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2006 Annual Report

April 1, 2005 to March 31, 2006



*Supporting Multiple Births Together
for Over 25 Years*

Message From The Board

Making a difference, one individual and one family at a time...

Today, in many communities across Canada, families have given birth to multiples. They feel a mix of emotions—scared about what this will mean financially, nervous about the needs of these special and often fragile babies, frightened about what the future will hold for their quickly expanded family, excited about the unique and special gift they have been given, and filled with the utmost joy as they hold each of these individual gifts for the very first time.

In these same communities, there are individuals and families who have already experienced this wide range of emotions, who are waiting to share their kindness and experiences and to provide encouragement, and to simply listen to those who need an ear. These individuals and families are members of Multiple Births Canada (MBC). They know the importance of working together as one “community” to support these new parents of multiples, the difference support can make to the future of these families and for the generations of families to follow.

MBC is proud of the work we started in the area of advocacy in 2005 with National Multiple Births Awareness Day and the dialogue we began on the need for a review of maternity, parental and compassionate care leave benefits (under the Employment Insurance Program) for multiple-birth families. This year’s theme, *“raising awareness of the unique risks of multiple-birth pregnancies and the post-natal issues faced by parents and multiples”*, while drawing attention to a need for better prenatal and post-natal care, will also further educate Canada’s politicians and policy makers about the unique challenges faced by our families.

MBC has many other successes we are proud of, and the 2006 Annual Report will share these highlights. Highlights include updates on MBC Resources, a review of the 2005 AGM and Volunteer Development Retreat, the 2005 Making a Difference Awards recipients, the Transitional Plan Year-3 update, and our first National Multiple Births Awareness Day celebrations in May 2005.

MBC is able to deliver on its mission, *“to improve the quality of life for multiple-birth individuals and their families in Canada”*, due largely to the dedication and passion of volunteers and supporters who work locally, nationally and internationally, devoting countless hours to making a difference for individuals and families in Canada!

The multiple-birth community continues to be blessed with the presence of Vicki Riley in the MBC Business Office, who makes an incredible difference every day as the Business Services Manager. The Board of Directors cannot express our appreciation enough for the support Vicki continues to provide to the multiple-birth community.

It is truly about the power of the difference we can make in each other’s lives. Working together, the hope for the future of Multiple Births Canada, the Canadian multiple-births community, and Canadian multiple-birth families is astounding. The possibilities of what we can achieve together are endless.



Kimberley Weatherall, Chair
Director of Volunteer Management
On behalf of the Board of Directors
and the Business Services Manager



2005 'Back to Basics' Volunteer Development Retreat Workshop

MBC Resources

Web Site & Discussion Forums

Many organizations these days are moving more and more resources on-line and MBC is no exception. People are busy and want access to information when *they* are available not just when the 'office is open'. MBC's web site and discussion forums are vital to the multiple-birth community including MBC's volunteers. The Volunteer Orientation & Training sections and the Chapter Executive section assist our chapters and volunteers to realize their roles and potential. Message Boards are a great way to post questions or advice at any time of the day or night—and that is what's happening at MBC's popular Discussion Forums. Further enhancements to the MBC web site are in the works pending financing.



Publications

The Business Office continues to receive upward of 15 publication orders via the Internet or mail every month (not including Internet membership orders). By far, the most popular MBC kit is the *Expectant or New Parent Kit* of which 83 kits were sold last year. MBC continues to ship resources internationally to countries such as England, Australia and Sri Lanka. Possible enhancements to e-commerce on the MBC web site, such as instant downloads, has the potential to increase revenue.

New fact sheets have been added to MBC's impressive fact sheet series and steps have been taken to attempt to have all MBC publications translated to French. *Multiple Moments* had a makeover in early 2006 but subscriptions are still low, with a little over half of the MBC membership receiving a subscription. The MBC Board of Directors is considering how to include *Multiple Moments* in membership.



Vicki Riley
Business Services Manager

Business Office

The MBC Business Office operates as a clearinghouse, filtering information and assisting multiple-birth families, members, chapter executives, volunteers, the Board of Directors, health organizations and the media by answering questions, offering referrals, registering memberships and providing resources. MBC's part-time Business Services Manager continues to be extremely busy and recruits occasional volunteer assistance. MBC's *Report From National*, included in *Multiple Moments* and posted on the MBC web site, details the Business Office activity on a quarterly basis.

Support Networks

The seven support networks continue to be an important resource to our members. The *Breastfeeding Network* has over 50 current members who receive *The MilkyWay* e-newsletter monthly; this number continues to grow as the word gets out about this important network. The *Higher-Order Multiples Network* continues to actively assist our many families having three or more babies. MBC's *Loss Support Network* has been providing support for grieving families for over 13 years and also has over 50 members who receive the monthly *Forever Angels* e-newsletter. The *Francophone*, *Lone Parents* and *Special Needs Networks* continue to offer e-connections and a quarterly newsletter within *Multiple Moments*. Unfortunately, the *Adult Network* has not taken off as expected. Adult multiples are encouraged to get involved and assist in the development of this support network.



(NEW Bilingual Poster)

Health & Education

The Health & Education Committee continues to work towards increasing awareness of multiple-birth issues, and encouraging governments and professionals to advance standards in the care of multiple-birth families. Over the past year, progress was made through a number of activities including:

- Assisted in the development of an organizational strategy to address the current Canadian Employment Insurance Benefit inequities for new parents of multiples.
- Formalized a partnership with Mount Sinai Hospital to produce an educational video/DVD for parents expecting multiple-birth children. It is anticipated that this DVD will become a valuable educational resource for prenatal educators, parenting groups, and families.
- In collaboration with the Best Start Resource Centre, published *Low Birth Weight & Preterm Multiple Births: A Canadian Profile*. This fact sheet provides background information for health professionals on risks and strategies for low birth weight and preterm multiple births.
- Continued efforts to encourage the Ontario Ministry of Youth and Child Services to address the needs of multiple-birth children and their families in the Best Start Initiative.
- Created a new Fact Sheet – *Mothers of Multiples and Post Partum Depression*. This Fact Sheet fills a void and provides timely support for this important topic.
- Two committee members participated in a Canadian Perinatal Network's (CPN) investigators meeting, held last September in Toronto, and delivered a presentation on issues related to preterm multiple births.
- Participated in a Co-Bedding Pilot Project of term, healthy twins in the General and Civic Hospital Campuses in Ottawa. A new Fact Sheet – *Multiples and Co-Bedding* was developed.
- Collaborated with the Hospital for Sick Children (Motherisk Program) in writing an article on Prenatal Multivitamin-Mineral Supplementation.



Donations & Sponsorships in 2005-2006

MBC and its members appreciate all donations. Over the last year, MBC received multiple donations and sponsorships including in-kind donations from our many national volunteers.

Special Mentions...

Multiple thanks to Duchesnay Inc. (www.duchesnay.com) for their 2nd annual donation to MBC. This generous donation will go towards a mutually satisfactory national project currently under discussion. In the past, Duchesnay has specifically assisted MBC with the *Multiple Moments* magazine budget. Duchesnay's vision closely relates MBC's vision – *to improve the quality of life of women during pregnancy*.

Special thanks to MBC's Affiliate Chapter, Temiskaming Multiple Births (www.temiskamingmultiplebirths.com), for their sponsorship of the design and printing of 3000 bilingual posters. (*see poster on page 2*)

'Back to Basics' – Volunteer Development Retreat 2005

The MBC Board of Directors wore many hats in 2005. Not only did they fulfill their duties in governing Canada's national organization for the multiple-birth community, they also rolled up their sleeves, organizing and coordinating 'Back to Basics' along with the 1st annual National Multiple Births Awareness Day lead event on May 28, 2005.

This three-day (May 27-29, 2005) Volunteer Development Retreat was held at the Canadian Ecology Centre in the Samuel de Champlain Provincial Park near Mattawa, Ontario. The secluded conference facility was the perfect location for national and chapter volunteers to get 'back to basics'. Delegates were treated to sunny days and pleasant evenings.



Informational workshops and sharing sessions included hands-on orientation of the volunteer training site, interactive sessions on team-building, and an introduction to many new MBC resources. The delegates also enjoyed some outdoor activities: canoeing, mountain biking, hiking, an activity using the GPS system, an adventurous walk using night vision monoculars, and an evening around the campfire, drumming, baking bannock bread, banana boats and yummy 'smores!

"I was part of something, that few have ever had the opportunity to be apart of, that was spending time with amazing women who are working to change things for many. With each step, both the politicians and the public are becoming more aware of the additional funding and support required for families of twins or higher-order multiples."

Jeannie Germain, Temiskaming Multiple Births

'Back to Basics' (continued)

The Volunteer Recognition Dinner on Saturday night was inspirational with volunteers being recognized for their many years of volunteer service at the national level. This was followed by the presentation of the year's Making a Difference Awards.

'Back to Basics' truly was a testament of the volunteer spirit of MBC, where many hands can and will make the load lighter for all those who belong in the multiple-birth community.

"From bannock to boats and marshmallows to midnight talks, the delegates bonded and learned more about the basics of volunteering this year. Locally in Durham Region, we will be getting 'back to basics' regarding recruiting new volunteers. We have decided to focus on the positives and the benefits of volunteering. DRPOMBA will also be encouraging as many of our members as possible to explore the volunteer training website."

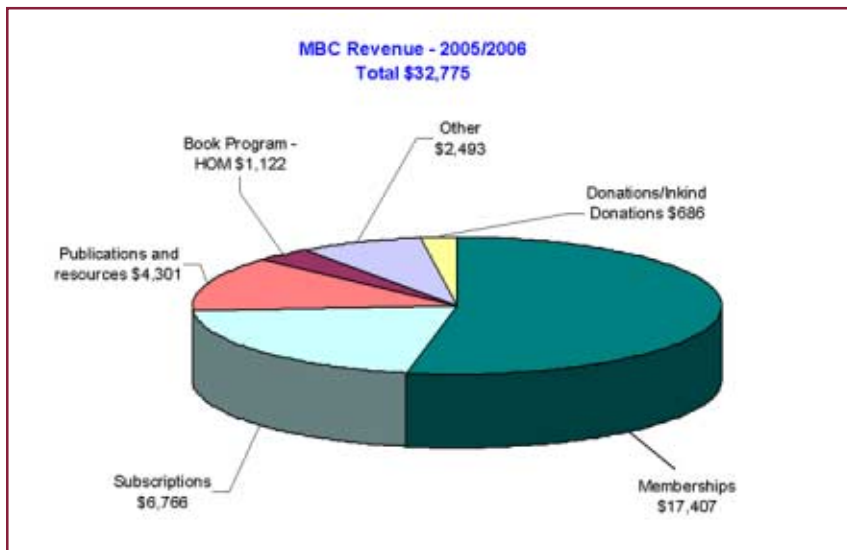
Katherine Romain, President, Durham POMBA

Financial Report

MBC had a good, strong financial year ending March 31, 2006 thanks to you, our members!

Our results for the year were bolstered by membership fees earned during the period being greater than those budgeted by almost \$1,200 (over 2005 by about \$600). Subscription revenue was in line with budget, and about \$400 over the prior year. We had a disappointing year with publication sales compared to our more aggressive budget for the year, but are optimistic for the future growth of this area. Other revenue results are better than budget including a profit from the 'Back to Basics' Retreat in May 2005 (\$950), and a small profit (\$57) for the NMBAD activities, both thanks to the generous support of fundraising efforts.

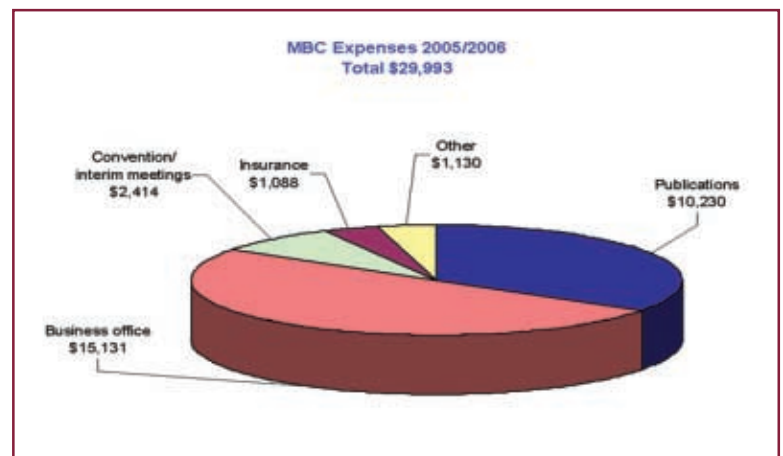
The favourable revenue variances are supported by some cost savings in almost all areas including the costs of publications, a small savings in the cost of the Business Office compared to budget, and the costs for meetings.



In all, MBC was able to generate a profit of \$2,782 to be added to our small surplus, and allow us to deal with unexpected financial requirements.

Revenue and Expenses Year Ending March 31, 2006

(Not reviewed by Bennett Gold)



Transitional Plan Update — Years 3 of 3-Year Plan

The Transitional Plan was developed in 2003 to outline the key objectives for the years 2003-2006. In each case, achieving the objectives in the three-year transition would increase the opportunities and improve MBC's success in addressing the longer-term Business Plan that was created as a result of the Mapping the Future Project (MTF). The following outlines the activities that were completed over the past year that directly relate to the plans set out for Year 3 of the Transitional Plan. Not all work planned was completed, however MBC made great strides in moving forward and is proud of the work that was completed with limited resources at its disposal. The Board will present the current draft of the Strategic Plan - "*Building The Future*" - at the 2006 Annual General Meeting. The Strategic Plan will then incorporate feedback on initiatives from stakeholders over the next few months. (Years 1 & 2 updates can be found on the MBC web site.)

Increase Volunteers

- Appointed a Volunteer Coordinator
- Created a list of volunteers and committees needed to move MBC forward
- Encouraged the utilization of the volunteer training section of website during Volunteer Development Retreat
- Reviewed volunteer training section of website for current contents to assess needed updates
- Hosted Volunteer Development Retreat and prepared resources for the sessions
- Created new committee for translation of French resources and appointed a chair

Increase Membership

- Created a new committee to review the membership structure and begin chapter outreach activities with non-member and former-member clubs
- Established relationships with non-member clubs
- Created French promotional materials and a new bilingual poster
- Produced a radio public service announcement (PSA)
- Provided MBC membership resources for distribution at Twins Festival in Montreal attended by Temiskaming Multiple Births who also carried the National Multiple Births Awareness Day (NMBAD) banner in the parade
- Attended conferences/trade shows in Toronto and Ottawa
- Developed a media database
- Created an annual media award
- Reformatted *Multiple Moments* with intention to eventually include in all memberships
- Send out a free new parents package to all families expecting 3 or more babies courtesy of the HOM network
- Welcomed new chapters from North Bay, Quinte and Fredericton

Increase Revenue Generation

- Started 2 national fundraisers and shared information with chapters
- Received funding from Duchesnay and Best Start
- Submitted funding proposals to Trillium and Heritage Canada
- Received support from Temiskaming Multiple Births for new bilingual poster
- Earned revenue from MBC chapters ordering books online from Chapters Indigo affiliate program
- Received donations from Volunteer Development Retreat
- Earned revenue from new publications including Fact Sheets and Breastfeeding Support Kit
- Earned revenue from MBC pins and NMBAD kits

Create a New National Web Site

- Advertised the Mt. Sinai Hospital symposium
- Appointed a Forum Leader to watch over the forums
- Posted the Twins Study request from Dr. Barrett's team
- Posted Information Circulars in the Resources section
- Created a new Recalls page
- Created a new Awareness Day section

Enhance our National Office

- Added new volunteers to assist in the national office
- Promoting the use of the 1-800 number to chapters

Making A Difference Awards

The Making A Difference Awards were founded in 1999 in memory of Sheryl McInnes (founder of the former POMBA Canada). The awards were established to acknowledge outstanding contributions and achievements within the multiple-birth community, and to celebrate those who have demonstrated excellence or exceptional dedication.

Congratulations to the following deserving winners – you have made a difference!

Winners from the 2005 Volunteer Development Retreat in Mattawa, ON:

**Mira Chan - Local Category
Vancouver Twins and More Club**

**Vicki Riley - National Category
MBC Business Services Manager
Multiple Moments Editor-in-Chief**

**Patricia Malmstrom - International Category
Twin Services Consulting**

Visit the MBC website for past winners and more information at: www.multiplebirthscanada.org

National Multiple Births Awareness Day...

is a celebration and an opportunity for the multiple-birth community to speak to Canadians about challenges and issues that are unique to multiple-birth families. It is commemorated annually on May 28th, the birth date of the Dionne Quints, who, in their adult life, quietly and effectively shared the message that first and foremost multiple-birth children are individuals. Building upon that message, Multiple Births Canada encourages members across Canada to unite and draw attention to each year's chosen theme:

2005 – “*A Call to Dialogue*” focused on the need to review current provisions for maternity, parental and compassionate care under the federal Employment Insurance Program.

The outcome of that dialogue included national media coverage and an opportunity to make a formal presentation in November 2005 to the Human Resources and Social Development Canada's Senior Policy Advisor to the former Minister, the Honourable Belinda Stronach. In March 2006, a similar presentation was sent to the Honourable Diane Finley, Minister of Human Resources and Social Development. The follow-up presentation included an outline of the needs of multiple-birth families as they pertain to Employment Insurance benefits and criteria.

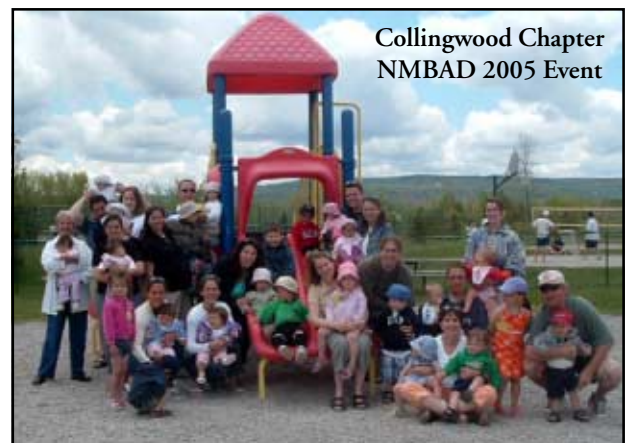
2006 – The theme “*Raising awareness of the unique risks of multiple-birth pregnancies and the post-natal issues faced by parents and multiples*” will further educate our politicians and policy makers about the unique challenges faced by our families.



Barrie Chapter NMBAD 2005 Event

National Multiple Births Awareness Day is important because it encourages a better understanding of the individuality and complexity of the multiple-birth relationship. Further, it focuses on a single theme in order to educate those who are not familiar with the multiple-birth experience. MBC believes that creating awareness and helping others to understand the journeys we travel will lead to opportunities and advocate change on behalf of the entire Canadian multiple-birth community.

Over the past 20 years, the number of multiple-births has risen by 35 percent in Canada. Although multiples represent 1 in 34 births, they account for 20% of preterm births, 25% of low birth weight births, and almost 30% of very low birth weight births. Early detection of the multiple pregnancy, proper nutrition and expert advice from professionals trained in multiple-birth pregnancies can lead to better outcomes.



Collingwood Chapter NMBAD 2005 Event



Vancouver & Richmond/Delta Chapters NMBAD 2005 Event

“I would like to take this opportunity to personally thank all who helped to coordinate this past weekend. I had a terrific, relaxed, well-paced weekend. I was very proud at the Multiple Awareness Day celebrations for all that we do as an organization.”

Pat

Pat Harber is the mother of 9-year-old triplet girls and a 24-year-old daughter, a member of

Twins Plus Association of Brampton and a national volunteer.

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Many people contribute to the work of Multiple Births Canada and we gratefully acknowledge their generous support.