmine did open up to the counsellor, who was able to provide feedback for Louise and suggested a course of action that involved doing therapy with the whole family over a long series of visits. Some sessions included Nadia and her current boyfriend "Mike". Others included different combinations of family members over the 3 generations, and at one point even encompassed 4 generations in one room. Everyone in the family began to work together, not only to support Jasmine and Louise but to understand how each person in the family felt and how they might do things differently as a large family group. Today Jasmine is a happy adolescent, Louise no longer feels she is carrying the world on her shoulders and the family as a whole feels connected.

Our *Individual, Couple, and Family Therapy* program has grown dramatically during the 3 years we have offered it. We served 330 people in this program during 2006-2007, 547 during 2007-2008, and **743** this year, constituting a **36-percent** increase over last year and a **125-percent** increase over the last 2 years. To accommodate the rising demand and to be accessible to families with children, since last year our office has been open for counselling appointments on Monday and Wednesday evenings and on Saturdays as well as during regular office hours.

What started as a 3-person crew in 2006 has grown to a thriving team of up to 16 people. In the last year Paula Murphy, John Ricker, Hazel Loewen, Jette Midtgaard, Susan Farr, Deborah Weis, Susan Payne, Nick Ruedy, Gail Atkinson-Ireland, Tamara Knott, Mitra Jordan, Erin Laird, Cary Wright, Susan Ilivitsky, Maria Melo, and Jillian Mickleborough-Sugiyama all provided therapy services in this program, many of them as volunteers. The following chart shows the breakdown of their work.

	Individual Adults	Couples	Children (5-12)	Youth (13-19)	Families
Paula Murphy	X	X	X	X	X
John Ricker	X	X		X	X
Hazel Loewen	X	X		X	X
Jette Midtgaard	X		X	X	X
Susan Farr	X				
Deborah Weis			X	X	
Susan Payne			X	X	
Nick Ruedy	X	X		X	X
Gail Atkinson-Ireland	X	X		X	
Tamara Knott	X	X		X	
Mitra Jordan	X	X			
Erin Laird	X	X		X	
Cary Wright	X	X		X	
Susan Ilivitsky	X				
Maria Melo	X	X			
Jillian Mickleborough-Sugiyama	X	X		X	

A few of these counsellors are no longer with us: Maria has moved to Norway and Jillian to her homeland in Japan. Tamara now has a thriving practice in Vancouver and Susan Payne works in Nanaimo. In the year ahead we will be joined by Sana Gaitonde, Lara Feldman, Teresa Norris and, we hope, some additional male counsellors as well. Gail resides in Ontario but will be working with our executive director to develop program materials.

The number of counselling sessions people can access at our centre is not restricted, provided the therapy is within our mandate and, based on client feedback as well as consultations with the team and executive director, deemed to be productive. The evaluations from clients have been overwhelmingly positive. Given the professionalism, flexibility, and affordability of the services it is hardly surprising that referrals from the community are skyrocketing: they have *quadrupled* in the last 2 years.

Despite our rapid growth we have managed to keep wait lists down to just 1 or 2 weeks for adults, couples, and youth, but for children our wait list has at times grown to 2 or 3 months. A recent grant from Telus Corporation will assist in reducing this waiting time in the coming year, and we have vigorously sought additional funding for our child counselling services. We wish to sincerely thank Sara Neely from the Victoria Foundation, Rhoda Waddington, and Karen Chester for their resolute efforts in this regard.

Special thanks are in order for Dr Allan Wade, Jim Browne from the BC Association of Clinical Counsellors, and our funders for this program: the United Way of Greater Victoria, the BC Gaming Commission, Telus Corporation, the Hamber Foundation, the Vanderkerkhove Family Foundation, and our private donors.

CAUGHT IN THE MIDDLE

A mother called, distressed. Her 7-year-old son "Isaac" had been acting angrily toward her. He had been saying things like, "It's all your fault, why did you leave Daddy? Dad says he'd like you to come back, so why don't you?" Mom was concerned about her son and felt guilty and torn about her decision to end her relationship. She didn't know how to answer her son's questions, and was having a hard time dealing with Isaac's father who wouldn't agree on some basic ways to parent him. Mom was considering whether all her efforts to separate herself from her husband were really the right decision, or whether she should just give up and do what Isaac said and get back into the relationship again. At least then Isaac would be happy, whereas as the situation stood no one was. She wondered, though, what would happen if Dad refused to get on-board with her in making parenting decisions? Confused and upset, she met with a counsellor at BCFIT who recommended *Caught in the Middle* as one of several services we could offer. She decided to meet with a *Caught in the Middle* coordinator, who explained there are separate groups for kids and for parents, and that her ex could come too on a different night. After a few meetings with the coordinators to make sure the program would work for them, Mom and Isaac and Dad all took part in the program. Eleven weeks later, Mom had decided she was right to stay separated but she and Isaac were having open and loving discussions about that, and she and Dad were talking much more productively about parenting together. He was not only more involved with Isaac, but feeling good about being "on the same page" with Mom about their parenting relationship. Isaac still missed his Dad but was able to express his feelings, avoid blaming either of his parents, and find other ways of handling his anger and sadness. He felt good, he said, to have ways of dealing with his feelings. "It's OK for Mom and Dad to have their feelings, too, and they don't need my help," he said.

Caught in the Middle is an elaborate group program for families in which there has been a parental separation and the children are, in a manner of speaking, "caught in the middle" between mom and dad. It originated as a children's group in 1985 and grew to a 2-generation program in 1987 when we added a parent group. This configuration eventually entailed 8 subgroups each time the program was run—2 children's groups and 2 parents' groups on

Tuesdays, 2 children's groups and 2 parents' groups on Thursdays—and the intake and coordination ultimately required 2 part-time staff. In 2008, we took a major leap forward when the United Way of Greater Victoria granted us multi-year funding to expand the program even further in several important ways, phasing-in each of the new developments over a 3-year period.

These new developments are: (1) a take-home resource kit ('tool kit') for families to use at home to prepare for the group and enhance communication skills before the program starts; (2) a preliminary 2-week psychoeducational workshop for the parents; (3) individualized counselling for children who attend an intake appointment but are either not ready or not likely to benefit from the group; (4) a follow-up component designed to evaluate the program's success and help determine next steps for each family; and (5) a grandparents' group. We introduced the first 4 of these components during 2008-2009, exactly according to schedule, and will introduce the grandparents' component in the autumn of 2009. *Caught in the Middle* will then be an 11-week, 3-generational program. By 2010 we will have had adequate opportunity to hone these new program components and integrate all the elements smoothly together, although doubtless we will continue to face many intricate challenges along the way.

The program coordinators—Susan Farr and Jette Midtgaard—have dedicated many overtime hours throughout the year to making sure the program's numerous subgroups are synchronized and, even more importantly, to making sure the group processes are adapted to suit the needs of each family. Quite simply this program has become something of a miracle each time it is run, and would not be possible without the highest level of teamwork.

Despite the demands of developing and implementing 4 out of 5 new program components this year, the team was able to run 12 children's groups and 12 parents' groups for a total of 78 children and 127 adults (205 participants in all). This grand total is slightly smaller than last year's 225 but larger than we have generally been able to achieve in previous years. The *Caught in the Middle* team as a whole is to be commended: Susan Farr, Jette Midtgaard, and the facilitators Lionel Zelniker, Donnarose Law, Helen Lennie, Jacqueline Nikolejsin, Barbara Green, Erin Laird, Cary Wright, Paula Murphy, Laurie Truant, and Deborah Weis. Everyone in the team, in particular Lionel and Donnarose, contributed ideas and feedback that greatly assisted in developing and implementing the new components.

We are fortunate this year to have an external member of the team: Rotem Regev from the University of Victoria. Rotem is a graduate student in the Department of Psychology, supervised by Dr Marion Ehrenberg and working with us through a partnership with the university's Office of Research Services. Her task is to work closely with the program coordinators and executive director to develop outcome measures for the program, and this project has proven to be comprehensive enough to be used as her master's thesis. The university has contributed funds for the collaboration, and Rotem has determined from an exhaustive literature search that the evaluation tools we are developing are world-class. She will continue to work with us in the year ahead.

Our long-term funders for this program are the BC Gaming Commission, the United Way of Greater Victoria, and the Ministry of Child and Family Development. In the year ahead we will continue to look for additional funding sources.

EVOLUTIONS AND SINGLE AGAIN

"Martha" came to our office feeling devastated. Her husband had just left her for another woman after 24 years of marriage. She was 58 years old and single again. She felt overwhelmed by the turn of events

and didn't think she would ever feel happy again. She began with individual counselling, where she started to work through what was happening and to engage with the counsellor in a grieving process. Her situation was complicated by the fact that her mother, with whom she had had a difficult relationship, was suffering from dementia and rapidly deteriorating. Furthermore, Martha had several health issues which meant she would have to learn how to live independently. Luckily, she did not give up. After a few months her counsellor suggested she take the *Evolutions* group, where she would connect with several of her peers to begin to put the pieces together and regain a sense of wholeness in her life. Martha did this, and as she told her story in the presence of her peers and opened up to a healing process in the group, she recovered. Now she is a single, independent woman with a wide network of friends. She and the people she connected with in *Evolutions* have continued to get together socially and to support one another. Martha says she has regained the confidence to reach out to others and to recreate her life. Her newly-found independence and ability to care for herself on her own terms have brought her much pleasure and joy.

These two programs are best understood together and serve a similar purpose, though for different clientele. *Evolutions* is a group for adults who are having great difficulty moving forward in their lives long after a separation or divorce has taken place, while *Single Again* is a group for adults who are still in the early stages of grieving a lost relationship. Another distinction is that *Evolutions* is a mixed group (men and women), whereas *Single Again* is a same-sex group each time it is run. We have run *Evolutions* since 1979 and *Single Again* since 2007. Paula Murphy coordinates both programs and facilitates some of them. Lionel Zelniker and Susan Grady facilitated the remainder, and Lionel co-facilitated one group with Gail Atkinson-Ireland, another with Jillian Mickleborough-Sugiyama, and a third with Susan Ilivitsky.

Between these programs we served 24 participants this year: 18 women and 6 men, although we are finally starting to see more men and in fact are on the brink of offering our first men-only *Single Again* group. The feedback we typically receive is that the participants do successfully move forward in their lives, during the groups and after completion.

Paula and Lionel have worked very hard this year to refine these programs, and we are thankful to the BC Gaming Commission for providing funding.

PARENTING WITH A NEW PARTNER

"Vanessa" and "Steve" each had a teenage child from a previous relationship and had been dating for 2 years. Everything was going smoothly and everyone got along until Vanessa and Steve announced they would be moving in together. Then, tensions broke loose between Vanessa and Steve's daughter "Samantha", who was not ready for such a transformation of her home and family. In particular, she refused to do anything with Vanessa unless her biological father, *not* Steve, would come along. Vanessa, after trying for several months to appease Samantha and try to restore their relationship, all but gave up. Why bother with a teenager who suddenly became so cold? She and Steve decided to try the *Parenting with a New Partner* group where, among other things, the facilitator helped them examine what had been working prior to their announcement and explore the changing family situation from the perspective of the children. Later the facilitator helped them develop concrete ideas about specific steps they could take, to help both children feel included and become comfortable with the new family arrangement. The ideas worked. The 2 co-parents reported that the relationship between Vanessa and Samantha quickly started to recover, and soon all members of the blended family felt they had restored the harmony among them.

This group program assists parents who have formed a 'blended family,' by helping them examine and enrich their relationships and implement ideas for successful co-parenting. Typically the group consists of couples who have come to our agency for conjoint counselling and wish to develop their parenting and relationship skills further in the context of the group.

Parenting with a New Partner began in 2006 with funding from the Queen Alexandra Foundation for Children, and with much help from Donnarose Law and Susan Farr in developing the program materials. During the last 3 years we have continuously refined the content, and both John Ricker (coordinator) and Barbara Green (facilitator) have worked hard to do this.

A total of **28** parents took part in the program this year, and the evaluations have consistently been very positive. Becoming a blended family is never easy and the group members have stated that the program material helped greatly with being able to apply new ideas both with their spouses and with the children: both their own and those of their partners. We are thankful to the BC Gaming Commission for providing funding.

TEEN LIFE COUNSELLING

"Nathan", age 14, came to BCFIT with his mother. Though guarded at first, Nathan nodded when his mother told the counsellor about Nathan's troubles at school, his lack of energy and loss of appetite, among other changes which had started a year ago when his father left the family to live with someone else. Nathan had even had a brush with the law after setting a fire at school. BCFIT's counsellor explained to both Nathan and the mother that it was up to Nathan whether he wished to talk, and that he would have confidentiality even from his mother. They agreed, but Nathan said he wouldn't say much. After the first visit, though, he told the counsellor, "You must be a magician, 'cause I swore I wasn't going to like this." By the time 4 more sessions had passed Nathan was doing well in school and had regained much of his appetite and zest for life. Asked how he had managed to make these changes, he replied, "You made it fun—I like talking to you and doing these games with you. You're not an ordinary counsellor." The counsellor asked Nathan whether he might be interested in a teens' group, to do more of the same activities with people his own age, and Nathan replied he would. Even before a group could start, Nathan and his mother reported he was doing very well now and had a different outlook. He wasn't so mad anymore and no longer felt so bitter about his father's leaving the family.

When family relationships are strained, the stresses and challenges teenagers experience differ from those of children or adults, and it is useful to have a counselling service specially tailored for their age group. In response to this need, in 2005-2006 we designed *Teen Life Counselling* to be provided either in a group format or in one-to-one counselling using materials and approaches specifically developed for teens. A grant that year from the United Way of Greater Victoria funded the program development and start-up, while Lara Schultz and later Alistair Findlay developed the materials to parallel the major themes in *Caught in the Middle* and incorporated innovative activities that could be used either in groups or in counselling sessions.

This year we served **36** teens, up from 25 last year and on-par with the previous 2 years. We are not yet satisfied with our ability to draw teens to our agency, and we have developed ideas for attracting more through collaboration with schools and other organizations. The Queen Alexandra Foundation for Children has expressed an interest in helping us with this objective, and we are actively looking for funding to put our ideas into action. We would like to thank the Queen Alexandra Foundation, including their Youth Advisory Council, for their interest in providing assistance. Funding for the program currently comes from the BC Gaming Commission.

LIVES IN TRANSITION

"Guadalupe" called BCFIT requesting individual counselling. She had lived in Honduras all her life until several years ago when she moved to Victoria and met "Albert", who had lived all his life in western Canada. They fell in love and married. Soon after this, she explained, their relationship became strained and increasingly distant. He had even talked vaguely of suicide recently. Given the prospect of suicide,

an individual counselling session was arranged for her urgently. In that session, which happened to be with a female counsellor, it was determined that Albert would likely benefit from individual counselling too but that he would likely want a male counsellor. Guadalupe went home and suggested to Albert that he call BCFIT and ask to see a male counsellor, and this was arranged for him the following day. The 2 counsellors then compared notes after their sessions, discussed the case with the executive director in clinical supervision, and explored the possibility of conjoint counselling after a few more individual sessions. The idea was put forward that both the male and female counsellors could work together as co-therapists with Guadalupe and Albert in couples counselling, attending to the cultural aspects as well as other elements of the case. The counsellors discussed the suggestion of co-therapy with their clients and, after a few more sessions, the couple agreed to give it a try. It became clear in this session that cultural differences had prepared the way for some very different ideas about marriage roles, as well as about communication, emotional expression, and a range of other issues. In preparing for the sessions, the co-therapists used some of the handouts and other materials that had been developed for the *Lives in Transition* group, to guide some of their questions for the couple and encourage dialogue about the cultural differences and their significance in the marriage. After a couple of months both spouses said they were beginning to communicate more effectively with one another, in part because they were able to understand each another's cooperative and caring intentions and, as a result, had begun to trust each other. Soon the relationship began to improve.

Lives in Transition is a new counselling program for adults in immigrant and refugee families with serious challenges in their relationships. We developed and modified the program in stages beginning shortly after the murder-suicide in Oak Bay in 2007, to become more accessible and helpful to families of diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds. At that time we were receiving various requests from other agencies to develop such a program. Our executive director began by forming a focus group consisting of women and men from various regions of the world, and some members of the focus group remained as program advisors. We decided to create a group program that would provide a context for curiosity and exploration of cultural differences, and to examine how people's relationships change when they move to a new culture. In particular, we were concerned that there are families in Greater Victoria who struggle with conflict in relation to marital and parenting difficulties but might not seek help, because their cultural backgrounds pose values and ideas about families that differ from the expectations of the dominant society. We realized, too, that many of the same families are unfamiliar with the Canadian legal system, and as a result we decided to include a guest presenter from our own Legal Support Services program in one of the group sessions.

Ultimately, our advisory group encouraged us to do 3 things: (1) introduce a group counselling program for bicultural families, facilitated by counsellors with expertise in this area; (2) seek additional "consultants"—volunteers or paid professionals who are members of various ethnic communities—to provide research, information, and direct support to clients and staff; and (3) conduct in-services for other community agencies, to provide information about cultural differences in family relationships and facilitate referrals. Our executive director assembled a team of 4 people—John Ricker, Elaine Ho, Mitra Jordan, and Ocean Lum—to work with him in achieving these objectives. Elaine, Mitra, and Ocean volunteered their time over many weeks for this project. The Victoria Foundation generously provided the funding as well as additional consultation.

We were ready to launch the program by January 2009. Unfortunately we received very few referrals for the group, but throughout 2008-2009 we were seeing increasing numbers of bicultural couples in our regular therapy sessions. Our team noticed that in the conjoint therapy sessions with some of the bicultural couples, we were using the very same ideas we had put together for the group. So, with support of the Victoria Foundation we decided *Lives in*

Transition makes most sense as a program that can be offered for couples *and* groups. In a group we can apply curiosity and ideas broadly, and in couple therapy we use a similar approach with much more depth and less breadth.

With this expanded approach to the program, we can now report that we have served 52 people—26 couples—using the materials and ideas we developed for the counselling program. In addition, through our collaboration with Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Community Services (VIRCS) we were able to involve professionals from various ethnic backgrounds in some of our individual appointments. We have not yet provided any in-services in relation to this program, but in the year ahead we will explore opportunities to do so collaboratively with other agencies such as VIRCS or the Intercultural Association.

We look forward to continuing to develop this program, and additional funding has been provided by the BC Gaming Commission. Many thanks are due to Marg Rose from the Victoria Foundation; Elaine and Sophia Ho; John, Mitra, and Ocean; Haixia Liu and Aviva Shtull from VIRCS; Dr Jacqueline McAdam-Crisp; and all the members of our focus and advisory groups.

*Richard Routledge, Executive Director
(Anecdotes provided by the Counselling Team)*

PUBLIC RELATIONS & MEDIA APPEARANCES

Public relations have been a growing focus of our agency over the past few years, and in 2008-2009 we took this initiative a few steps further to celebrate our 30th anniversary. Using funding from Service Canada we took on what is known as a Job Creation Project, which means we recruited and hired professionals who were receiving employment assistance and the federal government paid the wages and overheads. Our Job Creation Project was a time-limited (8-month) extension of our agency to include a *bona fide* public-relations department, responsible for specific major tasks which were acceptable to Service Canada in that they were “incremental to our business” rather than activities we were already doing. The major tasks included organizing and providing an Open House and 30th Anniversary Public Celebration, developing a logo and a newsletter, and designing a fundraising event. The project began in July and ended in February. Laetia Reid served as the coordinator and team leader, and our 3 government-funded professionals were Sher Snow, Mary Ann Harris, and Barbara Bronstein. The team worked hard and completed each part of the project with great success.

Both our Open House on October 15 and our 30th Anniversary event at the Royal Victoria Yacht Club on November 26 were vibrant events. They were attended by approximately 200 people each and featured thousands of dollars’ worth of donated food, art, and prizes to give away to the attendees. Marie-Christine White made a beautiful tapestry depicting the history of our agency, and a wedding-style cake for the anniversary event. Raji Goel delivered a speech which outlined our 30 years, accompanied by a slide show with assistance from Pam Rudy.

The event-planning team and executive director collaborated with a graphic artist named Dale Goble to develop a new logo for the agency, and everyone has been pleased with the result. The next task was to develop a template for an annual fundraising event, and the team actually developed not one but two of them so that we will have a choice. The final task, to develop a newsletter, proved the most difficult and we are very fortunate to have had the expert assistance of Debra Firstbrook, a professional writer who volunteered many hours of

her time to help. The newsletter is called *Transitions* and has received warm responses from professional and lay audiences.

In addition to the events and initiatives that comprised the Job Creation Project, BCFIT was featured at least 6 times on the radio (Island Parent Radio and C-FAX), each time with Pam Rudy and Richard Routledge as the speakers. We were also featured on *Island 30 TV* (on A Channel television), and our agency was the subject of 5 articles in print media during the year: 2 of them in *Island Parent Magazine* and 3 of them in the Black Press.

In the coming year Laetia will serve in a new part-time position titled Fund Development Officer, to coordinate and assist an “Individual Giving Team” to rigorously solicit donations from the public. It is hoped this will become a significant source of funding for us, as it has for other non-profit organizations in the last couple of years. The Individual Giving Team will consist of volunteers. Additionally, Laetia and Debra will continue to help the agency produce the *Transitions* newsletter.

Public relations will continue to be a major priority for BC Families in Transition. Plans are in the works for a second Job Creation Project, this time to host a conference in 2011 titled *Changing Times, Changing Families*.

Richard Routledge, Executive Director

PARTNERSHIPS WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

Our growth over the years has not occurred in a vacuum; we are intricately linked with numerous other organizations. Developing partnerships has been an important focus in recent years and we are starting to collaborate more closely with private as well as public and non-profit organizations. As we look to the future, this trend will continue as we are developing several new strategies for collaboration with the private sector.

A partial list of our community partners includes Single Parent Resource Centre; Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Centre Society; South Island Dispute Resolution Centre; Collaborative Family Law Group; Men’s Trauma Centre; Women’s Sexual Assault Centre; The Cridge Centre for the Family; Hill House Transition House; Victoria Women’s Transition House; Bridges For Women; The Pacific Centre for the Family; Big Brothers, Big Sisters; Child and Family Counselling Association; Disability Resource Centre; Surrounded by Cedar Society; School Districts 61, 62, and 63; Intercultural Association; Victoria Native Friendship Centre; Blanshard Community Centre; Burnside-Gorge Community Centre; Capital Families Association; Child Abuse Protection and Counselling Society; Citizen’s Counselling; Military Family Resource Centre; Ministry of Children and Family Development; James Bay Community Project; Parent Support Services; Boys and Girls Club; Esquimalt Neighbourhood House; Phoenix Community Services; Legal Services Society; Law Courts Education Society BC; BC Provincial Courthouse; ProBono Students Canada; The Need Crisis Line; Together Against Poverty Society; Esquimalt Neighborhood House; Ronald McDonald House Charity; Garry Oak Financial Group; Community Social Planning Council of Greater Victoria; University of Victoria; City University; Royal Roads University; and other universities in connection with internships, practica, faculty and student projects, committees, and speaking engagements. We have also started discussions with corporations for potential sponsorships, capital projects, public-education projects, and services for employees.

In the year ahead there are 3 partnerships that warrant special mention: our longstanding collaboration with South Island Dispute Resolution Centre (SIDRC) and our more recent ones with Intercultural Association and Garry Oak Financial Group. With SIDRC we look forward to

continuing our *Building Healthy Relationships* workshop series late this summer, and to extending our work together to provide mediation services in combination with counselling services. In the case of Intercultural Association, we are working together to find funding for a men's group in which staff from both organizations will participate. A men's group is long overdue at BCFIT and there is still a shortage of services for men in the community, so we are excited about this prospect. Our collaboration with Garry Oak Financial Group is also new and will take place in connection with our *Beating the Budget* financial-planning program starting in August.

Richard Routledge, Executive Director

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

	INCOME STATEMENT			
	Unaudited 2008-2009	Reviewed 2007-2008	Reviewed 2006-2007	Audited 2005-2006
REVENUE				
BC Gaming	\$109,816	\$99,300	\$47,145	\$40,795
United Way	85,796	54,683	81,826	68,953
Law Foundation	115,133	115,680	60,160	50,160
Ministry of Attorney General	20,123	20,050	19,347	33,173
Fees & Miscellaneous	59,202	44,155	30,387	24,930
Ministry of Children and Family Development	12,000	12,000	7,000	7,000
Foundations (other)	12,950	10,500	12,700	21,800
Service Canada	29,672	-	-	-
Collaboration	0	0	5,943	0
	\$444,692	\$356,368	\$264,508	\$246,811
EXPENSES				
Program Delivery Personnel	\$258,601	\$217,879	\$195,628	\$148,658
Rent & Utilities	30,150	21,385	19,670	17,532
Contractor Fees	42,940	25,705	18,749	25,798
Administration*	18,056	9,703	10,724	7,800
Accounting/Audit	6,200	7,230	6,025	4,990
Supervision, Legal	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000
Supervision, Clinical	3,547	3,703	1,969	0
Telephone, Fax, Internet	6,042	4,573	4,286	4,080
Amortization	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,480
Advertising	2,761	1,180	2,884	435
Security	2,615	2,756	2,379	2,279
Training & Travel	5,188	1,149	1,720	1,940
Memberships	732	906	688	632
Insurance	1,275	1,550	475	646
Program Development	3,573	1,481	307	8,648
Office Improvements	2,500	1,704	2,775	0
Deferred Revenue	38,000	36,293	0	0
	\$430,180	\$345,197	\$276,279	\$232,923
SURPLUS (Loss)	\$14,512	\$11,171	(\$11,771)	\$13,888

*includes bank charges, supplies, etc

BALANCE SHEET AS AT MARCH 31ST

ASSETS	2009	2008	2007	2006
Bank Acct, Cash, GST Receivable	\$ 51,699	\$ 79,127	\$ 37,858	\$ 62,515
Term Deposits	14,761	21,108	20,250	19,935
Funding Receivable	8,151	5,238	4,803	10,073
TOTAL ASSETS	\$ 74,611	\$105,473	\$ 62,911	\$ 92,523
LIABILITIES				
Fixed Operating Costs Payable	\$ 6,268	\$ 3,356	\$ 22,816	\$ 4,287
Variable Operating Costs Payable	2,205	8,865	0	0
Deferred Revenue	38,000	50,214	14,638	21,924
TOTAL LIABILITIES	\$ 56,473	\$ 62,434	\$ 37,454	\$ 36,211
UNRESTRICTED NET ASSETS	\$ 18,139	\$ 43,039	\$ 25,457	\$ 56,312
	\$ 74,611	\$105,473	\$ 62,911	\$ 92,523

COMMENTS FROM OUR SUPERVISOR IN LEGAL SUPPORT SERVICES

It has been my great privilege to work again this year with our stellar group of four mature and experienced advocates. It is my observation that many of the cases with which they are dealing are highly complex, require a great deal of compassion, understanding, clarity, and judgement, and are as difficult as any cases that I have encountered in my many years of practicing as a lawyer. Still, the feedback from clients, other lawyers and the legal community is that our advocates are excelling in their much-needed role.

Most striking to me as I have worked with them over time is that they have become a real "team", supporting each other by sharing information, providing emotional support, and even taking the next scheduled appointment when another advocate has had a challenging time with a client. This mutual support is essential to ongoing quality of service, and personal and professional well-being for our advocates.

Looking to the future, we must not lose sight of the importance of supporting the team to continue in their excellent work by providing continuing education and training, technical and administrative support, and time for debriefing, reporting and contemplation.

Crystal Buchan, External Legal Supervisor

COMMENTS FROM OUR EXTERNAL CLINICAL SUPERVISOR

Clinical supervision has been well attended over the past year, and although most meetings have focused on the counselling team I hope to be able to provide more support for the legal services team as well. The two teams held a joint meeting early this year, concerning shared interests and roles in the organization. Participants said they learned more about their respective roles and how to best utilize one another.

The focus of the counselling team meetings has been case consultation, primarily. The counsellors have presented many challenging cases, looking for ideas and points of reflection from their colleagues. Team members have established a high level of safety. This makes it possible for the counsellors to share concerns and ask for advice without putting their competency at issue. I am consistently impressed with the skill, ethical awareness, and sensitivity of the counselling and legal services teams. Many human services agencies provide little or no meaningful clinical supervision: BC Families in Transition is to be commended for the importance it attaches to clinical supervision for staff who are involved in such demanding work.

On a personal note, I would like to thank everyone in the organization, including Raji and the front office staff for making me so welcome.

Dr Allan Wade, External Clinical Supervisor

CORE STAFF**Richard Routledge, M.A., R.C.C., Executive Director**

Richard is a registered clinical counsellor with 24 years of experience in counselling, therapy, and community rehabilitation, largely focused on family communication and family violence issues. Since 1985 he has provided counselling for women, men, couples, teens, families, and groups. He is an adjunct faculty member of University of Victoria and City University, has a private counselling practice and conducts family therapy work for organizations outside of BC Families in Transition. He has served throughout his career in various leadership capacities and has been a presenter and guest lecturer on topics such as post-traumatic stress, grief and recovery, family relationships, parenting, mental health, alcohol and drug addictions, sexual health issues, organizational behaviour, and conflict management. In addition to this background he has worked in freelance journalism, radio, and corporate relations. Richard serves on the University of Victoria's School of Social Work Community/Practice Advisory Committee as well as the steering committee for the Association of Family Serving Agencies, and is a board member for the Victoria Family Violence Protection Society as well as a division chair for the United Way's campaign cabinet. He is passionate about developing innovative programs and joined BC Families in Transition in 2005.

Pam Rudy, B.Ed., Legal Support Services Coordinator

Pam has been a central pillar of BC Families in Transition ever since December 1986. Beginning in 1988 she has served as a legal advocate responsible for the agency's Legal Support Services program. She enhances her professional training annually by participating in advocacy conferences sponsored by the Law Foundation of BC and the Legal Services Society. She provides clients and the public with information about legal rights, responsibilities, and options, attends Family Court, assists with court preparation, and offers other forms of practical and emotional support. Additionally, Pam was the agency's acting executive director throughout most of 2003, all of 2004, and most of 2005. She has proven an invaluable 'backbone' for the organization throughout her many years of dedicated service and since 2007 she has supervised a team of three other legal advocates in the Legal Support Services program.

Raji Goel, Dip. Office Admin., Executive Assistant

Raji was born in Calgary and moved to Victoria in 1991. He volunteered for several agencies, contributing both his computer skills and his general office skills. He first joined BC Families in Transition in 1994 as a volunteer. His computer expertise and endless creativity is seen everywhere in our office, as well as on agency brochures, funding proposals, brochures, and handouts. In 1996 he pursued his Diploma in Office Administration. He graduated in the spring of 1997 and was hired in the fall as the agency's first paid secretary/receptionist. His role in the agency has grown over the years and he is now responsible for numerous tasks, including providing the public with information and referrals, supervising the First-Response Team, creating handouts, assisting the executive director with proposals and reports, and handling the agency's bookkeeping.

Paula Murphy, M.A. (Honours), R.C.C., Counsellor/Facilitator

Paula began her work with BC Families in Transition as a practicum student in the "Caught in the Middle" program prior to becoming a full-time staff member in May 2006. During the past decade she has worked with various agencies as a counsellor and group facilitator with adults, couples, and children. At BC Families in Transition she provides individual, couple, and family therapy, developed the "Single Again" group, and both coordinates and facilitates that program as well as the "Evolutions" group. Paula's master's thesis focused on women's experiences of separation and divorce at midlife and she has a strong interest in exploring midlife issues from a Jungian perspective. She has specialized training in Jungian/analytical psychology and dream analysis, psychological trauma and interpersonal violence, and somatic transformation.

Susan Farr (formerly Susan Duffy), M.Ed., R.C.C., Counsellor/Facilitator

Susan has worked with BC Families in Transition since 2005. She began with her practicum in the Counselling Psychology program at the University of Victoria, and then became a contract facilitator for the Caught in the Middle program. In 2005, the University of Victoria honoured her with a Blue and Gold Award for outstanding contributions to the community as a volunteer. Since then she has proven herself a vital and versatile staff member, serving as counsellor, program developer, and coordinator of multiple programs. She has an extensive background in community rehabilitation, including clinical work with high-risk youth and survivors of violence, and is most in her element when connecting with people. Although she provides some individual counselling her primary responsibility is to the Caught in the Middle program, sharing the coordination role with Jette Midtgaard.

Jette Midtgaard, M.Sc. (Clinical Psychology), Counsellor/Facilitator

Jette began with the agency as a clinical intern in February 2007, and was hired as a staff member 8 months later. She provides adult, couple, youth, and child counselling as well as group facilitation and program development for the agency. Together with Susan Farr, she handles the task of coordinating the Caught in the Middle program. In addition to her growing role with BCFIT, she works part-time at a youth detox facility. Previously she has worked at the Victoria Women's Sexual Assault Centre as a crisis line support worker and has been part of the Sexual Assault Response Team (SART). She has also worked at CAFCA as an autism interventionist, and has recently applied for membership with the BC Association of Clinical Counsellors.

Hazel Loewen, M.A., R.C.C., Counsellor/Facilitator

Hazel began her connection to the counselling field as a volunteer at sexual assault centres in Winnipeg and Edmonton. For over 16 years she has worked as a trauma specialist in the area of sexualized violence and abusive relationships. Her keen personal and professional interests in parenting led her to become involved in teaching parenting education courses. She wrote her thesis on the experience of mothering for childhood sexual abuse survivors, facilitated groups for mothers whose children witnessed violence, and took training and supervision in family therapy. Hazel also branched out into the addictions counselling field and provided individual, couple, and group counselling for 7 years at an outpatient addiction agency. It was during this time that she began developing her leadership skills by providing clinical supervision and becoming involved in program development. Hazel has also worked as a public education coordinator in developing, writing, and delivering educational workshops, as well as presentations and seminars to the community in the areas of sexualized violence and mental health awareness. Most recently, she has trained in meditation and incorporates this perspective into her practice. Hazel is a member of the BC Association of Clinical Counsellors and joined BC Families in Transition as a clinical intern in February 2007, before being hired part-time in October of that year.

John Ricker, M.A., Counsellor/Facilitator

John joined BC Families in Transition as a clinical intern in September 2007, initially working with adults and couples and later also working with children and youth as well as providing program coordination. His master's degree in counselling is from Bastyr University in Seattle, focusing on systemic approaches to family therapy. He volunteered at Citizen's Counselling Centre in Victoria and has pursued further studies in somatic experiencing and integrated body psychotherapy. He has also taught yoga and meditation for many years, and has lived and worked in diverse parts of the world including New Zealand, Peru, and both the Arctic and Antarctic regions. Recently he has recently applied for membership with the BC Association of Clinical Counsellors.

Laetitia Reid, B.A., Fund Development Officer

Laetitia has several years of varied experience in supervision and project development in the private sector, predating her arrival at BCFIT as a volunteer in April 2007. In 2007-2008 she lived in Montreal where she spent a year working as a corporate trainer. Her love of nature and mild winters brought her back to the west coast where BCFIT hired her as the coordinator for the Job Creation Project. Her ongoing commitment and enthusiasm will continue in her new position as Fund Development Officer.

CONTRACTED STAFF
Barbara Green, M.A.

Barbara has worked in human services for over 26 years, both in Canada and in Europe. She graduated from the University of Victoria with a B.A. in Human and Social Development and later from Royal Roads University with an M.A. in Leadership and Training. She is also a certified addictions counsellor. For most of her professional life she has served as a counsellor and group facilitator, and her clients have included children in care, youth at risk, families in crisis, couples, and inmates. Her first love is group facilitation with topics including addictions, parenting, anger management, behaviour change, money management, and life skills. Barbara has been an enthusiastic facilitator in the Parenting with a New Partner program for 2.5 years, and in the Building Healthy Relationships workshop series for 2 years.

Donnarose Law, B.A., B.Ed.

Donnarose graduated from Simon Fraser University with a B.A. in Psychology and a Bachelor's degree in Education. She has more than 26 years of experience in youth and family work, and has been an important member of the team at BC Families in Transition for 11 years. She was as a staff member for most of this time, serving as a counsellor, group facilitator, and coordinator of programs including Evolutions, Caught in the Middle, and a Step-Parenting program. For the last few years she has worked on a contract basis, facilitating Parenting After Separation and both the children's and the parents' segments of Caught in the Middle. Prior to joining BC Families in Transition she facilitated single-parent groups for the Single Parent Resource Centre.

Douglas Woodall, M.A., M.S.W.

Douglas earned a master's degree in social work at McGill University in 1970, specializing in policy planning, community development, and administration. He has a certificate in Advanced Child Custody Mediation from the Haynes Mediation Institute of New York. He has completed diverse coursework in child and family welfare, public welfare, family mediation, arbitration, federal and provincial administrative law, advocacy, counselling and psychology, treatment issues in working with perpetrators of violence, intervention skills in multicultural group conflicts, curriculum design, etc. Some highlights of his career include co-founding the Victoria Family Violence Project and serving as its first Board chair, co-founding the Association of Family Serving Agencies of Victoria, and co-founding the group that evolved into the Women Against Violence in Relationships Coordinating Committee. He worked for many years as a social worker, district supervisor, and regional training coordinator for the BC Government before moving to the Law Centre Victoria where he was employed as a social worker and paralegal for 18 years. Doug volunteered with BC Families in Transition in 2005-2006, and in 2007 became a member of the agency's Legal Support Services team.

Helen Lennie, M.Ed., C.C.C.

Helen has a master's degree from the University of Victoria in counselling psychology. She has over 25 years of experience in counselling, teaching, and personal growth work. While living in Los Angeles, she presented workshops on Adlerian perspectives on the parenting process. She has since been working in Victoria as a private practitioner, parent educator, and practicum supervisor, as well as a counsellor and teacher at elementary and middle schools. She has diverse experience in workshop facilitation, including in the areas of human development, conflict resolution, self-esteem, anger management, problem-solving, drug and alcohol education. Helen has worked with BC Families in Transition as a group facilitator for 7 years and is passionate about supporting families through transition.

Jacqueline Nikolejsin, M.Ed., R.C.C.

Jacqueline completed her counselling psychology degree at the University of Victoria and first joined the agency as a clinical intern in January 2007. She now works part-time as the elementary school counsellor for Pacific Christian School, and serves as a contractor with BC Families in Transition in the Caught in the Middle program. She also works for Corrections Services Canada as a bereavement counsellor. She is keenly interested in issues pertaining to grief, loss, and life transition and how these changes are experienced within families. She has several years of experience in this area. Some of her other professional involvements have included Victoria Hospice Society, Island Pastoral Services Association, and William Head Institution. Jacqueline has specialized training in solution-focused brief therapy, narrative therapy, and Bowenian family systems therapy.

Laura Luz, M.A., F.R.M.,

Certified Comprehensive Mediator, Member of BC Mediator Roster

Laura joined BC Families in Transition in 2007 as a contractor in the Legal Support Services program. Prior to this she assisted and supported families-in-crisis for a number of years within the Ministry of Child and Family Development system. She also participated on community boards, serving as educator, spokesperson, and writer. In her final 7 years with MCFD she worked extensively with behaviourally challenging young offenders within the youth justice system. After completing her M.A. degree in Organizational Leadership at Royal Roads University, Laura certified as a mediator and now sits on both the provincial and national Mediator Rosters. Over the past year, her private practice has focused more heavily on organizational and workplace conflict. Recently she launched a new website: www.CreatingWorkplaceSolutions.com

Lionel Zelniker, M.A., M.S.W.

Lionel graduated from McGill University in 1970 with an M.S.W. specializing in group-work practice. Since then he has served in a wide variety of family-service organizations, both in Canada and abroad. His major responsibilities have included individual and family therapy, group therapy, management, and supervision of professional social-work and child-care staff. In the last 16 years he has worked in private practice specializing in group therapy and providing various types of counselling, as well as training professional staff at various agencies in group-work methods and supervising graduate-level practicum students. He has served as a contractor with BC Families in Transition for 11 years, facilitating Parenting After Separation, Evolutions, and Caught in the Middle as well as training new facilitators.

Marie-Christine White,

Certificate in Comprehensive Family Mediation, Dip. Business Administration

Marie-Christine has worked with the agency for 9 years—4 as a volunteer and 5 as a contractor—all in Legal Support Services. She now operates the agency's toll-free Legal Support Hotline, providing consultation to the public in both English and French. In addition to her certificate in Business Administration from the University of Victoria, she completed a leadership-training program with Leadership Victoria. While taking this course, she had a vision for a community outreach program and, together with her team, implemented a program called "Squeals on Wheels" for young mothers. Between 2002 and 2006 she registered her mediation company and provided family mediation services for families in transition. Her employment history includes public relations and administration, and she has volunteered in numerous capacities including as a supervisor and facilitator with Rainbows and as an organizer for a 55+ group. Three years ago, she volunteered in Uganda by raising funds to build a kitchen in an orphanage.

Susan Grady, M.Ed., M.S.W.

Susan has 20 years of varied experience in counselling individuals, couples, families, and groups, and she has facilitated group counselling workshops for BC Families in Transition since 1998 chiefly in the Evolutions program. She has a strong interest in new ideas in the field and is passionate about theoretical and ideological issues. She currently works as a social worker for the Vancouver Island Health Authority.

Susan Payne, M.Ed.

Susan completed a practicum with BC Families in Transition in 2007, as part of her master's degree in counselling psychology at the University of Victoria. She began co-facilitating children's groups for Caught in the Middle in September 2006 and has also worked with two children individually at the centre. She has proven a natural team member and brings with her several years of experience in working with children in care and special needs programs. We were sorry to see her go when she moved to Nanaimo in the autumn of 2008.

Laurie Truant, M.A., R.C.C.

Laurie is a registered clinical counsellor with more than 10 years of varied experience including addictions counselling, lifeskills counselling, and clinical work with adolescents and adults with eating disorders. She has practiced individual and group therapy with diverse client groups, designed and facilitated psycho-educational groups for adolescents and adults, and presented psychological workshops to the public. She has been working as a clinical intern with BC Families in Transition since January 2007.

Deborah Weis, M.A., C.C.C., R.C.C.

Deborah joined BC Families in Transition as a clinical intern in February 2007 before being hired as a contractor in 2008, working with children and teens as well as with their parents. Over the past 22 years she has worked in a variety of settings and programs in the field of child and youth care, including in the areas of early childhood education, sexual abuse intervention, child and youth mental health, child protection, and counselling for children who witness abuse. She is currently employed as an outreach counsellor for Capital Families Association, working with children aged 0-5 years and their parents. As well as being a committed front-line worker, Deborah is interested in research and program development; her current research project is related to motherhood and the role of family support programs. During her internship she has provided both individual counselling and group facilitation, and has contributed to the development of new programs.

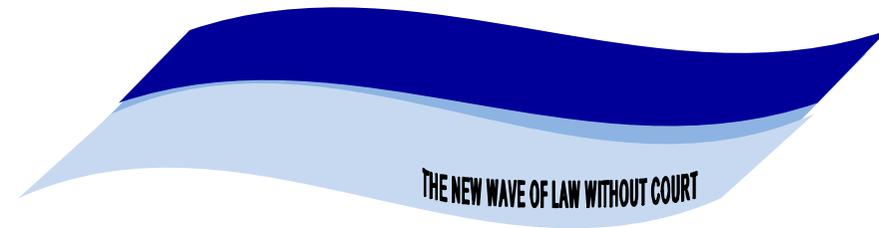
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