

OUR HISTORY - HOW CAFCA BEGAN

When the YM-YWCA closed its 'Special Services to Children' program in June of 1986, Ruth Cleary, Lisa Roy, Alan Churchill, Al Reid, Raymondo Abadacio, David Miles, Barry Gates and myself were out of work. We believed, however, that there was a need for these services to be delivered to the children and families in Greater Victoria. We also believed that we could provide these services by creating an organization that would satisfy our professional and moral goals as well as the needs of the Ministry of Social Services. To that end, we created CAFCA.

There were many hurdles to cross before we opened our doors for business at 905 Gordon Street on October 10, 1986:

1. Write the constitution and by-laws, search for a name, find an office space, register with the government, get approval, and ... pay for all the above. We each donated \$100.00 and countless hours to accomplish these tasks.
2. Hire two new counsellors willing to join our group, knowing we had not signed a master agreement with Social Services; therefore, we had no guaranteed contracts and as yet we had no board members for our society either. Those trusting and like-minded counsellors were Jane Miller and Heather Sander.
3. Find five willing souls to sign on as board members of an organization of counsellors who not only wrote their own constitution and by-laws, but also included themselves in all aspects of the decision-making process for this newly created society. The five individuals who took a leap of faith with us were Norman Dolan, Harold Penner, Andre Pel, Fiona St. Clair and Marilyn Kalihan.
4. Finally, after meeting with the Ministry of Social Services and Housing over the course of several weeks, we signed a master agreement in November of 1986 and CAFCA was open for business.

Although our doors were open and we were all working, we still needed to 'pass the hat' for any contribution each of us could make in order to pay some of our monthly bills and one of our funding board members generously donated \$250 to pay our liability insurance. No one received a pay cheque until three days before Christmas that year (eight weeks after work had begun), and a very welcome Christmas gift that was.

So here we are, many years later. After such humble beginnings, I consider myself very fortunate to have these wonderful memories and a lasting legacy of dedicated professional people to carry on the excellent work of CAFCA. Well done!

By Sharon Seeley