

*“A Communication
Link with
Foster Families
Across the
Province”*

INSIDE THIS ISSUE...

Board of Directors

2

Foster Care Redesign

3-4

Launch

5

Art & Writing Contest

6

Active Start Program

7

Halloween

8

Bursaries

9

First Aid

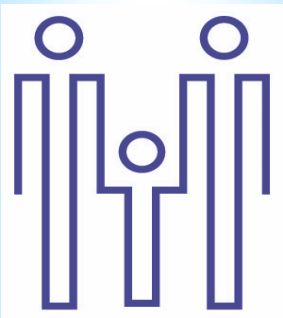
10

Holiday Recipe

11

Federation Staff

12



Fostering Community Newsletter

Issue: 58

Fall/Winter 2022

The Federation of Foster Families of Nova Scotia is a charitable organization funded by the Nova Scotia Department of Community Services and governed by a Board of Directors who are foster parents.

Mission Statement:

The Federation of Foster Families of Nova Scotia is a collective voice for all foster parents in Nova Scotia. In pursuit of this mission, the Federation will ensure assistance and support for foster families and Foster Family Associations.

Objectives:

- To ensure the integrity of the Federation as the collective voice for all foster parents
- To better equip foster parents in the provision of the best possible child care
- To promote a positive profile of foster care
- To encourage the development of Foster Family Associations and Support Groups
- To continually work toward improving foster care in Nova Scotia



**2023 AGM hosted by Mi'kmaw
May 26-28, 2023**

2022/2023 Board of Directors

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MARINA KEEPING	(902) 441-5294	makeeping@outlook.com

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SHEILA HILL	(902) 302-3345	bill_sheila_hill76@hotmail.com
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NORTHERN REGION:

MARY ANN BURKE (Vice President)	(902) 870-1254	maryannburke610@gmail.com
CAROLANN ZEGRAY (Secretary)	(902) 899-5958	1975@eastlink.ca

WESTERN REGION:

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MI'KMAQ REPRESENTATIVES:

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AFRICAN NOVA SCOTIAN REPRESENTATIVES:

IONA SMITH	(902) 802-4539	ionasmith1801@gmail.com
Vacant Position		

Foster Care Redesign Update

The Department of Community Services (DCS) would like to take this opportunity to update you on Foster Care Redesign.

For our initial launch of **MOCKINGBIRD FAMILY™**, we are starting with two constellations. Selecting our first two hub home foster families was a difficult decision for the Department, given how many amazing and committed foster caregivers we have in our province.

We chose one home in the Central Region and one in the Eastern Region. It was important to us to start this journey in two very different regions – urban and rural, to ensure we get a variety of learnings to help us implement MOCKINGBIRD FAMILY™ across the province in a way that works for all foster caregivers. Both hub home caregivers have extensive foster care experience, exceptional skills as foster caregivers, and are well respected in the fostering community.

- In the Central Region, Debbie Cain has agreed to be one of our first two hub homes. Debbie has 21 years experience as a foster caregiver and has demonstrated leadership and strong ties to Black and African Nova Scotian communities.
- In the Eastern Region, our second hub home will be that of Evelyn and Russell MacInnis. Evelyn and Russell have fostered for over 30 years and have maintained strong relationships with youth who have exited care well into their adulthoods.

The selection of satellite homes for the first two constellations is currently in-progress. The process is intended to be a collaborative effort between the Foster Care Redesign (FCR) Project Team, Foster Care Program Team, and the Hub Home Caregivers.

The satellite home selection process will consider the needs of the children that will be involved in the constellations, build on natural support systems in the region, identify culturally diverse and inclusive homes, and ensure we've included a mix of new and experienced foster caregivers.

The potential satellite homes will then be contacted to explore their interest in the coming days.

The official launch of our constellations is scheduled for the first week of December 2022.

Youth Reference Group

DCS values the voice of youth and recognizes the importance of youth participation in decision-making processes.

The goal of the Youth Reference Group is to empower youth who have lived experience in foster care, by providing a mechanism to advocate for the needs of children and youth who will be involved with the foster system in the future.

Foster Care Redesign Update

We are very pleased to announce that Patricia Chareka and Adrienne Hirson have agreed to be the Youth Reference Group Peer Leads. Patricia and Adrienne will facilitate the group conversations and work closely with the Department to ensure the voices of youth are heard.

There are currently eight members of the team. If you know someone who may be interested in participating in this exciting opportunity, please ask them to reach out via this email address fostercareredesign@novascotia.ca

Foster Caregiver Reference Group

The Department is also leveraging the voice of foster caregivers to provide insight into their unique experience through the Foster Caregiver Reference Group (FCRG). The Federation of Foster Families of Nova Scotia (FFFNS) Board, as the Foster Caregiver Reference Group, is your voice on foster care redesign.

The first meeting with the FCRG took place on December 8th of 2021 and have been meeting on a bi-weekly basis, with a few exceptions. To date, there have been approximately 16 meetings, discussing all areas of the redesign of the foster care program.

If you would like to discuss the redesign of the foster care program with your representative, contact information can be found on page 2.

Recruitment and Retention

The Department aims to increase the number of and diversity of foster caregivers. To inform the development of a Recruitment and Retention strategy, the Department partnered with the Association of Black Social Workers (ABSW) to consult with the Black and African Nova Scotian communities and has engaged DCS and MFCS staff, who work with foster caregivers everyday in a variety of capacities.

In closing, if you have any questions about Foster Care Redesign, please send your questions via email to fostercareredesign@novascotia.ca

Fostercare

Be  there.

Launch to Foster Family Appreciation Week “Foster Families Brighten our World”



This year's Launch was hosted by the Western Region. It took place at Willowbank U-pick Farm located in heart of the Annapolis Valley, just outside the Village of Port Williams.

The day was a huge success despite the rainy weather with a total of 203 in attendance. The day began at 10am with registration and family photos. The opening ceremony commenced at 11am and the event ran until mid afternoon.

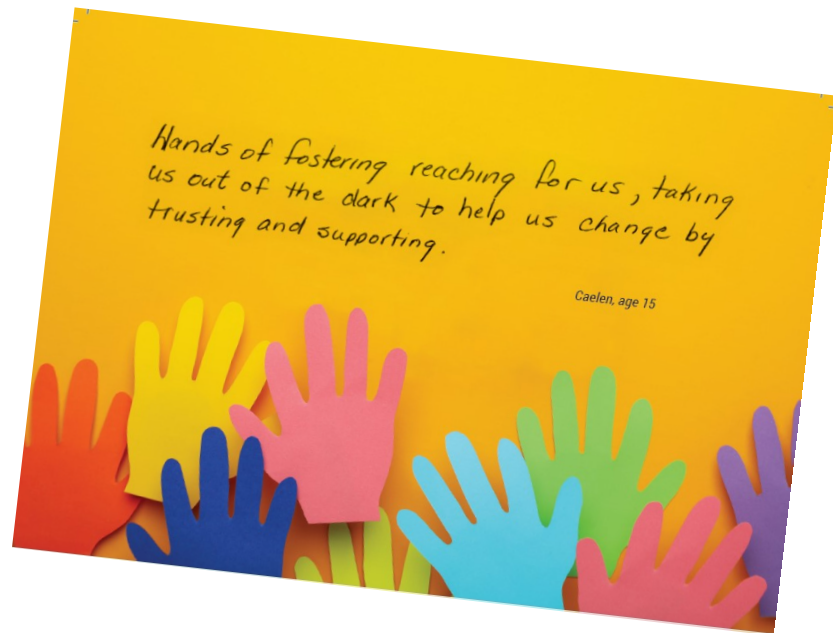
Prizes were awarded to the winners of the Art and Writing contest in support of Foster Family Appreciation Week.

Activities throughout the day included hayrides along the river trail, a petting zoo, a bouncy castle, a haunted barn, a tour of Willowbank's farm museum, face painting, apple and pumpkin picking, and for those interested, a dykeland walk along the Cornwallis River.

Attendees also enjoyed a picnic lunch and BBQ with a celebration cake to end the day.



Art & Writing Contest



Foster Families Brighten Our World

fostercare.novascotia.ca/page/art-contest



Halifax Active Start and FUNdamentals Program

is recruiting new athletes!

Special Olympics NS is pleased to be running our highly successful **Active Start and FUNdamentals** programs in **Halifax!** These programs help **children with an Intellectual Disability** develop their Fundamental Movement Skills (running, hopping, throwing catching, etc.) in a fun, social environment.

Who: Children ages 2-12 with an Intellectual Disability (and siblings)

When: Sundays, 12:30-1:30pm, September 2022 to June 2023

Where: Citadel Community Centre, Wilson Gym
1955 Trollope Street, Halifax, NS

What to bring: Clothes for activity, water

Fee: \$25 per seasonal program (fall, winter, and spring)

For more information: Rebecca MacDonald, rebecca.macdonald15@gmail.com

Come and see our trained volunteers work at delivering fundamental movement skills to your children. If you like what you see, please join us!

Looking forward to meeting your family!



Halloween at the Federation Office



Memorial Bursaries

The Federation has two memorial bursaries that are given out each year.

The Thelma Goodall Memorial Bursary is awarded to youth-in-care or former youth-in-care that are enrolled in a post secondary institution. Thelma Goodall and her daughter, Elizabeth Hamilton were both foster parents. Elizabeth was a founding member of the Federation.

The Jenny Cajolais Memorial Bursary is awarded to birth or adopted children of foster parents that are enrolled in a post secondary institution. It was named after the daughter of former foster parents, Claude and Jackie Cajolais, who were very active on the Board of Directors of the Federation.

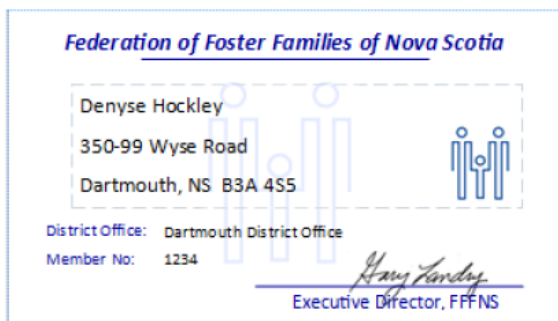
The deadline to apply for bursaries is May 31st of each year. Recipients are chosen by the Bursary Committee and cheques are issued each Fall after receiving confirmation of enrollment.

Bursary applications can be found on the Federation website or by contacting the office.



Attached to this newsletter you will find an expiry date sticker for your Federation membership card. These membership cards are included in the welcome package sent to new foster homes. Each year a new sticker is sent out with the Fall/Winter newsletter or Holiday card.

Example:



**Expires:
December 31st
2023**

Standard First Aid Training

St. John Ambulance Standard First Aid/CPR Level "C" – The Federation of Foster Families of Nova Scotia, with the assistance of the Department of Community Services, now covers the cost of registration for this training. Participants are reimbursed for mileage and childcare.

Please contact Michele Roberts at the Federation office (michele.roberts@novascotia.ca) or (902) 424-5665 to register or find out more about upcoming training dates.

Should it be necessary to cancel or reschedule, please note the following:

- Cancellations with 6+ business days notice will receive a FULL refund OR may choose to transfer to an alternate date with no transfer fee.
- Cancellations with 3-5 business days notice will be charged a \$40 (plus tax) administration fee OR may choose to transfer to an alternate date (see below regarding transfers)
- Cancellations within 1-2 business days notice may choose to transfer to an alternate date (see below regarding transfers); however, a refund is NOT available
- NO Shows will NOT receive a refund or credit

**There will be a transfer fee of \$25 (plus tax) for transfers requested with 5 business days notice, or less, prior to the class date



Please Help us Save Some Trees!
To sign up for email or if your email has
changed, contact us at
denyse.hockley@novascotia.ca
or 902-424-3071



Christmas Munchie Mix

Easy to make - no baking - kids can join in. This tasty treat has crunch, sweet, and salt. Be prepared because you may be making more than one batch once the family has a taste!

Ingredients:

- Chex Cereal (can be substituted with Golden Grahams or Cinnamon Toast Crunch)
- Honey Nut Cheerios (plain Cheerios work fine)
- Mini pretzel twists (pretzel sticks are ok too)
- Lightly salted roasted peanuts (any peanuts work here)
- Holiday M&M (the red and green are nice but any M&Ms work here)
- White chocolate melting chips (white candy melts are ok too)
- Holiday themed sprinkles

Directions:

- In a large bowl combine the Chex cereal, cheerios, pretzels and peanuts.
- Dump the mix into a large rimmed baking sheet lined with parchment
- Sprinkle the M&Ms on top
- Place the white chocolate in a microwave safe bowl and power on for 60 seconds; stir the chips and continue in 20 second increments until all melted and smooth
- Immediately drizzle the white chocolate over the mix then quickly add the holiday sprinkles
- With a spatula or spoon (even clean hands if you can find some), mix everything to distribute the white chocolate evenly over the mixture before the chocolate sets (I actually do not do this step, but it is part of the official instructions)
- Allow everything to sit for about 15 minutes so the chocolate can finish setting.
- Use those clean hands to break up the mixture into chunks and then

Enjoy!

Note: Assuming there are any leftovers, or if you want to prepare in advance - you can store in an airtight baggie or container and keep it at room temperature for a couple of days - or so I am told. It has never lasted that long in our house to find out! You can also store in the freezer (which I have done when preparing in advance).

Further note: If you want just a loose bowl of goodness that people can scoop up, leave out the white chocolate drizzle and just toss in those white chocolate chips into the mix!

Submitted by Marina Keeping



Federation of Foster Families of Nova Scotia



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We're also on the web!

<https://fosterfamilies.ns.ca/>

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/FFFNS/>

Federation Staff

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Position Vacant Project Assistant, Peer Support Services		

**Do you have any news or articles you would like to see featured in this newsletter? If so, please contact our editor Denyse Hockley at
(902) 424-3071 or denyse.hockley@novascotia.ca**