**Western Region Fostering Focus Team meeting Minutes**

**August 17, 2016**

**Lunenburg District Office**

**Present:**

Joanne Mutton, Joy Sweeney, Melanie Mood-Deveau, Debbie Thibault, Gary Landry, Jill Barkhouse, Kim Brown, Ethel Wentzell, Annette Davidson, Nancy Parker, Laurie d’Entremont

**Regrets:**

Pam Gosse-MacDonald, Joanne Frost-Trimper, Crissy Richardson

**Review of Minutes:**

Minutes from the March 3, 2016 meeting; no changes made.

**Business Arising:**

1. Minutes from March 3, 2016 and today’s meeting will be distributed throughout the Region by Jill Barkhouse, as agreed to previously. Gary will continue to post the minutes on the Federation website.
2. Access – Nancy provided an update that she is trying to connect directly with foster parents when there are issues arising from access arrangements or to consult about access plans and places for visits. Between the three access and transportation teams, they are trying to be as consistent as possible throughout the region.
3. Peer Support – Debbie Thibault provided an update regarding this program. They began their 2ed phase on August 1st to match new foster parents to mentor foster parents with the peer support program. They are planning additional training for new recruits in September. They continue to seek out additional volunteers for the program.
4. Forum – it was agreed that a spring target would be better given all of the plans for the fall, including training for staff regarding the new act and planning for Foster Family Appreciation Week.

**New Business:**

1. Term of Reference – previous terms were reviewed and changes recommended. The updated terms will be distributed with the minutes from today’s meeting.
2. Federation Representatives and Meetings – it was clarified that a representative from the Federation is able to join foster parents in meetings about their own file/issues, but this would not be appropriate if the meeting was case specific.
3. FFAW Survey – a planned survey of all foster parents in the Western Region was reviewed for feedback and suggestions. An invitation for all foster parents to participate in the survey will be sent out in the coming weeks to solicit feedback from foster parents regarding preferences for celebrations during foster family appreciation week.
4. Allegations – Feedback from foster parents was shared regarding when allegations are made against them and investigations are launched. There are investigations taking place about allegations that would have previously been addressed outside of an investigation. Discussed how impactful an investigation is to the children’s placement in the home and to the foster family. Discussed the option of exploring having designated staff or offices to complete the investigations. The matter will be raised at the regional level by Jill and or Kim.
5. Foster Care Forum Feedback – Jill reviewed data collected from the two forum days held in June 2014.

**Next Meeting:**

September 8, 2016 @ Lunenburg DO, 10:30am.