

Message from the Advocate

Hello and welcome to our second newsletter. In this issue you will hear about the public release of three outstanding investigative reports which I had committed to completing upon my appointment as Advocate. These reports provide an overall total of 34 recommendations to government departments, and we will follow up on these recommendations with applicable departments until they are completed.



Carol A. Chafe

You will also hear about our great experiences of Provincial Outreach with travel to the Western Region, an in-house education session here at our office, as well as a session provided at the Boys' and Girls' club. These proved to be very beneficial in getting to meet more and more people throughout the Province with a focus on our children and youth.

I hope you enjoy our newsletter and be sure and see how successful you are in completing our maze.

Education & Promotion

As part of our education and promotion efforts, we hosted two education sessions in June - one with a group from the St. John's Boys' and Girls' Club and another with the grade 4 class of Holy Cross Elementary. The children and youth participated in rights-based education games and enjoyed some refreshments during these sessions!

Further to our outreach program, this year we will also focus on providing staff with in-house education sessions on a quarterly basis. In this first quarter, Ms. Lorna Piercey, Chair, Advocacy Committee with the Association of Psychologists in Newfoundland and Labrador, presented to staff.

There are a lot of activities taking place as we move into the summer and fall seasons, including 3 regional outreach visits and release of our 2012-2013 public annual report, so stay tuned!

What's New

The Office of the Advocate for Children and Youth released an introductory quarterly newsletter in May 2013. This first issue of our quarterly newsletter provided a broad overview of the Office and activities we have been engaged in throughout 2011-2012. As we move forward with this newsletter we are providing updates on initiatives and activities that have taken place in the past quarter.



In March 2013 the Advocate publicly released three investigative reports, *The Child Upstairs... "Joey's" Story*, *Turning a Blind Eye* and *Out of Focus*. These reports concluded three outstanding investigations that the Advocate had committed to completing upon her appointment on September 27, 2010. The Advocate gave much thought and deliberation prior to releasing these reports, however she concluded that these children's stories, and the valuable lessons that lie within, were too important not to share. Below is a brief overview of each of the stories:

- ***The Child Upstairs... "Joey's" Story*** – the story of neglect of four children with one ultimately being permanently developmentally delayed.
- ***Turning a Blind Eye*** – the story of several children who suffered abuse at the hands of their mother over a span of thirteen years.
- ***Out of Focus*** – the story of two families with children who suffered neglect over a period of thirteen years with a tragic result of two dying and one being injured in a fatal fire that also killed three adults.

For further details on these reports, or for copies, please visit our website at www.childand youthadvocate.nl.ca.

Out & About

The mandate of the Advocate for Children and Youth (ACY) includes the legislated responsibility to ensure the rights, interests and viewpoints of children and youth are protected and advanced. In order to meet our mandate and as part of our Provincial Outreach Program, the ACY is committed to completing quarterly visits to regions across Newfoundland and Labrador. The purpose of these visits is to educate children, youth, service providers and others on the role and mandate of the Office, as well as the rights of children. Visiting different regions across the Province helps the ACY learn more about the specific issues impacting children and youth in different geographic areas and to identify any trends that may exist throughout the province. Provincial Outreach is a great learning experience for both the Office and the people we meet with, and the outreach trips always prove to be very rewarding!

In the first quarter of the 2013-14 fiscal year, the Advocate visited the Western Region of Newfoundland, specifically focusing on Stephenville. During this visit, the Advocate and a team of her staff had the pleasure of meeting with 13 groups of service providers from multiple provincial government departments and community organizations. In addition, presentations were given to 160 children at two different schools about their rights under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The ACY would like to thank everyone who took the opportunity to meet with the Advocate and her staff:

- Bay St. George Assessment Centre, Stephenville
- Canadian Mental Health Association, Stephenville
- Child, Youth and Family Services, Stephenville
- Child, Youth and Family Services Provincial Training Unit, College of the North Atlantic, Stephenville
- Community Education Network, Stephenville
- Community Health Nursing, Western Health, Stephenville
- Stephenville Elementary, Stephenville
- Stephenville Family Resource Centre, Stephenville
- Stephenville Primary, Stephenville
- Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Stephenville
- Western School District, Stephenville
- WestRock Community Centre, Corner Brook
- Women's Centre, Stephenville

Also, in June, the ACY had the opportunity to host a presentation for a class of students from Holy Cross Elementary school in St. John's and visited the Boys' and Girls' club (Buckmaster's Circle) in St. John's.



Next up on the outreach schedule is the Central Region. Keep an eye out for our team in the Gander area in July!

← In-house Education Session,
Grade 4 Class,
Holy Cross Elementary

We Need Your Help!

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.



The "Rights" Stuff

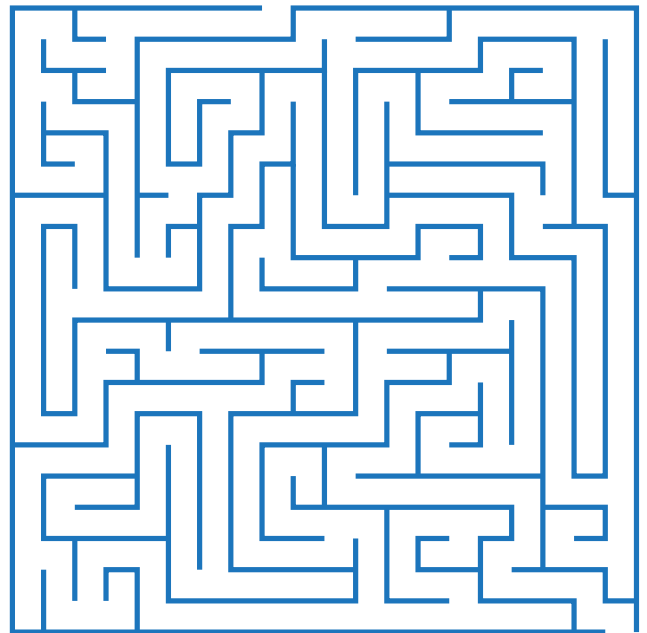
Right To Be Heard

The Bear wants to help children have their voices heard and respected. The Advocate for Children and Youth ensures that the rights and interests of children and youth are protected and that their views are heard and considered.

Help the Bear find the way through the maze to the Advocate for Children and Youth.

Article 12 – The Right to be Heard

Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child: "State parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child..."



The right to be heard is a general principle relevant to all aspects of implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. This does not mean all children and youth should always get everything they want; however, they must have involvement in the decision making whenever possible. Article 12 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child not only requires that children should be assured the right to express their views freely; but also that they should be heard and that their views be given "due weight."

Even the youngest children are entitled to express their views. Equally important, children must be made aware of this right and encouraged to participate in discussions that could potentially affect their lives.

"A person's a person, no matter how small." ~ Dr. Seuss

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

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

WebSite: www.childandyouthadvocate.nl.ca

Or drop by and speak with someone in our office:

193 LeMarchant Road, St. John's, NL • A1C 2H5 • Mon-Fri 8:30 am - 4:30 pm