

Connecting MBC, Chapters, Volunteers and Members...

Report from National...

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Paying It Forward

Paying it forward is a relatively new phrase and potentially a new way of thinking for many people—to look beyond our own personal problems or issues and begin to think of the difference one can make in the life of another. The phrase and premise of the concept, for those who may not be familiar with it, is based on the book by Catherine Ryan Hyde (and later the movie), who, through a personal experience of her own, learned the importance of repaying her appreciation of help received by paying it forward to someone else when not given the opportunity to directly thank those who had helped her. The action taken does not need to be huge or lavish; it simply needs to be done from the heart and without an expectation of self-gain.

Is this concept really that new, or is it simply another way to think about the lifelong behavior of people who volunteer in a variety of capacities, who help their neighbour at every opportunity, or who will put others first in a time of need? Do you feel as if you live by this philosophy in any or all aspects of your life, or do you pick and choose where the concept fits best? Over the last few years I have had many conversations about just how much we have become a “me” society, and that it appears that we are moving to an “it’s all about me and what I can get out of it” way of living.

As an example, I am asked frequently why I volunteer so much, and more specifically, why for multiple-birth issues. On many occasions the questions lead to what do I get “out of it” when my children are 19, and when the benefits of what I do are obviously not going to impact our immediate family. Even this week, when expressing just how exhausted we were to one another, an MBC Board member asked me, “Why do we do what we do?” I answer that it is because I don’t know what lies ahead for my family. Will there be more multiple-births in my family tree? And will it matter if there are not? Will my time be wasted when all is said and done? For me, the answer to those questions is quite simple. Helping to have a positive impact on the life of another is never a waste of time, and potentially never seeing or knowing of my impact should not matter to why I do what I do. The simple fact is that when you are willing to work towards making a difference in the life of another, you will be rewarded in your own personal satisfaction of knowing that you simply made the effort.

Naturally, I would not be me if I did not consider the implications of the philosophy of paying it forward for Multiple Births Canada, its membership and the future for the multiple-birth community. Is the work that is currently being completed by our volunteers from the national organization and local chapters going to impact the lives of our immediate families? The answer is a difficult one for sure; but as I noted earlier, should it matter if we will reap the benefits personally, or should we simply work towards the ultimate goal of improving the lives of all multiple-birth children and families in Canada (now and in the future)? I am very proud of those involved with MBC who are doing

just that...working towards a common mission with the pay it forward philosophy always in their heart and actions.

With the recent birth of the sextuplets here in Canada, we have been able to witness firsthand how an event in one person’s life can impact another, how a multiple birth and the knowledge gained as a result by the public, government officials and medical professionals will pay it forward to families of multiples for years to come. The media attention surrounding the sextuplets’ birth has brought much-needed attention to and increased awareness of multiple-birth issues, the needs of our families and awareness of the support system of MBC and its chapters. Multiple Births Canada, on behalf of all families in Canada, wish this family the very best as they begin their lives together, and we extend our heartfelt appreciation to them for the difference their birth has made for future generations in Canada.

The MBC Board wishes you the very happiest of new years! It is our wish for you that 2007 be a year filled with wonderful times, good health, happiness and a year in which you will make paying it forward a new philosophy to live by.



Kim Weatherall, CHAIR OF MBC
chair@multiplebirthscanada.org

The following report is a brief look at what the Board and some of the national volunteers have been working on since the last RFN. It also includes plans for work to be completed in 2007. For a more in-depth look at 2007 action points, please refer to the strategic plan located on the MBC website at: http://www.multiplebirthscanada.org/english/documents/StrategicPlan-Final-Oct2006_000.pdf

Prior to the holidays, the focus was on the preparation of the chapter renewal packages, initiating fundraising to cover the expenses of those attending ISTS, working on the membership fee survey, the launch of a new IC format and groundwork on translating the MBC website to French. The holidays brought a much-needed break for the Board, allowing everyone to recharge for what is shaping up to be a very busy 2007. The year began in high gear with the birth of the first sextuplets in Canada. As a result of the media attention generated by this special birth, Multiple Births Canada was called upon to answer many questions related to multiple-birth issues and the role MBC has to play in the community. Under the guidance of our Communications Director, Gail Moore, national volunteers, chapters and families rose to the occasion and represented both MBC and multiple-birth issues extraordinarily well. Thank you! For more information on the work completed, please see Gail’s message in this issue.

Furthering MBC’s goal of bringing the multiple-birth community together, in November the Board of Directors developed and distributed a membership fee structure survey to Outreach Committee members, national volunteers and Chapter Executives to ask for feedback on a

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number of suggestions for a new membership fee structure that current and new chapters could support. At the end of December, survey results were returned and analyzed. Our next steps include sending the same survey to non-member groups across Canada to enlist their feedback on the membership fee structure of our organization. Once these have been returned, the Board will take into consideration the opinions of all and develop its membership fee strategy to present to the membership at the AGM in June 2007, with the view to adopt a new fee structure at that time.

Other activities being worked on by MBC include preparation for the 2007 National Multiple Births Awareness Day, preparation for the 2007 AGM and Conference, preparation of the Annual Report, further fundraising efforts for ISTS, ongoing recruitment for additional national volunteers (including Board Members), further investigation of funding opportunities, and working towards bringing all families in Canada together through a strong chapter base and membership fee structure. In addition, the Board will be forming a national committee to begin work on hosting the 2008 AGM and Conference and the 30th Anniversary Celebrations of POMBA/MBC. If you have experience in this area and would like to be part of this committee, please contact Kim at chair@multiplebirthscanada.org.

Wishing everyone a wonderful 2007! Remember to send in your registration forms for the 2007 Conference...we are anxious to see you there!



Multiple Births Canada Prepares to Send Delegates to ICTS 2007

Plans for the 12th Congress of the International Society for Twin Studies (ICTS) to be held June 7-10, 2007 in Ghent, Belgium, are beginning to come together. Make sure you check out the Congress website, www.twins2007.be/, for more information about this very important weekend in which the world's leading medical specialists and researchers with a specialization in multiple births will come together to share their knowledge and experiences.

This Congress promises to be a time of learning, sharing and networking for all attendees, especially for Council of Multiple Birth Organizations (COMBO) members, which MBC is a member. MBC is planning to send delegates to represent Canada at this year's Congress and have submitted an abstract to be considered for presentation about Canada's National Multiple Births Awareness Day. If you wish to have more information about MBC's attendance at this year's Congress, please feel free to contact Kim at chair@multiplebirthscanada.org.

MBC is Looking for Volunteers

Without volunteers, Multiple Births Canada would simply not exist! Every day across Canada there are hundreds of volunteers working tirelessly in their communities to improve the lives of families with multiples. Whether as a family support volunteer, a Clothing Sale coordinator, a link to MBC, a Chapter Executive member or in any other capacity, these volunteers are making a difference in the lives of others.

At the national level, there is also a need for volunteers to assist in the fulfillment of MBC's mission and to assist the National Board of Directors in completing work that benefits all families in Canada.

The following are only a few of the many positions that are currently open. To view further details about these positions and to view more opportunities, please visit the MBC website under Volunteering/Volunteer Opportunities.

Open Board of Director Positions for 2007-2008

- Director of Finance
- Director of Fund Development
- Director of Information Management
- Director at Large Positions

Other Open Positions

- Independent Accountant
- Francophone Support Network Chair
- Adult Support Network Chair
- Volunteer Webmaster
- Volunteer Coordinator
- Marketing Volunteer
- Fundraising Coordinator and Fundraising Program Volunteer(s)
- National Discount/Affiliate Programs Coordinator
- Multiple Moments Volunteers:
 - Advertising Coordinator for MM
 - Writers: are you an aspiring writer? Do you have a story to tell?

Are you ready to Volunteer?

Please contact Lori MacEwen, Volunteer Coordinator at mbcvolunteers@multiplebirthscanada.org to discuss where your experience, interests and passions are best suited in volunteering with MBC.

MBC Website Links!!

Over 200 links to multiple-birth shopping and parenting resources Resources/Website Links

All MBC Fact Sheets (65+)

are available for FREE in downloadable PDF format in the Member's Only section of the MBC website

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Meredith Fraser-Ohman, MULTIPLE MOMENTS EDITOR
mmeditor@multiplebirthscanada.org

Greetings! Thanks for reading this issue of Multiple Moments—our first edition of 2007. As the new Editor, my first duty is to sincerely thank Vicki Riley for her endless dedication to Multiple Births Canada. Vicki has done an incredible job over the last seven years as Multiple Moments' Editor-in-Chief, while also serving as Business Manager for MBC. Vicki has given uncountable hours of service to both roles; her work ethic is admirable and truly unparalleled. I realize—with a slight sense of trepidation—what large shoes I am stepping into as I attempt to relieve Vicki of a portion of her tremendous workload. I can only hope to maintain the momentum she has generated with Multiple Moments.

Let me introduce—or reintroduce, if you remember me from earlier issues of Multiple Moments—myself. I am the mother of four-and-a-half-year-old trizygotic triplets (one boy, two girls). I have a wonderful husband—Todd—and a rewarding career as an Ottawa-based writer and editor. I've been an eager reader of Multiple Moments since I joined MBC in 2002, and I've helped out as Co-Editor for the last four years.

Through my volunteer work with MBC, I have come to appreciate the entire MBC family—not only the Board members and regular Multiple Moments contributors, but also multiple-birth families across the country. While we may not know each other personally, we share a common bond. Let's face it: we walk a unique and difficult path parenting multiples. It certainly helps to walk this path with the support of those who went through it ahead of us, and alongside parents struggling with similar challenges. This supportive multiple-birth community—this extended family—is the essence of MBC. I am honoured to accept a role in this wonderful organization and vow to do my part to help make life a little bit easier for multiple-birth parents. By sharing our stories, we can help each other through an interesting, intense and rewarding experience.

To share stories, though, we need to hear from you. We welcome your ideas and suggestions for articles. If you'd like to write one yourself, please do so and send it along. After all, at the heart of every community is communication. That being said, we'd like to do something new in Multiple Moments: we'd like to conduct an informal poll of our readers. We'll tally and post the results in subsequent issues; we'll also print some of your answers, comments and advice.

The timing of this issue coincides with March break, which often involves travel for families seeking a vacation or a change of scenery. The Multiple Moments Reader Poll question is this:

Did you wait until your children reached a certain age before you began travelling as a family, or have you been boarding planes, trains and automobiles with your multiples since they were newborns?

Please send your responses via email directly to me at mmeditor@multiplebirthscanada.org, or log on to MBC's website and submit your responses online.

Thanks for your input, and I hope you enjoy this issue of Multiple Moments.

p.s. Don't forget to pass on—or better yet, purchase—issues of Multiple Moments for your children's grandparents, teachers and other professionals they encounter on a regular basis. By sharing our multiple-birth perspective, we educate and inform those who influence and affect our children's lives.

Meredith

Vicki Riley, BUSINESS SERVICES MANAGER
office@multiplebirthscanada.org

Happy 2007!! I hope you are as excited about 2007 as I am! I'm not really sure why I have such high hopes for 2007 or if I just feel this way because it is the beginning of a new year which creates new hope and promises of change for many. I am excited to be able to concentrate on some MBC projects that have fallen by the wayside because of lack of time. With the Multiple Moments Editor duties off my plate, I feel that I can now step up and work on these projects—in my spare time.

On January 13th, the renewal packages, including a fundraising package to chapters who did not attend the 2006 conference, were mailed to all MBC chapters. If your chapter has not received this package, please contact the Business Office immediately. Many of the documents included in the package are posted in the Chapter Executive section of the MBC website. Other important documents are also posted in this location, as well as other resources your chapter may find handy.

Here is a quick review of some of the Business Office statistics from the last few months:

On our toll-free line, the Business Office received 49 incoming calls in October, 44 in November and 15 calls in December. As you can see, the phone did not ring much in December which was nice for me and my family. January was another story! Look for the stats on the number of calls in the next issue of Multiple Moments.

November referrals to local chapters and non-member groups: 1 referral to a member chapter (Brampton) and 6 referrals to non-member groups (3 Ottawa, 2 Toronto, 1 Kingston area). December: 4 referrals to member chapters (1 Vancouver, 1 Stratford, 1 Brant, 1 Orangeville) and 17 referrals to non-member groups (4 Montreal, 4 Toronto, 2 Manitoba, 1 Burlington/Hamilton, 1 Mississauga, 1 Regina, 1 Truro, 2 Halifax, 1 Kingston area). January: 4 referrals to member chapters (1 Windsor, 1 Kitchener-Waterloo, 1 London, 1 Guelph) and 4 referrals to non-member groups (1 Border City, 2 Toronto, 1 Mississauga). Our office refers through telephone conversations, email and written information included with orders. We feel that the referral numbers are lower for our member chapters because their contact information is easily found on the MBC website.

Please remember that MBC now has over 60 fact sheets (free downloads available to members), 13 booklets, 3 pamphlets and 6 popular support kits. For up-to-date information, refer to the website. All price increases are now in effect both online and via mail-in orders.

Vicki



The Ohman family.

Photo taken by Robin Andrew of UNPOSED Portrait Photography (www.unposed.com).

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Gail Moore,
DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS
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In January, the surprise birth of the Vancouver sextuplets resulted in enormous media attention. B.C. Women's Hospital in Vancouver honoured the family's wishes and kept the event a private experience—a decision Multiple Births Canada also respects, as we believe that each family's journey into the multiple-birth community should be a personal one, travelled in accordance with the parents' wishes to keep things private or share things publicly.

However, journalists need to do their jobs. Assignment editors were telling them to get the story, so they turned to the Internet in search of sources. Googling "multiple births" + "Canada", they hoped to verify that this was the first set of known sextuplets to be born in our country. What they found were thousands of entries for Multiple Births Canada.

And so began a couple of busy weeks for media relations. Multiple Births Canada was able to shift the attention from the family, helping in their quest for privacy, toward key topics such as prenatal health, postnatal concerns, and other issues faced by Canada's multiple-birth community.

We spoke directly to dozens of media outlets, in broadcast and print, from the Maritimes to the West Coast. We were able to accomplish this because many individuals stepped forward to tell our story, donating the valuable commodities of time and energy. I would like to thank the MBC members, Advisory Board members and National volunteers who helped us. Once again, you reaffirmed that by supporting multiple births together we can create awareness of the challenges faced by Canada's multiple-birth community.

Our local and national volunteers definitely play a big part in what we can accomplish as an organization. Having coordinated the first two National Multiple Births Awareness Day events, and now preparing for the third, has helped me see how much information and expertise MBC has to offer to our public, including the media. When the telephone started ringing at the business office January 8th, it was with great confidence that Vicki Riley was able to establish our ability to provide expert information to the media. She knows our resource tools intimately; she's provided them many times for members and Chapters alike. In almost 30 years, MBC has been able to produce a wide range of topics for anyone interested in knowing more about multiple births.

Many Canadians now know that Multiple Births Canada is about social responsibility. Chapters support families by providing them with information, mentoring, resource material, Christmas hampers and more. Nationally, MBC unites Canada's multiple-birth community; advocating for better multiple-birth services, providing opportunities for multiple-birth families to network, facilitating in the production of additional resource materials, and offering research linkages. Like other health-related organizations, we also need to do fundraising and create partnerships to continue operating.

It is my hope that the birth of the Vancouver sextuplets has given more people a better understanding of just how important it is for Canada to have a national organization focusing solely on the interests of its multiple-birth community!

Gail



DUCHESNAY

Pour le bien-être de la femme enceinte et de son enfant
Caring for mother and child during pregnancy

Multiple Births Canada would like to thank Duchesnay Inc. and their staff members for their most recent, and very generous donation to Multiple Births Canada. Duchesnay Inc. has agreed to complete the translation of our website from English to French, and as a result, a number of resources have been translated, reviewed and now can be shared with our Francophone communities.

In the past, Duchesnay provided educational grants which have been used to assist with Multiple Moments and the printing of our new bilingual pamphlet. Duchesnay's vision closely relates to MBC's — to improve the quality of life of women during pregnancy. To learn more about Duchesnay, please visit their website www.duchesnay.com.

MBC would like to thank its Sustaining Members for their added support:

Diane Nelson	Grande Prairie, AB	Cathy Barr	Guelph, ON
Bonnie Schultz	Gornley, ON	Donna Launslager	Waterloo, ON
Kimberley Weatherall	Orleans, ON	Diane Myers	Moffat, ON

Multiple Births Canada would like to thank the Temiskaming Chapter for arranging and paying for the translation of the Outreach Letter to non-member groups.



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www.multiplebirthscanada.org
or contact the Business Office
1-866-228-8824