

We need you . . .

What's going on . . . PART II

WHOA!

Two resignations on the same day...!

Elisha Kehoe and Rhonda Ross have both resigned. Their resignations, together and separately, were a big surprise.

These resignations were not related to one another; they simply occurred the same day. The loss of both of these individuals will be a challenge for Bluewater....

Elisha came to Bluewater in April of 2008 as a child trauma specialist working on finishing her Masters degree in counseling psychology. Months later, Elisha took a maternity leave when her daughter, Rian was born and at the end of her maternity leave left Bluewater to work for the Thames Valley District School Board (TVDSB) as a school social worker. As all will recall, I was very disappointed Elisha had not returned to Bluewater. I believed I had seen within her a spark I felt could provide leadership at Bluewater for many years to come.

I recalled my own tenure at Bluewater with Mr. Abe Suderman (a founder of BFSS). I had begun in 1986 and by 1991, Abe had ceded sufficient authority to me that at least one CAS resource worker remarked that she didn't even know that Mr. Suderman was still involved with Bluewater. In my opinion, this was the perfect legacy. Abe continued at Bluewater for another decade before his retirement in 2001. It was a decade in which he could be secure his vision of Bluewater was going to continue and thrive, in which he could become less and less engaged, during which he could ensure a smooth transition of power and control.

Again, following my own experience, with Elisha at TVDSB, I actively recruited her to return to Bluewater. After several long chats, Elisha finally agreed to return and was immediately thrust into the role as Executive Director in September 2011. This was not a role Elisha particularly wanted, but it was the role I wanted her to take. I wanted to be in a position to expand the range of services provided by Bluewater and develop some other business interests; I believed Elisha was the person whose leadership others would readily follow.

Alas, this was not to be. There is much to be said about following your passion. Elisha loves children and abhors anguish and pain. She is as passionate about counseling and therapy with children as an evangelical preacher on a Sunday morning. The bureaucracy of administrative tasks, of management, were numbing and soul-destroying. In late May 2014, Elisha took a leave; on August 18, 2014, she told me she was not going to return.

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She tendered her resignation effective September 2, 2014.

No one saw this coming!

Elisha and I had spoken in a Strathroy coffee shop; I drove to the office preparing to tell the staff of her decision. When I arrived, Rhonda was present.

In May 2014, Rhonda had been laid off from Bluewater because of a lack of work. It was to have been a thirteen week layoff with a planned return date of August 25, 2014. In the following weeks, Rhonda secured a position with a local realty office. On August 18, 2014, acknowledging the layoff had been a challenging time, Rhonda submitted her resignation effective September 2, 2014.

Ms. Rhonda Ross started at Bluewater in September of 1996—almost eighteen years ago. In her career at Bluewater, Rhonda was first the receptionist—a role to which she quickly added being Mr. Grzybowski's assistant. Over time, her role as assistant to John evolved to that as a bookkeeper (with Mr. Grzybowski assuming more an executive accounting role). After Mr. Suderman's retirement, Rhonda was promoted with the title of Office Manager.

I had believed Rhonda possessed a set of skills well suited to the Office Manager role. In addition to her organizational skills, Rhonda was creative, energetic and an enthusiastic booster of Bluewater. On many occasions, Rhonda had disclosed the positive impact Bluewater had on her life and her role as a parent. The power of the relationships Rhonda developed at Bluewater changed her life and Rhonda was not shy about saying so. It was with the ongoing encouragement and support from her Bluewater colleagues that Rhonda found the courage to go to her first acting audition and take those first tentative steps on stage at the Victoria Playhouse in Petrolia.

In Rhonda's emotional farewell remarks to staff she spoke of her connection to Bluewater and the impact her experience at Bluewater had on her

Terri Jensen has done an extraordinary job with Professional Development in Leamington. Her focus for the last several sessions had been on shame and guilt. Terri brought an additional clarity to the myriad ways in which shame and guilt impact on our children's behavior and on the manner in which we conduct ourselves. She did an excellent job throughout these presentations.

I am looking forward to Terri taking the leadership of the Professional Development sessions this autumn.

The schedule for our Professional Development dates can be found on page 5.

life and her family. She graciously thanked many staff for the impact their relationship had on her and the many things she had learned from them.

Eighteen years is a very long time. Almost everyone who had contact with Bluewater had contact with Rhonda. Mr. R. Davis, formerly of London-Middlesex Children's Aid Society, even had his own nickname for Rhonda, as did Mr. D. Cullen of Potensia Corp.—such was Rhonda's reach. She will be missed.

The loss of these two persons came as a surprise. In the previous BluesNews, we had tried to outline a vision of a future that would allow us to strengthen our foster care programming and provide a greater range of service to an expanding community base. Some of those plans are now in abeyance. We hope, in the near future, to be able to once again provide a vision of Bluewater that will facilitate growth, keep Bluewater on the leading edge of specialized, therapeutic, intensive support and keep us excited about the vocation that has chosen us.

Stay with us ... the future is ours to grasp!



HERITAGE HUMOUR

In the great days of the British Empire, a new commanding officer was sent to a jungle outpost to relieve the retiring colonel. After welcoming his replacement and showing the usual courtesies (gin and tonic, cucumber sandwiches, etc) that protocol decrees, the retiring colonel said, "You must meet my Adjutant, Captain Smithers, he's my right-hand man, he's really the strength of this office. His talent is simply boundless."

Smithers was summoned and introduced to the new CO, who was surprised to meet a humpbacked, one eyed, toothless, hairless, scabbed and pock-marked specimen of humanity, a particularly unattractive man less than three feet tall.

"Smithers, old man, tell your new CO about yourself."

"Well, sir, I graduated with honours from Sandhurst, joined the regiment and won the Military Cross and Bar after three expeditions behind enemy lines. I've represented Great Britain in equestrian events, and won a Silver Medal in the middleweight division of the Olympics. I have researched the history of....."

Here the colonel interrupted, "Yes, yes, never mind that Smithers, he can find all that in your file. Tell him about the day you told off the witch doctor..."

FACTORS LEADING TO SUCCESSFUL OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN FOSTER, GROUP AND RESIDENTIAL CARE

If you were to have asked me several weeks ago to name the most significant factors effecting outcomes for children as adults, I would have put 'connection with others' as number one. 'Self-regulation' would probably have been second on my list; 'safety' would rank third. 'Resilience' and 'self-esteem' would round out the top five. Apparently, I could not have been more wrong!

Several weeks ago, I attended a Ministry sponsored presentation at CPRI that highlighted Dr Kiaras Gharabaghi, PhD. Dr. Gharabaghi is an Associate Professor at the School of Child and Youth Care Program at Ryerson University. He is the editor of Child & Youth Services, an international journal about issues and themes related to vulnerable children and youth. Dr Gharabaghi is a researcher examining factors leading to successful outcomes for children and youth in foster, group and residential care as adults. Seemingly based on irrefutable evidence, Dr G's list is markedly different from my own. In fact, there is nothing in my top five list that is in Dr G's list at all!

So, before reading any further, take a moment. Try to identify, from your own knowledge and perspective, what you believe would be the most significant factors that lead to successful outcomes for children in out-of-home care as adults. What factors set the stage for children to be successful as adults? Create your list:

- ① _____
- ② _____
- ③ _____
- ④ _____
- ⑤ _____

You will be surprised by what the research actually says.....!



WHEN LIFE GIVES YOU LEMONS, MAKE LEMONADE

Siamese twins walk into a bar in Canada and park themselves on a bar stool. One of them says to the bartender, "Don't mind us; we're joined at the hip. I'm John, he's Jim. Two Molson Canadian beers, draft please."

The bartender, feeling slightly awkward, tries to make polite conversation while pouring the beers. "Been on holiday yet, lads?"

"Off to England next month," says John. "We go to England every year, rent a car and drive for miles. Don't we, Jim?" Jim agrees.

"Ah, England!" says the bartender. "Wonderful country... the history, the beer, the culture..."

"Nah, we don't like that British crap," says John. "Hamburgers and Molson's beer, that's us, eh Jim? And we can't stand the English - they're so arrogant and rude."

"So why keep going to England?" asks the bartender.

"It's the only chance Jim gets to drive."

FACTORS IN SUCCESSFUL OUTCOMES

Got your list ready? I was completely taken aback by Dr Gharabaghi's presentation. None of these factors would have made my list. How about you?

The number one factor leading to successful outcomes for children in out-of-home care as adults: a good night's sleep! Sleep, and good sleep habits, are crucially important to how we function. If nights are restless, beset by memories of past fears and/or trauma, fraught with ongoing trauma, or if one simply doesn't get enough sleep, daytime behavior can be markedly impaired and handicapped. Helping children acquire and achieve good sleep habits and routines takes on singular importance.

As parents we need to develop consistent bedtime routines to help develop sleep readiness: a quieter, less stimulating environment; darkened space; consistent bedtime; clean bedding, etc We need to ensure the mattress is comfortable and conducive to a good sleep. Lumps, broken springs, indentations from other sleepers, odd odours may give a mattress character, but they are not conducive to acquiring good sleep habits. London CAS has developed an award winning brochure outlining sleep care for infants and toddlers—a lot of good strategies and plans there that are customizable for older children.

The second major factor is good nutrition—eating well and properly. Nothing really needs to be said about the negative health impact of growing up on fast foods: obesity, diabetes, poor dentition. And it would appear, many of us fail to appreciate the real benefits of good nutrition.

Like a finely-tuned racing car, your body needs the right fuel (food) and regular maintenance (exercise, lifestyle and mental attitude) to achieve its true health potential. Nothing is more important than healthy eating!

Put in the wrong fuel or let it go without regular use and there's no way it can deliver its full power and performance. Without healthy eating, your body's engine will cough, splutter and eventually stall.

Maintaining a balanced diet through healthy eating can give you vitality and energy for life. It can help you stay at a weight that's right for you and boost your immune system. For most children, good nutrition will lead to improved sports performance (and in the context of children in out-of-home care, sports is often a deficit that has further negative social consequences). Unquestionably, good nutrition will help protect teeth and keep gums healthy—again, frequently a significant issue with many children in out-of-home care. The list of benefits can go on and on. The last one I want to mention is that good nutrition helps beat tiredness and fatigue and enhances our ability to concentrate and has the potential to alter our mood.

Ensuring that children-in-care receive a nutritionally balanced diet is one of the important ways we can intervene in the lives of children where we know our efforts will have a positive and beneficial influence.

The third most significant factor should not surprise anyone (although it did me): academic success. The more successful one is in school, the greater the likelihood of success as an adult wage-earner. School success and employment / vocational success are highly correlated. Doing well in school frequently leads to doing well in a career. Sure, this is not always the case. There are always exceptions to the rule. But in general, academic success leads to career success. And while not a determinant of a successful future, career success is highly correlated with personal satisfaction.

And by the way, academic success does not mean getting straight "A's". It

really does mean achieving mastery. Yes, a Bloor Street banker, is going to make more money than an auto-mechanic, but that does not mean he has a greater personal satisfaction. The banker may have greater opportunities for success in life than may the auto-mechanic but both have greater opportunities to be successful because they have an education than those who do not. It is mastery, not money, that makes the difference. Want to maximize a child's potential for success as an adult? Keep the child in school!

The fourth factor left my mouth agape: aesthetics, the appreciation of beauty, the experience of wonder, the breathlessness of awe.

Ever stopped to think what your life would be like if there were no beauty in it? If you possessed no sense of wonder? If there were no moments that take your breath away? There actually are people who do not have these experiences in their life and they, for the most part, have a psychiatric diagnosis of "anhedonia." They often describe themselves as feeling empty inside; they often live without joy, as though they were simply going through the motion.

Aesthetics are essential to our sense of well-being and our perception of success in life. "Everything that is valuable is valuable in a variety of ways. Art objects often have sentimental value, historical value or financial value. Wilderness can have economic value as well as recreational value. (But great art works are thought to possess a distinctive sort of non-instrumental and non-utilitarian value that is of central concern when they are evaluated as art works. It might be thought that this value is beauty, but many artworks are not beautiful. So it is more plausible that beauty is a particular species of the value in question.) **The aesthetic value that a work possesses** (and most would extend this to the natural environment) **has to do with the sort of**

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DATES

PARKHILL

September 10
September 24
October 8
October 22
November 12
November 26
December 10

January 14
January 28
February 4
February 18
March 4
March 18
April 8
April 22
May 13
May 27
June 10

LEAMINGTON

September 17
October 1
October 15
November 5
November 19
December 3
December 17

January 21
February 11
February 25
March 11
March 25
April 1
April 15
May 6
May 20
June 3
June 17



experience it provides when engaged with appropriately. If it provides pleasure in virtue of our experience of its beauty, elegance, gracefulness, harmony, proportion, unity, etc., we say that it has positive aesthetic value. If it provides displeasure in virtue of ugliness, deformity or disgustingness we may say that it has negative aesthetic value. One important thing to note is that the pleasure or displeasure underwriting aesthetic value is best thought of as directed *at* the object in question rather than being merely caused by it (Stecker, 1997). In other words, the aesthetic value is what we bring to the experience, not necessarily what the experience does to us."

At the end of the day, the really important part of this discussion is that a sense of the aesthetic is absolutely crucial to positive adult outcomes for children. Think of it as the way we assign value to things, objects, events, and/or relationships in our environment. And think of the previous paragraph as being the moral philosopher's way of understanding how or what is aesthetic value.

We have written previously about sensory integration. For most of us, sensory integration occurs automatically. The brain registers sensory information, and then responds to that information with the appropriate response from the five senses, as well as from our sense of balance and forces of gravity, explains Achenbach ("I'm thirsty, so I'll get a glass of water," for example). Children with sensory integration disorder don't have the ability to make those connections, Achenbach says. They also may be exceptionally sensitive to external stimuli (or conversely, may appear to "shut down" when there is too much stimulation).

In essence, good sensory integration occurs when all of your senses are working together as a whole and importantly, are experienced as being a part of yourself. Poor sensory integration, on the other hand, feels disjointed, broken up, individuals often don't feel as though they are encapsulated within

their own skin. They often report the experience of poor boundaries and almost always report challenges in some aspect of daily living.

Good sensory integration, feeling inside your own skin, being able to make the world of sensation and sensory input understandable is an essential infrastructure piece in helping children achieve positive outcomes as an adult.

So those are the top five:

- 1) A good night's sleep
- 2) Good nutrition
- 3) Academic success
- 4) Aesthetic sense
- 5) Sensory integration

Being connected, knowing that what happens to you makes a difference to someone else isn't even on the list. Care to hazard a guess to where it did fall?

It is ironic the research says these five factors, the individual's infrastructure supports, are not areas in which we do much training whatsoever. Yet these, as the current research suggests, are the top five areas in determining positive outcomes for children as adults.

So, if you are a foster parent, what does this all mean?

When was the last time you replaced the child's mattress? Was the replacement mattress new or re-used? When was the last time you tried lying on that mattress for an extended period?

Is the bedroom conducive to the child's sleep? Once children retire for the night, is there an effort made to reduce or diminish household noises? Lower bedroom temperature? Create the fitting light / darkness balance?

Does the child have his / her own alarm clock?

Other than scheduled homework time, what else is being done to support a child's academic success? Are you helping with homework or watching? Do you demonstrate or practice good work habits?

Do you play cards? Do children help with grocery shopping?

When was the last time the child's room was painted? Has anything been done to beautify the room?

How much decorating of personal space will you tolerate?

Do you visit the art gallery? Has your child *witnessed* a sunset? Or been exposed to the divine?

Do you have dinner table discussions about morality, right and wrong?

Are the beautiful things in your life open for all to see, or closeted and brought out only on special occasions?

Do you dance with your children? Or sing with them? Can you walk a balance beam? Or stand on your head?

Do you have 'spidey-sense'? Can you explain it? When something makes your 'skin crawl,' can you help someone else understand how and why?

There are countless other ways to focus on these five infrastructure pieces. Take a moment; develop your own list. What else can you do to promote success?

A teacher noticed a little boy at the back of the class was squirming around, scratching his crotch, and not paying attention. She went back to find out what was going on. He was quite embarrassed and whispered he had just recently been circumcised and he was quite itchy.

The teacher told him to go down to the principal's office. He was to telephone his mother and ask her what he should do about it. He did it and returned to his class. Suddenly, there was a commotion at the back of the room. She went back to investigate only to find him sitting at his desk with his penis hanging out.

"I thought I told you to call your mom!" she said. "I did," he said, "And she told me that if I could stick it out till noon, she'd come and pick me up from school."

UPDATES and REMINDERS

This is a time of change around Bluewater. Over the past several months, we have been closely scrutinizing our money management strategies. Criticizing my own conduct, I believe I have been too casual and lackadaisical about most money matters and want that to change.

In the past, exceptions to the rule outweighed applications of the rule and that is silly. There is no reason to have a rule if it is constantly OK to change it. Rules provide structure; they help us organize. Rules help us understand our relationships and the significance of our place in those relationships. Rules help to provide clarity.

A more formal note was sent previously to relate policy and practice changes at Bluewater, but I wanted resend this one because it has the potential for the greater impact on families dealing with Bluewater.

Claims for reimbursement must be submitted to Bluewater no later than 1pm on the 10th of each month. Reimbursement claims received after 1:01pm on the 10th will be paid the following month. Please do not ask for exceptions to the rule; they are unlikely to be granted. (We need time to prepare documents for the direct deposit payments, and the credit union needs time to process our request.)

Reimbursements include your out of pocket expenses and transportation expenses and anything else you paid for that Bluewater or a CAS has agreed to pay for....

The incentive payments owing for attendance at the Professional Development (PD) sessions ending in June 2014 will be paid in two installments. The first payment will be September 15 and the second on October 15, 2014. The incentive is determined as a percentage of \$4.00 per day per child equal to your percentage attendance at Professional Development.

Lets say there are 10 PD sessions and you attended 6 of those sessions. The incentive would equal \$2.40 a day per child. So if you had that child for 100 days, the incentive amount owing would be \$240.00

Looking for your payment stub? Check your email!

In the interest of saving trees and postage, the bottom half of your cheque (the part that tells you what is included in the total amount) is being emailed to you. We are not mailing them anymore. If you do NOT have email, ask your family support worker to bring them to you or check your mail box at the office when you come to your next Professional development session.

Make sure we have your current email address.

Rhonda resigned. She is NOT in her office anymore! She does not have a phone number here; there is no extension.

So,
leave all your paperwork with Sue.



THE SHOCKING TRUTH

As important as I believe it is, as often as I might tell you that what children need is to grow up knowing that what happens to them matters to someone, no matter how often you hear, "Relationships are everything", connectedness is number 6 on Dr. Gharabaghi's list.

**BLUEWATER FAMILY SUPPORT
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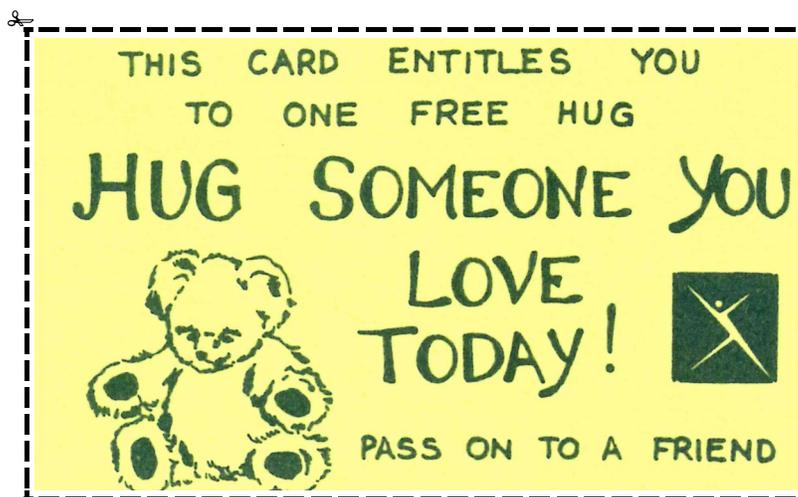
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*You thought you didn't give me what I needed but you did — sup-
port, faith, trust, and hope. You gave me the love and family part.*

There was one thing you did that was wrong was,

“You gave up on ME!”



HUMOUR : Paraprosookians

Paraprosookians are figures of speech in which the latter part of a sentence or phrase is surprising or unexpected; frequently humorous. Winston Churchill loved them.

1. Where there's a will, I want to be in it.
2. The last thing I want to do is hurt you. But it's still on my list.
3. Since light travels faster than sound, some people appear bright until you hear them speak.
4. If I agreed with you, we'd both be wrong.
5. We never really grow up, we only learn how to act in public.
6. War does not determine who is right - only who is left.
7. Knowledge is knowing a tomato is a fruit.. Wisdom is not putting it in a fruit salad.
8. To steal ideas from one person is plagia-
rism. To steal from many is research.
9. I didn't say it was your fault, I said I was
blaming you.
10. In filling out an application, where it
says, 'In case of emergency, Notify:' I put
'DOCTOR'.
11. Women will never be equal to men
until they can walk down the street with a
bald head and a beer gut, and still think
they are sexy.
12. You do not need a parachute to sky-
dive. You only need a parachute to skydive
twice.
13. I used to be indecisive. Now I'm not so
sure..
14. To be sure of hitting the target, shoot
first and call whatever you hit the target.
15. Going to church doesn't make you a
Christian any more than standing in a gar-
age makes you a car.
16. You're never too old to learn something
stupid.
17. I'm supposed to respect my elders, but
its getting harder and harder for me to find
one now.