

**February 2004**  
**Dysart et al presentation**

I speak to you today on behalf of the mothers of Haliburton County.

I am a mother. If I had mothered here, in Dysart, my daughters would have been less competent, less confident, less well-equipped to make the transition to adulthood than was the case.

Why is that? Because the time and place where I mothered invested in children, and that enriched my ability to give my children a good start in life. They had access to many many opportunities that are available to children in Dysart only at great inconvenience and expense to their families.

I think I speak for many mothers when I say that children should not have less opportunity because they live in Haliburton County. My intent today is to share some research that draws a picture of the current reality of children here. It will help you to consider in an educated, fact-based way whether this township is investing in its children in the right and proper way. It's a relatively simple question: as simple as ...  
Child's Play

There are hand-outs for your reference but I am providing overheads as well, in case the bi-focals needs a bit of assistance...

**1. DEMOGRAPHY:** School-age children (ages 5-19) comprise 17.4% of the permanent population of the County, 17.8% of Dysart's population. That is 875 children. Only Minden Hills has more children - 60 more.

**2. METHODOLOGY:** Last spring a team from FS went into every grade 1, 4, 7, and 9 classroom and administered a survey in order to get a fact-based picture of what children in our county do in their leisure time. The survey was carefully constructed and administered with assistance from McMaster University and HKPR Health Unit epidemiologist, and the data compiled using a software that allows us to fairly easily manipulate the data to answer questions. The results I'm sharing today describe what the children said they did during the school year.

A total of 546 students responded, and with this large a sample, we can generalize quite confidently to all students in the County. However, I'm presenting this data today by township, and because very few of the children who responded lived in Algonquin Highlands, data from that township should be interpreted cautiously.

200 students who live in Dysart took part in the survey, presented here by grade. FYI, we gathered information about the size of settlement in which students live, so we can differentiate between children who live in Haliburton Village, other small villages, and rural areas - in case that perspective would be helpful to you at another time.

**3. WHY CONCERN OURSELVES WITH RECREATION?** Family Services invested time and money in this research because the literature makes a very compelling case that significant participation in recreation exerts a powerful protective force for children. The research says that children who are involved in recreation with an intensity that influences how they think of themselves and who they play with are very much more able to deal with adversity. This slide shows how an investment in children's recreation pays off, by the reduction of use of repair services - which, as you know, tend to be expensive services, relative to recreation.

Now we consider specific activities - 8 different types of activity. These are presented by gender because boys and girls, as you know, play quite differently.

**4. INSTRUCTED SPORTS.** Students were given 4 choices of how often they took part in sports with a coach or an instructor. This slide shows that 51% of Dysart children took part once a week or more, that is, regularly. Boys are more often involved than girls: 57% of boys compared with 44% of girls. This is a bit better than the County average - 6 percentage points.

**5. INSTRUCTED ART, DANCE OR MUSIC:** Haliburton County is not *Where It's Art* for children. 29% of all Dysart children have cultural instruction, and not surprisingly, the girls far outnumber the boys: 46% of girls compared to 13% of boys. Again, Dysart slightly outperforms the County in this category.

**6. CLUB OR GROUP MEMBERSHIP:** 16%, the same as the County, takes part in clubs or groups. This would be Brownies, Scouts, Cadets, church youth groups, a relatively inexpensive recreational option. The gender difference is small.

**7. CAMP ATTENDANCE:** Dysart children are the most likely in the County to go to overnight camp - 17% vs 12% for the County, and more likely than most (Highlands East an interesting exception) to go to day camp.

**8. TV:** 50% of children in the County spend 3 hours a day or more watching TV. Dysart has the least couch potatoes - 42%. Interesting to note that boys watch more TV than girls.

**9. COMPUTER AND VIDEO GAMES:** This is the most popular leisure-time activity - 77% of County children play computer or video games once a week or more. The overall findings are quite consistent across the municipalities. Boys tend to be more involved than girls, and the gender difference is most pronounced in Dysart, where the boys register an impressive 92%.

**10. INTERNET USE:** This slide suggests that most families with school-age children in the county have computers and are hooked up to internet - if you consider that in order to go on-line at least once a week, you would likely access the computer in your own home. 64% across the County are on line once a week or more, and the percentage is slightly higher in Dysart - 69%. The gender difference is least pronounced in Dysart.

**11. READING:** The question here was ‘ How often do you read for fun (not just for school) during the school year?’ Almost 2/3 of the students -65% - said they read once a week or more, a modest standard. There is not much variation among the municipalities - Dysart is slightly higher at 67%. Not surprisingly, girls tend to read more than boys across the board, but the gender difference is Dysart is small.

Okay, there are 8 snapshots of how school-age children spend their leisure time. I have other data - uninstructed sports (this would include skate-boarding, skiing, pleasure skating, running, etc) and arts, paid work, listening to music. And I have data for these same categories in the summer months, as well as some very interesting input about what children would like to do if they had their druthers, if there were no impediments. I can share at some other time, and I can fine-tune this data in various ways.

The question for you now is whether you are satisfied with this profile of participation among the children in your municipality. Are you happy with how your children are spending their time? Do you think the circumstances are such that an adequate proportion of children get the ‘inoculation against adversity’ that recreation offers? Is your recreation and culture budget being used in a way that addresses adequately the needs of the children?

#### **FINANCES:**

To turn briefly to the question of money: municipal staff has kindly provided me with 2002 financial details on the Rec / Culture budget line, and I’ve analyzed them a bit to focus on this question.

**TOTAL SPENDING:** This slide shows how much the two levels of municipal government spent on Recreation and Culture in 2002. The total is a bit over \$2.5 million dollars, a significant portion of the total budget. Dysart is the biggest spender by more than \$200,000, even though it has almost 400 less people than Minden Hills.

**PER CAPITA SPENDING:** If you consider gross expenditure, Dysart spends \$161.82 per capita on recreation and culture, outstripped only by Algonquin Highlands, which weighs in at a few pennies short of \$202. Each municipality seems to take a somewhat different approach to offsetting expenses, so I also looked at expenditure after revenues were accounted for. Here Dysart sinks to third place in investment at \$72.97 per capita, a bit less than 2/3 of what Algonquin Highlands pays, and a bit more than 3/4 of what Highlands East pays.

**WHAT IS INCLUDED:** There are differences among the municipalities about what services they include in this budget line. This next slide shows the facilities that are identified in each budget. I was not able to tease out of the financials a split between capital and staffing costs, particularly with Dysart which seems to use contracts quite a bit. As far as I can ascertain, however, Algonquin Highlands is the only municipality that has program staff in recreation and culture, that is, a person whose job it is to manage people rather than facilities. It has 2 FTE staff whose job it is to develop and deliver recreational activities, including engaging and organizing community resources.

The Algonquin Highlands model is familiar to me from my mothering days, and demonstrates to my satisfaction that it is possible in this time and place for the municipalities to provide the coordinating function that FS has been providing for a small segment of the population - children, 17% - for all its taxpayers, by simply redirecting a very small proportion of this budget line to a human-management staffing function.

As I indicated in my letter requesting this appearance, at the present time, FS will lose its capacity at the end of June 2004 to provide the coordinating function for the \$35,000 of NCB funds that is ear-marked for children's recreation in Haliburton County. We worry that that money will be lost to children in this county unless action is taken to ensure that an appropriate service delivery structure is in place. I hope that the information presented today will be useful to you as you consider what plan of action Dysart et al should take.

**February 12, 2004**  
**Minden Hills presentation**

Many of you know me as Executive Director of Family Services, but today I speak not with my administrator voice, but with an advocate's voice. I speak to you today on behalf of the mothers of Haliburton County.

I am a mother. If I had mothered here, in Minden Hills, my daughters would have been less competent, less confident, less well-equipped to make the transition to adulthood than was the case.

Why is that? Because the time and place where I mothered invested in children, and that enriched my ability to give my children a good start in life. They had access to many many opportunities that are available to children in Minden Hills only at great inconvenience and expense to their families.

I think I speak for many mothers when I say that children should not have less opportunity because they live in Haliburton County. My intent today is to share some research that draws a picture of the current reality of children here. It will help you to consider in an educated, fact-based way whether this township is investing in its children in the right and proper way. It's a relatively simple question: as simple as ...  
Child's Play

I have hand-outs for your reference, and I will walk you through the material.

**1. DEMOGRAPHY:** School-age children (ages 5-19) comprise 17.4% of the permanent population of the County. Minden Hills has the largest number of children of any municipality - 935 - 60 more than Dysart et al. However, they comprise a very slightly lower percentage of your overall population.

**2. METHODOLOGY:** Last spring a team from FS went into every grade 1, 4, 7, and 9 classroom and administered a survey in order to get a fact-based picture of what children in our county do in their leisure time. The survey was carefully constructed and administered with assistance from McMaster University and HKPR Health Unit epidemiologist, and the data compiled using a software that allows us to fairly easily manipulate the data to answer questions. The results I'm sharing today describe what the children said they did during the school year.

A total of 546 students responded, and with this large a sample, we can generalize quite confidently to all students in the County. However, I'm presenting this data today by township, and because very few of the children who responded lived in Algonquin Highlands, data from that township should be interpreted cautiously when presented as a percentage, as it is in today's material.

220 students who live in Minden Hills took part in the survey, presented here by grade. FYI, we gathered information about the size of settlement in which students live, so we

can differentiate between children who live in Minden Village, other small villages, and rural areas - in case that perspective would be helpful to you at another time.

**3. WHY CONCERN OURSELVES WITH RECREATION?** Family Services invested time and money in this research because the literature makes a very compelling case that significant participation in recreation exerts a powerful protective force for children. The research says that children who are involved in recreation with an intensity that influences how they think of themselves and who they play with are very much more able to deal with adversity. This page shows how an investment in children's recreation pays off, by the reduction of use of repair services - which, as you know, tend to be expensive services, relative to recreation.

Now we consider specific activities - 8 different types of activity. These are presented by gender because boys and girls, as you know, play quite differently.

**4. INSTRUCTED SPORTS.** Students were given 4 choices of how often they took part in sports with a coach or an instructor. This slide shows that 44% of Minden Hills children participated once a week or more, that is, regularly. This is the third lowest rate of participation among the four municipalities, although only 1% lower than the County overall. The gender spread, at 20%, is the largest among these municipalities. Girls are especially uninvolved here: 33% compared to 53% of boys.

**5. INSTRUCTED ART, DANCE OR MUSIC:** Haliburton County is not *Where It's Art* for children: 24% across the County, 21% in Minden Hills, take lessons or attend a group in art, dance or music once a week or more. The girls compensate a bit for their under-representation in sports - 32% participate compared to 10% of boys - but they are still beneath the girls' County average.

**6. CLUB OR GROUP MEMBERSHIP:** This includes Brownies, Scouts, Cadets, church youth groups, often considered a relatively inexpensive recreational option. Minden Hills has the lowest participation rate of any of the municipalities at 13%. The gender difference is small. I would draw your attention to Highlands East, here, because it seems that while Highlands East has the lowest participation rates in both organized sports and cultural activities, the girls, at least, compensate by joining groups, whereas that compensatory strategy is not evident with Minden Hills children.

**7. CAMP ATTENDANCE:** Again here, Highlands East children compensate for low participation in organized sports and arts by attending day camp, in particular, whereas Minden has by quite a margin the lowest participation in either overnight or day camp. They weigh in at 8% and 7% in comparison with 13% and 12% across the County. This data is not differentiated by gender, by the way, because the differences were very small.

**8. TV VIEWING:** Here Minden Hills children lead the pack, with 59% overall, compared with 50% across the County, watching 3 hours or more a day of TV during the school year. The gender difference is relatively small, only 10%, compared with the other jurisdictions.

**9. COMPUTER AND VIDEO GAMES:** This is the most popular leisure-time activity - 77% of County children play computer or video games once a week or more, and Minden Hills children exceed that by only 1%. The overall findings are quite consistent across the municipalities, but the gender difference - boys watching more than girls - evident in all jurisdictions is most pronounced here, with Minden boys reporting an astonishing 92%.

If you're beginning to wonder about now just what it is that girls do in Minden Hills, you'd be quite justified. Maybe???

**10. INTERNET USE:** Yes, here the gender difference favouring girls is more pronounced in Minden Hills than elsewhere, with girls exceeding the County average by 4%, 73% compared with 69% across the County. The boys are 5% lower than the County average.

Of general interest, this data suggests that most families with school-age children in the county have computers and are hooked up to internet - if you consider that in order to go on-line at least once a week, you would likely access the computer in your own home. 64% across the County are on line once a week or more.

**11. READING:** The question here was ' How often do you read for fun (not just for school) during the school year?' Almost 2/3 of the students -65% - said they read once a week or more, a modest standard. There is not much variation among the municipalities - Minden Hills comes in lowest by a couple of percentage points, but the general gender differences - girls reading more than boys - is most pronounced in Minden Hills.

Okay, there are 8 snapshots of how school-age children spend their leisure time. I have other data - uninstructed sports (this would include skate-boarding, skiing, pleasure skating, running, etc) and arts, paid work, listening to music. And I have data for these same categories in the summer months, as well as some very interesting input about what children would like to do if they had their druthers, if there were no impediments. I can share at some other time, and I can fine-tune this data in various ways.

However, my question for you now is whether you are satisfied with this profile of participation among the children in your municipality. Are you happy with how your children are spending their time? Do you think the circumstances are such that an adequate proportion of children get the 'inoculation against adversity' that recreation offers? Is your recreation and culture budget being used in a way that addresses adequately the needs of the children?

**FINANCES:** To turn briefly to the question of money: municipal staff has kindly provided me with 2002 financial details on the Rec / Culture budget line, and I've analyzed them a bit to focus on this question.

**TOTAL SPENDING:** This slide shows how much the two levels of municipal government spent on Recreation and Culture in 2002. The total is a bit over \$2.5 million

dollars, a significant portion of the total budget. Minden Hills is the second biggest spender, although it has almost 400 more people than Dysart et al, the biggest spender.

**PER CAPITA SPENDING:** If you consider gross expenditure, Minden Hills spends \$108.61 per capita on recreation and culture, a dollar or so more than Highlands East and far outstripped by the Big Spender, Algonquin Highlands, which weighs in at a few pennies short of \$202.

Each municipality seems to take a somewhat different approach to offsetting expenses, so I also looked at per capita expenditure after revenues were accounted for. Here Minden Hills takes a clear last place at \$59.43, almost \$13 less than its closest contender, Dysart et al, about 2/3 of what Highlands East spends, and just over half of what Algonquin Highlands spends.

**WHAT IS INCLUDED:** There are big differences among the municipalities about what services they cover in this budget line. This next slide shows the facilities that are identified in each budget.

I was not able to tease out of the financials a split between capital and staffing costs, but as far as I can ascertain, Algonquin Highlands is the only municipality that has program staff in recreation and culture, that is, a person whose job it is to manage people rather than facilities. It has 2 FTE staff whose job it is to develop and deliver recreational activities, including engaging and organizing community resources.

The Algonquin Highlands model is familiar to me from my mothering days, and demonstrates to my satisfaction that it is possible in this time and place for the municipalities to provide the coordinating function that FS has been providing for children - only 17% of the population - for all its taxpayers. This could be accomplished in the other municipalities as well, by simply redirecting a very small proportion of this budget line to a human-management staffing function.

As I indicated in my letter requesting this appearance, at the present time, FS will lose its capacity at the end of June 2004 to provide the coordinating function for the \$35,000 of NCB funds that is ear-marked for children's recreation in Haliburton County. We worry that that money will be lost to children in this county unless action is taken to ensure that an appropriate service delivery structure is in place. I hope that the information presented today will be useful to you as you consider what plan of action Minden Hills should take.



**March 4, 2004**  
**Algonquin Hills presentation**

Thank you for inviting me today. I want to share with you the results of the research we did last spring in Haliburton County schools, as I am with all the other municipal councils. Your situation here is a bit different, however, so I will take a slightly different approach to the material.

How is your situation different? First, because you no longer have a school in your municipality, children who reside in your area are under-represented in the research sample. Therefore we can only be quite tenuous in comparing your municipality with the other three. Secondly, you are the only municipality, as far as I can ascertain, that has created an on-going recreation director role - 2 FTE's, I understand - so it's not really appropriate for me to build the case, as I do with the other municipalities, that unless you dedicate tax dollars to this function, the resources available to the children of the county are in danger of reduction. You are well positioned to take advantage of upcoming circumstances, and I'll speak to that later.

In presenting this research data, I am speaking not with the voice of the Executive Director of Family Services, but as an advocate. I speak to you today on behalf of the mothers of Haliburton County.

I am a mother. If I had mothered here, in Haliburton County, my daughters would have been less competent, less confident, less well-equipped to make the transition to adulthood than was the case.

Why is that? Because the time and place where I mothered invested in children, and that enriched my ability to give my children a good start in life. They had access to many many opportunities that are available to children in Haliburton County only at great inconvenience and expense to their families.

I think I speak for many mothers when I say that children should not have less opportunity because they live in Haliburton County. My intent today is to share some research that draws a picture of the current reality of children here. It will help you to consider in an educated, fact-based way whether this county is investing in its children in the right and proper way. It's a relatively simple question: as simple as ... Child's Play

There are hand-outs for your reference and I will walk you through them.

**1. DEMOGRAPHY:** School-age children (ages 5-19) comprise 17.4% of the permanent population of the County. Algonquin Highlands has the smallest proportion - 14.2%- and the smallest number of kids by quite a bit - 200 kids, less than half the next smallest municipality.

**2. METHODOLOGY:** Last spring a team from FS went into every grade 1, 4, 7, and 9 classroom and administered a survey in order to get a fact-based picture of what

children in our county do in their leisure time. The survey was carefully constructed and administered with assistance from McMaster University and HKPR Health Unit epidemiologist, and the data compiled using a software that allows us to fairly easily manipulate the data to answer questions. The results I'm sharing today describe what the children said they did during the school year.

A total of 546 students responded, but only 24 from Algonquin Highlands. We can use the full sample to generalize quite confidently to all students in the County, but we can make only very tenuous statements about how Algonquin Highlands students differ from students from other parts of the County. So I will draw your attention today to the County-wide data.

**3. WHY CONCERN OURSELVES WITH RECREATION?** Family Services invested time and money in this research because the literature makes a very compelling case that significant participation in recreation exerts a powerful protective force for children. The research says that children who are involved in recreation with an intensity that influences how they think of themselves and who they play with are very much more able to deal with adversity. This slide shows how an investment in children's recreation pays off, by the reduction of use of repair services - which, as you know, tend to be expensive services, relative to recreation.

Now we consider specific activities - 8 different types of activity. These are presented by gender because boys and girls, as you know, play quite differently.

**4. INSTRUCTED SPORTS.** Students were given 4 choices of how often they took part in sports with a coach or an instructor. This slide shows that 45% of County children took part once a week or more, that is, regularly. Boys are more often involved than girls: 51% of boys compared with 38% of girls.

**5. INSTRUCTED ART, DANCE OR MUSIC:** Haliburton County is not *Where It's Art* for children. 24% of all County children have cultural instruction, and not surprisingly, the girls far outnumber the boys: 36% of girls compared to 11% of boys.

**6. CLUB OR GROUP MEMBERSHIP:** 16% of children in the County take part in clubs or groups. This would be Brownies, Scouts, Cadets, church youth groups, a relatively inexpensive recreational option. The gender difference favours girls considerably, 21% to 12%. You see that the gender profile in Highland East is quite pronounced, which skews the County picture, so it may be that the gender difference in Algonquin Highlands is not so different than Dysart and Minden Hills.

**7. CAMP ATTENDANCE:** 13% of County children attend day camp and 12% overnight camp. Gender difference was minimal, so I didn't split it out. Again, Highlands East has an unusual profile.

**8. TV:** 50% of children in the County spend 3 hours a day or more during the school year watching TV. Boys watch more than girls: 67% to 43%.

**9. COMPUTER AND VIDEO GAMES:** This is the most popular leisure-time activity - 77% of County children play computer or video games once a week or more. The overall findings are quite consistent across the municipalities. Boys tend to be more involved than girls, 86% to 68%.

**10. INTERNET USE:** This slide suggests that most families with school-age children in the county have computers and are hooked up to internet - if you consider that in order to go on-line at least once a week, you would likely access the computer in your own home. 64% across the County are on line once a week or more, girls more than boys - 69% to 58%.

**11. READING:** The question here was ' How often do you read for fun (not just for school) during the school year?' Almost 2/3 of the students -65% - said they read once a week or more, a modest standard. There is not much variation among the municipalities. Not surprisingly, girls tend to read more than boys across the board, 74% to 55%.

Okay, there are 8 snapshots of how school-age children spend their leisure time. I have other data - uninstructed sports (this would include skate-boarding, skiing, pleasure skating, running, etc) and arts, paid work, listening to music. And I have data for these same categories in the summer months, as well as some very interesting input about what children would like to do if they had their druthers, if there were no impediments. I can share at some other time, and I can fine-tune this data in various ways.

The question I am posing to the municipalities is whether each of them is satisfied with the profile of participation among the children in their own municipality -- and I can't really do that with you, as I said before. My general impression is that the children of Algonquin Highlands are better served than their peers elsewhere in the County. If I were mothering here today, I would prefer to be in your municipality

#### **FINANCES:**

To turn briefly to the question of money: municipal staff has kindly provided me with 2002 financial details on the Rec / Culture budget line, and I've analyzed them a bit to focus on this question. Here we can be comparative among municipalities.

**TOTAL SPENDING:** This slide shows how much the two levels of municipal government spent on Recreation and Culture in 2002. The total is a bit over \$2.5 million dollars, a significant portion of the total budget. Dysart is the biggest spender, and Algonquin Highlands comes in third, even though it has the smallest population.

**PER CAPITA SPENDING:** When you consider gross expenditure, Algonquin Highlands is the clear winner, weighing in at a few pennies short of \$202. Each municipality seems to take a somewhat different approach to offsetting expenses, so I also looked at expenditure after revenues were accounted for. Again Algonquin Highlands wins the race, at \$115.

**WHAT IS INCLUDED:** There are differences among the municipalities about what services they include in this budget line, and big differences in the resources and facilities they manage. Algonquin Highlands is the only municipality that doesn't operate an arena, and they are the money hogs of the recreational world, hoovering up more than 40% of the rec budget in the other municipalities, and still a lot even when revenues are taken into consideration. As I speak with the Councils, some have taken the position that because they run facilities, such as the arenas, they invest in children's recreation. There is some truth in this, but it seems self-evident to me that unless there is a point person responsible for developing and coordinating recreation, only the already motivated and financially able are likely to participate, and in my opinion, that's not good enough -- because, going back to the work of Gina Browne about the 'inoculation against adversity' that participation provides, in the absence of a pro-active approach, those who would most benefit are least likely to get it. The investment is less likely to that part of the population for which it would really make a difference, perhaps a life-changing difference, and get a really high pay-back for the community as well.

Of course I'm preaching to the converted here: you have 2 FTE fulfilling that function. I am using the fact that Algonquin Highlands is operating the pro-active model that saw me through my mothering days as proof that it is possible in this time and place for the municipalities to provide the coordinating function that FS has been providing for children - 17% of the population - for all its taxpayers, by simply redirecting a very small proportion of this budget line to a human-management staffing function.

As I indicated in my letter requesting this appearance, at the present time, FS will lose its capacity at the end of June 2004 to provide the coordinating function for the \$35,000 of NCB funds that has for the past several years been ear-marked for children's recreation in Haliburton County. It hasn't been announced whether that money will continue to be available this year, but we worry that NCB money will be lost to children in this county unless action is taken to ensure that an appropriate service delivery structure is in place. You have the infrastructure in place to ensure that your children don't lose out -- although ironically, you are the lowest user of NCB funds among the four municipalities. You could opt to provide that service for your fellow municipalities on some cost-sharing basis... There may be other options as well: let's talk.

**March 8, 2004**  
**Highlands East presentation**

Many of you know me as Executive Director of Family Services, but today I speak not with my administrator voice, but with an advocate's voice. I speak to you today on behalf of the mothers of Haliburton County.

I am a mother. If I had mothered here, in Highlands East, my daughters would have been less competent, less confident, less well-equipped to make the transition to adulthood than was the case.

Why is that? Because the time and place where I mothered invested in children, and that enriched my ability to give my children a good start in life. They had access to many many opportunities that are available to children in Highlands East only at great inconvenience and expense to their families.

I think I speak for many mothers when I say that children should not have less opportunity because they live in Haliburton County. My intent today is to share some research that draws a picture of the current reality of children here. It will help you to consider in an educated, fact-based way whether this township is investing in its children in the right and proper way. It's a relatively simple question: as simple as ...  
Child's Play

I have hand-outs for your reference, and I will walk you through the material.

**1. DEMOGRAPHY:** School-age children (ages 5-19) comprise 17.4% of the permanent population of the County. Highlands East has the second smallest number of children, 540, ahead only of Algonquin Highlands.

**2. METHODOLOGY:** Last spring a team from FS went into every grade 1, 4, 7, and 9 classroom and administered a survey in order to get a fact-based picture of what children in our county do in their leisure time. The survey was carefully constructed and administered with assistance from McMaster University and HKPR Health Unit epidemiologist, and the data compiled using a software that allows us to fairly easily manipulate the data to answer questions. The results I'm sharing today describe what the children said they did during the school year.

A total of 546 students responded, and with this large a sample, we can generalize quite confidently to all students in the County. However, I'm presenting this data today by township, and because very few of the children who responded lived in Algonquin Highlands, data from that township should be interpreted cautiously when presented as a percentage, as it is in today's material.

99 students who live in Highlands East took part in the survey, presented here by grade.

**3. WHY CONCERN OURSELVES WITH RECREATION?** Family Services invested time and money in this research because the literature makes a very compelling case

that significant participation in recreation exerts a powerful protective force for children. The research says that children who are involved in recreation with an intensity that influences how they think of themselves and who they play with are very much more able to deal with adversity. This page shows how an investment in children's recreation pays off, by the reduction of use of repair services - which, as you know, tend to be expensive services, relative to recreation.

Now we consider specific activities - 8 different types of activity. These are presented by gender because boys and girls, as you know, play quite differently.

**4. INSTRUCTED SPORTS.** Students were given 4 choices of how often they took part in sports with a coach or an instructor. This slide shows that 32% of Highlands East children participated once a week or more, that is, regularly. This is the lowest rate of participation among the four municipalities, 13% lower than the County overall. The gender spread, however, is very small, only 1%, which is quite different than other jurisdictions.

**5. INSTRUCTED ART, DANCE OR MUSIC:** Haliburton County is not *Where It's Art* for children: 24% across the County, 22% in Highlands East, take lessons or attend a group in art, dance or music once a week or more. There is a strong gender difference here, as in other jurisdictions. In other areas, girls make up here for under-representation in organized sports, but in your municipality the girls were not under-represented in organized sports, so here the girls pull away from the boys in terms of participation.

**6. CLUB OR GROUP MEMBERSHIP:** This includes Brownies, Scouts, Cadets, church youth groups, often considered a relatively inexpensive recreational option. Highlands East children have the highest rates of participation of any jurisdiction, by quite a large amount. This may be an area of compensation for low rates of involvement in organized activity, but the gender difference is huge, with girls participating at much higher rates, again, pulling even further ahead of the boys.

**7. CAMP ATTENDANCE:** Here Highlands East children demonstrate high participation in camp attendance, especially day camp, where they attend at almost twice the rate of County children overall. This data is not differentiated by gender because the differences were very small. So while the participation here compensates for low participation in other categories, it doesn't address the disadvantage that boys have demonstrated in other areas.

**8. TV VIEWING:** This percentage is of those who said they watched 3 hours or more a day of television during the school year. Highlands East children have a similar profile to County children overall, 59%, and the gender difference is very similar, with 12% more of boys watching at this rate than girls.

**9. COMPUTER AND VIDEO GAMES:** This is the most popular leisure-time activity - 77% of County children play computer or video games once a week or more, pretty

much the same across the board. Here, as in other jurisdictions, boys watch more; here 21% more boys than girls participate in computer and video games.

We begin to have some idea about what boys are doing while the girls are taking part in the arts and clubs -- they're glued to a screen.

**10. INTERNET USE:** Here the girls join the boys at the screen, participating in on-line activities which tend to be more socially inclined -- e-mail, chat room, MSN, as well as research. 64% of girls as compared with 50% of boys go on-line once a week or more, but the overall participation rate is the lowest in the County, 7% below the County average.

Of general interest, this data suggests that most families with school-age children in the county have computers and are hooked up to internet - if you consider that in order to go on-line at least once a week, you would likely access the computer in your own home. 64% across the County are on line once a week or more, and in Highlands East it's 57%.

**11. READING:** The question here was 'How often do you read for fun (not just for school) during the school year?' Almost 2/3 of the students -65% - said they read once a week or more, a modest standard. There is not much variation among the municipalities and Highlands East comes right in on average. The general gender differences - girls reading more than boys - is less pronounced than average. Only in Dysart is the gender difference smaller.

Okay, there are 8 snapshots of how school-age children spend their leisure time. I have other data - uninstructed sports (this would include skate-boarding, skiing, pleasure skating, running, etc) and arts, paid work, listening to music. And I have data for these same categories in the summer months, as well as some very interesting input about what children would like to do if they had their druthers, if there were no impediments. I can share at some other time, and I can fine-tune this data in various ways.

However, my question for you now is whether you are satisfied with this profile of participation among the children in your municipality. Are you happy with how your children are spending their time? Do you think the circumstances are such that an adequate proportion of children get the 'inoculation against adversity' that recreation offers? Is your recreation and culture budget being used in a way that addresses adequately the needs of the children?

**FINANCES:** To turn briefly to the question of money: municipal staff has kindly provided me with 2002 financial details on the Rec / Culture budget line, and I've analyzed them a bit to focus on this question.

**TOTAL SPENDING:** This slide shows how much the two levels of municipal government spent on Recreation and Culture in 2002. The total is a bit over \$2.5 million dollars, a significant portion of the total budget. Highlands East has the smallest budget and has the second smallest population.

**PER CAPITA SPENDING:** If you consider gross expenditure as the amount of money spent per permanent resident, Highlands East has the lowest per capita, at \$107.32.

Each municipality seems to take a somewhat different approach to offsetting expenses, so I also looked at per capita expenditure after revenues were accounted for. My data from Highlands East was less detailed than for other jurisdictions, and perhaps because of that, the per capita expenditure with revenue taken into consideration doesn't change much, and becomes the second highest at \$95.18, after Algonquin Hills.

**WHAT IS INCLUDED:** There are big differences among the municipalities about what services they cover in this budget line. This next slide shows the facilities that are identified in each budget.

I was not able to tease out of the financials a split between capital and staffing costs, but as far as I can ascertain, Algonquin Highlands is the only municipality that has program staff in recreation and culture, that is, a person whose job it is to manage people rather than facilities. It has 2 FTE staff whose job it is to develop and deliver recreational activities, including engaging and organizing community resources.

The Algonquin Highlands model is familiar to me from my mothering days, and demonstrates to my satisfaction that it is possible in this time and place for the municipalities to provide the coordinating function that FS has been providing for children - only 17% of the population - for all its taxpayers. This could be accomplished in the other municipalities as well, by simply redirecting a very small proportion of this budget line to a human-management staffing function.

As I indicated in my letter requesting this appearance, at the present time, FS will lose its capacity at the end of June 2004 to provide the coordinating function for the \$35,000 of NCB funds that is ear-marked for children's recreation in Haliburton County. We worry that that money will be lost to children in this county unless action is taken to ensure that an appropriate service delivery structure is in place. I hope that the information presented today will be useful to you as you consider what plan of action Highlands East should take.



## Preparation for Presentations and Follow up

July 8, 2003

Reeve Ross Rigney, Minden Hills  
Reeve Eleanor Harrison, Algonquin Highlands  
Reeve Murray Fearey, Dysart et al  
Reeve Keith Tallman, Highlands East

Dear Reeves and your respective councils,

Re: a contribution to administering children's recreation across the county

As you may know from local events and media coverage, Family Services has received a second cycle of funding from Clarica to enable us to administer year-round recreational services for children in the County. The actual cost of the programs administered is addressed primarily by a block grant from the City of Kawartha Lakes - Haliburton Social Services Alliance of \$35,000/year from National Child Benefit (NCB) redirected funds. The NCB funds cannot be used for administration costs, and as you can well appreciate, it is practically impossible to distribute effectively that amount of money without staff time and expertise.

Clarica gave us \$50,000 last year, in a highly competitive selection procedure, to hire one staff person for a year, along with related transportation and administrative expenses, to administer the NCB and any other funds we could raise, toward the goal of raising community awareness of the importance of recreation to **every** child's social, intellectual and physical development. The 'rec staff' administered three initiatives over the year:

- matching 90+ children with a recreation of their choice for a season, cost-sharing with parents and service providers as appropriate for each child to afford the fees, gear, and transportation involved;
- planning and delivering 6 weeks of summer day camp to local children at an affordable rate;
- planning and delivering four Art Adventure programs in various schools, a 6-week after-school activity where local artists help a small group of 8 -12-year olds explore their creative capacity and fine-tune their social skills.

The two women who job-share the recreation coordination role - Cindee St. Pierre and Sue Ferren - are doing a phenomenal job of making the NCB money go far and wide for the benefit of all our children. In recognition of this, and that it takes a while to change community perceptions, Clarica gave us a second year of funding (one of 18 projects funded from 400 applications from across the country) but this time for \$35,000, with the expectation that one year into the project, we should be able to demonstrate local government support to address the 'missing' \$15,000. Thus this letter.

We try very hard to serve children equitably, regardless of where in the county they live, and we believe we have been quite successful. We would therefore suggest that splitting the \$15,000 evenly between the four townships, \$3,750 each, is a fair and simple way of addressing the problem, but we are open to other arrangements. We are approaching you early so that we can be in play for your next budget cycle.

Enclosed is information on some of the activities to date - and there will be more by the time we talk business! We would be pleased to speak to council whenever it is appropriate to advance our request, and to answer any questions in advance. Please contact me at the above address / phone number / e-mail.

Sincerely,

Fay Martin, MSW, PhD  
Executive Director

August 13, 2003

Reeve Ross Rigney, Minden Hills; Warden, Haliburton County  
Reeve Eleanor Harrison, Algonquin Highlands  
Reeve Murray Fearey, Dysart et al  
Reeve Keith Tallman, Highlands East  
Gary King, CAO, Haliburton County

Dear Reeves / Warden and your respective councils:

Re: support of children's recreation

Two of the four township councils have responded to our request of July 8/03 for funds to augment the \$35,000 we received from Clarica to support the involvement of Haliburton County children in recreational activities. In both cases, the councils have suggested that the request should be considered at the County level, and deferred to the 2004 budget deliberations. There seems also to be a theme from the County Strategic Planning process that recreation planning and delivery would benefit from a county-wide perspective.

This raises the following questions, to which we would appreciate specific answers within a time frame that will allow us to advance our request so that program delivery will not be interrupted:

:

1. What is the process and time-frame for up-loading recreation from the township to the County level?
2. Will the entire recreation / culture budget line for each township be up-loaded with the re-assignment?
3. What recreational activities will be up-loaded to County responsibility, and which will remain with the townships?
4. With whom should we work to ensure that our request gets timely attention as the changes are made?

The Get Movin' Committee (the Health Unit - Family Service initiative that County supported to get funds from Ministry of Tourism and Recreation) has been pulling together some facts relating to recreation in preparation for up-coming community consultations. The data shows that current investment in recreation is uneven across the county, but significant: an average of about \$150 / capita (permanent residents), and a total (2002 actuals) across the County of about \$2.3 million dollars. Family Services is also pulling together data about where the children are located who have used programs funded by Clarica / NCB. We'll be pleased to share this with you as it evolves into a more final draft.

We would be happy to speak to these issues / questions when they are on your council agenda. .

Sincerely,

Fay Martin, MSW, PhD  
Executive Director

November 6, 2003

Dear Reeves,

Murray Fearrey, in a telephone conversation on November 5<sup>th</sup>, has brought to my attention that information contained in the newspaper insert developed by Health for Life and included with this week's Echo, is incorrect. The information in question is the 2002 per capita investment of each local municipality government in culture and recreation. The information on which this is based had been made available to County counsellors at their October ?? meeting, by Counsellor Jim McMahon in response to allegations made by Reeve Tallman that children in Highlands East are not well served by Family Services' recreation initiative. Mr. Fearrey shared with me that the county counsellors had 'had a little laugh' at the obvious incorrectness of the per capita figures at that time.

This is concerning, as the figures were provided by municipal staff (in the case of Algonquin Highlands, Highlands East, Minden Hills) or taken from the statement of audit that appeared in the newspapers (Dysart et al, County of Haliburton). I would appreciate receiving corrected figures at your earliest convenience, and will ask the Echo to print the corrected information.

As evidence of the inaccuracy of the numbers, Mr. Fearrey said that Algonquin Highlands couldn't have the highest per capita expenditure as it doesn't even have an arena. He raises a good point, which echoes one of my concerns in my letter of ??? to councils, about how the jurisdictions understand responsibility for recreational expenses to be shared among them. I have earlier requested from each municipality a breakdown of revenue and expenditure relating to their 2002 recreation and culture line, and Minden Hills and County of Haliburton have complied. I would appreciate receiving the information from the other jurisdictions so that we can begin to develop a fact-based answer to the question Mr. Fearrey raises, of what exactly recreation funds are spent on by various jurisdictions.

I would appreciate the opportunity to appear before County council at the earliest appropriate time to advance the discussion of recreational spending between the two tiers of municipal government so that I can make an appropriate and timely request for municipal contribution to staffing the children's recreation initiative that has to date received grant funding from Clarica. This should also help the Get Movin' group (of which I am a member) be accurately informed as they prepare to conduct community consultations to elicit recreational priorities. (This is the project for which County Council supported a funding request to the Ministry of Recreation, Culture and ??? in ???)

I would also like the opportunity to correct the misinformation presented by Reeve Tallman regarding Family Services practice in allocating National Child Benefit funds in Highlands East. Had that council not revoked their invitation to Family Services staff to attend their ?? meeting to discuss precisely this matter, Reeve Tallman could have brought correct information to the County table. But since he didn't, and in response to requests for clarification subsequent to media coverage of the discussion, I would be pleased to set the record straight.

Thank you.  
Sincerely,

cc: Anne-Marie Cyr, Health for Life  
Jim McMahon, County rep, FSHC Board  
Haliburton Echo & Minden Times

November 24, 2003

## DEPOSITION TO COUNTY COUNCIL, NOV 26/03

My purpose in coming here this morning is to clarify the appropriate procedure for furthering my quest for an on-going investment of local municipal funds to ensure that children in this county have equitable access to cultural and recreational activities. I am asking that the municipality -- at either the lower or upper tier of governance -- direct \$50,000 each year, on an on-going basis, to continue the Recreation Coordinator role which is in its second year of operation financed by a grant from Clarica Inc. \$50,000 is less than 1% of the money spent on the Culture and Recreation line among all 5 municipal councils in 2002 -- an infinitesimal portion of the budget of the county but an essential contribution to the quality of life of our children.

Let me start with an explanation of why this investment is important to our children, and then we'll get to what has, to date, been the sticking point, a clarification of where and how this responsibility is or should be shared among the five councils.

First, then: Why should we invest in culture and recreation for children? The work of children is play. Playing is an essential part of how children learn. Increasingly, our culture has come to require that children be supervised at play -- it's no longer very acceptable to send our children out to amuse themselves as they see fit, as it was when we were young. Consequently, play has become commodified, that is, it has become a product that is bought and sold. That's not news to Haliburton County: the buying and selling of recreation and culture is the foundation of our economy.

When I was moving up to Haliburton County 6 years ago, my Toronto colleagues knew where I was going -- it was to the land of camps and cottages, the place of play. But selling play doesn't always provide a very good living, so there are many children in this county whose families cannot afford to buy them play. In preparation for asking for National Child Benefit redirected funds, we researched the cost of several popular activities: entrepreneurial activities, those operating on a for-profit basis, even considering normal economies like buying second-hand equipment, car-pooling, cost a lot: skiing \$////, hockey ////, figure skating ////, dance ////. When one considers that 52% of the households in our county make less than \$30,000 per year, you know that lots of families cannot afford these activities. Not-for-profit activities cost less because they are subsidized by community volunteers, and we have some wonderful opportunities here -- Jack Rabbits, Silver Flutes, Cadets, to mention a few. But unless there is some equalizing factor, there will be an unmistakable class divide: kids who play hockey or dance will be drawn from middle-class families, and those in Brownies and Cadets from economically challenged families.

Research shows that participation in recreation has a strong protective function (that is, it makes kids more able to cope with adversities) when kids engage with enough intensity that the activity becomes part of their sense of identity, in two ways, in relation to the development of a particular skill, and secondly, as part of a social network. That

is, they need to become a member of a group and become competent enough to self-refer as a skier, a Cadet, a martial artist. When kids engage with that intensity, the investment pays off. The work of Dr. Gina Brown of MacMaster University has shown quite conclusively that every dollar spent on recreation for children (under the intensity conditions described) is saved many times over by not needing to be spent on reparative interventions, like counselling, treating addictions, the law, etc -- and, of course, the medical conditions that emanate from sedative life styles. There you have the choice: recreation or repair. Play now or pay later.

This choice is most compelling under conditions of adversity. That is, children living in challenging conditions - poverty, dysfunctional families, educational disadvantages - are the ones who most benefit from engagement in recreational activities, and yet they are the ones least likely to be able to afford it. Unless -- this is where you come in -- their community sees it as a good investment in the well-being of their citizens.

I hope that you do. I think that you do, given that you support 6 purpose-built recreation centres, 3 arenas, plus many smaller facilities and parks, 4 museums, 6 libraries. And the staff to keep these facilities functioning.

But what the Clarica grant has allowed us to demonstrate is the importance of a staff person whose task it is to partner people with opportunities. So far, we've joined children with existing options in the Peer Pursuits part of the program (that's where we deploy NCB funds to bridge economically-challenged kids to a season of participation in an activity of their choice), and developed two universally-available options, Art Adventure and Adventure Day Camp. This year, in addition to consolidating the work of last year, we need to expand the affordable (not-for-profit) recreational / cultural options available.

There are people in this community who would give of their time and skills to offer activities for children and youth *if* the support were there to work out the details, confer credibility, assure quality and safety, address insurance issues, etc., etc..

This development of our community's potential is an on-going role, and it is a role that we think the municipality should own. Just as you can't keep your arenas going without ice-keepers, so you can't engage your citizens in culture and recreation -- as a civic rather than an economic activity -- without people-keepers. It needs to be a year-round role for year-round residents, a re-investment of tax money in the children for whom Haliburton County is home.

To move from talk to action, we need to clarify out whose responsibility it is to pay for a function that serves the entire county. Having a choice -- two tiers of municipal government -- is reasonably new. The onset of a new council is as good a time as any to rethink the issue, and clearly a rethink is required. In response to my July letter to township councils, 3 felt that a function that served the entire county should be funded at the county level. My August request for clarification of how that would take place has been tabled but not debated. I hope that today will commence the necessary debate.

Fay Martin, MSW, PhD  
Executive Director, Family Services

P.S. Since Sue Ferren's salary has been 'outed' as much as that of county councillors, let me clarify that she isn't paid \$50,000, which is more than the Family Services pay scale for that position. The grant must cover job-related expenses as well.

December 4, 2003 – letter to the Editor, Haliburton Echo

Re Family Services debate goes in circles, & editorial: Echo, Dec 2/03

I didn't come to Council to ask them to fill a pot hole in my budget, as seems to be the understanding, but to establish the appropriate time and place when I could make a case for redirecting a small portion of the existing Haliburton County Recreation and Culture budget to specifically address the needs of our children to play. I haven't made the case yet. I'm caught in not being allowed to make my case until the councilors feel comfortable with what they may decide once they've heard my case. That's a pretty convoluted way of doing business.

Or, as the situation now stands, *not* doing business. I can't imagine what is so frightening about this potential discussion that it is so relentlessly avoided. It's just a discussion about the value of children to our community, and an opportunity for our elected officials to decide in the public eye what they want to do about it.

I don't expect the councilors to be experts on child development or abreast of the literature, so I gave some evidence of the case to be made for investing in children's play. 1) It's a good economic investment: if children don't play now, we pay later. 2) It's a good social investment: the work of children is play. 3) Children have a moral right -- some would say first call -- to public resources (the value underlying women and children being put into life boats first).

Children are not a social burden; they are the keepers of our future. They are the 21% of our permanent population that doesn't have the right to vote, but that doesn't give our elected officials the right to disregard their needs. The Clarica grant demonstrates how much can be accomplished with a \$50,000 budget, less than 1% of current Recreation and Culture expenditure. Continuing the Clarica-funded role is but one of many possible routes to ensuring that our children can play. Can we please move forward to discussing *Child's Play* in Haliburton County?

January 22, 2004

Warden Bob Davis  
Councillors Fearrey, Rigney, McMahon, Tallman, Howe, Harrison & Gardner  
County of Haliburton  
Box 399  
MINDEN, ON            K0M 2K0

Dear elected representatives,

Enclosed please find a copy of a letter from Janine Mitchell, indicating that the \$15,000 that Gary King negotiated from NCB funds at a Social Service Alliance meeting last fall is to be deducted from the annual \$35,000 that they have granted Family Services for the past several years. This is the \$15,000 that we have for the past two years used to deliver Summer Adventure Day Camps. Last year this bought a very affordable week-long camp experience in any of six locations for 118 children, and a summer job that enhanced resumes and in some cases changed life trajectory for five local youth.

The situation at present is that the recreational programming we now offer will end in June 2004. At that time, the Peer Pursuits arrangements (bridging children to existing rec / cultural options) funded with 2003 funds will have come to an end, and the Clarica grant that we have used to staff program delivery will be exhausted. We will have no staffing dollars to deliver the programs that the Social Service Alliance / NCB has made possible for the last three years, and cannot responsibly accept the money unless we know that we have the resources to use it effectively for the purpose for which it was granted.

Since the County has decided that availability of recreation is a lower tier responsibility, I will be approaching each of the townships to discuss service to the children who live in their jurisdictions. Given the logistics involved, and the budget cycle, I am not optimistic that we will be able to piece together a cogent staffing plan in the time available. County Council members who were reported in the *Echo* as wanting municipalities to make their own choices will then have the opportunity to choose, for example, whether to apply for NCB funds for the children in their area. Townships that have recreation staff -- Algonquin Highlands is in an excellent position -- may have the capacity to meet Alliance application and reporting obligations. But if they don't, or choose not to, and Family Services can't without staffing dollars, how will Haliburton County's children get their share of NCB funds? What local organizations will pick up the task? What from-away agency would we hope will parachute services in?

This exchange around children's recreation illustrates how disadvantaged Haliburton County is in addressing human issues -- there's something a bit pathetic about the County trying to solve 'my' problem with expertise it doesn't have and money it doesn't control. Life is more than garbage and gravel, but there is no mechanism in the County to deal in other than an ad hoc and adversarial way with 'people issues'. (The Strategic Plan's position is so minimalist it doesn't warrant consideration.) There is no venue for



developing a Haliburton County plan for dealing with the matters that come before the Social Service Alliance or for monitoring its progress or for reporting to the public -- even through the issues are of central importance to life, and our tax dollars are allocated by the decisions made there. There is, to my knowledge, not even the practice of regularly reporting Alliance proceedings to the Council. That Haliburton County has been disempowered structurally is all the more reason to develop a community position around these issues. If our County reps to that table don't have staff resources to support their involvement, let them at least have citizen support.

Is there some way we can establish an on-going dialogue about human issues in our community so that the resources we have -- the Council's, the professional's, the public's -- can be more effectively used to make Haliburton County a better place to live in?

Sincerely,

Fay Martin, MSW, PhD  
Executive Director

January 26, 2004

cc: Gary King, CEO

Table 1: Comparison of investment in recreation and culture, by municipality  
(Sources: population figures, Census Canada 2001; budget information, municipal staff)

Municipal Jurisdiction	Permanent population	Rec & Culture '02 expenditures - gross	Per capita investment - gross	Rec & Culture '02 expenditures - net	Per capita investment - net	Variance - gross / net	variance as % of gross
Dysart et al	4925	\$796,960	\$161.82	\$359,394	\$72.97	\$437,566	54.9%
Minden Hills	5310	\$576,732	\$108.61	\$315,578	\$59.43	\$261,154	45.3%
Highlands East	3025	\$324,633	\$107.32	\$287,929	\$95.18	\$36,704	11.3%
Algonquin Highlands	1827	\$369,004	\$201.97	\$210,258	\$115.08	\$158,746	43.0%
Haliburton County	15,087	\$445,187	\$29.51	N/a	n/a		
TOTALS	15,087	\$2,512,516		\$1,173,159 +County	\$77.76+		

Table 2: FSHC *Child's Play* service to children by municipality, 2002 - 03  
(Sources: population figures: Census Canada 2001; utilization, FSHC data)

Municipal Jurisdiction	Child pop'n ages 5-19	Children as % of population	Adventure Day Camp, summer '03	Peer Pursuits '02 funding	HACK ('02 funding)	Peer Pursuits '03 funding	totals	% of service pop'n	% of child pop'n
Dysart et al	875	17.8	61 + 5	39+6					
Minden Hills	935	17.6	35						
Highlands East	540	17.8	9		88				
Algonquin Highlands	260	14.2	8						
Haliburton County	2610	17.4	118						

February 6, 2004

mail merge to All recreation providers and Peer Pursuit participants

Dear recreation providers and Peer Pursuit (the matching program) participants,

re: future of the *Child's Play* program

This is a head's up in anticipation of media coverage, and perhaps other discussion, of my upcoming presentations to the four lower-tier municipal councils to discuss their involvement in the future of children's recreational and cultural activities in the County. It is an invitation for you to make your position known to your municipal politicians. We expect that many Haliburtonians, not just parents and not just those who have received assistance, may feel strongly about the need to create and maintain a good choice of recreational and cultural activities accessible to all.

The facts are these: Family Service has received \$35,000 per year from the Social Service Alliance (a third level of municipal government) to provide rec programing for children from poor families. We use \$20,000 of this for Peer Pursuits and \$15,000 for 6 weeks of Summer Adventure Day Camp. This money cannot be used to hire staff, and we were not able to deliver the programs properly with our existing staff, who have other responsibilities. Therefore we sought two years of funding from a private source, Clarica Inc., to demonstrate that a recreational coordinator role is essential to spending the Alliance funds dollars effectively, and furthermore, can engage community resources to increase program options (for example, helping a community member who wanted to start a soccer club to bring the idea to reality). The township of Algonquin Highlands has two full-time people in this role, and most municipalities outside the County have some budget for staff who engage with people (in addition to those who run facilities, which is an essential but different role).

The Clarica funding, \$50,000 a year, will come to an end on June 30,2004. Family Services will then lose its ability to administer the \$35,000 Alliance funding, and that money may be lost to the County unless an alternative pathway is found. My purpose in meeting with the township councils is to explore alternatives. The municipalities could purchase the service from Family Services and the program continue much as at present. Or they could ask their staff to assume responsibility for administering the Alliance funds (Algonquin Highlands is in a good position to do this). Or they could contract another service to undertake that function. There may well be other options.

If you want to see this service to our children continue, we invite you to make your wishes known to your local municipal councillors - a list of names and phone numbers is attached for your information. Sue Ferren is no longer with Family Services, but you may direct any questions to me until you hear otherwise.

Sincerely,

Fay Martin, MSW, PhD  
Executive Director

March 26, 2004

Murray Fearrey, Reeve  
Dysart et al  
Box 389  
HALIBURTON, ON  
K0M 1S0

Dear Murray,

Re: Child's Play

When I presented some of the data from our research on children's participation in recreational activities to the Dysart Council earlier this year, you requested some further documentation. Specifically you asked for the hours of recreation that children in Dysart et al receive from the programs that are delivered by our Clarica-funded children's recreation initiative.

I'm enclosing two documents that give that information. Basically, the data demonstrates that children living in Dysart et al use a greater proportion re of this resource than children in other municipalities. Dysart children constitute 36% of the total number of children who participated in the program, and received 34% of the hours of recreation delivered through the program.

Another interesting perspective might be that a total of 10,127 direct hours of recreation was delivered for an administrative cost of \$50,600, just under \$5/hr of delivered service (i.e., not including the time involved in organizing the activities, recruiting participants, book-keeping and reporting). The direct benefit of Dysart et al from the Clarica grant, pro-rated for its level of utilization, is either \$17,204 based on proportion of hours of service, or \$18,216 based on the proportion of children involved.

I would appreciate if you would make copies of this material available to each Dysart et al councillor. I would be glad to speak to the issue further, if you wish.

Sincerely,

Fay Martin, MSW, PhD  
Executive Director

cc: Jim McMahon, County rep, FSHC board

March 29, 2004

Keith Tallman, Reeve  
Highlands East  
P.O. Box 295  
WILBERFORCE, ON  
K0L 3C0

Dear Keith,

Re: Child's Play

When I presented the Child's Play research to Dysart et al, Murray Fearrey asked for some further data re hours of service provided through the Clarica grant. Other councils have raised other questions which are addressed in the two tables enclosed. I thought your Councillors might also be interested, and ask that you make copies available to them.

The concerns identified by your councillors, as I recall, was the veracity of the data about participation in Peer Pursuits, specifically the number of skaters who required assistance in order to take part in that activity. As you see on the chart, skaters constituted the majority of the Peer Pursuit recipients - 21 of 39 Highlands East children. You may also find it interesting that Highlands East had the highest proportion of participants in this program -- 39%, compared with Minden Hills at 36% and Dysart et al at 21%.

Highlands East, by virtue of having two schools with the target age group, is also the major recipient of Art Adventure, but is not a big user of Summer Adventure Day Camp. This is not at all surprising, given our research findings that Highlands East children have the highest rates of camp attendance in the County, especially day camp. Consequently, if we are able to provide Adventure Day Camp again this summer, which seems likely, we will probably not offer the camp in Highlands East.

I would be pleased to discuss this information further with your Recreation Committee, if they are interested. I would like to pursue further the concern I identified in my presentation, that it appears that boys in particular in your community are under-involved in recreation and culture, to see how that resonates with your understanding of the community and if it is a problem, how we might work together to solve it.

Sincerely,

Fay Martin, MSW, PhD  
Executive Director

cc: Jim McMahon, county rep, FSHC board

March 29, 2004

Ross Rigney, Reeve  
Minden Hills  
Box 358  
MINDEN, ON K0M 2K0

Dear Ross,

Re: Child's Play

When I presented the Child's Play research to Dysart et al, Murray Fearrey asked for some further data re hours of service provided through the Clarica grant. Other councils have raised other questions which are addressed in the two tables enclosed. I thought your Councillors might also be interested, and ask that you make copies available to them.

What I find interesting is that while the children in Minden Hills are arguably the most disadvantaged in the Council, they constitute a lower percentage of participants than Dysart et al, arguably the least disadvantaged: 32% of the participants are from Minden Hills compared to 36% from Dysart. The majority of this difference can likely be attributed to attendance at Summer Adventure Day Camp, where 35 Minden children, compared to 61 Dysart children, took advantage of the opportunity. Two weeks of camp were held in each of the two villages, and the cost -- \$20/wk/child -- the same. This is especially concerning given -- as you know from the data I presented to Council -- that children from Minden Hills, compared to children in the other municipalities, are least likely to attend camps: 8% of Minden children attend day camp and 7% attend overnight camp, compared to 13% and 12% respectively in the County overall.

The high rates of camp attendance in Highlands East shown in our research, combined with limited participation in Adventure Day Camp last summer in that quadrant, is causing us to reconsider in which communities we will offer Adventure Day Camp, if, as appears likely, the funding is available to allow us to offer the program again this summer. The logical choice would be Minden, but we need to address the problem of getting better participation: surely more than 35 children in the village of Minden alone, let alone in the outlying areas, would benefit from such an opportunity!!!

We would appreciate the opportunity to discuss this issue further with your Recreation Committee. I recall that one of the problems identified by the councillors was that your facilities are under-utilized, so it seems probable that solving our problem of better participation in Adventure Day Camp may also address the larger problem of children not using optimally the resources the municipality maintains.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Fay Martin, MSW, PhD  
Executive Director

cc: Jim McMahon, county rep, FSHC board

## PARTICIPATION IN PEER PURSUITS, FALL 2003, BY MUNICIPALITY

Peer Pursuits is a program in which approximately \$20,000 each year of National Child Benefit funds are redirected to children from financially challenged families in order for them to participate in a season of a recreational activity of their choice. Families are assisted with some of the cost of fees, equipment and/or travel, and are expected to contribute what they can. Recreation providers also often assist in whatever way they can to help these and other children participate. The allocations are negotiated in the fall.

Activity	# participants	# hrs / season avg (hrs x wks + events)	Dysart et al		Minden Hills		Highlands East		Algonquin Highlands		Total hours
			#	hrs	#	hrs	#	hrs	#	hrs	
skating	29	1x25+15=40	-	-	8	320	21	840	-	-	1160
clubs	22	1.5x40=60	7	420	8	480	6	360	1	60	1320
dance	13	1x30+15=45	6	270	5	225	1	45	1	45	585
karate	8	2x40+6=86	3	258	4	344	-	-	1	86	688
hockey	7	2.5x30+4=79	2	158	2	158	3	237	-	-	553
music	6	2x40+4=84	-	-	4	336	2	168	-	-	504
curling	4	2x20+12=52	-	-	1	52	3	156	-	-	208
ski/snowbd	4	5x12=60	1	60	3	180	-	-	-	-	240
bowling	3	3x30+4=94	-	-	-	-	3	282	-	-	282
swimming	3	2x20=40	2	80	1	40	-	-	-	-	120
travel	24										
<b>totals</b>	99+24		21	1246	36	2135	39	2088	3	191	5650
<b>% of children</b>			21		36		39		3		
<b>% of hrs</b>				22		38		37		3	

Prepared by Fay Martin, March 26, 2004





<b>Totals</b>	2810	113 + 5		3955	99 +24 **		5660	32		512	244	9	100	99
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\* two programs with 8 participants each are scheduled for Cardiff and Wilberforce in April-May '04

\*\* 24 children received assistance with transportation, most in addition to other assistance

