

Upper Fraser Community Council
Date: November 18, 2014
Address: Abbotsford Garden Park Towers
Time: 6:00pm

Attendees: Natalie Fortin, Sylvia Dirks, Dawn Robertson (PAC Rep), Maggie Metcalfe (chair), Kerry Lawson (CPD Manager), Ikinder Chohan (minutes), Gerald Oesch, Judy Garrett, Brenda Gillet, Donaldda Madsen, Linda Golightly, Sandra Evans, Christine Foell, Julie Unger (facilitator).

Regrets: Jerry Laidlaw, Bryce Schaufelberger, Dan Collins, Tiffany McCurdy.

Agenda Topics	
Topic	Discussion
Introduction	Kerry welcomed the parent-advocates and explained that they were invited to the Community Council meeting to participate in an informal discussion led by Julie Unger regarding family leadership and resiliency.
Topic	Discussion
Julie asks, "which groups are you a part of?"	<p>Sandra: Special Olympics, therapeutic riding (on a national level), and friends. She is involved in areas that are directly associated to her son's needs.</p> <p>Linda: Mission Association Community Living (MACL) board, works with self-advocates in Mission (i.e. donates to fundraisers; such as, pub nights), Special Olympics (coaches bowling). Linda agreed to sit on the board for MACL because she wanted to know how to support her granddaughter's inclusion in the community.</p> <p>Judy: attends as many meetings and groups as she can; however, it is difficult to find groups in Hope. Judy has attended the Transition Group, which is a group for parents of youth who are transitioning to adulthood</p> <p>Sylvia: was part of a group of parents who children have Fragile X.</p>
Topic	Discussion
Julie asks, "how do you get information?"	<p>Judy: from other people (i.e. learned about the Supported Child Development from her son's preschool teacher).</p> <p>Sandra: connect with parents and families of children who have Autism Spectrum Disorder, contact her son's facilitator, and ask questions.</p> <p>Christine: Community Living, newsletters, other parents, mailing lists, and workshops.</p> <p>Sylvia: searches the Internet and phones around. Her need for support is propelled by crisis and transition.</p>

Topic	Discussion
Julie asks, "what elements of the groups encourage you to go back?"	<p>Christine: the fact that the groups include people with shared experiences. For example, she facilitates an informal family group where families address topics such as employment, social inclusion, and housing. Christine appreciates how informative the workshops offered by the Family Support Institute are. She stated that there is a higher level of need to access services when there's a transition occurring (i.e. transitioning from elementary school to middle school).</p> <p>Linda: the information that is shared at the groups. Linda passes the knowledge about programs she learns from the MACL board to the families in the groups she attends.</p>
Topic	Discussion
Julie asks, "what components of a group work for you?"	<p>Sylvia: being able to develop a support network. For example, for the past ten years Sylvia has met with three mothers of children who have developmental disabilities who are the same age as her daughter. They support one another and do not judge. They understand that although they experience similar situations they are allowed to have different opinions.</p> <p>Christine: there is value to being together.</p>
Topic	Discussion
Julie asks, "how is it that you can find information but other families cannot?"	<p>Christine: it is situational. Many families may not have the time or energy, or they are surviving without needing more. Parents need the ability to ask questions, and some families may not know what questions they need to ask.</p> <p>Sandra: families need the tenacity to push through your exhaustion and ask questions.</p> <p>Sylvia: it can be intimidating to find information and ask questions.</p> <p>Maggie: there is a feeling that families should not have to ask for supports because they should be able to do it independently. Maggie's son received more supports in school than he did as an adult, and now that he is an adult it is important to acknowledge that he has the capacity to make choices.</p>
Topic	Discussion
Julie asks, "what are the least helpful things service providers can do or say?"	<p>Sylvia: not validate her child's needs (i.e. service providers have told her that other individuals have it worse off than her daughter).</p> <p>Linda: not informing her of the services that are available for her granddaughter. She has found the services that are offered discreetly. For example, she did not know about respite until another parent told her about it. Linda stated that this should be</p>

	<p>information that should be public knowledge, and that she should have been made aware of it when her granddaughter first started receiving services.</p> <p>Maggie: when she asks service providers, “what services are available?” they respond with, “what do you need?” This results in a block of information. How is she to know what services to access if she is not aware of them?</p> <p>Christine: when entering the system there is an overload of information, which results in families missing a lot of information. Once initial services have been implemented individuals and families fall off of the radar so they miss new services.</p> <p>Sylvia: it is uncharted territory and can be overwhelming. Parents need to be encouraged to ask questions.</p>
Topic	Discussion
Julie asks, “what would have been helpful when you felt overwhelmed?”	Christine: a case manager, friends, and learning about respite earlier on.
Topic	Discussion
Julie asks, “what is it about your journey that allowed you to get past the barriers?”	Sandra: wanting the best for her son motivated her to attend meetings, which allowed her to develop the courage to pursue more resources.
Topic	Discussion
Julie asks, “would advocacy information groups help?”	<p>Christine: yes, if they teach parents how to advocate and access resources and programs.</p> <p>Sylvia: BCCPAC offered a training that helped her a lot, especially when she and her daughter were experiencing issues regarding school.</p>
Topic	Discussion
Brenda asks, “do you find inconsistencies in organizations? How can they make it be more fluid?”	<p>Sandra: Have a case manager, one person who is assigned to the individual at the beginning and have them work with your child. There shouldn’t be a transition from one agency to another when the youth transitions to an adult.</p> <p>Christine: Have one worker to guide you through the process. The Ministries need to collaborate and work together to help transitioning youth and their families; this process should start when the individual is in grade ten.</p> <p>Donalda: parents’ needs are not being met so it is difficult to think about their dreams for their children. PATHs are helpful and great, especially when everyone collaborates to make the dreams come true. Also, it is important to support families and acknowledge and work through the grief they experience</p>

	<p>because the grief impacts their ability to advocate for their child.</p> <p>Sylvia: when your child turns eighteen everything changes. They are finished school, turn into an adult, and have to start at a new agency with new workers.</p>
Topic	Discussion
<p>Mike asks, "did anyone tell you, "this is who you need to talk to?""</p>	<p>Dawn: yes, at the Infant Development Program someone told her to contact Jane Holland.</p> <p>Julie: we exclude people by thinking that they do not want to understand.</p> <p>Donalda: families can support each other – it is better that way. Parents need to ask for help.</p>
Topic	Discussion
<p>Christine asks, "what other things do you do to bring people in?"</p>	<p>Donalda: hosted monthly potlucks so friends and family could get to know her child better.</p> <p>Sylvia: it is our job to teach friends and family what we are going through so they can understand. She facilitated a support group so people can understand how to communicate and connect with her daughter.</p>
Topic	Discussion
<p>Siblings</p>	<p>Kerry: it is important for parents to include siblings and make them aware of the processes.</p> <p>Maggie: Parents need to support siblings and show them where everything is. This will make it much less difficult when they take over.</p>
Topic	
<p>Julie informed the attendants that the next step will be to review this information with the Council, and they will then discuss the next steps.</p>	
Adjournment	
8:37 pm	
Next Meeting	
Tuesday, December 16 th , 2014	