

**Report of the
Voice of Alberta
Native Women's Society
FOSTER CARE PROJECT**

to

**The Minister of
Social Services and Community Health
The Honourable W. Helen Hunley**

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VOICE OF ALBERTA
NATIVE WOMEN'S SOCIETY
FOSTER CARE PROJECT
OCTOBER, 1975 - JUNE, 1976

A report prepared by:

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Women's Society

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Alberta Social Services and Community
Health

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This report describes the activities carried out during a project entitled Voice of Alberta Native Women's Foster Care Project.

The project was funded through a grant received from Alberta Social Services and Community Health to assist the Voice of Alberta Native Women's Society in employing native women on a part-time basis to promote foster care and recruit foster homes for the department. The project also allowed for the native women to identify and encourage community programs for native families, particularly in the more isolated areas, also to do a survey on the number of native families providing care to children who are not their own, and do not receive any financial assistance.

FOSTER CARE PROJECT STAFF

October 1, 1975 - June 30, 1976

Project Committee - (Responsible for the organization of the project program and budget)

Bertha Clark - Fort McMurray - President of Voice of Alberta Native Women's Society

Zella Harris - Edmonton - Member and Liaison Worker for Native Secretariat

Christine Daniels - Edmonton - Member of Voice of Alberta Native Women's Society

Martha Gladue - Lac La Biche - Member of Voice of Alberta Native Women's Society

Christine Joseph - Cochrane - Member of Voice of Alberta Native Women's Society

Art Boettcher - Program Supervisor, Foster Care, Child Welfare Branch, Social Services and Community Health

Clara Woodbridge - Edmonton - Project Co-ordinator

Project Field Workers

Rose Muskego - Cold Lake - Bonnyville Regional Office

Rachel Hoof - Calgary - South Calgary Regional Office

June Caldwell - Calgary - South Calgary Regional Office

Lena Bumstead - Edmonton - South Edmonton Regional Office

Eva Paquette - Fort Chipewyan - Fort McMurray Regional Office

Nellie Sunshine - Sturgeon Lake Reserve - Grande Prairie Regional Office

Helen Christian - Paddle Prairie - High Level Regional Office

Celine Mercredi - Chateh - High Level Regional Office

Regina Denechoan - Chateh - High Level Regional Office
Geraldine Adams - High Level - High Level Regional Office
Emily Calliou - High Prairie - High Prairie Regional Office
Thelma Gauchier - High Prairie - High Prairie Regional Office
Violet Patenaude - Emilda - High Prairie Regional Office
Lena Landstrom- Lac La Biche - Lac La Biche Regional Office
Florence Whitford - Lac La Biche - Lac La Biche Regional Office
Annie Cotton - Blood Reserve - Lethbridge Regional Office
Rose L'Hirondelle - Little Buffalo - Peace River Regional Office
Sharon McCallum - Nordegg - Rocky Mountain House Regional Office
Emily Potts - Mackinaw Camp - Rocky Mountain House Regional Office
Theresa Fritz - Slave Lake - Slave Lake Regional Office
Elizabeth Cardinal - Saddle Lake Reserve - St. Paul Regional Office

HISTORY OF THE V.A.N.W.S.

In the fall of 1967, three native women from Alberta attended a Native Women's Conference at Fort Qu'Appelle, Saskatchewan. Upon returning to Alberta, they met and talked about the possibilities of having a Native Women's Conference in Alberta, and with the help of the Alberta Women's Institute, the first conference was planned for 1968. The theme for this first conference was "Past, Present, Future", which would be an opportunity for native women to express their concerns and mutual interests and to endeavour to define their goals for a better future in their communities.

A committee of 12 women was formed to plan this conference, working closely with the Federal and Provincial Governments. The Federal Government provided grants for the Treaty Women and the Provincial Government provided grants for the Metis Women. A president, vice-president, secretary, and treasurer were elected and the group was registered under the Society's Act in August 1968, as the Voice of Alberta Native Women's Society.

A second conference was planned and held in 1969, with the theme "Success With Unity, We Are Responsible". Unity made the second conference another success.

The theme of the third conference in 1970 was, "With Responsibility We Progress". By this time the women had accepted responsibility as they had progressed into several program areas such as pre-school education, and various community workshops to form locals throughout Alberta communities.

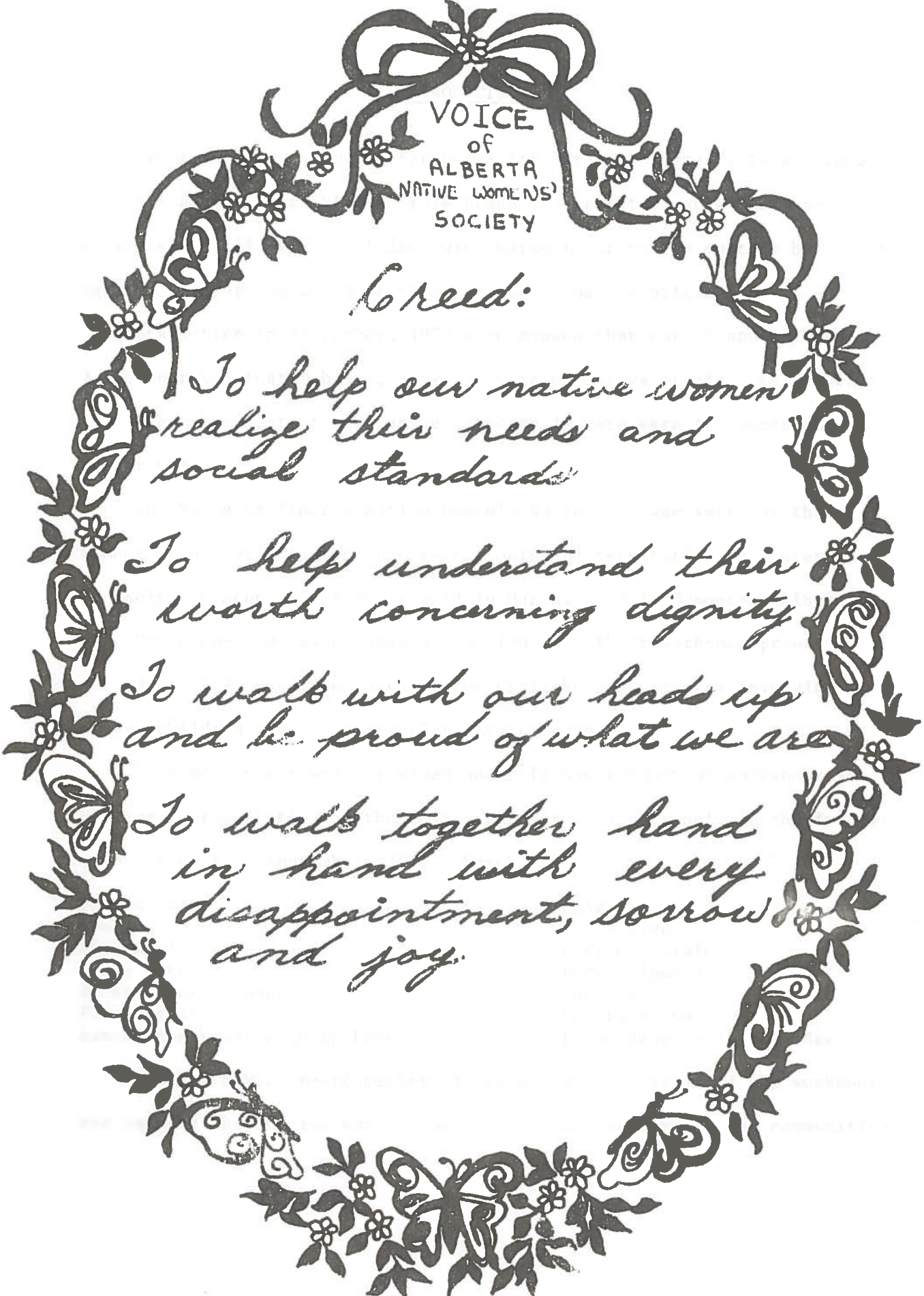
The theme of the fourth conference was "Women's Outlook for Unity". This was a great year as this conference was combined with the first National Native Women's Conference, first time in history that representation of native women from all across Canada were involved together.

By this time, the V.A.N.W.S. is becoming a uniting force. There is less talk about the difference between Metis and Treaty Women, and we are all concentrating more on what has to be done. Leadership courses were developed and those who were organized, went to the more isolated areas to interest and organize locals. Inmates were visited at Fort Saskatchewan jail and leadership courses were given in the jail. Many various workshops, learning programs, and projects are now planned annually.

This Society is now in its' 10th year of organization and boast a membership of approximately 800 Treaty and Metis women in Alberta.

The V.A.N.W.S. constitution:

- 1) To provide a communications organization
- 2) To communicate and exchange information among the various native women's groups across the province.
- 3) To focus on certain problems and through communication, attempt to obtain their solution.



VOICE
of
ALBERTA
NATIVE WOMENS'
SOCIETY

Creed:

To help our native women
realize their needs and
social standards

To help understand their
worth concerning dignity

To walk with our heads up
and be proud of what we are

To walk together hand
in hand with every
disappointment, sorrow
and joy.

INTRODUCTION

"We need more native foster homes for native children", is a phrase we often hear in the Child Welfare Branch. Statistics show that approximately 44.1% of the children with wardship status or custody by agreement under the Child Welfare Act are of native origin.

Statistics in September, 1973 also showed that out of approximately 3,400 approved foster homes, only 223 were of native origin, this then indicates that most of the native children in care were in caucasian foster homes.

The Voice of Alberta Native Women's Society became aware of the number of native children in care following a presentation on foster care at their 6th annual conference held in March, 1973 in Edmonton, Alberta.

Conference delegates passed a motion that their workshop priority for 1973 - 1974 would be based on the Child Welfare program involving native children and, in particular, foster care.

This motion was well received and followed through as workshops involving a presentation of the foster care program were held in the following communities from September, 1973 - March, 1974:

Grande Cache	Calgary
Manning	Peace River
Wetaskiwin	Little Buffalo
Slave Lake	Fort Chipewyan
Rocky Mountain House	Wabasca
Fort Vermilion	Lac La Biche
Assumption Reserve (High Level)	Blood Reserve (Lethbridge)

The V.A.N.W.S. Board members in each community arranged the workshops and assured that native women from the various settlements and communities

in their regions attended. The Fort Chipewyan workshop included, as an example, delegates from Fort MacKay, Fort McMurray, Janvier, and Anzac. The attendance at each workshop varied from 15 to 60 people. The enthusiasm and interest shown by the workshop participants was most encouraging.

Many participants were totally unaware of the foster care program and its' function. They were happy and pleasantly surprised that the Department really did want native families to become foster families.

The enthusiasm and interest following these workshops encouraged the members to pursue the program further and to actually become involved in the recruitment and development of native foster homes throughout the province and also to assess the total needs of native families in communities, particularly in the more isolated areas.

The Board members of the V.A.N.W.S. met with the Minister of Social Services and Community Health on July 4, 1974 to present a proposal and to request financial assistance to impliment the proposal.

PROJECT PROPOSAL OUTLINE

The V.A.N.W.S. propose to employ native women on a part-time basis to:

- 1) identify the social needs of the community
- 2) determine what resolutions to social problems could be made
- 3) encourage and assist members of the community in developing the appropriate resources.

PROBLEM AREAS IDENTIFIED IN THE WORKSHOPS

Problem #1: Guardian Social Allowance Vs. Foster Care

During the workshops, many concerns were expressed that our Guardian Social Allowance program is being used to assist families financially, when

in actuality foster care rates should be paid. In the native culture, families will accept custody of "neglected" children related to them rather than have our Department become involved on a protection basis. In many instances, the family cannot financially meet the needs of these children, but struggle to do their best. Often the assistance given through the Guardian Social Allowance program is not sufficient to meet the child's needs, whereas foster care rates would enable the family to meet the child's needs without financially placing a burden on their own family.

Proposed Action of the Voice

- 1) Determine as accurately as possible the number of native children living with relatives in each of the communities and reserves.
- 2) Determine why the children are living with relatives, instead of their own families.
- 3) Determine the financial situation as follows:
 - a) Guardian Social Allowance Program
 - b) Social Allowance Program
 - c) Assistance from Indian Affairs
 - d) Assistance from the parents of the child
 - e) No government assistance, fully supporting the children themselves - if so, by what means - salary, Old Age Security, etc.
 - f) If no help is being given but appears necessary, determine why they haven't requested help (e.g.) fear of losing child, etc.

This kind of compiled information would assist the Department in determining the need for a review of the existing situation.

Problem #2: The Lack of Native Foster Homes, Group Homes and Emergency Receiving Homes

In most instances where native children become wards, they are removed from their own culture and environment and placed in our white society, which is very frightening and disturbing to the native child. If they remain in the white society for any long period of time, the children lose their identity with the Native Culture, and language, which is very up-

setting to the native people.

Proposed Action of the Voice:

- 1) Locate, promote, encourage, and inform native families in each community of the need for foster homes, group homes, and emergency receiving homes.
- 2) Outline the foster care program in the native language to interested families.
- 3) Accompany and assist the interested applicant in an interview with the Department Social Worker.
- 4) Assist the Social Workers in determining the applicant's suitability for foster care.
- 5) Assist the Social Worker in approving the foster home, if acceptable, and in the placement process. Act as liaison person temporarily until the foster parent is comfortable and able to relate to the social worker.

Problem #3: The Lack of Community Resources, Particularly in the Northern Isolated Areas

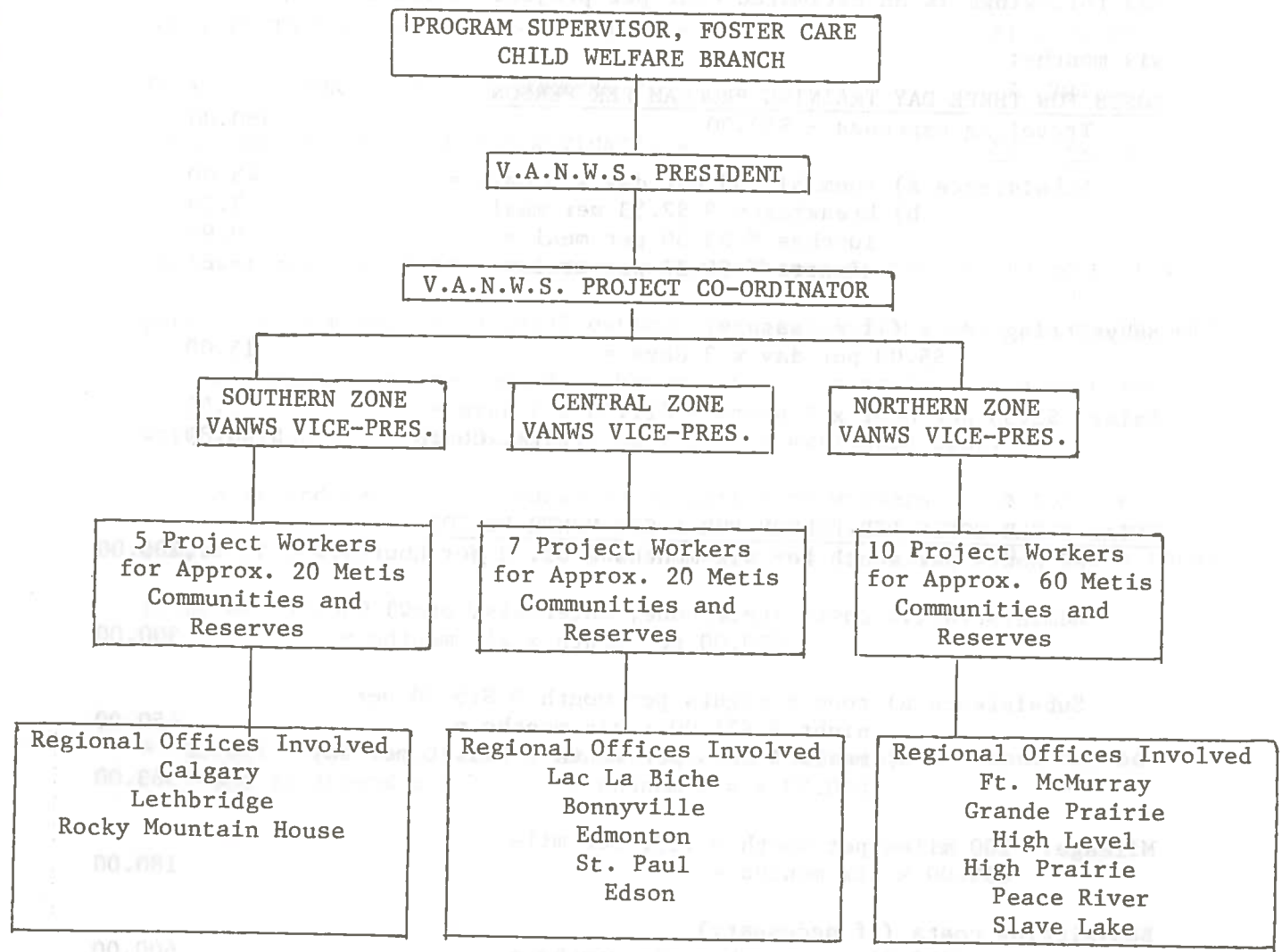
- 1) Identify the kinds of community programs lacking that would help prevent family breakdowns, and increase total family involvement in community activities and resources.
- 2) Encourage and assist in the development of community programs (many of them low-key volunteer kinds of activities).
 - a. Early childhood services
 - b. Baby-sitting services (roster type of program)
 - c. Community transportation pools
 - d. School volunteers (assist in lunch room, playground supervision, language interpretation, etc.)
 - e. Home management courses, sewing, cooking, etc.
 - f. Family responsibility courses (caring for children, safety in the home, etc.)
 - g. Community health programs (first aid, immunization, baby clinics, etc)
 - h. Recreational programs
 - i. Alcohol prevention programs
 - j. Others as identified in each individual community.
- 3) Encourage participation of the entire family in such programs.

* Refer to Appendix A for forms used for the project

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE
V.A.N.W.S. FOSTER CARE PROJECT

The V.A.N.W.S. is divided into three zones in the province. The Society has a provincial president and one vice-president along with four Board members in each of the three zones. The Voice has approximately 600 Metis, Treaty, and Non-Treaty native members at the present time.

ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE OF THE PROJECT



PROPOSED PROJECT BUDGET FOR SIX MONTH PERIOD

Costs to involve the following:

- 1) Salary, subsistence and traveling costs for Project co-ordinator.
- 2) Traveling, subsistence, and babysitting costs for the project workers.
- 3) On-going administrative meetings as required throughout the project period for those involved.
- 4) Administration costs, telephone, materials, etc.
- 5) Salary for project workers. It was agreed by the committee that the project workers should be paid the minimum hourly wage as determined by the Board of Industrial Relations.

The followings is an estimated cost per project worker for a period of six months:

COSTS FOR THREE DAY TRAINING PROGRAM PER PERSON

Traveling expenses - \$50.00	\$50.00
Subsistence a) room \$15.00 per day x 3 days =	45.00
b) breakfasts @ \$2.53 per meal =	7.59
lunches @ \$3.30 per meal =	9.90
dinner @ \$6.27 per meal =	18.81
Babysitting costs (if necessary)	
\$5.00 per day x 3 days =	15.00
Salary \$2.50 per hour x 7 hours = \$17.50 x 3 days =	52.50
TOTAL COSTS -	<u>\$198.80</u>

TOTAL FIELD COSTS PER PERSON FOR A SIX MONTH PERIOD

80 hours per month for six months @ \$2.50 per hour =	\$1,200.00
Administrative costs (telephone, materials, etc.)	
\$50.00 per month x six months =	300.00
Subsistence a) room 5 nights per month @ \$15.00 per	
night @ \$75.00 x six months =	450.00
b) meals 5 days per month @ \$12.10 per day	
\$60.50 x six months =	363.00
Mileage: 200 miles per month @ .15¢ per mile	
\$30.00 x six months =	180.00
Babysitting costs (if necessary)	
\$100.00 per month x six months =	<u>600.00</u>

Total Field Cost for six months =	\$3,093.00
Add Training Costs =	<u>136.50</u>
TOTAL COSTS PER PERSON FOR SIX MONTHS =	3,283.00
TOTAL COST FOR 22 PROJECT WORKERS @ \$3,282.00 =	72,204.00

ESTIMATED COSTS FOR PROJECT CO-ORDINATOR

Salary for 8 months at \$1,000.00 per month =	\$8,000.00
Subsistence a) room \$100.00 per month x 8 =	800.00
b) meals \$60.00 per month x 8 =	480.00
Mileage and travel \$250.00 per month x 8 =	2,000.00
Administrative Costs \$100.00 x 8 =	<u>800.00</u>
TOTAL COSTS FOR PROJECT CO-ORDINATOR =	\$12,080.00
TOTAL COST FOR 22 PROJECT WORKERS =	72,204.00
TOTAL COST FOR PROJECT (APPROXIMATE) =	<u>\$84,284.00</u>

The original budget estimate requested was based on the involvement of 45 part-time workers, for a total estimate of \$152,467.50 for a six month period.

The Department recommended that we start the project on a more restricted basis, at approximately half of the estimated cost.

A second request was based on 22 part-time workers for a total estimate of \$84,284.00. The request was approved in August, 1975 for a total grant of \$90,000.00.

* Actual costs involved in the project and financial statement may be found in Appendix B

RECRUITMENT FOR PROJECT STAFF

PROJECT CO-ORDINATOR

The project co-ordinator will be responsible for the implementation and supervision of the project and the workers.

CRITERIA AND JOB DESCRIPTION

- will be a member of the V.A.N.W.S.
- will be available for full time employment from September, 1975 to the end of the project.
- must have a car and a drivers license
- will maintain contact with all project workers on a consultant basis, and also with the zone presidents
- will maintain contact with Foster Care Supervisor for direction and support
- will maintain contact with regional office staff involved in the project to keep communication lines open between project workers and regional office staff
- will require skills in communicating and supervising with community people and project staff
- will need to be resourceful, co-operative and innovative

CRITERIA AND JOB DESCRIPTION FOR PROJECT WORKERS

- will be a member of V.A.N.W.S.
- will be able to speak the Native language of the area
- will have an understanding of the English language, both verbally and written
- must be out-going, innovative, able to work with people, both individually and in groups
- must be available for approximately 80 hours of employment a month
- must have an interest in children and families, foster care, and community resources
- must have means of transportation (depending on area)

The V.A.N.W.S. Board members from each of the three zones were responsible for the recruitment of project workers along with the assistance of the V.A.N.W.S. president, Bertha Clark, and the Project Co-ordinator, Clara Woodbridge.

Recruitment was more difficult than originally anticipated. Many of the members were hesitant to become involved and employed as they had never had any employment experience. Many were not able to drive or had no means of transportation, and others were too involved with their own families.

Some who commenced working on the project resigned due to illness, family problems, or other employment opportunities.

Of the 22 women recruited, 15 remained for the full duration of the project.

TRAINING PROGRAM

The training aspect of this project was a very vital one, all project workers had to become familiar with the program criteria and the Department's expectations. It was also necessary to familiarize the workers with the administration procedures of the project.

It was planned to have all of the workers attend one three day training program. This was not possible due to the difficulty experienced in recruitment. Some were not able to attend because of illness and other legitimate reasons.

It was necessary to hold three training sessions from October 1, 1975 to January 1, 1976.

The training sessions were a three day live-in program with the following agenda:

1. Registration and get acquainted (first evening)
2. Opening Remarks
3. Introduction of Training Program
4. The Project -
 - Reasons for the Project
 - Procedures Administrative and forms to be used
 - Salaries and responsibilities
5. The Child Welfare Branch
 - its' functioning and programs
 - how children come into care?
 - apprehension and court procedures
 - behavioural difficulties children experience when separated from their parents
6. The Foster Care Program
 - philosophy
 - how to introduce foster care
 - recruitment
 - forms, rates, etc.
 - regional office involvement
 - roles of: Foster Parent
Social Worker
Project Worker
 - confidentiality
7. The difference between Guardian Social Allowance Program and Foster Care Program
 - philosophy
 - rates
8. Communication Skills
 - role playing
 - interviewing
 - being a good listener
 - keeping the clients interest
9. Community Resource Program
 - a. Identifying community resources
 - b. What do we look for?
 - c. How do we evaluate programs?
10. Regional Office Role:
 - responsibilities of the Regional Office
 - responsibilities of the project worker
 - how do we work together? (team approach)

The workers commenced working on the project immediately following the training program. The training program provided some insight into the Department's program policies. Regional office staff were asked to provide supervision and guidance to the workers, as the training program could not totally prepare the workers to do the work without their support.

MEETINGS THROUGHOUT THE PROJECT

Workers were brought together midway through the project to share experiences, to gain additional information, to clarify areas of concern, and to gain some insight to the success of the project. This two day meeting was most vital and encouraging. The workers were very enthused and very openly shared their experiences and concerns, both negative and positive. They left the meeting re-generated with additional confidence to reach their goals.

Statistics indicate that the majority of referrals were made after this meeting. This would indicate that the meeting did provide them with motivation and enthusiasm to do the job well.

Reports from each regional office administrator outlining their experiences and involvement with the project were also shared with the workers. This helped to create the strived for "team approach" in the project.

The project was active from October 15, 1975 to June 30, 1976. At the end of the project, a two day meeting was held with the project workers, the committee and other V.A.N.W.S. personnel, to evaluate the entire project.

* Reports from the President of V.A.N.W.S., Bertha Clark, the Co-ordinator, Clara Woodbridge, and from some of the workers will be found in Appendix C

POSITIVE FEEDBACK PROVIDED BY
THE PROJECT WORKERS AT THEIR FINAL MEETING:

- regional office administrators very co-operative and encouraging.
- Chiefs from most reserves were co-operative because of their involvement initially. All Chiefs in the areas received an outline of the project asking for their co-operation.
- project workers have opened communication lines with the Department and native families.
- Native families were very happy to be involved in the planning for Native children, through their own language and people.
- project workers discovered their hidden potential in working with people.
- the ability to refer families for Guardian Social Allowance, when caring for their grandchildren, nieces, or nephews.
- being an interpreter was a good experience.
- becoming aware of resources and the proper contact.
- V.A.N.W.S. members referred families interested in foster care to the project workers.
- project workers became much more aware of native people's needs.
- homes were recruited in areas where native foster homes have never existed.
- some project workers were able to find permanent employment involved in social work because of their ability and interest.

NEGATIVE FEEDBACK PROVIDED BY
THE PROJECT WORKERS AT THEIR FINAL MEETING:

- project co-ordinator felt that a more intensive training program for herself would have helped her.
- project co-ordinator could have used more co-operation from the V.A.N.W.S. Board members of each zone, particularly in recruitment.
- regional office administrators were aware of the project, but in some offices, the social worker had no knowledge of it, this was frustrating.
- project workers were at times left on their own too much.
- some project workers felt the training program was too short.

- some project workers needed more support from the co-ordinator.
- project workers required some simply printed brochures to leave with the families.
- some native organizations approached were unaware of the project.
- wages paid to the project workers were low.
- the role of the project worker was not clear to some offices and communities.
- some reserves were very protective and did not want any intruders.
- some social workers were always busy and did not co-operate with project workers.
- referrals were left too long before the social worker made contact and people became disinterested.
- housing was very limited, many families were interested and could provide excellent care but their small home could not accommodate additional children.
- families would express an interest, but would not follow through.

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

Fourteen regional offices participated in this project. Statistics in 1974 indicate the department had 3,108 approved foster homes, with approximately 223 of the homes being either Treaty or Metis in origin. A survey completed in January, 1975, indicated that 63 of the 223 native homes were approved in the last six months of 1974 as a result of the workshops held in the native communities. These statistics then clearly point out the urgent need for native homes when approximately 44.1% of the children in care are of native origin.

It is also of interest that 46 of the 223 native homes exist on the Gleichen reserve, which has its' own Child Welfare Services staffed by Native Social Workers. These 46 homes have formed a Foster Parent Association, which to our knowledge, was the only all Native Parent Association in Canada up to that time. The following chart will show results of the Foster

Care Project in each Regional Office area:

FOSTER HOME REFERRALS (NOV. 1, 1975 - JUNE 30, 1976)

Regional Office	Referral	Approved	Possible	Rejected	Already Approved	Cancelled
Bonnyville	8	0	3	4	1	
Calgary	0	0	0	0	0	
Edmonton	17	6		5	1	5
Edson	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fort McMurray	2	2	0	0	0	0
Grande Prairie	6	6	0	0	0	0
High Level	20	5	5	5	0	5
High Prairie	40	14	21	5		
Lac La Biche	70	15	32	23	0	0
Lethbridge	35	0	2	4	0	0
Peace River	6	28	3	4	0	0
Rocky Mountain House	20	6	7	6	1	0
Slave Lake	15	9	6			
St. Paul	18	12	0	6	0	0
TOTAL	257	103	79	62	3	10

More than 50% of the homes have been approved, are in the process, or will be considered at a later date. Most of the 62 homes rejected were for two reasons:

1. families were large and had no additional space for foster children
2. marital and/or alcohol problems with the family

It is possible that some of the families rejected because of limited space, could be considered if suitable accommodation were located or if the number of people in the home decreased. Many of these families were already caring for grandchildren, and in some instances, had the grandparents residing with them.

GUARDIAN SOCIAL ALLOWANCE

The objectives set out by the project for this program were not to successful for the following reasons:

1. Project workers found that to complete a survey on this program would have taken their total time. Even then it would not have been an accurate survey.
2. The majority of families interviewed that were caring for children who were related to them were already receiving assistance of one kind or another.

The one positive aspect concerning this part of the project is that native families are now aware of the Guardian Social Allowance program and are knowledgeable of the difference between this program and the foster care.

Statistics show that six families were encountered that were receiving assistance for the children in their homes, seven families were referred for Guardian Social Allowance and approved.

IDENTIFYING COMMUNITY NEEDS

This aspect of the project indicates that a large number of the rural areas suffer from a lack of community programs. Not all of the workers participated in this part of the project.

The Lac La Biche project workers suggested a large number of programs for four different areas:

Eleanor Lake Community

- a. need for a hall
- b. school volunteer (assist with lunch, playground supervision, language)
- c. home management courses
- d. family responsibility courses (caring for children, safety, etc.)
- e. health programs (first aid, immunization, etc.)
- f. recreational programs
- g. alcohol prevention programs

Caslan Colony Community

- a. early childhood services
- b. family responsibility
- c. babysitting services
- d. alcohol prevention program

These were referred to Early Childhood Services (Lac La Biche School Division) and A.V.C. (Community Programs, Lac Lac Biche)

Owl River Community

- a. recreational programs

These were referred to the Local 114 of Metis Association of Alberta

Kikino Colony Community

- a. communication skills workshop

This was referred to a Native Organization.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN HOUSE PROJECT WORKERS

Recommended community programs for all of the Reserves in the area and in particular for the Big Horn Reserve.

EDMONTON PROJECT WORKER

This worker, with the help of the V.A.N.W.S. Edmonton Chapter, very actively:

1. encouraged hospital visits
2. established a playground program for native youth from a grant received
3. encouraged workshop
4. encouraged and provided volunteer native interpreters for court, etc.

HIGH PRAIRIE WORKERS

Attended a number of community meetings and encouraged the people to get involved in community programs.

LETHBRIDGE PROJECT WORKER

Identified the following community needs:

1. need for a form of family counselling service
2. expansion of existing Home Economist services involving native women

as instructors

3. need for homemakers/home visitors program
4. expansion of present limited alcoholism counselling services.
5. development of a Volunteer Program to be attached to schools, homemakers, program and family services. This is the largest untapped resource available on the Blood Reserve with the best potential for ready development given the availability of leadership.

POSITIVE COMMENTS TAKEN FROM THE REPORTS OF REGIONAL OFFICES

- enjoyed working with the project worker
- a valuable and necessary program
- project of great benefit to our department
- the worker was extremely good at her job
- training was accurate and good
- project a definite success and hope it will continue
- project reasonably successful
- project worker did an excellent job
- the project far more successful than I thought
- project has had a positive effect on the native foster home situation in this area because:
 1. we have recruited a number of good homes
 2. community awareness of the program in native communities
 3. project a success because of the staff involvement, intelligent, motivated and highly productive
 4. the whole regional office staff were involved
- we had regular meetings with the project staff
- training was quite adequate
- project a real step toward reaching out to native families to encourage participation in the Foster Care Program.
- please involve us again if you continue the project
- the worker was very successful in foster care recruitment
- worker willing to give her time voluntarily when the project was completed
- project has demonstrated that a skilled native person, knowledgeable of the native people can gain the trust and involve, evaluate, and communicate with native people more effectively than white social workers.

- a successful foster care workshop was organized with 20 native foster families involved.
- the project has more than doubled the number of native foster homes in our area.
- project workers were sincere and worked conscientiously on the program
- project did provide some native foster homes and more interested families
- it has eliminated some of the fears many native people have had toward any kind of involvement with department.
- it has brought the ladies of the various communities a little closer to our department and more accepting of each other's activities
- generally speaking the project was successful
- project was a success not because we gained a large number of native homes, but successful in that the foster care program has been introduced to a large number of native people in this area
- the dividends of this project may not be apparent for some months, but have certainly taken a step in the right direction.
- the relationship between our staff, the project worker grew from a shaky relationship to a very positive one.
- project worker was amazed at the long hours social workers must put in to keep up with clients demands - she actually asked the native people in one community to appreciate their social worker and to have some patience
- all in all, it was a very worthwhile project and worth repeating.

NEGATIVE COMMENTS FROM THE REPORTS OF REGIONAL OFFICES

- training program not adequate
- lack of communication between co-ordinator and project workers
- not enough support from the regional offices
- wrong person chosen for the job
- no one was actively involved
- project worker lacked a sense of understanding in the program and was confused

- worker showed lack of interest and seemed unwilling to attend followups with social worker from the office.
- difficult to assess the success of the program as there appears to have been some personal conflict between the native worker and one of the Indian Bands.
- meetings with the bands were continually cancelled or no one would show up
- project worker did not keep her appointments with the Regional Office and had difficulty in locating her when we tried

CONCLUSIONS

1. The project had identified that 257 native families expressed an interest in foster care, because of the contact made by the native project workers. The majority of these families were not aware of the need for native foster homes, nor were they familiar with the foster care program. These families were interviewed personally by the project workers over an approximate six month period through part-time employment. This more than doubles the number of approved native foster homes the department had prior to the commencement of the project.
2. Considering that 44.1% of the children in care are of native origin, many more native homes are required. The project has proven that there are native families who will become foster parents, however, the encouragement to get involved must come from a native person who can relate and explain the program in the native tongue.
3. The project provided an insight into other services that native families could benefit from:
 - a. home management programs (these could be offered by native homemakers)
 - b. health programs (first-aid, communicable diseases, etc.)
 - c. child growth and development programs
4. The remaining amount of the total grant is \$21,023.51. The project will be continued until these funds are expended.

RECOMMENDATION

We recommend that additional funds be made available to the V.A.N.W.S. so that they may continue to assist the department in the recruitment and development of desperately needed native foster homes.

APPENDIX A

Forms Used in the Project

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FOSTER HOME APPLICANT FOR VOICE OF NATIVE WOMEN SOCIETY PROJECT

(Form to be completed for interested applicant in Foster Care)

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

Number of Own Children: Male _____ Female _____

Number of Foster Children They Could Care For: Male _____ Female _____

Ages of Foster Children They Could Care For: Male _____ Female _____

REASON FOR INTEREST: _____

Do they wish to have you involved in the interview with the Social Worker? Yes _____

No _____

YOUR COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS: _____

GUARDIAN SOCIAL ALLOWANCE QUESTIONNAIRE FOR VOICE OF NATIVE WOMEN SOCIETY PROJECT

Form to be completed for families caring for children related to them. Example:

- Grandparents caring for their grandchildren
- Aunt & Uncle caring for their nieces or nephews
- Sister or Brother caring for their siblings

Name of Guardian _____

Address of Guardian _____

Names of Children Being Cared For:

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

Children's Own Parents Name _____

Address _____

Why are the Children Living With Relatives? Explain in your own words.

Check the Areas where the Guardians Receive Financial Assistance for the Children.

- _____ Guardian Social Allowance Rates
- _____ Social Allowance Program
- _____ Assistance from Indian Affairs or Band
- _____ Assistance from the Parents of the Child
- _____ Guardians Supporting the Child/Children by themselves

By what means are the Guardians supporting the Children?

- _____ Old Age Security
- _____ Wages

Do the guardians receive the Family Allowance? Yes _____ No _____

If no help is being received, explain reasons why. (Example, fear of losing children, etc.)

I D E N T I F Y I N G C O M M U N I T Y N E E D S

Voice of Alberta Native Women Society Project

Form to be completed when identifying the need for Community Services that would help to prevent family breakdown.

- Examples:
- a) Early Childhood Services
 - b) Baby-Sitting Services (Roster-type program)
 - c) Community Transportation Pools
 - d) School Volunteers (Assist in lunch room, playground supervision, language)
 - e) Home Management Courses
 - f) Family Responsibility Courses (Caring for Children, Safety in the Home, etc)
 - g) Community Health Programs (First Aid, Immunization, etc.)
 - h) Recreational Programs
 - i) Alcohol Prevention Programs
 - j) Others, as identified in each community.

Describe the Program Identified in each community _____

Action Taken: _____

Referred to: _____

Worker's Signature _____

Community _____

APPENDIX B

Financial Statement

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

THE VOICE OF ALBERTA NATIVE WOMEN'S SOCIETY

FOSTER CARE PROGRAM

November - June 30, 1976

	DEBIT	CREDIT
Bank		
Term Deposit	21,023.51	
Grant Received		90,000.00
Salary	35,501.85	
Program Training	5,295.50	
Program Training - Travel	1,325.63	
Mileage Expense	9,020.59	
Babysitting	3,950.00	
Living Allowance - (rooms)	635.75	
Living Allowance - (meals)	3,372.29	
Rental - Travel Program	406.80	
Telephone	808.24	
Rec. General for Canada	4,334.95	
Supplies	47.68	
Conference	2,467.35	
Evaluation Meeting - Expencc Accounts ...	734.95	
Evaluation Meeting - Babysitting	109.85	
Evaluation Meeting - Meals	382.71	
Evaluation Meeting - Rooms & Breakfast ..	446.35	
Evaluation Meeting - Coffee & Conf. Room.	130.00	
Bank Charges	6.00	
	\$90,000.00	\$90,000.00

APPENDIX C

Reports from the:

- a. V.A.N.W.S. President
- b. V.A.N.W.S. Project Co-ordinator
- c. V.A.N.W.S. Project Workers

REPORT AND EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT

FROM BERTHA CLARK, PRESIDENT

VOICE OF ALBERTA NATIVE WOMEN'S SOCIETY

I want to let it be known that it is because of the Voice of Alberta Native Women's Society organizing that has made many activities of the members possible, also that the Foster Care Program was made possible by the concerns of our Delegates at our annual Conferences Resolutions.

We received fundings from the Secretary of State to hold Workshops within the communities and reserves, to motivate our members into becoming active in their community and reserves in various community agencies such as Alcohol Preventions, Welfare, R.C.M.P. relations to Native People, then with Mr. Boettcher explaining the Foster Care Program to our members at these workshops. I want it known that with the sincere approach which Mr. Boettcher used to talk to the women throughout the various workshops, he gave the women much information as to the rights of Foster Parents of whom many were looking after children and had not ever received any financial assistance. At the end of the years of workshops, I stated that we have now had enough knowledge and were aware that with so many native children needing homes and having to leave their communities, that we should now go into action and do something for our native children, quit criticizing the "White Society" for taking these children into their homes, at least they were not being put into insitiutions. It was at this time that we met with the Minister of Health and Social Development, who at that time was Mr. Crawford. We related to him our concerns of our Native children and felt that with some funding that we could set up a project which could work for us.

A Foster Care Committee was formed with the three Vice-Presidents, Zella Harris, Native Secretariat, Mr. Art Boettcher, and myself. We prepared our needs and proposal with the expertise of Mr. Boettcher and Zella Harris. Mr. Boettcher did a tremendous job of putting our needs together and took it to his department for approval. When we did get the results and only half of the funding was approved, my first reaction was to question this to the Minister, as I was certain our women given a chance could do it. Then at a meeting with the committee we agreed that half was better than none, so the green light was on.

We hired a co-ordinator, Clara Woodbridge, whom we knew would do an excellent job. Then we had to hire women which was done not too easily, here there was some misunderstandings, but these were straightened out, the show had to move onward.

A Training Session was held, this was a three day training of all native women. Again I must say that Mr. Boettcher did an outstanding job of putting together the plan for training. Due to the short time to recruit women, we held three training sessions. The women who came forth to do the were extremely enthusiastic with their training and ready for the job. There are still things to do in that some women had family situations in that regardless of the excellent job they were doing were forced to quit their jobs. Several quit because of other commitments, others through their fine and good work were offered other jobs in their areas, which we were very proud to see as it proved the women did their jobs well. I estimate the job done to be at a 85% success. Perhaps some took the job for the money more than the job itself, but this I say is a learning thing, and was corrected. The wages were at a minimum, the project in some cases hired some women whom had never worked before, when the project is complete, they will likely get other jobs if

this cannot be done then they are eligible for unemployment benefits.

This is not an evaluation in a true sense, as I was not the co-ordinator or worker but as President of the Voice of Alberta Native Women's Society, I want to first thank Art Boettcher for his outstanding work with our women, with out his sincere efforts, the job could not have been done so thoroughly. I also wish to thank Zella Harris for her support in this project, as a Government Employee, she assisted the co-ordinator in many ways.

I wish to thank Helen Hunley, Minister of Health and Social Development, for her fine remarks to our Project. A great deal of gratitude goes to Clara Woodbridge, Co-ordinator of the project and her workers for all their efforts to see the project succeed. I feel that there is a great need in some way to continue this program to go on to other social needs of our Native people. We still need some receiving homes in most areas for children in all aspects.

I wish to thank especially the native families who have opened their doors to our,homeless native children, I feel if these women could in some way continue to work they could work with communities and reserves on a prevention basis with families and children in order to prevent family breakups. I know that native women going to native homes to explain the program and what it is to be a foster parent has been a success in that the communication between Natives is so much easier especially language wise; I have heard the social workers say this, which will come up in the completion of the evaluation.

I want to thank the Directors of Health and Social Development and their staff for their co-operation as it has proven through working together

a job can be done and done well, so let us again get our needs together and continue with a similar project. There are still homes we have not reached and there are still many children in need.

Thank you.

REPORTS FROM PROJECT CO-ORDINATOR

CLARA WOODBRIDGE

September 1975:

Was at Mr. Boettcher's office getting information as to what my job was all about, also was given supplies.

Left for High Level to look for women to take jobs as liaison worker in looking for native foster parents and homes for native foster children for Social Health and Welfare Development.

We had a good meeting in High Level. Explaining what the job was about was another thing, but having foster care programs at workshops helped, as I didn't know that much about the work myself. (I think it would of been nice if a person had at least a week in training on Foster Care explaining it, but we could talk freely because we hadn't received the monies as yet).

As we travelled and where we stopped or met women, we talked on the subject of foster homes. Bertha Clark and I also stopped and went to see the Family Court Worker, Eileen Knott, and told her about the foster home program, in case she would come across someone who would want a part time job.

Went to Wabasca to see Chief Sam Young, and explained the program and why we aere looking for women. Sam Young said "That is the first time anyone brought a worthwhile project to government, and he would fully support the V.A.N.W.S. in their work".

We also went to see Martha Gladue, Central Vice-President for V.A.N.W.S. at Lac La Biche, so she would go about looking for native women who would like a job as liaison worker for native homes.

It would have helped if we could have stayed longer in different areas longer so we could talk and fully explain about this project but you know how slow government is in giving the okay and money to work with.

I also went South to Lethbridge Friendship Centre but they hadn't even heard of it so I explained we wanted women who would like to work part-time on something like "Native children are always taken from native mothers and put into white foster homes, we should do something about it, so this is the reason we got this project going with help of government funds."

October 1 to October 31, 1975

It would have been nice to have had a worker for Coaldale area, maybe some Cree children can be sent that way. I went to Cardston, Standoff which actually feels like you're trespassing, well anyway I went to a private house, a man came out and I talked to him outside his nouse I asked for the Chief, but apparantly the Chief at the time was taking a course in alcohol, but anyway I explained about this training and looking for women on foster homes. This person thought it was a good program and he felt it was good that I locked for the Chief first, because he said, most people come here on our reserve and put a program of some kind without the Chief's permission, this is the reason why that people who put these programs don't get our co-operation. We feel these people don't respect our people. I told hime I felt that I wouldn't work on the reserve unless I had an okay from the Chief. I then went to Standoff, I went to the Jim Shot Both Side Building. They were having a meeting but I did get to talk to a few people also Rose Yellowfeet made us comfortable so I gave her details on foster-parent, child home program. She then told us Annie Cotton was interested,

but Annie was also taking that Alcohol program. I did put Annie's name as one of the workers. I then left to go to town of Glietzen, but we took a wrong route so ended in Calgary, so I proceeded on to Cochrane to look for Christine Joseph. At that time Christine Joseph had moved so I came on to Rocky Mountain House, Nordegg, Mackinow Camp. I made a few inquiries to where these camps were, by this time we stopped some Indian families in a car at the shopping centre, so they in turn showed us the way to Mackinow Camp where we visited three families.

It was really interesting to see how families there were living in the wilderness of the Rockies. They live in tents with lumber sidings, and they even have it petitioned off so it's made into two rooms. They don't have electricity, but they do have propane stoves, gas-lite, but also have one building that has electricity so they can have movies, but I don't know if it's motor run. There must be 12 or more families living by mountain side and liquor is not allowed at camp.

We then stayed over at a guard's home at Nordegg who had two foster children besides their own. Sat. went to a banquet set up by Fort Vermilion Wild Rose Chapter of V.A.N.W.S. This was quite an interesting banquet.

There was young and old women, musician, trappers, handicraft men, mothers of three sets of twins and triplets, volunteer helpers and what have you.

It was a pleasure to talk with them and tell all about our new program of women looking for native foster parents and some homes for our native children.

Went to Ottawa to National Women's Association meeting told them of our new project in Alberta of foster care. On coming home, tragedy had hit us again, my brother and his son had drowned, so I went to Utikima Lake and

helped to make tea, coffee and heat up food for the volunteer helpers.

Had a meeting with the committee members on foster care.

Towards the end of the month we had training for the new recruits of twelve that applied for liaison workers on native homes for native children.

They were a very interesting group, some were shy and newly introduced to any kind of meeting or gathering. I do feel these women did appreciate our making them feel comfortable and understanding them and not rushing them through the program. Zella Harris, Bertha Clark and Art Boettcher were very good resource people in the kind of training these women required for looking and introducing people on the program of native foster homes for native children.

November 1 to November 30, 1975

Went to Grande Prairie to look for some more women. Went to Friendship Centre, but the administrator didn't know off hand if there was any women who could work on the project, also went to Dorothy Walker, hoping she may be able to take the job but Mrs. Walker is taking in foster children, but she also said she would inquire around. I also stopped at Chief's house at Sturgeon Lake but he wasn't in, so I went to the Administration Band Office, and spoke with the Administrator, and he figured we could get one from the reserve that would be capable of doing the job. Talked to Art Boettcher and was able to attend Foster Care Conference for November 8 & 9, 1975.

Here at the conference I learned a lot of things and met people who are fostering some of our native children even adopting them. Some were quite frank about admitting that they were leary of accepting native children. That they were prejudiced at first. To me this conference was very

educational and learning things. I also was able to go to Benavalant Fund and ask for help for teenage girls to go back home which they paid for her fare.

I attended a Chapter of V.A.N.W.S. meeting. Had a meeting with President, Bertha Clark, who signed cheques. Also was at Arts, and phoned Miss Arthur to have a meeting with her. Made some calls. We had a meeting with Indian Association Board and Executive. It was a good meeting and questions were asked of Art Boettcher, Bertha Clark, and myself. The Indian Association Board wanted to know the reason why the looking for native foster homes for native children. Reason was through workshops we had in past two years with native women whose main concern was children from homes and put in white homes which was a different environment which often made children rebel.

Anyway it came out with the Indian Association Executive and Board making a motion in giving us (Voice of Alberta Native Women's Society), full support in our program on Foster Care. The meeting lasted longer being that it held interest to the Treaty men of Indian Association.

I took cheques and went to see the women in High Prairie and Slave Lake area also looked for women for our program.

We held another training program I was able to attend this one better than the first, and learned more about what was expected of the training out come.

I find that the less women at the training is better as you can exercise their roll better, and explain things also writing material which is very essential in doing reports. I also think that these women can help others from their training.

I also went to speak in Cree on radio explaining our need for women for the project and why we are needing foster homes for native children. Met Bertha's plane and also took her around town.

Bertha Clark and I had our meeting with Miss Arthur, Miss Hunley, Minister of Health and Welfare's secretary. We had a good meeting and this meeting concerned our looking for a building for the Voice of Alberta Native Women's Society Activity Centre, meeting place for senior citizens, meeting place for V.A.N.W.S. also a place for doing handicrafts etc.

December 1, 1976

Went to see Mr. Burgess social worker at Bisell Centre, 96 St. and 103 Ave. about my job.

Visited Mrs. Auger, she was sort of interested in children then changed her mind because she already has two.

Lena Bumstead and I got together about how we can cover some areas in Edmonton district. Visited Della Sound, Mrs. Jennie Cyres ~~Sound~~ on volunteering in Xmas native carol singing at Charles Camsel Hospital .. Mrs. Mary Giroux has two grandchildren she keeps but is on social assistance Lena will have to look after that. Was at Lean's and showed her how to make her reports about everyone she visits. Met with the President as we had to do some straightening out for the bank accounts etc. Lena and I went to Native Counselling Service and met with Pat Anderson, executive assistant director. We explained our job so their workers in the field would help our women with maybe transportaion also they can recommend native people in family court where they can find native homes for children that are taken into custody. We also, (Lena and I) had meeting with Chief and Council at Winterburn. They recommended working with their social worker Violet Peacock. They also thought that it was a good thing we were working on, finding

native homes for native children. They really have a good administration going there. We also went to Duffield to meet with Chief and Council. We went with a social worker who was also taking two foster children to visit their mother on the reserve. Its heart breaking to see these children come away from their mother when they prefer to stay there and they (the children) were holding back their tears. They are already learning to hold their emotions back, in the two years they were in a white foster home. The mother had a drinking problem but she was rehabilitatating herself because she really wanted her children back. We also seen the receiving home, they already have at Duffield, it is really nice and clean and spacious, lots of room inside, and outside to play in. We then had our meeting with Chief and council. It was a good meeting, Why I say it was because these people asked us different things, how it came about, why it came about, when it came about and who wanted it to come about. I told them it came mostly from workshops we'd set up through the last two years and with Mr. Boettcher's help and as a resource person we learned more about fsoter care. Besides the women at workshops were concerned about native children losing their identity and nativeness.

Now this was one interesting part, they(the Chief and Council) said they wouldn't mind accepting treaty children from another reserve, but absolutely refused Metis children. Why? Because they said when they become of age the foster child would have to leave the reserve, the child would then when grown up might rebel, turn bad because he would feel rejected and also the foster parents would be in sorrow having learned to love the child.

These people have seen it happen. They also gave the Voice of Alberta Native Women's Society workers to come to reserve and work with their social worker.

Also was at V.A.N.W.S. party and exchange of gift, talked with President, as I had done an errand like getting a plaque for a very important women in Keg River. Was at a Senior Citizen's supper, to help support the group.

Phoned to Violet Patenaude, as she was kind of discouraged about the social and welfare not looking at homes but I told her not to worry that they would get around to it.

Sent letters to all workers to be sure to have reports and expenses out, and sending some advice for Xmas cheer. Talked to Mr. Boettcher about training new worker by January. I went around getting things for Pound-maker's Lodge for V.A.N.W.S. Chapter. Also made a presentation of gifts to the rehabilitate persons there on behalf of the Edmonton Chapter.

August 1976

Finding Native foster homes for Native children came about because of various Native women concerned about Native children being put into white homes and losing their Indian culture and identity. It started as a pilot project funded by government, and so far I feel has been a very successful project.

Most of our women who worked in our foster parent project were not highly educated, and had only a three day workshop before going out into the field. They encountered and overcame a number of problems. One problem was a limited paid mileage, but the women worked on their own and put in a lot of overtime and received no pay for their extra work. Along with finding foster homes for native children in various communities, we were able to help others raising grand children on their old age pension by filling our a Guardian Social Allowance for them, to help with the child's welfare. Some of our women workers also promoted activities in the community as recreation projects. They also interested the people they met to get involved in some of the community projects they started. One example is in High Prairie they joined the Foster Parent Association. Our women workers were successful in their work because of past experiences with associating with native people and having experienced the hardships themselves.

Getting reports from the workers was a bit of a problem as they couldn't write what they really wanted to say, and some referrals brought into a social worker were not looked at right away, and checked out, which was a hold-up for our workers because when going to the office to find out about referrals turned in, the administrator is out and no one else knows anything about the project. You are then repeating yourself over and over again before

you find anyone who knows anything about the project. This was very frustrating to our workers because half a day was wasted, and you still have to wait for your referral of a foster home to be reviewed by the social worker.

The requirements we looked for in selecting our workers were:

1. to own a car
2. get along with native people
3. speak a native tongue
4. able to approach white or native people in a friendly way
5. free to travel
- 6 to work 20 hours a week

We found it easier to work in rural communities than in cities because in cities you didn't know where the native people were, in rural communities, every one knows each other.

We held workshop at the following places:

Standoff, Midnapore, Olds, Rocky Mountain House, Hinton, Jousard, Peace River, High Level, Paddle Prairie, Fort Vermilion, Lac La Biche, Edmonton, Fort Chipewyan, Little Buffalo

In some of the above mentioned places, homes could have been found for the foster children if a social worker were with us to talk to the people about requirements of their home. As they were concerned about not having an extra bedroom for the child, and their homes were not modern, with up-to-date furniture, and the child would have to share a room with the other children or sleep on the floor as the others did. This was the main reason why these people felt reluctant to becoming foster parents. To them helping their own relatives was more important.

Through the 10½ months I have worked, I found it a challenging experience working between the native people and the white people. Working with the native people is a natural thing for me, but meeting with the

white social workers always made me feel uneasy, as I would wonder if they would except me as a person, or look at me and think it's just another Indian. But looking back, they always received me in a friendly manner, and never have I had to wait in line to see them, with or without an appointment. So this made me act as my natural self and speak freely on how my women workers were doing in the communities. The Administrator and social workers were very pleased at having a native worker gobetween in finding foster parents for native children.

In all the communities we worked in I feel that a permanent position should be created for a native person to work along with the social worker, because of the barrier of understanding between a white and native person. As I feel our project was successful even though we only had a three day workshop. Mr. Boettcher (Child Foster Care Supervisor) Zella Harris and Bertha Clark, helped in making our workshop successful by making a friendly atmosphere for everyone. Thus all our women attending felt at ease and spoke freely and expressed their own ideas.

Their training involved:

1. foster care
2. Guardian Allowance
3. Adoption
4. How to fill out guardian allownace referrals
5. How to promote foster parents (done by play acting and getting them all involved)

I feel that Mr. Boettcher would be able to give us an accurate number of homes found for our native children, which was a very worth while project and more foster homes were found for our native children then ever before in Alberta.

REPORTS FROM PROJECT WORKERS

Lena Bumstead, Edmonton Regional Office

To prepare ourselves for the Foster Care Plan, we took a three day course at the Providence Centre. Art Boettcher trained us. I thought he did a fantastic job, despite the fact that he took on the task on short notice and that it was the first time he worked with or trained native women.

I also think we should have had a longer course, for we were totally unfamiliar with Foster Care.

I strongly recommend Art Boettchers training us if there are any refresher course to be taken in the future.

In the seven months I worked with Foster Care, I visited forty-seven homes. Out of these forty-seven, I received nineteen applications and two guardian applications. I do not know how many of these were approved.

I also made twelve visits to the reserves in the Edmonton area. I visited the regional offices twenty-four times...the Centennial, North and South Regional Offices. I worked mainly through Mrs. Coachman at the South Regional Office.

HOW DID I LIKE THE PROGRAM?

I really enjoyed my work and I think it was a very worthwhile project. Most of the people I interviewed did not know much about Foster Care and it was a real pleasure telling them about it. I liked the fact that Native children would be kept in Native homes and in their own surroundings.

HOW WELL DID WORK WITH THE SOCIAL WORKERS?

I felt that I worked with them quite well. We never had any real disputes although there were times I didn't quite agree with them, but I never forced any issues. I feel that one social worker cannot change re-

gulations. There were several homes that were disqualified that I felt were really good homes.

WERE THE NATIVE FAMILIES HAPPY ABOUT THE PROGRAM?

Very much so. Every home I visited thought it was a marvelous idea. Especially the older people who are seeing their children and grandchildren lose their language and culture. They feel that by placing foster children in Metis and Native homes, they will be able to keep some of their culture.

DID I ASK ALOT OF QUESTIONS?

No, I didn't. I let the people ask me the questions. I felt that they were happy to receive the information I was able to offer them.

DID I LIKE MY VISITS?

Yes, very much. I have met alot of people and have made many new friends. Drank alot of coffee, tea and ate the odd bannock. I think I enjoyed the old people more, but it was sad to listen to some talk about their children and grandchildren. I spoke to a couple of old people who had lost all contact with their grandchildren. They were made permanent wards some years ago and there was no way to tracing them, as some had been adopted.

This is one of the reasons I like the program, that we can keep native children in native homes.

WHAT DID I DO IN THE COMMUNITY?

In the city, most communities have their own programs set up and did not need any help.

The Friendship Centre has a program for Native children and so does the Native Counselling. I did do what voluanteer work was needed in the communities and hospitals, such as an interpreter in the hospitals,

handling calls from the Social Services. Also as a trustee for people confined to hospitals (doing errands for them). I helped set up workshop at the Alexis Reserve and attended other workshops. Went to Grande Prairie attended a workshop there on the behalf of Foster Care.

Clara Woodbridge and I worked for and did receive a grant from the Secretary of State for a Youth Summer Project.

This project enabled Metis and Native students from the ages of fourteen to eighteen years old to work during the summer for the Parks and Recreation. They supervised children in the parks. This gave them a sense of responsibility and provided supervised care, creative play and guidance for the children. They also watched that the children kept out of trouble, for example glue sniffing, vandalism etc.

We had a training session for them at ADAC before the project began so that they would be familiar with symptoms of drug abuse.

DID I VISIT THE CHEIF AND COUNCIL?

Yes, I did. Both Clara Woodbridge and I had meetings with them and we were well received by all.

Most of the reserves have receiving homes and Social Services Aides who do their own Foster Care. They were all happy about the project and were very interested in the information we had to offer about the Foster Care Plan.

DID I VISIT THE COLONIES OR OTHERS?

No colonies within my area.

Sharon McCallum and Emily Potts, Rocky Mountain House R.O.

The entire program I found to be much too short to accomplish all three aspects of the project fully. It was a start though, a good start at helping to solve a few of our native peoples problems. Things will not change by themselves, it's projects like ours that make our people aware, and awareness is the answer.. Six months is definitely not enough time to meet the projects means. In my area alone there are three reservations and one camp plus the town itself, all under the guidance of one social worker (in the field).

Mr. Laike was our worker, he has a very large area to cover and he has to spread his time out. Consequently, we didn't see him very much, which was of no help to us. He really didn't have the time to spend with us or even look after our referrals. He left us very much on our own.

The people in my area are very shy and withdrawn. It was a difficult task to get them involved. This possibly comes from years of prejudice and hard life. All in all, they were very responsive.

- a) Foster Care - they generally all were willing to provide homes for native children to the best of their ability
- b) Community Services - I found very few that were interested in Communities or projects. A little push from one of their own people would have done the trick but six months is not enough time to initiate any lasting programs.
- c) Guardian Social Allowance - the people were very hesitant about this. I found a general distrust of the white man and the social worker.

Most of the people we interviewed had very little comprehension as to Foster Care and Guardian Allowance. Therefore, they asked alot of questions and we found that it took 1 - 1½ hours sometimes longer in each home.

Some people on the other hand didn't even let us in the door, but had we had a longer time to work at it, through the grapevine or whatever, we could have reached them too.

Most of our visits were done door to door. When starting the program, we approached:

social workers
health nurses
Metis Association
local V.A.N.W.S.
Kochitawin Referral Centre for Alcohol and Drugs
Chiefs (very hard to reach)

We tried to make them all aware of the program and gave them time to think about it. Then we returned. Door to door visits, then referral forms. We had a very slow response from the Social Services office. We did not accomplish as much as we could have had we had more co-operation from the office.

I started on the project November 26, 1975. I met with Mr. Zudwyh and set up an appointment for the next week to meet with the Chiefs of Sunchild and O'chiese reserves. I met Mr. Val Boehm of A.D.A.C. Red Deer and we had a discussion about Cubs and Scouts.

On December 3, we went to Sunchild. We were very disappointed. Only one Chief showed up. We asked for letters giving us permission to work on the reserve. We visited the school, the kids danced for us.

Next I went to Kochiliwan and discussed the project. I had signs made there and put them up.

I inquired about first aid demonstrations and had no time later to continue. Day care was another lost cause as no one would let us use their home. Needed more time.

In February, we went to our workshop. Had a good time and found out we were alot slower here. Came home and dug in again. We did interviews and visited schools. Our referals were never followed through. People lost interest, and we were very frustrated.

I wish to thank the V.A.N.W.S. for giving me the opportunity to work on this project, it gave me an insight into how I could help our people with so many other things. I truly believe that had the program been a two year one, a lot more would be accomplished.

Helen Christian, High Level Regional Office

I really don't know how to start my report. But as it goes I really enjoy working as foster care for the Voice of Native Women Society Project.

It sure makes a person feel good to know that the children are placed in the homes I recommended. Usually when I go in to the reserves, I usually try and see the Chief first. They usually tell me to go ahead and visit the homes. So I go and visit the homes and it is not hard to tell whether the people would make good foster parents. I make it a point to try and visit the homes at least two times before I get them to file in the foster care form, and then they would recommend some persons that would make a good foster parent.

As for Voice of Native Women Society Project it was the best thing that ever happened. If it was not for the project we would not have the two homes right in Paddle Prairie right now which were approved homes. One home has two children and the other home has three.

I believe I fill in something like 26 foster home applicants in the areas of Paddle Prairie, Keg River, Fort Vermillion, Rocky Lane, Tall Cree, Jean Dor, and Meander River. Also something like 16 Guardian. I only hope that I had more time to visit the above places I am sure I could have had more foster parents. But for the applicant I fill in I never did get copies made out for my own. So the Social Development has them all.

I also liked working with the other ladies that were involved with the Voice of Native Women Society Project and also the only gentlemen that did the greatest Mr. Art Boettcher. If it was not for the training Art, had us do, I don't believe I would of been able to do the job without the training.

Theresa Fritz, Slave Lake Regional Office

I, Theresa Fritz, am a worker in the community of Slave Lake area. I started working in Wabasca and Desmarais, Kinuso, Canyon Creek, Wide Water, and the town of Slave Lake. You can see which communities were not visited, this is due to transportation. The social worker Florence Pearson flies to these places as that is often the only way to reach them.

I found this project and the dealing with foster parents and foster children very interesting and fulfilling. I found homes in Wabasca and Desmarais, however, there were not too many for guardians. There was nothing in Kinuso, due to the fact that everyone has a job to go to. I found one home in Canyon Creek, and five foster homes in Slave Lake. There could be more homes available in Slave Lake, but some families felt that their homes were inadequate due to the size of the home or needing repairs.

This project should continue as the need for a program of this kind is greatly needed, I have barely made a dent, so to speak. The people are getting more aware of what I'm trying to do and their interest had been aroused.

I have been involved with the Bigstone Band Council meetings held in Desmarais for their Reserves. There wasn't much I could do as they have their own homemaker. However, I did offer my help whenever I could. I

also helped with the lunch program in the Missionary School in Desmarais.

The Slave Lake Hospital was another area where I was involved, I found homes for expectant mothers for remote areas while they were waiting to give birth and come too early. Social Services paid for their room and board to the three homes I found.

As there is a lot of activity going on in the area of recreation, I did not get involved in this case. They have good leadership. I also did not work with the R.C.M.P. being unaware that I could have until near the end of my tenure.

If I'd had the support of the local welfare staff in Slave Lake office, I could have done more work in the short time I worked. It is to be regretted that I did not get their recognition until much later.

I have done my very best on this job and would like to continue working when the job again becomes available.

I am enclosing forms for foster homes, as well as a list of names of children given to me by Mrs. Pearson. These children are already placed in homes.

In my closing may I say how much I have enjoyed working for this project.

Thanks to all the staff and all who made this program possible.

Florence Whitford, Lac La Biche Regional Office

As a worker for the Foster Care Program, I became aware of the many problems faced when trying to find suitable homes for foster children.

The territory covered by this worker was the area east of Lac La Biche. The total number of homes visited by both workers were 70 families. Many families visited did not have appropriate living conditions or enough room

to accomodate extra children. Other families that were interested in caring for children had marital or alcohol problems and were therefore considered unfit for foster care.

The remaining families that were disqualified for foster homes were physically unhealthy and could not be given foster parent responsibilities.

Thus, very few families of the total visited could be used by the Department of Social Services.

The interest in the program can be attributed to the genuine concern of many families in the community for children. The purpose of the Foster Care Program spread rapidly by word of mouth.

Many families that wanted foster children were parents whose children were older and had left home. In these cases, both the husband and wife wanted to care for children. These perspective parents had sincere love of children and basically just wanted to help.

As the project progressed, I became more aware of my duties as the native worker for the Voice of Alberta Native Women's Foster Care Program. It wasn't until after the recent meeting in Ft. McMurray that I really understood my work tasks.

Field work was done almost exclusively by myself, however, much time was spent in consultation with the Social Services social worker. There is a great need for foster homes in this area. However, until more adequate housing can be provided for many native families, native foster care will continue to be at a low level.

Annie Cotton, Lethbridge Regional Office

As a worker for this project, I must say I really enjoy working in it. As it is greatly needed on my area. It brings me to a position to have my voice heard as a government worker. To help assist as next of kin people who don't get any financial backing on children who take in when left by problem parents. I have also gain lots of friends. My working with the social department of Lethbridge was very good, expecially the one I work with making our visits on the reserve to fill out applications for foster parents. Who also keeps one on the go. Seeing that I made my rounds and how many were to apply for foster care. The native families were very much in favour of the program. They thank me for taking the time to see them that I got them involved. Every where I go, people stop me to know more about my duties. Who would be qualified to be foster parents. The people I visit also asked a lot of questions. Some I explain my work and how the program works. They understand. Some want to be of service to take in foster children, because they understand about the problems. The people on the reserve are very happy to visit them. Sometimes I end up counselling couples who I happen to come by and are in the midst of disagreements. It does make me feel good and themselves that there is someone who cares to listen and talk. It is such consolation. Some even make appointments as to see them. Door to door is very much appreciated as people don't have transportation. Many young wives are homebound who would like to go the school, sew or cook, but cannot go to places where sewing, cooking is taught to different ladies on reserve. Some programs could be sought to assist these young wives.

Seeing a lot problems on the reserve on Welfare. I set up a meeting

with our district supervisor of Indian Affairs, Al Fontana, and Welfare worker. Also our local reserve administrator of Welfare, Arnold Fox, and two social workers to iron out some problems on welfare. Many difference were iron out. This was not part of the duties but seeing so many complaints held this special meeting. Also I go some people interested in volunteer services to help out as teacher aids, help children with sports activities. I spoke to some teachers on the foster care program. Then also we had a workshop on foster care where the social worker, Al Zimmer, has help me and the Lethbridge Liaison Worker, Molly Mitchell. The coordinator, Clara Woodbridge, and myself went to visit the counsellors three times. We talk to them about the program and very much appreciate that we thought and concern of children that were left by their natural parents. And some I have seen individually and very much encourage them to keep working on the project. Even suggesting me as how to improve the project.

I have also visit the R.C.M.P. and explain my line of work as recruitment of foster homes on the reserve. Teacher also know even church minister know about the work as Foster Care. How it came about that the V.A.N.W.S. has brought about a very worthwhile project, the Foster Care Project.

Eva Paquette, Fort McMurray Regional Office

I will come to the point this is report of my report of Foster Care Programs. I enjoyed my work as you see many problems in our community. It was interesting to work in my community as I know just about every body here.

I had a talk to Chief, Fred Mardel, about the work I was doing and he

said it sounds good, But it will be hard to find good homes in this town. Many were interested byt find it's a big responsibility. I have found two foster homes and got help for the grandparents that are caring for their grandchildren. It was not easy in Fort McMurray as I did not know where the native families lived.

Talked to the Social worker he was very co-operative and visited a few homes there. I would have been glad to visit Chard and Fort McKay, but unfortunately, I got sick and had to be in the hospital. I am sorry to say I cannot continue this work as my husband is not well nnd I have to take it easy too.

Once again I learned a lot about other problems the main one is drinking, it's too bad.

Joan Caldwell, Calgary Regional Office

As of January 15, 1976, I regret to inform you that I will not be able to continue working for the Foster Home project. I started a full time job two weeks ago and the workload is too much. I didn't seem to spend too much time at home.

I appreciate the opportunity I had while working with you all. The knowledge I received was invaluable.

I hate to inform you that of all the homes I visited, none seemed positive. Also I will forward my work sheets.

CORRECTIONS

1. Title - History of the V.A.N.W.S. on the second page should read:

This Society is now in it's 10th year of organization and boast a membership of 600. (instead of 800)

2. page 14 - Table of Statistics should read:

	<u>Referral</u>	<u>Approved</u>	<u>Possible</u>	<u>Rejected</u>
Lethbridge	35	28	3	4

	<u>Referral</u>	<u>Approved</u>	<u>Possible</u>	<u>Rejected</u>
Peace River	6	0	2	4

3. Title - Conclusions last sentence of the 1st paragraph should read:

This increases by more than one half the number of approved native foster homes the department had prior to the commencement of the project.