

# **Abbotsford Child and Youth Committee Minutes**

**September 25, 2014, 1 to 3pm  
Sweeney Neighbourhood Centre, Board Room**

**Chair:** Eric Van Egmond, MCFD

**Minutes:** Louise Smith, ACYC Coordinator

## **Attending:**

|                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
| Simone Maassen       | Abbotsford Community Services (ACS) –Youth Resource Centre           |
| Cheryl Unger         | Big Brothers, Big Sisters  |
| Karen Copeland       | parent   |
| Alison Balzer        | Youth Unlimited  |
| Sharon Crowley       | Literacy Matters   |
| Becky Moore          | Central Abbotsford Community School                                  |
| Justin Hohne         | Abbotsford Restorative Justice (ARJAA)                               |
| Samantha Omichinski  | ARJAA  |
| Shairose Jinnah      | ACS – Child, Youth and Family Services                               |
| Andrea Senft         | School District 34   |
| Denise Thandi        | Abbotsford Early Childhood Committee/Success by Six                  |
| Peter Buitendyk      | Fraser Valley Aboriginal Child and Family Services Society           |
| Jeff Mclean          | ACS – Abby Dads  |
| Maria Cargnelli      | ACS – New Beginnings, Child Care Resource and Referral               |
| Bev Olfert           | Abbotsford Youth Commission  |
| Laszlo Kovacs        | West Abbotsford Community School Society                             |
| Kimberley Laing      | Sumas First Nation – Education and Community Development Coordinator |
| Ryan Coreau          | City of Abbotsford   |
| Irene Wesenberg      | MCFD – Youth Justice/Restorative Justice East Fraser                 |
| Ajay Kaushal         | Fraser Health – CYCP Fraser East                                     |
| Maple Melder Crozier | University of the Fraser Valley – Child, Youth and Family Studies    |
| Jill Parker          | Abbotsford Police Department – Youth Squad                           |

Meeting called to order at 1:10pm.

## **Introductions and organization highlights**

All in attendance went around the room and introduced themselves, several representatives provided additional information:

- Sharon Crowley – Literacy Matters – September is Literacy Month
- Karen Copeland – is sitting on ACYC currently as a parent although she had been involved with FORCE. Currently she is providing a blog site and Facebook page to enhance coordination regarding child and youth mental health resources.
- Denise Thandi – AECC – Abbotsford is being actively considered as an Early Years test site and a new website is being launched
- Simon Maassen – YRC – in late October they will be offering a drop-in parenting group for the mothers and fathers of teenagers. It is an open referral process for interested parents to join these sessions.

- Cheryl Unger – Big Brothers, Big Sisters – there has been some recent administrative and leadership changes in the organization, but these have not impacted services to families.
- Maria Cargnelli – Child Care Resource and Referral is offering a workshop for caregivers on childhood anxiety. Maria is also Chair of the Abbotsford Early Childhood Committee.
- Bev Olfert – Abbotsford Youth Commission – past summer had the best attendance ever in their programs. Launching a Youth Nites Out program – please note, if a youth's access is limited by registration costs, subsidies are available.
- Maple Melder-Crozier – University of the Fraser Valley – new Dean of Faculty of Professional Studies, Dr. Tracy Ryder Glass. Also, on October 4<sup>th</sup> UFV is holding a Mental Health First Aid session, and they plan to run another session at the end of October.
- Eric Van Egmond – MCFD - The collaborative partnership in Abbotsford between four primary organizations - MCFD, ACS, Abbotsford Division of Family Practice, and Impact Youth Substance Use Services – which developed and delivered the Abbotsford Youth Health Centre was awarded the BC Premier's Regional Award. The project has also gone forward to be considered for the Provincial Premier's Award.

## **Updates from Tables**

### **Early Years – Denise Thandi**

- Successful summer completed supporting families – for example, literacy and storytime in the park had approximately 25 children per day
- Working with the School District on delivery of the Middle Years Information Fair.
- EDI screening will be administered at the Early Years Expo in November.
- Next AECC (Early Childhood Table) will be October 14<sup>th</sup>, 9 to 11am at the Sweeney Neighbourhood Centre – focus of that meeting will be a presentation on domestic violence and the early years.

### **Middle Years Table – Andrea Senft**

- This committee is currently on hold.
- One upcoming task will be a community review of services and programming for the middle years. Interested in whether there may not be enough awareness of the services and programs available.
- Focus currently on organizing the Middle Years Information Fair for Tuesday, October 28<sup>th</sup>. Fair will be for ages 10 to 14 years old in keeping with middle school years as opposed to 8 to 12 years old
- Currently exploring whether a Middle Years Development Index (MDI) could be done in Abbotsford.
- School District is exploring the development of an interactive website for school principals so they can more quickly access information or resources on child and youth mental health, community programming.

- Early Years Expo will be held on November 26<sup>th</sup> at the Abby Arts Centre. EDI screening will be provided there.
- Middle Years Table is always open to new participants. Next meeting has not been set but will hopefully be in October or November.

### **Youth Table – Bev Olftert**

- This Committee is active from September to June.
- Meets the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of every month, 8:45 am to 10am, at the Abbotsford Youth Commission.
- October 8<sup>th</sup> is next meeting – theme is domestic violence as it relates to youth.

### **Special Needs Table – Maple Melder Crozier**

- This committee meets every two months, next one in November
- At last meeting there was a presentation by Monarch House regarding their services for assessing, diagnosing and treating autism  
<http://www.cbi.ca/web/monarchhouse>
- This committee can also provide a resource on services and programs for families with special needs.

### **Community of Practice Table – Ajay Kaushal**

- Focus is trauma informed practice and next meeting will be October 7<sup>th</sup>, and will involve a DVD series facilitated by Kim Hetherington.
- Denise Thandi can be contacted regarding meeting details.

### **Forum Update – Eric Van Egmond**

- The ACYC was postponed from May, 2014, and rescheduled for November 28<sup>th</sup>, 2014
- However, over the past few months, there has also been a lot of community work to ready for the launch the Safe Relations Safe Children – the Province's response to the Schoenborn tragedy. This has involved many of Abbotsford's adult and child serving organizations related to domestic violence, adult mental health, and substance abuse, and the launch is to be completed this Fall in Abbotsford.
- Out of concern that the Abbotsford community doesn't have the capacity to run two large events this Fall, the ACYC Executive is recommending that the November 28<sup>th</sup> date be used for the kick-off of the Safe Relations Safe Children event.
- This would also provide for more time to prepare for an ACYC event that would cover the child and youth friendly initiative review.
- Eric asked if this recommendation from the ACYC Executive would be supported by the ACYC membership. No objections were raised. Andrea noted that the Strong Start Annual retreat will also be happening on November 28<sup>th</sup>.

## **ACYC Terms of Reference (TORs)**

- Each year the ACYC terms of reference are to be reviewed.
- Each Table is also encouraged to have TORs
- A handout was provided with the suggested revisions and updates of the ACYC TORs.
- Any feedback, comments or concerns are to be sent to Louise for inclusion.
- TORs will be on the November 20<sup>th</sup> agenda to be discussed and moved for approval

## **Presentation:**

### **Dads Matter: Exploring a Father's Impact on the Children of Abbotsford**

*Jeff Mclean*, Supervisor, Abby Dads and The Family Centre, Abbotsford Community Services – [www.abbydads.ca](http://www.abbydads.ca)

*Peter Buitendyk*, Family Services Social Worker, Fraser Valley Aboriginal Children and Family Services Society Xyolhemeylh

- Jeff and Peter presented an overview of research that demonstrated the positive impact engaged fathers provide to their children's healthy development
- Jeff provided information on a new initiative from Abby Dads, funded by the Vancouver Foundation, that supports fathers involved with the Supervised Access program.
- Peter also shared his observations as a social worker regarding the isolation of fathers and their need for an advocate when negotiating some form of continued engagement with his family and/or children.
- They then opened the floor to comments, questions, and suggestions about what would be recommended for next steps in Abbotsford to support dads.
- There was a wide range of suggestions and comments from the floor. Ajay suggested that the strategies have to be larger, less program or service specific. Peer to peer mentorship was also discussed – how could this be broadened so that healthy fathers are connected to struggling fathers. Eric mentioned that M2W2 and Big Brothers/Big Sisters have mentorship models that have been successful. Denise commented that 1:1 mentorship is a gap whereas there is group mentorship. A discussion followed on whether dads are more drawn to the 'organic' mentorship offered in groups than formal 1:1 matches.
- The YRC have put in outreach efforts to engage fathers in their parenting of youth. Very difficult to get fathers to parenting groups but they are seeing some progress. Andrea mentioned that there is a Strongstart location with a large portion of dads attending – possibly due to shift work schedules aligning with one another, but it also triggers a positive effect – dads know other dads will be there, they invite other dads etc.
- Kim suggested more childminding being offered during men-focussed programming to encourage men to wear their 'dad' hat when participating.

***Meeting adjourned 3pm – next meeting November 20, 2014 – 1 to 3pm.***