



[www.multiplebirthscanada.org](http://www.multiplebirthscanada.org)

Multiple Births Canada  
2013 Annual Report  
*April 1, 2012- March 31, 2013*





# Message from the Board of Directors & Executive Director



Multiple Births Canada has operated as a registered non-profit since 1978. In recent years, MBC's greatest challenges have been: meeting the increasing needs for support and educational resources with the steady increase in multiple pregnancies; financial resources to support this growing need; and the decreasing availability of volunteers. However 2012-2013 was a year filled with hope, success and thankfulness.

Multiple Births Canada reached a major milestone in 2012-2013 with MBC's application to become a

registered charity accepted. **Becoming a registered charity** strengthens MBC's mission to improve the quality of life for multiple-birth individuals and their families in Canada. MBC's official charitable objective is to promote the health of twins, triplets and other multiple birth individuals and their families. MBC will work to develop and distribute educational resources and programs for multiple-birth individuals, their families, health providers and health organizations in Canada, and undertake activities incidental and ancillary to the attainment of these purposes.

The Board foresees new opportunities for growth and outreach to families and communities across Canada in the future, as MBC finds new sources of funding. Our deep appreciation goes to lawyers Kevin Fritz and Nick Gray from Wildeboer Dellelce LLP for their incredible contribution to the success of MBC's application, along with the many current and past members of MBC who contributed to this year's successful application.

Another big project this year was developing and launching a **new website for MBC**: the goal was to create a visually appealing, more accessible website with newly updated content. This goal was met through a generous donation from MBC Member Stephen van Esch and his company MessageRocket.

More than half of all twins and higher order multiples are born prematurely or at low birth weight, with significant health consequences. Last fall, MBC launched a new **Preterm Birth Support Network**, to bring reliable information, support and connections to parents expecting multiples and caring for premature twins, triplets or more.

The issue of **parental leave for parents of multiples** received a great deal of public debate and media attention from November 2012 to March 2013. First a private member's Bill was introduced in the House of Commons, Bill C-464: Parental Leave for Multiple Births or Multiple Adoptions, proposed by Sana Hassainia, MP. Then Christian Martin's appeal for EI parental leave benefits to both qualified EI recipient parents was denied by the Federal Court of Appeal. MBC provided information about the needs of multiple-birth families and spoke to the media a number of times about the issue. MBC is encouraged to see this subject being discussed, researched and debated by the media, and by elected politicians and civil servants.

Our publicity and outreach efforts received a big boost from a **radio Public Service Announcement** when Bell Media donated a 30-second advertisement which was played on 15 radio stations.

The Board and AED developed a **Stakeholder Survey** in spring of 2012 to ask about all aspects of MBC's current resources and support programs, and their wishes for future directions. This valuable feedback helped in the development for our **2013-2016 Strategic Plan**.

We offer our heartfelt thanks to **Multiple Births Canada's amazing volunteers**. As an organization run almost completely through the work of volunteers, we know there's truth in the saying that "many hands make light work". We couldn't accomplish everything in this report and all that cannot be listed here, without a large team of committed, passionate volunteers, bringing many talents to support multiple-birth families.

***With the greatest appreciation for your support!***

*From your Board of Directors: Sheila Catto (Co-Chair), Shirley Comben (Co-Chair), Lori Oldfield and Heather McAuley, and Kimberley Weatherall, Executive Director*

# Top 10 Achievements

1. **Became a Registered Charity!** Officially registered in July 2012, and announced to our members and the public in September 2012. MBC joined the Canada Helps network to make it easier for supporters to donate online and support the work of Multiple Births Canada.
2. Launched a **new MBC website** in September 2012, with updated content, making it more user friendly and easier to find information. Volunteers have continued to update content throughout 2012-2013, including sections for members and for Chapter volunteers.
3. Hosted **2012 Volunteer Development Retreat** in Mattawa ON, Sept 28-30th, with workshops and discussions for volunteers from Affiliate Organizations and the national team.
4. Launched the **new Preterm Birth Support Network** in September 2012, to share information and support for families whose multiple-birth infants were born before 38 weeks, and who may have spent time in Neonatal Intensive Care Units.
5. Celebrated **National Multiple Births Awareness Day 2012 with the theme:** "Multiple-birth educational resources and peer to peer support - TOGETHER we can make a difference". Conducted a Members Survey and shared how MBC provides support through fact sheet publications, information for professionals, support networks and local affiliate organizations. Celebrated in many cities across Canada.
6. Published 4 issues of **Multiple Moments magazine** with themes: Q1-12 Relationships and Influences Beyond the Multiple Unit, Q2-12 Making Time for Multiples, Q3-12 Educating Multiples, Q1-13 Positive Parenting.
7. **Social networking: started new Facebook groups** for the Preterm Birth Support Network, Lone Parents Support Network, and Chapter Executives. Continued to share news and conversations on MBC's public page and in the private group for Members, and on Twitter.
8. **Called for improved parental leave for multiple-birth families:** Corresponded with the federal NDP to support the private member's Bill C-464: Parental Leave for Multiple Births or Multiple Adoptions. The Bill was introduced in the House of Commons in November 2012, and defeated by a narrow margin in March 2013. MBC also supported Christian Martin, father of twins, as he continued his appeal of the Employment Insurance (EI) decision not to grant parental benefits to both qualified EI recipient parents after the birth of their daughters. The Federal Court of Appeal ruled against Mr. Martin in January 2013, but he planned to pursue his case before the Supreme Court of Canada.
9. Continued our **international networking and learning** with MBC's Acting Executive Director (ICOMBO Past Chair) travelling to Italy for the 2012 ISTS Congress and meeting of ICOMBO Members.
10. Developed a **Public Service Announcement radio ad** about Multiple Births Canada, which was broadcast on the Bell Media Network from January 2012 to April 2013. This 30-second advertisement was played more than 2100 times on 15 radio stations.



# Financial Statements

## 2013 Financial Report (April 1, 2012 to March 31, 2013)

Financial results for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2013 netted an income of \$1,261. In September 2012, the MBC Board hosted the 2012 Retreat and Annual General Meeting. This success of this Retreat contributed to the small profit for 2013. Membership fees continues to be the main source of funding for MBC; however, for the current fiscal year they have decreased due to the change in recording unearned revenue.

MBC continues to struggle to find grants, advertising and fundraising opportunities. MBC was under budget in spending by \$3,564 which also contributed to our small profit for the year. A special thank you to the Acting Executive Director who continues to run a very successful organization on a limited budget.

### Donations & Sponsorships in 2012 - 2013

In the fiscal year 2012-2013, MBC received **charitable and in-kind donations** from MBC members, past members and their families, and from affiliate Chapters, businesses and the wider multiple-birth community. This support had a very significant impact on our financial position for the year, and our ability to deliver programs and events.

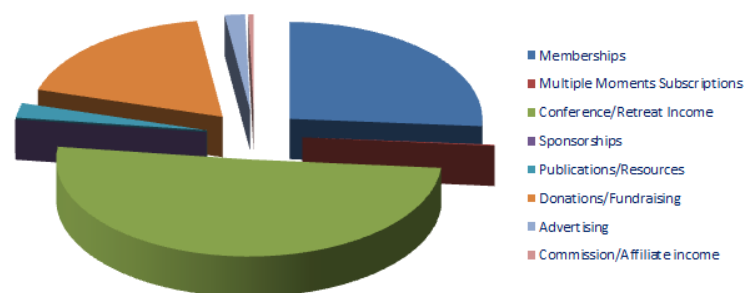
Special mention to EMD Serono Canada Inc. for its donation to assist with funding core operations. MBC would also like to thank the Edmonton Twin and Triplet Club and Temiskaming Multiple Births for their monetary contributions to the 2012 Retreat. Many thanks to Bell Media for their in-kind contributions towards the MBC PSA's and to Stephen Van Esch from Message Rocket for his in-kind donation of web design services.

### Donors & Sponsors

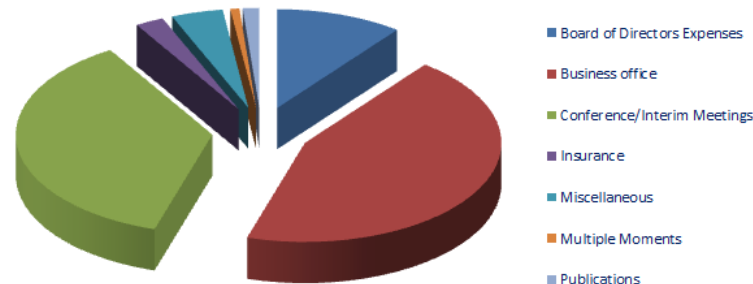
<b>Anonymous (Various)</b>	<b>Stephen Moreau</b>
Cathy Barr	Darlene Nagy
<b>Bell Media</b>	<b>Karen &amp; Tom Neilson</b>
William Bressette	Lori Oldfield
<b>Cavalluzzo</b>	<b>Victoria Riley</b>
<b>Shilton McIntyre &amp; Cornish LLP</b>	Jennifer Scarmato
Sheila Catto	<b>Bonnie Schultz</b>
<b>Shirley Combden</b>	Shelli Scott
<b>EMD Serono Canada</b>	Temiskaming
Edmonton Twin & Triplet Club	Multiple Births
<b>Kevin Fritz</b>	<b>The Storage Zone</b>
Lisa Gertsman	Tara VanZeben
<b>Nick Gray</b>	<b>Kimberley Weatherall</b>
Donna Launslager	Wildeboer
<b>Dr. Barbara Luke</b>	Dellelce LLP
Message Rocket	

Year Ended March 31, 2013 (unaudited)	2013 Actual	2013 Budget	2012 Actual
<b>Revenues</b>			
Memberships	\$ 13,342	\$ 17,000	\$ 18,399
Multiple Moments Subscriptions	90	200	228
Conference/Retreat Income	25,798	21,310	21,225
Sponsorships	0	-	2,000
Publications/Resources	1,246	1,680	1,832
Donations/Fundraising	9,320	9,500	8,716
Advertising	870	2,000	1,440
Commission/Affiliate income	221	1,500	1,703
	<b>\$ 50,887</b>	<b>\$ 53,190</b>	<b>\$ 55,543</b>
<b>Expenses</b>			
Board of Directors Expenses	\$ 5,196	\$ 5,500	\$ 3,727
Business office	21,970	22,650	19,315
Conference/Interim Meetings	18,145	21,115	26,531
Insurance	1,168	1,200	1,126
Miscellaneous	2,111	1,225	3,501
Multiple Moments	375	500	625
Publications	662	1,000	1,421
	<b>\$ 49,626</b>	<b>\$ 53,190</b>	<b>\$ 56,246</b>
<b>Excess of revenues over expenses</b> (expenses over revenue)	<b>\$ 1,261</b>		<b>\$ (703)</b>
Surplus, beginning of year	3,634		4,337
<b>Surplus, end of year</b>	<b>\$ 4,895</b>		<b>\$ 3,634</b>

### Revenues for the year ended March 31, 2013



### Expenses for the year ended March 31, 2013





# Extended Parental Leave Project

This past year brought immense national attention to the issue of extended Parental Benefits for multiple-birth families, with MBC being involved in two ways:

- Advocating for Bill C-464: *Parental Leave for Multiple Births or Multiple Adoptions*, introduced as a private member's Bill by Sana Hassainia, NDP MP for Verchères—Les Patriotes (Québec). Bill C-464 was defeated by a narrow margin at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading on March 27, 2013.
- Supporting Christian Martin, father of twins, as he continued his appeal of the Employment Insurance (EI) decision not to grant parental benefits to both qualified EI recipient parents after the birth of their daughters.

Bill C-464 sought to amend the Canada Labour Code and the Employment Insurance Act to increase the maximum number of weeks during which parental benefits can be paid from 35 weeks to 70 weeks in the case of multiple births or multiple adoptions for qualified EI recipients.



Toward this effort, MBC produced a number of communication pieces in English and French, distributed them to all 308 Members of Parliament, attended both the reading and votes on the Bill in the House of Commons, and met with some MPs in their offices in Ottawa.

#### **Our key messages were:**

- The intent of Bill C-464 was to create equality for all parents qualified to apply for the Parental Leave Program (PLP). The PLP was designed to support six key pillars: promote child development; balance demands of work and very young children;

make short-term investment for long-term economic gain; use EI as an effective instrument; promote gender equality; and allow businesses to retain valuable, experienced employees.

- \* Unfortunately, the PLP currently fails multiple-birth families on three pillars: promoting child development, balancing work/family demands, and providing employment security.
- Canada's Employment Insurance Act was previously amended to provide special provisions for Parental Benefits. Fairness for Military Families: Bill C-13 (2010). The intent of Bill C-464 was also justified as it would have provided multiple-birth infants the same quality and level of parental care singletons receive during their formative months.
  - \* Extended leave for multiple births should reflect the reality that 56.6% of twins and 94.1% of triplets are born at less than 5.5 pounds. Compared to single born babies, multiple birth infants are at greater risk of suffering from long term disability, particularly cerebral palsy and of dying during the first year. Extra weeks allotted by the PLP for multiple-birth parents would allow these parents to provide the additional care and extra time needed to give equal care to multiple-birth infants.
  - \* Extended leave would also address the extreme sleep deprivation issues faced by multiple birth parents when they return to work expected to perform at their previous productivity levels despite their babies' birth age not reflecting their corrected age. This sleep deprivation has been known to affect multiple-birth parents' job security and mental health.
  - \* And, the PLP should address a related issue many multiple-birth families unexpectedly face when they cannot find affordable daycare or places for more than one infant at a time, therefore being forced to take a leave of absence or quit their job.

In a statement issued on March 27, 2013, MBC expressed its hope that Canada's multiple-birth community will see a positive outcome to this issue in the future.

# National Multiple Births Awareness Day

The theme for National Multiple Births Awareness Day 2012 was **"Multiple-birth educational resources and peer to peer support - TOGETHER we can make a difference"**.

As part of the communications plan MBC administered a National Multiple Births Awareness Day 2012 survey. Of the data and remarks collected from the survey, here is a snapshot of what was said about four key programming areas coordinated nationally by Multiple Births Canada and locally by affiliated multiple-birth groups. They are: educational resources, professional outreach, support networks, and peer to peer support.

We asked Canadian multiple-birth parents which MBC Fact Sheets they read or used and found educational and applicable to their lives. Here are the top 5 selected: *Postpartum Depression and Mothers of Multiples, Clothing and Equipment, Expectant Mom Tips, You're Having Multiples* and *Safety Tips for Parents of Multiples*.

We asked multiple-birth families if they had ever provided our professional community with multiples-specific information. Over 60% said they shared multiple-birth educational resources with medical doctors; almost 60% said they shared multiples-specific information with childcare providers, and almost 55% said they shared multiples-specific resources with educators.

We asked multiple-birth families why being involved with a local multiple-birth group and/or MBC is important. The following are two of many similar comments:

- "Without family close by, we knew we'd need as much support as possible when our boys arrived. Now I stay involved as I've connected with a great group of parents, and am proud to be a part of something that makes a difference in my community and serves a real need."
- "Those with twins truly understand how simple things become complicated: feedings, sleeping, potty training. The help I have received from my Facebook support group has gotten me through every bump and hurdle I've faced. A feeling you are not alone or crazy."

We asked respondents if they were planning National Multiple Births Awareness Day activities. Affiliate organizations supported the day in a big way. Across Canada celebrations included:

- Brampton Twins Plus Association hosted an Ontario event at Canada's Wonderland
- Brant Multiples 'N More went to the Twin Valley Zoo
- Durham Parents of Multiples held a family Picnic at Heydenshore Park
- Edmonton Twin and Triplet Club hosted an event at the Edmonton Valley Zoo
- Kitchener-Waterloo POMBA went to Kitchener City Hall to make donations to Our Place Family Resource and Early Years Centre and Cambridge Memorial Hospital
- Multiple Births Families Association of Ottawa/Gatineau had a family day at Andrew Haydon Park
- Multiple Births Guelph Wellington held a family breakfast at Applebees Cambridge
- Saskatoon Parents of Twins and Triplets Organization hosted a pancake breakfast at St. Volodymyr School
- Windsor/Essex POMBA presented a cheque for \$1000 to the NICU of Windsor Regional Hospital





# Multiple Births Canada Office

## Office

Acting Executive Director Kimberley Weatherall is MBC's sole half-time staff member, and runs the MBC Office from her home in the Ottawa area.

This year has been an extremely busy one for Kim and the volunteers that work with her, with many hours dedicated to the following:

- Led on the application to become a registered charity
- Initiated the donations program through CanadaHelps.org
- Led on the planning of the 2012 AGM and Volunteer Development Retreat
- Worked with NDP MP Sana Hassainia, Stephen Moreau, Christian Martin and Gail Moore on the EI Parental Leave Project



- Stepped in as the Acting *Multiple Moments* Editor in Chief role
- Developed and coordinated the affiliate and discount programs, along with other MBC partnerships
- Worked on a number of proposals for funding
- Liaised and worked regularly with a number of MBC Committees including the Health and Education Committee, MADA Committee and the 2013 Conference Hosts
- Liaised with members and the general public regularly through daily social media updates (i.e. Facebook and Twitter)
- Supported members, Chapter Volunteers and new groups with an interest in starting an Affiliate Chapter in their area
- Worked with current and searched for new volunteers for MBC
  - Represented MBC at the ISTS Congress and ICOMBO Business Meetings in Italy, April 2012
  - Performed the administrative tasks associated with running the MBC office
  - And worked closely with the Board of Directors

## Inquiries

The MBC office receives weekly inquiries from: new and expectant parents of multiples looking for MBC Chapters (calls from areas where no Chapters exist are referred to non-member groups); parents wanting information on clothing sales; those interested in studying or contacting multiple-birth children or parents; professionals seeking more information from MBC to help in their support of multiple-birth families in their communities; media needing multiple-birth information; MBC members and Chapters needing support; and, parents wishing to form a new Chapter.

## Website Host and Server

With our change to the website came some needed upgrades to our servers. After some comparison of quotes for pricing and services between our current provider, Message Rocket (owned by Stephen Van Esch) and another independent company from Western Canada, we decided to change over our Internet Service Provider. Based on services, pricing and willingness to work with a Charity on lowered pricing, we decided to move our services to Message Rocket at the end of 2012. With the exception of a short downtime just before the holidays, there was very little disruption and things went surprisingly smoothly. The changeover has drastically decreased our server cost and allowed us greater space availability.

# Multiple Births Canada Communications

## Website



In early 2012, MBC began work on the design, preparation and launch of a new website, which was released at the 2012 Volunteer Retreat and AGM in September, 2012. The development of this new website was a long process, which still continues to this day.

The redesign of the website began with Stephen Van Esch, a member of Multiple Births Guelph Wellington, offering his services as a Web Designer

in February of 2012. Within a few weeks the project was started, with a target date to launch by September 2012. The goal of the new website was to be welcoming, friendly, professional and easy to navigate.

Over the next 7 months, Stephen worked closely with the Board of Directors and Acting Executive Director, especially with our Director of Information Services, Lori Oldfield, to determine styles, format, fonts, and interfaces that would work for MBC. Once the base was completed, a small committee started to clean up and clarify information on the current site to make sure that only the most accurate and up to date details were moved. By mid-summer we incorporated the assistance of many Volunteers to work on editing the content of the site to be ready for the September launch.

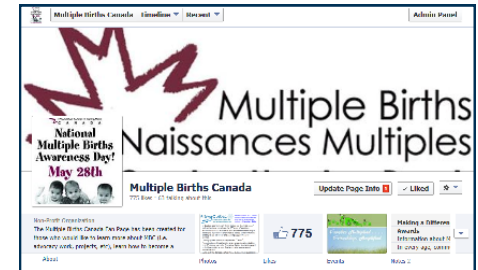
By mid-September the new website was ready, loaded and prepped for the Retreat. To say it was a long week leading up to the Retreat with many late nights and long hours is an understatement, but we had the base site ready to go for the "MBC and You" workshop. That said, it was a basic site that still needed to be worked on and expanded.

Since the Retreat our work has continued on the new website; populating more webpages and setting up logins for the Member and Executive Areas. By the end of the 2013 fiscal year (March 31<sup>st</sup>) the site was 85 to 90% complete. Today the work continues to ensure the site reaches our goal and is updated regularly.

As we look to the future, we expect continued growth and the need for additional content to be updated and expanded on our site. With the help of volunteers and sponsors we will continue keep our site current and professional.

## Social Media

MBC's private Facebook group for members continues to be a valuable forum for members to connect, and to receive news and information. In the past year MBC has developed additional Facebook groups for conference delegates, Chapter executive and members of some of the Support Networks. MBC also has seen a steady increase in the use of its Facebook "fan page" with membership increasing to over 700 "likes" this past year. MBC's Twitter account has also been used for sharing news and information with the public.



## Electronic Tools for Working Together



With the national volunteers, Board of Director and Executive Director working from all areas of the country our use of electronic tools has steadily increased. Over the last year the use of tools such as DropBox, Trello and Constant Contact to share our E-News have been invaluable. These tools were branched out to our Multiple Moments team, Volunteer Coordinators and Health and Education Committee this year with great success; allowing for a much smoother way of communicating and working together. This past year also saw MBC use Constant Contact for the first time as a survey tool when we surveyed families across Canada about the resources and support offered by Multiple Births Canada.



# Support Networks

MBC offers ten **National Support Networks** to connect multiple-birth families with similar circumstances across Canada.

In the summer of 2012, Lynda Haddon offered to chair a new **Preterm Birth Support Network** for families whose multiples were born prematurely, before 38 weeks' gestation, and who may have spent time in Neonatal Intensive Care. Carolyn Leighton-Hilborn assisted and became Chair in the winter of 2012. This growing network offers an email newsletter "Early Arrivals", a private Facebook group, quarterly articles in *Multiple Moments* magazine, and is developing several new publications relating to preterm birth and caring for premature infants.

The **Breastfeeding Support Network** is MBC's largest support network, connecting members through a monthly e-newsletter, *The Milky Way*, sharing stories and answering questions about breastfeeding twins or more at one time. A series of 11 Fact Sheets on all aspects of breastfeeding and regular magazine articles keep all MBC members informed.

The **Higher Order Multiples Network** responds to inquiries from parents expecting triplets, quadruplets or quintuplets. MBC offers several publications including the Fact Sheet on *the Challenges of Parenting Twins and Higher Order Multiples*, and helps to connect families through email, social networking and regular *Multiple Moments* articles.

The **Special Needs Network** publishes a monthly e-newsletter, *All Children are Special*, discussing topics of concern to parents with one or more multiple-birth children diagnosed with special needs. Personal referrals to resources, several Fact Sheets and articles in *Multiple Moments* help families find support from "veterans" with similar experiences.

The **Lone Parent Support Network** offers information and email support to single parents, whether due to divorce, death, military posting, or single by

choice. A private Facebook group, publications and articles in *Multiple Moments* help connect single parents to others who understand this unique parenting journey.

The **Loss Support Network** offers a monthly e-newsletter, *Forever Angels*, for bereaved families after miscarriage or loss of one or more multiple-birth infants or children. A series of Fact Sheets on loss and grief and regular articles in *Multiple Moments* offer support to those who are mourning, and parenting after loss.



The **Father Support Network** offers an opportunity for dads of twins, triplets or more to connect with other fathers and share parenting tips, stories and experiences. Articles in *Multiple Moments* share a father's perspective on parenting multiples.

The **Francophone Network / Réseau francophone** connects multiple-birth families who speak French, with a regular column in *Multiple Moments* magazine and a series of publications *en français*. Francophone volunteers respond to

inquiries and assist the MBC office with translations.

The **LGBTQ+ Support Network** for multiple-birth families offers connections and support for parents or children who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered or queer. The network offers support through one-to-one discussions, facilitating community connections, and regular articles in *Multiple Moments* magazine.

The **Chapter Support Network** gives MBC's affiliate Chapter organizations and volunteers a way to connect. Through Facebook networking, workshops at the national Conference, email, and articles in *Multiple Moments*, the regional multiple-birth organizations exchange advice and best practices in supporting multiple-birth families across Canada.

# Health and Education Committee Report

The Health and Education committee has been working on updating a number of older MBC Fact Sheet titles and developing some new ones. It is surprising how long it takes to research the latest statistics and health recommendations, write and edit, review by other MBC volunteers and send to outside expert reviewers, make final revisions, and complete the design layout for publication!

As of spring 2013, the committee has completed writing and the review process for 8 Fact Sheet publications in the areas of Breastfeeding support, Loss support and Preterm Births.

These titles are expected to be published in the fall of 2013:

- Preterm Birth: Kangaroo Care (new)
- Preterm Birth: Reducing risks (new)
- Loss: Grieving Grandparents
- Loss: Getting through the Holidays
- Breastfeeding: 11 Tips for Breastfeeding



- Breastfeeding: Are my babies getting enough milk?
- Breastfeeding: Storage of Breastmilk
- Bottle feeding multiples (NEW)

The H&E Committee is also working on a number of other Fact Sheet titles, at varying stages of development:

- Nutrition for multiple pregnancy (complete re-write)
- Loss: Vanishing Twin (update)
- Breastfeeding: Nipple pain (update)
- Preterm birth: List of resources (new)
- Preterm birth: Conditions that may increase the probability of preterm birth (new)
- Preterm birth: Your babies in the NICU (new)
- Speech development with multiples (new)

While working through all these publications, Jenna Kelland has also been writing a Research column in *Multiple Moments* magazine which reviews the latest scientific and medical research about multiple-birth children and parenting.

Another project in the works is to complete and publish French translations of eight Fact Sheet titles from 2011, and a future project is to retype and update the content of all the MBC booklets.

Jenna Kelland  
Health and Education Committee Chair

## Health and Education Committee Volunteers

Rose Czarnuch, NL  
Jenna Kelland, AB  
Kim Krueger, AB  
Donna Launslager, ON  
Carolyn Leighton-Hilborn, ON  
Tania McNamara, ON  
Diane Myers, ON  
Anna Rendall, ON  
Jennifer Stephens, BC



# Partnerships

## Assisted Human Reproduction Canada (AHRC)

Our partnership with the Assisted Human Reproduction Canada ended when AHRC closed on September 30th, 2012. Portions of the AHRC have been moved to the Biologics and Genetic Therapies Directorate (BGTD) within the Health Products and Food Branch of Health Canada. This Department will continue to administer and enforce those provisions of the Assisted Human Reproductive Act that remain in force. We are grateful to the AHRC for their commitment to educating families on the risks associated with multiple births, and for their assistance with the creation, promotion and distribution of fact sheets, pamphlets and a multiple-births specific area on the Health Canada website.

## International Society for Twin Studies (ISTS)

The International Society for Twin Studies (ISTS) is an international, non-political, non-profit, multidisciplinary scientific organization. Its purpose is to further research and public education in all fields related to twins and twin studies, for the mutual benefit of twins, their families and scientific research. MBC continued to be an active member of this organization thanks to the involvement of MBC volunteer and Acting Executive Director, Kimberley Weatherall (ISTS Board Member to Dec. 2012) and MBC Advisory Board Members Dr. Jon Barrett and Jane Denton (current ISTS Board Members). All three attended the 2nd World Congress on Twin Pregnancy and the 14th Congress of the International Society for Twin Studies in Florence Italy in April, 2012. The next Congress will be held in Budapest, Hungary in April 2014.

## International Council of Multiple Birth Organizations (ICOMBO)



The mission of the International Council of Multiple Birth Organizations is to raise awareness of the unique needs of multiple-birth infants, children, adults, and their families promoting their health, education and welfare.

During the ISTS Congress in Italy the ICOMBO Board met to hold their Business Meeting, organized and chaired by MBC's Acting Executive Director Kimberley Weatherall who stepped into the role of Past Chair during the 2012 Congress. During the Business Meeting ICOMBO unveiled their new logo, new website and a new membership structure allowing for national multiple-birth organizations to pay their annual fees directly to ICOMBO for the very first time. In addition to presenting on the topic: *Reducing Canada's Reproductive Technology-Related Multiple Births: Canada's Role Through Education*, Kimberley chaired the ICOMBO workshop sessions where organizations and professionals from around the world shared their research, knowledge, programs or projects.

ICOMBO utilizes **International Multiple Birth Awareness Week (IMBAW)** to draw attention to benchmarks from the **Declaration of Rights and Statement of Needs of Twins and Higher Order Multiples** and to stimulate international discussion and action on a specific theme. In 2012 we celebrated the following topic: *"School placement of multiples, and issues regarding whether separation or not is best"*. IMBAW is held every two years to coincide with the ISTS Congress year.

ICOMBO increased their social networking in 2012 by creating an open Facebook page for families of multiples from all over the world to share and learn from others facing the same parenting experiences. This site and the closed volunteer site has increased the sharing between multiple-birth organizations world wide.



# Volunteers Making a Difference 2012 - 2013

The **Making a Difference Awards** were presented on Saturday September 29th, 2012 at the annual MBC Conference and AGM in Mattawa, Ontario. These awards are given to honour and acknowledge some of our many volunteers within the MBC network that have made an impact on our communities, country and the world. This year, awards were presented in the following categories:

## Local Category



The 2012 MADA award in the Local category was presented to **Michelle Van Dijk of the Kitchener-Waterloo Parents of Multiple Births Association.**

Michelle is a positive and engaging member of the K-W POMBA Executive. As current Treasurer for the club, she keeps the Board on track with their spending, but also goes out of her way to find ways to save the chapter money and makes sure the sale disbursements, including hundreds of cheques, are completed successfully and timely. Counting the money isn't all Michelle does though, she spends countless hours volunteering at social events, helping those members in need, and has spent many hours with new and expectant parents, connecting with them and counselling them as needed. Her personality and drive are considered to be huge assets to the club. She is respectful and dedicated, energetic and humble. Her logical and calming nature have helped the Board through many challenges. Michelle has dedicated so many hours of her time representing K-W POMBA and helping their members, while still holding down a full time job, raising four beautiful children and supporting and championing for her physically disabled husband.

Her peers had no trouble nominating Michelle, describing her as "someone who understands what you are going through and helps you", as "amazing, remarkable and irreplaceable", and as "an asset to our club in so many more ways". They felt Michelle deserved to be recognized for her tireless efforts and her selfless giving. Multiple Births Canada agrees and congratulates Michelle for Making A Difference!

## Local Category - Honorable Mention

This year we had an entire Chapter who reinvented themselves. In a time when volunteers are sometimes scarce and lives so often busy, two driven and enthusiastic women stepped forward to bring together a chapter locally and to represent themselves nationally. The Twins Plus Association of Brampton and in particular **Nina**



**Garcia and Kerry Sutton** should be commended for their enthusiasm, their courage and their commitment to their chapter and members and to the multiple birth community. Some accomplishments this year include a fantastic and well received clothing sale, pulling together as an entire chapter to help a multiples family who lost everything in a house fire, and organizing a National Multiple Birth Awareness Day Celebration at Canada's Wonderland, attended by numerous MBC Chapters including Guelph, Temiskaming, Sarnia and

others. This chapter and in particular Kerry and Nina embody what being a part of the multiple-births community is all about, and Multiple Births Canada honours them and wishes them continued success!

## National Category



The **2012 National Making A Difference Award** was presented to **Lynda Haddon**, for her exceptional and generous volunteer work on behalf of multiple-birth families across Canada.

Lynda has many accomplishments within the multiple-birth community, which she has been a part of for over 25 years locally, nationally and internationally.

### Some of her accomplishments include:

- Chair of Breastfeeding Support Network including creating 12 Fact Sheets, a Breastfeeding Support Kit, and compiling *The Milky Way*, Lynda's monthly newsletter to members which in August 2012 released its 87<sup>th</sup> issue.
- Chair and Founder of the Loss Support Network, authoring over 15 fact sheets, providing bereavement support to multiple birth families worldwide and of course writing the monthly newsletter *Forever Angels* which in August 2012 reached issue #157!
- Lynda has been a representative for MBC regarding many bereavement and breastfeeding issues facing multiple births families, and she is regarded nationally and internationally as an expert in both of these fields.
- Member and past Chair of the Ottawa Coalition for the Prevention of Low Birth Weight
- Advisor to MBC Board members for over two decades, providing support and information whenever it's needed



# Volunteers Making a Difference 2011 - 2012

- Past Chair of her local chapter of Ottawa Twins Parents Association (now known as the Multiple Birth Families Association of Ottawa-Gatineau) and of POMBA Canada (now known as Multiple Births Canada)

Lynda exemplifies the dedication, caring heart and professional approach that Multiple Births Canada strives for and supports multiple birth families across the nation. We are forever thankful that she continues to give so selflessly to our community, and we recognize her many achievements.

### International Category

This years' recipient of the **International MADA Award** is **Kimberley Weatherall**.



2012 marks Kimberley's 25<sup>th</sup> year as a volunteer in the multiple birth community!

Kim accepted leadership of the International Council of Multiple Birth Organizations (ICOMBO) in 2007, and over the last five years "transformed it into a cohesive focused global community". As Chair of ICOMBO, Kim was directly responsible for or played a role in the following:

- Chairing/organizing ICOMBO sessions at the International Congress on Twin Studies in 2010 in Seoul, South Korea and in 2012 in Florence, Italy.
- Developing & gaining acceptance for a new organizational structure for ICOMBO
- Pursuing & launching a new identity and logo for the organization
- Pursuing & launching a new website for ICOMBO
- Creating & monitoring an ICOMBO Facebook group that now has worldwide members
- Producing ICOMBO newsletters for the last five years
- Developing & launching International Multiple Births Awareness Week (first celebrated in 2010 worldwide)
- Encouraging a complete review of the Declaration of Rights and Statement of Twins and Higher Order Multiples, completed in 2010 (again with key MBC members!)

The work that Kim has accomplished with ICOMBO in the last 5 years will continue to benefit many countries and multiple birth families worldwide in years to come. This substantial international legacy is made even more impressive by the fact that during this entire time, Kim continued to actively volunteer in a leadership level both nationally with MBC and locally as well. Kimberley Weatherall has truly achieved

exceptional accomplishments of international significance and Multiple Births Canada recognizes her many achievements!

### Corporate Category

The 2012 Winner of the **Corporate Award** is **FreshCo, a division of Sobeys Inc.** FreshCo, a division of Sobeys Inc,



was approached by a member of the Multiple Birth Families Association of Ottawa-Gatineau prior to National Multiple Births Awareness Day 2012, asking them to mention NMBAD in their weekly flyer for the new location in Findley Creek Village, Ottawa and possibly even have some specials on baby items. FreshCo immediately went above and beyond this request by running a special banner ad not only locally, but nationally as well; offering many specials on various baby items. Multiple Births Canada thanks FreshCo for spreading awareness of the challenges faced by multiple-birth families and of the importance of National Multiple Births Awareness Day!

### Media Category

The 2012 **Media Award** was presented to **Sonia Mendes of the Ottawa Citizen**. In 2012 Sonia was approached by the Multiple Birth Families Association of Ottawa-Gatineau to do an article about the Chapter. Sonia Mendes, a freelance writer with the Ottawa Citizen interviewed numerous families in the Ottawa-Gatineau area and wrote an excellent article about multiples and their families. The timing of this article was perfect as it appeared in the Citizen on the day of MBFA Ottawa's spring sale. This article was also picked up by the Calgary Herald and promoted both the Edmonton Twin & Triplet Club and the Twins, Triplets and More Association of Calgary. The article provided a positive view of life with multiples, and spotlighted a number of chapter initiatives, and it also supported the resources and services offered by both MBFA Ottawa-Gatineau and



Multiple Births Canada!

- Volunteer Service Recognition**

  - Donna Launslager for 25 years
  - Darlene Nagy for 10 years
  - Nancy Young for 10 years
  - Lynn Stadler for 10 years

***Congratulations to all the recipients of the 2012 Volunteer Awards!***

# 2012 Volunteer Development Retreat and AGM



On the last weekend of September 2012, deep in the forest in Mattawa, Ontario gathered 70 volunteers and parents of multiples from across the country. They arrived hoping to learn more about their home Chapter and MBC. They did not come to wolf howl, but howl they did. They did not come to dance, but dance they did. In fact they did a lot of things they had never done before.

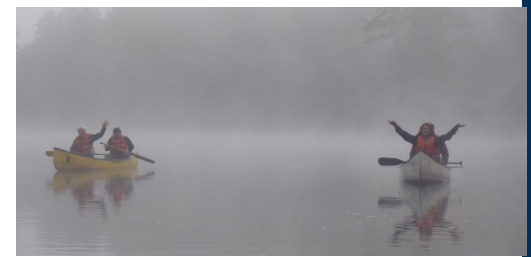
The theme for this year's Retreat was *Supporting Families...Empowering Volunteers*. The Retreat was hosted by the Acting Executive Director and Board of Directors of MBC, with all of them stepping up to lead workshops, sharing sessions and more. The Board also called on the expertise of long-time volunteers Lynda Haddon, Diane Myers and Cathy Barr to offer a full weekend of information gathering. These ladies brought wonderful leadership and knowledge to share.

For those who arrived early, there were optional activities on Friday morning. Some painted paddles, some canoed through the fog and a group travelled to North Bay to visit the Dionne Quintuplet Museum. This was a very personal experience for all who attended. We were all fascinated by, and yet disturbed by the events that took place not so long ago to 5 little girls and their family. We all left grateful that things have changed since then for our multiple-birth families.

The Retreat officially got started with the Board of Directors and Acting Executive Director making the announcement that MBC had finally become an official Registered Charity. This process has been in the works for so long, and will mean so much to many families across Canada. There were quite a few tears of joy and shouts of delight at the announcement. Throughout the weekend Chapter representatives were given many opportunities to share and gather information from each other. We all know front line information is some of the very best. In addition to two full sessions dedicated to Chapter exchanges, other workshops covered important information such as communication methods, budgets and finance, membership, support networks, incorporation, insurance, prenatal classes, organization, free resources and much more. The challenge now is the hard work of using this information to make our Chapters more efficient, more communicative and more organized.

Even with all this hard work and hours of learning, we still found time to play. Campfire singing, night vision, GPS tracking and wolf howling were certainly out of the ordinary for most of us. The Hospitality suite hosted by Ottawa/Gatineau was Bond-tastic! The Born to be Wild evening hosted by Temiskaming Multiple Births (TMB) was Groovy! All the costumes were indeed wild.

This weekend hosted members from 14 Chapters across Canada, and the information shared will go on to help so many families. Plans are already well underway for next year's Conference and AGM, hosted by Simcoe County Parents of Multiples, Sept. 27-29<sup>th</sup>, 2013. We hope to see you there!





# Volunteers Supporting Multiple Births Canada

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Sheila Catto**, Co-Chair & Director of Support Services, SK

**Shirley Combden**, Co-Chair (from Sept. 2012), Treasurer & Financial Director, AB

**Lori Oldfield**, Director of Information Management, ON

**Heather McAuley**, Director at Large, ON

**Erin Little**, Director of Communications, ON (to Jan. 2013)

**Lynn Stadler**, Secretary, ON (to Sept. 2012)

**Sean Wilde**, Director, ON (to July 2012)

**Gail Moore**, Past Chair, Advocacy & Awareness Coordinator, ON (advisory for Board since Sept. 2012)

## SUPPORT NETWORK CHAIRS

**Murielle Dietrich**, Francophone Support Network, ON

**Lynda P. Haddon**, Breastfeeding Support Network & Loss Support Network, ON

**Sheila Catto**, Higher Order Multiples Support Network, SK

**Eric Novak**, Father Support Network, ON

**Theresa Sanders**, Special Needs Support Network, ON

**Debbie Zen**, Lone Parents Support Network, ON

**Heather McAuley**, Chapter Support Network, ON

**Tania Zulkoskey**, LGBTQ+ Support Network, BC

**Carolyn Leighton-Hilborn**, Preterm Birth Support Network, ON (from Oct. 2012)

## OTHER NATIONAL VOLUNTEERS

**Theresa Sanders**, Membership Coordinator & Making a Difference Awards Chair, ON

**Jennifer Schultz**, MM Editor, AB (to Dec. 2012)

**Kimberley Weatherall**, Acting MM Editor, ON (from Jan. 2013)

**Lori and D'Arcy Oldfield**, Webmasters, ON

**Elaine Nugent**, Website Assistant, ON (from Jan. 2013)

**Alison Pilz**, MM Layout, ON

**Kim Skublics**, MM Book Reviewer, ON (to Feb. 2012)

**Gerlinde Rup**, Volunteer Database Coordinator, ON

**Dawn Knuff**, Volunteer Coordinator, ON (from Jan. 2013)

**Nicole Fisher**, MM Website Reviewer and Facebook Moderator, ON

**Murielle and Pascal Dietrich**, French Translation, ON

**Stacey Haggerty**, MM Copy Editor, ON (from Feb. 2013)

**Tara Bedard**, MM Copy Editor, ON (from Mar. 2013)

**Serena Engler**, MM Book Reviewer, AB (from Feb. 2013)

## STAFF

**Kimberley Weatherall**, Acting Executive Director, ON



## ADVISORY BOARD

**Dr. Fiona Bamforth**, MSc, FRCPC, University of Alberta Hospital, Edmonton, AB

**Dr. Cathy Barr**, PhD., Imagine Canada, Guelph, ON

**Dr. Jon Barrett**, MBBCh, M.D., MRCOG, FRCS(C), Sunnybrook & Women's College Health Sciences Centre, Toronto, ON

**Dr. Alan Bocking**, M.D., FRCSC, Professor & Chairman, Dept. of Obstetrics & Gynaecology, University of Toronto, ON

**Laura Corbett**, R.N., BScN, PNC (C), Clinical Nurse Leader, Birthing Center II / Women's Special Care Unit

**Jane Denton**, Director Multiple Births Foundation, Herford, UK

**Dr. Audrey Huberman**, Ed.D., Curriculum, Teaching & Learning, Private Practice, Toronto, ON

**Dr. K.L. Jang**, Ph.D. Assistant Professor, Department of Psychiatry, University of BC, Vancouver, BC

**Dr. Louis Keith**, M.D., Northwestern University Medical School, Center for the Study of Multiple Birth, Chicago, IL

**Jean Kollantai**, Founder, Center for Loss in Multiple Birth (CLIMB) Inc., Anchorage, AK

**Linda G. Leonard**, M.S.N., R.N., Twin/Triplet Specialist, University of BC, Vancouver, BC

**Patricia Malmstrom**, M.A., Twin Services Consulting, Berkeley, CA

**Pat Preedy**, PhD., Education Specialist, West Midlands, UK

**Cheryl Wadasinghe**, Government Advisor, Nepean, ON.

# Supporting Multiple Births Together...



*Multiple Births Canada gratefully acknowledges the work of the many individuals who volunteer and make a difference in the lives of multiple-birth families across Canada. While we are unable to mention everyone within the Annual Report each year, MBC feels strongly about the support we receive from the hundreds of volunteers who work daily to support multiple-birth families in their communities and nationally. We also recognize, and thank, all the families of these volunteers for supporting the work they do in an effort to improve the lives of multiple-birth individuals and their families.*

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*MBC would like to thank the following photographers for their contribution to this Annual Report: Paula Whitten Photography (facebook.com/PaulaWhittenPhotography), Emily Beatty (emilybeatty.com), Lindsay Jeans - Olive Juice Photography (facebook.com/OliveJuicePhotographyByLindsayJeans), Melinda Curran, Debbie Lister, Brooke Shaw, The Picture Company (Philippines) and, all the parents, members and volunteers who have shared their wonderful photos as well.*

[www.multiplebirthscanada.org](http://www.multiplebirthscanada.org)