

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

NCA ACTIVITIES:

1. **Meetings:** **upcoming NCA Steering Committee and Members' meetings**
2. **Reminder:** **Sign up for the Forum on Public Policy and UN Convention on Rights of Child, 29-30 Jan. 2004**
3. **Register:** **by 13 January for NCA Symposium in Kananaskis, Alberta, March 24th-26th, 2004.**

NEWS FOR OUR MEMBERS:

1. **Call for papers:** **Thirteenth National Child and Youth Care Conference**
2. **Released:** **FNCFCS national research report on voluntary sector-Aboriginal collaboration**
3. **Publication:** **"Children and Young People as Citizens: Partners in Social Change"**
4. **Reminder:** **NCA response to Draft National Plan of Action**

ISSUE ALERT:

1. **New funding for culturally-appropriate domestic violence program**
2. **National Child Benefit clawback phased out in Manitoba**
3. **UNICEF announces top five global concerns for children**

NCA ACTIVITIES:

1. **Upcoming meetings:**
Steering Committee: Thursday 15 January, 10am-4pm, Ottawa.
Members' meeting: Tuesday 20 January, 9-11 am, Ottawa.
Members' meeting: Wednesday 11 February, 9:30-12:00, Toronto.
Steering Committee: Thursday 19 February, 10am-4pm, Toronto.
2. **The Canadian Coalition for the Rights of Children, the Society for Children and Youth (SCY) of BC and the International Institute for Child Rights and Development of the University of Victoria, in collaboration with the National Children's Alliance, are hosting a forum on moving forward on the commitments contained within the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) on 29-30 January in Ottawa. There will be presentations and moderated discussion about: existing child rights instruments; international**

reporting processes; successes and gaps in Canada's implementation of the Convention; Aboriginal and youth perspective; the Convention and the justice system; research on the impact of implementation on children's well-being and participation; opportunities to consider and respond to the National Plan of Action; and case studies of how the CRC has been used in Canada. In the discussion sessions, the SCY will be testing its tools for integrating the CRC's provisions into public policy, legislation and practice. **Please find attached the invitation to the forum, a description of the organizing bodies and the registration form for participants.** The deadline for registration is 19 January.

3. **Electronic registration** will be available as of Tuesday 13 January for this year's NCA Annual Symposium in Kananaskis, Alberta. Just go to the Members' Page of the NCA website (<http://www.nationalchildrensalliance.com/>) and enter the username (ncamember) and password (children). Travel subsidies will be available on a first-come, first-serve basis, with consideration going to balancing participation by sector and region; participants are expected to cover their own accommodation and ground costs. The Kananaskis Resort is offering an excellent room rate at 75\$ per night and we have reserved, until 14 February, a block of 70 rooms for our guests. Prior to the conference, the NCA is hosting, on 24th March a one-day training session on Aboriginal partnerships, given by the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society; participation is limited to 30 individuals. The meetings on the 25th and 26th will consist of dynamic keynote speakers and concurrent panel discussions on Aboriginal issues, monitoring of public commitments to children and election advocacy. A networking reception and special entertainment are planned for the two evenings of the conference.

NEWS FOR OUR MEMBERS:

1. **The Child and Youth Care Association of Alberta will be holding the National Child and Youth Care Conference** in Calgary, Alberta, from October 13th to 15th, 2004. Entitled "It's the Journey, not the Destination", the event will focus on how the process (as much as the overall goal) of the work of child and youth care professionals affects their clients' personal growth, and vice-versa. In addition to the conference there will be a Pre-conference Day to continue developing National Standards, an Educator's Forum as well as a variety of social and entertainment events that will offer a distinctly Albertan flavour. For more information and to submit a presentation proposal, check out the Association's website at <http://www.geocities.com/garthgoodwin/CCCYCA.html>

2. The First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada has now completed the national research report on the nature and extent of collaboration between First Nations child and family service agencies and the child, youth and family-serving voluntary sector. The report, entitled "Caring Across the Boundaries" is available online on the website of the FNCFCs at <http://www.fncfcs.com/>.

3. The International Save the Children alliance in South and Central Asia Region has published four booklets and a discussion paper "Children and Young People as Citizens: Partners in Social Change". Although it highlights the experiences of children in South and Central Asia, the publication is intended to show the diversity of ways in which the right to participation of children all over the world can change their lives for the better. More information is available on the website of Save the Children Canada <http://www.savethechildren.ca/>.

4. The National Plan of Action has been posted on the NCA website for your comments. From our web page www.nationalchildrensalliance.com, just log on to the Members' Page (user = ncamember, password = children) and under "What's New" click on the link under "A Canada Fit for Children". We have set it up so that you can read the Plan in one window and then minimize or toggle it to leave your comments in the box provided. You will also be able to view other members' feedback on the Plan. The NCA hopes to draft a collective response by the end of January, so please try to submit your input by the 20th of the month.

ISSUE ALERT:

1. Federal funding for Family Violence outreach in ethnic communities: The new Secretary of State (Multiculturalism) (Status of Women), the Hon. Jean Augustine, announced last month that the federal government would invest \$231,200 in an ongoing civil society initiative to combat family violence. *Towards a Shared Vision of Family Violence* was developed by The People's Law School: Public Legal Education Society in BC to provide information about domestic violence to cultural communities whose members' mother tongue is neither French nor English. Through this four-year project, community leaders develop information and messages in a culturally sensitive manner, deliver them through community-based ethnic media and conduct follow-up community workshops to help reduce or prevent the occurrence of family violence.

The Department of Canadian Heritage will fund the project through the Family Violence Initiative of its Multiculturalism Program. More information can be obtained from : <mailto:nctv-cnivf@hc-sc.gc.ca>.

2. The NDP government of Manitoba is putting an end to clawing back the National Child Benefit, which means social assistance cheques won't be reduced by the amount of federal child payments. Parents will now benefit from the full income assistance rate available.

Wayne Helgason, Executive Director of the Social Planning Council of Winnipeg, says "The extra benefit won't get them out of poverty, but it will certainly help the depth of poverty."

The province of Manitoba had already phased out the clawback for children under the age of 12; the end of the clawback of the benefit for kids between 12 and 17 will ensure that 100% of provincial social assistance will go to the poorest families. The cheques had been reduced \$68.47 for one child, \$114 for two, and another \$42.50 for every additional child.

The province's Family Services and Housing Minister Christine Melnick says the elimination of the clawback will put \$13.7 million dollars back into the hands of low-income people.

According to the latest Manitoba Child Poverty Report Card, more than one of every five Manitoba children lived in poverty in 2001, the worst record in Canada. Ms. Melnick contends that those statistics are based on pre-tax income, adding that with Manitoba's various tax credits, after-tax income for low-income families would likely push the province's poverty rate down.

3. Top Five Concerns for Children in 2004 [press release]

[NEW YORK, 31 December 2003] - Marking the New Year by calling attention to the immediate needs of children in developing countries, **UNICEF** today named the top five concerns for children in 2004: child survival, the effects of HIV/AIDS, children caught in war, exploitation, and insufficient investment.

"Each of these issues alone poses heartbreaking challenges for hundreds of millions of children," said UNICEF Executive Director Carol Bellamy. "Together, they represent a global imperative to do more for children in 2004."

Education is the single best way to tackle these problems over the long term, Bellamy said. "By making sure that all boys and girls get a basic education, we will not only give them a chance of growing into independent adults who can protect their own health and rights, but we will give the next generation of children a better chance of escaping a life of poverty and hardship," Bellamy said. "If we continue to invest in children and insist that they be a central focus of any discussion about development, we may indeed make the world a better and safer place."

[Source: UNICEF. For the full story, go to:
http://www.unicef.org/media/media_18479.html]

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