

JANUARY 2021

# FSC NATIONAL NEWS

Newsletter for members of Family Service Canada



## Message from the Board

Happy New Year everyone.

The board is currently working on two projects in an effort to provide the membership with additional value. We are engaged in a research initiative with Community University Partnership (CUP) of Alberta to explore the effectiveness of our Canadian adaptation of the F&ST (Families and Schools Together) program operating in 5 Family Service agencies across Canada. This will be completed in conjunction with a literature review of other evidence based parenting programs to examine commonalities and differences across programs in terms of content, delivery, and outcomes. F&ST is a product of Family Service Canada and can only be delivered by our members. If you'd like more information, please connect with me.

We are also working in collaboration with Family Service Ontario to submit a joint Expression of Interest (EOI) to the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC). We believe that we could develop preventative healthy relationship programming for 18-30 year olds that could be delivered nationwide. If you are interested in participating, please connect with me. There will be opportunities to participate on the advisory committee and through the implementation process. Our hope is to create self-directed learning videos, educational materials for lunch and learns, and a psycho-educational group curriculum.

Board Chair  
Pauline Smale

**SAVE THE DATE!**  
March 11, 2021

**2021 Community of Learning Conference**

An online event from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Pacific (Noon to 6:00 p.m. Atlantic)

More details coming in the new year! Watch [www.FamilyServiceCanada.org](http://www.FamilyServiceCanada.org)



# CEO Spotlight: Maria Howard, Family Services of Greater Vancouver, Chief Executive Officer

Maria Howard has recently joined Family Services as CEO in September of 2020. She is an experienced leader with a demonstrated history of working in the charity/non-profit industry.

Maria has decades of leadership in the health-care sector, as well as provincial and national governance experience. She holds an MBA in Leadership from the University of Athabasca and an M.Ed. in Rehabilitation from the University of Washington.

With extensive business experience combined with previous roles both as a rehabilitation counselor and in health-care sector leadership, she joins FSGV with directly relevant operational experience, underpinned by a commitment to caring and inclusive communities.



## Families & Schools Together: Family Dynamics Winnipeg

When schools were forced to close in the spring of 2020 due to Covid-19, the F&ST program was in its last week of winter programming. Realizing that the future of having programs in schools looked doubtful, Family Dynamics and the F&ST Team quickly pivoted to create a program that could be offered virtually while still building connections between schools, families and community.

With the original goals of F&ST in mind, and creating new goals for a virtual program, we set to work creating a virtual version of F&ST to be piloted during the summer months. Focusing on key components, we determined what could be adapted, done at home with families on their own, and done virtually through the Zoom platform.

The components we adapted were the full-family activities of Feeling Charades and Scribbles, one-to-one time, the meal, Hello's, Parent Time and the Closing Circle.

Feelings Charades, Scribbles and one-to-one was done on each family's own time. Parents were given instructions and YouTube tutorials were created for parents to refer to. The weeks' activities, along with groceries for the weekly meal, were delivered by the F&ST team. Also included in the first delivery were craft supplies to make a Family Flag, a table cloth to use for the F&ST meal, and a basket of activities to keep

children engaged. Age-appropriate activity sheets and books were also provided to each family. On program day, families were emailed a Zoom link for the virtual part of the program. We started each Zoom call with the F&ST ritual of Hellos. After greeting each other, we moved into Parent Time. Though facilitated, this was a completely parent-lead opportunity for parents to share with one another.

Following Parent Time, we ended each call with the Closing Circle. Here, families were invited to share announcements with the group. We also did a draw for a winning basket, and ended with Rain, a pass-the-action game that is part of the original F&ST program.

After facilitating two community-based programs, we were confident we could work with schools. In the fall, we facilitated a Middle Years program and are currently preparing for two school-based programs and a community-based program for our winter cycle. Schools are eager to find new and safe ways to build and maintain connections with their families and the virtual F&ST program is an ideal fit.

We also developed an evaluation strategy which allowed us to conduct Social Impact Interviews, and distribute a more robust survey to participants. Social Impact Interviews allow us to measure how participants' lives might be different had they not participated in our program. Our survey was revamped with refined questions that measured progress towards program goals. We also made the survey more accessible by distributing with the use of Survey Monkey, and translating the survey to Arabic to ensure we captured the voices of all participants.

*By Corinne Paulishyn*

