

COALITION OF CHILD CARE ADVOCATES OF BC

Report from the Chair

This week we celebrate the life of Martin Luther King Jr., a man who dedicated his life to inspire people to rise up against injustice. Dr King had a dream where all men and women, regardless of the colour of their skin, would enjoy equality and freedom.

And, like Dr King, we have a dream... a dream for children. In our dream all children's programs are brought out of dark basements into bright, colourful light. In our dream no mother cries because there is no affordable child care space for her child. In our dream our nation commits to its' children so that quality programs are the norm, not the exception. In our dream those who teach young children are valued, respected and compensated fairly. In our dream there is equality for all children and access to stimulating, caring environments isn't dependent on family income. In our dream Canadians care for each other and live by a code of collective responsibility, where children are valued and provided with everything they need, food, clothing, nurturing and education so that they may reach their full potential. In our dream every child matters. And we believe that dream can be achieved through a generously funded, not for profit, accessible, affordable, universal child care system.

The Coalition, its' Board and membership stand together, even in such hard times as these, working and supporting each other so that our dream may one day become a reality. Not for our individual programs, not for a single child but so that all children have the opportunity to live and learn and laugh. Every year, our AGM provides us with a few minutes to reflect on our past year. A year filled with action, support for each other and determination that injustice will not prevail. While we find ourselves in a place that values power and money, we work to create change to "set things right".

During 2002 we continued to work with funding provided by Status of Women. It was the last year of a 3 year project, and the Board worked hard to complete our commitments. Our provincial conference calls provided opportunities for sharing information and action planning with the active participation of many of the Child Care Resource and Referral programs. In August our Strategic Planning Session brought together representatives from regional and provincial constituencies to a) assess the impact of change to provincial child care policy and b) to develop medium and long term strategies to promote our child care goals. We were able to provide support for travel and accommodation so that we could truly have a provincial perspective. In the Spring we hosted a breakfast/brunch at the ECEBC conference as well as presenting a workshop on advocacy.

Coalition members continue to sit on various federal, provincial and local committees including First Call, the ECDI Roundtable, the HR Roundtable and a variety of social justice coalitions. We marched in numerous rallies and demonstrations, spoke at a variety of social justice functions and set up tables for public information. We sponsored and staffed children's play areas at a number of public events and wrote hundreds of letters to MP's, MLA's and editors of newspapers across the province. We wrote briefs, including our response to SUFA and to the Standing Committee on Finance and the Minister's Regulation review.

Our active participation at the Child Care Advocacy Forum table kept us connected with the other provincial partners. As well, our funding helped support the Forum financially. I am pleased to report that SFU Childcare Society has secured funding through the Vancouver Foundation to help carry on and expand the work of the Forum and I wish to extend our thanks to Sheila Davidson a member extraordinaire of the Coalition. The Forum conducted the Parent Impact survey which

collected personal stories from parents impacted by cuts to subsidy and while the government has, to date, chosen not to act on the results of that survey we know it's messages were heard. A second survey, focusing on impacts to programs has just been completed. The results of that survey will be available shortly in a report titled "Where are the children?"

In partnership with First Call we co-sponsored a Forum "Community Indicators" a project of Campaign 2000. The second of these forums will be held in March and will focus on federal initiatives and actions. Our brochure was updated and reprinted. We continued to send out our Newsletters and proudly launched our web site. Membership continues to grow and members report a better sense of connectedness. We continue to support our sister organization the Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada in spirit and in campaigns.

It is difficult to report on the activities of such a vibrant group, clearly some important work has been left out of the report. But whatever work we take on, we approach it with thoughtful consideration. Most importantly, our work and our lives are intertwined, propelled by a commitment to ethical behaviour. We have not given up on our dream. In fact, we have recommitted at a level much deeper, more convinced that it is possible for a province and a nation to honour its' children in meaningful ways. We will not step aside, nor we will let a passing political agenda sway us. On behalf of the children, we work, we dream.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Harney
CCCABC Chair
January 21, 2003