



*Supporting children, teens and families through major life transitions—your go-to hub for resources and programs.*

*Inside this issue:*

<b>From your PD</b>	
<b>Quick Tips</b>	1
<b>Feature— Reconciling Your Grief</b>	2
<b>Did you know? Parent Coordinator</b>	2
<b>Bouquets-YWCA Edmonton</b>	3
<b>Upcoming Sessions</b>	3
<b>Your SFR Team</b>	4
<b>Teleconference</b>	4

## A Message From Your Program Director

The 2011/2012 year has once again been very successful for RAINBOWS programs.

Jonathan and I trained 97 Facilitators in 7 workshops in Wainwright, Sylvan Lake, Peace River and Edmonton.

In February, we provided our first ever dedicated Sunbeams training for early childhood specialists at Edmonton's Genesis Early Learning Centre.

In March, we trained 18 Facilitators in Peace River and we were rewarded with the knowledge that they will be providing Rainbows for children in not only Peace River, but also High Level, Manning, High Prairie, Fairview and Gift Lake!

As we approach the end of another school year and enjoy the renewals of spring, we continue with our own "transformation" at Starfish Family Resources. We have added a few more resources to our website and have improved the way the information is presented.

BCFIT also provides a comprehensive array of services for families, children and teens experiencing divorce, separation or blended families. They offer workshops, counselling and legal support services, and have a 30 year track record of making an immense difference in the well-being of families.

As a result of this exciting partnership, we are further formulating our values, which will be useful for determining our direction in how we move forward.

Finally, but not least, we are delighted to have two new, enthusiastic members join our Board of Directors at Starfish-Joy Turchanski and Lisa Smith. They are both welcome additions to our team.

We look forward to hearing about your successes and challenges, and would be delighted to share your ideas with all our RAINBOWS partners in our next Newsletter.

*Victor Dorian*

We were fortunate to have found excellent mentorship and inspiration from a sister organization - BC Families in Transition out of Victoria, BC.



**The next facilitator training:**  
 Sept 15—Bowden  
 Sept 21-22 -Edmonton

For more info contact:  
**Victor Dorian**  
 Program Director for SFR  
 Rainbows Registered Director  
 info@starfishfamilyresources.org

Tel 780-448-1180  
 Toll-free 1-800-416-4673

### Quick Tips ~ For Parents

Your child doesn't need the latest gadget or toy to know you love him/her, but they do need to hear it in many ways and often. Here are a few simple ways:

- \* Cuddle up under a blanket and watch a movie or TV program of their choice.
- \* Let them pick an activity to do together
- \* Help them bake their favourite cookies
- \* Put a funny or encouraging note in with their lunch
- \* Find something to compliment your child on
- \* Offer encouragement and let them know you believe in them
- \* Have a family game night
- \* Set aside time each day for them to tell you about their day



## RECONCILING YOUR GRIEF

When the fabric of the family is torn apart by the loss of a loved one it can often be easy to overlook the grief of a child. Children don't understand death and loss of a parent due to divorce and yet that loss threatens the very foundation of the child's world. They are confused by their feelings and overwhelmed by all the questions.

Children's experience of grief is vastly different from teens and adults and varies greatly depending on the type of loss and the developmental stage of the child. Pre-schoolers, elementary school-age children, pre-teens and early adolescents will all express grief differently. So, an important consideration in helping children adjust through their grief is the developmental stage of the child, while taking note that a grieving child's developmental stage may lag behind their chronological age. Regression is expected and developmental accomplishments take longer to achieve.

But before parents can help their children, they need to understand and recognize what is happening with their own emotions as well as recognize the swirling nature of the grieving process itself, which in sim-

plistic terms involves spinning through chaos, transition and restructuring.



Divorce or the death of someone we love changes our lives forever. The journey of healing requires that grief be expressed, rather than stuffing, ignoring or trying to deny it.

People are all too often told to “*just get over it*”. However, the loss and new reality must first be integrated before reconciliation, restructuring and “moving on” can occur. People do not “get over” grief, but with support and guidance, the pain of grief is gradually replaced by hope and a renewed sense of purpose.

If you are grieving or want to support someone who is, I invite you to check out **Dr. Alan Wolfelt's** model of “**companioning**” people in grief.

Dr. Wolfelt has written many books about healing in grief including:

### Ten Essential Touchstones for Finding Hope & Healing Your Heart

In his most comprehensive book on bereavement yet, he describes in compassionate, down-to-earth language, ten touchstones—or trail markers—that are essential physical, emotional, cognitive, social, and spiritual signs for mourners to look for on their journey through grief.

#### The Ten Essential Touchstones:

1. Open to the presence of your loss.
2. Dispel misconceptions about grief.
3. Embrace the uniqueness of your grief.
4. Explore what you might experience.
5. Recognize you are not crazy.
6. Understand the six needs of mourning.
7. Nurture yourself.
8. Reach out for help.
9. Seek reconciliation, not resolution.
10. Appreciate your transformation.

For more info on the resources of Dr. Alan D. Wolfelt, check out his web site:

<http://www.centerforloss.com/>

### Did you know?

In high conflict separations and divorces, parenting issues may continue to bring parents back to court for resolution. A more cost-effective, less stressful alternate strategy to manage issues as they arise is through the use of a Parent Coordinator. Parenting Coordination is an emerging new alternative dispute resolution process which is starting to become popular in Alberta.

The role of the Parenting Coordinator is to help parents come to a successful resolution between themselves. However, the Parenting Coordinator is also empowered by the parents, their Parenting Plan Agreement or by Court Order, to make recommendations binding on the parents in the event the parents are unable to agree on solutions. In other words, the decision of the Parenting Coordinator must be followed by the parents, as if ordered by a Court. To learn more, check out the Alberta Family Mediation Society.

<http://www.afms.ca/index.php?pid=31>



## WAY TO GO YWCA

Edmonton



The YWCA has been providing counselling services to Edmonton families, couples and individuals for over 100 years. Their Counselling Centre has been helping families deal with life issues and transitions for over 20 years.

Counselling sessions and groups are offered on a fee-for-service basis, determined by a sliding scale based on ability to pay.

The YWCA has been offering RAINBOWS programs for about 15 years and is one of the few sites that runs the excellent Sunbeams program for preschoolers.

They provide Prism for parents in conjunction with Rainbows for younger children and Spectrum for teens when there is sufficient interest.

Each Prism parent is provided with a one hour individual orientation session with a registered YWCA psychologist prior to a Rainbows session.

The YWCA volunteer Rainbows Facilitators come from all walks of life, with many being local University students in programs such as counselling psychology and social work.

The YWCA has been a key partner of Starfish Family Resources, particularly by hosting RAINBOWS Facilitator and Coordinator training 3 or 4 times per year – we very much appreciate it!



### Upcoming RAINBOWS Sessions

- North Point Community Church, 14025 167 Ave, tel 780 452 5566, will run a 13 week, Tuesday evening program starting September 25, 7 pm (Rainbows and Prism).
- YWCA Edmonton, 10350 124 St, tel 780 423 9922, ext 222, will provide a 10 week Monday evening program starting September 24, 630-8 pm (Rainbows, Prism and Sunbeams).
- Kids on Track, 15641 96 Ave, tel 780 481 2942
- West Edmonton Community Church, tel 780 489 2579, will provide Rainbows, Prism and possibly Spectrum this fall.
- Millwoods Family Resource Centre, 1733 Millwoods Rd, tel 780 413 4521, will provide a 10 week Rainbows and Prism session this fall, Mondays 630-8 pm. Check [www.mwfrc.org](http://www.mwfrc.org)
- Alberta Parenting for the Future Association, Stony Plain, tel 780 963 0549, will be providing Rainbows, and possible Spectrum for their region; Coordinator: Candace Fehr
- Leduc County FCSS, Nisku, runs Rainbows and Sunbeams; phone 780 955-6421; Coordinator: Judy Dumont
- Boys and Girls Club, Fort Saskatchewan; phone Corinne at 780 992 0103 for details
- City of Leduc, tel 780 980 8429; Coordinator, Tabitha White



Stepping forward into change doesn't mean huge leaps... but you can take a tiny step each and every day. Each step changes the view allowing you to see new possibilities.

SFR is a non-profit, registered charitable organization that is dedicated to helping children, adolescents and adults in understanding, accepting, healing and moving forward after a loss due to death, divorce, separation, abandonment or other painful family transition.

[www.starfishfamilyresources.org](http://www.starfishfamilyresources.org)

## SFR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Nancy Allen

Terence Graw

Barb Hepperle

Justin Wong

Brad McMaster

Joy Turchanski

Lisa Smith



### MAY TELECONFERENCE

Our fourth semi-annual teleconference produced both stimulating conversation and some great ideas about engaging parents of Rainbows participants, as well as tools and resources for parents and program facilitators.

In addressing the challenges of low parent attendance, involvement and awareness, travelling time and child care were identified as significant obstacles. A parent orientation session before their child starts Rainbows is useful and highly recommended.

Some community sites which had available resources, determined that providing snacks or meals for Rainbows participants as well as child care for families with young children made an enormous difference in encouraging parents to get involved. Parental motivation might be stimulated if better information packages were provided along with activities that the child and parent can do together at home.

Another challenge identified is the difficulty some parents have in being able to separate their own grief and needs from that of their child. Many parents are often unaware that their children's "behavioural problems" can merely be a reflection of their own behaviour and coping mechanisms.

Tools for assisting parents include but are not limited to the following: educating parents to focus on the child's best interests; providing them with an opportunity to deal with their own grieving process separate from their children; participating in workshops or support groups or such as **FOCIS** (Focus on Children in Separation), **PRISM** or **Rebuilding After Your relationship Ends**; creating parenting plans, working with a divorce coach to better manage emotions and/or conflict. These strategies have all been proven to be effective in reducing family stress, thereby resulting in better adjusted kids and a more successfully functioning family unit.

Here are some useful links recommended by teleconference participants:

<http://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/pi/fcy-fea/lib-bib/pub/book-livre/pdf/book-livre.pdf>

<http://www.pathwayshrc.com.au/>

<http://www.lianalowenstein.com/>

<http://www.ccis-calgary.ab.ca/uploads/FCS/Co->

[Parenting Tip Sheets/Co-Parenting - English Oct 2009.pdf](http://www.ccis-calgary.ab.ca/uploads/FCS/Co-Parenting_Tip_Sheets/Co-Parenting_-_English_Oct_2009.pdf)

<http://www.relationships.org.au/>



## CO-PARENT Successfully!

**Are you a parent who is separated or divorced? Are you looking for tools to help you move forward?**

Check out this excellent resource designed to help separated and divorced parents put aside their issues with one another and focus on what is best for their children. You'll learn how to :

- ★ Effectively communicate with your ex-spouse
- ★ Provide consistency and structure for your kids
- ★ Manage appointments, meetings and activities
- ★ Develop agreed upon parenting schedules
- ★ Manage and share child-related expenses

[www.coparentsuccessfully.com](http://www.coparentsuccessfully.com)

*We invite you to share your thoughts with us by contributing to our Newsletter and participating in future teleconferences.*

