

# ANNUAL REPORT 2015/2016

SOUTHERN FIRST NATIONS  
NETWORK OF CARE





# OUR MANDATED AGENCIES



**ANIMIKII OZOSON CHILD  
AND FAMILY SERVICES  
(AOCFS)**

Ontario First Nations members  
residing in Winnipeg and other  
families as assigned by the  
Southern First Nations Network  
of Care



**ANISHINAABE CHILD  
AND FAMILY SERVICES  
(ACFS)**

Dauphin River / Pinaymootang /  
Lake Manitoba / Lake St. Martin  
/ Little Saskatchewan



**CHILD AND FAMILY ALL  
NATIONS COORDINATED  
RESPONSE NETWORK  
(ANCR)**

Winnipeg / Headingley /  
East St. Paul / West St. Paul



**DAKOTA OJIBWAY CHILD  
AND FAMILY SERVICES  
(DOCFS)**

Birdtail Sioux / Canupawakpa /  
Long Plain / Roseau River /  
Sioux Valley / Swan Lake



**INTERTRIBAL CHILD  
AND FAMILY SERVICES  
(ICFS)**

Dakota Tipi / Fisher River /  
Kinonjeoshtegon



**PEGUIS CHILD AND  
FAMILY SERVICES  
(PCFS)**

Peguis



**SANDY BAY CHILD  
AND FAMILY SERVICES  
(SBCFS)**

Sandy Bay / Dakota Plains



**SAGKEENG CHILD  
AND FAMILY SERVICES  
(SCFS)**

Sagkeeng



**SOUTHEAST CHILD AND  
FAMILY SERVICES  
(SECFS)**

Berens River / Bloodvein /  
Brokenhead / Buffalo Point / Hol-  
low Water / Black River / Little  
Grand Rapids / Paungassi /  
Poplar River



**WEST REGION CHILD AND  
FAMILY SERVICES  
(WRCFS)**

Ebb & Flow / Gambler /  
Keeseekoowewin /  
O-Chi-Chak-Ko-Sipi / Pine Creek  
/ Rolling River / Skownan /  
Tootinaowaziibeeng /  
Wawaseecappo

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# BOARD OF DIRECTORS

## BOARD CHAIR

### ALLAN COURCHENE

Allan Courchene is a member of the Sagkeeng First Nation. He and his wife have ten grandchildren. Over the last 25 years Allan has worked as a teacher, principal, university professor, policy analyst and coach, and in each of these roles he has been an advocate for youth with personal issues.



## VICE CHAIR

### DAVE RUNDLE

Dave and his family are members of the Ebb & Flow First Nation. He has been married for 47 years to his wife, Delphine, and they have three children and four grandchildren. Before his retirement Dave had worked for First Nations for 45 years in various capacities.



## TREASURER

### STEVE COURCHENE

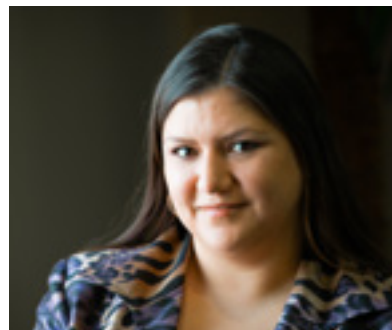
Steve Courchene is a member of the Sagkeeng First Nation. He and his wife, Susan, have four children and three grandchildren, one of whom they are raising as her primary guardians. Steve's work was instrumental in developing the first Aboriginal-owned and operated centre for Aboriginal youth in Canada.



## SECRETARY

### CLAIRISSA KELLY

Clairissa Kelly (Walking Buffalo Woman of the Bear Clan) comes from Peguis First Nation. As a child, Clairissa and her seven siblings spent a brief amount of time in the care of Child and Family Services and she brings that personal perspective to the board. In addition to her personal experiences with the child welfare system, Clairissa is also an emerging First Nations Educator.



## BOARD MEMBER

### GLEN COCHRANE

Glen is currently the senior pastor of The Peguis Church and has been in the pastoral ministry for the past 27 years. He works closely with families dealing with issues that hinder families from being functional.

Glen has been a motivational speaker at youth conferences encouraging youth to pursue their dreams and assisting them in how to overcome and deal with the obstacles that will hinder their vision in life.

Glen is married to his wife Verla of 36 years and is the father of 1 child, who has recently made him a grandfather of 2 amazing boys, who've altered his view of children in so many positive ways.

Glen is a former band councillor, who represented Peguis First Nation for 3 terms, and brings a vast political view re: areas affecting CFS.



## EX-OFFICIO

### DON COURCHENE

Don Courchene is an experienced commercial banker with over 18 years of experience working in the financial sector. As an independent consultant he has assisted numerous First Nations people to successfully start new businesses and expand existing services to enhance their opportunity to succeed in their venture.



## EX-OFFICIO

### CHIEF LANCE ROULETTE

Lance Roulette is from the Sandy Bay Ojibway First Nation, band number 283. He is a graduate from Yellowquill College with a diploma in First Nation Governance. He and his wife, Janice, have three children.





# MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR



On behalf of our Board of Directors, I'd like to say what a privilege it is for us to be ambassadors for the betterment of our children in care. As Loris Malaguzzi states, "children need the freedom to appreciate the infinite resources of their hands, their eyes and the ears, the resources of forms, materials, sounds, and colours." This freedom is what inspires our Board to work towards creating safe, caring and loving environments for our children.

The Southern First Nations Network of Care (SFNNC) board consists of individuals with diverse backgrounds and with skills and experience that are significant to our mandate. We are pleased to bring

forth the best practices for our communities, and the individuals serving on our Board are honoured to be chosen to be the representatives for this important role.

In 2015/16, the new Board was responsible for recruiting the best candidates to fill the role of Chief Executive Officer (CEO) within the organization, and we are pleased to welcome Tara Petti in this role. Tara brings with her an excellent wealth of knowledge to serve our children and provide the full, loving care they require.

We value the opinions, comments and suggestions of all organizations and we welcome requests for any information you may require.

Please contact the SFNNC:  
2nd Floor, 630 Kernaghan Avenue  
Winnipeg, MB R2C 5G1  
Phone: 204.783.9190  
Toll-Free: 1.800.665.5762  
Fax: 204.783.7996  
Email: [reception@southernnetwork.org](mailto:reception@southernnetwork.org)

It is with honour that I serve as the SFNNC Board Chair.

Megwetch, thank you,

Allan Courchene  
Chair, Board of Directors





# MESSAGE FROM THE CEO



With warm greetings, we are pleased to present the Southern First Nations Network of Care (SFNNC) Annual Report for 2015-2016.

Our organization has been through many changes throughout its existence and this past year has continued to bring forth many opportunities to embrace and work through change and turn challenges into opportunities.

Some important accomplishments and changes to highlight in the 2015/16 year:

- On December 18, 2015 the Order of Administration for South East Child and Family Services was lifted and the governance and administration of the Agency was handed back to the newly appointed Board of Directors and Acting Executive Director. This was a long awaited and significant accomplishment reflective of the hard work put in by the Acting Executive Director and the Board.
- In the fall of 2015, our CEO accepted the challenge to advocate for change for Indigenous children and families in the child and family services system by moving to a senior position with the Provincial government as the Acting Executive Director of the Child Protection Branch.

Recruitment and selection of a new CEO was facilitated by the Provincial Administrator and the SFNNC Interim Board of Directors.

- On January 12, 2016, the Order of Administration for the Southern Network was lifted and the Interim Board of Directors were appointed as the official Board of Directors of the SFNNC. This was a monumental event and marked the beginning of a new chapter for the organization!

As the newly hired A/CEO, I readily accept the opportunities that exist as our organization continues to move forward with a new Board of Directors. I have been with the SFNNC since 2007 and bring the experience of working and building relationships with our Agencies and Leadership with the goal of strengthening the circle around our children and families. I have had the opportunity to experience, look back and reflect on what the organization has done, for the purpose of moving forward to see what we can continue to do to change things to make life better for our children, families and communities.

There are many dedicated and committed people working at the SFNNC, within our Agencies and in our communities. The work is extensive and many challenges continue to be faced. There is no one person that has all the answers, however, every person has gifts and when we bring our gifts together, Creator shows us the answers and this is how we will work together to strengthen and restore our sacred circles, our children and our future.

Ekosi, Meegwetch, Wopida Tanka

Tara L. Petti





# MESSAGE FROM THE ASSOCIATE CEO



Boozhoo, Aaniin, Makade Makwa Ikwe dizhnikaaz. Sandy Bay doonji. My spirit name is Black Bear Woman. The name given to me at birth is Sharon Desmarais.

I would like to first thank the creator for all the teachings and blessings I have received this last year. As I reflect back, I think about the constant changes, my own personal growth and all the teachings I've received on a daily basis. My first year as Associate CEO of the SFNNC has been full of many changes but I truly believe this to be a good thing. Change is sometimes hard to accept, but it is what we make of it and it pushes us to grow and develop in areas we never thought possible.

I feel blessed to work with such a wonderful group of staff. Each individual works hard for all our agencies, families and children. Their tireless efforts are well noted and very much appreciated!

While it was very sad to see our former CEO, Bobbi Pompana, leave the SFNNC to venture out and take on new challenges, we wish her all the best in her future endeavors. I also would like to welcome our new CEO, Tara Petti, to her new position. Tara and I had the opportunity to work together for a short period prior to her coming into her new role, and I know her past experiences and education will have prepared her well for upcoming goals and challenges.

I would also like to welcome our new Board of Directors to the SFNNC as they settle into their new roles and take on responsibilities. Their expertise and experience will be an asset to the Network and the agencies.

I have been involved in several exciting tasks this past year which have been at the same time very challenging and very rewarding. The SFNNC currently has three agencies piloting the Customary Care Agreement. While Sagkeeng is not one of the piloting agencies, the community offers a Circle of Care program which has the same type of goals and objectives and which may make the transition easier if this becomes the accepted service. According to many elders, customary care has always been inherent in our communities but the 'Sixties Scoop' and residential school era interrupted this practice.

It's been a real pleasure to have had the opportunity to work closely with Sagkeeng CFS, their Advisory Board and the Chief and Council as they re-established their agency. I would like to congratulate Frank Daniels in his new role as Executive Director, and to thank the Advisory Board for their work in preparation of their governing duties. We've also worked hard with all the staff and management to ensure continuity of service by implementing resources, training, and supports to ensure they have the necessary tools to provide best practice in their service delivery.

I've also had the opportunity to work with representatives of our agencies in developing a Medicine Wheel Case Plan for all our agencies to utilize. As legal guardians of many children, we have a responsibility for the safety and well-being of our children, ensuring they are aware of their history and their truths and that they live a well-balanced life for their own future development.

Gitchi Miigwetch,  
Sharon Desmarais

# ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



# GOVERNANCE



## VISION STATEMENT

FIRST NATIONS CHILDREN, FAMILIES, AND COMMUNITIES WILL BE HEALTHY, STRONG, EMPOWERED AND ENJOY AN ENHANCED QUALITY OF LIFE.

## MISSION STATEMENT

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH ITS CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES (CFS) AGENCIES, THE SOUTHERN FIRST NATIONS NETWORK OF CARE (SFNNC) MAKES A DIFFERENCE IN THE QUALITY OF LIFE OF ALL CHILDREN AND YOUTH BY ENSURING THEIR PROTECTION THROUGH THE PROVISION OF SAFE HOMES WITH RESPONSIBLE CAREGIVERS, PROMOTING THE WELLNESS OF FAMILIES AND STRENGTHENING OF FIRST NATIONS PEOPLES AND COMMUNITIES. SERVICES AND RESOURCES WILL ALIGN WITH COMMUNITY NEEDS; AND ACTIVITIES WILL BE MORE FOCUSED ON PREVENTION THAN CRISIS MANAGEMENT. IT WILL SERVE AS A MODEL OF SUCCESSFUL SELF-GOVERNANCE THAT WILL INSPIRE SIMILAR LEVELS OF PROFESSIONALISM, COMPASSION AND EFFECTIVENESS AMONG ALL CFS AGENCIES.

## MANDATE

THE SFNNC RECEIVES ITS MANDATE FROM THE FIRST NATIONS IN SOUTHERN MANITOBA AND FROM THE PROVINCIAL CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES AUTHORITIES ACT (CFSAA). THE SFNNC, ALONG WITH THE OTHER THREE CFS AUTHORITIES, IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT AND MANAGEMENT OF A PROVINCE-WIDE SERVICE DELIVERY SYSTEM. THIS INCLUDES ENSURING THAT SERVICES ARE DELIVERED TO SOUTHERN FIRST NATION CITIZENS THROUGHOUT THE PROVINCE, AS WELL AS PEOPLE WHO CHOSE THE SFNNC.



# ALTERNATIVE CARE AND RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

In collaboration with our member agencies, the Alternative Care and Resource Development Unit is responsible for planning, developing and implementing culturally appropriate resources to support children, families and communities. This unit was formerly known as the Strategic Resource Development Unit, which merged with the Policy and Strategy Unit in 2014/15.

## DEVELOPING ALTERNATIVE CARE OPTIONS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

### KINSHIP CARE

Kinship care is based on a traditional connectedness between children, caregivers and community, and has long been a custom in First Nations communities. If a child is unable to be cared for by their biological parents, then other family members or members of the community come forward to care for the child. For the SFNNC, kinship care is defined as a family that is approved to care for a specific child based on blood ties, family ties, common ancestry, community membership or another significant relationship to the child.

In April 2015, the Alternative Care and Resource Development Unit developed and introduced the Southern Network Kinship Home Licensing Standard through input and guidance from our member agencies and the Southern Network Elders Council. The new standard, which is in compliance with the Foster Homes Licensing Regulation and The Child and Family Services Act in Manitoba, enables our member agencies to license kinship caregivers through a culturally appropriate process.

The intent of the standard is to encourage family and extended family members to become kinship caregivers; streamline the existing foster care application process to make it less bureaucratic with fewer barriers, less intrusive and more culturally appropriate; and maintain family, community and cultural connections for children in care and move away from a reliance on stranger-based foster homes.

### APPEALS

The SFNNC reviewed a total of seven appeals during the 2015/16 year. Of these appeals, two were regarding the refusal or cancellation of a foster home license and five were regarding the removal of a foster child from a foster home. After reviewing each appeal, we upheld all of the agencies’ decisions. We are looking at developing procedures to ensure that agencies and foster parents are adhering to the timelines associated with the appeal process and that the process is completed in a timely manner.

### TYPE AND NUMBER OF APPEALS

REMOVAL OF A CHILD	REFUSAL/CANCELLATION OF FOSTER HOME LICENSE
5	2

### VARIANCES

The SFNNC received a total of 14 variance requests during the 2015/16 year; eight were approved, two were denied and four did not require our intervention as these requests were eligible for approval at the agency level. The SFNNC advised these agencies and offered consultation if they had any questions.

TYPE OF VARIANCE	OUTCOME
More than three under three years old - 2	Approved - 8
More than seven dependents - 1	Not approved - 2
Dual License - 4	No action taken - 4
Other - 7	

## COORDINATING EMERGENCY PLACEMENT RESOURCES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

### HOTEL REDUCTION TEAM/ COLLABORATIVE AUTHORITY RESOURCE TEAM

The Hotel Reduction Team was established in June 2014 to address the rising numbers of hotel placements in Winnipeg CFS’s Emergency Placement Resources (EPR) program. The team is comprised of staff reassigned from all four authorities and the CFS Division.

In April 2015, the Minister announced that as of June 1, 2015, the practice of using hotels for emergency placements would no longer be permitted. This deadline was extended to December 1, 2015, for rural and Northern Manitoba. To meet this deadline, the Hotel Reduction Team (HRT) met with agencies in Inter-lake, Eastman, Parkland, Westman, Thompson and The Pas/Flin Flon regions to identify emergency and long-term placement resource development opportunities. Both the June 1 and December 1 “no hotel” deadlines were met by agencies mandated by the SFNNC.

In January 2016, the HRT was renamed the Collaborative Authority Resource Team (CART). The focus of this team remains to collaboratively work with agencies to locate long-term placements for children and youth placed within EPR; and to develop shared resources across the province.



# PROMOTING THE RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF CAREGIVERS UNIT

## CAREGIVER RECRUITMENT CAMPAIGN

To promote kinship and foster care in Manitoba, Manitoba Family Services launched the Community of Care Recruitment Campaign in January 2016, in partnership with the four authorities and the Manitoba Foster Family Network. The campaign encourages family and community members to come forward and become a caregiver for a child who needs a safe and loving home. It is based on the understanding that every culture has traditional values and practices about banding together for its members’ mutual support and protection. Learn more about the campaign at [allrelated.org](http://allrelated.org).

## PAIRED ALTERNATIVE TREATMENT HOME RESOURCES

The Inter-Authority Alternative Care Sub Committee (ACS), which is comprised of representatives of Manitoba Family Services and the four authorities, reports to the CFS Standing Committee. ACS has developed a proposal called Paired Alternative Treatment Home (PATH) resources, which would be licensed under the Foster Homes Licensing Regulation and is intended to provide highly specialized care for children and youth with complex needs, sibling groups and emergency or reunification homes. The proposal is currently being reviewed by Standing Committee.

## RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

The Alternative Care and Resource Development Unit continued to provide resource development support to our member agencies and other organizations, including:

- Reviewing proposed child care facilities on a province-wide basis;
- Participating on inter authority committees and working groups related to enhancing resources within the CFS system;
- Developing First Nations-specific resources;
- Consulting with member agencies on cases regarding resource and placement issues;
- Collaborating with member agencies to develop new resources such as specialized foster homes and residential care facilities; and
- Providing support with system-wide initiatives.

# DEVELOPING TRANSITIONAL CARE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH WITH COMPLEX NEEDS

## MORNINGSTAR PROGRAM

Morningstar is a two-year pilot program launched in June 2014 at R.B. Russell Vocational High School in Winnipeg. Led by the Morningstar Council, which is comprised of representatives of the partner organizations (including the SFNNC), the program is intended to improve access to support services for students and their families at the school and thereby promote positive outcomes.

Two positions called Skaabe (helpers) were created as a key resource to the Morningstar Program through funding provided by two agencies mandated by the SFNNC. Based at the school, the Skaabe provide direct support services to students and their families in collaboration with multiple service providers in the community. Their key duties include: advocacy; navigating the social services system; counselling; assessment; cultural programming; and developing student plans.

In January 2015, Morningstar was evaluated to assess the outcomes from year one of the program. The report indicates that the program is achieving some early positive outcomes for students and their

families, including: improved educational outcomes; improved well-being (mental, physical, social and spiritual); and improved access to support services in the community.

# PLANNING, DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING CUSTOMARY CARE

## MORNINGSTAR PROGRAM

In partnership with Manitoba Family Services and the other three authorities, the SFNNC is developing proposed legislation to recognize customary care in Manitoba. It will include amendments to The Child and Family Services Act to provide a legislative basis for supporting the provision of customary care to Aboriginal children through agreements and living arrangements.

As agreed by the parties, customary care recognizes and reflects the unique customs of a community. It preserves a child’s cultural identity, respects the child’s heritage, facilitates cross-generational connections and recognizes the role of the community in raising its children. When a parent or guardian expresses an interest in arranging customary care for an Aboriginal child, the parent or guardian may enter into an agreement with the child and family services agency and the Aboriginal community to provide supports and services for the child.

Planning is underway to introduce customary care in Manitoba through six First Nations CFS agencies, including three in the south – Dakota Ojibway Child and Family Services; West Region Child and Family Services; and Sandy Bay Child and Family Services.

The SFNNC has recently contracted a Customary Care Specialist to work with the southern First Nations CFS agencies to plan, develop and implement customary care in Manitoba.







# COMMUNICATIONS

## “WE CARE!”

As of November 5, 2015, the Southern Authority was officially recognized as the Southern First Nations Network of Care. Eight years prior, the movement to change the name began. It was all part and parcel of a branding strategy to chart a path into the future – a path which adhered to the principles of change that were promised on the road to devolution and, more importantly, were rooted in Aboriginal custom and culture.

We believe this strategy and these principles of change will lead to a better outlook within the child and family services field. The message is clear and driven by an underlying philosophy: to be culturally appropriate in our approach to child welfare. Collectively, we are a “network of care” that is rooted in the traditional philosophy of collectiveness and reflected in two simple but powerful words: “we care!”

It was with traditional teaching in mind that the SFNNC and the three other authorities put forth the idea of “kinship care” within the foster care system. In 2015, a plan was drafted, a budget agreed upon and a campaign called “Community of Care” was launched. The initiative was the first time in CFS history where everyone agreed to acknowledge and encourage the age-old customs that cross all cultural lines with the rallying cry: “we are all related within the Community of Care!”

On the Community of Care website ([allrelated.org](http://allrelated.org)), movie star Adam Beach retells his story of how he lost both his mother and father tragically at the tender age of eight. He also tells of how his uncle, Chris Beach, took in Adam and his two brothers in spite of having a growing family of his own. Without that support from his family, Adam says: “I wouldn’t be where I am today.”

That message of care echoes in eternity. It speaks to our traditional connectedness between our children, relative caregivers and the communities. It builds upon the customs of family ties and our common ancestry. It boldly says “we are a community and we care.” Ultimately, kinship care will make families stronger and less traumatized. Children will get to stay with their siblings, experience fewer moves and changing of schools and will be less likely to run away – and more likely to remain with their parents when they return home.

The landmark decision of the Canadian Human Rights Commission substantiating the complaint that the Canadian Government has discriminated against children and families living on First Nations drove home the need for kinship care. It was truly an historic ruling for our children, our agencies and our communities and it was all driven by the commitment and dedication shown by Dr. Cindy Blackstock, through her First Nations CFS “Caring Society,” and the Assembly of First Nations.

“We care” has power!

Meegwetch, Jim Compton,  
Communications Specialist



# HUMAN RESOURCES

The Human Resources (HR) Unit has responsibility for a number of areas. These include:

- Developing and supporting the HR capacity for the SFNNC;
- Assisting and supporting southern CFS agencies in the development and maintenance of their HR systems;
- Working with the southern CFS agencies to build an Aboriginal workforce;
- Coordinating the SFNNC and agency responses to information requests under the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA), the Personal Health Information Act (PHIA), and the Public Interest Disclosure Act (Whistleblower Protection);
- Managing and coordinating education and training services; and
- Supporting the ongoing development of Elder/Spiritual Caregiver services.

Developing and supporting HR capacity for the SFNNC and the southern CFS agencies includes improving the HR practices in the areas of: Employee Relations; Compensation and Benefits; Health and Safety; Training and Professional Development; and Human Resource Policies and Procedures.

During 2015/16, key activities for the HR Unit included:

- Conducting a review of the Sagkeeng CFS agency’s Human Resource department, including recommendations for implementation;
  - In the absence of the agency’s HR Manager, the Director of HR for the SFNNC had assisted with fulfilling their HR needs; as a result, an internal person with the required qualifications was hired to act in the role of HR Manager;
- Mentoring the newly appointed Sagkeeng acting HR Manager;
- Meeting bi-monthly with HR Managers/Directors;
- Coaching agency Executive Directors’s and HR staff on topics including unions, complaints, staffing, audits and management issues;
- Coaching SFNNC Managers regarding staff issues;
- Coordinating the SFNNC health and safety committee and following up on issues arising from those meetings;
- Overseeing the recruitment and hiring process at the SFNNC and Sagkeeng CFS positions; and
- Responding to requests for information.

## CULTURAL/SPIRITUAL CARE SERVICES

Without an Elder/Spiritual Caregiver on staff, the Cultural Committee has taken a lead role in offering cultural/spiritual services and teachings. The Committee has continued to incorporate cultural aspects into their daily work. Smudging is readily available and all staff are encouraged to participate in quarterly sweats and solstice feasts. With the assistance of the SFNNC Elders Council, brochures on purification and medicines have been developed and are available to SFNNC and agency staff, foster parents and children in care.

## BUILDING AN ABORIGINAL WORKFORCE

Building an Aboriginal workforce is an ongoing objective for the SFNNC and our mandated agencies. As of March 31, 2016, the Aboriginal status of staff was as follows:

WORKFORCE	SOUTHERN NETWORK	AGENCIES	ANCR
Aboriginal Status	67%	79%	32%
Non-Aboriginal Status	33%	21%	66%

