

ADOLESCENT CAREGIVERS MEETING MINUTES

OCTOBER 25, 2011

Attendees: Dawn Johnson, Rights 2 Success; Nathan Parnell, Rights 2 Success; Corinne Campbell, MCFD Over 12 Resources; Jocelyn Barratt, Hollyburn Family Services; and the following foster parents: Peter Dueck and Dina Dueck, Saveria Vacchiano, Juliana Austral, Shori Lal, Tita Tocol, Lori Pobuta, Mary Jane Richardson, Kevin and Jean Murray, Nick Vaughan, and Holly Hutchinson.

The speakers for the meeting were Dawn Johnson, Youth Engagement Coordinator of the Rights 2 Success program, and Nathan Parnell, Aboriginal Youth Intern in that program at ASU. They provide rights education for youth and adults. They speak to various groups that work with young people.

Dawn and Nathan circulated a brochure that was designed by a youth council in a way that would speak to them. Their goal is to make ministry literature more youth-friendly.

Rights 2 Success is a program based on a partnership between MCFD and the Youth in Care Network. The program is based on the convention of the United Nations Rights of the Child, which was ratified by Canada in 1991. The focus is to create advocacy for youth, to help them find an advocate, and to teach them how to advocate for themselves. All children have rights, rights that are written into legislation.

The rights of children are as follows:

- the right to be healthy
- the right to be heard
- the right to be yourself
- the right to be safe

Talking with children and youth offers the opportunity for discussion and teachable moments. It is important to ensure that young people have the opportunity to participate in matters that affect them e.g., Comprehensive Plans Of Care, ICMs, and planning. Right 2 Success assists children and youth to participate in the processes by preparing them to advocate for themselves. Just as children are informed, it is necessary for the adults in their lives to be informed as well. The rights of youth in custody and rights of aboriginal youth are included in the workshops that are given.

Dawn does a workshop that is 3 hours long and is available to adults working with youth. She also offers workshops on advocacy: how to help them develop as advocates for themselves.

There was considerable discussion among participants about difficulties with children in care understanding differences between their rights and taking personal responsibility. There was interest in upholding parents' rights while teaching the rights of the child.

Tony Vanon, a social worker with the Vancouver Coastal region, does youth conferencing for youth nearing the age of majority. It was suggested that he might come to our group to speak in the future.

In the second half of the meeting, Jean Murray advised that the Partnership Meetings are being held once a month now to discuss common solutions. She will report back to us on the outcome of those meetings.

We discussed additional ideas for future meetings, which included pizza night, and workshops on self-care. Other interests are Mental Health - concurrent disorders, especially.

Jodi Takar is still running Slack Master support services but is working out how to screen people with the new relief caregiver policy in a fast and efficient way. Jodi will keep us apprised of her progress and will provide a new relief list as soon as possible.

Don't forget to attend the Foster Parent Appreciation brunch on October 27, 2011!

Respectfully submitted,

Holly Hutchinson