ADVOCATOR

ISSUE 15

October 2016

Message from the Advocate

HIDRE

Fall is a time of fresh starts, brightly colored leaves and frosty mornings. For children it also means the beginning of a new school year, new school supplies and another chapter filled with new learnings.



Carol A. Chafe

New learnings play a significant role in the work that we do at the Advocate for Children and Youth (ACY). With each investigation completed there are new learnings, in our daily advocacy role there are new learnings, and with each new learning we educate the public through many venues, including our investigative reports, presentations and in our newsletter.

In this newsletter we discuss the four (4) new investigations I called on September 28, 2016. We also discuss the places we visited as part of our outreach where we provided education sessions to professionals and community organizations about our office and the work we do. Finally, be sure to try our "Right's Stuff" word puzzle with a focus on children's right to access to information, Article 17 of the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)*.

Have a wonderful, productive and educational season everyone!



What's New

On September 28th, the Child and Youth Advocate held a press conference where she publically called four (4) new investigations and provided a brief overview of each:

- An eighteen- year old youth who committed suicide while residing in a group home and receiving services from DCSSD and the Regional Health Authority.
- A sixteen-year old youth with complex mental health needs whose health deteriorated while in her group home placement and had experienced several critical incidents. Eventually, she was moved to another service provider and is currently thriving in her new placement.
- A family of several children, who had an open protective intervention file with DCSSD for several years, and yet they were allegedly maltreated and physically and sexually abused by their parents.
- A young child who was placed in an alternate care arrangement by DCSSD as his mother required further supports. The child remained in that arrangement for a lengthy period of time and concerns have been identified with the services provided by DCSSD including a lack of permanency planning.

In addition to the four new investigations, we are currently conducting six previously called investigations. In the press conference, the Advocate also reiterated how imperative it is that she receives accurate and timely information in the event of a critical incident or death of a child or youth. In November 2014, the House of Assembly passed a motion committing to legislation to respond to her request of June 2014 to amend the *Child and Youth Advocate Act* to ensure mandatory reporting by all government departments and agencies of critical incidents and deaths of children and youth receiving services.

In her statement, the Advocate said "We can no longer accept that "change takes time"; action must be taken immediately to make that "change now". We must ensure that not one more child or youth suffers because their right to services is not upheld".

Please visit http://www.childandyouthadvocate.nf.ca/pdfs/ PressReleaseSept28-2016.pdf to see the full press conference statement.

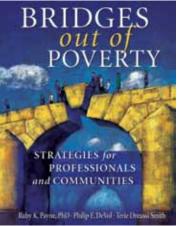
Out and About

In August, ACY staff completed two presentations for Public Legal Information Association of NL's Youth Justice Camp, which took place at The Lantern in St. John's. Youth Justice Camp is a free, interactive day camp that educates youth about the law. The youth learned about the work of the ACY, and the difference between wants, needs and rights.

On August 25, the Advocate attended a roundtable discussion in Halifax, NS, hosted by the Government of Canada's Task Force on Marijuana Legalization and Regulation. The federal government has made a commitment to legalize, strictly regulate and restrict access to marijuana. To do this, a task force has been created to provide advice on the design of a new system. Key areas of research that were relevant to the ACY included the effects of marijuana on children and youth, and how to prevent access to marijuana by children and youth in a legalized environment.

In September, ACY staff attended a conference organized by

the Community, Career & **Employment Partnership** Project entitled "Bridges out of Poverty". The presenter was Gayle Montgomery, a social services coordinator in Ontario. Her work is based on the book Bridges out of Poverty: Strategies for *Professionals and Communities* by Dr. Ruby K. Payne. "Bridges" reaches out to the millions of service providers and businesses whose daily work connects them with the lives of people in poverty. The presentation focused



on addressing barriers between middle-class human services workers and people living in poverty.

ACY staff also attended a presentation in September on Thrive Community Youth Network's Project Endure, a three-year project funded by Health Canada's Drug Strategy Community Initiative Fund in partnership with Buckmaster Circle and MacMorran Community Centres. This community capacity-building project serves youth from ages 12 to 16. It addresses risk factors associated with substance abuse and school absenteeism, offers support to both youth and their caregivers, and promotes protective factors for youth, their families, neighborhoods, and the broader community.

We Need Your Help!

Contact the Advocate for Children & Youth if you or someone you know is in need of help: Phone: (709) 753-3888 • Toll Free: 1-877-753-3888

WebSite: www.childandyouthadvocate.nl.ca Or drop by and speak with someone in our office:

To ensure we reach children and youth and the public, please contact us to add your name to our distribution list and we will send copies as requested.

TTY: (709) 753-4366 • Fax: (709) 753-3988 • Email: office@ocya.nl.ca



The "Rights" Stuff

Article 17 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child:

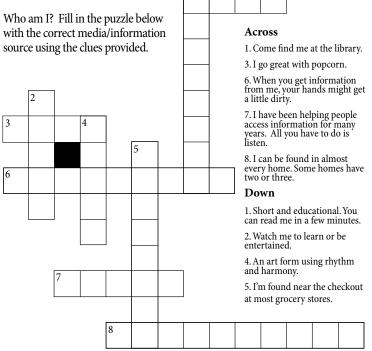
You have the right to get information that is important to your well-being, from radio, newspaper, books, computers and other sources. Adults should make sure that the information you are getting is not harmful, and help you find and understand the information you need.

Child's Access to Appropriate Information

During the drafting stage of the Convention, Article 17 was about protecting children and youth from the media; however, in recognition of the essential role played by the media in promoting awareness of the rights of the child, media providers are encouraged to deliver information so the material is appropriate to the capacities and interests of young children. Article 17 suggests that the content of information and material disseminated by the media should be in accordance with these aims:

- development of the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential;
- development of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms;
- development of respect for:
 - the child's parents;
 - the child's cultural identity, language and values;
 - the country in which the child is living;
 - the country from which he or she may originate;
 - civilizations different from his or her own;
- preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality, and friendship among all peoples;
- development of respect for the natural environment.

Media Sources Crossword



The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you'll go." ~ Dr. Seuss