

## Family Services Updates June-September 2024

### Inuit Child First Initiative

We are short staffed by 2 positions in the ICFI, and are recruiting. As a result, our CFI staff are taking a regional scope in the management of applications to the ICFI. We thank our beneficiaries for their patience with their applications to the ICFI.

### Family Connections Program

Rita-Anne Voisey has tendered her resignation as the Family Connections Manager, and her last day with us is on October 2<sup>nd</sup>. I would like to thank Rita-Anne for her dedication to the NG over the last 5 years, in serving hundreds of individuals and families year to year, most times as the only Manager in the role. She served as a pillar in the growth of the family connections program, and is a great advocate for families and mentor to staff.

We are recruiting for another Manager, and hope we can have this position filled soon. The Director will be Acting FCM until the position is filled.

### Indigenous Representative

Krista Mogridge tendered her resignation and her last day was on August 16<sup>th</sup>. Krista was a great advocate, I would like to recognize her remarkable advocacy for Inuit children, and youth in-care, in ensuring they remain connected to family, community and culture.

Krista was our first Indigenous representative, and began the role in 2020. The IR is designated on behalf of the Nunatsiavut Government (NG) to participate in the cultural connection plan for of a child/youth who are in the care/custody of CSSD. The Indigenous representative can be heard in court where appropriate to ensure that cultural connection plans are filed in the best interest of the child with respect to maintaining family, culture and community connections. The policy for CSSD around cultural connection plans came into effect on June 28, 2019 and coincide with the child welfare legislation that outline cultural connection planning.

We are recruiting for another Indigenous Representative, and the Director of Family Services is the Acting IR until the position is filled.

### New Position:

On August 12<sup>th</sup>, Darlene Jacque transitioned to a new role as the **Inuit Child Welfare Senior Policy Analyst**. This regional position is responsible for the direction of policy development based on research, monitoring and evaluation in the child welfare field. This involves coordination and collaboration with provincial and national stakeholders. The goal is to ensure that Labrador Inuit children and youth are reflected in regional, provincial and national child welfare services and supports.

### Caring for our Children Project

Staff continue to support foster parents in Nunatsiavut and are lobbying to CSSD to help with

communication and financial support. We are hearing that long wait times for financial support from CSSD to foster parents are a detriment and we are advocating at the social work front line level, up to the Deputy Minister level to rectify this issue.

Foster Families Appreciation Month is in October and staff are busy preparing events to honor our foster parents in Nunatsiavut and ULM. Our staff look forward to this event with them each year, invitations have been sent out to foster parents.

*Dates:*

October 1 – Rigolet

October 2- Postville

October 3- Makkovik

October 4- Hopedale

October 6 – Nain

#### **Youth Services Social Worker:**

Julia Dicker continues to support youth age 16-30, with membership applications, linking to CSSD, income support, NL Health Services and other service providers.

#### **Partnership: The Institute of Fiscal and Social Democracy, NG, & ITK**

The NG are working on the development of a **performance framework and funding approach for Inuit Child and Family Services** in partnership with the Institute of Fiscal Studies and Social Democracy (IFSD). We are currently in the first phase of our work together. This phase includes the gathering of information, defining the vision for Child and Family Services for Nunatsiavut Government, collecting data and building an environmental scan.

We are hosted an in-person meeting in HVGB on August 6<sup>th</sup> (was scheduled for Nain but had to be moved due to lack of accommodations).

- vision for child/family services
- serving urban Inuit
- human resources
- programs and gaps
- recruitment/retention challenges
- financial resources
- infrastructure
- external engagement
- IT resources
- Housing
- annual budget for child/family services
- capital needs and assets
- challenges faced by communities in Nunatsiavut
- language & culture
- sources of support in Nunatsiavut
- etc.

This meeting covers a broad range of areas, and we invited expertise from many divisions across NG and DHSD for participation. We thank you for your involvement and look forward to the collaboration in this important work required to assume jurisdiction over CFS.

Additionally, members of ITK and IFSD were in Nain September 17-18 to visit the region and understand the context to inform the performance framework and funding approach for CFS.

**Conference Attended: Loving Justice: Breathing Life into our own Laws September 8-11, Vancouver**

The Director of Family Services and the Senior Inuit Child Welfare Policy Analyst attended a conference by the Our Children Our Way Society on assuming jurisdiction and creating new laws for Indigenous Child and Family Services. The conference was affirming and innovative, and showcased some best practices in Canada, Australia and New Zealand.