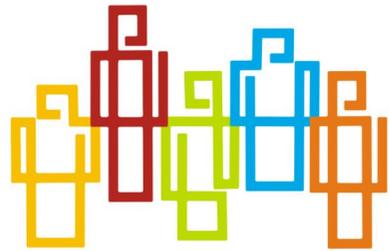


ANNUAL REPORT



**BC FAMILIES
IN TRANSITION**

2011 - 2012

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

www.bcfrit.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.

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.
Leigh Wilkins, Dip. Legal Assistance
Deborah Puymon*, Legal Assistant
Maryam Malekie*, M.A.(in progress)

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

Doug Woodall, M.S.W.,
Dip. Process-Oriented Psychology
Laura Luz, M.A., F.R.M.,
Member of BC Mediator Roster
Leigh Wilkins, Dip. Legal Assistance
Marie-Christine White,
Comprehensive Family Law Mediator
Maureen McDowell*, LL.B., family lawyer
Sandy Germain*, Legal Assistant
Sarah Magee, Legal Researcher
Theo Schmidt, Certified Financial Planner

COURT SUPPORT

Craig Vaughan*
Debra Danco*
Justin Levine*
Kait Pritchard*
Kaylee Apostoliuk*
Mike Han*
Shelby Liesch*
Simon Cheung*
Theresa Link*

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 Bahrami, M.Ed. (in progress)
Barbara Green, M.A.
Brigitte Breault, M.Ed., R.C.C., R.Psych.
Chris Rowand, M.A., R.C.C.
Donnarose Law, B.A., B.Ed.
Dawn Cox, M.Ed, R.C.C.
Erin Laird, M.A., R.C.C.
H. Digby Clarke, Ph.D., LL.B., C.T.
Helen Lennie, M.A., C.C.C.
Ian Symons*, B.A
Jacqueline Nikolejsin, M.Ed., R.C.C.

Karen Meadows, M.S.W.
Laurie Truant, M.A., R.C.C.
Lionel Zelniker, M.A., M.S.W.
Lorne Mackie, M.A., R.C.C.
Luciana Daghum, M.A.(in progress)
Maxine Fisher, M.Ed, M.T.A.
Mitra Jordan, M.A., R.C.C.
Patricia Gering, B.S.W., B.C.A.T.R.
Rebecca Corcoran, M.A.
Robin Feldman, M.A., A.T.R., B.C.A.T.R.
Sophie von Herrmann,
M.A.(Expressive Therapies)
Teresa Norris, M.Ed.
Trudy Mahle-Matthews*, M.Ed.

“BEHIND THE SCENES”

Computer Technician
Melvin Klassen*, B.Sc.

Fundraising
Rhoda Waddington*, B.S.W.

***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



It is remarkably easy to provide a president's report for BC Families in Transition. Simply put, we continue to be a growing and flourishing agency. Our staff, contractors, and volunteers continue to provide excellent services and unrivalled productivity. Our finances are in order, with an appropriate reserve and contingency fund.

With the knowledge that we would be shopping for new office space this year, the Board has been conservative with program growth and budget management. We have experienced significant growth in demand for services in recent years and met that demand, being careful to ensure we can do so within a long-term budgeting framework. This year, that task meant building capacity to transition to new space and cope with the new costs that move will bring. We are all confident we will manage this transition successfully and continue to grow.

We are happy to acknowledge the very generous financial support we have received for this move. This support has come in part from the Law Foundation of BC in a grant given in addition to their annual support for our Legal Support Services program, and in very large part from Vancity—our soon-to-be former landlords—who have more than demonstrated they are a different kind of financial institution indeed!

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 Susan Belford and Melinda Budgell, for their years of service to the Board. Their hard work and clear perspective have been invaluable. We look forward to welcoming Paul Miller to the Board and anticipate he will have much to offer as finance professional. We also welcome back Jane Taylor Lee, a past staff member and past President of the Board, for another term of service to an agency that already owes so much of its success to her.

As always, it has been a genuine pleasure and source of pride to serve on the Board, with dedicated colleagues who understand the value of our agency's services and are committed to its prosperity.

Bruce McGuigan, President

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT



Over the last 6 years we have more than doubled in size, more than tripled our service-delivery output, changed our name from *Separation and Divorce Resource Centre* and expanded our scope of services to help keep families together, developed new partnerships, and added quite a variety of new programs and services in every department. We have become a much more versatile family-service organization. In order to sustain this growth while also keeping the quality of all our services exemplary, and in order to prepare for considerably more growth in the year ahead in 2012-2013, the Board and I planned 2011-2012 as a year not for expansion but rather for *capacity development*. This is a term the United Nations defines as a process of *obtaining, strengthening, and maintaining the capabilities* which will be needed to set and achieve development objectives over time.

Capacity development in 2011-2012 meant first and foremost the ability to move our organization into significantly larger physical space and to sustain the additional overhead expenses that entails. I am pleased to say that with the very generous support of Vancity and the Law Foundation of BC, we succeeded. The transition to new physical space is underway at the time of printing this report. To be in a position to sustain the ongoing operating expenses of the larger headquarters, it was necessary for us to increase the size of our operations budget by some 21 percent over the fiscal year, and that is a feat for which we are very grateful to each of our funding partners: the United Way of Greater Victoria, the Law Foundation of BC, the BC Gaming Commission, the Ministry of Child and Family Development, the Ministry of the Attorney General, the TELUS Community Fund, the Victoria Foundation, and the Justice Education Society.

Capacity development this fiscal year also meant tightening administrative procedures in our Counselling and Therapy Services department and Public

Education department; developing a more sophisticated set of outcome measures in our Legal Support Services department and a 'voice' to advocate for change in the family law system; acquiring funds for the development and implementation of a new Supervised Access program in 2012-2013; re-evaluating our plans for a social enterprise and modifying them; providing training for staff, contractors, and volunteers; beginning to develop a database to assist with administration and reporting in all program areas; and more. Increasing wages for our staff and contractors remains another task which is critical to our objectives in the years ahead.

Planning for continued, substantial growth in the current economic climate has not been easy, and could not be accomplished without the dedicated involvement of a first-rate Board of Directors. Our tireless Board president Bruce McGuigan and each of the other 7 directors have worked hard this year. They have been active in supporting me to navigate the organization, and active in supporting our team as a whole. I feel each director has contributed in individual and unique ways throughout the year to ensure our success.

The year has been a very challenging one for our approximately 50 dedicated staff members, contractors, and volunteers. We were short-staffed for much of the year and everyone worked very hard to maintain the same quantity and quality of services regardless. Each and every team member displayed a work ethic, level of enthusiasm, and commitment to *quality client care* that inspire me.

The list of people and organizations I wish to thank is extensive. In addition to our Board, our funders, and our many team members, I wish to thank very sincerely Rolf Baumbusch and the other executives at Vancity, as well as Vancity account manager Rebecca Pearson and community development manager Danella Parks, for making it possible for us to move into custom-built office space in August 2012. Without their help we would not be able to meet rising levels of service demands in the coming year. I would also like to thank our longstanding legal supervisor Crystal Buchan; our external clinical supervisors Dr Allan Wade and Dr Bruce Tobin; our I.T. volunteer Melvin Klassen and our web designer Beverly Stuart; our friend and fundraising assistant Rhoda Waddington; our late colleague and friend Dr H. Digby Clarke, and his family for donating his books; Barry Obara and all staff at Obara & Company Chartered Accountants; all staff of the law firm of Brown, Henderson, Melbye; the Victoria Collaborative Family Law group; Jane Taylor Lee; Jerry McHale; Mary Mouat; David Merner; John Berkes of Dome Construction; Jacqui Johl of Johl Studios; Katherine Ridewood of Ridewood Design; Ken Featherby of NAI Property Management; Malcolm McMicken of the McMicken & Bennett law firm; Mark Warner, Kelsey Somner, and Marie Morton of the Black Press; Patricia Eaton, Ingrid Buschmann, and all staff of the Central branch of the Victoria Public Library; the Canadian Corporation of Commissionaires; the BC Association of Clinical Counsellors; Chris Rowand for his heroic and unprecedented fundraiser; all the staff of the various community agencies and other organizations with which we partner;

all of our members; and the many people who have used our services and provided feedback to help us to move forward.

It is indeed an honour each day to serve the community alongside so many dedicated people. We are in very good shape to move forward in 2012-2013, which will be a landmark year for BC Families in Transition!

Richard Routledge, Executive Director

PUBLIC EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

This department consists of 2 programs *First Response Services* and *Parenting after Separation*. This year once again, the department provided services to over **10,000** people.

FIRST RESPONSE SERVICES

First Response Services is the name we have given to our front-end services team to describe accurately what it does. Our staff, contractors, and volunteers are extensively trained to respond to the several hundred phone calls and drop-ins we receive each month, which include many crisis calls and other urgent requests for help in complex circumstances. Much like a triage team in a hospital, the First Response personnel 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 and each family promptly. These decisions require a great deal of teamwork with our other departments, as well as with our executive director and frequently with social workers or other professionals, referring agents, and other organizations. The quality of the outcomes for family members and the safety of children are the team's top priorities.

This year our First Response Services team handled an estimated **1,000** phone calls (over **900** per month), **540** drop-ins, and approximately **250** email inquiries. Of the calls we received from the public and were able to track **26 percent** were for legal information or legal support, **27 percent** were for child or youth counselling, **24 percent** were for adult counselling, **17 percent** were for Parenting after Separation, and **6 percent** were for general information or referrals. The vast majority of the inquiries were local, but each year we receive hundreds of calls and emails from all over British Columbia. We now also receive dozens of inquiries each year from across Canada and even from other countries on various continents.

This year once again, we have observed that both the variety and the complexity of the inquiries we received are ever-increasing. As last year, we found an estimated **two-thirds** of our counselling referrals involve a pre-existing mental health diagnosis for either the direct client or someone in the immediate family. Concerns for the physical safety of a child or other family member are paramount in many of the calls we receive. Our First Response Services team contends with numerous decisions about ethical issues which arise from providing a wide range of counselling services for families, and the so-called 'pre-intake' role of this

department is critical. For these reasons, our First Response Services team has continuously evolved.

Raji Goel, our executive assistant, is the department's full-time staff member and has served as a key figure in our agency for about 18 years. In addition to answering calls and serving the public, he handles all of our bookkeeping and tends to be involved in almost everything going on at the agency. He also arrives early each morning to take care of our janitorial and building-maintenance tasks.

Sandra Teiffel, a retired school counsellor with 30 years' experience, joined us as a volunteer in 2006 and has become our intake coordinator extraordinaire. Without any exaggeration, she has made it her mission to develop and perfect a detailed procedure. This process includes gathering 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 useful; 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. 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 and other staff members during this process, and she worked extremely hard this year.

In addition to Raji and Sandra, the First Response Services team this year included Leigh Wilkins—who is one of our legal advocates—and 2 longstanding volunteers: legal assistant Deborah Puymon and counselling graduate student Maryam Malekie. For the first few months we were also assisted by a law student named Simon Cheung. During the year our treasurer Ken D'Sa, who has extensive experience in the banking industry as well as in human resources, assisted Raji with some of his bookkeeping work.

Finally, we are sincerely grateful to Rhoda Waddington, a retired social worker who has volunteered with us since early 2007 by commuting from North Pender Island at her own expense. This year she helped by assisting our executive director to explore funding avenues for child counselling. We missed her vibrant presence on our front lines, but are very grateful for her help.

Our First Response Services team has become increasingly multidisciplinary and each team member is trained in providing a vital support service. We receive feedback from clients that the ability of our First Response Services team to help with stress and strong emotions has been essential, as even picking up a telephone to make a call for help can be extremely difficult. Given that about **in 8** adults who use our services reveal thoughts of suicide, **at least half** report some difficulties with addiction, and about **1 in 3** of the children we see either are known to have been abused or display signs of abuse or are the subjects of abuse allegations, the capacity of our First Response Services team to know how to respond is fundamental.

PARENTING AFTER SEPARATION

Parenting after Separation is a province-wide program created by the Ministry of the Attorney General, and we have been contracted since 1997 to provide it for the community of Greater Victoria. It is presented in somewhat different formats in other provinces across the country. In BC, the format is an intensive, 3-hour-20-minute information session with some group interaction and individual assistance. It includes an introduction to the family legal system and a large amount of information about co-parenting, with discussion and a problem-solving focus. There are always 2 presenters, 1 male and 1 female, and on most occasions there is a guest speaker from the Family Justice Centre. There is also a commissionaire on-hand at each session, to ensure no one whose name is not on the list of registered participants will be admitted. This safety feature guarantees ex-partners will not attend the same sessions together.

Parenting after Separation educates people about alternative dispute resolution processes, as well as about how to communicate with other parents and guardians when raising a child. Attending this session is mandatory for people going to provincial court to start or vary an order regarding child custody, access, or maintenance. Because of this rule it is now common to see grandparents or other extended family members who are mandated to attend the session. We are also seeing current partners of separated parents. Although Parenting after Separation is mandatory for many people, about a third of all participants attend on their own free will. It is an excellent resource for parents who are going through separation or divorce, and for parents who have already gone through that process and who are still working on their co-parenting skills.

This year we were fortunate to have 3 extra sessions added to our contract with the Ministry of the Attorney General, bringing the total number of sessions to a record **38**. We had **960** people register, of whom **703** attended. These numbers are significantly higher than last year's figures of 831 (our previous all-time record) and 583 respectively. Even with the extra sessions this year, we had an average **25** people register for (and **18** actually attend) each one.

Each participant receives a completion certificate which is valid at court for 2 years, and we are seeing increasing numbers of people having to re-attend when their court cases take longer than 2 years to complete. We also continue to see waiting lists of up to a month for this program.

Raji coordinates the program and our First Response Services team handles participant registration and confirmation call-backs. Donnarose Law—a veteran front-line service worker with many years of diverse experience—has been facilitating the sessions for us since 1999 and Lionel Zelniker—a social worker and group counsellor *par excellence* for over 40 years—has been doing so since 2002. Doug Woodall—a retired social worker and paralegal with mediation training—has facilitated as back-up during the last 5 years when Lionel is away, and Jane Taylor

Lee—an experienced psychotherapist specializing in work with high-conflict families—for the last 3 years when Donnarose is away. All 4 facilitators are exceptionally talented and this is evident once again in the program evaluations. As usual over **90 percent** of them state the workshop was very helpful, and many participants state they wish the workshop could have been longer. This observation is impressive considering two-thirds of the participants were court-ordered to attend.

The workshop sessions for this program are conducted in a large, luxurious boardroom at the Central branch of the Victoria Public Library, right across the street from BCFIT. We wish to thank the library staff—particularly Patricia Eaton and Ingrid Buschmann—for going to great lengths to ensure everything runs smoothly for us.

We also wish to thank each of our facilitators for their professional skill, enthusiasm, and attention to detail with each and every participant. Finally, we wish to thank Anne Reuvekamp, the local area manager for the Family Justice Centre, and each of the commissionaires for their skills in public relations as well as security.

Richard Routledge, Executive Director
Raji Goel, Executive Assistant

LEGAL SUPPORT SERVICES DEPARTMENT

This section is divided into 2 parts: *Legal Advocacy and Information Services*, which we have provided since 1987, and a more recent addition called *Talking about Money in Relationships* (formerly *Balancing the Budget*), introduced in 2009. The department assisted **4,117** people in Legal Advocacy and Information Services and **45** in Talking about Money in Relationships, for a total of **4,162** people this year. Once again, over **99 percent** of our evaluations state our clients were satisfied or very satisfied with the services they received.

LEGAL ADVOCACY AND INFORMATION SERVICES

Our team of 4 rigorously-trained, highly-experienced advocates provides clients with the same legal information family lawyers do, without giving legal advice. They also provide extensive support in completing the steps involved in family law proceedings, including preparation for court, and are closely supervised by an experienced family lawyer.

Our Legal Advocacy and Information Services program has expanded over the past 25 years to include all of the following services:

- Pre-separation consultation;
- Financial information pertaining to separation/divorce, spousal and child support, etc.;
- Preparing for court and assembling legal materials for lawyers to use;

- Court support (at both the BC Provincial Courthouse and the Western Communities Courthouse);
- Toll-free Legal Information Line in English and French, on Mondays and Thursdays;
- Computer Workstation for clients to conduct legal research, obtain legal forms, and receive immediate help from our team;
- Referrals to mediation services;
- Legal Information Workshops for the public;
- In-Service Presentations for front-line workers at partnering organizations;
- Noon-Hour Speaker Sessions;
- Legal-Education Forums;
- Educational resources pertaining to family law;
- Family law research.

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 much of its work off-site. However, our advocates work with many more people than our 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 **4,162** people the department served this year, a record **1,510** were assisted at the courthouses.

A huge increase this year is the number of people assisted through our bilingual, Toll-Free Legal Information Line. We supported **903** people this year through the information line, as opposed to last year's 367. The proportion of callers speaking in French remains about the same at an estimated **10 percent**. Although most of our Legal Information Line calls come from Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands, we continue to receive more calls from the BC mainland and the Kootenays. We are steadily becoming a vitally important legal resource to the province of British Columbia as a whole.

During the fiscal year 2011-2012 our team of legal advocates consisted of the following personnel:

- Pam Rudy—who has now served with our organization as a full-time legal advocate for 25 continuous years, and is also our Legal Support Services Coordinator;
- Marie-Christine White, our bilingual advocate who has worked with us part-time since 1999 and is about to receive the highest level of family mediation certification in Canada;
- Douglas Woodall, retired social worker and paralegal with mediation training, who volunteered with us in 2006 and then joined our Legal Support Services team part-time in 2007;

- Laura Luz, another very highly-experienced and highly-trained family mediator, who joined us part-time in 2007 and, sadly for us, moved to Ontario in August 2011;
- Leigh Wilkins, a former court volunteer with a legal office assistant diploma and experience in several family law offices, who joined our team as a part-time advocate in August 2011.

Though saddened to see Laura leave, we were fortunate to be able to hire Leigh, who was already very familiar with family law information and with BCFIT. Leigh became our primary advocate to attend family remands held on Mondays at the Western Communities Courthouse, and she established herself as the advocate whom duty counsel rely on to identify unrepresented clients and bring them to the duty counsel's attention.

Marie-Christine's primary role was to manage our Legal Information Line, although she also conducted some legal information appointments, assisted at Provincial Court, and participated in workshops and in-services. Both Doug and Laura gave assistance to individuals at Provincial Court as well as providing legal information interviews and participating in the workshops and in-services. All the advocates worked hard as a team to provide all of the diverse components of this comprehensive program, which included devoting long hours to researching, documenting, and following-up on the many thousands of individualized services provided throughout the year.

We had a busy year working with 9 law students in various capacities. During the summer and fall 3 law students—Simon Cheung, Kait Pritchard, and Mike Han—volunteered at Provincial Court on family remand days. From September to November we had 2 second-year law students (Debra Danco and Kaylee Apostoliuk) and 2 first-year law students (Shelby Liesch and Justin Levine) from the UVic Chapter of ProBono Students Canada. This keen group of students researched and created a set of information sheets on family law topics, which had been pre-selected by our advocates in response to common questions asked by our clients. In addition to volunteering at court, Simon Cheung conducted independent research on 5 further family law topics and created handouts for them.

An enthusiastic court volunteer, Theresa Link, joined us in February. She had previously volunteered as a court support worker for the Elizabeth Fry Society in Calgary. Theresa was familiar with working with duty counsel, so she immediately adapted to her court support role with BCFIT. One of our former court volunteers, Craig Vaughan, volunteered again during part of his summer and Christmas breaks while attending his first year at law school in Windsor.

Maureen McDowell and Sandy Germain—a family law lawyer and paralegal respectively—volunteered with us for about 2 years (up to and including April 2011) to run a free Legal Clinic on Thursday evenings. This was a very valuable addition to our services and we are very grateful that they were able to do this for us.

Our team of dedicated advocates and volunteers was made complete with our legal supervisor, Crystal Buchan, a practicing family law lawyer for over 20 years. Crystal has been supervising our Legal Support Services Program since 2004, and she has volunteered increasing amounts of her time to assist in our counselling department as well. Our advocates have learned a great deal from Crystal during our monthly supervision meetings, when an endless variety of legal questions pertaining to client situations or court practices are addressed. We are extremely grateful for Crystal's long-standing commitment to this program and to BCFIT as a whole.

In January we hired a law co-op student, Sarah Magee, under a partnership between the University of Victoria and the Law Foundation of BC. Sarah's 16-week project was to research and develop a more comprehensive set of outcome measures for our Legal Support Services program. This initiative stemmed from our recognition that our outcome measures had reflected only a portion of the day-to-day work of our team, and only a general sense of the impact this work has for clients. Sarah's research involved interviewing about 60 people: former clients, court litigants, mediators, lawyers, and BCFIT team members. After analyzing her research results in conjunction with Pam and our executive director, Sarah designed an expanded set of outcomes and several new surveys for us to use. The new measurement instruments provide a better reflection of what our team does, as well as much more comprehensive data with which to monitor and evaluate our program. We commend Sarah for doing an exceptional job in a limited time.

Several other unique experiences took place during this year. In July Richard and Pam were guests on a Shaw TV program called *Island Justice* hosted by family law lawyer, Roger Batchelor. It was a prime opportunity to talk about our agency's many programs and services. Another special invitation came in March from the Law Foundation of BC, when Richard and Pam participated in one of the Law Foundation's family law committee meetings. The purpose of the meeting was to identify emerging family law issues affecting the province of BC and propose possible ways the Law Foundation might be able to respond. We appreciated the opportunity to present our perspective and hear from other family law professionals representing a variety of organizations.

Our advocates accessed several professional development opportunities this year. Pam attended the Annual Advocacy Conference in November, which is jointly sponsored by the Law Foundation and the Legal Services Society, and 3 of our advocates participated in a 2-day course titled *Mediating with High Conflict People* taught by an internationally-known attorney named Bill Eddy. We are grateful to the Victoria Collaborative Family Law Group for making it possible for both Marie-Christine and Leigh to attend, and to the Law Foundation of BC for making it possible for Pam to attend. Laura and Pam were also able to attend a course on how to calculate spousal support using Divorcemate software, which has become a

valuable office tool in demonstrating for clients what information to input in order to have an idea what a potential payor or recipient of support can expect.

In November a new *Family Law Act* was passed to replace our existing *Family Relations Act*. Although actual implementation is not expected to take place for a year or longer, our advocates have already been studying various sections of the *Act* in detail during the legal supervision meetings with Crystal. Our advocates are looking forward to when the changes do occur, as we will be very well-positioned to continue being a valuable resource for educating the public about family law. Moreover, we look forward to providing a significant 'voice' for continued family law reform in this province.

Once again this year we are very grateful to the Law Foundation of BC, which provided about 90 percent of the funding for this huge program, and to the BC Gaming Commission which provided most of the remainder of it. For the 6th year in a row, we wish sincerely to thank the law firm of Brown, Henderson, Melbye as well as our individual donors for their generous contributions. We also wish to thank our colleagues at the South Island Dispute Resolution Centre, the Victoria Collaborative Family Law Group, and the Family Justice Centre.

We owe our thanks to Dr Allan Wade as well, for his support to the team in dealing with issues that can be very demanding emotionally. He, as well as family law lawyer Mary Mouat, David Merner of the BC Attorney General's ministry, and Jane Taylor Lee, all helped in developing important initiatives for the coming year.

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

We have provided this program since 2009, to help adults *either* deal with the financial aspects of a separation/divorce *or* work together as couples to understand their finances more clearly and reduce marital conflict. Originally developed with a grant from the United Way of Greater Victoria, this program is partially funded through our collaboration with the Justice Education Society, which first developed the workshop component of this innovative program. Our other partner is Garry Oak Financial Services, where a certified financial planner (Theo Schmidt) meets with participants for personalized financial-planning services.

Talking about Money in Relationships includes all of the following components:

- an initial appointment with a legal advocate;
- a 3-hour financial planning workshop called "Separated with Children: Dealing with the Finances;"
- up to 2 appointments (4 for a couple) with a certified financial planner who specializes in separation and divorce work; and
- a follow-up appointment with a legal advocate.

Participants are given the option of choosing *either or both* the workshop and the services of a financial planner. The workshop provides a large amount 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. Before Laura moved to Ontario in August, both she and Marie-Christine took turns to facilitate the workshop, having taken the training at their own expense. Since Laura's departure Marie-Christine is the sole facilitator.

When couples meet with our certified financial planner with the purpose of resolving their disagreements about money and moving forward, they are offered a structured set of up to 4 appointments organized 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.

The objectives for these sessions are (1) Develop a common language for talking about money: in other words, 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;" and (5) Explore 'smart spending' (economically smart consumption), including how to handle credit cards and other commonly significant topics.

We wish to thank the Justice Education Society, Theo, and the United Way of Greater Victoria for their help in developing this valuable program.

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

COMMENTS FROM CRYSTAL BUCHAN, LEGAL SUPERVISOR

Our amazing advocates served 4,162 people this year, demystifying the court process and providing legal information. Reports from duty counsel, court staff, lawyers and others providing service in our community, are that our advocates are an extremely valuable resource to everyone at court, are helpful and supportive, and collaborate exceptionally with other service providers to the great benefit of all. Bravo!

Crystal Buchan, Legal Supervisor

COUNSELLING AND THERAPY SERVICES DEPARTMENT

This section is divided into 4 parts: an *Overview of the Department* followed by *Individual, Couple and Family Therapy* our various *Group Counselling Programs*; and a relatively new program called *All About Me* for children and youth in MCFD care.

OVERVIEW OF THE DEPARTMENT

Our agency has offered group counselling programs since 1979, and an array of individual, couple, and family therapy services since 2006. Over the last 6 years we have dramatically expanded the size, scope, and versatility of this department to serve all ages, all walks of life, and all family configurations. By now we are able to respond to almost any family situation in which changes in relationships are the primary concern. This fiscal year the department served **1,140** people in a combination of approximately **7,000** individual/couple/family therapy appointments and **226** group-counselling sessions.

Over the last several years we have assembled a large, impressively diverse team of very professional therapists. Nearly all of them 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 therapists volunteer 100 percent of their time.** Those who have been completing 'supervised hours' for their final qualifications were selected from a pool of **more than 450** applicants, from all over the world, over the past 5 years.

During the 2011-2012 fiscal year, staff member Jette Midtgaard was away on maternity leave. We were very glad to welcome her back in mid-March. On a sad note, however, a valuable contractor passed away in October. Dr H. Digby Clarke, RCC, a grief-and-loss specialist, worked with BCFIT literally to his dying day and is dearly missed. He contributed in several important ways to BCFIT's future development and we will commemorate him annually with a special training seminar on grief and loss.

Our Counselling and Therapy Services team members during the 2011-2012 fiscal year included Susan Farr, Hazel Loewen, John Ricker, Dr Digby Clarke, Mitra Jordan, Dawn Cox, Rebecca Corcoran, Teresa Norris, Sophie von Hermann, Maxine Fisher, Patricia Gering, Chris Rowand, Lorne Mackie, Ava Bahrami, Luciana Daghum, Brigitte Breault, Erin Laird, Karen Meadows, Trudy Mahle-Matthews, Lionel Zelniker, Donnarose Law, Jacqueline Nikolejsin, Laurie Truant, Barbara Green, Darcy Dyck, Elicia Loiselle, and joining us again for the last 2 weeks of the year, Jette Midtgaard. The chart on page 15 shows the involvement of each team member.

In addition to the roles shown in the chart below, staff members Susan Farr and Hazel Loewen took on a range of administrative and program-development tasks for the Counselling and Therapy Services department. They did so in collaboration with our executive director, with team members in each department, with Dr Bruce Tobin, and with the BC Association of Clinical Counsellors.

OUR COUNSELLING AND THERAPY SERVICES TEAM IN 2011-2012

	Individual Therapy with Adults	Therapy with Couples/Families	Individual Therapy with Children (4-11)	Individual Therapy with Youth (12-19)	Group Facilitation with Adults	Group Facilitation with Children	Group Coordination
Susan Farr	✓						✓
Hazel Loewen	✓			✓			
John Ricker	✓	✓					✓
Jette Midtgaard	✓		✓	✓			
Chris Rowand	✓	✓		✓			
Dawn Cox	✓	✓					
Dr Digby Clarke	✓						
Mitra Jordan	✓	✓					
Sophie von Hermann ²			✓				
Maxine Fisher ³	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Patricia Gering			✓				
Rebecca Corcoran	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
Teresa Norris	✓	✓		✓			
Brigitte Breault ⁴	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Trudy Mahle-Matthews	✓	✓					
Lorne Mackie	✓	✓		✓			
Karen Meadows	✓						
Ava Bahrami			✓	✓		✓	
Luciana Daghum	✓		✓	✓		✓	
Donnarose Law					✓		✓
Lionel Zelniker					✓		
Erin Laird						✓	
Jacqueline Nikolejsin					✓		
Laurie Truant						✓	
Barbara Green					✓		
Darcy Dyck						✓	
Elicia Loiselle				✓			

Notes:

- 1 Maternity leave until March 15
- 2 Expressive arts therapist
- 3 Music therapist who also provides traditional talk therapy
- 4 Play therapist
- 5 Registered psychologist

Like our other departments, our Counselling and Therapy Services department regularly contends with child safety concerns, reports and allegations of abuse, court involvement, ministry involvement, police involvement, intergenerational and intercultural conflict, and a never-ending variety of clinical, practical, and ethical

demands. Clinical supervision is vital for 3 different reasons: (1) to be sure we are doing everything possible for those who seek our help, with the highest standards of service quality; (2) to ensure we continue to develop our programs and our agency with the benefit of outside feedback; and (3) to support our team members who immerse themselves in this emotionally-demanding work.

Accordingly, clinical supervision must be readily available at BCFIT and we now provide it in a variety of formats. First, it is provided 'in-house' in individual meetings with our executive director (Richard Routledge, MA, RCC, family therapist), 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 internationally-respected Dr Allan Wade, RCC, who has generously provided this service for us since 2006. Third, we provide monthly group supervision meetings specifically with a child-therapy focus, led by child-therapy specialist Dr Bruce Tobin, RCC, ATR. We are very grateful to Dr Wade and Dr Tobin for their enthusiasm and for the extremely skilled ways in which they do their work for our team. Dr Tobin further assisted our staff this year by helping to refine our procedures and policies pertaining to child therapy. We continue also to be very grateful to our wonderful legal supervisor—family law lawyer Crystal Buchan—as she has volunteered numerous hours over the past 6 years to assist this department.

Supplemental to the on-site clinical supervision, we were able to provide some of our therapists with access to training courses and workshops. We are committed to increasing our capacity for training as funding for it becomes available.

Our therapists 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). Once again this year, Jim Browne from the BC Association of Clinical Counsellors has consulted with our staff regarding ethical issues. Team leaders at the Ministry of Child and Family Development, too, have provided important clinical consultation.

Our Counselling and Therapy Services department, our Legal Support Services department, and our Public Education department collaborate together actively each day. It is extremely useful for our counsellors to be able to consult instantly 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.

INDIVIDUAL, COUPLE, AND FAMILY THERAPY

This fiscal year our team provided individual, couple, and family therapy sessions to a total of **996** people of all ages. This is an accomplishment as we were short-staffed, in part because of Jette's being away on maternity leave and in part because of a decision to recruit only 2 new interns (Lorne Mackie and Chris

Rowand), until we have completed some administrative and program-development tasks and moved into larger office space. Everyone worked very hard to meet the demand as we often faced waiting lists, particularly in the domain of child counselling, which has been our fastest-growing program over the last few years.

Over the last 6 years our team has grown to a diverse assembly spanning a variety of backgrounds, clinical orientations, areas of specialty, and hours of work. As listed in the table on page 15, we have team members who specialize in working with children or youth, others who work with individual adults, others who work with couples or families, and some who work with almost anyone. 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 of our practitioners are staff members, some are adjunct independent clinical counsellors, and some of them volunteered much or all of their time this year. (The inside cover of this Report provides credentials and indicates which team members were volunteers). We are fortunate to have such a wide range of therapists, who vary in terms of their theoretical approaches and yet are consistent in their underlying ideology. Some describe themselves as response-based, others as narrative, solution-focused, cognitive-behavioural, Adlerian, humanistic, or as users of emotionally-focused therapy or other approaches, and yet all are 'on the same page' in every respect in their work as a cohesive team.

For children, we offer specialized therapy services using methods which do not rely principally on talking. Methods known as expressive arts therapy, music therapy, and play therapy allow children at BCFIT to work through their feelings and perceptions through creative as well as verbal means. Children at our centre are able to communicate and work through their often-conflicting, often-confusing emotions through drawing, painting, drumming, strumming, creating scenes with puppets or dolls or sandtrays, building models of themselves or their families, and more. Older children and youth have a choice of using those methods or a more traditional, conversational approach. Our versatility in working with children and teens is indeed impressive, but we continued to face waitlists this year in order to provide these services. Our move to larger office space in August 2012 will help alleviate that problem.

The therapy work our team conducts is often extremely difficult, due to the sheer complexity and urgency of the family situations we routinely encounter. Sandra Teiffel's considerable expertise in conducting pre-intakes in First Response Services enables us to provide the right 'fit' between clients and practitioners. The success and rapid growth of this program would not have been possible without her magnificent effort throughout the last 6 years.

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 their marital issues in order to stay together. We continue to see more men (although 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.

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. Our clients' feedback regarding our counselling services has been overwhelmingly positive: **over 99 percent** of the evaluations we have received indicate people are "very satisfied."

We are deeply grateful to the United Way of Greater Victoria, the BC Gaming Commission, the TELUS Community Fund, and the Vandekerkhove Foundation for their continued help and commitment in making this program possible.

GROUP COUNSELLING PROGRAMS

During the year BCFIT proudly provided the following group counselling programs:

- **Caught in the Middle:** This group program is now an 11-week, multi-part service for families in which there has been a parental separation and the children are, in a very real way, 'caught in the middle' between the parents. We have been running this comprehensive program for many years for both the children and the parents of the same families, and we now have the capacity to include the grandparents as well. The 1st week of this program is for follow-up interviews, reassessment, and further referrals.
- **Evolutions:** This is 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:** This is an 8-to-10-week program for adults who are in the early phases of separating from their partners.
- **Parenting with a New Partner:** This is an 8-week program for parents in blended (i.e. step) families.
- **Putting the Magic Back into Your Holidays:** This is a 3-hour experiential workshop to assist adults with the loneliness, sadness, and other emotions that arise from knowing one's family is in disrepair during the holiday season.

The BC Gaming Commission supports all of these 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.

Our Caught in the Middle program is very well-known in Greater Victoria, and is possibly the most complex and intricately-coordinated group-counselling program anywhere in the world. It 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 subgroups and 2 parents' subgroups on Tuesdays, plus 2 children's subgroups and 2 parents' subgroups on Thursdays—and the intake and coordination involved 2 part-time staff members. Then 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 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. The 2010-2011 fiscal year marked the conclusion of the program-development grant, and we have received overwhelmingly positive feedback about the expanded, even-more-comprehensive program which resulted.

The coordination of this juggernaut was expertly handled this year by Susan Farr, assisted by Donnarose Law. Together they accomplished the seemingly impossible task of screening and organizing all the various subgroups for the different generations involved, enabling the program to run once in the fall, once in the winter, and once in the spring, with a total of **21** subgroups, and they managed to update the program manual for the children's groups as well. The coordination process required matching the participants to make sure they could 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 ensure Caught in the Middle remains a safe and healing place for everyone reflects considerable wisdom and experience.

There is a great deal of interest in Caught in the Middle within the community at large, and after 27 years of running it, the program still seems to be gaining strength. We are very grateful to all the people who helped with the program this year: Susan and Donnarose for working miracles in program coordination, and all the facilitators: Donnarose (again), Erin Laird, Laurie Truant, Rebecca Corcoran, Barbara Green, Lionel Zelniker, Jacqueline Nikolejsin, Luciana Daghum, Ava Bahrami, and Darcy Dyck. The teamwork in this program is quite simply second to none.

ALL ABOUT ME

In February 2011 we received an invitation from the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) to create a new counselling program for traumatized children and teens who are involved with that ministry and need intensive help for complex, ongoing family transition issues. The new program was developed in February to April and 'launched' in May 2011. Our executive director worked with Nancy Fredericks (who has since retired) and Peter Monk of MCFD, with much help from BCFIT team members Rebecca Corcoran, Sandra Teiffel, and Elicia Loiselle.

The inspiration for the program design stems 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 consistently youth-focused design of the program content, methods, reporting, and evaluation.

In this program we worked with 43 children and teens this year, about equally divided into the age categories 5 to 8, 9 to 12, and 13 to 19. So far the work has consisted of individual sessions, some sessions with siblings together, and meetings with parents and guardians. Beginning in 2012-2013 we will work with about 60 children and youth per year and this will include at least 1 therapy group annually. Our team has already met to design the first group, which is planned for autumn 2012.

All the referrals must come directly from MCFD social workers, and the intake process is very closely coordinated by Sandra Teiffel in conjunction with Peter Monk and our executive director. The therapy team in this program included Rebecca Corcoran, Maxine Fisher, Lorne Mackie, and Chris Rowand; Lorne has now moved to Alberta and this summer Jette Midtgaard will join the All About Me team.

We are very grateful to Peter Monk, who is the team leader for the Child and Youth Mental Health division of the MCFD and our primary contact for this program. He has been instrumental in helping us 'tweak' the program and develop a group component. We are grateful, too, to Sandra for her excellent work in the day-to-day program coordination, and to all of our therapists who devoted exceptional care in the course of their ongoing work with the program participants.

The clinical work in this program has indeed proven intensive. Our executive director, along with Dr Bruce Tobin and Dr Allan Wade, have devoted many hours to the clinical supervision that has been required to attend to emotional and physical safety concerns, along with other clinical and ethical issues.

We have consistently received excellent feedback from participants and MCFD staff, and it is hoped the program will expand beyond the Core Victoria ministry mandate when additional funding becomes available.

Richard Routledge, Executive Director

There is a further achievement for Caught in the Middle this year. A University of Victoria graduate student, Rotem Regev, wrote an academic article arising from her outcome-evaluation study of this program in a previous year, and her article was published in a peer-reviewed journal. Congratulations are in order to Rotem and to everyone who has helped over the years to make the program a success!

Evolutions and *Single Again* serve a similar purpose for different clientele. *Evolutions* is a group for adults who are having difficulty moving forward in their lives several months or longer after a separation or divorce has taken place, whereas *Single Again* is for adults who are still in the early stages of shock and grief after losing a cherished relationship. *Evolutions* is a mixed group (men and women), whereas *Single Again* is a same-sex group each time it is run. We have provided *Evolutions* ever since 1979 (it was originally called simply *Adult Small Group*), and *Single Again* since 2007. We wish to thank our beloved (and still missed) former staff member, Paula Murphy, for developing *Single Again*.

Susan Farr coordinated both *Evolutions* and *Single Again* this year, in addition to *Caught in the Middle*, and as always she did a masterful job. As last year, Donnarose provided all of the group facilitation for both programs. The evaluations were extremely positive, as illustrated in letters from 3 of the participants, which we have provided at the back of this Report.

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 and the format. The purpose of this program is to help parents who have added a new partner into the home and thereby become a 'blended family,' and who have found stress in the new family relationships to be a result. Becoming a blended family is almost always 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. As in previous years, staff member John Ricker worked very hard to coordinate this program, in the process conducting many intake sessions to help couples determine whether a group program or couples counselling would offer a more effective approach. Once again this year Barbara Green provided all the group facilitation.

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. We have offered this program each year since 2005, and it is largely the brainchild of one of our established facilitators, Helen Lennie. She 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 workshop participants tell us they appreciate the valuable opportunity to create new meanings, during what is for them a very stressful season.

NEW SERVICES IN THE COMING YEAR

SUPERVISED ACCESS

Supervised Access' refers to a court-ordered arrangement by which non-custodial parents are only permitted to be with their children in the presence of an approved, adult third party who is responsible to observe, monitor, and report on the interaction. The purpose of this arrangement is to ensure the safety of the children and to provide court with a means of gauging the readiness of the non-custodial parents to be with their children without supervision when the visits come to an end. Along with supervised access visits are so-called 'transfers,' which refer to a simple drop-off of a child by one parent and pick-up of the child by another parent, in the presence once again of a court-approved third party.

For many years there has been a dire shortage of these services in BC, with the results that (1) children often do not have visits with their non-custodial parents at all and (2) the legal system can scarcely enforce an option that is in such short supply. There was a time when our organization provided supervised access and transfer services, and thanks to a generous grant from the Victoria Foundation we will be able to offer this program again and tie it in very closely with our Legal Support Services, Counselling, and First Response Services departments. We are very excited about this.

The grant from the Victoria Foundation allows us to take the necessary time, involving all departments of our organization, to develop this program very carefully before implementing it. We look forward to delivering this program beginning midway through the 2012-2013 fiscal year.

PROJECT HOPE

Project Hope is a new partnership among BC Families in Transition, the John Howard Society of Victoria, and Arbour Counselling Centre. It is a group program that supports the families of persons who are involved in the criminal justice system. Family members of offenders often face difficult and distressing times when someone related to them has committed a crime. *Project Hope* is open to adult family members of persons who have either been convicted of an offense or who have completed a Diversion program. It is an 8-week guided group which will be facilitated by Jacqueline Nikolejsin—one of BCFIT's cherished counsellors since 2007—and will help participants develop mutual support, gain understanding of their changing family circumstances and how to cope with them, and move forward to restore hope. Currently there is no such service in Greater Victoria.

Initially *Project Hope* is supported by fee revenue alone, but as a partnership we are exploring potential funding sources. We would like to extend our sincere thanks to everyone who has been involved: Jacqueline Nikolejsin, Eve Gordon, Dave Johnson of the John Howard Society of Victoria, and Joel Durkovich of Arbour Counselling Centre. We are excited about the long-term prospects of this program.

COMMENTS FROM DR. ALLAN WADE, CLINICAL SUPERVISOR

Thanks to the intrepid crew at BCFIT, we have continued supervision on a monthly basis over the past year, regularly with the counseling team and periodically with the legal team.

There are now two supervision groups at BCFIT; one led by myself, which is primarily concerned with general practice with adults, the other led by Dr. Bruce Tobin, which is concerned primarily with working with children.

Some staff members attend one or the other of the supervision meetings, not both. Staff members rightly put the priority on working with families, so it is not always possible to attend one, let alone two, supervision groups. Consequently the general practice supervision groups have been smaller this year.

I find the supervision meetings rich and varied. We discuss ethics, counseling methods, specific cases, family law, personal and professional responses to extreme cases, and a variety of issues of concern to BCFIT particularly. One example is the new *Family Law Act* and the shift in services to families. Another is the issue of Custody and Access and related reports, which powerfully influence the lives of parents and children.

It has been my immense pleasure to work with two intact teams for some time now. I believe we have created a safe and relaxed approach to supervision, where different ideas and practices are valued. This is due to the close collegial relationships fostered within the organization generally, and to the respectful and engaged manner in which participants bring forward their concerns and support one another.

I believe team members exemplify skilled and ethical practice. The work the staff do is complex and challenging. Our discussions about families are always thoughtful and appreciative: I am sure any family members who heard our discussions would feel cared for, respected and encouraged by the level of skill and awareness among the staff.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to work with BCFIT.

Dr Allan Wade, Clinical Supervisor

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

For the second year, I have provided monthly group supervision to about eight BCFIT counselors who specialize in work with children. This year we have been focusing on integration of creative arts activities (expressive therapies) with the more conventional verbal clinical techniques in which our counselors are well trained. Our two-hour sessions give our clinicians an opportunity for informal discussion of ethical, theoretical and practical issues relating to their current clinical casework.

In May I also gave staff a one-day workshop in art therapy that included theory and practical skill development.

I've been most impressed by the curiosity and intelligence of our counselling staff! They pose interesting and insightful questions that keep me on my toes, and once the conversation gets underway, the time flies!

Hats off to our executive director for pulling such a great team together!

Dr Bruce Tobin, Clinical Supervisor

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

INCOME STATEMENT

	Unreviewed 2011-2012	Reviewed 2010-2011	Reviewed 2009-2010
Revenue			
BC Gaming	\$129,600	\$114,635	\$141,000
United Way	108,478	147,909	94,362
Law Foundation	104,474	88,726	91,200
Ministry of Attorney General	25,753	20,781	20,170
Fees & Miscellaneous	66,320	70,483	67,086
Ministry of Children and Family Development	42,000	12,000	12,000
Telus	--	50,000	--
Foundations (other)	38,273	17,510	24,402
	\$514,898	\$522,044	\$450,220

Expenses

Program Delivery Personnel	\$243,711	\$260,368	\$256,963
Rent & Utilities	47,362	35,678	32,890
Contractor Fees	143,880	81,600	56,443
Administration*	20,127	22,800	19,346
Accounting/Audit	5,579	5,483	6,109
Supervision, Legal	5,000	5,000	5,000
Supervision, Clinical	6,365	3,856	2,571
Telephone, Fax, Internet	7,567	5,869	5,806
Amortization	7,600	7,695	8,054
Advertising	2,824	3,607	2,334
Security	858	3,035	2,556
Training & Travel	5,034	3,831	3,768
Memberships	714	587	691
Insurance	1,450	1,165	1,275
Program Development	3,451	3,750	4,846
Office Improvements	--	1,067	1,110
Deferred Revenue	--	33,810	50,500
	\$501,522	\$479,199	\$460,262

Surplus (Loss) \$13,376 \$42,845 (\$10,042)

* includes bank charges, office supplies, etc.

BALANCE SHEET AS AT MARCH 31ST

	2012	2011	2010
Assets			
Bank Acct, Cash, GST Receivable	\$110,017	\$135,816	\$ 64,362
Term Deposits	--	--	12,106
Funding Receivable	14,650	21,551	9,333
TOTAL ASSETS	\$124,667	\$157,367	\$ 85,801
Liabilities			
Fixed Operating Costs Payable	\$ 14,598	\$ 17,387	\$ 11,000
Variable Operating Costs Payable	555	1,389	2,700
Deferred Revenue	--	33,810	50,500
Total Liabilities	\$ 15,153	\$ 52,586	\$ 64,200
Unrestricted Net Assets**	\$109,514	\$104,781	\$ 21,601
	\$124,667	\$157,367	\$ 85,801

** For 2011 and 2012 includes a building and relocation fund of \$45,000

TREASURER'S REPORT

I am pleased to submit this report on the financial condition of BC Families in Transition for the period April 1, 2011 to March 31, 2012.

Despite difficult conditions in financial markets and the tough times in the business community, our key partners continue to collaborate, trust, and support the services we deliver to individuals and families, and which help improve their lives and change the outlook for many. At the outset, I must thank the BC Gaming Commission, The Law Foundation of BC, the United Way of Greater Victoria, the Ministry of the Attorney General, the Ministry of Children and Family Development, the Victoria Foundation, the Vandekerkhove Foundation, and others who continue alongside with us on this journey of changing lives.

Our Revenue/Income for the year was just under \$515K, as compared with \$522K last year. In most cases, the funds received are allocated to specific programs and services we deliver. The slight decline in revenue can be explained by not receiving the one-time TELUS Community Fund grant (we received \$50K last year), a slight decline in United Way funding, and a slight decline in fees and miscellaneous items.

On the Expenditure side, thanks to our executive director, expenses continue to remain within normal business operations. An increase in our rent is per the Rental Agreement with Vancity which lays down a schedule of escalated rents over the period of our current lease.

The significant increase in Contractors' Fees is directly connected to our non-profit status, which means we must rely on uncertain sources of funding from our partners. As stated before, the financial support is directly linked to market fluctuations and factors within the funding organizations, which impact us significantly. Our preferred business strategy would be to hire staff members at fixed salaries that are competitive to help retention of the best. However, we are unable to do so given our dependency on the funding we receive, noting that all of our funding sources are themselves under considerable strain. As a result we were not able to bring any of our valued contractors on salary during 2011-2012, and we continue to rely largely on contractors and volunteers to cope with increased service demands.

The increase in Clinical Supervision expenses reflects the important fact that the work of our counselling team is becoming increasingly complex.

Our Net position at the year end shows a surplus of \$13K. On the Balance Sheet side our Unrestricted Net Assets are just over \$124K. Please note that when we learned that we were going to have to move to a new and more expensive office location, our Board had the foresight to put some money aside, as well as to locate alternate premises for operations. Expecting exorbitant relocation and refurbishment costs, our Board set aside funds to help meet some of these expenses, and these are included in the financials for this year. I am very proud to confirm that, since that time, both Vancity and the Law Foundation of BC have stepped up in their support of our relocation and have been extremely generous with their contributions specifically designated for our moving expenditures.

In closing, on behalf of the Board, I wish to thank our supporters, our staff especially the executive director, our contractors, and our volunteers. I would like to express our deepest and sincere appreciation for your partnership with us. I am confident your collaboration will only help us continue to grow and provide individuals and families with the highest level of integrity, dedication, high quality and professionalism so that lives can be changed.

Ken D'Sa, Treasurer

LETTERS FROM OUR CLIENTS

THANK YOU BC FAMILIES IN TRANSITION (BCFIT):

I am divorced, remarried, and have a blended family that is new to Victoria. We came to BCFIT with lots of changes and challenges, both in our nuclear family and in extended family relationships.

At a time when I felt displaced and alone, looking for support and guidance for all the many dynamics occurring in and around my family, BCFIT gave me that special place where I could come and feel cared for, nurtured. I appreciate greatly the experience we have had, the gentle guidance for me, my husband, and our children.

When children are involved, we, as parents, want and need to feel that we can give our children all that they may need, but sometimes that is not possible. Knowing that there is a place that offers programs to a family in need of support and which was there to assist was everything for us. What you have done for my family in a number of areas, I can attest that—make no mistake—“you just get it.”

I am truly thankful to everyone at BCFIT that contributes to making your place a success. I and my family are blessed by each and every person who took time in their day to help our family, and the other families in our community, be successful.

The program Single Again sponsored by BCFIT saved me from a total emotional breakdown and possibly suicide. Our facilitator showed such compassion and gave us invaluable insight into our grieving process as we journey to heal ourselves with the support of a new network of friends who are on the same path. I am so grateful to have been fortunate enough to participate in this program. All women involved in separation and divorce should have access to this valuable support.

I've had so much help, support, and kindness shown to me from the people at BC Families in Transition. It was and still is such a good personal experience that I don't think I would be where I am today if it weren't for all of you. I especially would like to thank my counsellor there, who has helped me more than he realizes. I was able to be myself and to be completely honest with him as well as being able to face up to my fears, inadequacies, and loss of self-confidence. Opening old wounds and hurts can be difficult for most people to deal with, and it certainly was for me, but with the help of my counsellor and the facilitator of the Single Again program, I was able to overcome many personal barriers. I know that I still have a long way to go,

but I am a stronger woman today and also a wiser mother with a better understanding of her teenage son. This alone has improved my relationship with my son who is the most important person in my life. In addition to the counselling I received, I was also introduced to yoga and meditation which have helped me tremendously in my daily life. Thank you from the bottom of my heart, and may good karma always be with you all.

I am pleased to provide a written endorsement with respect to a workshop provided through the BC Families in Transition agency in Victoria. I was fortunate to be able to join the Single Again workshop, facilitated by Donnarose, as soon as I was aware that my marriage of many years was coming to an end. This 8-week course was very beneficial to me. It provided me with a valuable opportunity to connect immediately with other women in a similar circumstance. This was very important to me as I am a recent newcomer to Victoria and given my new circumstance may have found it difficult to find those connections on my own. Donnarose did an excellent job. She provided a safe place for us to share our experiences; I felt we were able to both empathize with each other's painful experiences, but also celebrate our successes. I left after each session inspired and empowered. The workshop information passed on by Donnarose was also helpful and she was proficient in going through and explaining the content. The written information and references that were given to us provided some good guidelines in terms of being able to manage intense emotions; it was information that could be referred to as needed. This was definitely a worthwhile and beneficial workshop for me and has benefitted me in terms of being able to help myself move forward. I very much enjoyed networking with the other participants. I was fortunate in that I was able to register for this workshop very soon after my marriage breakup, at a time when I so greatly needed the support.

My experience with BC Families in Transition's Legal Support Services was and is beyond exemplary!

Due to serious illness and injury, I literally felt lost at sea when I entered the law courts with my daughter to begin the process of seeking legal information regarding separation and divorce. An amazing woman from BCFIT recognized this and suggested I contact them and gave me their address and phone number.

Throughout the entire process, I felt emotionally, mentally and professionally supported to the highest degree. At every point, I felt a genuine concern for my individual well-being. The staff graciously and intuitively picked up on my needs and promptly provided the help, knowledge and information I needed to progress to the

next step. Fast forward... I'm on the other side... still intact and feeling stronger, wiser and encouraged!

The help, guidance and expertise I received from BCFIT's Legal Support Services was invaluable to say the least and it gives me great comfort knowing this service is available to others in need. At a time when I thought it wasn't possible, my life has been enriched and enlightened thanks to the caring people involved at BCFIT!

MEMBERSHIPS/DONATIONS

Since 1978 BC Families in Transition has been helping people and families manage the challenges of separation, divorce or transition to a new family structure

YOUR CONTRIBUTION WILL HELP

- provide service and support to more than 10,000 children, youth, and adults per year
- sustain our on-going growth and development as an agency

Date: _____

New Member

\$20 - Individual

Renewal

\$100 - Organization/Corporation

Donations (Tax Deductible receipt will be issued for \$20 and above)

Memberships are for 1 year only and expire on March 31

Donor Information

Name: _____

Address: _____

City _____ Postal _____

email: _____

Phone (h): _____ (w) _____

Payment

Cash/Cheque

Visa/Mastercard

Total Amount: _____ (Membership plus additional donation if applicable)

Card Number: _____ Expiry Date: _____

Name on Card: _____

Signature: _____

BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2011-2012

BRUCE MCGUIGAN, M.A.
GREG HATTON, B.A.
JUNE PRESTON, M.S.W.
KEN D'SA, B.COM, C.H.R.P.
MELINDA BUDGELL, M.ED., C.C.C.
MICHELLE WINKEL, M.A., A.T.R., M.F.T.
ROBERT KLASSEN, B.A., L.L.B.
SUSAN BELFORD, M.A.

AGENCY FUNDERS



BC Gaming Commission
 Ministry of:
 -Attorney General,
 -Children & Family
 Development



Individual Donations
 Allen and Loreen Vandekerkhove Family Foundation



Our thanks to all who financially supported our organization.

A Special Thank You to:

McMicken & Bennett Law Firm
Johl Studios
Dome Construction Ltd



for assistance with our move to a new office

VOLUNTEERS 2011-2012	
Board of Directors	Bruce McGuigan, President Greg Hatton June Preston Ken D'Sa Melinda Budgell Michelle Winkel Robert Klassen Susan Belford
Clinical Counsellors/Facilitators	Ava Bahrami Brigitte Breault Elicia Loiselle Karen Meadows Lorne Mackie Luciana Daghum Teresa Norris Trudy Mahle-Matthews
First Response Assistants	Deborah Puymon Maryam Malekie
Assistants in Legal Support	Maureen McDowell Sandy Germain
Support at Court	Craigh Vaughan Debra Danco Justin Levine Kait Pritchard Kaylee Apostoliuk Mike Han Shelby Liesch Simon Cheung Theresa Link Rhoda Waddington
Fundraising	
Computer Technician	Melvin Klassen

Thank you to all our volunteers!

THANK YOU TO:



**MASTER CAROLYN BOUCK OF THE
 BC SUPREME COURT**