

## National Children's Alliance (NCA) E-mail Digest, week of 5-9 April, 2004

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### NCA ACTIVITIES:

1. **Announcement:** The NCA has moved!
2. **Feedback:** invited regarding the NCA Symposium in Kananaskis
3. **Meetings:** National Youth Strategy Working Group, conference call, 15 April 2004 at 11am

### NEWS FOR OUR MEMBERS:

1. **Input:** requested for UN Global Study on Violence Against Children
2. **Input:** requested from Committee on the Rights of the Child
2. **View:** new website to combat commercial sexual exploitation of children
3. **Study:** on Aboriginal Children and the Convention on the Rights of the Child
5. **Welcome:** to Bruce Macdonald of Big Brothers and Big Sisters of Canada
6. **Farewell:** to Leslie Langford of Social Development Canada

### ISSUE ALERT:

1. Fraser Institute says private sector can meet child care demands
2. Assembly of First Nations disappointed with Federal Budget
3. Charity changes in Federal Budget bring mixed reviews

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### NCA ACTIVITIES:

**1. The National Children's Alliance has finally found a new home!** The staff of the Alliance are now sharing office space with our friends at the Canadian Association of Family Resource Programs (FRP). The NCA can be reached at the following coordinates: mailing address: 331 Cooper Street, Suite 707, Ottawa, Ontario, K2P 0G5; telephone: (613) 560-5843; fax: (613) 237-8515; e-mail: [Dianne@nationalchildrensalliance.com](mailto:Dianne@nationalchildrensalliance.com) or <mailto:tara@nationalchildrensalliance.com>. Please note that our website address is still [www.nationalchildrensalliance.com](http://www.nationalchildrensalliance.com). We are very happy in our new "digs" and look forward to an exciting and eventful year ahead!

**2. The NCA would like to thank all those who attended its annual national Symposium in Kananaskis, Alberta;** it couldn't have been a resounding success without the participation and enthusiasm of our old and new members. A combination of beautiful mountain scenery and timely, fascinating presentations helped to stimulate extremely constructive and sustainable discussions as well as foster new contacts between veterans and newcomers to the Alliance; we hope the latter will be the object of another First Step presentation ceremony next year!. On the whole, the Kananaskis conference has provided some very exciting opportunities for advancing the work of the Alliance on a number of issues: developing an agenda for Canada's youth, exploring policy initiatives for minority/immigrant and refugee children, continuing to partner with Aboriginal organizations and communities, as well as refining an advocacy strategy for the upcoming election. We will be sure to follow-up on the momentum this Symposium generated.

The proceedings of the conference will be ready and circulated by the end of the month. Many thanks to those who gave us verbal feedback on the event; it would also be very helpful if you could complete and return the attached evaluation form to [redacted] at your earliest opportunity.

**3. The next meeting of the Working Group on a National Youth Strategy** will take place by telephone conference call on Thursday April 15 at 11am. If you are interested in participating, please let me know, either by telephone (613) 560-5843 ext. 225 or by e-mail ([redacted]) and I will provide you with the dial-in numbers. An agenda for the call will also be sent out to those who confirm their participation.

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#### **NEWS FOR OUR MEMBERS:**

**1. While there is greater awareness of the human rights of children, the intensity of violence being committed against children is on the rise in many parts of the world.** In response, UNICEF, the World Health Organization and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights are conducting a global study on Violence Against Children. **UNICEF Canada** is trying to put together a funding proposal to support the holding of regional consultations for North America; to this end, it is inviting members of the National Children's Alliance and other key Canadian organizations which deal with children to provide their input on what the consultations and the Study itself should focus on. Please complete the attached questionnaire and return it to Dina Aloï, Programme Manager, UNICEF Canada, e-mail: [daloi@unicef.ca](mailto:daloi@unicef.ca).

**2. The Committee on the Rights of the Child will be reviewing its working methods, including the structure and format of the Concluding Observations**

(CO s). It is looking for feedback from national NGOs on the COs regarding the recently submitted report of Canada to the Committee. Please complete the attached questionnaire and return it to the Canadian Coalition for the Rights of Children, e-mail: [awilson@cfc-efc.ca](mailto:awilson@cfc-efc.ca). The information provided will be included in a comprehensive analysis of the Committee's working methods, which is being prepared by the NGO Group for the Convention on the Rights of the Child in Geneva.

**3. The International Centre to Combat Exploitation of Children (ICCEC)** of the University of Victoria has launched a website to assist government, the public and law enforcement in combating the commercial sexual exploitation of children and youth in Canada. The bilingual website at [www.iccec.ca](http://www.iccec.ca) seeks to provide professionals with links to important initiatives, strategies, approaches and instruments being developed around the world to address this problem; young people can access information and support from others who have shared the experience of sexual exploitation; and the general public can learn more about the issue and find out what they can do to help combat the problem in their communities.

**4. The First Nations Child and Family Caring Society** has submitted a brief to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child entitled: "The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child: Non-Discrimination and Diversity". It is an overview of the key issues facing Aboriginal children and offers recommendations to address the impacts of colonization through the mechanism of the Convention and the Committee reporting process. To obtain a copy, please contact the FNCFCFS at (613) 230-5885.

**5. The National Children's Alliance would like to extend a warm welcome to Bruce Macdonald**, who is the new President and CEO of Big Brothers and Big Sisters of Canada. Bruce has actually been with the organization for several years, serving most recently as Vice-President for External Affairs. He steps into the shoes of longtime NCA Steering Committee member Mike McKnight, who has gone on to greener pastures in Vancouver. Many of you met Bruce at Kananaskis and we look forward to sharing his obvious and infectious enthusiasm for children's issues!

**6. On the other hand, a longtime friend of the NCA is leaving:** Leslie Langford at HRDC/Social Development Canada has been a project officer for the Alliance and indeed many of our member organizations. She has had a long career as a dedicated civil servant and has helped her projects and their staff with respect and dedication. Leslie is taking a well-earned retirement as of 16 April. It has been heard through the grape vine that she has plans to spend her new-

found freedom traipsing around Australia; whatever you do, Leslie, we wish you all the best!

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## ISSUE ALERT:

**The Federal Budget brought down on 23 March evoked diverse reactions from those concerned with children's issues. The first budget of Prime Minister Paul Martin's government contained a number of initiatives directly aimed at benefiting the most vulnerable children. Here are a few of the responses:**

**1. Fraser Institute says private sector can meet child care demands:** Peter Shawn Taylor argues that government policies can lead to an inefficient allocation of resources within the licenced child care sector. "If the supply is a problem and government funding a constraint, then the solution lies in encouraging greater private sector participation". For the full text of the article, please see <http://www.fraserinstitute.ca/shared/readmore.asp?sNav=pb&id=642>.

**2. The Assembly of First Nations expressed its disappointment with Minister Goodale's first budget.** National Chief Phil Fontaine said that the resources proposed to combat the poor situation of Aboriginal people in this country, as acknowledged in the Throne Speech, are inadequate. The lack of new resources for areas like housing, health, economic development and education may indicate that the Government does not have a plan to take action on the most urgent priorities for Aboriginal communities. He said that First Nations are fully prepared to work in partnership with the Government to undertake the fundamental strategic work necessary. A comprehensive and sequenced approach that recognizes the links between effective self-government and health, education and economic development is the only way to build stronger First Nations in Canada. For the full text of the AFN's response to the budget, please see [www.afn.ca/Media/2004/mar/march\\_23\\_2004.html](http://www.afn.ca/Media/2004/mar/march_23_2004.html).

**3. The non-profit sector as a whole will be affected by the budget as well:** a lower disbursement quota on capital assets will now no longer apply only to foundations, but to all registered charities. While some quarters, like the Association of Fundraising Professionals, welcomed the reduction in the disbursement quota as a way of allowing charities to build their long-term capacity and expand their services, others fear the impact on charities, particularly the smaller ones, no longer being able to leave their endowments

untouched and instead be required to pay out the quota of 3.5% every year. The Budget also proposed a new Not-for-Profit Corporations Act which would seek to reduce the regulatory burden while improving financial accountability. Professor Ken Wyman of Humber College's Fundraising and Volunteer Management post-graduate studies programme has prepared a full analysis of the Budget from the perspective of the voluntary sector; for the full text, please e-mail: [ken.wyman@humber.ca](mailto:ken.wyman@humber.ca). The federal government's official website for Budget 2004 also contains a section specific to the sector at <http://www.fin.gc.ca/budget04/bp/bpc4de.htm> - voluntary.

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