



BRITISH
COLUMBIA

0175-20-CFDE:

(16)

September 21, 2009

Ref: 187152

Her Worship Mayor Pamela Goldsmith-Jones and Council
District of West Vancouver
750 17th St
West Vancouver BC V7V 3T3

Dear Mayor Goldsmith-Jones and Council:

Once again, October has been proclaimed as Foster Family Month in British Columbia. It is an opportunity to publicly recognize and celebrate the tremendous contributions of the thousands of foster families across British Columbia who care for and support children and youth who need it most.

Foster Family Month is a time for each of us to acknowledge the more than 3,300 foster families in communities throughout British Columbia who provide an unwavering commitment to children, youth and their families. Foster parents come from all walks of life but share a common vision of providing care to children and youth who are in need. There is always a need for more individuals and families to open their homes, become foster parents, and provide support, hope and encouragement to help a child develop into a confident adult.

During the month of October, there will be many events scheduled to acknowledge foster parents across the province. I encourage you to get involved in these events and help to celebrate the contributions of thousands of generous and dedicated foster families. I have enclosed a fact sheet about fostering that outlines the vital role foster families play in our province and I encourage you to visit the Ministry of Children and Family Development's Web site at: www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/foster for details of events in your area.

On behalf of the Honourable Gordon Campbell, Premier, and the Government of British Columbia, I thank you for recognizing the stability, love and compassion that foster families provide to children and youth-in-need.

Sincerely,

Mary Polak
Minister

Enclosure

FACTSHEET

September 2009

Ministry of Children and Family Development

FOSTER CARE IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

October is Foster Family Month in British Columbia, a time to recognize foster families for the remarkable contributions they make to children and families in our communities. Foster families may provide care on an emergency, short or long term basis and give children and youth a safe, nurturing, and supportive home when they need it the most.

- Foster family homes are the primary placement resource for children in care. The Province has approximately 8,900 children in its care, and of those, about 6,000 children and youth are placed with approximately 3,300 foster families.
- Twenty-four delegated Aboriginal agencies, the Federation of Aboriginal Foster Parents and the ministry are working to increase the number of Aboriginal foster homes and build the capacity of Aboriginal communities to provide support for vulnerable children.
- About 35 per cent of children in care who are adopted - are adopted by their foster family.
- Support, education and advocacy services are provided through the British Columbia Federation of Foster Parent Associations, the Federation of Aboriginal Foster Parents and regional foster parent agencies.
- There is always a need for more foster families of all cultural, social and ethnic backgrounds, so that children in care can maintain their cultural and community connections.
- The main qualifications to be a foster parent are a desire to provide a supportive and caring environment and make a positive difference in a child's life. Foster parents must be in good physical and mental health; they receive training and undergo background and reference checks. On average, the approval process takes three months.
- There are different types of foster homes:
 - Restricted foster homes are usually the homes of relatives or family friends. Regular foster homes provide care for up to six children of varying ages and needs. Monthly rates for these homes are \$803 to \$909 per child, depending on the age of the child.
 - Specialized foster homes care for children with more challenging behaviour or developmental needs. Payment rates for specialized homes range from \$1,261 to \$2,726 a month per child depending on the level of care they provide and the number of children.
- Each foster child has a care plan that outlines the type of care required to meet his or her needs and a plan to either return the child to their parents or to another permanent home. For many children in care, foster families provide a permanent home right through to adult life, while also supporting the child's ongoing connection to their families and communities.
- Find more information at www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/foster or call the Fosterline at 1 800 663-9999.

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Contact: Ministry of Children and Family Development
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