...Helping Children, teens and families adjust positively to family transitions

Spring Foot Steps

... navigating change step by step

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Foundation for Families in Transformation (FFIT)

Our Mission is to assist children, teens and families with moving forward through major life transitions, by supporting appropriate programs and acting as a hub for related resources.

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RAINBOWS Facilitator and Coordinator training
for fall 2011

In Carstairs
September 9/10
- details to be announced;

In Edmonton

September 16/17
November 18/19

Greetings From Your Program Director

We are delighted to share our second Newsletter with you. When I see the buds bursting open and the tulips in bloom, I am reminded of how they, like our Rainbows kids and families, are given another chance to grow and flourish. It's a time of new beginnings – a time to renew our hopes and dreams.

We are undergoing our own exciting metamorphosis this spring. We have recently chosen a new name and logo. We also expect to launch our new website sometime this summer and we welcome two new members to our Board.

Another successful teleconference in April resulted in an exchange of useful ideas about Rainbows program supplementary activities and materials.

Rainbows is now being offered at Montrose School in Edmonton as well as in several schools in Barrhead, thanks to dynamic new Coordinators. Another brand new Site in Edmonton, the Lillian Osborne High School, is so committed to supporting its students through transitions, that it sent six people for Spectrum training, including their principal!

As always, we welcome your ideas, stories and submissions for our newsletters.

Have a great summer!

Victor Dorian

Quick Tips ~ For Divorced Parents with Infants

- The younger your child is, the more important it is to have regular, frequent contact with both parents to maintain attachment bonding.
- Both parents need to be involved in routine activities like feeding, bathing, bedtime rituals and playtime.
- Try to keep similar feeding and bedtime routines as well as security items such as blankets, toys and pacifiers in each home.

SALT: See them – Allow them – Listen to them – Trust them

by Marianna Cacciatore

SEE THEM

For one who is grieving, being seen validates and makes real their experiences. If you can simply see them, without acting on the urge to alter or fix them in some way, the gift you give is freedom - a luxurious spaciousness in which they can uncover their own strength, resilience, and creative responses to life.

ALLOW THEM

Grief is unpredictable. Each person's response to loss is as unique as their fingerprint. As a companion, if you can allow them the freedom to do whatever they need, without adding your worry, fear or criticism, you will offer them a gift of immeasurable value - the freedom to be who they are, and to respond to their loss as they desire.

LISTEN TO THEM

If the person who is grieving needs to talk, and if they choose to do it with you, listen generously. Be still. Don't interrupt, even through periods of silence. Breathe deeply through your own discomfort if silence is hard to handle. Give them all the space and time they need to let the deeper words come to the surface and be spoken - and sometimes there are no words. Your presence itself is enough to qualify as generous listening.

TRUST THEM

Within us lies everything we need to heal. Given any kind of safe and nurturing environment, we heal. If you can trust this process, your care will not be contaminated with worry but, rather, it will offer a sense of confidence in their resilience. It will help them have faith in themselves, if only a morsel, even in their darkest hour.

SALT provides some excellent lessons for supporting someone coping with loss and grief.

It speaks to the salt in tears. Although primarily intended for helping people heal after a loss due to death, the principles apply equally well to the more common painful transition children face when their parents separate or divorce.

As Facilitators, you are all caring companions for the grieving Rainbows children, and as role-models, you help the children in your groups be true companions to each other.

Taken from "Being There for Someone in Grief"

http://www.mariannacacciatore.com/salt.htm

Did You Know?

Participation in a Rainbows program has been shown to result in the following:

- **a positive correlation between strong self esteem and academic achievement**
- **a 53% increase in the child's self-esteem**
- **a 75% decrease in absenteeism from school**
- **a 70% increase in compassion thereby reducing the likelihood of bullying**

Source: Rainbows International's Report Card www.rainbows.org

A Bouquet for Prince Charles School

RAINBOWS Facilitators

Thanks to two very special people, Gwen L'Hirondelle and Lena McInroy, the Prince Charles School in Edmonton has been assisting children for the past 12 years by providing Rainbows programs. Some 500 children have coped better with transitions such as separation, divorce and death, thanks to these two very dedicated Rainbows Facilitators.

Through Gwen and Lena's efforts, school Newsletters, supportive principals and parents' Councils, the program has become so well-known at the Prince Charles School that parents ask for it when their children are faced with divorce or other major grief.

RAINBOWS Sites

In the Edmonton region

- Alberta Parenting for the Future, Stony Plain, New Site! tel 780-910-5845: Coordinator: Candace Fehr
- YWCA Edmonton, 10350 124 St, tel 780-423-9922 Ext 222; Coordinator: Pam Schellenberg
- WECA (West Edmonton Christian Assembly), 6315 199 St, tel 780-489-2579; Coordinator: Nancy Allen
- MWFRC (Millwoods Family Resource Centre) 1733 Millwoods Road, tel 780-413-4521; Coordinator: Debbie Gregg
- Kids on Track, 15671 96 Ave, tel 780 481-2942; Coordinator: Gisela McKerracher
- North Pointe Community Church, 14025 167 Ave, tel 780-452-5566; Coordinator: Michael Voll
- Leduc FCSS, Nisku and region, tel 780-955-6421 Coordinator: Judy Dumont
- Boys & Girls Club, Fort Saskatchewan, tel 780-992-0103 Coordinator: Wendy Serink
- Leduc Rainbows, tel 780-980-8429 Coordinator: Charlene Schatz

FOOTSTEPS

Helping children, teens and families adjust positively to family transitions.

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.

FFIT Board of Directors

Nancy Allen
Barb Hepperle
Michael Oshry
Brad McMaster
Kiersten Walker
Terence Graw
Justin Wong

Cornerstone of Hope
Helping families to live through loss and thrive in the face of adversity

http://www.cornerstoneofhope.ca

Cornerstone of Hope Cornerstone of Hope, Alberta Society, was formed in 2002 to respond to the need for grief support for Children and their families in southern Alberta. Cornerstone was founded by Dennis and his wife Irene who have been working with children for over 30 years. They have done health and manners puppet shows in schools, worked with children's community programs, and run Kids Clubs in their own home. They have been Program Directors at children's camps and for the past 18 years, they have been facilitating and coordinating Rainbows programs. Dennis and Irene have a vision to help families live through loss and thrive in the face of adversity. They are working to increase the number of Rainbows sites in Southern Alberta so that Rainbows can be offered free to every family that needs it. Cornerstone offers training and program support to organizations and individuals who want to provide grief support to families. The programs offered are "Rainbows", "Just Me and the Kids", "Transformations", and "Divorce Care". Further information on each of these programs can be found at www.divorcecare.org , www.rainbows.ca , http://drgrantmullen.com/ (Transformations) and http://www.singleparentfamilyresources.org/Canada/home.php (Just Me and the Kids)

Community RAINBOWS Sessions in the Edmonton region for fall 2011

- **North Point Community Church, 14025 167 Ave, tel 780 452 5566, will run a 13 week, Tuesday evening program starting September 20**
- **YWCA Edmonton, 10350 124 St, tel 780 423 9922, ext 222, will provide a 10 week Monday evening program from September 26 to December 5. Phone 780 423 9922 Extension 222 to register.**
- **Kids on Track, 15641 96 Ave, tel 780 481 2942 will run a fall Rainbows session this year**
- **Millwoods Family Resource Centre, 1733 Millwoods Rd, tel 780 413 4521, will provide a 10 week Rainbows session this fall**
- **Alberta Parenting for the Future Association, Stony Plain, tel 780 910 5845, will be providing Rainbows, and possible Spectrum for their region**
- **Leduc County FCSS, Nisku, runs Rainbows and Sunbeams; phone 780 446 2042 for details**
- **Boys and Girls Club, Fort Saskatchewan; phone 780 992 0103 for details**

Rainbows
GUIDING KIDS THROUGH LIFE'S STORMS

Victor Dorian

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