

National Children's Alliance (NCA)

E-mail Digest, week of 17-21 May, 2004

NCA ACTIVITIES:

1. Welcome to our new Summer Student
2. RSVP for meetings of the NCA and the new CEO of the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy
 - Toronto: 1 June
 - Ottawa: 14 June
3. Feedback requested on proposed NCA election messages (attached file)

NEWS FOR OUR MEMBERS:

1. Announcement Fifth Annual Lowery Lecture on Children's Rights
2. Volunteer Overseas assignments with Right to Play International
3. Employment opportunity with Winnipeg Harvest Inc.
4. Employment opportunity with Canadian Cancer Society
5. Seeking office space in Ottawa area for child resource organization
6. Report on Child Poverty
7. The Jet Set! Members on the international stage

ISSUE ALERT:

1. New campaign to split the Canada Social Transfer
2. Anniversary, Day at UN emphasizes importance of families to children and communities

NCA ACTIVITIES:

1. Please join the NCA in welcoming a newcomer to our staff: Daniel Meester, a second-year student at Carleton University in the Bachelor's of Public Affairs and Policy Management degree program. Daniel will be working with us from May until the end of August through the Coop Student Program and the Arthur Kroeger College of Public Affairs. Dan has worked with young people in various capacities before, is a wizard at web design and has shown an enthusiasm to do anything and everything at the Alliance since the day he arrived! The Program has brought us fantastic students in the past, like Elizabeth King and Stephanie Pearce, whose excellent work many of our members came to know. We look forward to a great summer with Daniel and he looks forward to meeting each and every one of you in the course of our election and youth agenda work.

2. As many of you know by now, the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy (CCP) has taken on the role of host organization for the National Children's Alliance, following the closure of the

Coalition of National Voluntary Organizations (NVO). The CCP has chosen a new President and Chief Executive Officer, Ms. Georgina Steinsky-Schwarz, to lead it into the entity that is being created from the strategic alliance of the CCP and NVO. Meetings are being arranged in Ottawa and Toronto to allow members to meet Ms. Schwarz and have a dialogue on the importance and future role of the NCA within the new entity. The meeting dates are as follows:

Toronto: Tuesday 1 June, from 1-3pm, in the meeting room of the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy, 425 University Avenue, Suite 700, Toronto, tel: (416) 597-2293.

Ottawa: Monday 14 June, from 12-2pm, in the boardroom of the Canadian Association of Family Resource Programmes, 331 Cooper Street, Suite 707, Ottawa, tel: (613) 237-7667.

As lunch will be provided, please RSVP your attendance for either of these meetings with Tara by e-mail (tara@nationalchildrensalliance.com) or by telephone: (613) 560-5843 ext. 225:

-for the Toronto meeting, the deadline is Thursday 27 May;

-for the Ottawa meeting, the deadline is Thursday 10 June.

As former members of NVO and as key voices for children in the Canadian voluntary sector, your participation in this dialogue would be most valuable, to ensure that the new organization will reflect and actively foster the role that the National Children's Alliance and its members play in advocating for not only strong social policy for children and families in Canada, but also for recognition of the voluntary sector in shaping that policy.

3. With an election call likely to come any day now, the NCA wants to be prepared to ensure that children are a priority on the agendas of all the contenders. We are developing a brochure for our membership containing key messaging on our collective policy positions. Please review the content for the brochure and send any comments or suggestions you may have to dianne@nationalchildrensalliance.com by Wednesday 26 May 2004.

NEWS FOR OUR MEMBERS:

1. Jeffrey Wilson will deliver the fifth annual Lowery lecture on Children's Rights. As a practitioner of family law for the past 25 years, Mr. Wilson has argued cases that have helped to entrench children's rights in immigration, the school system, youth justice and child protection. Established by Defence for Children International, the Lecture series is both a gathering place for the child rights community and a forum for exploring cutting edge and emerging issues in the child rights area. In his presentation, entitled "The language of childhood: the politics of repression", Mr. Wilson will examine whether the language and notions we currently use to characterize childhood allows adults to escape accountability for discriminatory treatment of children. The lecture will take place on Tuesday 25 May 2004 at 7:00pm, at the George Ignatieff Theatre, 15 Devonshire Place, University of Toronto. Admission is free but come early to be guaranteed a seat.

2. Right to Play International is recruiting Volunteer Project Coordinators and Communications Coordinators for international assignments from July to October. The organization currently has projects in 22 countries. The positions offer an honorarium of \$8 000 US per annum, plus accommodation, insurance, etc. All projects require project management and implementation skills, with overseas experience preferred. Specific experience is sought in areas including: working with people with disabilities, experience working with children and in developing children's activities; HIV awareness and health promotion. For more information, please see www.rightrightplay.com/opportunities.asp. Right to Play is an international organization, headquartered in Toronto, that directly sponsors recreation and sport as an essential component of the healthy development of people, communities and nations worldwide.

3. Winnipeg Harvest Inc. is seeking an Executive Director to lead the reorganization in the ongoing development and implementation of its food bank operations programs. The candidate must have been an effective manager of all the human, fiscal, capital and operating resources of the organization and have a sound knowledge of poverty issues, among other qualifications. For more information, please e-mail: E-mail: harvest@xpressnet.com.

4. The National Office of the Canadian Cancer Society is seeking a Manager to provide project management and communications support to the Executive Director and Working Groups. The deadline is 21 May. For more information, contact info@cdpac.ca.

5. The Ontario Prevention Clearinghouse's Best Start Resource Centre for Maternal, Newborn and Early Child Development is seeking office space in the Ottawa area for one of its Health Promotion Consultants. If members have an office space that is available to sublet or if you know of an organization that does, please contact Barb Willet, Best Start Manager, at 1-800-397-9567 ext. 240 or by e-mail at barbw@beststart.org.

6. Campaign 2000 released a report earlier this month calling upon Ottawa to consider using future budget surpluses and modest tax increases to fight child poverty. Canada's child poverty rate has been stuck at about 16% for the past 30 years and 15 years have passed after an all-party resolution in Parliament called for an end to child poverty in Canada by the year 2000. The report recommends that the federal government work with the provinces to raise the minimum wage, extend EI benefits to one year to protect all earners when the economy is in recession, end the clawback of child benefits from people on social assistance, provide leadership to the provinces on early childhood education and invest billions in affordable housing. The full text of the report can be found at the website of Campaign 2000.

7. Three of our members are participating in major international fora this year: Cindy Blackstock of the **First Nations Child and Family Caring Society (FNCFC)** was recently invited to Geneva to attend a meeting of the NGO Working Group on the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The FNCFC is the only indigenous group in the entire world on the Working Group... Jennifer Dickson is currently in New York representing **Pauktuutit Inuit Women's**

Association at the United Nations' Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues...Sandra Griffin will participate in the Committee on the Rights of the Child's Day of Discussion on Implementing Child Rights in Early Childhood in September, representing the **Canadian Child Care Federation** and the **Canadian Coalition for the Rights of Children**.

ISSUE ALERT:

1. Campaign launched to split Canada Social Transfer: the Canadian Council on Social Development (CCSD) has joined with the United Way, the National Anti-Poverty Organization and other community agencies to demand distinct and accountable funding for Canada's social programs. Canadians are still feeling the effects of the federal government's 1995 decision to combine its contributions to the provinces for health care, post-secondary education and welfare into one lump sum payment, which they called the Canada Health and Social Transfer: the new funding structure allowed the provinces to spend the money, without conditions attached, in return for accepting a temporary cut in funding that gave the federal government used to pay off part of the deficit. Canadians could no longer trace where their taxpayer dollars for health care were being spent, students no longer had protection against increased tuition fees and welfare recipients saw their benefits slashed with no recourse. The first of these concerns was addressed to some extent when the government followed the recommendation of the Romanow Commission and created the distinct Canada Health Transfer; however, the problems with post-secondary education and welfare still being clubbed together under the Canada Social Transfer persist. The CCSD and its allies are calling for a public debate on Canada's social programs characterized by the same vigour and attention that marked the dialogue on the future of health care: Canadians recognize that social programs are just as important as Medicare for ensuring the health and well-being of not just the most vulnerable, but of all citizens of this country. The campaign is recommending: that the Canada Social Transfer be split into separate streams for post-secondary education and welfare; that the federal government should restore welfare funding to the levels prior to the cuts made by then Finance Minister Martin when he created the CHST; that the federal and provincial government should honour their commitments under the Social Union Framework Accord and agree upon a common set of principles to guide social policy in this country; and that an independent council composed of citizens, public officials and community representatives should be established to monitor how social program moneys are spent. For more information on this campaign, you can contact John Anderson at the CCSD (613-236-8977).

2. International Day of Families marks ten years of progress: on 15 May, in a message to the international community, United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan said that much progress has been made for families in the ten years since that have passed since the International Year of the Family was celebrated. Irrespective of the differences among them in defining the family unit, a large number of UN member countries have instituted national programmes of action and integrated a family lens into national legislation and policy. More research is being done on issues affecting families and that data is increasingly being used to enrich social policies and programs. Civil society is beginning to collectively mobilize and coordinate around projects and advocacy in support of families. The international community is realizing that the well-being of families is

critical to national development and poverty eradication. However, significant challenges remain to families all over the world: the spectre of millions of children orphaned by HIV/AIDS (14 million currently) looms over the developing world, and families in the industrialized countries are no closer to having guaranteed protection against government cost-cutting measures in times of economic recession. Families of indigenous peoples and populations under occupation are particularly vulnerable to breakdown and the adverse consequences this has on their children, yet are continuing to be deprived of the basic conditions and rights they need. The Secretary General called for the development of policies and programmes that recognize and support the contributions families make to their members, community and society and asked governments and civil society to work together to create an environment that sustains and nurtures families for the benefit of future generations. For its part, the UN's Division for Social Policy and Development has published a new study on family indicators to help guide policy makers in the development of effective family policies: *Family Indicators* provides a critical look at current practice regarding indicators, as well as the basic conditions necessary for the establishment of a comprehensive array of family indicators (purchase information is available at <http://www.un.org/publications>). The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) took the opportunity of the International Day of Families to highlight the fact that a family is a child's first line of protection against violations of his/her most basic rights. "Children growing up without parental care are much more vulnerable and at greater risk of violence, exploitation, trafficking and discrimination", said UNICEF Executive Director Carol Bellamy.

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