

APRIL 2023

FSC NATIONAL NEWS

Newsletter for members of Family Service Canada



Message from the Board

Hello all,

It is hard to believe we are almost a month into spring and the weather across the country can't seem to agree with the season change! As a very wise person from Saskatchewan said recently - "April brings showers for May flowers!" - I am holding on to that!

I am writing to share the next steps in the Affinity groups we have been talking about. A big thank-you to those of you who reached out and shared your feedback on how to plan the groups as well as your interest in attending.

In May, we will launch the inaugural meeting of the two chosen groups: Human Resources and Communications. We welcome you and/or your dedicated staff person to join the group and begin the sharing of dialogue and learn from each other. We envision that groups can develop based on the interest and needs of those who attend. If people are interested in continuing these groups, that would be wonderful. If there is limited interest, then that is fine too. Regardless, we hope our experience in these discussions can be one of our shared conversations at the Community of Learning next fall!

Here are the details for the meetings. Please feel free to join both or one. Please add the below information to your calendars!

May 16th Human Resources – 10 – 11 am MST
Hosted by Pauline Smale, CEO
The Family Centre in Edmonton
[Google Meet link](#)

May 17th Communications – 11 – 12 pm CST
Hosted by Trish St. Onge, Executive Director
Navera Community Connections in Saskatoon
[Zoom Link](#)
Meeting ID: 876 0740 9210
Passcode: 346734
Dial by your location
[Find your local number](#)

We look forward to a great sharing and learning experience!

Cheers,

Maria Howard

CEO Spotlight: Maria Howard

Maria Howard has led Family Services of Greater Vancouver as CEO since September 2020. She is an experienced leader with a demonstrated record of advancing the non-profit sector in support of people in need. Having started as a rehabilitation counsellor, she has spent her career supporting and advocating for people who are challenged by health and social issues to live the fullest life possible, engaged in their communities.

Maria holds an MBA in Leadership from the University of Athabasca, and an M.Ed. in Rehabilitation from the University of Washington. With decades of extensive business experience, she has held leadership positions in the public healthcare sector, as CEO of the Alzheimer Society of BC, as well as provincial and national governance roles. At FSGV, she leverages her operational excellence, while guided by a commitment to caring and inclusive communities.



It is Maria's natural alignment of personal values and professional impact that has allowed her to be effective in her career; she is a change-maker and leader with a hopefulness and vision that energizes and builds confidence in both internal and external stakeholders.

Currently, Maria serves as the Chair of Family Services of Canada, Regional Director with the Federation of Community Social Services of BC, and as a board member with Voices in Motion, an intergenerational choir for people living with dementia in Victoria, BC. In her personal life, Maria enjoys travelling with her family, gardening and spending time with her two best four legged friends!

Name change for Catholic Family Services Saskatoon

Catholic Family Services Saskatoon is now Navera Community Connections Inc.

The new name aims to foster hope, possibilities and growth. After more than 82 years of contributions to people in our community and bringing expertise like counselling services, community programs, and early learning to our community, we recognize that it is time to update our brand to better reflect who we are and all we have to offer.



The word Navera is rooted in the word navigation and in the language of Urdu means budding – a great fit for hope, possibilities and growth. The prefix Nav means new or novel – a new era. **Navera.**

We believe the name **Navera Community Connections** resonates with our work, our purpose and is just open and undefined enough for us to create meaning. The possibilities that **Navera Community Connections** brings to our work is endless.

Family Services of Greater Vancouver: Family Services Financial Empowerment

Affordability and financial security are top concerns for many Canadian households. Throughout the pandemic and in recent months, the impact of inflation and high interest rates on households in poverty and other marginalized people is even more severe. In BC, Family Services of Greater Vancouver is meeting folks where they're at to help people feel more in control of their finances. The agency has a 95-year history of supporting children, youth, and families in crisis – through intervention, counselling, and education.

Today, we're highlighting the important work being done in the Family Services Financial Empowerment program. They offer free workshops on a range of topics, including filing taxes, budgeting and financial goal setting, credit and debt, saving and investing, frauds and scams, and much more. Experienced financial coaches provide confidential, tailored support to individual clients through 1-on-1 sessions.

To give readers a better idea about the resources available, Rocio Vasquez, Operations Manager for the Financial Empowerment program, explains the most misunderstood aspect of accessing support: "People think support is only available when there is something wrong, or it's for those with a stable income." Far from it, the breadth of our offerings means the door is wide open for people from all backgrounds. Regardless of your starting point and your goals, Financial Empowerment can help you feel more confident about money.

In keeping with the agency's overall values and philosophy, they deliver their Financial Empowerment program in a trauma-informed way. Many clients are newcomers to Canada, so workshops and coaching are provided in multiple languages and respond to cultural sensitivities and personal experiences. Family Services does not sell financial services, represent a financial institution, or receive fees for our services – an important approach to trust building.

Faranak Ghorbani, a Money Navigator for the Financial Empowerment program, says, "I am a trauma-informed individual who speaks Farsi and this has allowed me to be culturally sensitive in providing financial literacy workshops to the Persian community." While Family Services hopes to continue expanding service into more languages, they currently offer support in English, Español, Việt, Français, 粵語 (Cantonese), 普通话 (Mandarin), and داجیایا یارب (Farsi).

Beyond Financial Empowerment, the team at Family Services of Greater Vancouver is dedicated to supporting marginalized youth, victims and survivors of violence, people who have experienced trauma, and families of all shapes and sizes. This deep knowledge also informs the agency's advocacy with all levels of government. To learn more, visit fsgv.ca.