



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

The B.C. Ministry of Children and Family Development asked the Victoria Foundation to manage and distribute the Lex Reynolds Adoption and Permanency Trust Fund because of the foundation's proven granting experience, administrative capabilities and prudent financial investment policy.

Helping BC's children make connections for life

Lex Reynolds Adoption and Permanency Fund:

A retreat to provide information and resources to 30 adoptive parents of children with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder. A potlatch to adopt foster parents into their child's Aboriginal clan and nation. A training program to prepare teens for adoption.

These are just a few examples of projects funded this year by B.C.'s Lex Reynolds Adoption and Permanency Trust Fund. The independent trust fund was established in 2003 by the Ministry of Children and Family Development to help British Columbia's children and youth who are awaiting adoption or other permanent connections. The trust fund is managed by the Victoria Foundation. In 2009 it was re-named after Lex Reynolds to honor the late lawyer and children's advocate – and adoptive father – who was the fund's founding co-chair.

The permanent endowment generates money to support organizations and individuals in finding and helping to maintain lifelong connections for B.C.'s children and youth.

"Every child deserves a loving family and a place to call home, and the Lex Reynolds Adoption and Permanency Trust Fund has been instrumental in promoting the need for more adoptive families in British Colum-

bia," said Minister of Children and Family Development Mary McNeil.

As of Aug. 31 of this year, the Ministry of Child and Family Development reported there were approximately 8,100 children and youth in care in B.C. Nearly 5,900 of them are placed with about 3,300 foster families across the province and more than 1,200 are waiting for a permanent family.

"These children are waiting for a loving family," said Sandra Scarth, co-chair of the trust fund. "They are waiting for a family they can turn to when they have a problem, a family who will celebrate birthdays and holidays with them – a family to help them forge the happy memories that will allow them to grow up to be strong, successful adults."

Scarth says what is not obvious from the ministry's numbers is that there is a desperate need for families who will adopt older children and children in sibling groups who want and need to be placed together.

"When people think about adoption they often envision babies. Unless we eliminate the barriers and significantly increase the services and resources available to adoptive families, older children and sibling groups will remain in a holding pattern," she said. To help address these and other challenges associated with adoption, grants from the Lex Reynolds Adoption and Permanency Fund are used to develop projects and programs that provide support, promote adoption and connect kids with their culture. Since the fund's inception in 2003 \$766,000 has been awarded to 133 projects across the province. These include 17 mini-grants of \$1,500 distributed earlier this year and two full grants that have just been announced.

- The Adoptive Families Association of B.C. received \$20,000 to create an online education resource centre for adoptive parents and those considering adoption.

- The Northwest Inter-Nation Family and Community Services Society, based in Terrace, received \$11,000 for a custom adoptions project to support culturally grounded adoption and permanency arrangements.

"The online resource centre will provide information and access to agencies and courses relating to adoption," said Scarth. "It will also preserve the privacy of prospective parents who prefer the anonymity provided through the Internet as they take their first step on the path to adoption."

"The custom adoptions project will gather valuable research that will support culturally grounded adoptions in B.C.'s Aboriginal communities" said Geord Holland co-chair of the trust fund.

To make a donation or to learn more about the Lex Reynolds Adoption and Permanency Trust Fund, visit www.connectingforlife.ca or contact the Victoria Foundation at 250-381-5532.

Since 1936, the Victoria Foundation's permanent endowment has had the power to connect people who care with causes that matter. If you wish to make a difference in your community – one that has lasting impact, start here. Call Sandra Richardson, CEO for information at 250.381.5532. www.victoriafoundation.bc.ca



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