

Advisor

Summer 2013



www.sffa.sk.ca

Advisor

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The Star: A Story to Help Young Children Understand Foster Care

By Cynthia Miller Lovell

ISBN-13: 9780967701004

ISBN-10: 0967701007

Publication Date: 06/2005



The Star: A story to help young children understand foster care is an easy-to-read, short story with beautiful, watercolour illustrations. The book follows a fictional young girl, Kit, who is taken from her mother to the safety, and different world, of a foster home. On Kit's first night in foster care, she becomes friends with a star outside her bedroom window. The star tells Kit about other foster children it has seen. Throughout the story, the star is a source of comfort for Kit as she experiences many emotions and adjusts to all the new things in her foster home. To get the most out of this book, the author recommends looking at Questions & Activities for The Star: A handbook for foster parents.

Congratulations! to CFFA President Sheila Durnford

Sheila Durnford has been awarded the Child Welfare League of Canada's 2012 Foster Parent Achievement Award. Sheila attended the Awards Reception held in Ottawa, Ontario, February 28, 2013. The Canadian Foster Parent Association nominated Sheila and we were very pleased that she was chosen from all the other nominees.

There were a total of 6 different Achievement Awards presented during a special Awards Reception. These awards recognize and honour individuals from across Canada who have shown exceptional dedication in specific areas of the child welfare system. Nominees are identified by CWLC member organizations and represent an array of professions from all provinces and territories. They are selected by an independent Evaluation Committee.

Kilometer Allowance Review

In accordance with Article 15.3.3 of the PSC/SGEU Collective Agreement, kilometer rates effective April 1, 2013 are as follows:

Ordinary - 41.34 cents/km

North of 54th parallel - 44.52 cents/km

2013 PROVINCIAL Annual General Meeting

will be held at 1:00 pm

June 15, 2013

Radisson Hotel

Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

Board of Directors Chairman's Report



I would like to start my report for 2012-2013 with a few of the successes and accomplishments this past year. First, I invite you to celebrate with the board and the SFFA office at being awarded the in-home support contract for the Regina region. This was a long time coming and accomplishes one of the members' proposals that was submitted in past PAGMs. Way to go, Deb and team!

Exit interviews with foster families have begun, with the intention of understanding the needs and causes behind the decision to exit fostering, with the exception of retirement. The office has hired an individual to manage this effort and to conduct the interviews. This input will be used to better understand what we need to do to retain foster families where it makes sense, and to develop programs and supports to existing homes.

We celebrate a recent partnership with Fox Valley Consulting in Regina to pilot a recruitment strategy with First Nations and Métis. We are looking at piloting a mentorship program this fall as well.

With the increased activity and new opportunities, the office is starting to feel cramped and the need for more office space is upon us. As a result, we have had to ask the Adoption Support Centre to find new space for their needs. Growth and opportunities are good.

By the end of the summer we hope to have video conferencing capabilities deployed.

In November 2012, the board invited the local leadership teams to plan and work through the local policy document with us. The local policy that you will be reviewing and voting on is a direct result of the efforts of the local leadership teams, as they represented the needs of the entire membership. The plan is to continue building on this as we move forward.

The board has met a number of times this year via conference calls. We are doing our best to ensure that the board communicates well between members, and conference calls and emails seem to be the most prudent.

By the end of the summer we hope to have video conferencing capabilities deployed for the office to improve their communications with the Ministry, as well as for the board to use on a regular basis. This past winter a number of meetings between the office and the Ministry had to be cancelled,

postponed or done via phone due to weather, and we expect to see reductions in costs and time spent away from the office by using this medium. From the board's perspective, I envision better, more productive meetings that will take place more often. Video conferencing will also provide us with the capability to meet face-to-face. I hope to report to you next year on the success of this endeavour.

The board and SFFA continue to work on strategies that are supported and outlined in the Strategic Plan.

The board governs around 5 strategic perspectives:

1. Foster Families/Stakeholders
2. Financial Stewardship
3. Retention
4. Growth – Recruitment
5. Organizational/Internal business processes

Deb and the SFFA team develop the day-to-day operational plans to align and adhere to these perspectives. The initiatives that the office has underway are directly linked to the strategic plan of the organization.

We have much more to do, and as always want to hear from you. Please don't hesitate to contact myself or any of the board members.

Regards,

Kevin Harris

Chairman of the Board, SFFA

Park N Play 2013

3 CATEGORIES - 30 PRIZES!

Enter to win Camping & Season Passes!

Regional Park Passes

10 - 2014 Season Passes

Regional Park Camping

5 - Camping Certificates

\$100 Value, to be used in the 2014 Season

5 - Camping Certificates

\$60 Value, to be used in the 2014 Season

Regional Park Golf Certificates

5 - Golf Course Certificates

\$100 Value, to be used in the 2014 Season

5 - Golf Course Certificates

\$60 Value, to be used in the 2014 Season

To Enter:

Visit any Member Regional Park. (Listed on the website and Regional Parks Guide) Use the entry form which can be found on our website, from the guide, or pick it up at any Regional Park Gate/Office. Fill it out; attach one (1) proof of purchase (receipt for park entry, camping, swimming, concession, etc.) and mail it to the address provided on the entry form!

GOLFING

You must visit a Regional Park golf course. (Listed on the website and Regional Parks Guide) Use the entry form which can be found on our website, from the guide, or pick it up at any Regional Park Gate/Office. Fill it out; attach one (1) proof of purchase (receipt for park entry, golf, or golf rental) and mail it to the address provided on the entry form!



Visit our website for more information at: <http://www.saskregionalparks.ca/parknplay.php>

The rewards of being a foster parent

by Sister Michael Delores Allegri

A reward, according to Webster is: something given for a special service. To give a gift for a good performance or deed. So how does a reward relate to foster care? I can't speak for every foster parent, but I think I have similar experiences to many, and I think most would agree with me.



It's "stepping up to the plate" to help out a child who is forced into a situation that is beyond comprehension.

What is it about foster care that is so compelling? It's "stepping up to the plate" to help out a child who is forced into a situation that is beyond comprehension. It's an acknowledgment that we are all one family – and sometimes we need to be there for others who are having a difficult time. It's being willing to put your life at the disposal of a child, and/or family, who has no one else to turn to.

So where/what are the rewards? They're all non-monetary and, for the most part, unrecognized by those not involved in foster care, social services or child advocacy. But for us, as foster parents, we are

rewarded with hugs, smiles and all the other great gifts children so freely share. And, if you can imagine something greater than that, foster parents get it.

We witness (and sometimes get to help) bio-parents growing in parenting skills, learning how to show their child love. We see the sorrow at their past mistakes and willingness to "change their ways" for the sake of their child. If the bio-family can't make it, we get to be the strong force, the glue, the stabilizer who helps the child deal with termination and move into a new phase of his/her life. We get to participate in the meeting between child and adoptive parent – we get to assist in the "birthing" of a new family. How gratifying to watch a child bond with his/her new parents!

What greater reward could there be than to give new life to a child; especially to a child who has been hurt or damaged by mistakes of adults who were supposed to be the child's love and support system. To be able to help a child learn to trust and love again is quite a reward in itself.

Foster parents have the privilege of giving the child his/her life back. We have the privilege and reward of knowing that by my life, another's will be better!

This article was written by Sister Michael Delores Allegri, President of the Colorado State Foster Parent Association. It was reprinted with permission. For more information, visit: <http://www.csfpa.org/>

Map, THE THERAPY DOG:



*Map,
more than
a best
friend*

by Anne Densmore, Ed.D.

After years of hoping and searching, and a couple more of training, I finally have the perfect partner in my practice as a speech and play therapist: a Portuguese water dog named Map. Like any good therapy dog, Map can reach children in a way that no one else can.

Therapy dogs provide comfort and support. They must be social, gentle, and enjoy getting and giving physical affection—Map has those qualities in spades. They also must be well behaved and respond to their handlers, neither of which applied to Map when I got him as a puppy. He chewed everything in sight. On walks, he sniffed every blade of grass, picked up every acorn and nosed into every clump of mud, no matter what I said or wanted.

After many therapy dog classes and a lot of practice, we learned. I say “we” because I had to be trained as well. I’ll admit, there were many bumps on the road, but after two years of training, Map became a certified therapy dog. He shines when he is in his blue training coat visiting a

preschool. He loves to see the kids and to work with me.

How does Map help kids? His presence somehow lets children open up to learning. He offers kids a way to feel more whole in the face of physical illness or disability. He can also help children heal from emotional pain. One child I worked with, a four year old, lost his parents on 9/11. He stopped talking and refused to answer anyone. Over several visits, Map helped this child find his voice again.

Children with language delays or developmental disabilities are a big part of my practice. For those who are comfortable with dogs, Map is a great co-therapist. Children practice social skills and talk to Map as if he is a peer. I worked with one perky four year old who would not talk or make any sounds. He had what’s called childhood developmental dyspraxia. This is the inability to produce sound combinations with vowels and consonants. Out of frustration he threw tantrums instead of requesting things from his parents and he substituted

a gesture system for language. I knew that children in a crisis state can relate to animals, so I brought Map to his school to see him. The child smiled, leaned over Map and buried his face into his coat. He looked up and said, “Puppeeeee!” This was his first word. It was a long process to recovery, but the child got better—and Map was there to help. By the age of six, this boy could converse just like his peers. His parents happily had a new problem, “Can you get this child to stop talking? We can’t get in a word!” they told me.

Sharing and negation skills are something else that Map can help me help children improve. Sometimes Map sets the example. He is good at sharing his beloved rubber bone. A child can take away his bone and Map won’t budge or move. The child then shares a toy with Map.

Map is also trained to follow a child in play and focus on him or her, giving the child his undivided attention. Even though many children get this kind of attention from their family, they still love this special attention from a trained therapy dog. As you can see in the video below, Map can stay with a child during an obstacle course and, just as important, is a good listener.

Like any great therapist, Map knows how to listen and how to help children help themselves.

Reprinted with permission from <http://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/map-the-therapy-dog-more-than-a-best-friend-201211095500>.

Kids Get Stressed Too:

Even though we, as parents may be SUPER excited (can you tell I am excited?) when kids go back to school, your kids may be feeling some anxiety and stress.

Especially tough for special education students, or new foster kids who may be starting in a new school or have social anxiety disorders or other issues, getting ready for school, or handling the prep for it, can cause stress.

Whether it's back-to-school stress, or just every-day stress from counselling and doctor's appointments, or any number of issues that foster/adoptive kids and parents go through, finding ways to ratchet down the stress and anxiety levels and relax is vital and a skill that can help a child throughout his or her life.

Although teaching ADD, RAD or kids with defiance disorders relaxation techniques may take some time, teaching by example, and going through the techniques (or one particular technique that works for you and your kids) together on a routine basis is key to creating a habit that may help your kids get through a stressful situation at school or at play. So, pick a technique you can work with and then practice it each day, say, while you wait for the school bus, to get everyone in the right frame of mind to be relaxed and start the day off right.

Below is an article shared with us by the author and one of our readers that lists 10 relaxation techniques. There are some great ideas here that I have used with my kids over the years. Check them out.



Pick a technique you can work with and then practice it each day.

10 RELAXATION TECHNIQUES FOR KIDS

While it may seem unnatural for children to experience stress, many children actually do have high levels of stress. Children are worried about doing well in school, winning sports games, pleasing their parents and fitting in with their friends. As most adults know, living up to others expectations can be very stressful.

If you find your child is experiencing stress, here are some relaxation techniques that you can try with him.

1. Deep breathing

The convenient thing about this technique is that it can be done at anytime, anywhere. Have your child close his eyes and take a deep breath in through his nose and fill his tummy with air. Do this step slowly and then blow the air out of his mouth all at once.

Sometimes having him think about breathing in the good and blowing out the bad will also help to relax him.

2. Visualization

Visualization can provide a vacation from the mind. The first couple of times you can help your child do this technique, and then after some practice she should be able to do it herself. Have her sit or lie down in a comfortable position and close her eyes. Ask her to picture herself in her favorite vacation spot. Is it on a boat or at the beach? Wherever it is, help her intensify her visualization by asking her if she can feel the wind on her skin or the spray of the waves hitting her face. Then move on to her sense of smell and ask her if she can smell the sea water or the flowers nearby. Move on to her sense of hearing and ask her to listen for the sea gulls or the laughter of other children. Once you've made it through all of the senses let her stay in that visualization for a few minutes as she releases stress.

3. Exercising

The freedom of running causes your body to release endorphins that flood your brain and make you feel better. Sometimes exercise can help clear his mind and reduce his stress levels. Making a habit of regularly exercising will help him learn to cope better with stress.

4. Listening to calming music

Music can be naturally relaxing. The human body is an amazing thing, and often our moods will adapt to the type of music we're listening to. If she listens to loud angry music she may begin to feel angry and stressed. If she listens to soft calming music it will lower her heart rate and drop her blood pressure. These things will help relax her overall and can even be used to help her fall asleep at night. If she's using music as a sleep aid try to avoid music with lyrics or use the same one over and over so that she doesn't listen to the words.

5. Laughter

Laughter is one of the biggest stress relievers for both adults and kids alike. Read a joke book with him or take him to a really funny movie. Watch a comedy on TV. Tickle him. Anything to get him to laugh. The longer he laughs the more tension he will release.

6. Meditation or prayer

Meditation or prayer is very relaxing. By removing herself from distractions and sitting or lying in a comfortable spot

she can begin to meditate or pray. Meditation requires that she closes her eyes, clears her mind, and focuses on her breathing. Prayer can be done with her eyes closed, and as she is talking to God she can unload her burdens. Either method she chooses will have a relaxing effect on her.



7. Massage

Massages will help kids relax. While this isn't the time for a deep tissue rub down, a relaxing massage is done with soft hands and a tender touch. Gently squeeze the shoulders to release the tension that sits there. Rub his scalp and as it becomes looser any tension headache should ease. If no one is available to give him a massage have him rub his own feet. This self-massage will encourage blood flow and help manage stress.

8. Release muscles

A muscle relaxation technique will help loosen tight muscles. Have her lay down on her back on the floor or bed. No pillow should be used during this exercise. Tell her to close her eyes and scrunch her toes

as tight as she can and have her hold that for 20 seconds if she can and then relax her feet. Continue having her tense her calves and hold it for 20 seconds and then relax her calves. Moving muscle group by muscle group continue up the body to the head. Once she has scrunched her face and then relaxed tell her to imagine that she is a sponge and just let her lie like that for a while.

9. Mindful walking

The mindful walking technique is an easy one to teach to kids. Start this technique by sitting down on the floor with your child. Have him close his eyes and concentrate on his breathing for a few minutes. As soon as he is calm have him stand up and start walking around the room. Have him concentrate on his feet. How they bend and how they touch the floor and roll off the floor. First one foot and then the other foot. Continue to walk mindfully for 10 minutes.

10. Cuddling

Cuddling with a parent or pet will reduce stress. Just petting a pet can relieve stress and improve a person's mood. It's hard to be upset when a pet is cuddling with you, believes Richard Timmons, DVM (Doctor of Veterinary Medicine). If you don't have a pet then cuddling with a parent or caregiver can be just as soothing.

This article was reprinted with permission with credit to fosterparentrescue.blogspot.com and baysittingjobs.com.

Ninja Nutrition

with Sarah Liberman:

Getting Kids To Eat Healthy



Not having kids of my own, writing an article on healthy eating with children was a daunting task. My sneaky inner ninja wanted to talk about how to hide vegetables, but this practice does not do children any favours. It destroys an opportunity to teach children about the benefits of proper nutrition. They grow up removed from what they are putting in their bodies and don't develop an understanding of the link between what they eat and how they feel. When it comes time for them to cook on their own, such awareness is essential in creating healthy, satisfying meals.

Taking a more honest approach, I decided to write an article that will help both adults and children alike. Both little and big people sometimes have a hard time understanding the importance of eating vegetables, avoiding junk foods, addressing overeating and developing an understanding of hunger and fullness cues. Here are some strategies that will help us whether we are wee ones or all grown up.

Eating Your Veggies

Vegetable consumption seems to be a struggle regardless of

age. The internet comes to our rescue with a variety of tools available to increase awareness of the diversity of our diet. Today I Ate A Rainbow is a website with resources, both for purchase and free of charge, tailored to kids to help get you started.

We have a lot to teach children, but they also have a lot to teach us.

Observe how children interact with food.

Toddlers don't consider a bad day to be an excuse for a week of bad eating nor do they attribute their self-esteem to their diaper size.


There are charts that track progress in trying new foods and a fridge magnet set that kids can use to mark the colours of food they ate that day. These options remind me of the Richard Simmons Deal-A-Meal cards my mom used to have when I was a child. The cards represented one serving of a food group and, as you ate, you moved cards from one side of a wallet to the other.

A visual reminder of the kinds and colours of foods you eat can make building awareness a game that can result in a sense of accomplishment.

Grocery shopping with your kids, if tolerable, can also help increase the variety of vegetables they will eat at home. Look through flyers at home with them and talk about the different foods you see. Share your memories and encourage picking out new foods to try. Use menu planning or reading food labels together as a chance to explore what makes a balanced meal and the importance of eating a variety of foods.

Picky Eaters

Encouraging openness can be hard since children love predictability and adults can be set in their ways. It can take at least 10 exposures to a new food before acceptance. You may need to serve a new food on several different occasions or in different forms. Some foods are more easily tolerated cooked than raw or favoured as a main event or side dish. Customization of meals can help introduce foods by making them part of a buffet of toppings. Including children in food preparation makes it more



likely they will taste it when it's done. Be imaginative: carrots can be steamed as a side, shredded on salad or made into muffins. Remember not to force anything on a child. Instead, offer a few bites.

Eating out is also a great opportunity to try new foods without the risk of cooking an entire meal that your family won't eat. Try restaurants with foods from around the world, order several appetizers to share and encourage everyone to taste what each family member has ordered. You can also combine nutritional learning with some armchair travel. Cook traditional foods from other countries or celebrate a holiday from another culture as a theme night. Dress up, learn some words from the language of the area, try out traditional music or dance, and integrate food as a part of cultural expression.

You Can't Eat What You Don't Have

Many diets start with the cleaning out of cupboards. It's important to look at the environment you create for yourself and your children. Parents control the supply. Whatever you put in the pantry can be put in their bellies, so stock whole foods to limit junk food. Consider the groceries you buy for meals as well as snacks. Pre-cut fruits and veggies, hard-boiled eggs and nuts are fast options they can access on their own. Also consider what they see. Have healthy choices at eye level and put treats away. Out of sight is often out of mind.

Hunger Cues & Overeating

Children and adults both get grumpy when their blood sugar drops. As children grow, having control over when and what they eat for snacks will encourage a connection to hunger cues, providing opportunities for them to learn what nourishes them and how to know when they are full. Predictable meal times allow kids to experiment with their intake based on when more food is coming. They aren't spoiling their dinner if snacking options available provide healthy variety; they are learning intuitive eating.

You are a role model. Remember the commercial where the little girl is dressed up like her mom, having a tea party with her stuffed animals and then lights up a pretend cigarette? Kids watch our eating behaviour too. Good and bad relationships with food often come from these observations. This includes the type of food that we eat, the amount and our reactions. Statements such as "I am starving," or "I am way too stuffed" are heard by little ears. Going on a diet with a desire to be thin overriding physical hunger or overeating then beating yourself up can foster unhealthy patterns of eating in your children too. Explore your own areas for growth as an opportunity for you and your family to build positive behaviours.

Reprinted with permission. Originally published in the March 2013 issue of Saskatoon Well Being Magazine. www.saskatoonwellbeing.com

Summer Reading Club

Each summer, the Saskatchewan Weekly Newspapers Association partners with the Saskatchewan Library Association to encourage children to become involved in the Summer Reading Club. Each week throughout July and August (for a total of 8 weeks) 84 member newspapers across Saskatchewan places puzzles and contest entry forms in their papers to promote the Summer Reading Club and encourage children to visit their local library. Prizes are awarded at the end of September. Over 1,000 entries are received on a yearly basis. An estimated space provided is valued at over \$110,000 with circulation of over 289,000 and a readership of over 500,000.

Regional and Municipal Libraries

Each of Saskatchewan's Municipal and Regional Libraries partner with the Saskatchewan Library Association to implement the TD Summer Reading Club and arrange Children's Storyteller and Performer tours by providing staff time and expenses to organize the details of the program.



Summer Safety

The Ozone Layer—A Reason To Protect Ourselves

The earth's ozone layer protects all life on earth from excessive exposure to ultraviolet radiation (UV) from the sun. UV is a type of light emitted by the sun or certain kinds of artificial light. As the ozone layer thins, the amount of UV reaching the earth's surface increases.

Exposure to UV is the main cause of skin cancer. It can also cause tanning, sunburn, premature skin aging, eye damage and a decrease in immune system response. There are two types of UV rays. UVB rays (280-315 nm) are responsible for delayed tanning and sunburning. UVA rays (315-400 nm) cause immediate tanning, premature aging and wrinkling of the skin and immunosuppression. UVA is prevalent in tanning parlors.

The UV Index

The UV index indicates the intensity of the sun's UVB rays. There are five categories -- low, moderate, high, very high and extreme. You should always take precautions when you go out under the sun and the UV index is equal or higher than 3. The index is often included with weather reports and is a good tool to help choose proper sun protection.

Sun Safety For All

Before you head for the beach, the park or even the back-yard, take a few minutes to learn about sun safety. You can protect your family and still have fun under

the sun. This advice applies to everyone regardless of age or ethnicity.

- Avoid needless exposure to the sun.
- Protect your eyes by wearing UV blocking sunglasses.
- Select shaded areas for outdoor activities.
- Clothing such as a broad brimmed hat, long-sleeved shirt, and long pants can protect your skin. Tuck a handkerchief under the back of your hat to help prevent sunburn on the neck.
- If you can't cover up, use a sunscreen containing a Sun Protection Factor (SPF) of at least 15, verify it has both UVA and UVB protection, re-apply every two hours and after sweating or swimming.
- Avoid using sun lamps.
- Some medication can make skin more sensitive to UV rays, consult your doctor if you have any questions.
- Don't let infants or children play or sleep in the sun in a playpen, carriage, stroller, etc.
- Get children used to wearing sunscreen lotion, paying particular attention to the most exposed parts - the lips, face, neck, shoulders, back, knees and tops of feet.
- People can use both sunscreen and insect repellents when they are outdoors to protect their health. Follow the instructions on the package for proper applications of each product. Apply the sunscreen first, followed by the insect repellent.

Air Quality and Health

Air pollution is a year round problem, but in the summertime there are additional factors that can increase air pollution problems. Some pollution results from chemical reactions that require sunlight. Pollutants can build up in stagnant or slow moving air masses that combine local air pollution with what has already been added by upwind sources. Heat and smog can provide a double attack on the vulnerable.

How does air pollution affect my health and the health of my family?

There are many different types of air pollutants. Depending on the length of time you are exposed, your health status, your genetic background and the concentration of pollutants, air pollution can have a negative effect on your respiratory and cardiovascular systems by:

- Making it harder to breathe
- Irritating your lungs and airways
- Worsening chronic diseases such as bronchitis, emphysema and asthma
- Causing heart problems such as heart failure, blood clotting, and altered heart rates and rhythms.

Each individual reacts differently to air pollution. Children, the elderly and those with heart or lung disease are most sensitive to the adverse health effects of air pollution.

... continued next page

People participating in sports or strenuous work outdoors breathe deeply and rapidly, allowing more air pollution to enter their lungs. They may have difficulty breathing when air pollution levels are high.

Negative health effects increase as air pollution worsens. Studies have shown that even modest increases in air pollution can cause small but measurable increases in emergency room visits, hospital admissions and death. Small increases in air pollution over a short period of time can exacerbate illness among those at risk.

What can I do to protect my health and the health of my family?

You can better protect yourself and those under your care by understanding how air pollution can affect your health, and by checking the Air Quality Health Index on a regular basis.

To check the Air Quality Health Index reading for your community or to learn more about how air pollution can affect our health, visit airhealth.ca.

Community or regional air quality warnings or advisories may be issued when air pollution is above a certain level. Remember though, some people

can experience increased health problems below warning levels.

It's up to you to protect your health. When the Air Quality Health Index reading rises, Canadians can:

- Reduce or reschedule outdoor physical activities
- Monitor possible symptoms, such as difficulty breathing, coughing or irritated eyes
- Follow a doctor's advice to manage existing conditions such as heart or lung disease

This information is courtesy of Health Canada. For more information, visit: www.hc-sc.gc.ca

DID YOU KNOW ?

- ***You can get a sunburn on a cloudy day. Up to 80% of the sun's rays can penetrate light cloud, mist and fog.***
- ***Air pollution comes from both local sources (e.g. vehicles, industry, wood smoke) and far away sources, carried over hundreds of kilometers.***
- ***Children inhale more pollution per kilogram of body weight than adults.***
- ***A full bus has a passenger capacity of 40 to 60 cars.***
- ***You cannot always see or smell air pollution which is harmful to your health.***



The only army cadet in Newfoundland and Labrador to receive the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal credits her foster family and strong community support with helping her to achieve that honour.

“This is definitely a positive thing that has happened to me in my life, being in foster care with the family that I have. I’m very lucky to be with them,” said Tiffany Thistle-Samson.

Thistle-Samson, 17, was nominated by a member of the provincial army cadets for her community volunteer work. Aside from cadets, she helps raise money for the Children’s Wish Foundation and Ronald McDonald House, participates in the Terry Fox walk and volunteers at events at the Royal Canadian Legion.

Joined cadets at age 12

She said finding out about the award was extra special because it happened on her foster father’s birthday.

“It was overwhelming.” She said her foster mother, Tina Samson, encouraged her to join cadets when she was 12 year old. Since then, Thistle-Samson has risen through the ranks to become the senior environmental army cadet for Newfoundland and Labrador.

Samson said both she and her husband were proud of their foster daughter’s achievement.

“You’re talking about people, older people in the community that have spent so much time giving back to the community and here’s our little 17-year old getting



Army cadet and foster child receives Jubilee Medal

the same award,” said Samson. “We’re like, ‘Oh my gosh. Wow. She’s excelling.’”

Social workers, community support key to success

Both Samson and her daughter said having support from competent social workers and others in the child welfare system was key to making their relationship work.

They’ve been following recent news stories about failures in the child welfare system, but said their experience was positive and very beneficial.

“The social worker builds a relationship with the birth family and they know the information that we need to help her have a good life,” said Samson.

“You need the whole team, but the social worker is the one who keeps the team together and keeps you educated and keeps

you up to par.”

Time management skills

Thistle-Samson also credited a strong mentor within the cadet movement, Joan Green, with encouraging her to take on leadership roles.

With so much to do, the busy teenager said she had to develop time management skills in order to fit all her activities into her schedule. “You definitely have to balance things out,” said Thistle-Samson, “but you put aside some things and work on them later.”

Thistle-Samson plans to study psychology at Memorial University and continue her involvement with the cadets, hoping to become a cadet officer when she turns 19.

This article was reprinted with permission from CBC News. <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/newfoundland-labrador/story/2013/03/06/nl-jubilee-medal-foster-child-306.html>



The Heart Gallery is a travelling photographic exhibit created to find permanent families for children and youth living in foster care and group care. The Heart Gallery project originated in 2001 in the United States. Today, there are 120 Heart Galleries across America.

The Adoption Council of Canada (ACC) has always been intrigued by creative strategies to recruit adoptive families for children and youth in care. In 2009, the ACC entered into preliminary discussions with the Heart Gallery of America on the idea of expanding the project into Canada. As conversations progressed, the ACC, which is based in Ottawa, approached the Children's Aid Society in the region to be the first official Heart Gallery in the country.

On April 15, 2010, the first Heart Gallery in Canada was officially launched. The pilot project was championed by the ACC and the Children's Aid Society of Ottawa (CASO), in conjunction with Tripp Photography and Associates. Funding to develop and sustain the Ottawa Heart Gallery was generously provided by Jockey Being Family, CASO, and the ACC.

Over the past two years, CASO has integrated the Heart Gallery as an effective recruitment strategy. The Heart Gallery is multifaceted.

It helps to: **empower children and youth by giving them an active role in their destiny; create a positive identity within children and youth; capture and showcase the inner and outer beauty of children and youth; create community awareness about the need and opportunity to provide permanent homes for children and youth in foster and group care.**



Of the 39 children photographed in Ottawa, 35 have been placed in their permanent adoption homes.

The Heart Gallery in Canada is now expanding to include a second pilot region: Guelph & Wellington County. This project is a partnership between the ACC, Family & Children's Services of Guelph and Wellington County (FCS Guelph), and Dean Palmer Photography. The Guelph Heart Gallery officially launched to the public on Wednesday, October 24, 2012. Funding to launch the second Heart Gallery project was kindly provided by Jockey Being Family, The Co-Operators, ACC, FCS Guelph, and Platters Catering.

It is our belief that every child, youth, sibling group regardless of age, unique need or length of time in foster care, has a right to a permanent, legal connection to a caring family. The Heart Gallery will change the face of adoption in our communities, and eventually, across the country.

The Adoption Council of Canada is endeavouring to launch additional Heart Galleries across the country. The goal is to add 6 new locations by 2016. For more information, visit <http://canadaheartgallery.ca>



Physical Activity

tips for Children

Help kids enjoy their way to a healthier lifestyle! One hour of physical activity every day: at home, at school, at play. Every step counts!

1. Physical activity plays an important role in the health, well-being and quality of life of all Canadians, and it is particularly important for children and youth. Habits formed early can last a lifetime.
2. How much physical activity do children need? Children aged 5-11 should accumulate at least one hour of moderate to vigorous-intensity physical activity daily. But more is even better!
3. To make the most of their physical activity, try to include: Vigorous-intensity activities at least three days per week; activities that strengthen muscle and bone at least three days per week.

Help kids get active:

- Encourage walking to school and getting active as a family
- Get them to skateboard, bike or run instead of getting a ride
- Ask them to walk the dog with you
- Have them rake the leaves, shovel snow or carry the groceries
- Encourage them to dance to their favourite music
- Replace computer and TV time with something active
- Build active opportunities into daily classroom routines and encourage students to join a school sport team
- Take kids to the playground or to the park to play
- Reduce screen time
- Be more active in the after-school time period. Every step counts!

Health Benefits

- Opportunities for socializing
- Improve fitness
- Increased concentration
- Better academic scores
- Stronger heart, bones and healthier muscles
- Healthy growth and development

- Improved self-esteem
- Better posture and balance
- Lower stress

More physical activity provides health benefits. Encourage children to move more as part of a healthy lifestyle.

What is moderate aerobic activity?

Moderate-intensity aerobic activity makes you breathe harder and your heart beat faster. You should be able to talk, but not sing.

- Examples of moderate-intensity physical activity include walking quickly, skating, bike riding and skateboarding.

What is vigorous aerobic activity?

With vigorous-intensity aerobic activity, your heart rate will increase even more and you will not be able to say more than a few words without catching a breath.

- Examples of vigorous activity include running, basketball, soccer and cross-country skiing.

What are strengthening activities?

- Muscle-strengthening activities build up your muscles. With bone-strengthening activities, muscles push and pull against bones helping make them stronger.
- For children, climbing and swinging on playground equipment is an example of a muscle strengthening activity.
- Examples of bone-strengthening activities include running, walking, and jumping rope.
- Combine aerobic and strengthening activities

To achieve health benefits, children need to do both aerobic and strengthening activities. Aerobic activities result in faster breathing, a warmer feeling and an increased heart rate. Strengthening activities build muscles and bones.

Get them active after school

After school is a great time to be physically active. Suggest activities other than TV/computer. Sign up for active programs, and if possible find active ways to get home from school. Make time to be active every day.

Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines were developed by the Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology. More information can be found at www.publichealth.gc.ca.

Province renames Child and Youth Agenda

The Cabinet Committee on Children and Youth is refocusing its efforts to respond to important issues facing Saskatchewan children, youth and families and to support the goals of the Saskatchewan Plan for Growth. To reflect this focus, the Child and Youth Agenda will be renamed the Child and Family Agenda.

“The Committee is expanding our mandate to include additional work in the areas of education, health, and family supports to respond to the needs of young people and their families today,” Social Services Minister and Committee Chair June Draude said. “Our cross-government approach will now be referred to as the Saskatchewan Child and Family Agenda to reflect the critical role that parents and other family members play in the lives of children and youth, as well as the emphasis that our government is placing on supporting the family as a whole.”

The Cabinet Committee, comprised of ministers from across government, has identified challenges that must be addressed to meet both the goals of the Saskatchewan Child and Family Agenda (previously called the Saskatchewan Child and Youth Agenda) and the Saskatchewan Plan for Growth.

Goal: Children get a good start in life

Challenges: School readiness, literacy, parenting, overweight and obese children and youth

Goal: Youth are prepared for their future

Challenges: Educational attainment among Aboriginal groups, graduation rates, school attendance

Goal: Families are strong
Challenges: Mental health, addictions, parenting, FASD

Goal: Communities are supportive
Challenges: Inter-agency co-operation and communication

The Cabinet Committee has tasked the seven member ministries of the Saskatchewan Child and Family Agenda with identifying initiatives to address each of these challenges, as well as establishing specific targets to track the progress of the initiatives. “By refocusing our efforts in these critical areas, we can help children, youth and families realize the better quality of life envisioned for all Saskatchewan people in our Plan for Growth,” Draude said.

The Cabinet Committee on Children and Youth was established in December 2010 in response to the Child Welfare Review Panel’s final report. The Committee currently consists of Social Services Minister June Draude, Chair; Education Minister Russ Marchuk; Advanced Education Minister Don Morgan; Justice Minister and Attorney General Gordon Wyant; Minister responsible for Corrections and Policing Christine Tell; Government Relations Minister Jim Reiter; Health Minister Dustin Duncan and Saskatoon Fairview MLA Jennifer Campeau.

For more information, contact:

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Regina

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Cell: 306-536-1479

PlayEscapes (Regina)

Phone: 306-777-7047

Website: www.regina.ca

Target Ages: Kindergarten to Grade 7

PlayEscapes is a FREE summer drop-in program offered by the City of Regina for children entering Kindergarten (must be 5 years old by December 31, 2012) through Grade 7. The program runs Monday through Friday, July 9th to August 17th, 2012 (no program Monday August 6th), from 9:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and 1:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

The program offers leader-facilitated play opportunities that promote physical activity, and develop creativity, imagination, life skills, and positive self-image.

PlayEscapes is a FREE summer drop-in program where children are not required to stay the entire time.

PlayEscapes welcomes children and youth with disabilities. Participants who may need assistance during the program are required to bring an attendant.

For details on location and times, call 777-7047.

Artrageous Minds - The Power of Positive Life Skills (Regina)

Phone: (306) 569-3922

Email: info@artrageous-minds.com

Website: www.artrageous-minds.com

Target Ages: K-Gr 6

Proven, structured, drawing program nurtures self-confidence, problem-solving & teamwork. Superior quality artwork results from "thinking outside the box" & mastering artist-quality materials. It really is FUN and easy to draw!

Up to 120 students participate in Artrageous Minds weekly—Wow! If you have an artsy child, consider registering for an after-school or evening program offered by Artrageous Minds. Artrageous Minds has been providing its unique, confidence-boosting, structured drawing program to children K-Grade 6 in Regina and area for the past 9 years. Visit our website for more information on all our programs, including after-school & evening programs, and holiday Art Camps.

Register for a SUMMER ART CAMP - choose one of four camps in July. For more information or to register, visit www.artrageous-minds.com.

Prince Albert Street Fair

June 15, 2013 - 9:00am Downtown Prince Albert

10th Annual Street Fair held in beautiful downtown Prince Albert. Music, food, dancers, kids' activities, raffle, sidewalk sales and more! Plan to attend!

Interpretive Centre—Prince Albert National Park

NEW EYES FOR NATURE PHOTOGRAPHY

Monday 10:00 – 11:00 am

Capture memorable photos with new tips, tricks and techniques. Bring your digital or phone camera. Meet at Nature Centre with your vehicle.

WHAT'S THE POOP?

2:00 – 3:00 pm

Discover wildlife tracks and scat. For families with kids aged 6 to 11.

Photo Adventure Scavenger Hunt Contest (Saskatoon)

Hey kids! Summertime Sam wants to be part of your summer adventures! Join him for the scavenger hunt and have a chance to win a bike or gift card equivalent!

How to Enter:

1. Scavenger hunt items listed below can be found at select City of Saskatoon Leisure sites. Ask a parent or guardian to take a picture of you having fun at one or more of the following sites. Each photo acts a ballot into a fabulous end of summer prize draw. (One photo/ballot per site, per child).

- Waterslide
- Spray Pad
- Playground Program
- Wave pool
- Diving board
- Skateboard Site
- Pelican slide at Kinsmen Play Village
- Practice green at Silverwood golf course
- McDonald's Natural Place to Play Playground at the Saskatoon Forestry Park & Zoo
- Your favourite animal at the Saskatoon Forestry Farm Park & Zoo

2. E-mail photos with your name and phone number to saskatoonkidsclub@saskatoon.ca.

Photos can also be dropped off at any Leisure Centre or mailed to City of Saskatoon:

Attn: Saskatoon Kids Club, 2nd Floor Leisure Services, Saskatoon, SK S7K 0J5.

Hand drawn submissions will also be accepted. The contest runs from June 9 to Aug. 31, 2013 for ages 2-12 years. No purchase necessary (general admission applies). The grand prize draw will be made on September 5, 2013.

& CAMPS

Benefits of YMCA Summer Programs

1. Focus on programming that develops the YMCA's pillars of service learning/civic engagement, social development, personal development and recreation/nutrition.
2. Enhance youth's potential and provide positive opportunities during summer season.
3. Incorporate the related Developmental Assets, including: support, empowerment, boundaries, expectations, time management, learning, positive values, social competencies and positive identity.
4. Develop lifelong routines of active living and positive nutritional choices.
5. Develop future community leaders.



Regina YMCA Summer Day Camps

GENERAL DAY CAMP AGES 5-12

Week 1: July 8-12	\$ 180 Member \$ 200 Non-Members
Week 2: July 15-19	\$ 180 Member \$ 200 Non-Members
Week 3: July 22-26	\$ 180 Member \$ 200 Non-Members
Week 4: July 29-Aug 2	\$ 180 Member \$ 200 Non-Members
Week 5: Aug 6- Aug 9	\$ 144 Member \$ 160 Non-Members
Week 6: Aug 12-16	\$180 Member \$200 Non-Members
Week 7: Aug 19-23	\$180 Member \$ 200 Non-Members
Week 8: Aug 26-30	\$ 180 Member \$ 200 Non-Members

Mighty Munchkins Ages 3-4

This half-day camp is perfect for your preschooler.

This is a great way to get your child ready for play school or Kindergarten. Creative games, songs, crafts, recreational swimming, out trips, music and theme based activities will fill their half day. Campers need to pack a nutritious snack to camp. Registration begins April 1.

Weeks 1-4, 9:00am - 12:00pm

Week 1-4 - \$74 Members \$85 Non-Members

Special Needs Camp/ARC Ages 7 and Up

Participants in this program will take part in day camp activities, learn new skills and have fun. Not only does this challenging program include swimming, outdoor activities, sports and drama activities but it also allows participants to be integrated with a day camp group. All interested people must meet with the day camp director prior to registering.

Week 1-4, 6-8 - \$295 Members \$347 Non-Members

Week 5 - \$236 Members \$278 Non-Members

For more information, visit <http://ymcaregina.squarespace.com/summer-day-camp/>

Saskatoon YMCA Summer Day Camps

Themes/Dates:

Week 1: Pirate Week (July 2 - 5)*short week

Ahoy! Get ready to sail on a pirate ship! There might even be a treasure box..

Week 2: Hawaii Week (July 8 - 12)

This week we'll surf across the Pacific to Hawaii for some fun-filled adventures. At the end of the week, we'll have a Hawaiian Luau with a limbo and hula hoop contest!

Week 3: Super Hero Week (July 15 - 19)

Put on your capes...we are super heroes this week! At the end of the week we will wrap things up with a super hero party!

Week 4: Nature Week (July 22 - 26)

Come and learn about the nature that surrounds each of us each and every day!

Week 5: Holiday Week (July 29 - Aug 2)

Every day will be a different holiday this week!

Week 6: Super Safari Week (Aug 6 - 9) *short week

This week campers will explore the mighty jungle. Activities and crafts will be wild!

Week 7: Mad Scientist Week (Aug 12 - 16)

Let's see what scientific mischief we can get ourselves into this week!

Week 8: Art Smart Week (Aug 19 - 23)

Participate in a bunch of art!

Week 9: Ultimate Sports Week (Aug 26 - 30)

Come to learn about and play a wide variety of sports!

For more information, visit <http://www.ymcasaskatoon.org/ymca-day-camps>

Animals

THAT MAKE GOOD therapy pets

by Margaret Puckette

Dogs, cats, and “pocket pets” like ferrets, birds, or lizards are therapeutic for children who struggle with any disability: physical, behavioural and developmental. A calm smiling dog, an affectionate cat, or a small pet they can hold is a great therapist. The right animal offers unconditional love and affection, and the right animal makes your child feel special. If you are considering animal therapy or a pet for your child, strategically pick the right animal. If your child will attend an animal therapy program, or you plan to select their own pet, monitor your child’s interactions when they are first introduced to the creature.

Be honest with yourself, the animal you like may not be the best for your child. Hyperactive and barking dogs, aloof cats, fearful hamsters, and noisy birds

don’t work and can be outright stressful. Pay attention to this—people are too often unaware how much negative energy fussy pets generate and how distracting and chaotic they can be.

Criteria for the right animal:

- The animal’s natural manner fits your child’s emotional needs;
- Quiet, if child easily experiences sensory overload;
- Uplifting and affectionate, traits that help a withdrawn or anxious child;
- Interactive, if your child needs to be drawn out or receive attention: a bird that speaks, or a dog that follows instructions;
- The animal bonds with your child and likes to be with them for long periods.

The animal has a preference for your child;

- Your child is able to treat the pet humanely. Animals can be abused consciously or unconsciously by troubled children;

- You appreciate the animal too, and aren’t concerned about mess, smell, hair, or feathers in your home. You should consider yourself the one responsible for its care. This pet is a therapist first, not a lesson in responsibility for your child. They can learn responsibility later;

- The child’s pet should still be welcome and cared for if it doesn’t work out for your child. If it’s not wanted, consider a rescue shelter or humane society that can find another caring owner.

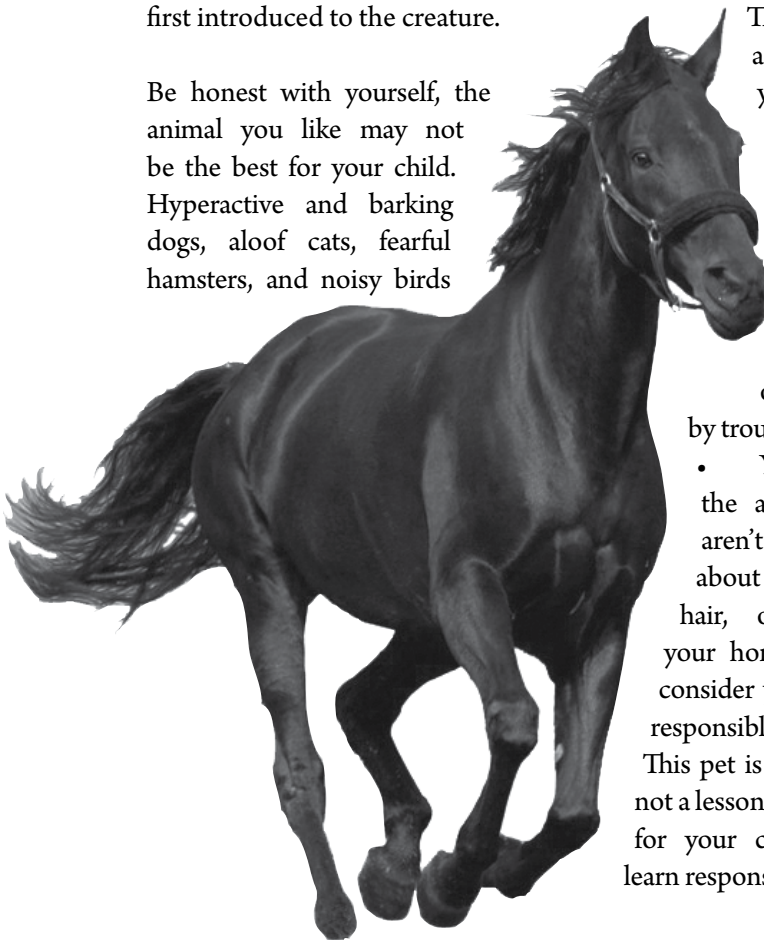
Dogs

Most people are familiar with therapy dogs. Their natural affinity with humans, even untrained, is a reason that dogs are the most popular of pets. If you are interested in getting a puppy to train as a therapy dog, you can find instructions on how to train certified therapy dogs, and modify them to fit your home. Certified dogs need significantly more training because they can be used in nursing homes, hospitals, and schools.

Birds

The parrots and parrot-like or hooked beak birds have marvelous personalities and bond for life. These colourful birds prefer not to fly, but instead spend their time socially with people, other birds, even dogs and cats! The best low-cost option is a parakeet, extremely low maintenance, and happily chirpy, easily tamed and easily trained to talk.

“Patients hold and stroke cockatiels so tame that they often fall asleep in a human lap.” Maureen Horton, the founder of “On a Wing and a Prayer” tells of “non-responsive patients in wheelchairs who suddenly begin speaking again while petting a cockatiel as their relatives weep





at the transformation.” She described bringing her birds to visit a group of violent teenage delinquents who clamoured to touch a cockatoo named Bela. “For a few minutes,” Horton says, “these hardened criminals became children again.” - *“On a Wing and a Prayer,” a pet-assisted therapy program, uses birds to visit patients.” Connie Cronley, Tulsapeople.com*

Fish

Fish can't be held, but few things beat the visual delight and serenity of a beautiful aquarium. Fish do have personalities and form interactive communities in a tank, which are fun to watch, and individuals are fun to name. There is a reason aquariums are commonly placed in waiting rooms and clinics, lobbies, and hospitals.

Pocket pets

These are usually mammals that like to be cuddled and carried around, often in pockets: ferrets, mice, rats, gerbils, hamsters, guinea pigs, and very small dogs. It is best to select a young animal that is calm and won't bite, and handle it gently and often so that it becomes accustomed to being held. Challenges with many pocket pets include running away or escaping their enclosures, urine

smell, and unwanted breeding. As the main caretaker, you will want to be comfortable with their needs.

Reptiles

Lizards are also excellent pets and demand little attention, and they are readily accepted by children. My bearded dragon, Spike, comes with me to my support groups. Dragons are a very docile species—safe with young children and popular with teens and parents. Other good species are anoles (often called chameleons), iguanas, and geckos.

“I'd have to say my Leopard Gecko Mindy is very much therapy for me. She really is my therapy lizard, she wants to sit with me when I'm upset and tolerates me, which even my two dogs and cat won't. She'll just find a place on me and curl up and be like 'I'm here, I won't leave you.'”

User name "Midori", Herp Center Network

Horses

Properly trained horses are extraordinarily healing. Certified horse therapy programs are considered medically effective treatment and are often covered by health insurance. Horses benefit disabled children and teens across the board: those

with physical disabilities such as paralysis and loss of limbs, mental/cognitive disabilities such as development disabilities and retardation, and children with mental and behavioural disorders. The horses are selected for their demeanor and trained to reliably respond appropriately to children who may misbehave. Therapists are specially trained also to collaborate with the horse as a team.

Horses have a “large” serenity and a lack of concern with the child's behaviour. They are also intelligent and interactive like dogs, provide a warm soft hide to lean on, and they empower their riders. A child on a horse will connect with the animal's rhythmic bodily movement, which stimulates the physical senses and keeps the child physically and mentally balanced. According to parents and children in these programs, horses change lives. *New research proves horses are genuinely effective: Study Suggests That Equine Therapy is Effective* (<http://blogs.psychcentral.com/equine-therapy/2013/01/equine-therapy-effective-a-new-study-suggests-so/>)

This article was reprinted with credit to Margaret Puckette and can be found at <http://www.raisingtroubledkids.com/animals-that-make-good-therapy-pets/>.



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