

From the Chair

We have had several changes to the Board of Directors this past year. Three members of the board resigned due to personal reasons, and we have replaced them with two people who bring special talents to the board.

Diane Champion-Smith has spent most of her career teaching and working in education in Australia, Alberta and BC. Within the education system, Diane has held positions in classroom teaching, writing curriculum for high school students, serving on the Ministry advisory boards, and is currently a middle school counselor. In the middle of Diane's extensive education career, she took on a new role as Executive Director of the Kaiser Youth Foundation and served on the McCreary Centre for Adolescent Health and other non-profit boards before returning to working in schools where she is again doing what she loves best, working hands on with kids.

Alan Rohr is a dad who experiences first hand the challenges faced by a child with mental health challenges, as his son lives this every day. The F.O.R.C.E. is thrilled to have a father's perspective on our board, as we know it strengthens our ability to understand the opportunities and challenges that we need to look at in supporting the 'whole' family.

We welcome both Diane and Alan to our board.

The program continues to expand with over eleven contracts this year throughout B.C. We have hired a part-time Executive

Assistant, Jennifer Stein, to assist the society with it's growing demands. We launched a new FORCE chapter in Chilliwack on October 24th and the official opening of an office in Victoria will take place on November 7th with a special ribbon cutting ceremony and presentation.

The mental health conference we hosted in May of this year was extremely successful. Following the conference, Keli was selected as one of only six people from B.C.; 100 across Canada, to attend the National Child and Youth Symposium in Toronto to discuss a National Strategy for Mental Health in Canada. Since that conference, Keli has been selected as one of twelve members, and the only member from BC, from across Canada to sit on the Child and Youth Advisory Committee for the Mental Health Commission of Canada. The society is proud to have Keli represent not only The FORCE, but represent BC and the kids and families we have worked so hard to support.

People are interested and listening more than ever. We continue to get the word out to those who need to hear it. The thing that the F.O.R.C.E. does best is to build relationships with the service providers and families in our communities. These relationships are built on trust, respect and a willingness to work together to improve the lives of kids and youth.

Thank you for your support.

Neil Coward
Chairperson

News Flash!

Presentations:

Anxiety BC, www.anxietybc.com, and The F.O.R.C.E. are once again partnering to deliver 5 community skill building seminars focused on anxiety disorders in children and youth. The communities and dates are:

Chilliwack –	October 24 th
Penticton –	November 1 st
North Vancouver –	November 29 th
Burnaby –	January 22 nd
Victoria –	January 24 th

Check our website for more information on times and locations.

Appointments:

The Mental Health Commission of Canada, www.mentalhealthcommission.ca, has selected its board members, it's advisory committee chairs, and now it's advisory committee members.

We are very pleased that our Executive Director, Keli Anderson, has been appointed to the National Child & Youth Advisory Committee for the Mental Health Commission of Canada. We know Keli will be standing up and speaking out for the kids and their families across Canada that have been orphaned for too long in the mental health systems.

The Child & Youth Advisory Committee will be meeting together over the next 3 months to develop a work plan in preparation for a late January meeting with the Board of the Mental Health Commission and the other advisory committees.

The F.O.R.C.E. Society for Kid's Mental Health

'As families, we've been there'



Families Organized for Recognition & Care Equality

www.bckidsmentalhealth.org
theforce@bckidsmentalhealth.org
604-878-3400 or 1-800-661-2121

Newsletter November 2007

Funding provided by:
Ministry of Children & Family Development
& the Provincial Health Services Authority

The F.O.R.C.E. Provides...



Support

Provides families with an opportunity to speak to other families who understand and may be able to offer support or advice on what has worked for them.



Education

Provides families and professionals with information, tools and tips on how to support and assist children with mental health difficulties.



Advocacy

Provides assistance that can help both professionals & families in meeting the mental health needs of children and youth.



Navigation

Provides information that can assist families and professionals in knowing the services available and how to access them.

Support

Abbotsford

When: The 1st Monday of each month, 7-9 pm
Where: Fraser Valley Child Development Centre
#109-32885 Ventura Ave.
Contact: Paula Jacobs at 604-878-3400 or
Paula.Jacobs@gov.bc.ca

Chilliwack

When: The 1st Monday of each month from
Where: 201 - 45619 Yale road
Contact: Chris Whiteway at 604-858-3846 or
chris.whiteway@gmail.com

Penticton

In progress

Squamish

When: Every 2nd Wednesday from 6:30-8:30pm
Where: Brackendale Elementary School
Contact: Leslie Stevens-Cross at 604-878-6400 or
crosswyred@shaw.ca

Sunshine Coast

Contact: Rebecca Pavitt
rpavitt@dccnet.com

Surrey

When: The 1st Tuesday of each month from 6:30-8:30pm
Where: Pacific Community Resources (Newton)
#114-13479-76th Avenue
Contact: Eva Hanlon at 604-589-7659 or hanlon@shaw.ca

Tri-Cities

When: The 1st Thursday of each month from 6:30-8:30pm
Where: Tri-Cities Neighbourhood Centre
Contact: Jeannie Rohr at 604-878-3400 or 604-944-2500 ext. 317 or
force_tricities_group@yahoo.ca

South Island

When: The 1st Wednesday of each month from 6:30-8:30pm
Where: 3100 Tillicum Road
Contact: Lisa Hansen at 250-479-1192 or islandFORCE@shaw.ca



Education

The Children's Health Policy Centre at Simon Fraser University is a group that every parent and mental health practitioner should know about at www.childhealthpolicy.sfu.ca. They are an interdisciplinary research group that focuses on integrating research and policy to improve children's social and emotional well being. This group is responsible for undertaking many research projects and initiatives as well as publishing a vast number of articles for academic and other journals. The centre is affiliated with the Ministry of Children and Family Development and sponsors practitioner training in "evidence-based" approaches for the prevention and treatment of common mental disorders in children; such as cognitive-behavioural training for preventing and treating anxiety and depressive disorders.

The director of the centre and Canada Research Chair for Children's Health Policy, Charlotte Waddell says that *"Investments in children's mental health are among the most important investments that any society can make."*

The website for the centre is very user friendly and provides links to helpful information for families and mental health practitioners. It also highlights research the centre and other

agencies have done and are currently doing around children's mental health issues.

The centre puts out a quarterly e-newsletter that has a different focus each issue and it can be read online or printed out. The Summer 2007 Quarterly issue focused on children's emotional wellbeing and in this issue the centre discussed anxiety and anxiety disorders in children as well as parental involvement in treatment. The centre has just released their Fall 2007 Quarterly Newsletter which highlights how children with Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) cope at school. They also present findings from two large-scale trials on combined psychosocial and medication treatments for ADHD as well as discuss the cost effectiveness of three commonly prescribed ADHD medications. The theme for their Winter 2008 Quarterly will be building on children's resilience with particular focus on programs addressing supportive relationships.

**If you would like to contact
The Children's Health Policy Centre
they can be reached by phone (778-782-7775) or
email (chpcom@sfu.ca).
You can also subscribe to their
quarterly newsletter on their website.**

Education



FRIENDS for Life Program Update..... by Donna Murphy

This year is an exciting year for FRIENDS parent training in BC. It is the third year of bringing this information to BC families, and I am once again busy meeting representatives from school districts, mental health teams, and school PACs and DPACs as she plans the delivery of the parent training of the

FRIENDS program to 15 school districts in BC. To ensure geographical representation we have chosen three school districts in each of the five MCFD regions in the province. As, well, there have been more requests to involve more than one community in some of the more remote school districts in the province. Often these communities have limited resources for children, youth, and families, and they depend on the skills brought to them through the FRIENDS parent training. I continue to work with Kelly Angelius, manager of the FRIENDS program in Victoria, to bring this very important information to families in BC.

To date we have provided parent training to thirty school districts, and thirty-three communities in BC. This years school districts are:

Northern Region:	Interior	Fraser Region	Vancouver Coastal	Vancouver Island
Burns Lake	Merritt	Abbotsford	West Vancouver	Nanaimo
Prince George	Nelson	Burnaby	North Vancouver	Campbell River
Terrace	Lilloett	Langley	Pemberton	Port Hardy

As well, we will be working with the First Nations School Association to deliver parent training to two Aboriginal sights, which will be determined in partnership with the FNSEA.

This year we are also a part of a research project from UBC that will help determine the impact the FRIENDS parent training has on families. Marnie Flores, a master's student, under the supervision of Dr. Lynne Miller is leading the research in four of our previous sites. They are: Surrey, Chilliwack, Fort St. John, and Smithers. This is a first for parent training and we look forward to the results.

WOW! I am very excited to be able to work with all of these people, especially parents who we hope will ensure the sustainability of the program.



Navigation & Advocacy

The F.O.R.C.E. can help Families Navigate

2 new Orientations being developed and piloted for Child & Youth Mental Health:

Parent Orientation:

We are working with the mental health teams and the kids and families they work with in Vancouver to develop an orientation to child & youth mental health. The objective of the orientation is to provide parents and educators with information that will inform and educate them on child & youth mental health, what the systems are that serve this population and what is available in the way of mental health services and what resources are available to assist them.

Teacher Orientation:

We are working with the Surrey School District and the teachers in that district to develop an orientation to child & youth mental health. The objective of the orientation is to provide teachers with information that will inform and educate them on child & youth mental health, what the systems are that serve this population, what each system provides in the way of mental health services and what resources are available to assist them.

The F.O.R.C.E. successfully advocated for this type of 'welcome wagon' introduction into child and youth mental health and it is our intention that these orientations will provide both parents and teachers with information that enhances their ability to understand and support kids with mental health challenges.

The long-term goal is to have a Child & Youth Mental Health orientation available to parents and schools in communities across BC.

Support

Everyday Heroes

by Leslie Stevens-Cross

A hero is defined as someone who despite imminent danger or risk of personal injury performs the selfless act of placing his or her own life in jeopardy to save or rescue another.

Usually, these people are recognized for one single act of bravery that forevermore elevates them to hero status; but how would you define someone who through the course of their life had also rescued another, effectively arriving at the same result but completing this task over their lifespan. Imagine someone who despite his or her own personal agenda or needs achieved the same effect but approached the role as a continuous activity rather than an isolated event.

Folks like this do exist in our world. Look around; they are the parents and guardians of children with invisible disabilities. These are the people who labour through their daily lives with the determination to make the world a better place for their kids. They hope to save their sons and daughters from a society that often marginalizes or limits their kid's opportunities.

There are no medals awarded to these everyday heroes, no ceremonies of recognition, they just strive for the personal satisfaction that comes from the knowledge that somehow in some small way they made a difference in the life of their child.

If, before they began this journey, someone were to have asked them to volunteer for this task they may not have stuck up their hand to enlist for the job but despite that, they feel compelled to follow it through to completion.

Such is the battle I wage. Perhaps you do as well. We struggle to rise above the judgments of others whose children do not battle with behaviour, anxiety or compliance challenges. We rally against an educational system that struggles to meet the learning needs of our special children. We seek assistance and guidance from a Mental Health Care system that is woefully unrecognized and inadequate to address the requirements for care that our children present. We often stumble along the way looking for the portal that will offer hope for our children and families. Routinely we do this without assistance or direction. I know because I've been there. That was until I met Keli Anderson from The F.O.R.C.E.

When I realized there were others in the world like me looking for guidance and help I was pleasantly surprised. What had seemed like such a lonely journey became easier knowing that someone before me had forged the way, sought the answers and was willing to share the gift of their knowledge.

Oddly enough, Keli and I had met previously. Our paths had crossed in the world of financial services before either of us had begun our journeys with our children.

We had careers, loving husbands and the drive to climb the corporate ladder to success. What we didn't realize was that someone else had a different idea about what our life's work would be. We lost touch over the years. Our children and their challenges took priority.

Fortunately for me, Keli arrived at this point before I did and with the help of Donna Murphy, these two exceptional women vowed that they would not stand by and allow other parents to struggle blindly through the maze of child and youth mental health challenges. They formed The F.O.R.C.E. and as a result when Keli and I met years later she was there to offer me the support and guidance I needed to seek help for my daughter.

As a peer support group, The F.O.R.C.E. does not presume to have the clinical training nor the education required to offer diagnostic or treatment options, but what we do have is a collective base of experience and wisdom that helps us help others.

Sometimes it's just being willing to listen or offering a shoulder to lean on. Maybe it's sharing a great book or the name of a mental health clinician who has been helpful in the past. Perhaps it's being a sounding board or an advocate for a parent and child in need. As members of The F.O.R.C.E. we share the tiny pieces of information stored in the grey matter of the collective heads of those parents who've "been there and done that".

That's what The F.O.R.C.E. is. It's why I joined and that's how I hope to make a difference in the life of my child and the lives of other parents and children who need a little help with navigation.

As parents we sorely want our children to be accepted and included for who they are but as a general rule the world is not yet ready to accommodate their special requirements, at least not without a little push. These exceptional little people deserve to be accepted and embraced for who they are.

Like my colleagues involved with The F.O.R.C.E. I am making it my mission to ensure that in future more opportunities are available to meet our kid's needs.

We're not heroes, just folks with something to share.

About the author:

Leslie Stevens-Cross is the F.O.R.C.E. Parent Support and Resource Coordinator for Squamish. Leslie brings her infectious humor and warmth to all those she meets and The F.O.R.C.E. is very pleased and honoured to have her on our team.