

Minnesota Council on Family Relations 2008 President's Report

MCFR's Mission: *The Minnesota Council on Family Relations strengthens all families by educating and supporting family professionals and promoting connections among those involved in research, policy and practice.*

Action and accomplishments exemplify the work of MCFR during 2008. Below are highlights of these efforts related to the various activities of the Council.

CONFERENCES

The **Spring Conference on April 4, 2008** on *Nature, Children and Families: A Necessary Connection* was co-sponsored with the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum and held there. Morning speakers were Marti Erickson, Andrea Faber Taylor and Nancy Rosenow, and a wide choice of breakout sessions were available in the afternoon. **Tammy Dunrud** chaired the conference along with her co-chair from the Arboretum, Mary Vida. As part of the work of the Policy Committee, Board Member **Carolyn Carr Latady** created our first Policy Action Bulletin based on the conference theme. It is posted on the MCFR website.

The **Fall Conference** will be held on **Thursday, December 4, 2008** on *Contemporary Families – Formation, Function and the Future* at the University of Minnesota Continuing Education and Conference Center in St. Paul. Nationally known expert, Stephanie Coontz, is the keynote speaker, and there will be a broad array of breakout sessions. **Rose Allen and Minnell Tralle** are the co-chairs. This is the first conference in which participants were able to register electronically through Eventville.

Planning is underway for the **2009 MCFR Spring Conference on Friday, April 3, 2009** on *The Intersection of Family and Health* at the new Wilder Center in St. Paul. **Sara Lassig and Kristin Schneider Dillon** are co-chairing this conference.

Conference scholarships are available for MCFR student members and MCFR members with financial need. All proceeds from the **Silent Auction** held at the fall conferences go to the **Student Scholarship Fund**. Member contributions to the fund can be done at any time using the form that is on the MCFR website.

Educating and supporting family professionals is a central part of the MCFR's mission, and these conferences are a major means for meeting our mission and providing networking opportunities for our members. The conferences also provide financial sustainability for the organization.

STUDENT SECTION

Heather Cline took on leadership of the **MCFR Student Section** in 2008 with the continued support of past chair, **Kristin Schneider Dillon**. The Student Section held two **membership social events**, continue with their **student blog** and have an active **listserv**. Through a survey to member professionals and students, they have established a **mentorship program** matching professionals with students to promote engagement between current and future professionals focused on families. The Student Section has also initiated a **Student Poster Session** at the fall conference, which provides students with an opportunity to present their research or practitioner-focused work.

AWARDS

For the first time the MCFR nominated one of our student members, **Sara Lassig**, for the **NCFR Association of Councils Outstanding Graduate Student Research Paper Award** for her dissertation on *Saying Goodbye During a Terminal Illness: Retrospective Reflections of Meaning from Surviving Family Members*. Sara was selected to receive this award, which was presented to her along with \$500 at the NCFR Annual Conference in Little Rock, Arkansas in November.

The Ruth Hathaway Jewson Distinguished Service to Families Award given to a professional in the family field who is recognized for outstanding work on behalf of families will be presented to **Peg Lindlof** at the fall conference, and the **Friend of the Family Award** given to a professional or organization who may or may not be in the family field but who has made significant contributions to the quality of family life in Minnesota will be presented to **The McKnight Foundation**.

STANDING COMMITTEES

COMMUNICATIONS – The MCFR Communication Committee, under the leadership of **Beth Yokom**, made important long-term contributions to MCFR this year by working with a graphic artist to create a **new logo** for MCFR which led to development of a **new membership brochure and display board**. The new display board was completed in time for it to be on display at the NCFR conference in Little Rock and served as a model to other Council affiliates. This new design is also being used to update the MCFR website and will be reflected in all MCFR publications including the *Family Forum* and conference brochures.

Communication vehicles for the MCFR continue to be the **website** at www.mcfr.net managed by **Rose Allen** with plans for **Pa Nhia Yang** to soon take this on, the **member listserv** at mcfr@lists.umn.edu also managed by **Rose Allen** and the electronic newsletter *Family Forum*, under the leadership of **Editor Ron Pitzer**.

The MCFR website provides a means for members to keep up with Board decisions, read the newsletter and access conference registration materials and post conference resources. The home page is also used to honor MCFR award winners and keep members apprised of upcoming events. From November 1, 2007 through November 18, 2008, the website had 19,392 page views. The most commonly accessed file type is a PDF file, indicating that visitors are downloading conference brochures, newsletters and resources from past conference presentations at a high rate.

The MCFR listserv provides MCFR with a rapid communication and response system. There are currently 189 subscribers on the listserv. This is a member-only service. From November 1, 2007 through November 18, 2008, there were 105 messages sent to MCFR members on the listserv.

The MCFR Family Forum newsletter is published and distributed electronically three times a year. The newsletters are also posted on the MCFR website for public viewing. The Forum features updates on the work of the MCFR board, conference information, articles about current research on families and book reviews.

MEMBERSHIP – The Membership Committee, with the leadership of chair **Tammy Dunrud**, worked with **Linda Vukelich** to develop an **online option for members to renew their membership and register for conferences** through Eventville. The committee will debut MCFR's new marketing materials developed by the Communications Committee, including the new logo, membership brochure and display board and a new **membership campaign** at the fall conference.

Current Membership:

109 Regular Members

179 Affiliate Members (also NCFR Members)

28 Student Members

TOTAL: 316

NOMINATIONS – Thanks to the efforts of the Nominations Committee, chaired by **Mary Jo Czaplewski**, we have an excellent roster of officers and members joining or continuing on the MCFR Board for 2009.

The 2009 officers include:

- Rose Allen, president
- Beth Yokom, president-elect
- Betty Cooke, past president
- Mary Maher, secretary
- Kristin Schneider Dillon, treasurer

Newly elected board members are: Bill Allen, Michael P. Brown, Patricia Crumley, Nancy Melquist, Monica Potter and Leeann Sponsel.

Returning board members include: Ada Alden, Marcie Brooke, Carolyn Carr Latady, Heather Cline, Mary Jo Czaplewski, Tammy Dunrud, Sara Lassig, Peg Lindlof, Sue Meyers, Ron Pitzer, Minnell Tralle and Pa Nhia Yang.

A special thanks to those who are leaving the board this year – Madge Alberts and Jackie Mosqueda. It is also important to acknowledge the invaluable contributions of our **Executive Administrator, Linda Vukelich**, to the MCFR Board.

POLICY – Under the leadership first of **Madge Alberts** and then later in the year, **Carolyn Carr Latady**, the Policy Committee has made important strides in clarifying the role of policy in MCFR and initiating efforts to support policy work in our organization. Taking into account the diversity of views of MCFR members regarding policy as well as the multitude of issues important to the work of family professionals whom we serve, the Policy Committee decided to ground their work in the themes of the two annual conferences. Out of each conference a **Policy Action Bulletin** will be produced that outlines the relevant issues and themes of the conference, credible research in the area and possible action steps that members can take to influence policy related to the theme within their realm of influence. The first edition is based on the spring 2008 conference theme, *Nature, Children and Families: A Necessary Connection*, and is available on the MCFR website.

The Policy Committee will also work with the University of Minnesota Children, Youth and Family Consortium to offer members a workshop on use of the **Family Impact Checklist** for assessing the impact of policies and programs on families.

RELATIONSHIP WITH NATIONAL COUNCIL ON FAMILY RELATIONS

The MCFR has a strong relationship with the National Council on Family Relations through active involvement with the Association of Councils (AOC) through the work of **Marcie Brooke and Ada Alden**. During 2008 Marcie has served as past president of the AOC and Ada was the Program Chair for the AOC Leadership Workshop at the NCFR conference in Little Rock in November. They will continue to serve on the Executive Board of the AOC in 2009. Several

MCFR members attended NCFR in Little Rock in November where the **new institutional identity for NCFR** was announced and unveiled. You will see the new logo in evidence in their publications and other products. NCFR plans to focus attention on affiliates including MCFR in 2009.

MCFR CONSTITUTION AMENDMENTS

A task force of MCFR Board Members reviewed and made recommendations for amendments to the MCFR Constitution in order to bring the Constitution into alignment with the current functioning of the organization. All MCFR members will be asked to vote to approve the proposed amendments in January.

UPDATING MCFR BOOKLET *ETHICAL THINKING AND PRACTICE FOR PARENT AND FAMILY EDUCATORS*

Glen Palm, Ada Alden and Betty Cooke updated the document last published by MCFR in 2000 titled *Ethical Thinking and Practice for Parent and Family Educators*. It was published by NCFR in the new 2009 second edition of *Family Life Education: Integrating Theory and Practice* edited by David Bredehoft and Michael Walcheski. It is in the process of being refined in order to be used more formally as ethical guidelines for the NCFR Certified Family Life Educator (CFLE) designation. MCFR will continue to work with NCFR in planning how the new edition of this document will be published, distributed and used by both organizations.

MCFR FINANCIAL STATUS

Under the leadership of MCFR Treasurer, **Kristin Schneider Dillon**, and Executive Administrator, **Linda Vukelich**, the MCFR budget has a balance of \$15,051.42 as of October 31, 2008. We are in the process of investing \$10,000 in an ING Business Savings account because of our healthy balance. The account has no fees or service charges; provides complete liquidity of money; requires no minimum balance; is accessible online 24 hours a day, seven days a week; is FDIC insured for up to \$250,000 and is currently offering a 2.8% annual percentage yield. Recent successful conferences have been the main reason for this positive financial status.

It has been a privilege to be president of MCFR during 2008. It was a year in which many members took important leadership responsibility for events and activities and together made important contributions to the education and support of family professionals. Through these efforts we also make important contributions to families in our state. This important work will continue into 2009, and I look forward to continued involvement with MCFR. I encourage all members to become more active in the organization in the coming year and to also encourage other family professionals to join.

*Respectfully submitted,
Betty Cooke,
President*