

Canadian Parents for French BC and Yukon President's Report April 1, 2018-March 31, 2019

Fellow board directors, board members, partners, funders and CPF BC YT Staff: it has been my distinct pleasure and honour to serve as your President since October 2018. I am delighted to share meaningful progress, both from a regional and network perspective, on the Education and Outreach, Chapter Support, Advocacy, Partnerships and Governance and sustainability fronts. Beneficiaries of a core funding increase, with thanks to the federal government and Ministry of Canadian Heritage, we were fortunate to welcome a new staff member, Satwinder Gill, as outreach coordinator. We were further supported by our funders and national partners in the opportunity to convene in Halifax in October 2018 for our AGM, where we celebrated important advances in the Senate Report on the Modernization of the Official Language. As a Branch, we welcomed two new board members, Carmen Woo, serving as Branch Treasurer, and Spencer Hancock, as our newest Youth director. Regarding partnerships, we were approached by the *Conseil Scolaire Francophone* (BC Francophone school district) partners in June of 2018 to help support the upcoming Jeux Francophones being held in Victoria July 2020. Additionally, the Branch hosted a successful regional conference in February 2019 in Parksville, well attended by regional members, as well as BC MLA Michelle Stillwell. We participated in advocacy meetings in Ottawa in April of this year with our national partners, and specifically MP John Aldag and Senator Marie Françoise Mégie (*Chair of Senate Committee on the Modernization of Official Languages*). Supported by past Présidente Patti and daughter Robin Holm as coordinators, we hosted a very successful 36th annual regional Concours competition, with a special address by BC's education minister, the Right Hon. Rob Fleming. On the advocacy and membership front we celebrated the addition of 2 new Chapters: Bowen Island and Castlegar, as well as a revival of the Vancouver downtown Chapter, extended our outreach through successful online training modules, and continued progressive dialogue around program access with our provincial ministry partners as well as local school boards. A very full year broadening awareness and the experience of the benefits of bilingualism !

From a governance perspective, considerable effort and progress was focused on the continued refinements and alignment of operating policies, and working towards the enhancement of working partnerships, internal and external. Change is constant and we strove to keep pace pro-actively, thoughtfully, and strategically, with the Strategic Plan in mind. A further a summary of events by pillar of the year:

1. Youth

Thanks to our staff, volunteers and students, we had another fantastic **Concours d'art oratoire** event. *Un grand merci* goes to Casey Edmunds, Master of ceremonies, as well as Robin & Patti Holm a skilled coordinators; Dr. Bettina Cenerelli, as chief **Concours d'art oratoire** judge, as well as our numerous judges and volunteers. We thank Canadian Heritage, Reso-Sante, and our other sponsors for their funding of **Concours d'art oratoire** and other CPF events.

French for the Future was another exemplary event held at SFU and UVIC. The event includes opportunities *en français* for students to explore career options in French.

In May of this year our National Partners launched the caravan *Bonjour My Friend*, exploring Canadians views from across Canada for 50 days on the meaning of linguistic duality from the Victoria office of the Société Francophone de Victoria. Many exciting things were learned on that adventure, which will no doubt be shared in the coming months.

We are thrilled to be working to support *Les Jeux Francophones Victoria July 2020* as an opportunity for greater engagement with (primarily high school aged) youth at the chapter/district levels from across the region.

2. Parents, members, volunteers

Staff hosted online volunteer training workshops for Seven online Chapter training modules and member participation and feedback welcomed an integrated.

The BC and Yukon Branch appreciates the BC Ministry of Education's financial contributions for our socio-cultural funding. We are continually amazed by the creativity and leadership of our Chapter leaders as they plan and execute diverse and engaging cultural activities for youth and members. We have had some extraordinary events honouring the evolving definition of bilingualism and look forward to what's to come. In recognition of the fabulous contributions to CPF and our mandate, we congratulate this year's Bouquet de Merci recipients, *Cindy Lister (Saanich)*, and *Christine Marin (Richmond)*. The Teacher Award is awarded to *Jamayca Whalen(Kelowna)*. *Félicitations Tous !*

3. Decision-makers

This has been a year of many stakeholder meetings. *Past President Diane Tijman*, *Treasurer Carmen Woo*, and *Executive Director Glyn Lewis* participated in the BC Ministry of Education stakeholder meetings on French Immersion programs, access, and the French Teacher Shortage. The Branch participated in ongoing dialogue with BC education Minister Fleming and the French Programs staff to refine our collective approaches re: improving access as well as progressing the negotiation of terms vis-à-vis the renewed Federal French Funding bilateral agreement with the provinces. *Executive Director Glyn Lewis was a frequent media contributor en français* and in English, related to the FSL teacher shortage, the Modernization of OL Act, as well as French language education access.

As Branch President, I continue to participate in the CPF Council of Presidents and communicate regularly with the National President and Board of CPF. In all these activities, I strive to contribute BC & Yukon's voice to the planning and successful delivery of support to our membership and that of the greater network.

4. Organization

We continue to be a dynamic, strong, and effective network and through the leadership and guidance of our *Executive Director Glyn Lewis*. The Board and staff work collaboratively to review, plan, implement and enhance our Strategic Plan activities. Policy review is an on-going important part of our work as a Board, with the goal of streamlining and clarifying processes within a governance model. Led by *Chair Cendra Beaton*, the Policy Committee has worked diligently on reviewing bylaws and policies and completed a significant update to the CPF BC-Yukon Policy Manual.

Fiscal Oversight

Co-chaired by *Treasurer Carmen Woo* and *Vice-President Andrea Calder*, the Finance committee met regularly, engaging in fiscal oversight as well as in the exploration of funding diversification strategies. Expenses were well controlled, and we benefited from a 20% increase in core funding which was largely applied to additional staffing in Education and Outreach, and Member support. For additional financial information, please see *Treasurer Carmen Woo's* financial report.

Your Board at Work

The BC and Yukon Branch board has been an exemplary team, and I am grateful to everyone for their time, dedication and commitment. Each member has shared their perspective, bringing their diverse skill sets to better inform our work as. None of this would have been possible were it not for the wise guidance and experience of those who have come before, most notably Past Présidentes, Diane Tijman, whom we recently learned has been nominated to a post with the National Board of directors (Felicitations Diane !), as well as *Past President Patti Holm* for her continued mentoring, despite attempts by both to retire. As a former FSL coordinators and principals, Diane and Patti shared invaluable knowledge, guidance and experience.

For the coming year, the Nominations Committee will re-elect the following directors to 2 year terms : *complete based on outcome of noms report*

Advocacy

The Branch is working constantly on advocacy issues. We continue to support Chapters in advocating for improved access to French programs, including Immersion, Intensive and Core French. This is turning out to be a challenging year in BC with school districts like Vancouver recently making deep cuts to their French Immersion program. Nevertheless, as we move into another year, the Board will continue to meet with government and our partners and advocate on your behalf. We encourage you all to get involved. Visit your School Trustees, MLAs and MPS and talk about your issues. Consult with us and write letters to your local papers. Join the CPF Leadership page on Facebook. Yes you can make a difference and we can help you!

Sincere gratitude and respect to my fellow Directors, our hardworking staff, and the hundreds of Chapter volunteers for everything you do to support the French language and culture in your community. It is because of members like you that CPF is able to make a positive difference to French language programs in British Columbia and Yukon.

Avec ma gratitude et mes remerciements sincères,

Greer Cummings

President

Canadian Parents for French BC & Yukon