

For immediate release



An Inclusive Approach to Foster Care: Caregivers Needed in Southern AB

[June 28, 2022](#), Lethbridge, AB — McMan South is seeking individuals and families who want to make a positive change in the lives of children to become Therapeutic Foster Caregivers; a new initiative that focuses on bringing children with trauma-impacted needs back to their families of origin through increased supports.

Therapeutic Foster Caregiving is new to Alberta; it is based on a different approach than traditional foster care. The focus is on providing therapeutic interventions for children while strengthening connections between the child and their culture, family of origin, home community, and support networks so they can return home or to another safe, long term, permanent living arrangement. With Therapeutic Foster Caregiving, Increased and in-depth support is provided for the children as well as the caregivers.

Therapeutic Foster Caregiving is an alternative option for children who have experienced trauma, where they are placed in a family-based home environment and given increased therapeutic support that nurtures their wellbeing and connection to their family of origin and home community.

“Therapeutic Foster Caregiving is a new initiative for Alberta,” explains Damon Van Ginneken, Director of Services at McMan South.

“One of the big things that makes McMan South’s model of therapeutic foster caregiving exciting is that it’s based on something called inclusive foster care. That means the family of origin is really involved and we’re not removing children from their existing networks and replacing their supports with the foster family. What we’re doing is bringing the foster family into the children’s existing networks. In doing so, we strive to enhance these existing family and community connections rather than disrupt or separate them.”

McMan honours [An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families](#). In accordance with this act, one of McMan's top priorities is placing Indigenous children with either their family of origin or another Indigenous caregiver before considering other options. Moreover, when other options must be considered, maintaining and enhancing connection with the child's home community and family of origin is of paramount importance.

The program is designed to offer additional benefits to the children as well as to their caregivers. For example, some young people aren't well-suited to group care environments, and traditional foster care may not offer intensive enough therapeutic support for them; the Therapeutic Foster Caregiving environment helps to mitigate factors like negative peer influences, or over-stimulating settings for those with certain disabilities. The child-to-caregiver ratio is also smaller, meaning that caregivers and specialists have more availability for each child.

Additional support for caregivers includes intensive paid training, frequent and purposeful access to a team of therapeutic professionals, 24/7 on-call support for crisis situations, psychological consultations, and respite care. As Brittany Anderson, Therapeutic Caregiving Specialist explains, the training is more in-depth than for typical foster care.

"Training is geared towards managing any sort of troubling behaviours that the child might be experiencing or displaying, and also how to best help improve their wellbeing through a trauma informed lens, an understanding of disability, and an understanding of colonialism and its impacts on Indigenous children, and so on."

Therapeutic Foster Caregivers are needed in many areas of southern Alberta, including Lethbridge, Taber, Medicine Hat, Brooks, Pincher Creek, Fort MacLeod, and surrounding areas. Anyone considering becoming a Therapeutic Foster Caregiver is encouraged to learn more at www.mcmanfoster.ca.

McMan Youth, Family and Community Services Association (South Region) is a non-profit that provides social services in southern Alberta for individuals with complex needs. Their services include various skill-building and support groups, recovery and addiction services, supervised visitation, family mediation, supported and independent housing and emergency shelter, Therapeutic Foster Caregiving, and community connections.

Media

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