

## **FAMILY CARE OFFICE**

### **Executive Summary for the 2002-2003 Annual Report**

The Family Care Office (FCO) was created in December 1993. It is funded jointly by the University's operating budget (through the Office of the Vice President Human Resources and the Office of the Vice President and Provost) and by St. George campus students (through the Student Services fee). The Office reports directly to the Director of Student Services and to the Quality of Work Life Advisor & Special Assistant to the Vice-President, Human Resources. It has been a member of the Equity Issues Advisory Group since 1993.

The Family Care Office is a service that provides guidance, information, referrals, educational programming and advocacy for the University of Toronto community. Through all its functions, the FCO aims to raise awareness of family care issues and of quality of life issues central to the achievement of educational equity and employment equity at the University of Toronto.

#### **Overview of Services**

Last year, the Office handled almost 1700 cases from students, staff and faculty compared to 1495 cases in 2001-02. The primary areas of concern involved child care options, funding for child care, children's programming, schools, maternity and parental leaves, parenting, elder care, relocation issues and housing, requests for counselling and legal referrals frequently involving separation/divorce, financial aid, balancing work/study/family and flexible work arrangements. We also provide educational programming and offer a variety of workshops, support groups and events to address these family care issues. This year there was again an increase in our attendance to over 1550 participants. We offered 8 more workshops/events and 1 more support group. In addition, we have a library of practical resource materials. The Coordinator of the Family Care Office reviews university policy, procedures and publications for their impact on those with family responsibilities and makes recommendations for revisions or for further development.

The Family Care Office also coordinates the Faculty Relocation Service (FRS) and assists with the University's recruitment of faculty by providing relocation assistance to prospective and recently appointed faculty. Last year, the office staff assisted 180 prospective and newly appointed faculty.

#### **Staffing**

Staffing in the office went through a transitional stage this year as a result of an organizational review in the previous year. In October 2002, the Acting Coordinator was confirmed as the Coordinator. The Resource and Program Consultant job description was then revised to an Education and Resource Coordinator and this individual was hired in January 2003. The Office Manager's job description was also reviewed and the decision was made to transfer the financial and human resource administration components of this position to the Financial Manager in the Office of the Vice President, Human Resources effective August 2003. These changes in job descriptions reflected some of the changes in the mandate of the Family Care Office and of the Faculty Relocation Service and will allow for a more efficient operation of the service. While this transition in staffing did create added stress, the program and services of the office were not affected as the FCO continued to increase its programming and handled a larger caseload than the preceding year.

#### **Objectives for 2002-03**

The major priorities and initiatives set out for 2002-03 were accomplished. Some of these initiatives included creating a Babysitting Bulletin Board to help those in the U of T community with informal child care needs. We increased our programming and also developed a borrowing policy for our Resource Library and have seen more individuals now using these resources. To improve our communication and advertising we now have a U of T listserv. We held focus groups with student parents to better understand their family care needs while studying on-campus. The office continued to provide support for those students applying for child care subsidies and assisted in administering the SAC Dollars for Day Care funds. We organized family events with the Athletic Centre and co-organized the Innis College Family Film Day. Popular workshops this year included *Caring for Aging Relatives: The Legal Issues*, *Bullying: What Parents Can Do*,

*Stop Fighting with Your Teenager, An Introduction to Autism Spectrum Disorders and Dealing with Misbehaviour.* We also worked collaboratively with other U of T services and the community to sponsor workshops such as *Positioning Yourself for a Career in Academia for Women Grad Students and Other Stories to Be Told: LGBTQ Parents and their Teens.* The Father's Group and Coping After a Recent Separation or Divorce Support Group were also well attended.

### **Key Issues from 2002-03 and Future Implications**

- I. The high costs of child care, and limited availability of infant and toddler spaces are issues the office will continue to raise, and we will continue to provide students, staff, and faculty with the information they need to make appropriate child care decisions for their situation. Financial aid for student families is also an ongoing concern. The office continues to direct students to potential sources of funding and support on and off campus. **Focus for 2003-4:** Over the last year, there have been significant changes to day care on-campus. The Early Learning Centre opened in August 2003. The Office will work with the staff of the Early Learning Centre to develop joint programming, to advise on the need to provide evening and weekend child care and to possibly expand on the Babysitting Bulletin Board. In September 2003, a new day care replaced the existing nursery school in Student Family Housing. This has provided high quality subsidized child care spaces for student parents living in Student Family Housing. There are plans to renovate this day care site to add infant spots and the Coordinator has been asked to sit on this Project Planning Committee and will ensure the needs of student parents are foremost in the planning. Unfortunately the demand for on-campus licensed day care spots is still higher than the current capacity and so waiting lists still exist. Workshops such as Cooking on a Budget, Child Care Subsidy Information Session, Budgeting for Student Parents, and Choosing Child Care for your Family will be offered to help provide child care and financial information.
- II. As a result of the focus groups conducted last year, the office is beginning to address the concerns student parents raised. **Focus for 2003-4:** More parenting workshops, providing information on separation and divorce issues, workshops on applying for a child care subsidy and how to budget; creating a drop-in time in the office for student parents to connect with each other; providing a summary of some student parent concerns with regards to academic accommodation to the Interim Dean of Arts and Science; and organizing more family events on-campus.
- III. Providing guidance on flexible work arrangements and related policies is a continuing project for the office. A Caring for Friends and Family survey of staff and faculty was conducted last year by the Office of the VP Human Resources and the Family Care Office assisted in designing and distributing the survey. **Focus 2003-4:** The survey will provide a starting point for determining the concerns of staff and faculty and once the analysis of the survey is complete, the FCO will assist with follow-up focus groups. The office will investigate training strategies on the implementation of flexible work arrangements and related policies.
- IV. Faculty recruitment and retention is a priority for the university and so the Faculty Relocation Service (FRS) and the assistance the office provides to departments as they hire new faculty continues to be very important. **Focus 2003-4:** Ensuring all chairs, directors and deans receive information on FRS and inviting all staff involved with recruitment to an Open House. To assist new faculty partners and spouses to adjust to Toronto and U of T, offer a newcomers spouse/partner networking group. Ensure office staff receive updated training to be able to respond to all relocation concerns.
- V. As the office caseload level has increased by 35% in the last two years and the demand for workshops has also increased, the workload of the office staff is reaching its limit. Sources for additional staffing assistance need to be considered and this could include using an intern from the Faculty of Social Work or, if our budget is increased, hiring a new staff member. However, office space is very limited and this will be a problem when considering our options.

**FAMILY CARE OFFICE**  
**Annual Report**  
**July 1, 2002 - June 30, 2003**

## **Introduction**

The Family Care Office (FCO) was created in December 1993. It is funded jointly by the University's operating budget (through the Office of the Vice President Human Resources and the Office of the Vice President and Provost) and by students (through the Student Services fee). The Family Care Office is a service that provides guidance, information, referrals, educational programming and advocacy for the University of Toronto community. Through all its functions, the FCO aims to raise awareness of family care issues and of quality of life issues central to the achievement of educational equity and employment equity at the University of Toronto.

The FCO adopts a highly collaborative approach to educational programming and works with partners across the University on joint initiatives. It maintains a resource centre comprised of practical material on topics ranging from pregnancy and infant care to lesbian and gay parenting issues, bereavement and caring for elderly family members. The Office acts as an advocate and liaison on behalf of University families with government and community agencies, University departments and employee and student organizations. The Office consults regularly with these organizations to ensure that it is meeting the needs of the University population and that a high quality of service is being maintained. The Coordinator of the Family Care Office reviews University policy, procedures and publications for their impact on those with family responsibilities and makes recommendations for revisions or for further development. In addition, the Office coordinates the Faculty Relocation Service (FRS) and assists with the University's recruitment of faculty by providing relocation assistance to prospective and recently appointed faculty.

Throughout its history, the Family Care Office has emphasized an inclusive definition of family. Thus, any member of the University community is entitled, for the purposes of the office, to define family, as it is most appropriate for his/her own circumstances. The Office is committed to providing culturally sensitive service to clients. Referrals are offered to a wide array of resources including those that have a specific faith or cultural perspective. This has always been an important factor for students and staff and has enhanced our ability to assist in the recruitment of faculty.

## **Staffing**

As a result of the organizational review in the previous year, staffing in the office went through a transitional stage and was finalized in January 2003. In October 2002 the Acting Coordinator was confirmed as the Coordinator. The Resource and Program Consultant job description was then revised to an Education and Resource Coordinator and this individual was hired in January 2003. Until the Education and Resource Coordinator was hired, casual staff members were used as temporary replacements. The Office Manager's job description was also reviewed and the decision was made to transfer the financial and human resource administration components of

this position to the Financial Manager in the Office of the Vice President, Human Resources effective August 2003. These changes in job descriptions reflected some of the changes in the mandate of the Family Care Office and of the Faculty Relocation Service and will allow for a more efficient operation of the service. While this transition in staffing did create added stress, the program and services of the office were not affected as the FCO continued to increase its programming and handled a larger caseload than the preceding year. The Office also continued to provide several unique work/study opportunities for students interested in undertaking research or career-related projects in family care or community services.

### **Case Overview**

Since its inception in December 1993, the Family Care Office has experienced a steady increase in demand for its services. This year saw a 13% increase in cases compared to last year with a total case load of almost 1700. This number represents a four-fold increase in case load since 1994/95.

The types of services requested by individuals and departments are broadly defined under child care and elder care but certainly extend beyond these categories. Clients request comprehensive family care, including: assistance with budgeting and time management; referrals to family lawyers, counsellors and physicians; access to a complex web of community services (including food and clothing banks, parenting classes and housing); and support groups. Departments also benefit from consultations about policy and about unique family-related situations involving individual employees and students.

## **Case Work, Education and Training and other Direct Service**

### **Case Work**

From May 1, 2002 to April 30, 2003, the Family Care Office handled 1693 cases: 630 students (22 part-time undergraduates, 266 full-time undergraduates and 342 graduate students), 60 post-doctoral fellows, 826 employees (316 staff and 510 faculty members) and 177 other which includes University departments, visiting faculty, journalists, other institutions, alumni and members of the community [see Table 1]. Hundreds more attended presentations, panel discussions and displays in which the office took part. It should be noted that case load is not the only indicator of the impact of the Family Care Office's activities. In terms of service to students and staff, the impact of the education and training programs and of the website is as significant as that of individual casework.

As in previous years, student concerns centered primarily around issues such as child care availability (including access and quality), children's programs, family financial planning, parenting, legal assistance, housing, pre-natal health and maternity and parental leave. Employees requested assistance with child care and children's activities, summer and emergency programs for children, as well as family care leaves (i.e. maternity leave, parental leave and part-time leave for family care), relocation (including moving, housing assistance and referrals to health care professionals and other community resources), health issues, elder care, personal counselling, legal issues and concerns around work problems and work/family balance [see Table 2- Types of Inquiries]. Sample case descriptions can be found in Appendix 1.

Inquiries concerning child care options and subsidies tend to be the least time consuming cases. In terms of staff resources, emergencies involving student families, elder care cases and faculty relocation cases are the most challenging, complex and time consuming.

Certain types of cases arise more frequently, such as requests for resources to support aging family members; advice on advocacy for parents of children with disabilities; student parents seeking support groups; assistance with finding child care for infants and toddlers as waiting lists continue to increase for this age group; advice on Toronto schools and the school system; and registering children for Toronto schools if the parent is not a Canadian citizen. Legal, counselling and health care referrals, guidance on creating flexible work arrangements and housing options are also ongoing concerns. The Family Care Office tries to address many of these concerns in its programming.

Departments consulted with the Office on a range of family care issues, including maternity and parental leave arrangements, part-time leave for family care purposes, mediation support and referrals to external counselling resources for staff.

### **Education and Training**

Over 1550 people attended the 44 workshops/events and 4 support groups sponsored or co-sponsored by the office this year. The Office was able to provide 8 more workshops/events this year and 1 more support group, which is a significant increase, based on our staffing size. New workshops were offered, including: *Bullying: What Parents Can Do*, *Stop Fighting with your Teenager*, *An Introduction to Autism Spectrum Disorders*, and *Other Stories to Be Told: LGBTQ Parents and their Teens*. A new event organized this year with the International Student Centre was “Mothers Unplugged: Motherhood Across Cultures”. This was a panel/discussion for student parents to share their parenting experiences and philosophies from different cultural standpoints.

We continued our Elder Care Lunch Series and offered workshops such as *Taking the Mystery out of Retirement Living*, *Seniors* and *Safety in the Home and Family Dynamics in Caregiving*. These workshops are well attended and the participants keenly await the next series of sessions.

The Office sponsored a workshop from the Toronto Child Abuse Centre on child abuse and invited staff from the U of T affiliated daycares as well as the summer camp programs. This turned out to be a valuable professional development opportunity for these employees, as they found the session informative and relevant.

The Family Care Office co-sponsored the annual symposium for women graduate students interested in pursuing an academic career. As part of the Student Services conference for undergraduate students, “What a Difference a Year Makes” the office facilitated the very well attended workshop *The Frugal Student Gourmet: Cooking on a Student Budget*.

For the first time, we offered a six session Coping with a Recent Separation or Divorce support group in the summer and then again in the spring. It was well attended by students, staff and faculty as they appreciated the opportunity to meet on-campus over lunch to discuss their mutual concerns and issues. This year our Alzheimer Caregiver Support Group did not enjoy consistent

attendance and so was cancelled in January by consensus. However, based on evaluations from our Elder Care Lunch series, there seems to be a desire for a more generic Caregiver Discussion Group and so we will offer this opportunity next year. This year we also helped co-sponsor an International Spouses/Partners Support group with the International Student Centre. Two new faculty spouses attended this group, but overall they tended to have different concerns than the student spouses. Consequently, we hope to launch our own Newcomer Spousal/Partner Network for new faculty this Fall 2003. The Office did try to offer a bereavement support group for individuals who had lost a spouse or partner but did not receive sufficient interest to start the group. Lastly, our Father's Group continued to have strong attendance year round and was a valuable resource to student, staff and faculty fathers.

The Coordinator co-facilitated a diversity issues workshop for the Gender Issues Committee with the Physics Department in the fall. The Coordinator also participated in the design of the course 'The Healthy Workplace' as a part of the Supervising in a Unionized Environment Program offered by the Staff Development Centre. The Office participated in orientation/ training/ information sessions for new faculty in Arts and Science, retiring staff and faculty members, CALSS interns, students from TYP, SGS, Nursing and Social Work.

A complete list of workshops/events and support groups can be found in Appendix 2.

### **Resource Centre**

The Resource Centre contains many books on topics ranging from infant care and gay and lesbian parenting to elder care and balancing work and family. Over 60 new titles were acquired this year to further increase the depth and breadth of our resources and the Office was able to implement a short term borrowing policy. The Office continues to order and obtain information guides and brochures from local community services and has developed in-house tip sheets on the following topics: choosing child care, child care assistance, pregnancy, and school registration for international children.

The Office has created a draft design of a newsletter dealing with family issues that will be ready for distribution in 2003/04. This will provide another avenue to promote family care concerns within the U of T and will remind the U of T community that the FCO is a valuable on-campus resource.

### **Web site and Listserv**

The re-design of the Family Care Office web site was completed in August 2002. The content on the site was significantly improved and as a result the usage of the web site has soared. The estimate of the average number of people who are viewing the web site per week more than doubled. For the web statistics for this year, see Table 3A. A very popular service is the on-line summer day camp directory and the winter and march break camp directories.

As more and more people rely on email for communication, the Office decided to create and maintain a listserv through the U of T Information Commons. This was a direct and effective way of communicating and promoting our activities to students, staff and faculty.

## **Outreach**

The Family Care Office makes use of the broadest possible range of promotional tools, from email listservs, campus mail, posters, advertisements and announcements in University publications to public displays, presentations, and class announcements. We meet directly with various student groups and student governments to promote our services and to arrange for collaboration on events when possible. A new family care brochure was developed for the fall and was well received as an attractive and comprehensive overview of our services. Staff found it to be in greater demand than the previous ‘bookmark’ format.

Even with our continued efforts to improve our publicity and promotions protocol, the Office finds that communicating effectively in such a large and diverse institution is a constant challenge.

## **Faculty Relocation Service**

The Faculty Relocation Service (FRS) is a separate program, operating from within the Family Care Office, with funding from the Office of the Vice President and Provost. This highly successful initiative has provided deans, chairs and search committees with assistance in meeting their goals in an intensely competitive recruiting environment. The program has helped newly-appointed faculty and their families to relocate and transition smoothly to life within the University and Toronto communities.

The program’s goals are to:

- a. Ensure that those involved in academic searches are aware of and can easily access tools that enhance their ability to attract and hire the best candidates.
- b. Ensure that the process of relocating newly-appointed faculty and their families to the University and the city is comprehensive, efficient and welcoming.
- c. Provide support to the Office of the Provost in its efforts to retain faculty in a highly competitive environment.

The Faculty Relocation Service provides assistance to prospective and recently appointed faculty by meeting with these individuals to discuss their relocation concerns such as housing, moving arrangements, care for children and elderly family members, banking and referrals to ethno-cultural and religious communities and lesbian and gay communities. The Office is the contact point for the distribution of faculty recruitment kits and maintains the FRS website.

In its fourth year, staff was in contact with 180 prospective and newly appointed faculty (in person, via email, by telephone or a combination of methods) and responded to inquiries concerning a wide variety of issues. While a few of these cases involved only the exchange of a few emails, most consisted of a 30 minute to 1 hour appointment with a staff member, often with follow up. At least a dozen cases were sufficiently complex that they involved a few days of staff time primarily spent on researching resources. The FRS raised awareness of the importance of equity issues (ethno-cultural and faith issues, disability issues, LGBTQ issues, maternity/parental/adoption leaves and other ‘family-friendly’ policies) and their relevance to

recruitment efforts. Furthermore, “quality of life” factors have proven to be particularly significant in attracting sought after candidates.

The FRS maintains a strong working relationship with Jan Nolan, Director of Faculty Renewal to ensure that service is maintained at a consistently high level. During the year, individual faculty recruitment consultation would occur between the two offices and the web site content update was done in collaboration with the Director. The two offices planned and organized the first FRS Open House, which was a very successful event with approximately 60 administrative staff involved with faculty recruitment from various departments in attendance. The FRS also maintains close links with other individuals who provide faculty recruitment programs such as Donna Deak (tax consultations), Ellen Brikaras (UHIP), Rachel Kasimer (immigration) and Grace Angellotti (Faculty Housing).

As part of the web site development initiative, the Office worked with U of T Procurement Services to develop more comprehensive information on the frequently asked questions around moving arrangements as this can be a frustrating experience for newly hired faculty.

Once more, the number of users accessing the FRS website dramatically increased relative to last year, underlining the importance of this form of communication. Last year, on a weekly basis the web site had an average of 257 individuals viewing the site and this year the weekly average jumped to 436. Faculty recruitment kits continued to serve as a valuable tool produced and distributed by our office with close to 650 kits requested by departments.

## **Student Issues**

### **Aid for Student Families**

The annual “Financial Survival for Student Families” workshop, co-sponsored by the Family Care Office, Admissions and Awards, Woodsworth College, Office of Status of Women, SAC, GSU and APUS, attracted over 120 attendees. The Office continued to benefit from its current Office Manager’s previous experience with financial counselling to provide enhanced financial aid counselling for student families and improve links with student financial aid providers across campus. The Office assisted the Food and Clothing Bank by attending the committee meetings, by writing the work/study job applications and assisting with training the work study students and volunteers. The Family Care Office worked collaboratively with Admissions and Awards, Students’ Administrative Council (SAC), Student Affairs and parent groups in designing and implementing a mechanism for distributing the SAC Dollars for Day Care funds. Particularly critical was the Office’s role in surveying the needs of student parents to ensure that the funds benefited the greatest number of families. Through this program, 45 applications were received, out of which 42 were approved for grants totalling \$41,700.

The Family Care Office also participated in the coordination of the Family Interim Room (a refuge room for those students fleeing violent or threatening situations). The Office facilitated three ‘Cooking on a Budget’ workshops that were well attended by both undergraduate and graduate students.

## **Pregnant Students**

Students frequently feel judged, misinformed and cast adrift when they become pregnant in the middle of their academic programs. The Family Care Office continues to offer information and referrals to students who wish to balance pregnancy, parenthood and studies, and to provide guidance for staff in supporting the students' decisions. Relevant information was again included in the student handbook, "Getting There". A tip sheet for pregnant students previously developed by our office was revised to reflect updated and new information.

## **Focus Groups**

The Office held three focus groups for student parents to discuss family issues while balancing studies and raising a family. These groups provided the FCO with valuable advice and information on topics for upcoming workshops and resources student parents need most. The feedback re-emphasized the tensions these families face with regards to finances, time management and the guilt over lack of parenting time and child care. Concerns were also raised around inconsistent faculty responses to requests from student parents for consideration for issues such as a sick child. These students are also looking for ways to connect with other student parents and so the Office hopes our new student parent drop-in times on Tuesdays starting this fall will help fill this void. Outreach suggestions were also provided and consequently, the Office will re-examine our various avenues of reaching student parents.

## **Access, Employment and Equity Issues**

### **Child Care**

Child care continues to be an issue of critical importance to faculty, staff and students alike. Its provision is essential to the achievement of educational and employment equity. There is a chronic shortage of government funded child care subsidies, infant and toddler day care spaces, part-time spaces and evening spaces. International students encounter severe hardships particularly due to their ineligibility for child care subsidies.

The building of the University of Toronto Early Learning Centre that is scheduled for completion in August 2003 will be an important first step in addressing some of the child care concerns for U of T parents. This new child care centre will house the programs from Margaret Fletcher Day Care Centre and Nancy's Part-Time Child Care Centre and while Kidspace will be jointly administered with the Early Learning Centre, it will maintain its current physical space at OISE/UT. There will be 96 spaces at the new centre for children from birth to 5 years and both full-time and part-time spots will be offered. It should be noted that there is already a long waiting list for these spots.

The Coordinator has been asked to work with the new staff of the Early Learning Centre so that joint programming and services may be put in place. The aim will be to provide more effective connections for U of T parents to child care information and family resource programs in the community.

The University has taken over the license for the Early Learning Centre and this should allow for better access to all programs, for improved services for children with special needs and allow for research opportunities within these day care sites. The University has also revised its Policy on

Day Care and has developed the University of Toronto Policy on Child Care Programs. One of the key components of this policy is the creation of a University Child Care Advisory Committee and the Coordinator of the Family Care Office will be a member of this committee. The policy can be found on the U of T web site at <http://www.utoronto.ca/govcncl/pap/policies/childcare.html>

The Coordinator has also been involved with the planning of a new day care at Student Family Housing for September 2003. This will be a valuable initiative towards creating additional high quality child care spaces at affordable rates for the student parents living in Student Family Housing. The existing nursery school will be replaced with a day care run by George Brown College. This will eventually provide 24 pre-school and 10 toddler spots that will be eligible for a child care subsidy with the intent of adding infant spots after renovations are complete.

The Family Care Office created a Babysitting Bulletin Board this fall to provide students, staff and faculty with yet another child care option. This service was greatly appreciated by parents looking for a short term informal care arrangement. The new Early Learning Centre hopes to offer some weekend and evening hours in future and this will be very beneficial for student parents. The Office continues to advocate on behalf of students needing child care subsidies, and part-time and off-hours child care.

The Office produced and distributed a child care brochure to market the University centres to our population. In August 2002, the Office organized a lunch meeting for the daycare supervisors to be able to discuss the ongoing issues in child care. As a follow up to this meeting a workshop on child abuse was arranged for the staff of the child care centres in February 2003.

### **Balancing Work and Family: Maternity, Parental, Adoption, Primary Caregiver and Family Care Leaves**

The Office provided advice to staff and departments on maternity, parental, adoption and primary caregiver leaves, particularly on the discretionary aspects of the leaves for faculty members, and promoted best practices. A significant portion of those taking maternity leave attended the planning workshops offered by the Office and 138 leave kit requests were processed.

The FCO worked with the Quality of Work Life Advisor to distribute the Caring for Family and Friends Survey and will be involved with the follow up focus groups and analysis once the data collection is complete. This survey examined dependant care issues as well as work-life balance for staff and faculty.

The Family Care Office will continue to serve as a resource in the implementation of flexible work arrangements for individual employees, particularly when the use of the "Part-time Leave for Family Care" policy is being considered. As part time/ flexible options become better understood within the University, there will likely be a need for better training of supervisors to deal with these requests and the Office expects to be more involved with department consultations on such issues.

### **Equity Issues and Family**

Since its inception, the Family Care Office has strived to ensure that services and programs reflected the experiences and needs of the different ethno-cultural, religious and lesbian and gay members of the University community. The content and language of workshops is designed to be inclusive. The Family Care Resource Centre is updated regularly with new materials involving sexual orientation and family, and resources were added this year on Toronto's ethnic communities and Muslim services in Canada. This fall a workshop was co-sponsored by the Office entitled, "Other Stories to be told: LGBTQ Parents and their Teens". The Office during prospective faculty appointments made connections to ethno-cultural community services and the lesbian and gay communities when requested.

As a member of the EIAG, the Coordinator gave a short presentation to the OISE/UT decanal search committee on equity and diversity issues. The Coordinator also participated in discussions on the role of a possible new equity position at UTSC and how this position might help UTSC students with family responsibilities. As mentioned earlier, the Coordinator co-facilitated a diversity issues workshop for students, staff and faculty in the Physics department. The Coordinator was also on the organizing committee for the conference chaired by the Vice-President Human Resources – *Excellence through Equity: Confronting the Tensions in Universities*.

### **Parenting and Families On-Campus**

The Office held an Open House for student parents to introduce the FCO services and distributed children's books collected in a previous year's book drive. To provide fathers with a place to meet and share insights and concerns, the Family Care Office continues to facilitate a fathers' group for members of the University community. It meets twice a month and is consistently well attended. The Office continues to refer students to the two student parent groups on campus (largely attended by mothers) and to provide support to these groups as requested. The Family Care Office co-sponsored two Family Nights with the Athletic Centre for University families and co-sponsored a weekend children's movies event jointly with the Cinema Studies Student Union at Innis Town Hall. These events were attended by faculty, staff and students, many of whom had never previously attended a University athletic event. Staff worked with Student Family Housing to ensure student families are aware of our programs and services. The Office held events at Student Family Housing, such as Family Cooking on a Budget and a student parent focus group. The Family Care Office assisted at their Summer BBQ and provided its brochure for inclusion in welcome baskets for new families. The newly installed display cases in each elevator to advertise our upcoming workshops and events to all student families in the 30 and 35 Charles Street buildings were an effective means of reaching out to these student families. The Office also contributes to the Family Housing newsletter on a regular basis.

The Office continues to provide advice on policies and practices related to families and children. This year, the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) announced changes to the procedures and policies around fees and admission for the children of international students attending TDSB schools. Together with the International Student Centre, the implications and procedures were communicated to student families and administrative offices. Once the Coordinator for the International Student Centre was able to ensure that the majority of international student families would not have to pay international school fees, the FCO developed a tip sheet to help these

student families understand the school registration process. The Family Care Office also met with the school principal of the local elementary school where most of the Family Housing tenants send their children to discuss the school's programs and services and its relationship with U of T families. Finally, during the spring lockout of the Toronto Catholic School Board teachers, the FCO acted as a liaison and information source for parents looking for alternative child care assistance.

### **Employee Assistance Program (EAP)**

The Family Care Office and the Family Services Employee Assistance Program have developed an effective working relationship. The feedback on referrals to and from the EAP staff has been positive. As anticipated, the introduction of the EAP has not resulted in a decline in demand for the services offered by the Family Care Office, more accurately, the two services complement one another. This year the Family Care Office used EAP funding to sponsor three of our elder care workshops and a bereavement support group. Unfortunately, we did not have a sufficient number of registrants for the bereavement group but the facilitator from the Family Service Association provided high quality workshops that were much appreciated by the staff.

### **Postdoctoral Fellows**

Since the mandate of the Family Care Office is broadly defined to include almost all members of the University community, we have always provided services to postdoctoral fellows. In the past, due to their unique status, post doctoral fellows failed to qualify for many of the benefits or for the protection accorded to either students or employees. However, because of new university policy, postdoctoral fellows will now receive recognition as significant contributing members to U of T's academic mission. This December, a new Postdoctoral Office was set up within the School of Graduate Studies to assist postdoctoral fellows with their concerns. The FCO met with the new Coordinator of this office to facilitate better referrals between our services and to assist with the development of family and relocation resources for postdoctoral fellows. The Family Care Office still expects to provide some assistance and service to these individuals as they settle in Toronto and have concerns with child care and other family issues but will also be able to direct many of these individuals directly to this new office.

### **Priorities and Initiatives 2003/2004**

*Through all of its functions, the Family Care Office aims to raise awareness of family care issues and of quality of life issues central to the achievement of educational equity and employment equity at the University of Toronto. The following initiatives will be undertaken in 2003/2004.*

To provide student parents an opportunity to network with each other and find additional supports, the office will organize a 'drop-in' time on Tuesday evenings. This would allow parents to drop by and meet other parents and share ideas about parenting and balancing studies and family.

Investigate offering more family events on-campus for student parents looking for inexpensive entertainment alternatives on-campus.

Expand our current Open House in September to invite exhibitors from organizations offering family related services.

Building on our educational programming pertaining to child care and parenting, we hope to offer a certificate of achievement to student parents who attend a minimum number of these workshops. This should boost attendance and provide an opportunity for student parents to feel acknowledged by U of T.

Examine how best to build upon our new Babysitting Bulletin Board. This could potentially be a good source of unlicensed home child care but requires further planning to determine how this could be expanded and administered given our current staffing and resources. Develop a strong liaison with the staff of the Early Learning Centre to work cooperatively at developing new child care and family resources for U of T families.

Focus on providing increased educational programming and support groups specifically targeted to the suggestions/feedback from the student parent focus groups.

Develop a Family Care Office newsletter once each term in print and web format.

As the university expects there to be increased enrolment due to the double cohort, monitor if there is an increase in requests to use the FCO services by UTSC and UTM students, and if the younger students have unique family care concerns.

Investigate and develop a peer network for new faculty mothers to facilitate work-life balance issues faced by these mothers.

In conjunction with the Quality of Work Life Advisor, facilitate focus groups for staff and faculty to follow up on the analysis of the data that was obtained through the Caring for Friends and Family Survey.

With the Quality of Work Life Advisor and based upon the results of the Caring for Friends and Family Survey, investigate training strategies on implementing flexible work arrangements in the U of T community.

Raise awareness of FRS through a letter campaign to all chairs, directors and deans, followed up by an Open House for administrative staff involved with faculty recruitment. To complement the FRS, provide a Newcomers Spousal Network group for Fall 2003.

Increase outreach and links to Human Resources staff to ensure all generalists are aware of our services and programs.

## **Acknowledgements**

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Kaye Francis  
Coordinator  
Family Care Office  
June 30, 2003

## **APPENDIX 1: Sample Case Summaries**

A student requested help in locating a service that would conduct an educational assessment of her autistic child.

The Office was consulted by an employee and by Human Resources to determine whether the Primary Caregiver Leave policy would apply in this staff member's atypical situation.

A pregnant student contacted the Office to outline various options on how to successfully complete her degree.

A prospective faculty member required clarification of the immigration implications and assistance in determining whether there were adequate support services in Toronto for a HIV partner before accepting an offer from the University.

An undergraduate student needed a counselling referral and advice around community support services as she was experiencing extreme stress since her father had been diagnosed as likely having Alzheimer Disease.

A staff member experiencing health complications during her pregnancy consulted our office jointly with Human Resources to explore her options around sick leave and long term disability. Advice was also provided on the employment insurance (E.I.) implications in this situation.

A staff member needed information and advice on the services and support that might be available for her parents in the U.S. One of her parents was extremely frail and the other was showing signs of dementia. She also needed to know about available resources to reduce caregiver stress.

A prospective faculty member was concerned about the school system in Toronto and needed assistance in assessing the options available through the public and private system, as well as an overview of how the education system works in Ontario.

Consultations took place with several prospective faculty concerning the Canadian medical care system. Some had concerns over family members' pre-existing conditions and referrals to appropriate medical health professionals were required.

An undergraduate student needed assistance with her financial situation and new child care arrangements as a result of leaving her abusive partner.

A student parent required assistance in locating a parent support group and family program resources within her ethno-cultural community.

A staff member wanted to understand her options in using flexible work arrangements and part time leave for family care to allow her to have more time with her child who had a learning disability.

## **APPENDIX 2: Family Care Workshops, Events and Support Groups 2002/03**

### **Workshops**

Maternity Leave Planning

Choosing Child Care That Works for Your Family

Bullying: What Parents Can Do

Birthing Alternatives: The Role of the Midwife

Childproofing Your Home

Building Your Child's Self-Esteem

Working with Your Child's School

Stop Fighting with Your Teenager

An Introduction to Autism Spectrum Disorders

Dealing with Misbehaviour

Other Stories to Be Told: LGBTQ Parents and their Teens

Taking the Mystery out of Retirement Living

Helping Seniors Stay at Home

Family Dynamics in Caregiving

What is Alzheimer Disease?

Seniors and Safety in the Home

Caring for Aging Relatives: The Legal Issues

Elder Care: Advance Care Planning

Family Cooking on a Budget

Financial Survival for Student Families

Balancing Work/Study and Family

Positioning Yourself for a Career in Academia for Women Grad Students

Helping Students Through Crisis – Session II

What is Child Abuse?

### **Support Groups**

Father's Group

Alzheimer Disease: Caregiver Support Group

Coping with a Recent Separation or Divorce

International Spouses/Partners Support Group

### **Events**

Family Care Office Open House

Family Day at the Athletic Centre

Family Day at Varsity Arena

Innis College Family Film Day – “It's True Love”

Motherhood Unplugged

U of T Camps Open House

Faculty Relocation Service Open House

**TABLE 1: Direct Service — May 1, 2002 - April 30, 2003**

Undergraduates (part-time)	22
Undergraduates (full-time)	266
Graduate students	342
Post doctoral fellows	60
Staff	316
Faculty <sup>1</sup>	510
Departments <sup>2</sup>	68
Other <sup>3</sup>	109
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1693</b>

1. All inquiries on behalf of an individual prospective or new faculty member are counted as one case per year, regardless of the number of contact hours.
2. Most cases involving departments are listed under the relevant employee or student category.
3. 'Other' includes alumni, researchers, visiting faculty, journalists, general public and queries from the University community not directly related to family care.

**TABLE 2: Types Of Inquiries — May 1, 2001 - April 30, 2002**

Child care facilities/subsidies/children's programs/schools	38.9%
Maternity/parental leave	15.4%
New faculty/relocation	16.3%
Medical	6.0%
Relationships/support groups/counselling	7.7%
Housing	3.4%
Financial Aid	2.4%
Legal Assistance	3.0%
Parenting	1.2%
Elder care	2.0%
Balancing work/study/family; flexible work arrangements	1.3%
Emergency Assistance; abuse	1.0%
Other (incl. student pregnancy, general information, etc.)	9.5%

**Note:** An individual case is counted in each category that applies, with the exception of an inquiry from a prospective or newly appointed faculty member. This inquiry, regardless of content, would be listed in the 'new faculty' category only. All inquiries on behalf of an individual prospective or new faculty member are counted as one inquiry per year.

### Table 3A & Table 3B: Website Statistics

The following statistics for both the Family Care Office and the Faculty Relocation and Support Program websites are based upon reports produced by Access Watch, a website traffic analysis tool.

#### Definition of Terms Used in Table 3A and Table 3B

- **Unique Hosts** – This measure assumes that every computer is unique to one person, so it is not exact (due to multi-user systems, public computer labs, etc.). However, most people do use a desktop system of their own, so ‘unique hosts’ gives a fairly accurate approximation of how many people are viewing the website.
- **Unique Visits** – A ‘unique visit’ is a unique host active during the period of an hour. This measure gives you an indication of user interest in the website.
- **Accesses** – An ‘access’ is a request for an HTML page on the server.
- **Hits** – A ‘hit’ is any request on the server, including text and graphics.

**Table 3A - Family Care Office Website Statistics (April 27, 2002 – May 5, 2003)**

	Unique Hosts	Unique Visits	Accesses	Hits
<b>Average (per week)</b>	867	1654	3888	22 291
<b>Total</b>	45 970	87 652	206 038	1 181 429

**Table 3B – Faculty Relocation and Support Program Website Statistics (April 27, 2002 – May 5, 2003)**

	Unique Hosts	Unique Visits	Accesses	Hits
<b>Average (per week)</b>	436	697	1277	2270
<b>Total</b>	23 115	36 933	67 657	120 300