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2005 Annual Report

April 1, 2004 to March 31, 2005
PLUS Highlights of the 1st Quarter of 2005/2006



*Supporting Multiple Births Together
for Over 25 Years*

Message From The Board

This year we have witnessed a new momentum of change within Canada's national multiple-birth organization, Multiple Births Canada (MBC). The organization has grown and become more confident in the direction that it must take in order to fulfill its mission to *"improve the quality of life for multiple-birth individuals and their families in Canada"*.

This Annual Report outlines many of this year's accomplishments, new resources developed, donations received and identification of those who have been responsible for making it happen. The 'Top Ten List' and the 'Transitional Plan Update', which are both part of this Annual Report, provide more details of the specific achievements and areas in which MBC dedicated its resources over the last year. Highlights include the development of the Adult Multiples Network, two new chapters established, the creation of new MBC lapel pins and other promotional tools, increased communication between the national organization and its members/chapters about national activities, and the continual improvements made to the MBC website.

Why does Canada need a national organization for multiple-births in Canada? This question still remains a mystery for a number of people in Canada. Others understand the importance of moving forward as a strong and unified group working together to make a difference in not only our own lives and communities, but also for the families that will follow in our footsteps. Clearly, Canada must have a strong national voice to bring forth change and awareness to multiple-birth issues in Canada.

An important aspect of strengthening MBC over the coming years will be to build stronger relationships with our current membership while striving to build new relationships, and to increase membership and partnerships. This will help MBC grow and flourish as a national organization. As such, we will be working to enhance our national presence through chapter dialogue, increased benefits to individual members, and increased membership and support in all provinces and territories in Canada. As important, will be increasing the understanding of what membership in Multiple Births Canada means in the long-term for the multiple-birth community in addition to the short-term for our families.

We also recognize that in order to grow MBC, we must secure additional financial and human resources to support our existing and potential programs and services. We believe that we must work towards having full-time paid staff in order to deliver optimum programs and services needed by Canada's multiple-birth community. Therefore, working on our financial sustainability and financial future will become part of our main focus over the next year.

Our wish for the upcoming year is that, along with an increasing number of healthy multiples born in Canada, a new spirit of togetherness and a strong sense of 'community' will be born within the multiple-birth community—a community that will work together with passion and determination to improve the lives of multiple-birth individuals and families in Canada for generations to follow.

Of course none of it would be possible without our incredible volunteers and supporters. We wish to thank all MBC volunteers and supporters who work locally, nationally, and internationally, and who devote countless hours to the development, preservation, management and overseeing of this extraordinary organization. Included in this list is the MBC Advisory Board, to whom we have turned to for support and guidance in their areas of specialty this year more than ever.

The Board would also like to express our sincerest admiration and gratitude for Vicki Riley, our Business Services Manager, who every day makes an incredible difference for MBC, its volunteers, its membership, and to the multiple-birth community.

It is this kindness, support, generosity, and encouragement from individuals who truly care about the future of MBC and the multiple-birth community as a whole that makes the difference needed in Canada!



Kimberley Weatherall, Chair
Director of Volunteer Management
On behalf of the Board of Directors
and the Business Services Manager



History in the making! Three Past-Presidents and the current MBC Chair were in attendance at the 2005 Volunteer Development Retreat from left: Liz Boily, Lynda Haddon, Bonnie Schultz & Kim Weatherall

MBC Resources

Web Site & Discussion Forums

As more and more people have access to the internet, it is vitally important for the multiple-birth community to have information on-line. MBC is now accessible 24-7, 365 days of the year through our newly redesigned web site. MBC's Discussion Forums are beginning to see more traffic while the Volunteer Orientation & Training sections and the newly created Chapter Executive section will assist chapters and their volunteers realize their roles and potential. Keep checking www.multiplebirthscanada.org as we have further exciting developments planned!



Publications

E-commerce has proven to be a very efficient way of generating revenue and getting MBC resources into the right hands. However, *Multiple Moments* subscriptions continue to be low. Affiliate Chapters are asked to promote *Multiple Moments* in their newsletters, web sites and general meetings. Advertising revenue for *Multiple Moments* and/or sponsorships for MBC publications is essential.



Other MBC publications continue to perform well. MBC's *New or Expectant Parents Kit* is the most popular by far and has been sent to many countries abroad. The newly created *Breastfeeding Support Kit* and related Fact Sheets also have a huge potential.

Business Office

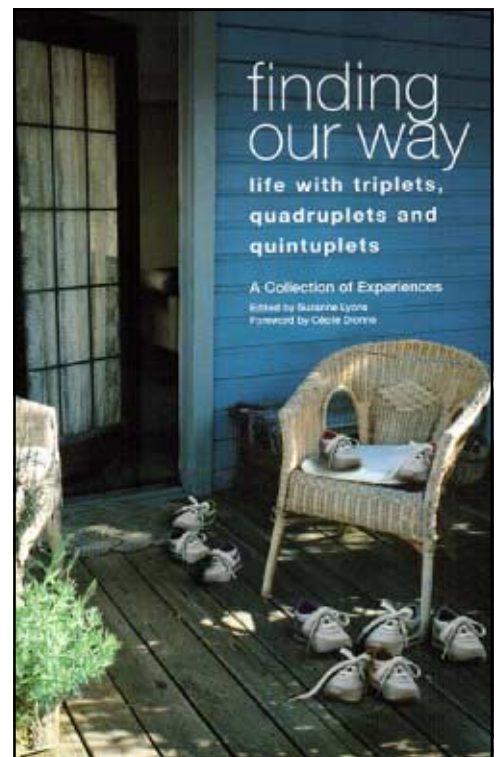
This 'virtual' office is often mistaken for a national, storefront business office. With only one part-time staff and occasional volunteers assisting, the Business Services Manager is extremely busy. This office operates as a clearinghouse, filtering information and assisting multiple-birth families, members, chapter executives, volunteers, the Board of Directors, health organizations and the media by answering questions, offering referrals, registering membership and providing resources. On average, the Business Services Manager works between 35 and 45 hours a week—about twice her contractual hours—and for about 4 times the value of her honorarium rate—an honorarium of about 1/6 the market value of that time.

Support Networks

MBC is now running *seven* important Support Networks! The newest, *Adult Multiples*, is a Canadian first! MBC rose to the challenge of changing times and created this important additional support for Canadian multiples. Over the past year, the *Breastfeeding* Network has flourished into a very active support system with new members joining every week. Besides the sharing of personal stories, members 'leap' at the chance to help and support someone else, sharing hints, tips and ideas. MBC's *Loss* Network continues to be a *free* service provided to bereaved multiple-birth families. Members are from all over North America, as well as one in each of New Zealand and Australia. The *Higher-Order Multiples* Network continues to assist their special families, as do the *Lone Parents*, *Special Needs* and *Francophone* Networks who are steadily offering support and connections to those who request it.

“At Multiple Births Canada, people are involved at so many levels and in so many ways: for example, lending a sympathetic ear to a parent who is distressed, organizing get-togethers for expectant and new families, educating families and professionals about multiple-birth issues, creating a website for multiple-birth families, networking with community organizations and governments, and developing strategies at the national level to benefit families living anywhere in Canada.”

Linda G. Leonard is an Associate Professor (E.) and Multiple Births Specialist from the UBC School of Nursing, operates the Multiple Births Support Program, and is a Multiple Births Canada Advisory Board member.



Health & Education

The Health & Education Committee is a newly formed standing committee whose priorities will fall in two areas:

Health – Issues related to the health and well-being of multiple-birth individuals and their families (preconception to adulthood).

Education – Issues related to meeting the educational needs of multiple-birth children (early years to university age).

The Health & Education Committee has been busy working on the following projects:

- Represented MBC at the Ontario Ministry of Health's Local Health Integration Networks (LHIN) Planning Workshop;
- Researched and supported efforts on the *Call to Dialogue* for changes to the federal *Employment Insurance Program*;
- Continued to send Stakeholder Packages to government and related organizations;
- Wrote *Preterm and Low Birth Weight and Multiple Births: An Information Guide for Parents* for the Ottawa Coalition for the Prevention of Low Birth Weight (now an MBC Fact Sheet in both official languages);
- Wrote an article on Preconception Education which was published in *Maternal Newborn Child Health Promotion Network E-Mail Bulletin*, *Canadian Journal of Infertility Awareness (IAAC)* and *Ottawa Public Health newsletter*;
- Began discussions with Best Start, a new initiative of the Ontario Ministry of Youth and Child Services, providing guidance and data as it relates to multiple-birth families.

Donations & Sponsorships in 2004

MBC received multiple donations and sponsorships over the past year. Contributions made to a specific area have been acknowledged in *Multiple Moments* and on the MBC web site. MBC and its members appreciate all donations made in celebration of anniversaries, birthdays, memorials or 'just because'.

Special mention to *Duchesnay Inc.* of Montréal for their generous donation to MBC's national magazine *Multiple Moments*. Sincere gratitude to the following donors: Juste pour Rire-Twins Weekend, Webcanvas.ca, the Haddon-Leonoff family and the MBC Board of Directors and volunteers who donate not just their time but their home equipment and supplies as well.

2004 Annual General Meeting and Conference

The 2004 Annual General Meeting and Conference held June 3-6, 2004 and hosted by Temiskaming Multiple Births was an exceptional weekend of renewing and beginning new friendships, while learning new ways to provide support to both our families and our chapters. The theme of the weekend "Multiples in Balance" allowed the delegates to reflect on the need to keep balance in their lives while leading a very hectic life of parenting multiples and volunteering in the multiple-birth community. Our sincerest appreciation to the Temiskaming Multiple Births conference committee and the surrounding community for such a fabulous weekend and for making us all feel so incredibly welcome to the beautiful shores of Lake Temiskaming.

Making A Difference Awards

The Making A Difference Awards were founded in 1999 in memory of Sheryl McInnes (founder of the former POMBA Canada). The awards were established to acknowledge outstanding contributions and achievements within the multiple-birth community, and to celebrate those who have demonstrated excellence or exceptional dedication.

Congratulations to the following deserving winners – you have made a difference!

At the 2004 Conference in New Liskeard, ON:

Deanna Corner – Local Category

Diane Myers – National Category

Lynda P. Haddon – International Category

Do you know someone deserving of this award?

Nominate someone special who is making a difference!

Top 10 Things MBC Did For Its Membership In 2004-2005

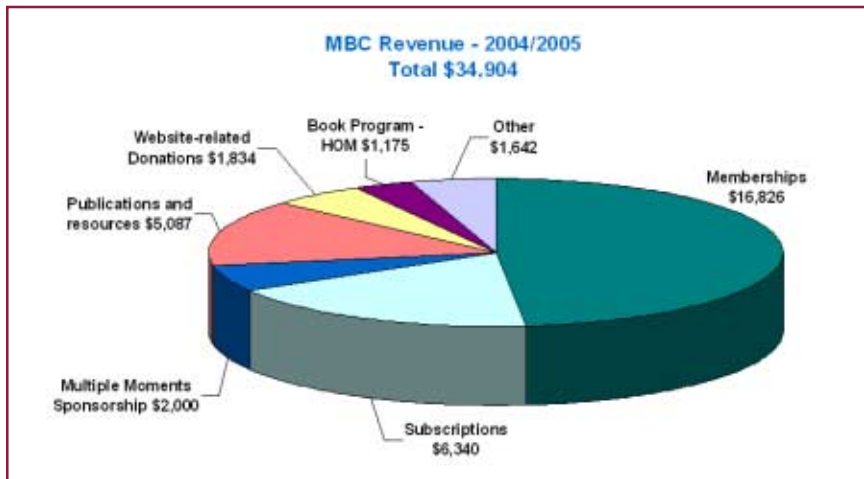
1. Increased awareness of the multiple-birth community by initiating National Multiple Births Awareness Day to be celebrated henceforth on May 28th and having it endorsed by the surviving Dionne quintuplets – Annette and Cécile.
2. Increased support to chapter development by organizing the 'Back to Basics' Volunteer Development Retreat weekend at the Canadian Ecology Centre in Mattawa May 27-29, 2005.
3. Focused on *Building the Future* of Multiple Births Canada by applying for a three-year funding grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation.
4. Focused on improving support for our chapters by applying for funding for *Train the Trainer* through the Canadian Volunteer Initiative.
5. Increased resources including the development of a Breastfeeding Support Kit, many new fact sheets, and the translation to French of some of our existing publications.
6. Improved communications including two-way dialogue with chapters initiated by MBC's Director of Membership, the monthly Board Activity report, and the addition of forums to the national website.
7. Planned and initiated greater advocacy activity at the national and provincial level, the development of an advocacy plan, invitation to membership to sit on the Advocacy Committee, as well as focused on thematic work, including: "A call to dialogue on parental benefits and compassionate leave benefits for multiple-births families" as the 2005 focus for National Multiple Births Awareness Day. Also sought to engage with the Ontario Ministry of Youth and Child Services on their new Best Start initiative.
8. Increased online tools including the addition of the Chapter Executive section on the website, the ability to order MBC resources and membership online using PayPal, and global access to Canada's multiple-births information.
9. Welcomed new chapters Rainbow District Multiple Births (Sudbury) and Orangeville Twins Plus Association and assisted other local groups to form, with a focus to become a chapter.
10. Created new promotional items to support public awareness of MBC, which in turn generates interest in local chapters. Items include MBC pins and balloons, including reprints of posters and brochures.

Financial Report

A small budget does not mean that MBC can't do big things! Just look at the past year—MBC's first National Multiple Births Awareness Day, our "Call to Dialogue" theme and its success, the 'Back to Basics' Retreat, and the continued evolution of our website, publications, and chapter development. This, of course, would not even be remotely possible without the dedication of all our volunteers and the ongoing support of our valued members.

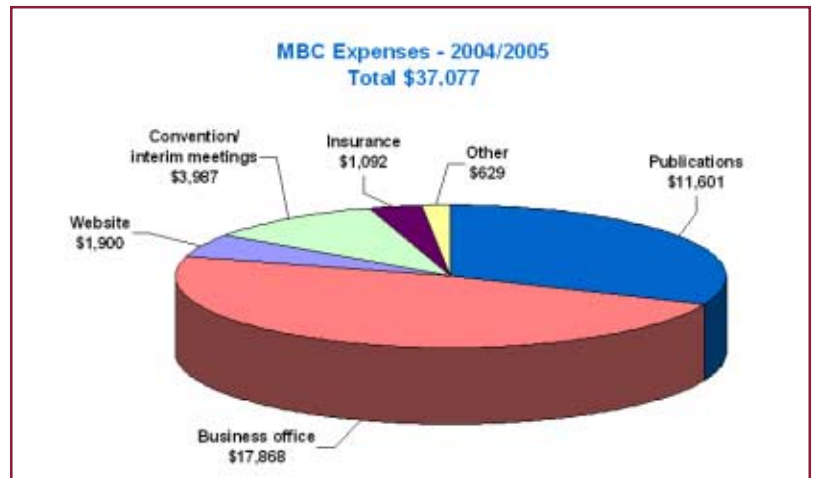
That said, just imagine the results we could achieve with a bigger budget! An ongoing objective of MBC, this year we hope to find some ways to increase our sources of funding, and thus enhance our programs and services, and better sustain our day-to-day operations.

The 2004/2005 results indicate an operating loss as a result of shortfalls in revenue in categories such as memberships, publication sales, and subscriptions to Multiple Moments. The 2005/2006 budget more conservatively estimates these revenues, subject to fundraising efforts for the upcoming year.



Revenue and Expenses Year Ending March 31, 2005

(Not reviewed by Bennett Gold)



"I don't know what I would have done without the support of my local MBC chapter back when my boys were little and life was crazy! To this day, I rely on the resources and the friendships I made through MBC."

Vicki Riley is a member of Barrie Parents of Twins and More (10+ years), is the mother of three children including monozygotic twin boys and volunteers at the local and national levels.

Transitional Plan Update — Years 2 of 3-Year Plan

The Transitional Plan was developed in 2003 to outline the key objectives for the years 2003-2006. In each case, achieving the objectives in the three-year transition would increase the opportunities and improve MBC's success in addressing the longer-term Business Plan that was created as a result of the Mapping the Future Project (MTF). The following outlines the activities that were completed over the past year that directly relate to the plans set out for Year 2 of the Transitional Plan. Not all work planned was completed, however MBC made great strides in moving forward and is proud of the work that was completed with limited resources at its disposal. After the election of the Board of Directors in May 2005, an updated plan for Year 3 will be formulated incorporating the remaining activities from Years 1 & 2. (The Year 1 update can be found on the MBC web site.)

Increase Volunteers

- Multiple Births Canada became a member of Volunteer Canada.
- A funding proposal was submitted to the Canadian Volunteer Initiative through Volunteer Canada to develop a Train the Trainer program for the new Volunteer Orientation and Training web sites. The funding proposal was rejected-application will be resubmitted in the fall of 2005.
- The Volunteer Development Retreat was planned which includes workshops, networking opportunities, team building, hands on training and the distribution of resources.
- MBC Representative Liaison position was created at the national level to liaise with the MBC Reps of Affiliate Chapters.
- MBC Web site was developed to include an MBC Rep Forum and Volunteer Forums, which will be used in conjunction with the Orientation and Training web sites.
- Application submitted to Trillium includes funding for a part-time paid Volunteer Coordinator.
- Minimal utilization of the Volunteer Orientation and Training Web sites occurred, however hands-on training sessions were planned for the 2005 Volunteer Development Retreat.

Increase Membership

- Partnered with the Ottawa Coalition for the Prevention of Low Birth Weight to create an MBC fact sheet Preterm and Low Birth Weight and website resources in both official languages.
- A Membership Director came on the Board in September 2004.
- Increased one-to-one contact with Affiliate Chapters with the creation of the MBC Rep Liaison position.
- Developed a 2-year Membership Option.
- Created an Adult Multiples Network to attract new membership.
- Two new chapters were formed and discussions were held with other groups scheduled to join MBC in year 3.
- An objective of the National Multiple Births Awareness Day is to increase exposure of Multiple Births Canada and local chapters, increasing membership at the affiliate chapter level, increasing the number of chapters, and increasing direct membership to the national organization. MBC is working as well with non-member groups to promote this awareness day in their communities.
- Initiated work in the area of advocacy for increased Employment Insurance Benefits for parents of multiple-birth children - a direct benefit for families.
- Increased Francophone publications in support of the Francophone community within MBC.
- Discussions with, and about, working with multiple-birth groups (not affiliated with MBC) were initiated.
- While planning the Back to Basics Retreat discount requests were sent to many companies and organizations.

Increase Revenue Generation

- Created additional fundraising opportunities at the national level through affiliate programs including "A Song Is Forever" CDs and advertised it to members.
- Wrote and submitted three funding proposals: Low Birth Weight Coalition of Ottawa, Canadian Volunteer Initiative, and Trillium.
- E-Commerce for membership and publications was expanded.

Create a New National Web Site

- Forums were further enhanced and new areas developed.
- Links were updated nationally and internationally with other organizations.
- Updated with new content and visuals.
- A back-end tool was created by John Withnall-Website Designer to allow for MBC to have more hands on control of the content of the website.
- Business Services Manager (BSM) received instruction on maintaining website, allowing for increased efficiency in updating.
- Received funds from 2004 Conference Surplus allowing for the purchase of software enabling the BSM to make updates.
- A new Chapter Executive Section was created with individual login passwords for each Chapter.
- Media Kit was incorporated onto website for media relations.
- E-commerce continually improving and expanding.

Enhance our National Office

- Discussions with the BSM took place in October 2004 to identify ways of ensuring her responsibilities and time commitments were as realistic as possible given the numbers of hours and salary indicated within her contract. Additional practices were put in place to assist her (i.e. use of out of office assistant on email, working 4 days, some responsibilities shifted to others, etc.)
- Students and other MBC Volunteers continue to assist in the office.

“Due to the passion, dedication and hard work of volunteers across Canada, Multiple Births Canada has had an outstanding year; one that is sure to mark the beginning of a new awareness of both MBC as an organization supporting individuals and families with multiple-births, as well as the unique needs of multiple-birth families in Canada.”

Kim Weatherall, Director of Volunteer Management and mother of eighteen-year-old monozygotic twin girls.

National Multiple Births Awareness Day - May 28th



*Supporting
Multiple Births
Together*

www.multiplebirthscanada.org

Advocacy & Awareness

There is a lot to be proud of as an organization—the most exciting being MBC’s work in the area of advocacy and awareness. In the fall of 2004, the MBC Board of Directors designated May 28th (the birth date of the Dionne Quintuplets) to be National Multiple Births Awareness Day (NMBAD), with the approval of Annette Dionne and Cécile Dionne. In further developing the importance of this day to Canadians, MBC will work towards official recognition by the Federal Government of the 28th of May as National Multiple Births Awareness Day in Canada.

Building awareness of the unique needs of multiple birth individuals and their families has always been a priority for MBC—however, with the advent of NMBAD, the possibilities for outreach and explicit awareness-raising activities rose exponentially! Moving from the local level, where much important work is done to raise funds for families and children in need, to the national level offers a scope that goes beyond one family’s community, to communities from coast to coast to coast.

Top 3 Wish List For 2005-2006

1. **Enhancing our national presence in all provinces and territories in Canada. MBC wants to make a difference in all regions of the country and must engage key people in all areas to take lead roles to assist with this expansion.**
2. **Obtain sustainable funding so that MBC can fulfill its mission "To improve the quality of life for multiple-birth individuals and their families in Canada". MBC believes that we need full-time paid staff to deliver optimum programs and services needed by Canada's multiple-birth community.**
3. **Increased benefits to membership in MBC, while increasing the awareness of what membership to MBC means to the multiple-birth community in Canada!**

While excitement is high and the potential list of things to be done is long, the Board realized early on that a strategy needs to be put in place in order for MBC’s advocacy and awareness activities to be strategic, and the most effective possible. It was agreed that an advocacy plan be developed to support the NMBAD initiative, as well as a suite of communications products, research one-pagers and position papers.

As part of an overall advocacy plan, themes for upcoming years were developed to highlight the unique needs of the multiple-birth community. This year’s theme is a "Call to Dialogue on Employment Insurance Benefits" which focusses on the maternity, parental and compassionate care leave provisions under the federal government *Employment Insurance Program*. Further work will be completed on this theme as we begin a new year including ongoing support to individuals and families that contact MBC with questions regarding this program, and plans to meet with the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development Canada.

Highlights: April 1 to June 30, 2005

National Multiple Births Awareness Day Dionne Quints Museum - May 28th, 2005



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Nicole Fisher

Director of Membership
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Director of Volunteer Management
Acting Director of Funding & Discounts
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Vicki Riley, Wasaga Beach, ON

Business Services Manager
Editor, Multiple Moments

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Special Needs Support Network

Lynda P. Haddon, Perth, ON

Adult Multiples Support Network
Breastfeeding Support Network
Loss Support Network

Diane Myers, Moffat, ON

High Order Multiples Support Network

Stephany Palmer, North Bay, ON

Lone Parents Support Network

Josée Roy, Earlton, ON

Francophone Support Network

Health & Education Committee

Lynda P. Haddon, Perth, ON

Donna Launslager, Waterloo, ON

Diane Myers, Moffat, ON

Cheryl Wadasinghe, Nepean, ON

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

Dr. Louis Keith, M.D., Northwestern University Medical School, Centre for the Study of Multiple Birth, past Co-President of the International Society for Twins Studies (UK), Chicago, IL

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

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

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

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

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Association Members

Simcoe North—Ontario Early Years Centre, Midland, ON

Many people contribute to the work of Multiple Births Canada and we gratefully acknowledge their generous support.