



Connecting MBC, Chapters, Volunteers and Members...

From the Desks of the Directors...

DIRECTOR OF VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT/CHAIR-Kim Weatherall

Wondering what the Directors have been up to since the last RFN? It has been a very busy fall for the MBC Board! The following is a synopsis of what we have been working on either collectively and/or independently since the last RFN. Along with reading and responding to the numerous emails we receive (and create as a group!), we have been assisting Diane Myers on the Trillium proposal, planning the 2005 AGM & Volunteer Development Retreat, preparing for and attending the Interim meeting and we have continued to meet bi-weekly on MSN for Board meetings, about 2.5 hours each time.



Carrie & Cheryl – these cabins are totally wired!

Personally, the time leading up to the Interim meeting was spent gathering information for Board Manuals to help guide the work completed by each of the Board Members and planning the logistics, the agenda and gathering the information that would be needed. Kim, Gail, Carrie and Cheryl (Board Members) along with Vicki Riley (BSM) and Diane Myers (Volunteer) spent the 1st weekend in October at the Canadian Ecology Centre for the Interim Board Meeting, Nicole Fisher (Board Member) joining us by phone. We chose this spot to allow the Board to view the potential site for



Back row Diane Myers and Vicki Riley
Front row Carrie Johnston, Cheryl Wadasinghe and Gail Moore

Board & Volunteers...

Officers:

Chair, Kim Weatherall
Vice-Chair, Gail Moore
Treasurer, Carrie Johnston
Secretary, Lisa McInnes (Currently on a leave of absence)
Past President/Chair, Carrie Johnston
Privacy Officer, Kim Weatherall
Privacy Officer, Carrie Johnston

Board of Directors:

Director of Communications, Gail Moore
Director of Finance, Carrie Johnston
Director of Information Management, Lisa McInnes (Currently on a leave of absence)
Director of Membership, Nicole Fisher
Director of Research, Cheryl Wadasinghe
Director of Volunteer Management, Kim Weatherall

Business Office

Business Services Manager, Vicki Riley

Committee Chairpersons:

Breastfeeding Support Network Chair, Lynda P. Haddon
Chapter Liaison, Sheri Lockyer
Clothing Sale Updates, Vicki Riley
Conference Liaison, Kim Weatherall
Conference 2005 Chairs, Kim Weatherall and Gail Moore (Acting) Discount Coordinator, Kim Weatherall
Francophone Support Network Chair, Josée Roy
(Acting) HOM Support Network Chair, Diane Myers
Lone Parenting Network Chair, VACANT
Loss Support Network Chair, Lynda P. Haddon
Making a Difference Awards, Katherine Romain
MBC Representative Liaison, Shelly Blizzard-Jones
Multiple Moments Editor, Vicki Riley
Multiple Moments Co-Editor, Meredith Fraser-Ohman
MM Book Reviewer, Kim Skublics
Special Needs Support Network Chair, Francesca Bell
VAO Project Representative, Diane Myers
Webmaster, John Withnall

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conference2005@multiplebirthscanada.org
discounts@multiplebirthscanada.org
francophone@multiplebirthscanada.org
homnetwork@multiplebirthscanada.org
loneparents@multiplebirthscanada.org
loss@multiplebirthscanada.org
makingadifference@multiplebirthscanada.org
mbcrep@multiplebirthscanada.org
mmeditor@multiplebirthscanada.org

mmbookreviewer@multiplebirthscanada.org
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the upcoming Volunteer Retreat in May 2005. We were able to accomplish so much, yet have a good time getting to know one another and the facilities better. It began Friday afternoon with a tour of the facilities, preliminary meetings, a trip to meet with the representative at the Dionne Quints Museum in North Bay and back to the cabins to work late into the evening (ok so 1:00 am!).

We resumed our meetings early Saturday, had a short walk in the woods with Mother Stork in the afternoon (picture taking event!), worked late into the evening Saturday and concluded mid-afternoon on Sunday for a total of 27+ hrs of actual meeting time. This does not include all the time when we discussed MBC issues over meals and after lights out! The main topics of the weekend were the following: conference 2005 planning, new Adult Multiple Support Network, National MBC Awareness Day theme and launch, membership / chapter development, advocacy with res-

pect to EI/Parental Leave, and checking in on where we stood in relation to the MBC Goals and Objectives. Throughout it all, we also met with Diane Myers about the Trillium application. In addition, we managed to look at ways of helping Vicki have more free time (she works way too much!), renewed her contract, overhauled the Business Office computer and discussed a variety of other topics that were better accom-plished together in one room. I am very proud of those involved – Way to go gang! We stayed focused in such a beautiful environment and accomplished so much that weekend.

Please make sure to contact a Board Member if you have any questions with regards to any of the work that we have been doing or email me directly at chair@multiplebirthscanada.org

DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS/ VICE-CHAIR-Gail Moore

It's not that I enjoy overextending myself, but it's hard not to roll up your sleeves when you have a person like Kim at the lead! That's the short reason why I find myself co-chairing two annual MBC events in a row!

I'm talking about "Back to Basics" MBC's AGM & Volunteer Development Retreat. As an experienced co-chair, I know what's ahead – and, it's not going to be easy. But, I also know that there are many chapters who'll support us and we're looking forward to hearing from you.

Connecting MBC, Chapters, Volunteers and Members...

Other projects I've been pushing forward are also outlined later in this RFN – National Multiple Births Awareness Day and the Adult Multiples Support Network. I hope you'll catch my passion for these new initiatives!

Finally, I've been involved in our application to the Trillium Foundation. Specifically, I've been able to get a "let's talk about it" response from three Canadian Corporations in regards to funding assistance. We're far from seeing any agreements, but at least we've got some hope. Sustainability is a necessary part of "Building the Future" and I'm really hoping that we have some positive news to share in 2005.

DIRECTOR OF MEMBERSHIP – Nicole Fisher

Whew! What a whirlwind it has been since I started this position in mid-September! I have learned more about MBC and my computer than I ever thought possible!

I have been spending my time trying to get up to speed with how MBC operates by reading over a lot of documents, reviewing the website, and training on the Volunteer Orientation website. I never dreamed that so much email could fly around on a daily basis! I am definitely still in the learning process, there is so much work being done by the volunteers of MBC!

I spent a morning in Orangeville with Diane Myers, meeting with a group of multiple-birth moms who are interested in taking their playgroup a step farther and forming a chapter. That was exciting to me, seeing a chapter start from the beginning (not to mention the drive on a beautiful, sunny, autumn day with adult music playing!). I also attended a seminar here in Waterloo about sustaining non-profit organizations, which was informative. We hope to use some of that information to help MBC further its goals.

In the next little while I hope to work further with Shelly Blizzard-Jones and Lynn Stadler to communicate with each MBC chapter, through a chat format with all the Chapter MBC Representatives and also by direct phone calls to each chapter. We want to touch base with every chapter to open the lines of communication. Of course, you are welcome to contact me at anytime! Please email me at membership@multiplebirthscanada.org

DIRECTOR OF RESEARCH – Cheryl Wadasinghe

Most recently, I have been spending my time thinking about childcare and employment insurance -- not for me personally, but on behalf of you, our membership. These two issues have been getting a lot of attention in the media -- partly because of the last federal election, but also because many Canadians are not happy with the state of child care in Canada or with the current provisions under EI.

My fellow board members and I have been asking ourselves how these two issues affect multiple-birth families -- and what we can do to improve not only the awareness of our members to what services and policies exist to help them, but also to improve awareness of multiple-birth issues at the government level.

As a result, the Board has approved a tentative advocacy work plan that I am now trying to get through as best I can... Our main intent is to develop and expand the 'advocacy' page in the book of services that MBC provides to its members, to raise awareness of the needs of families with multiples, and contribute to the advocacy work being done by many other like-minded organizations in Canada.

To start with, we are preparing to engage the federal government at a very general level by writing letters that describe our organization, the work that we do, and our position regarding both child care and parental leave (EI). My second task is to establish (and re-establish) working partnerships with other organizations, in order to better understand how they conduct their advocacy work and hopefully develop some joint policy statements. Thirdly, we hope to develop an MBC policy statement in time for the celebration of the first annual National Multiple Births Awareness Day.

Other tasks we hope to engage in include advocacy activities at the provincial level (impending health cuts in Ontario to start), as well as letters to both Prime Minister Paul Martin and Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty to advise them about National Multiple Births Awareness Day.

This is our first attempt as a board to establish a formal advocacy arm to MBC, and it shows. Progress will likely be slow, but you should soon be seeing new postings to the website regarding this work -- and your feedback and comments and ideas are more than welcome. This is very exciting and motivating work! If you are interested in helping out in this endeavor, please do not hesitate to contact me at research@multiplebirthscanada.org

DIRECTOR OF FINANCE – Carrie Johnston

The Value of Volunteering. While it's not always exciting to report on the status of one's financial dealings, it is interesting to look at the value of volunteer hours. What are the manpower costs to run a volunteer organization? If one paid staff to do the work, what value would that have in our annual budget.

A couple years ago, the Directors of MBC did an estimate of how many hours were put in by volunteers to run all aspects of the national office, board of directors and the various committees, support networks and resources and it was a big eye opener to come up with a figure that equalled 5 full time employees. With the national office continuing to expand, more calls, emails and referrals going through, additional projects being developed, more resources & services provided, it would be easy to imagine our equivalent manpower is likely equal to more than 8 full time employees.

What would that equal in dollar figures? Here's where it gets pretty scary. Not even considering that some roles would be equivalent to the duties of an Executive Director right down to Administrative Assistants as well as publishing professionals and management type staff. Calculating at a modest average salary of \$30,000 per year, that equates to \$240,000 annually to run a national organization. It's quite

humbling to think that all that work and time spent is almost completely voluntary.

At present, MBC runs with an annual budget of slightly more than \$37,000. Spending wisely and always finding the most economical way to run things, has put MBC in a solid position to continue serving multiple-birth families for years to come. While similar organizations continue to struggle, and in some cases cease operating, the investment our volunteers are making in MBC not only relates to an actual dollar amount, but contributes to the spirit and pride in our organization.

Take the time at some point to estimate the value of volunteers in your own chapter. You might be very surprised to see how much is being invested right in your own community.

MBC Board Objectives 2004-2005...

The following are some of the priorities of the Board of Directors for 2004-2005, in keeping with both the goals and objectives of the Transitional and longer term Business Plan. These priorities were identified during the Interim meeting as areas in which the MBC Board and Volunteers would focus their attention in order to meet these goals. An overall theme in our work would be to concentrate on the area of *conception to 5 years old*, as this is the area that we know best! In addition, the results and the exposure from the National Multiple Birth Awareness Day will have a large impact on all of these areas.

In the area of **Increasing Membership...**

- Develop stronger relationships with Affiliate Chapters through direct contact with phone calls, with the help of the new MBC Rep Liaison, by using MSN Chats and creating a more defined role for the MBC Reps.
- Create an action plan for Affiliate Chapter Membership with new, existing and previous MBC chapters. This plan will include steps to improve the renewal process.
- Develop an Adult Multiples Support Network to attract individual membership to MBC.

In the area of **Increasing Volunteers...**

- Hiring a Volunteer Coordinator through the Trillium Proposal/or to create a volunteer position that will take the place of a paid Volunteer Coordinator.
- Increase the number of MBC Volunteers trained through the training site and through the Volunteer Retreat 2005.
- Increase Volunteer Recognition with a new award to be called the Dionne Award.

In the area of **Increasing Revenue...**

- Create a Sustainability Plan that will include developing more partnership agreements.
- Continue to develop the Trillium Proposal.
- Develop a PR Plan that will include the promotion of membership, publications, e-commerce through the use of the website, posters, pamphlets, etc.
- Develop fundraising ideas and partnerships with chapters.

Connecting MBC, Chapters, Volunteers and Members...

In the area of Improving the National Website...

- Purchase software to increase the speed in getting changes completed and to decrease overall cost to update.
- Improve the content including more pictures, position statements, information for families, and information for and by professionals.
- Evaluate the website including website stats on a regular basis (i.e. unique hits, best pages, etc.)
- Promote the MBC forums and volunteer training.
- Improve the resources in the Members' and Chapter Executives' Only portions of the website, along with improve the password and security of these areas of the site.

In the area of Enhancing our National Office...

- Investigate the purchase of software that will aid the work completed by the Business Services Manager.
- Investigate finding assistance for the BSM (i.e. Co-op Student).
- Create more guidelines for BSM to work by including specific office hours to be posted and adhered to.

National Multiple Births Awareness Day...

"We, Annette and Cécile, two of the Dionne Quintuplets, believe society should recognize multiple-birth children for their individuality while also acknowledging the unique challenges faced by these children and their families. For this reason we support the efforts of Multiple Births Canada in initiating and launching National Multiple Births Awareness Day to be henceforth held on May 28th."

After months of discussion, we have our wish! Annette and Cécile have not only allowed us to celebrate National Multiple Births Awareness Day on their birth date, they've endorsed our efforts by issuing a public statement.

This new MBC initiative will guide Canadians to a better understanding of the unique needs and challenges faced by multiple-birth individuals and their families. In 2005, we'll focus on improving Canada's Employment Insurance (EI) benefits for new multiple-birth parents.

At present maternity and parental benefits provided through EI are not adequate. They do not consider the extra burden that weighs on parents and their newborns before and after the multiple-birth delivery. Medical evidence indicates that the birth of one baby allows for recovery and bonding to occur much sooner than when two or more babies are born, yet the timeline for these parents to return to work is the same. This does not address the individuality of multiple-birth babies, nor meet the objectives of current EI standards.

Our plans for May 28, 2005 include bringing our "Back to Basics" delegates to the Dionne Quints Museum in North Bay for a media event.

Multiple Births Canada 2005 AGM & Volunteer Retreat...

Back to Basics
May 27-29, 2005

The setting for our next AGM and Volunteer Development Retreat 'Back to Basics' is the Canadian Ecology Centre at Samuel De Champlain Provincial Park, just east of Mattawa, ON. The goal is to offer workshops that will make us stronger at the chapter level. In addition to the AGM, the weekend includes celebrating our first annual "National Multiple Births Awareness Day" - May 28th. MBC chose this site, as it is 20 minutes from where the Dionne Quintuplets were born May 28th, 1934.



The exciting news is that the accommodations are far from basic. Each room is equipped with extras including a computer wired to the Net!

You'll love that registration includes... all meals, all activities including a visit to the Dionne Quints Museum AND all accommodations!

Our agenda includes a full range of workshops: Train the Trainer, Transferring Training to your Chapter, PR and Community Awareness, Managing your Chapter, and Growing your programs to meet the needs of your members.

We've also worked in opportunities to have fun and bond with others! Share the news and the excitement. You and your chapter will benefit from this volunteer development retreat!

Thanks Carrie for designing our symbolic logo! Check it out in colour on the MBC website!

2005 Volunteer Retreat - We need your help!

As mentioned, the 2005 Conference has transitioned into a training weekend for volunteers of MBC and its affiliate Chapters. This is exciting to the Board as it offers us an opportunity to get to know our members better, allows more time for learning and sharing between chapters and gives everyone time to learn more about MBC and Chapter roles in supporting our collective membership.

The challenge for the national organization is how do six people--spread across Canada--keep up with their board duties, organize this event, and find time to access the funds needed to do it all?

We need the support of affiliate members and chapters to make this volunteer and chapter development weekend a success. How can you help? We need financial donations of any size, but we are also hoping you will use your connections with businesses or individuals to access cash donations, products, or services.

Your chapter can also support this event by holding a fundraiser (or 2) and donating all or partial funds to the retreat. Further, it is hoped that volunteers from your chapter will attend and reap the benefits of the volunteer development program.

If you feel you can help in any way, don't be shy, please contact us as soon as you can! Thank you for your support of MBC, its chapters and its members!

Multiple Births Canada 2006 AGM and Conference...

Plowing Thru Parenthood
May 25-28, 2006

Chatham-Kent Multiple Births Association has graciously agreed to host the 2006 AGM and Conference over the weekend of May 25 - 28, 2006, which will incorporate the 2nd year of celebrating the National Multiple Birth Awareness Day. Following in the tradition of previous conferences, this will include workshops for parents, volunteers, chapters and professionals. MBC would like to thank the Chatham-Kent Chapter and their dedicated volunteers for taking on this conference and their continued support of MBC.

Watch for exciting information both through Information Circulars and on the website, as more details are confirmed. If you live in that area and would like to help out the conference committee or have questions please email conference2006@multiplebirthscanada.org

For more information about the 2005 and 2006 AGMs and Conferences, contact the MBC Conference Liaison - Kim Weatherall at conferenceliasion@multiplebirthscanada.org

Building the Future... An Update on Trillium...

Building the Future, an Ontario Trillium proposal, is an essential part of our progress to allow Multiple Births Canada to develop a stronger base and to grow. An Ontario Trillium proposal was to be submitted on October 15, 2004, but I felt that the proposal was not yet at a stage where we would be successful. With the support of the MBC Board, I did not submit on this date. The next proposal deadline is on March 1, 2005, at which time we will be better prepared to submit a successful proposal.

Through the Ontario Trillium Foundation funding, Multiple Births Canada will improve the health and well being of multiple-birth children and their families by improving our human resources and financial vibrancy capacities.

Building the Future, through work in northern, south and eastern, and central Ontario we will:

- Recruit, train and retain more volunteers
- Build stronger Chapters and stronger relations with new and existing chapters

Connecting MBC, Chapters, Volunteers and Members...

- Increase awareness of MBC and its Chapters
- Ensure long term financial vibrancy

Building the Future will be a three-year project that will strengthen and build MBC's foundation. This will allow us to realize our dreams.

Diane Myers

NEW -- Chapter Executives Section on Website...

Looking for information and resources to help you manage your chapter? We are pleased to announce that MBC has created a secure Chapter Executives section of the MBC website to provide better access to information, announcements and tools to help you better fulfill your important roles on your local Chapter executive/board.

Find all the latest membership forms and subscription forms, sample templates of a membership database or a chapter membership form, as well as the Chapter Handbook and Operating Guidelines which contains information about the formation and operation of a local MBC chapter. Look for updates to the Handbook in this section, information for MBC Representatives specifically and tips on how to promote your chapter in your community with our Media & PR Guide. Running a local chapter can be a daunting task. Many others have been there, done that, and have a wealth of information to share so take advantage of finding all this information in one spot on the MBC website. Ideas are always welcome so if you're looking for something and can't find it, let us know.

Contact the Business Office for your Chapter's password today!

Partnership Efforts...

Working together... Multiple Births Canada and the Ottawa Coalition for the Prevention of Low Birth Weight (OCPLBW)

Earlier this year, at the request of OCPLBW, MBC submitted a proposal to collaboratively work on a project that would address low birth weight and preterm birth prevention in multiples. MBC is proud to work together on resources that will benefit families expecting multiples in Canada. This collaborative project is funded by OCPLBW through funds they received from Success by 6 to address low birth weight issues and how to impact them. The following is a summary of the status of that project.

While not all low birth weight or preterm births can be prevented, there are some things parents, family and community can do to help prevent them. Donna Launslager, Diane Myers and Lynda Haddon (Chair, OCPLBW) are collaborating with OCPLBW Committee on a detailed Fact Sheet on multiple birth low birth weight and preterm birth prevention. The content will be posted on OCPLBW's Site at www.lbwinfo.ca and will also be available for use by MBC, as Fact Sheets in both official languages, and on MBC's web site. This collaboration is another important example of MBC working with other Committees in our communities to bring about positive change.

Loss Support Network...

I am pleased to share the following letter with you received from Lynne Schulz, from Australia. Lynne is the author of "The Survivor." This book picks up where Lynne's first book, "The Diary" left off, chronicling multiple-birth loss and its effect upon survivors and their families.

MBC's Loss Support Network and Lynne have been sharing information for many years and MBC's Bereavement Support Kit was the basis for Apex Australia Twin Loss Awareness Kit. As Lynne states, "I feel proud that...we can work together..." By combining our skills and expertise we can reach our goal of supporting all multiple-birth families, wherever in the world there is a need. Who could ask for more?

If you would like to order Lynne's books on surviving co-multiples, you can do so through Pleasant Word at the following Web Site: www.pleasantword.com

Hi Lynda, 30th October, 2004

Great to hear from you! Thank you so much for helping to promote my book!!!

Also, whenever I talk about the twin loss awareness kits, I speak about the positive relationship that has been established between our two countries in regards to twin loss issues. I feel very proud that we can demonstrate that organizations, no matter where they are in the world, can work together instead of against each other.

I really appreciate all the promotional work that you do for me, Lynda! One day I hope we get to meet face to face!

Take care and many thanks for the update. Enjoy your day :] Lynne Schulz

NEW - Adult Multiples Support Network...

Responding to requests for new services for adult multiple-birth individuals, MBC initiated the NEW Adult Multiples Support Network.

Interim Chair of this new network is Dave Johnston, an adult multiple and husband to none other than Carrie Johnston!

MBC is encouraging adult multiples to discuss their needs and issues online at a new forum, hosted by www.multiplebirthscanada.org.

It is anticipated that the network will want to develop new resource tools to cover such topics as marriage to a multiple, how to deal with the loss of a co-multiple, and how to handle separation from a co-multiple.

As the only national organization addressing the needs of Canada's multiple-birth community, MBC will be welcoming a population estimated at over a half million multiple-birth adults.

Multiple Thanks...

To **Temiskaming Multiple Births** for donating the funds from the MBC 2004 AGM and Conference to the website fund! The Conference Grant Agreement states that any surplus funds from the conference be split 3 ways, 1/3 to the Host Chapter, 1/3 to MBC and 1/3 to a project that is mutually agreed upon. This year the success of 2004 allowed for \$1400 to be donated to the website (\$1000 towards the Webmaster fees for

the site's creation and funds to purchase of the program *Contribute* for the Business Office). *Contribute* allows the Business Services Manager to make updates (not structural changes) from the Business Office to the website. The last third will be going straight towards the 2005 Volunteer Retreat thanks to the hard work of the 2004 Committee, Chapter and their community!

To **Vicki Riley** who has been thoroughly enjoying the purchase of *Contribute* and has been making incredible changes and updates to the website on a very regular basis. This work is not really part of her contract with MBC, but the work that she has been doing is simply amazing. Keep up the great work Vicki!

To **Diane Myers, Donna Launslager and Lynda Haddon** for all their hard work on getting the information needed to complete the Low Birth Weight Fact Sheet.

To **Vivian Hassam** (mother to Vicki Riley) for her many hours of assistance in the Business Office - collating, folding, stapling and stuffing!

To **Diane and her helpers** on the hundreds of hours already devoted to the Trillium application!

To **Katherine Romain, Mary Finer, Rita Reid, Liz Boily, Suzanne Lyons, Diane Myers and Joanne McGlynn** for representing MBC at the National Women's Show.

Volunteer Recognition...

It is time once again to start thinking about whom in your community should receive the **Making a Difference Award**. This award was established to acknowledge outstanding contributions and achievements within the multiple-birth community.

Is there someone in your chapter or community who has "gone beyond the call of duty?"

Is there someone at National level who has inspired you or your chapter?

Is there someone Internationally who has had a positive impact on Multiple Births Canada?

Now is the time to start thinking about those people who have shown exceptional dedication or excellence in the work that they do for the multiple-birth community.

The recipients of these awards will be honoured at the 2005 Volunteer Development Retreat in Mattawa, Ontario and will receive an engraved plaque and certificate.

Without volunteers there would be no support for multiple-birth families at the local, national and international levels!!

Get your nomination form...

Online: www.multiplebirthscanada.org/english/makingadiff.php

By phone: (705)429-0901 or 1-866-228-8824 and request your nomination form by mail

By email: makingadifference@multiplebirthscanada.org

Forms can be returned electronically to makingadifference@multiplebirthscanada.org, mailed to Making a Difference Award Committee, c/o 28 Tom Edwards Drive, Whitby, ON, Canada L1R 2R4, or faxed to 705-429-9809.

Deadline for nominations is March 30, 2005.

Questions? Email Katherine Romain at makingadifference@multiplebirthscanada.org