



FAMILY SERVICES of Central Alberta

Also known as Red Deer Family Service Bureau
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Annual Report May 2006 to May 2007

Executive Summary

In many ways, the past year has been about change, mostly positive although many were unforeseen and challenged everyone in the agency. This inaugural report will be presented in narrative form to lay the foundation for future reports that will focus on outcomes, evidence based practices and strategic planning.

For many, this past year was viewed as transitional, in that staff, our location and our name changed, while we tried to hold on to our tradition of excellence in programming.

This report is dedicated to Lynn Langshaw who was our friend and a devoted staff member who inspired us all.

Agency

- As the new Executive Director, my tenure began at the end of February 2006 and I was immediately consumed with the details of our move, staffing, and support for the Board and the agency financial situation.
- We moved from our quiet Michener location to 5409 –50th (Gaetz) Avenue on the edge of downtown Red Deer.
- The Board of Directors, after considered consultation with staff, funders and our clients changed our name from Red Deer Family Services to **Family Services of Central Alberta**. They felt that this name better reflects the scope of our services and programs, highlights the locations we serve, and informs the public of our regional funding obligations.
- At the end of June, we moved from Michener to our new downtown site...it took thirteen truckloads and over twenty-one hours.
- In August we hosted a Grand Opening where we launched our new website, www.fsca.ca.
- We were successful in recruiting new Board members who represent a wide scope of talent and expertise. Cheryl Murphy, Nancy Archibald, Barb Eklund and Kathy Cho joined the Board and immediately had a positive impact. We continue to recruit as two of our Board members resigned due to family obligations. We are pleased that Lori Cunningham who has been on maternity leave and has recently returned to the Board.

- On December 2nd, the Board held a strategic planning retreat and developed a new vision statement and updated our mission. This was the first step in an agency wide planning process.

Our Mission

We are accountable to assist individuals and families to maintain dignity, enhance autonomy and strengthen relationships.

Our Vision

We are the leaders in providing programs and human services that strengthen the health of families in Central Alberta.

Chairman's Comments

May 1, 2007

For the past three years, first as Treasurer, and for the last year as Chairperson of the Board of Directors, I have taken great pride in observing the significant contributions Family Services of Central Alberta has made to our communities.

Over the past year there have been many exciting developments within the agency, starting with the move to our current location last June. This was followed by an active fundraising campaign that has resulted in positive partnerships with several local organizations such as Community Savings, Redstone restaurant, and the Rotary clubs. We have improved our profile in the community during the past year, and will further enhance it with the upcoming Children's Festival in June.

On behalf of the Board I would like to acknowledge the amazing work the staff has done this year. Their dedication and commitment through a rather tumultuous year is highly commendable. They have done themselves and the organization proud.

As well, on the Board's behalf, I would like to express our gratitude to our Executive Director Walter Lidster. A year ago I said he was a man of vision and leadership, and would guide the organization to uncharted success; comments based on knowing him for only a short time. Now, after having worked with him for over a year, I have a tremendous amount of respect and admiration for Walter's ability to inspire and lead people, and for the way he took his ideas and vision for Family Services and turned them into reality.

I am honored to be associated with such a worthy organization that is contributing so much to the families of our communities. I look forward to working with Walter, the staff and Board in the coming year.

Vic Petersen

Strategic Planning

- While the Board led the way in strategic planning, other processes have been underway within our programs.
 - Counselling held a strategic planning meeting in May to review their mandate, focus and overall approach to their clients. There is a need to expand our capacity, do research, invest in training and look at other treatment modalities.
 - Education is developing new outcomes and work plans
 - Parent Link became the focus of considerable planning and the development of work plans for 2006/2007 and 2007/08.
- A planning group of coordinators and staff began to look at the agency programs for children 0 to 6 to ensure that we were meeting the needs of children and their families. New outcome measures for all programs are being developed and will guide future planning, budgeting and evaluation.
- Management group decided that despite the limitations of the HOMES database all our programs will be entered on the database. This will meet the needs of three of our funders and should save administrative time in report writing. Training and template design began in the fall and continues to this date.

Future

- Program evaluation
- Annual outcome reports
- Strategic planning with Board

Administration

- An analysis of organizational development began in early March with a decision to decrease the number of director positions to one and to review the job description of the program director and the operations coordinator. The purpose of the review was to place more resources in direct service delivery, reduce administrative costs, strengthen internal controls and enhance the role of coordinators.
- New internal financial controls were adopted as were changes in management meetings, policies and procedures
- A new management handbook of procedures was developed

Future

- Continue to need to look at ways to manage costs
- Need to find new funding sources
- Stress on staff of funding challenges

Fiscal

- A new budget building process was adopted after some staff attended training on financial management
- Internal controls were developed and along with new security measures and more defined roles
- A new accountant, Alara Laden, came on staff and has been instrumental in streamlining our invoicing, accounting, reporting and budgeting systems
- All financial systems were put on Simply Accounting for ease of reporting and to ensure sound financial management standards

- A separate account for fund development receipts was opened
- Managers attended a workshop hosted by Canadian Revenue Agency on charitable accounting and taxation
- A program budget review process was adopted

Future

Like every agency we are challenged by the on-going costs of administration particularly the increasing cost of:

- Janitorial services & supplies,
- Insurance
- Property management
- Audit
- Transportation
- Utilities
- Technology

In addition there is a growing demand to support staff through better and more training, to face increased funders' expectations and to supply the number of reports required by funders, potential donors, sponsors and the community.

Fund Development

- A fund development committee was struck to oversee the fund development plan and work plan developed by the Executive Director. The committee meets monthly and is composed of Board and staff members.
- We launched a bequest program, an individual ask program, and began to develop some corporate sponsorship relationships.
- Service Clubs, particularly the Centennial Rotary, Sunrise Rotary, Downtown Rotary and the Foresters have become our partners
- A workshop for staff on fund raising was offered by Walter and was well attended
- Various staff members have attended workshops on fund raising, special events & fund development
- We launched our Capital Campaign for \$1.7 million dollars in mid August.
- We pursued and were successful in gaining a Wild Rose Foundation grant to support a fund development officer position to help us develop our capacity and to assist in reaching out the community to support us. Darlene Hardy-Bennett became our part-time fund development officer on March 1st.
- We were fortunate to be the recipients of the Community Savings Classic Golf Tournament in July 2006 that successfully raised \$40,000.00. This was a critical event for us as an agency as we had never fund-raised previously, nor had the staff participated in a special event. The hard work and enjoyment we all experienced was well rewarded.
- The Redstone restaurant hosted *A Night in New York* on our behalf in September and raised over \$11,000.00 toward our campaign
- In late January, the Centennial Rotary Club hosted their second annual Sportsman Dinner, and designated FSCA as the charity to be supported.

Future

- Funding for continuation of fund development officer position
- Development of sponsorships

Marketing

Like most non-profits, we have had to meet the challenge of informing the community about our services and increasing our knowledge of families' needs. Some of our strategies in the past year have been:

- Launching a new website in August 2006
- Completing and distributing a parent questionnaire
- Developing a communication plan to address issues of brochures, advertising, posters, emails, on-line registration and community events
- Some job descriptions were redone to include marketing responsibilities
- Recreating our brochures, mailing lists and developing some marketing materials
- Attending job fairs/community fairs/interagency meetings
- Have had feature articles in papers, on television, on provincial websites and through public presentations
- Developing relationships with local media personnel to assist us in planning
- Developing some marketing businesses sponsorships
- Had a graphic designer volunteer his services
- Partnering with other non-profits & government agencies to enhance marketing

Future

Some of our future challenges include:

- Securing funding for on-going marketing
- Reaching new citizens through targeted marketing
- Finding funding for staffing to market our programs and services

Board Development

- In addition to recruiting new Board members, the Board participated in a strategic planning workshop on December 2nd
- In addition to the new vision statement, the Board developed strategic goals for 2007 with specific outcomes
- Board was successful in adding new members and in diversifying the skill set of the Board to include a number of members with financial planning and management backgrounds

Future

- Board is discussing having an Annual retreat
- We continue to try to recruit four more board members
- We need to find ways to support Board members; particularly getting parents to participate
- Board members have acknowledged that they would like training in a variety of areas

Human Resources

- We established a staff Wellness Committee to oversee initiatives to focus on staff physical, emotional and social well-being. The committee has hosted events such as a fitness challenge, potluck suppers, workshops and even a baseball team

- Diversity Committee has been active in ensuring agency policies, programs and site is welcoming to people of diverse backgrounds. We have hosted a drumming circle, Canada World Youth, translated our brochures in Spanish, created a new group for parents from other countries (see Parent Link) and plan to redo our signage to be more welcoming.
- A new staff Code of Conduct was developed and adopted by the Board as agency policy
- A new Managers Procedure Handbook has been developed
- A self-assessment survey of managers was completed
- A salary review was completed which resulted in a revision of salary grid, changes in some staff salaries and the development of new salary scales
- A benefits review has begun
- This past year we have made a concerted effort to encourage staff from all programs and departments to pursue additional training. In late May a full day workshop was held on change styles and communication. Staff from all program areas attended workshops on numerous topics such as computer skills, financial planning, suicide response, children and anxiety, child development, fund raising etc.
- We have faced many challenges particularly:
 - Recruitment for home support positions

Future

In the next year we need to continue to build on our progress and will be addressing:

- Staff training
- Capacity building
- Salary increases
- Cost of living raises
- Administrative costs increase (e.g. insurance)
- Risk management

Operations

The time period that is reflected in this annual report was certainly a time of change for the Operations team. Some staff left for other positions and sadly we lost one staff member to cancer. Two staff in particular should be recognized here, Bev Knopf and Linda Brouwer for “holding down the fort” through the many changes. Special thanks also to Lorraine Irwin. New staff was hired and today we have in place a strong vibrant team with a variety of skills that complement each other and contribute greatly to the agency.

Building

In January 2006, Family Services of Central Alberta took possession of their building! Renovations began shortly afterwards. A huge thank-you goes to Steven Kennedy who helped oversee the contractors and to Group 2 Architects for meeting with the staff and then drawing up the blueprints. The renovations took longer than anticipated; the main and second levels of the building were complete when the agency moved in on June 24, 2006. The lower level was completed by the end of August 2006. Growth has already occurred and more renovations were completed in some of the unfinished spaces in the lower level during the month of March 2007. The move to the new location has been a very positive one. The location is very prominent and provides the agency with a higher profile within the community.

Program Evolution

- Parent Link

This has been a year of change in Parent Link as we revisited our mandate, service operations, and relationship with funder, role of local CFSA and particularly with our affiliate communities. We have accomplished a great deal including:

- Conducting a successful parent survey
- Establishing our Website
- Monthly Newsletter
- Parent conference in partnership with Red Deer College
- Children's Festival (partners are numerous)
- Basic English and Play
- Active Parenting courses in partnership with Red Deer Public School Student Services
- When No is Not Enough
- Added Blackfalds & Eckville centers
- A detailed work plan
- New relationship with sites (in Blackfalds, Delbourne, Western County, Penhold, Sylvan Lake, Eckville, Bowden, Innisfail, Elnora)
- The new Ages & Stages questionnaire adopted
- Began work on a relationship with a regional committee
- Received an increase of funding

- Adult Day Program

The Adult Day Program experienced a very successful year. Our facility size dictates that we can accept 15 participants and we have operated at full capacity the last 12 months. DTHR has indicated that staff members in Day Support Programs have Health Care Aide Certification and we are working towards meeting these criteria. We also continue to benefit from the dedication of two wonderful volunteers. Participants continue to enjoy the socialization and activities that focus on their abilities and strengths. The Caregivers Support Group meets weekly with an average of 14 persons attending.

- Due to a grant from Red Deer and Community Foundation, we have been able to extend our program from two days a week to three. A caregiver group is held every Monday pm and a Wednesday afternoon group is evolving.

- Home Support

The Home Support Program continues to be in high demand with a lengthy waitlist of up to a year. A major challenge still facing this program is staffing and retention of workers. At this date we have a solid core of dedicated workers but have space for 2 fulltime persons. Seniors continue to make up the majority of our clientele but an increase in requests from persons with mental health issues has been noted. We are the only agency providing Home Support at a subsidized rate with alternative options charging more than double our fee for service.

- Counselling

- We did lose a contract for play therapy from CFSA in part due to the tendering process

- Liz Holt resigned from the Agency and Deb Murray became the Counselling Coordinator
- Counselling Dept. took on two Masters Marriage & Family Therapy students and two Play Therapy students to supervise
- Hired Meena Enjati at the end of September to fill vacant therapy position (Irene Wilkensen had been on mat leave for a year)
- Contract with Alberta Justice to do **Focus On Communication In Separation Program**; recent contract with Crisis Centre to provide therapy

- Education

Education had a challenge in the past year with childcare staffing. With the amount of hours and rate of pay we were unable retain and attract new staff. The E.D. and our Board approved a new pay scale, which made our positions more attractive. We have been able to hire more staff and morale has greatly improved. We hired Treena Gordon as our new childcare supervisor. Treena has training in childcare and ECD and is working to enhance our childcare services that support our programming.

- Healthy Families Home Visitation

Healthy Families operates under a set of provincial standards from the Ministry of Children's Services, and is funded by CFSA Region 4, Public Health Agency of Canada, United Way, and private donations. Family support takes place in the parent's home, beginning with a 1-hour session each week. Each visit contains the components of supporting the parent's needs, modeling positive parent-child interaction, increasing knowledge of health and child development (including developmental screening) and family literacy.

The average length of involvement in the program is 14-16 months.

FSCA is the Central Office for Healthy Families in Central Alberta and supports the programs in Red Deer, Sundre, Olds, Rocky Mountain House, Rimbey, Sylvan Lake, Lacombe, Ponoka, Elnora, Delburne, Trochu, Bowden, Innisfail, and the many other communities nearby, with funding, core training, regular networking and training events, resources, and evaluation.

There are currently a total of 12 people working as Healthy Families Home visitors and 7 supervisors. In the past year, 262 families were provided with service, (a total of 571 people) In January, we welcomed Amanda Canning as our Healthy Families operations assistant, and Rosanna Van Gunst joined our team as a home visitor for the Red Deer area.

- Infant Preschool Wellness Program

The Infant Preschool Wellness Program served 63 families in 2006. Staff reported an increase in the complexity of family concerns. Housing and mental health concerns, in many situations, impacted the ability of adults to parent effectively. We welcomed Melissa Frank as a new outreach worker in March.

IPWP Drop-in Groups saw a decline in attendance over the year. To continue to meet the needs of the current parenting population, these groups will be re-structured while maintaining the vision and outcomes of the program.

- Building Incredible Babies

In 2006, Building Incredible Babies served 114 clients in Red Deer, Blackfalds, Penhold and Springbrook. Partial funding for BIB to cover outlying areas was in-kind through DTHR for the past 3 years. In March of 2006 this in-kind funding was re-allocated by DTHR resulting in a reduction of staff FTE's. Clients who resided in those communities were no longer able to

access the BIB program. Of the clients who were involved in BIB, staff reported an increase in complex issues within the family including mental health concerns and substance use.

- **Growing Together**

This new initiative is a partnership with Ministry of Health, David Thompson Health Region along with the Olds & Rocky Mountain House Parent Link Centres. The project will provide three year funding for the introduction of a developmental screening tool for parents of 18 to 24 month old children. In addition the project will allow for the development of a new team of professional health care providers, groups for parents and new support information to assist toddlers to meet their developmental milestones.

- **Understanding the Early Years**

A new project funded by Human Resources Social Development Canada will assist in developing research on needs of children 3 to 5 years of age and their parents as well as a community inventory of services and a community mapping report. This highly collaborative project involving key partners such as the Red Deer Public School System, Red Deer Catholic School System as well as over 31 other agencies will lead to a community action plan to address the needs of children in Red Deer.

Volunteer Program

- Board adopted the Canadian Code of Volunteers
- Developed a strategic work plan to implement Code
- Developed Volunteer Handbook, work plan, policies, application forms, orientation manual
- Received a Wild Rose Grant to hire a part-time volunteer coordinator and we were fortunate enough to have Charlene Vallee start work on March 1st.
- We are currently implementing the work plan and have work on an annual recognition event and on recruiting new volunteers
- We have joined the Volunteer Manager's network

Community Partnerships

- Children's Working Group (31 agencies)
- Performance Measurement Outcomes Committee-City of Red Deer
- Children's Festival Planning Group
- Healthy Families Advisory Committee
- Parent Link Sites committee (9 communities)
- Domestic Violence Coordinating Committee
- Street Kid Working Group
- City of Red Deer –Cultural Services-Parks & Recreation
- Central Alberta Alzheimer's Society
- Red Deer Public School System
- Red Deer Catholic School System
- Central Alberta Immigrant Women's Association
- Youth and Volunteer Centre
- Children's Services Centre
- Crisis Centre
- Central Alberta Women's Outreach

- Central Alberta Women's Emergency Shelter
- Red Deer Public Library
- Native Friendship Centre
- Volunteer Managers Network

Funders: Current & On-Going Support

- Family and Community Support Services
- Public Health Agency of Canada
- Department of Justice
- United Way
- Ministry of Children's Services
- Life Long Learning Association
- Child and Family Services Regional Authority
- Ministry of Health
- David Thompson Health Authority
- Red Deer and Community Foundation
- Wild Rose Foundation
- Human Resources Social Development Canada
- Red Deer and Community Foundation
- Service Canada

Business Partners

Community Savings
 INSL
 Joe's Janitorial
 Sunrise Rotary Club
 Copies Now

Memberships

Family Service Agencies of Canada
 Alberta's Promise
 Chamber of Commerce
 Downtown Business Association
 Alberta Home Visitation Network Association
 Alberta Association of Child and Family Services Agencies

Walter Lidster
 Executive Director
 May 2007