

Lex Reynolds Adoption Permanency Trust Fund: Helping children make permanent connections



Imagine not having a family – or someone to turn to in times of need. Imagine not having someone with whom to celebrate birthdays, holidays and life's successes.

Every child and youth deserves to be nurtured, loved and appreciated. To be connected for life.

We know that children and youth who have established permanent relationships with caring individuals, family, community and culture do better in life.

So how is it that so many of our children and youth are still waiting for permanent placements?

Victoria's 2010 Vital Signs says that in the Capital Region in December 2009, there were 10.7 children in government care for every 1,000 children under the age of 19, compared to 9.4 in BC. Although this is down from 11.2 in 2008, more needs to be done to build strong "forever" connections for our children and youth.

"Youth who leave foster care when they hit their late teens have worse educational and health outcomes, setting them up for unemployment, poverty and homelessness," says Sandra Scarth, co-chair of the Victoria Foundation's Adoption and Permanency Trust Fund and president of the Adoption Council of Canada.

In March 2009, there were 8,959 children and youth in care in British Columbia. Of these, 5,169 were in permanent care with

1,377 of these registered for adoption. In the year prior, 304 of these children were adopted.

These numbers show that in one year, fewer than one in 15 children and youth in permanent care find life-long, stable environments in which to grow up and develop.

To help address this, the Ministry of Children and Family Development established the Lex Reynolds Adoption and Permanency Trust Fund in 2003. Its purpose is to support groups that help children and youth find and maintain lifelong connections through adoption or other avenues of permanence.

Grants are awarded from the interest earned on permanent funds managed by the Victoria Foundation. An advisory committee made up of adoptive parents and people working in the field promote the fund's availability and make granting decisions.

More than \$636,000 has been awarded from this fund for 123 projects that promote adoption and permanency, and support adoptive families.

"We know that adopted children do better socially and academically than children who leave care in their late teens," Scarth says. "It is critical that no child leave care without at least one loving parent to be

with as they grow and mature. Everyone deserves somewhere to go for Christmas or for a helping hand when they need it."

November is Adoption Awareness Month. If you'd like to help a child connect to a family or learn more about the Lex Reynolds Adoption and Permanency Trust Fund, visit www.connectingforlife.ca or contact the Victoria Foundation at 250-381-5532.

Children who make permanent connections perform better as they mature.



November is Adoption Awareness Month.
Learn more at www.connectingforlife.ca

When the economy is up, we grant. When the economy is down, we grant.
How? By working **smarter**.

Established in 1936, the Victoria Foundation has built a lasting endowment fund that has served our community well. In 2009, during unprecedented economic times, we continued to grant to non-profit organizations. We also found innovative, successful ways to add value beyond granting such as our Community Advisors, a valuable resource for non-profits. At the Victoria Foundation, working smart is the result of our experience – nearly 75 years of it.

To learn more about the Victoria Foundation, please call Sandra Richardson, CEO, at 250-381-5532. www.victoriafoundation.bc.ca




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