



Adoptive Families  
Association of BC

# 2014 - 15

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## annual report

# executive report



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## Vision

A family for every child

This year, AFABC worked hard to keep ahead of the changing needs of adoptive families.

More families were able to access adoption support and education thanks to our expanding online programs. Our online support groups allowed families who live in remote areas of BC to connect with each other. The accessibility and convenience of our AEP-Online program lead to an increase in demand of 223%, showing us that online learning is definitely participant-friendly.

To increase awareness of the 1,000 kids and youth in government care we partnered with the Ministry of Children and Family Development on the 1000 Families BC campaign. We also developed a PSA commercial featuring Vancouver Whitecaps FC players Kekuta Manneh and Christian Dean, who are both adopted.

With over half of the children and youth in government care having Aboriginal heritage, the importance of maintaining relational, cultural, and physical connections for these kids has never been more of a priority. Our new Pathways program trains social

## Mission

To promote and support adoption

workers in family finding techniques that strengthen children's connections to birth culture(s) and communities. Many of our education programs received updates to bring more Aboriginal perspectives to our training, and we continue to make partnerships with the Aboriginal community to ensure the best future for kids in care.

We're grateful for the many volunteers, families, board members, and staff who share our commitment to supporting adoption and adoptive families in BC and Canada.

On behalf of everyone here at the Adoptive Families Association of BC, thank you for your ongoing support.

Bill Hartley **Chair**

Karen Madeiros **Executive Director**

# community

“

I received a life-changing bursary from the Adoptive Families Association of BC. Because of you lovely people, I can become a really awesome aesthetician and accomplish my life goals. It will help me better myself so I can have a career, more experience, and be wise. So thank you so much!”

– Lindsey Lillian, 2014 Howard Legacy Youth Fund recipient



Bill Hartley, AFABC Board Chair, and Dominik Zembrowski, 2014 Howard Legacy Youth Fund recipient.

Nineteen-year-old Lindsey Lillian from Nanaimo is pursuing esthetics at Vancouver Island University, and Dominik Zembrowski, 22, from Vancouver is in his second year in BCIT's mechatronics and robotics program. These two former youth in care were the recipients of the first ever **Howard Legacy Youth Fund** awards. This bursary provides financial assistance to youth in and from care who are hoping to attend trade, vocational, or academic post secondary programs.

The adoption community has many champions who strive to better the lives of waiting kids and adoptive families through organizational change, media awareness, volunteerism, and philanthropy. This year's **AFABC**

**Adoption Awards** recognized Pieta Woolley and the Tyee for their media series on the complex challenges youth in care face when they turn 19. Also recognized were longtime volunteer Deanna Jones; adoption champion Drew Savage; adoption employee benefits provider Deloitte Canada; longtime donor the John Hardie Mitchell Family Foundation; and Howard Legacy Youth Fund creator Peggy Howard.

Our volunteers gifted over 1,400 hours of their time to help out at family social events and camps, to share their stories in our magazine, and to provide support for other parents.

1,464 hours  
volunteered to AFABC

460 members

twenty  
professional members

# support



*Kids having a laugh at Timberline Family Camp.*

“

We all had a wonderful time and are **so** thankful for the opportunity to come. It was wonderful to connect with so many other adoptive families to support and encourage each other. We can't wait to come next year!”

– Andrea and family

waiting child inquiries **712**

fourteen in-person support groups

eight online support groups with **500+** participants

**1769** client support contacts

**36** family social events

Families in Nanaimo, Kamloops, Vernon, and Nelson now have access to **PASS**—our innovative hands-on parenting training—with the expansion of the program to these areas of the province.

Families that live in remote areas and those who can't access our face-to-face services are now able to access more support thanks to an increase in our **online support services** with Facebook groups, including two new groups: Waiting Parents and Adoptive Parents of Teens.

As valuable as online flexibility is, equally important for families and parents is having "face time" with support coordinators and peers. GLBTQ parents,

families with children of African heritage, parents in Vernon, waiting parents, and families with children with FASD are meeting each other and us regularly at coffee shops and community centres.

Children, youth, and parents build the best connections with each other during playtime. This past year, we saw hundreds of families playing, picnicking, swimming, skating, and camping their way into each other's lives and hearts at over 30 family social events all across the province.

# education



“

The AEP-Online prepared us for the adoption, and, like any schooling, you don't realize how valuable it's been until you're in the thick of a difficult situation. There was so much information, but each piece of it has been of great value to us in one way or another. It helped us be more sensitive to the behaviour our kids are exhibiting, and it's helped us manage the impact of the drastic changes in our family since the twins came home.”

– Tim and Amber Neufeld

For prospective adoptive parents like Tim and Amber Neufeld, the MCFD-required Adoption Education Program (AEP) used to mean re-arranged work and personal schedules to accommodate classroom time. Thanks to our **AEP-Online** program, they can now complete assignments at their convenience and from the comfort of their own home. This flexibility resulted in a 223% increase in demand for the program.

Fifty percent of children and youth in government care have an Aboriginal background, and the AEP-Online now brings more Aboriginal perspectives to its content so that parents have a strong foundation of knowledge of the cultural

community of their children.

Over 60 people across BC tuned in to Cultural Planning in BC, a new webinar focused on the importance of cultural planning for Aboriginal children in care. Free **webinars** like this one bring groundbreaking content to families who might not otherwise be able to access this information in their community.

**351** AEP-Online participants

**eleven** webinars

**323**  
webinar participants

**90**  
face-to-face workshop participants

**six** face-to-face workshops

# advocacy

Our message today to British Columbians is: If you are able to provide a 'forever family' to one of these children and youth, please apply. Many of these kids haven't had a positive start in life and it's critical that they be provided with the security and opportunity for growth that a permanent, nurturing family can bring.

– Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond, Representative for Children and Youth in BC



1000 Families BC campaign logo.

941 children & youth  
*waiting to be adopted* in BC

kids and youth  
*adopted from care* in 2014

265

600+ youth *aged out*  
of care in 2014

With more than half of our kids in care having Aboriginal heritage, our community partners have emphasized the importance of maintaining cultural connections.

We worked to bring more **Aboriginal perspectives** to many of our programs. Our new Pathways program trains social workers in family finding techniques that strengthen children's connections to birth culture(s) and communities.

We walked with our GLBTQ families in the Vancouver Pride Parade in August, and supported unrestricted use of bursary funding for former youth in care in October.

Our participation on the Safe Babies Committee allows us to hear from and **advocate for families** parenting children with prenatal exposure.

Media issues, such as the Fifth Estate's coverage of "rehoming" and CKNW's investigation of privacy restrictions around child profiles, keeps AFABC in the news and on our toes about the need to remain respectful of our families' privacy while at the same time supporting opportunities to **influence systemic change** in adoption-related concerns.

# awareness



Vancouver Whitecaps FC players Kekuta Manneh and Christian Dean spend the afternoon with fellow adoptees.

“As a proud mother of four adopted children I cannot express the love, joy and fulfillment they have brought to our family. There are 1,000 children in British Columbia who need homes now. Please find it in your hearts to consider providing a forever home to these children in need. I can assure you that you will be rewarded every day of your lives together.”

– Lieutenant Governor Judith Guichon, adoptive mom

BC's Lieutenant Governor, Judith Guichon, shared her story of adoption, faith, and perseverance during **Adoption Awareness Month** in the hopes of motivating more families to offer their home to a child or youth in care.

AFABC, the Lieutenant Governor, the Minister of Children and Family Development, and BC's Representative for Children and Youth joined together to create **1000 Families BC**. This campaign reflected the need to find 1000 families for the 1000 children and youth in care, aimed to dispel common myths of adoption, and promoted unique and

diverse adoptive families.

Vancouver Whitecaps FC players Kekuta Manneh and Christian Dean shared their adoption stories and helped us make a **public service announcement** for Adoption Awareness Month.

Families celebrated Adoption Awareness Month with us at our fabulous annual Family Fun Day in Burnaby, a Christmas parade float in Duncan, a games night, a family portrait session, and family skates throughout the province.

1367  
facebook  
followers

1854  
twitter  
followers

80  
mentions by  
news media

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**135,000+**  
visits to [bcadopt.com](http://bcadopt.com)

# youth



Speak-Out Youth Group members share their gratitude to AFABC donors, supporters, and volunteers.

Former youth in care worked on an exciting new web project that launches in June 2015. **AgedOut.com** will be an up-to-date warehouse of information on services available to young people, in addition to being a learning tool to help youth feel empowered as they leave care. Youth participated in focus groups, content, videos, and planning for the site. AgedOut.com will be the most comprehensive online tool for helping youth in and from care navigate the complexities of adulthood.

The **Speak-Out Youth Group (SYG)** shared their powerful voices

with community partners including the Ministry of Children and Family Development, the Federation of BC Youth in Care Networks, Aunt Leah's, and more. The group was also a partner in planning the BC Child and Youth in Care week celebrations.

The group learned skills in print and web publishing as they created the third **Speak-Out Youth newsletter** and launched a blog on the **Speak-Out Youth Zone** website.

**AGEDOUT.com**

“The Speak-Out Youth Group really means a lot to me. I feel very safe. I feel like I belong. And it feels very nice to be able to have my voice heard. I'm allowed to have an opinion and my opinion is respected and heard. The Speak-Out Youth Group is my life, my family. It is my favorite place to go sometimes. The staff are amazing and wonderful. I could stay forever.

– Ashley

**eleven** SYG members      **twelve** SYG meetings

**2400+**  
unique visits to the  
Speak-Out Youth Zone

**188** **twitter** followers

# finding family



Going home to our community was amazing. It was great to see everyone after such a long time. I would love to do it again in the summer. Being welcomed home by the community during the Potlatch was very emotional and heart-warming! I felt at home there and could see that my little sister was opening up and very happy; it meant a lot for us to be there together. It was a lot of fun!

– Autumn

More of BC's most vulnerable waiting children found permanent family connections thanks to our expanded team of **Child Specific Recruiters (CSRs)** and our **Wendy's Wonderful Kids (WWK)** recruiters.

Autumn has connected with her family, community and culture with the help of Kelly Davie, AFABC's CSR in Nanaimo. Kids like Autumn now have the help of three new CSRs in Vancouver Island and the Interior region. CSRs have smaller caseloads, which allows them to develop individualized permanency plans for each child based on the child's unique

background and needs.

Kids who work with CSRs and who are over the age of 15, as well as those with mental health disorders, are three times more likely to find permanency than youth who are served by another form of adoption preparation and recruitment.

BC's delegated Aboriginal agencies and MCFD trained in the specialized family finding that our CSRs use. The **Pathways program's** Creating Connections workshop was delivered in 10 communities, with new workshops being developed for 2015.

44 child-to-family matches

ten adoptions finalized in 2014



Pathways

## featured partner



*Dawn and her daughter Marysha.*

I had the privilege of attending the Adoptive Parents Getaway with 16 remarkable women who have adopted. I have found that connecting with other adoptive parents has been essential on my adoption journey. These are the friends in my life that 'get it,' that 'get me.' They have all struggled with the same issues to some degree that I have. They also have experienced the same thrill of seeing their dear sweet child begin to blossom.

– Dawn

For the past 10 years, the Victoria Foundation has been right beside us and through their Lex Reynolds Adoption & Permanency Trust Fund has been celebrating and strengthening adoption in BC.

Thirty adoptive parents of children with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder shared information and resources at the Adoptive Parents Getaway this year, thanks to the Lex Reynolds Fund. The retreat also creates a crucial sense of belonging that connects children and families, provides information, reduces isolation, and validates identity and culture in adopted children.

The Lex Reynolds Adoption & Permanency Trust Fund honours the late lawyer, children's advocate – and adoptive father – who was the fund's founding co-chair.



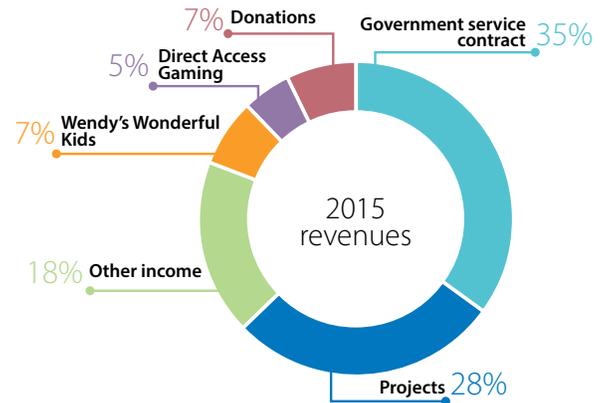
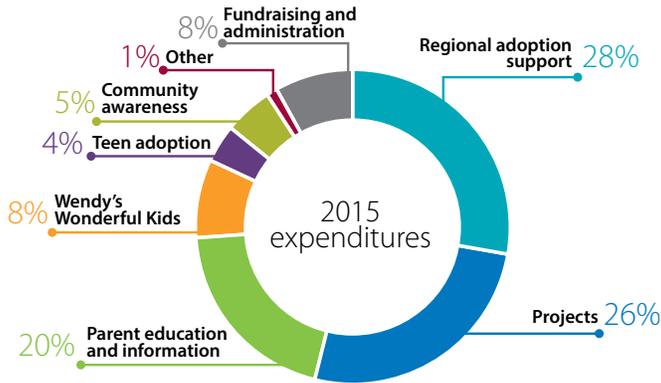
In Partnership with



**Our donors help us help kids.**

See the back page of this annual report for a complete list of donors.

# year end report



Expenditures	2015	2014
<b>Programs, Services, and Projects</b>		
Regional adoption support	\$ 548,231	\$ 585,301
Projects	511,573	221,276
Parent education and information	391,051	297,862
Wendy's Wonderful Kids	153,199	161,958
Teen adoption	73,389	90,631
Community awareness	92,025	86,525
	<b>\$1,769,468</b>	<b>\$1,443,553</b>
<b>Other</b>	9,751	91,180
<b>Fundraising and administration</b>	162,205	158,061
	<b>\$1,941,424</b>	<b>\$1,692,794</b>

Revenues	2015	2014
Government service contract	\$ 714,725	\$ 715,812
Projects	556,720	270,311
Other income	359,857	224,667
Wendy's Wonderful Kids	151,182	160,231
Direct Access Gaming	100,488	100,405
Donations	131,104	131,609
	<b>\$2,014,076</b>	<b>\$ 1,603,035</b>

Financial position	2015	2014
Assets	\$2,462,035	\$2,156,343
Liabilities	\$1,644,188	\$1,431,148
Restricted funds	\$553,672	\$485,071
Unrestricted surplus funds	\$244,175	\$240,124

## Highlights from the Treasurer

Fiscal 2015 was another strong year of steady growth and expansion. We are very excited about the areas with the most significant growth: the AEP-Online, the PASS program, and AgedOut.com. These account for a 15% increase (\$249K) in total expenditures and are partially supported by one-time-only government grants. Government service contracts and grants continued to account for over 60% of our revenues, while donations represented 7% (8% in fiscal 2014). To help support the above

programs, we will continue to diversify our revenue sources by investing in fundraising programs that will grow our donor base. We are proud to say that about 90% of our revenues were invested in programs, services, and projects that benefitted children and youth in need of a forever family.

During the year, a surplus of \$73K was earned. The Board restricted \$50K of it into our operating reserve for future contingencies in response to the

increase in our expenditure level. In addition, \$5,000 was reserved to fund summer camps for adopted children. Finally, AFABC allocated \$4,160 to match generous donations from Peggy Howard and friends towards our youth bursaries.

The full set of financial statements for the year ended March 31, 2015, along with the auditor's report are available on our website at [www.bcadopt.com](http://www.bcadopt.com).

# thank you

## SPIRIT PARTNERS (\$100-\$199)

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Mount Pleasant War Memorial Community Cooperative Association  
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Treena and Kevin Innes

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MediaCore Technologies Inc

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DAVE THOMAS  
FOUNDATION  
FOR ADOPTION®

## Fernwood Foundation



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Our Adoption Awards are generously donated by Eclipse Awards.