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#### 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.

Richard Routledge, M.A., R.C.C. – Executive Director

#### PUBLIC EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

##### FIRST RESPONSE SERVICES

Raji Goel, Dip. Office Admin  
 Sandra Teiffel, B.A, Dip. Ed.  
 Deborah Puymon\*, Legal Assistant  
 Jackie Bush\*, PhD (candidate)  
 Jan Handley  
 Maryam Malekie\*, M.A.(in progress)  
 Rhoda Waddington\*, B.S.W.

##### PARENTING AFTER SEPARATION

Lionel Zelniker, M.A., M.S.W.  
 Donnarose Law, B.A., B.Ed.  
 Doug Woodall, M.S.W.,  
 Dip. Process-Oriented Psychology  
 Jane Taylor Lee, M.A.

#### LEGAL SUPPORT SERVICES

Pam Rudy, B.Ed. – Legal Support Services Coordinator (over 23 years at BCFIT)  
 Doug Woodall, M.S.W.,  
 Dip. Process-Oriented Psychology  
 Marie-Christine White,  
 Comprehensive Family Law Mediator  
 Laura Luz, M.A., F.R.M.,  
 Maureen McDowell\*, LL.B., family lawyer  
 Member of BC Mediator Roster  
 Sandy Germain\*, Legal Assistant  
 Leigh Wilkins\*, Dip. Legal Assistance  
 Theo Schmidt, Certified Financial Planner

#### COUNSELLING & THERAPY SERVICES

Hazel Loewen, M.A., R.C.C.  
 Susan Farr, M.Ed., R.C.C.  
 Jette Midtgaard, M.Sc. (Clin. Psych.),  
 R.C.C.  
 John Ricker, M.A., R.C.C.  
 Ava Bahrani, M.Ed. (in progress)  
 Barbara Green, M.A.  
 Chris Rowand, M.A. (in progress)  
 Darcy Dyck, M.Ed (in progress)  
 Donnarose Law, B.A., B.Ed.  
 Dawn Cox, M.Ed, R.C.C.  
 Elicia Loiselle\*, M.A. (in progress)  
 Erin Laird, M.A., R.C.C.  
 H. Digby Clarke, Ph.D., L.L.B., C.T.  
 Helen Lennie, M.A., C.C.C.  
 Ian Symons\*, B.A  
 Jackie LeBlanc\*, M.A. (in progress)  
 Jacqueline Nikolejsin, M.Ed., R.C.C.  
 Karen Meadows, M.S.W.  
 Lara Feldman, M.DIAC.  
 (Master's in Play Therapy), R.S.W.  
 Laurie Truant, M.A., R.C.C.  
 Lionel Zelniker, M.A., M.S.W.  
 Lorne Mackie, M.A. (in progress]  
 Luciana Dugham, M.A.(in progress)  
 Maxine Fisher, M.Ed, M.T.A.  
 Mitra Jordan, M.A., R.C.C.  
 Nick Ruedy, M.A., R.C.C., C.C.C.  
 Rebecca Corcoran, M.A. (in progress)  
 Robin Feldman, M.A., A.T.R., B.C.A.T.R.  
 Sophie von Hermann,  
 M.A.(Expressive Therapies), R.S.W.  
 Teresa Norris, M.Ed. (in progress)  
 Trudy Mahle-Matthews, M.Ed.

#### "BEHIND THE SCENES"

Amy Collins, B.A.\*  
 Public Relations, Newsletter  
 Melvin Klassen\*, B.Sc.  
 Computer Technician  
 Hellen Diaz\* Public Relations, Newsletter  
 Michael Berry\*, M.A., M.Ed.  
 Leslie McGrath\* – Newsletter  
 Program Development

\*Volunteer during the past year

## 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.

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT



The past year has been a struggle for non-profit service agencies throughout the province. Like all boards of non-profit agencies, our board has been concerned with developing ongoing financial support for our programs. Our motivation has always been to continue to provide our first-rate volunteers, contractors, and staff with the resources they need to continue to provide the finest quality of services available to families. We on the board are not remotely tempted to congratulate ourselves for having weathered another difficult year. The reality, expressed continually by our funders, is that our staff, contractors, and volunteers are known throughout the service community for their professionalism and compassion. British Columbia Families in Transition is also recognized by the granting agencies for our unrivalled productivity and professional management.

Not only have we survived, we have prospered. We continue to develop and deliver new services. We continue to expand the number of families and individuals we support. And, most gratifying of all, we have consequently been able to support our staff with a benefits package, very modest wage increases and increases in vacation time.

We will face new challenges in the coming year. I can say with confidence all of these challenges will be overcome and BCFIT will continue to prosper. This confidence comes from having worked closely with our dedicated board and having had the honour of seeing BCFIT's team at work.

This year we thank Paul MacRae for his years of service to the board. His sharp intellect, wit and creativity have contributed greatly over the years to the board's effectiveness. We also welcome Robert Klassen back to the board. Mr Klassen contributed to the development of the agency in its early years and his vast experience in collaborative family law will be a welcome addition.

It has been a genuine pleasure and source of pride to serve on the board with dedicated colleagues who understand the value of the services provided by our agency and who are committed to its prosperity.

*Bruce McGuigan, President*

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT



Once again this year, we have succeeded in providing the finest quality of care in counselling, legal support, and relationship education for families, and to expand our services while doing so. We served thousands of families, with a broad mandate to help all generations through relationship transitions including separation/divorce, intense conflict, changes of parents or partners, death in the family, and more. Our challenge this year has been to continue to build organizational sustainability while also increasing our capacity—both for numbers of families and for complexity of cases—in every program area. I am proud to say we were able to accomplish this task, thanks to the teamwork and skill of the more-than-50 staff members, contractors, and volunteers who collectively make up BC Families in Transition.

As some readers will know, BCFIT has grown by leaps and bounds during the past five years. It was then that we adopted a staffing model which introduced for the first time a bona fide counselling and therapy department, and in the next two years we doubled both in size and scope as we expanded both our legal support and counselling departments, changed our name, and broadened our mandate. Referrals from community resources **squadrupled** between 2006 and 2009. Since 2006 our total funding has doubled while our **service output has more than tripled**: from about 8,800 to about **26,700** appointments, workshop attendances, conversations at court, phone calls, and drop-ins in the course of a year. To accomplish this growth while consistently maintaining overall client satisfaction rates close to **99 percent**—as measured in Likert-scale follow-up evaluations in all program areas—and while developing a

host of new services, partnerships, projects, and procedures, is a tremendous achievement for our team.

We are deeply grateful to each of our funding partners for working with us to make this growth possible, despite major uncertainties in the economy and the fact that much of what we have proposed to do over the last five years has been a matter of faith. Our Board of Directors, too, deserves enormous credit, for it has been instrumental in supporting our staff, supporting me, and helping to plan the strategy for moving forward. We would not be where we are today without the visionary and incisive leadership of one past president—Dr Richard McGuigan—and the subsequent two remarkably dedicated presidents: Jane Taylor Lee and, beginning in 2009, Bruce McGuigan. We are strong as an organization today because they, and the other enthusiastic board members who have served us, have assisted in navigating our path through a veritable minefield of potential dangers and pitfalls.

The journey over the past year, as during the past several years, has been a very difficult one for all of our team members. Each of them has contributed unpaid hours to identify problems, determine and evaluate potential remedies, and work together to implement the best available solutions. Given the complexity of family relationship issues, family court battles, family violence, and the fact that clients face other challenges simultaneous with these, it is largely overtime and unpaid work that has allowed us to attend to the details along the way. **In my view, it is these ‘extra’ efforts in all parts of our organization that best define who we are as a community service.** It is not what we do but *how we do it* that most impresses me about BCFIT.

This observation brings up a related challenge. There is little question that what we are dealing with in all program areas is more complex and challenging than it was in past years, and that our attention to quality has increased along with the quantity of services we deliver; but our standard outcome measures do not yet capture how we do our work and the level of quality we achieve. BCFIT is not unique in facing this challenge, and we will collaborate with other organizations in the year ahead to address it.

I am deeply honoured and grateful to be working with first-rate professionals in all parts of our organization every day. Words do not adequately convey my earnest thanks to everyone, and there is a long list of people to whom thanks are due. To begin I sincerely thank each of our many talented front-line team members, both paid and unpaid; all of our wise, devoted, and astute board members; our longstanding legal supervisor and advisor Crystal Buchan, who is also a former board president; and our external clinical supervisors Dr Allan Wade and Dr Bruce Tobin. Less visible but nevertheless contributing to our success this year are the TELUS Community Board; the United Way of Greater Victoria; the Law Foundation of BC; the BC Gaming Commission; Nancy

Fredericks, Peter Monk, and our other collaborators at the Ministry of Children and Family Development; the Ministry of the Attorney General; the Victoria Foundation; our tireless friend and ally Jane Taylor Lee; our ‘web diva’ Beverly Stuart; our volunteer I.T. wizard Melvin Klassen; our new collaborators Patricia Eaton and Ingrid Buschmann at the Greater Victoria Public Library; Shelly Westwood and the rest of the staff at the Black Press; the law firm of Brown, Henderson, Melbye; and our accountant Barry Obara and his team. Importantly also, we wish to thank two consultants—Michelle Colussi and Lois Gabitous—who worked very hard with the board and me to help us organize a social enterprise which will commence in 2011-2012. This endeavour was made possible by a grant from Enterprising Non-Profits and is described in a subsequent section of this report (please see “Projects and Partnerships”).

All in all, we share a bright future though our work together is far from complete. I eagerly look forward to the journey ahead.

*Richard Routledge, Executive Director*

## PUBLIC EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

This department consists of 2 major programs: *First Response Services* and *Parenting after Separation*. Once again the department provided services to over **11,000** people this year.

### FIRST RESPONSE SERVICES

*First Response Services* is the 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.

This year the First Response Services team handled about **12,000** phone calls, drop-ins, and email inquiries. Although the vast majority of the inquiries are local, we receive some from other parts of British Columbia, other provinces, and even other countries.

The variety and complexity of the inquiries are increasing every year as we become more visible as a front-line resource. For example, we are receiving more and more counselling and legal support inquiries for situations which involve a mental health component. An estimated **two-thirds** of our counselling referrals now involve a pre-existing mental health diagnosis for either the direct client or someone in the immediate family. As another example, our First

Response Services team now contends with numerous decisions about ethical issues which arise from providing a diverse range of counselling services for families. For these reasons, the First Response Services team has evolved to develop a large decision-making role, and Sandra Teiffel (a retired school counsellor) ably fills this niche in close collaboration with the executive director and with Raji Goel, our executive assistant and First Response Services supervisor.

Raji is the department's full-time staff member and has served with the agency for about 17 years. As our executive assistant he fulfills many roles at once, including handling our bookkeeping and coming in early each morning to take care of the janitorial and building maintenance tasks. Sandra began as a volunteer in 2006 and has become our intake coordinator *par excellence*, making it her mission to develop and perfect a detailed procedure. This process includes gathering basic information from family members and referral agents; determining the 'best fit' for each person with each program and each team member; identifying additional in-house and community resources which might be needed; taking care of logistics for scheduling the appointments, with many personnel sharing a finite number of rooms; and summarizing the available information in a file for each team member. Whenever child counselling is requested she completes several additional steps, such as acquiring proof of consent from parents or guardians as well as clarification of the legal custody and guardianship arrangements. Sandra also makes numerous outbound calls to facilitate each of these steps and follow-up on the success of the arrangements. She consults with the executive director during this process.

As First Response Services has become larger and more demanding, our need for volunteers in this department has increased. We are deeply grateful to Rhoda Waddington, a retired social worker who has volunteered in this department since early 2007 by commuting from North Pender Island at her own expense. She not only volunteers on the front line; she also devotes numerous unpaid hours to researching and contacting potential donors and other funding sources. We are indeed very fortunate to have her in our team.

We are also grateful to our other dedicated volunteers in First Response Services—notably legal assistant Deborah Puymon and counselling graduate student Maryam Malekie. Regrettably, earlier in the year we said goodbye to Jan Handley, a customer relations worker who had been a big help to us for 4 years, and to a doctoral student named Jackie Bush who is now at the University of Calgary. We have said hello to another legal assistant named Leigh Wilkins, who joined the agency as a volunteer in legal support in 2005, and also to Simon Cheung, a law student who has just begun to work with us. Additionally, our treasurer Ken D'Sa assists Raji with some of his bookkeeping work.

All of our First Response Services personnel are skilled in providing a vital support service, including handling stress and strong emotions, which is important to clients before they are ready to start a new program. This skill is essential as approximately **1 in 8** adults who use our services express thoughts of suicide, **at least half** report 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.

#### **PARENTING AFTER SEPARATION**

*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. Unlike the rest of our services this program's content is standardized by the province. It includes an introduction to the family legal system and a large amount of information about co-parenting, with group discussion and a problem-solving focus. There are always 2 presenters—1 male, 1 female—and on most occasions there is also a guest speaker from the Family Justice Centre.

The workshop is a necessary step for people applying for (or responding to) a court order for custody, access, or maintenance of a child, and we are starting to see many more grandparents and extended family members attend. 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.

This year was a landmark for *Parenting after Separation* as it marked the last year of offering it at our current office space. The Ministry of the Attorney General put the program to tender at Christmas time and when we were once again awarded the contract, a part of our agreement was to provide the workshop in a larger, more comfortable space. We are thrilled to offer the workshop in the luxurious meeting room at the Central branch of the Greater Victoria Public Library, and we are very thankful to Patricia Eaton, Ingrid Buschmann, and the other library staff for going out of their way to make this arrangement possible for us. We are thankful, too, to Doug Woodall and Raji Goel who assisted with the successful proposal.

Moreover, as part of our renewed contract we run *Parenting after Separation* **35** times per year instead of 33. This expansion is significant because we now see wait lists of about a month.

Raji coordinates and reports on *Parenting after Separation* and our First Response Services team handles participant registration and confirmation call-backs. Donnarose Law has been facilitating this program for us since 1999, and Lionel Zelniker since 2002. Doug has facilitated as back-up during the last 4 years when Lionel is away, and Jane Taylor Lee for the last 2 years while Donnarose is away. All the facilitators are exceptionally skilled, as reflected once

again in the program evaluations. As usual **over 90 percent** of them state the program was very helpful, and many participants state they wish the workshop could have been longer than 3 hours. This observation is a huge tribute to the expertise with which our facilitators conduct the sessions.

Demand for this program is consistently high. This year we had **831** people register (our highest ever), which resulted in **583** people attending. It is hard to believe that the first time we offered this program, in December 1997, we had an average of 4 people in attendance at each session. Now **17** is the average number for a given session.

We sincerely thank our facilitators—Donnarose, Lionel, Doug, and Jane—for their considerable talent, professional skill, hard work, and enthusiasm. We also wish to thank the Commissionaires, who have provided a security guard for each session since 2004, and Anne Reuvekamp, the local area manager for the Family Justice Centre.

*Richard Routledge, Executive Director  
Raji Goel, Executive Assistant*

## LEGAL SUPPORT SERVICES DEPARTMENT

This section is divided into 2 parts: our longstanding *Legal Advocacy and Information Services* program and a relatively new one called *Talking about Money in Relationships* (formerly *Balancing the Budget*). The department assisted **4,075** people in *Legal Advocacy and Information Services* and **62** in *Talking about Money in Relationships* for a combined total of **4,137** this year. Once again in this department, **99 percent** of our evaluations state our clients are satisfied or very satisfied with the services they received (4 or 5 on a 5-point Likert scale across several subcategories).

### LEGAL ADVOCACY AND INFORMATION SERVICES

A visitor to BC Families in Transition will typically see more counsellors on-site than legal advocates, because our Legal Support Services team consists of fewer people and does some work off-site. However, the advocates actually work with nearly 4 times the number of people the counsellors do in a given year. That is because they generally see clients for only 1 or 2 appointments, and on Family Remand Days at the Victoria and Western Communities courthouses they support large numbers of people in a single visit. Of the **4,075** people we provided with legal advocacy services this fiscal year, **1,118** were served at the courthouses.

Our Legal Support Services team also provides a toll-free Legal Information Line in English and French, as well as a Computer Workstation for clients to conduct legal research, obtain legal forms, and receive immediate help

from our staff. This year we supported **367** people through the information line. An estimated **10 percent** of those callers were French-speaking.

Although most of our Legal Information Line calls come from Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands, over time we have received more from the BC mainland and the Kootenays. We are becoming an important legal resource to the province of British Columbia as a whole.

Our legal advocacy team consisting of Douglas Woodall, Marie-Christine White, Laura Luz, and full-time coordinator Pam Rudy has been working together for the past 4 years. Combined, the 4 of us have over 100 years of experience in this field. Like a precise machine we have fine-tuned our program delivery and file management to provide excellent professional services both in-office and at court. We are very fortunate to have had the same personnel who are enthusiastic in assisting clients and continually researching information to update our knowledge base. Client issues have increased in complexity and go beyond strictly family law territory. Matters of adoption, name change, wills/estates, out-of-province legislation/forms, interjurisdictional support orders, and child protection issues are some of the additional challenges our advocates encounter while working with clients.

Just after the end of the fiscal year, we added a fifth advocate to our Legal Support Services team: Leigh Wilkins, an experienced legal office assistant who has already been part of our organization as a volunteer for several years. She now has a role in First Response Services as well as in Legal Support Services. Welcome, Leigh!

For the last several years our Legal Support Services team has had continuous legal supervision and support from one very dedicated family lawyer, Crystal Buchan, whose guidance has been invaluable in assisting us with the challenges arising from increasingly complex family situations. We are extremely privileged to have Crystal's expertise and a dynamic advocacy team in our Legal Support Services program.

For the second year in a row we are delighted that we were able to provide pro bono clinics with the volunteer assistance of family lawyer Maureen McDowell and paralegal Sandy Germain, both from the Cox, Taylor legal firm. A total of **40** clients attended these clinics on designated Thursday evenings. The importance of the pro bono clinics is that low-income clients who become stuck negotiating spousal support and property division, because they do not know what is required by law, are able to get support calculated at the clinics and are then more informed to continue negotiations.

In reviewing this grant year we have come to realize several things. We were engaged in more outreach activity this year which was beneficial; however the trade-off was in providing fewer client appointments. We also have come to realize that the complexity of cases has increased whereby advocates spend

more time doing research, both in advance of and following client appointments. That extra time is not being reflected in our statistical reports. (For example, Pam recently determined that during the year our advocates made approximately **2,200** outgoing follow-up phone calls/emails either to clients or for them to other resources—why did we not think to report this number before??) Our goal for next year is to utilize connections we have with the University of Victoria to design a reporting system that adequately reflects our service delivery. Moreover, an ever-increasing proportion of our clients in this program do require more than 1 or 2 appointments in order to help with their legal circumstances.

We took full advantage this year of many opportunities for networking and providing in-services, as well as for giving presentations and workshops off-site. Our advocates presented legal information workshops to the Single Parent Resource Centre (twice), Law Centre Student Assisted Program (3 times), Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Centre Society, Victoria Women's Transition House, Hill House, Young Parents Support Network, Stepping Stones (a rental readiness program for tenants), Law Day (an open house at the Victoria courthouse), South Island Dispute Resolution Centre, Intercultural Association, Bridges for Women Society, Collaborative Family Law Group, Best Babies Support Groups at the West Shore Child Youth and Family Centre and at Esquimalt Neighbourhood House, Parent Support Services, Victoria Family Justice Centre, and Grandparents Raising Grandchildren.

In January we held our second annual on-site noon-hour panel presentation on options for Alternative Dispute Resolution, featuring 5 presenters: Anne Reuvekamp, area manager of the Victoria Family Justice Centre; Jane Dutly, executive director from South Island Dispute Resolution Centre; Robert Klassen, family law lawyer/mediator and founding member of Victoria's Collaborative Family Law (CFL) Group; Cally Farr, a divorce coach with CFL; and Theo Schmidt, a financial planner who is also with CFL.

This year provided BCFIT with opportunities to provide input on legal aid availability and family law changes. Pam was invited to give an oral submission to the Public Commission on Legal Aid chaired by Commissioner Leonard Doust, QC when he visited Victoria to hear submissions representing demographic groups which use the BC legal aid system. With input from advocates and several counsellors, Pam also wrote a response to the Ministry of Attorney General regarding the draft new *Family Law Act* that the Ministry is proposing to replace the current *Family Relations Act* in the near future.

Professional development this year included Pam's attending the Law Foundation and Legal Services Society's Annual Provincial Advocacy Conference in November. Pam also attended a half-day training session in Vancouver in October on the use of Divorcemate software in calculating spousal support. All the advocates received updates from Crystal Buchan regarding the

new Supreme Court Rules and new family law forms which changed in July 2010, and also attended a session on using Divorcemate. All the advocates met with Al Leslie, counsel for the Family Maintenance Enforcement Program, to learn more about new enforcement procedures.

We are grateful to the Law Foundation of BC, which provides about 90 percent of the funding for this huge program, and to the BC Gaming Commission which provides most of the remainder of it. For the 5th year in a row, we wish to acknowledge sincerely the law firm of Brown, Henderson, Melbye as well as our individual donors for their generous contributions. We also wish to thank our associates at the South Island Dispute Resolution Centre, the CFL Group, and the Family Justice Centre. Last but not least, we owe our thanks to Dr Allan Wade for his support to the team in dealing with issues that can be very demanding emotionally.

#### TALKING ABOUT MONEY IN RELATIONSHIPS (FORMERLY 'BALANCING THE BUDGET')

This program started in 2009 with a generous grant from the United Way of Greater Victoria, and was implemented to help adults deal with the financial aspects of a separation or divorce. The program was designed as a collaboration with Justice Education Society (then called Law Courts Education Society of BC) and Garry Oak Financial Services, and consisted of a 4-part package offered for a total price of \$25:

- an initial Legal Support Services appointment;
- a 3-hour financial planning workshop called "Separated with Children: Dealing with the Finances";
- 1 or 2 appointments with a certified financial planner who specializes in separation and divorce work; and
- a follow-up Legal Support Services appointment and evaluation.

All participants were given the option of choosing *either or both* the workshop and the services of a financial planner.

The workshop was originally developed by the Justice Education Society and provides a great deal of information on the financial stages of separation, how to become financially literate and organized, and how to communicate with a partner about finances during the process of separation and divorce. Marie-Christine and Laura facilitate this workshop, having taken the training at their own expense, and are skilled in tailoring the copious amounts of material to meet the needs of the participants. The Justice Education Society was able again this year to provide a small amount of funding in return for using our experience with this workshop as a pilot project for the Victoria area.

The certified financial planner for this program, Theo Schmidt, is part of the Garry Oak Financial Group and is also a member of the Victoria Collaborative Family Law Group. Clients meet at his office and are consistently

very pleased with his ability to make complex material transparent and manageable.

When we ran this program for its first year in 2009-2010, we realized it had greater potential and deserved a significant expansion. Participation was lower than anticipated and, at the same time, we saw that it is not only couples who are separating but also those who are struggling to stay together and are disagreeing about money that can benefit. We approached the United Way of Greater Victoria with this idea and they shared our excitement. Consequently, in 2010-2011 we were able to expand the scope of the program.

We decided to keep the workshop component as is, specifically for couples who are separating, and further develop the component involving the financial planner. This component now includes a series of 3-4 weekly sessions (not just 2) with Theo, still for the same subsidized price, and structured with "homework" to help people move forward productively from the first session to the last. The series of sessions is as follows:

- Session 1: Taking Inventory. Stock-taking; pinpointing the problems; finding imbalances (if any);
- Session 2: Creating a draft plan, with financial 'bells and whistles' along with the necessary action steps and recommendations;
- Session 3: Refinement and implementation of the draft plan, and follow-through;
- Session 4: Additional session if required to refine the plan or the implementation of it, and address arising issues.

For couples who are trying to resolve conflicts around money with the objective of staying together, we apply the following 5 objectives:

1. Develop a common language for talking about money – financial literacy;
2. Use this common language to address the imbalance of financial knowledge that typically exists between the spouses;
3. Explore 'lifestyle choices for the family' and their financial implications/options;
4. Help the spouses make the best use of the money they have, with the underlying assumption "money doesn't have to be a nuisance;"
5. Explore 'smart spending' (economically smart consumption), including how to handle credit cards and other commonly useful topics.

Theo is now developing a web-based form called *Ask Our Financial Planner*, to be added to BCFIT's website. He and Pam are also developing a set of information sheets which will be made available both as a hard-copy package and on BCFIT's website. Additionally, we are now developing 2-hour

informational workshops on particular topics which are frequently of interest to our clients in learning to work together with money issues.

We wish to thank consultant John Billings and the United Way of Greater Victoria for his help in expanding the scope of this valuable program. We also thank Amy Collins, a professional writer who volunteers for BCFIT, for her help with promotional materials.

Pam Rudy, Legal Support Services Coordinator  
Richard Routledge, Executive Director

## COUNSELLING AND THERAPY SERVICES DEPARTMENT

Although group counselling has been an important part of our agency's service-delivery since 1979, it is only in the last 5 years that we have had a bona fide therapy department to provide individual, couple, and family therapy services. We provide these services for all ages, all walks of life and all family configurations, with tremendous versatility and the ability to respond to almost any situation in which relationships are the primary concern. This department has grown and developed so rapidly that what started as a 3-person team with a few adjunct facilitators has become a host of 30. This fiscal year, the department served **1,240** people in a combination of approximately **7,200** individual/couple/family therapy appointments and **211** counselling group or subgroup sessions.

Our Counselling and Therapy Services team members this fiscal year included a diverse assortment of professionally-trained clinicians: Susan Farr (previously Susan Duffy), Jette Midtgaard, Hazel Loewen, John Ricker, Mitra Jordan, Dawn Cox; Rebecca Corcoran, Dr Digby Clarke; Teresa Norris, Nick Ruedy, Lara Feldman, Sophie von Hermann, Robin Feldman (no relation to Lara!), Elicia Loisel, Erin Laird, Karen Meadows, Trudy Mahle-Matthews, Lionel Zelniker, Helen Lennie, Jacqueline Nikolejsin, Donnarose Law, Laurie Truant, Barbara Green, Ava Bahrani, Luciana Dugham, Jackie Leblanc, Ian Symons, Darcy Dyck, John Scheunhage, and Cary Wright (the latter 2 of whom finished their internships last summer). In March 2011, we introduced Maxine Fisher, Lorne Mackie, and Chris Rowand. Our practitioners are either RCCs (registered clinical counsellors), members of professional associations in art therapy or expressive arts therapy or music therapy, or nearing the end of their graduate or post-graduate training and completing 'supervised hours' for final qualifications. (For a list of names and credentials, please see the inside cover of this Report).

**Many of our clinicians volunteered 100 percent of their time at our agency.** Moreover, those clinicians who are (or were) completing 'supervised hours' for their final qualifications were selected from a pool of **more than 300** applicants, culled from many universities and elsewhere, both within Canada and abroad,

over the past 4 years. Our executive director interviewed nearly all of the applicants prior to their selection.

The work of this department, like our other departments, is extremely complex as it frequently involves child safety concerns, court or ministry involvement, police involvement, intergenerational and intercultural conflict, and a dazzling variety of clinical, practical, and ethical issues. Clinical supervision is vital to ensure our standards of excellence, as well as to support the team members who conduct this emotionally-demanding work. We now provide clinical supervision in 3 distinct formats. First, it is provided 'in-house' in individual meetings with the executive director (who is an experienced family therapist and RCC) and, for students helping to facilitate *Caught in the Middle* with staff member Susan Farr, MEd, RCC. Second, we provide clinical supervision for all department members in monthly group meetings led by the indomitably humble, though internationally respected, Dr Allan Wade, RCC. Dr Wade has generously provided this service for us since 2006. Third, as of this year we provide monthly group supervision meetings specifically for those clinicians who work with children, and these meetings are led by child-counselling specialist Dr Bruce Tobin, RCC, ATR. We are very grateful to Dr Wade and Dr Tobin for the enthusiastic and extremely skilled ways in which they do their important work for our team. We are also very grateful to our longstanding legal supervisor—family lawyer Crystal Buchan—as she has volunteered increasing numbers of hours over the past few years to assist our Counselling and Therapy team, advising us on such matters as how to testify in court, how to improve our client forms and documents in the event of a subpoena, how to prepare our agency for the possibility of family law changes that will impact our work, and more. Jane Taylor Lee, too, has provided our team some similar training.

Our Counselling and Therapy team is multitalented and our clinicians work closely together to support each client or family. To accomplish this, BCFIT is committed to the highest levels of ethical practice and follows the Code of Ethics and Practice Standards established by the BC Association of Clinical Counsellors ([www.bcacc.org](http://www.bcacc.org)). Jim Browne and John Gawthrop from the BC Association of Clinical Counsellors have provided assistance during the year, consulting on ethical issues and program development tasks respectively. In addition to clinical supervision we have been able to provide some of our clinicians with access to training courses and workshops, and we are committed to increasing our capacity for this training as funding for it becomes available.

This department and our Legal Support Services department collaborate together actively. It is extremely useful for our counsellors to be able to instantly consult with our Legal Support advocates on a legal issue, or arrange for a client an appointment with one of our advocates after a session. We have a truly

effective, multidisciplinary environment. The sections below outline in greater detail our individual/couple/family services and our group counselling services.

### **INDIVIDUAL, COUPLE, AND FAMILY THERAPY**

This fiscal year our team provided individual, couple, and family therapy sessions to **994** people of all ages. The largest area of growth has once again been our child therapy services, and we are deeply grateful to the TELUS Community Board for a \$50,000 donation which, together with a \$30,000 grant from the United Way of Greater Victoria, made this possible. With this assistance, our maximum capacity for child counselling has grown from about **140** children and youth per year to approximately **240**, depending on the complexity of the family circumstances and level of trauma involved. The combined TELUS/United Way grants also made it possible for us to hire Dr Bruce Tobin as an additional clinical supervisor and to expand Sandra Teiffel's hours to allow her to complete our pre-intake and intake procedures for child counselling.

Our services for all ages in individual/couple/family therapy were made possible not only by these grants but also by other major grants from the United Way of Greater Victoria and the BC Gaming Commission, a special donation from the Black Press, and some very generous donations from people who used the services. A note of very special recognition is due to Rhoda Waddington—our volunteer in First Response Services who commutes from North Pender Island—who has relentlessly fundraised for our child therapy program.



Richard receiving a cheque from Black Press

Our team that started in 2006 as a 3-person individual/couple/family therapy unit has grown to a diverse assembly spanning a variety of backgrounds, clinical orientations, areas of specialty, and hours of work. This ensemble has proven versatile enough to be able to accommodate almost any family situation, with a choice of practitioners united with a common value set who work together superbly. Some are staff members, some are adjunct independent clinical counsellors, and about half are volunteers. The following chart shows a breakdown of practitioners who served in our team during the fiscal year, along with the types of counselling they provided at BCFIT.

	Adults	Couples/ Families	Children (4-11)	Youth (12-19)
Susan Farr	✓			
Jette Midtgaard	✓	✓	✓	✓
Hazel Loewen	✓	✓		✓
John Ricker	✓	✓		✓
Cary Wright	✓	✓		✓
Chris Rowand	✓	✓		✓
Dawn Cox	✓	✓		
Dr Digby Clarke	✓	✓		
Elicia Loisetle				✓
Erin Laird	✓	✓		✓
Jackie LeBlanc	✓			
John Scheunhage	✓			
Karen Meadows	✓			
Lara Feldman <sup>①</sup>			✓	✓
Lorne Mackie	✓	✓		✓
Maxine Fisher <sup>②</sup>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mitra Jordan	✓	✓		
Nick Ruedy	✓	✓		✓
Rebecca Corcoran	✓	✓	✓	✓
Robin Feldman <sup>③</sup>			✓	
Sophie von Hermann <sup>③</sup>			✓	
Teresa Norris	✓	✓	✓	✓
Trudy Mahle-Matthews	✓	✓		

Notes:

① Play therapist

② Music therapist who also provides traditional talk therapy

③ Expressive arts therapist

In 2007 when we changed our name from Separation and Divorce Resource Centre to BC Families in Transition and simultaneously expanded our mandate to help families stay together, we opened the door to a much wider range of counselling. We now accommodate individuals and families with transition issues that include loss of a family member through death, incarceration, military deployment, and other changes besides separation or divorce, and we are seeing more couples who are proactive in addressing marital issues together preventatively. We continue to see more men (although still somewhat fewer than women), more children and teenagers, and a wider range of cultural and ethnic diversity than in previous years. The proportion of our clientele who identify as non-Caucasian is about the same as for the population of Greater Victoria as a whole.

Because of the rapid expansion of this program and the size of the team, the challenges of internal coordination and ongoing program development have been considerable. Sandra Teiffel, our intake worker in First Response Services,

has worked extremely hard and done an outstanding job. The demands of the intake role require tremendous intuitive skill and attention to myriad details for each person or family, and Sandra's extensive background as a school counsellor enables her to provide it. Staff members Susan Farr, Jette Midtgaard, Hazel Loewen, and John Ricker, too, have taken initiative to collaborate on a great deal of work to attend to the details of quality control.

The number of counselling sessions people can access at BCFIT is not restricted as long as the therapy stays within our mandate and, based on client feedback as well as consultations with the team and executive director, is deemed to be productive. We have in-house review and consultation procedures for this purpose. Once again this year our clients' evaluations of our services have been consistently positive: about **99 percent** of responses are scored as "satisfied" or "very satisfied" on a 5-point Likert scale across several subcategories.

#### GROUP COUNSELLING PROGRAMS

BCFIT provided the following group counselling programs during the past fiscal year:

- **Caught in the Middle:** an 11-week, multi-component program for up to 3 generations—children, parents, and grandparents—in families in which there has been a parental separation and the children are, in a manner of speaking, "caught in the middle" between their parents. The 11<sup>th</sup> week is an optional one for follow-up interviews, reassessment, and further referrals.
- **Evolutions:** an 8-to-10-week program to assist separated or divorced adults to understand and handle long-term grief and loss associated with the end of a relationship.
- **Single Again Support Group:** an 8-to-10-week program for adults who are in the early phases of separating from their partners.
- **Parenting with a New Partner:** an 8-week program for parents in step-families and blended families.
- **Teen Life Counselling:** an informal seminar to assist youth aged 13 to 19 to deal with the emotional issues associated with separation or divorce, and to address a variety of questions about relationships.
- **Putting the Magic Back into Your Holidays:** a 3-hour experiential workshop to assist adults with the loneliness, sadness, and other emotions that commonly arise from awareness that one's family is in disrepair during the holiday season.

The BC Gaming Commission supports all of these group programs, especially *Caught in the Middle* which is also supported by the United Way of Greater Victoria and the Ministry of Children and Family Development. This fiscal

year we served **246** participants in our group counselling programs, up from last year's 207.

*Caught in the Middle* originated as a children's group in 1985 and grew to a 2-generation program in 1987 when we added a parent group. The configuration then 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 entailed 2 part-time staff. In 2008 the United Way of Greater Victoria granted us multi-year funding to expand the program even further over a 3-year period by adding the following new components: (1) a take-home resource 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 a good 'fit' for the group; (4) a follow-up component designed to evaluate the program's success and help determine next steps for each family; and finally (5) a grandparents' group. This fiscal year marked the conclusion of the grant and we are quite pleased with the results.

A major change in our lineup occurred in February, when staff member and *Caught in the Middle* co-coordinator Jette Midtgaard went on maternity leave. We are deeply grateful to Donnarose Law, who has been with the agency in one form or another since 1997, for stepping in to take Jette's place in assisting Susan Farr with the daunting task of coordinating *Caught in the Middle*. Susan, Jette, and Donnarose have once again accomplished the seemingly impossible task of screening and organizing all the specific subgroups for the different generations in this huge program—6 times per year (2 in the spring, 2 in the fall, and 2 in the winter). Each time, the process requires matching the participants to make sure they can work together, matching each of the subgroups with the right facilitators, keeping the subgroups synchronized with one another in terms of the program content, and being continually vigilant to identify clinical, practical, and ethical issues regarding custody and guardianship, abuse or allegations of abuse, and more. Whenever both of a child's parents wish to participate in this program, they attend on separate nights, but nonetheless the coordinators' ability to make sure *Caught in the Middle* remains a safe and healing place for everyone reflects considerable wisdom and experience.

A sincere thank-you is due to everyone in this year's *Caught in the Middle* team: Susan, Jette, Donnarose, Lionel Zelniker, Helen Lennie, Jacqueline Nikolejsin, Erin Laird, Laurie Truant, Rebecca Corcoran, Barbara Green, Teresa Norris, Lara Feldman, Jackie LeBlanc, Ian Symons, Ava Bahrani, Luciana Dugham, and Darcy Dyck. Susan wishes to include the following statement: "Once again I am so grateful to have a loyal and dedicated team of professionals

*who care so deeply about the Caught in the Middle program and the people who attend. Thank you."*

Our other group programs, too, have been updated during the past year. Of particular importance, we revolutionized *Teen Life Counselling* with much thanks to Elicia Loiselle and Jette Midtgaard. Rather than trying to organize a 6-to-8-week group for teenagers on-site, we decided to run the program off-site in collaboration with Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Centre Society (VIRCS), because that organization already had a group of more than 20 youth with a range of relationship issues and questions best suited to our team to address. Jette and Elicia coordinated with VIRCS' team member Megan Thom to deliver an informal group at VIRCS, providing much-needed support for the participants concerning separation and divorce issues, family relationship changes, and problems to do with relationships more generally. The group was quite warmly received and the strong consensus is that this format works well as a partnership program. As a result we will continue to run *TLC* as a collaboration with VIRCS. We would like to express our thanks to Megan for her great help in making this program such a success!

*Evolutions* and *Single Again* serve a similar purpose for different clientele: *Evolutions* is a group for adults who are having prolonged difficulty moving forward in their lives after a separation or divorce has taken place, whereas *Single Again* is for adults who are still in the early stages of grieving a lost relationship. *Evolutions* is a mixed group (men and women), while *Single Again* is a same-sex group each time it is run. We have provided *Evolutions* since 1979 and *Single Again* since 2007. Susan Farr coordinated both programs this year and, as she does with any program, she did a masterful job. Donnarose Law provided all of the group facilitation for both programs. The evaluations were very positive once again this year, showing the participants felt supported and no longer so alone, were able to move forward to achieve greater fulfillment and independence, and felt they learned valuable things about themselves and their relationships.

*Parenting with a New Partner* began in 2006 with a grant from the Queen Alexandra Foundation for Children, and we have continuously refined the content. The purpose of this program is to help parents who have formed a 'blended family' by adding a new partner into the home, and have found stress in the new family relationships a result. Becoming a blended family is usually a difficult transition and our group provides a context to examine and enrich the changed relationships, both between the partners and with the children/stepchildren. This year as in previous years, staff member John Ricker worked very hard to coordinate the program, in the process conducting many intake sessions to help couples determine whether a group program or traditional couples counselling would offer a more effective approach. This year Barbara

Green provided all the group facilitation, and the evaluations once again showed the participants gained valuable new insights and ideas which they were able to apply within their new family configurations.

*Putting the Magic Back into your Holidays* is not an ongoing group but a stand-alone, 3-hour session offered only during the winter holiday season. It is largely the brainchild of one of our established facilitators, Helen Lennie, who in 2005 developed an exceptional workshop for people who feel alone when they no longer have their family members with them during the holiday season. Raji Goel coordinates this workshop, and Helen facilitates it on select Saturday afternoons in November and December. The participants in this program tell us they value the opportunity to create new meanings for the holiday season.

During the last 2 years we have received several requests to run our group counselling programs on other organizations' premises. This is a favourable development, because one of our major constraints is now a shortage of space and because it presents opportunities to develop new partnerships.

#### **A NEW COUNSELLING PROGRAM: ALL ABOUT ME**

Near the end of the fiscal year, we received an unexpected invitation from the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) to create a new counselling program, specifically for children and teens who are involved with the Ministry due to psychological trauma arising from experiences of parental or guardian abandonment. The program needed to be developed quickly in order to commence at the start of the new fiscal year, in April 2011. Our executive director worked with Nancy Fredericks and Peter Monk of MCFD, with much help from BCFIT team members Rebecca Corcoran, Sandra Teiffel, and Elicia Loiselle, and by April the program was ready to roll. The inspiration for the program design comes largely from narrative and response-based therapy, and we describe it as a "self-determination and skill-building program for MCFD-referred children and youth who have experienced trauma pertaining to family transition." The name *All About Me* reflects the strictly child-focused nature of the program.

In *All About Me* we will work with about 60 children and youth per year up to age 19. Most of this work consists of individual sessions, but there are also some sessions with siblings together, and we aspire to assemble at least 1 group per year. All the referrals come directly from MCFD social workers, and the intake process is very closely coordinated by Sandra Teiffel in conjunction with our executive director and with Peter Monk. We are excited about the future prospects of this new program, and so far Rebecca Corcoran, Maxine Fisher, Lorne Mackie, and Chris Rowand have provided the counselling.

*Richard Routledge, Executive Director*

## **PROJECTS AND PARTNERSHIPS**

BCFIT's rapid growth and development have been possible in large part because of our readiness to partner with other organizations, including many other non-profit agencies, and their readiness to partner with us. Developing partnerships is an important area of focus and we are starting to collaborate more closely with numerous non-profit, public, and private organizations.

This trend will continue in the 2011-2012 fiscal year, as we are about to offer a small-scale Employee and Family Assistance Provider (EFAP) program as a social enterprise. This important development has been made possible by a grant from Enterprising Non-Profits, which is a collaboration of 9 different funders (the largest contributor is Vancity) to provide consultants to help non-profit organizations develop a social enterprise. At the time of printing this report, work is underway to develop promotional materials, which will then be used selectively in approaching local organizations with which we already have a connection. We do not intend to become a competitor to existing EFAP corporations, but rather to limit ourselves to a small handful of contracts with local corporate clients.

As stated previously, we are very much indebted to the two consultants who were provided to us through Enterprising Non-Profits to help us sort out our options and develop a modest, realistic strategy. These consultants were Lois Gabitous and Michelle Colussi, and we offer a heartfelt thanks to both. Additional thanks are due to former clinical intern Gail Atkinson-Ireland and graphic designer Virginia Dakiniewich.

Michelle Colussi also assisted with another project through the Enterprising Non-Profits grant: a marketing strategy for a set of educational DVDs/downloads which also form part of our vision for a social enterprise. We have long-range plans for this project, and the first step is to produce a DVD to assist parents in talking to their children and teens about getting a divorce or permanent separation. This first step is funded by the United Way of Greater Victoria. We are currently part-way through the development of the DVD, and this project will be a major focus for us in the upcoming quarter. We wish to thank former volunteer Michael Berry for his fundamental help in getting the project started.

A third current project concerns speaking engagements. We have come to recognize the vast diversity of backgrounds, training, and expertise that exists at our fingertips within our multidisciplinary team, and the potential to capitalize on this by providing training workshops. As a first step in this direction, we began this year to hold semi-annual "in-house professional development days," which are occasions when we close part of our office and in a formal, structured way if we were presenting to an outside audience, present in 'conference style' a variety of materials to our in-house colleagues. These events have proven to be a great deal of fun and provide a valuable 'bonding experience' for all staff,

contractors, and volunteers who can attend. Our next step will be to package some of our presentations and take them 'on the road' to other organizations.

A partial list of our community partners during the 2010-2011 fiscal year includes the Single Parent Resource Centre; Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Centre Society; South Island Dispute Resolution Centre; the Victoria Police Department and Greater Victoria Police Victim Services; Victoria 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; Pacific Centre Family Services Association; Big Brothers, Big Sisters; Child and Family Counselling Association; Disability Resource Centre; Young Parents Support Network School Districts 61, 62, and 63; Intercultural Association; Victoria Native Friendship Centre; Citizen's Counselling; Blanshard Community Centre; Burnside-Gorge Community Centre; Capital Families Association; Child Abuse Protection and Counselling Society; 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; Justice Education Society; BC Provincial Courthouse; Together Against Poverty Society; Garry Oak Financial Group; Community Social Planning Council of Greater Victoria; Victoria Family Violence Prevention Society; University of Victoria; City University; and other universities in connection with internships, practica, faculty and student projects, committees, and speaking engagements.

*Richard Routledge, Executive Director*

#### **COMMENTS FROM CRYSTAL BUCHAN, LEGAL SUPERVISOR**

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It has been my great privilege to again this year provide legal supervision to our excellent team of legal advocates. As always, I find myself in awe of the number of clients served and the consistently excellent service that the clients report receiving.

There are so many exciting, but challenging changes for our family law advocates. These include the new Supreme Court Rules and Forms, the proposed new *Family Law Act* and the advisory spousal support guidelines. The advocates and I have met monthly to review rules, forms and court processes, and to debrief about their experiences with our clients at the office and at court.

We are very grateful to Divorcemate for providing their computer program for calculating child and spousal support, and for providing training opportunities for the advocates. The advocates and I have worked together on the computer on calculations and forms at some of our meetings in preparation for the advocates providing some direction to clients who are now using computers themselves.

The advocates and I have spent considerable time this year reviewing effective ways to collaborate with community organizations, to make effective referrals to other organizations, and to communicate about our work so that we receive effective referrals from others. All reports that I receive, whether from duty counsel, court staff, lawyers and others providing service in our community, are that our advocates collaborate exceptionally with other service providers to the great benefit of our clients.

We have engaged in a careful and thoughtful discussion about client confidentiality and ensuring that the client understands the limits of the advocates' service. I have every confidence that the advocates are providing up to date legal information and appropriate assistance to our clients. They keep detailed client files, which allows continuity of service in the event that the client does not see the same advocate on each visit.

I had the opportunity to attend the Law Foundation's *Supervising Lawyers Conference* in Vancouver on April 27, 2011. It was an informative conference, and a wonderful opportunity to meet other lawyers engaged in legal supervision. I am reminded of how fortunate our organization is to have the continuity and exceptional quality of service provided by our advocates.

*Crystal Buchan, Legal Supervisor*

Thank you to all our volunteers!

**COMMENTS FROM DR ALLAN WADE, CLINICAL SUPERVISOR**

Clinical supervision has taken place about once monthly this year, with a large and growing community of counsellors. We continue to place priority on discussing situations that present special ethical and practice challenges. These discussions are typically informal, with everyone asking questions, offering ideas, and reflecting on their own practice. At times, we use more structured activities.

A recurring theme this year has been the practice and ethical challenges presented by cases of interpersonal violence, especially where so-called "custody and access" disputes have reached the court. Crystal Buchan attended two meetings and provided valuable information from a legal perspective. I believe the team is interested in finding ways to contribute in a positive way to these very demanding situations, in a manner that helps children move forward.

I am always impressed at the level and tone of the discussions. The team is very experienced and never fails to bring forward thoughtful and often unexpected perspectives. The tone is often quite light and playful, while respectful of clients and focused on providing useful ideas for all concerned. It is a rich learning environment for interns, who are encouraged to participate fully. I believe any client of BCFIT would be impressed and comforted by the quality of the supervision meetings.

Once again, it has been my privilege to participate. I continue to gain valuable new information and perspectives from the team and appreciate the commitment of the organization to on-going supervision, for team members and clients alike. Thank you.

*Dr Allan Wade, Clinical Supervisor*

**COMMENTS FROM DR BRUCE TOBIN,  
CLINICAL SUPERVISOR FOR CHILDREN'S THERAPY**

I have been providing clinical supervision since January to a group of 6-8 BCFIT counsellors who specialize in working with children and youth.

We conduct our two-hour monthly sessions like a clinic. Counsellors bring their issues of concern; they ask questions and generate discussion about clinical skills, strategies, procedures, policies and ethics relating to interventions with children and adolescents.

Wow! I am totally impressed not only with the intelligence and professionalism of the counselling group, but with their passion, their caring for their clients, and their desire to grow their skills. It is a joy to work with this group!

*Dr Bruce Tobin, Clinical Supervisor*



## FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

### INCOME STATEMENT

	Unreviewed 2010-2011	Reviewed 2009-2010	Reviewed 2008-2009	Reviewed 2007-2008
<b>Revenue</b>				
BC Gaming	\$149,760	\$141,000	\$109,816	\$99,300
United Way	148,259	94,362	85,796	54,683
Law Foundation	91,200	91,200	115,133	115,680
Ministry of Attorney General	19,558	20,170	20,123	20,050
Fees & Miscellaneous	69,911	67,086	59,202	44,155
Ministry of Children and Family Development	12,000	12,000	12,000	12,000
Telus	50,000	0	10,000	0
Foundations (other)	12,500	24,402	2,950	10,500
Service Canada	0	0	29,672	-
	<b>\$553,188</b>	<b>\$450,220</b>	<b>\$444,692</b>	<b>\$356,368</b>
<b>Expenses</b>				
Program Delivery				
Personnel	\$270,168	\$256,963	\$258,601	\$217,879
Rent & Utilities	34,869	32,889	30,150	21,385
Contractor Fees	76,001	56,442	42,940	25,705
Administration*	16,690	19,346	18,056	9,703
Accounting/Audit	5,525	6,109	6,200	7,230
Supervision, Legal	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000
Supervision, Clinical	3,855	2,571	3,547	3,703
Telephone, Fax, Internet	5,821	5,806	6,042	4,573
Amortization	3,000	8,054	3,000	3,929
Advertising	3,327	2,334	2,761	1,180
Security	2,902	2,555	2,615	2,756
Training & Travel	4,191	3,768	5,188	1,149
Memberships	1,015	691	732	906
Insurance	1,150	1,275	1,275	1,550
Program Development	3,709	4,846	3,573	1,481
Office Improvements	1,046	1,110	2,500	1,704
Deferred Revenue	99,560	50,500	38,000	36,293
	<b>\$537,829</b>	<b>\$460,262</b>	<b>\$430,180</b>	<b>\$346,126</b>
<b>Surplus (Loss)</b>	<b>\$15,359</b>	<b>(\$10,042)</b>	<b>\$14,512</b>	<b>\$10,242</b>

\*includes office supplies, bank charges, etc.

### BALANCE SHEET AS AT MARCH 31<sup>ST</sup>

	2011	2010	2009	2008
<b>Assets</b>				
Bank Acct, Cash, GST Receivable	\$133,788	\$ 64,362	\$ 51,699	\$ 79,127
Term Deposits	0	12,106	14,761	21,108
Funding Receivable	3,556	9,333	8,151	5,238
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>\$137,344</b>	<b>\$ 85,801</b>	<b>\$ 74,611</b>	<b>\$105,473</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>				
Fixed Operating Costs Payable	\$ 9,170	\$ 11,000	\$ 16,268	\$ 3,356
Variable Operating Costs Payable	4,677	2,700	2,205	8,865
Deferred Revenue	99,560	50,500	38,000	50,214
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>\$113,407</b>	<b>\$ 64,200</b>	<b>\$ 56,473</b>	<b>\$ 62,434</b>
<b>Unrestricted Net Assets</b>	<b>\$ 23,937</b>	<b>\$ 21,601</b>	<b>\$ 18,139</b>	<b>\$ 43,039</b>

**\$137,344    \$ 85,801    \$ 74,611    \$105,473**

## LETTERS FROM OUR CLIENTS

*To Whom It May Concern:*

*Last year, I experienced my hardest year in life...yet. My relationship ended and my life role changed...before I knew it, I was no longer a partner, a step mom – had no house to run, no dogs to care for and a new home/community to settle into. This new reality was not ideal and not what I wanted...in turn, I crumbled. I came to a point that I was so worried about myself, but didn't want to worry my loved ones so I protected them and pretended all was fine. This tactic caught up with me too...before I knew it, I didn't really know myself at all and was becoming more lost with each passing day.*

*Being a strong, successful independent woman...I thought of reaching out to someone, but I didn't have any luck in the past so I didn't. Time carried on and I was becoming worse off. Finally, a day came that I really couldn't take life anymore and so I called a local woman's shelter, in which they recommended I come in. With that appointment, I was referred to your agency. I will never forget my first call...how caring, accommodating and concerned Sandra was for me. She heard me out and brought me in to meet with a counsellor, right away. Ever since that day, I've been meeting with the counsellor on a weekly basis and I must say, she has been a real blessing to me – and ultimately, BC Families in Transition. The value she has offered me and my quality of life...well, it would be difficult for me to measure in words. The experience has been one of my best, in life. I was a typical "I don't need help...I can figure this out on my own...I got myself into this mess, I can get myself out." When in truth, the counsellor and BC Families in Transition are exactly what I needed.*

*I've had the opportunity to refer other people in crisis to your organization and I do so with great pleasure, as well as confidence – for I know I am sending them to the best place! The people and atmosphere are the make-up for this and I cannot thank each and every one of them enough. As my ending time nears, I hope to see BC Families in Transition continue to positively affect others' lives, just as it did for me.*

*Thank you so very much, for assisting me during my life transition.*

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*In Support of British Columbia Families in Transition:*

*My 25 year marriage came to an abrupt end, leaving me and my two dependent teenage children without support and at the mercy of an increasingly unreasonable ex-partner keen to absolve himself of any moral, emotional or financial obligation. When private counselling for the children and me became unaffordable, I was advised to seek the services of BC Families in Transition, which offers support for families like ours.*

*My counsellor conducted my initial intake interview and was able to grasp and validate for me that I was emerging from a relationship where there had*

*been an imbalance of power; one marked by financial, emotional and as I would soon experience, physical domination. While the children and I went on to receive emergency and ongoing emotional support from Victoria Women's Transition House, I remained in touch with the staff at BCFIT as I waited for the start of a support group for women in my position. Kind and welcoming front end staff were always happy to share information about other services and I was emboldened to participate in the following programs in the hopes of rebuilding my life.*

*The Finances after Separation class put me in the company of other men and women who had been similarly shell shocked by the ends of their relationships. It felt good to hear their stories. Laura and Marie-Christine augmented the materials with practical advice and personal experiences. What struck me was that every person there was the partner in their marriage who had had little to no experience in the handling of family finances. We were all vulnerable and very much in need of the information that was provided that night.*

*I availed myself of a follow-up interview with a legal advocate for the one-on-one information that my particular situation demanded. Attempts at mediation with my ex-husband were by then already at an impasse due to his lack of financial disclosure but the advocate helped to make sense of the information I did have. She arranged for an appointment with the financial planner for a reduced fee of \$25. He confirmed that my situation was indeed dire and expedited a meeting with the non-profit Credit Counselling Society for their assistance in debt management and bankruptcy counselling. I now had a better idea of how I might navigate my separation towards the 'least worst' outcome for the children and me.*

*I also attended a Parenting after Separation class with other single parents – some looking for any help they could get, others there by obligation of the courts. The facilitators are to be commended for their composure and compassion in striking the right balance in what seemed to me to be a powder keg of fathers who had been prevented from visiting their children and women on the verge of losing custody. The emphasis on the emotional well being of the children was instructive for all present.*

*It was at this point that funding for my lawyer from the Legal Services Society came to an end. I turned to my BCFIT legal support advocate, who quite literally dashed with me to the Law Courts Building and showed me how I could access the documents in my file. She referred me to a resource that could empower me with the information I needed. She looked me in the eyes, said that she believed in me and to be in touch if I needed her help, before she had to dash back to her office and her next client. Feeling overwhelmed and utterly hopeless, I joined the queue of beleaguered individuals looking to overworked Duty Counsel to lead me piecemeal through this legal labyrinth.*

*What is truly remarkable is how BCFIT and their dedicated staff endeavor to work within a system that systematically fails to meet the needs of the very people that they are charged to assist. BCFIT is the only organization of the very many that I have accessed that tends for those spouses who dare to stand up and fight for their legal right to financial support. Please support them with your funding dollars.*

*Dear BC Families in Transition Staff,*

*I am writing this letter to let you know how grateful I am for all the help I have received from your organization throughout the last year and a half.*

*Two years ago my husband and I separated. Circumstances made the hope of reconciliation dim and unlikely. I had to be honest with myself, and who I was as a person—a person created to be an individual.*

*I was sad, lonely and confused. I experienced an array of emotions that with the help of my counsellor I was able to bring into perspective, and find some peace and solace.*

*With the help of my counsellor, the legal advocacy department and the other support staff, I have been finding my way through this challenging life experience of separation and divorce.*

*I thank you from the bottom of my heart for all your help, and your genuine care of me during this most difficult of times. I will continue to attend counselling sessions as they do make all the difference in my life—until I feel where I am able to move on; able to stand on my own and face my life with courage, self esteem and confidence.*

*Thank You.*

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