

2009 Annual Report — April 1, 2008 to March 31, 2009



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Supporting Multiple Births Together

This headline reflects the core philosophy of Multiple Births Canada (MBC), its Board of Directors, Chapters, Affiliate and Direct Members, and its National and Local Volunteers. Connecting multiple-birth families increases the potential for collaboration and enables MBC to facilitate a stronger and more united effort in advocating for the services and resources required by Canada's multiple-birth community.

This past year, MBC took a leadership role in several areas, including addressing the unique challenges faced by multiple-birth families regarding classroom placement of multiples, the need for increased counselling of couples using assisted reproduction technologies (ART), the movement toward offering appropriate EI parental benefits to new parents of multiples, and planning the 30th Anniversary Annual General Meeting and National Conference featuring an expert panel of multiple-birth specialists.

MBC continues to move forward because of the dedication and drive of its volunteers, both on the national front and at the local level through MBC's Affiliate Chapters. These volunteers provide ongoing support to MBC members and other stakeholders, keeping this non-profit organization responsive to the needs of Canada's multiple-birth community. MBC is truly blessed to have many new and long-time volunteers, donors and supporters who recognize that *to improve the quality of life for multiple-birth individuals and their families in Canada*, we must individually commit our energies toward growing and maintaining the healthy and vibrant national multiple-birth community that exists after 30 years of determination and desire to make a difference.

Every year, over 5,000 new multiple-birth families begin a unique and educational journey. MBC provides these families with support and encouragement, multiple-birth-specific resources and networking opportunities as highlighted in this Annual Report. On behalf of the Board of Directors, I thank every person who contributed in any way to these initiatives and successes.

Gail Moore
Chair of the Board



“MBC continues to move forward because of the dedication and drive of its volunteers, both on the national front and at the local level through MBC's affiliate Chapters.”
...Gail Moore



Top 10 Achievements of MBC 2008-2009

1. Hosted the 2008 National Conference and AGM, October 16-19, 2008, which featured many recognized multiple-birth experts including Dr. Jon Barrett, Dr. John Mascazine, Karen Kerkhoff Gromada, Lynda P. Haddon, Patricia Malmstrom, Laura Crouse, and Vera C. Teschow.
2. Produced a 30th Anniversary Special Edition (44 pages) *Multiple Moments* magazine which included a special centre-spread displaying an MBC/POMBA History Timeline highlighting significant events over the last 30 years.
3. Developed an online survey seeking input from MBC members about the direction of future National Multiple Births Awareness Day (NMBAD) events, the 2009-2012 Strategic Plan, *Multiple Moments* magazine and other MBC initiatives and resources; and presented results.
4. Produced a new three-year Strategic Plan entitled ***Strengthening Our Support*** that focuses on five strategic priorities: **Awareness—Resources—Support—Membership—Financial Sustainability.**
5. Produced a communications plan and media kit for the 2008 National Multiple Births Awareness Day theme: ***"Multiple Births Canada encourages all health care professionals providing fertility advice and/or treatments to fully disclose all risks associated with a multiple pregnancy and birth, including all negative and positive outcomes, to enable patients to make informed decisions."***
6. Presented at the 2009 Best Start Conference in Toronto on February 24, 2009. Ontario health care professionals learned how to better prepare families expecting and parenting multiples, and how these experiences are different from that of a singleton pregnancy and parenthood. The presentation was based on the Early Human Development Journal 2006 article, *Preparation for Parenting Multiple Birth Children Best Practice Guidelines*, written by two of MBC's Advisory Board members—Linda Leonard and Jane Denton.
7. Posted MBC's first YouTube video Public Service Announcement. www.youtube.com/watch?v=cKd3gXHEyLc
8. Received financial support, established new partnerships or further developed partnerships with Primetime Insurance, A Perfect Party by Cody, Savvy Mom, Global News Ontario, Panta Pharmaceuticals, the Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada (SOGC), Duchesnay Inc., EMD Serono Canada, Grant Thornton, Liandrea, Molly Magee and My Pacifier.
9. Increased member support by implementing a monthly e-newsletter, *All Children Are Special*, for the Special Needs Support Network, published a new Special Needs Fact Sheet entitled *Financial Resources*, and launched a Special Needs Facebook group.
10. Launched MBC Facebook group to enable members to contact one another online, share information, share photos and publicize MBC events. Over 225 members have joined this group.



"We ourselves feel that what we are doing is just a drop in the ocean, but the ocean would be less because of that missing drop."

...Mother Theresa



National Multiple Births Awareness Day

The theme for 2008 was: *"Multiple Births Canada encourages all health care professionals providing fertility advice and/or treatments to fully disclose all risks associated with a multiple pregnancy and birth, including all negative and positive outcomes, to enable patients to make informed decisions."*

The communication package sent to print and broadcast media outlets across Canada included:

- Resource piece: Multiple-birth children and their families following ART, by Jane Denton and Elizabeth Bryan. Published in "Current practices and controversies in assisted reproduction, Report of a WHO meeting."
- Survey results: Fertility Assistance Resulting in a Multiple Pregnancy survey administered by the MBC Board of Directors online through surveymonkey.com. The survey asked multiple-birth families across Canada to share opinions and thoughts regarding their personal infertility experiences and rate how well they were educated and counseled by the fertility industry on the possibility of complications associated with a multiple pregnancy. Survey findings included the following:
 - ◆ Respondents gave a failing grade to the following statements:
 - "They provided me with literature relevant to my situation."—52.3% disagreed or strongly disagreed
 - "They provided me with opportunities to discuss the potential impact of a multiples pregnancy."—48.9% disagreed or strongly disagreed
 - "They stressed the long-term medical implications of a multiple pregnancy."—55% disagreed or strongly disagreed
 - ◆ When asked, "Do you think your fertility specialist/clinic needs to know more about the risks of a multiple pregnancy?", one-third of respondents answered yes. Only one-third of respondents answered no; the final third were not sure



The theme for 2009 is: *"Classroom placement for multiples—together or not?"*

As part of the advocacy work planned for this initiative, MBC will contact English and French public and Catholic Canadian school boards or districts as well as the Ministry of Education in each province. They will be provided with the following updated resource pieces:

- Multiple Births Canada Fact Sheet: Multiples in School—Parent Tips
- Multiple Births Canada Fact Sheet: Multiples in School—A Guide for Educators

MBC will encourage school boards or districts to consider developing a policy to ensure annual consultations between parents and teachers on classroom placement, if such a policy does not already exist. Multiple-birth families will also be encouraged to print the material and share it with their children's teachers and school principals; the goal will be to get this information into as many Canadian schools as possible. As with all National Multiple Births Awareness Day themes, this advocacy work will be ongoing.



Dedicated Volunteers Make A Difference in 2008-2009

In 2008-2009, MBC continued to rely heavily on the dedication and commitment of volunteers to work towards achieving the goals and objectives set out in its Strategic Plan. MBC's 30th Anniversary celebrations served as a reminder that MBC (previously as POMBA Canada) has been supporting individuals and families in Canada for three decades; it also reinforced the dedication of the MBC team, working daily on behalf of its members. In preparing for the fall celebrations, it was comforting to know that while the organization may have changed its name, and new volunteer positions and titles were created, individuals continue to step forward to pay back their appreciation for support they received from others by becoming volunteers. It is with pride that MBC can claim to have volunteers who have volunteered for over for 10, 15, and 20+ years—and in some cases at the local level even longer! In addition, MBC volunteers have a longstanding history of representing Canada at the international level, and that continued over the last two years with representation on the Council of Multiple Birth Organizations (COMBO) and the International Society for Twin Studies (ISTS).

With each new year we must say goodbye to some valued team members, but we are always excited when new volunteers step in to fill those vacant positions. In the fall of 2008 MBC gained three new Board Members: Heather Scher, Sheri Franklin and Sheila Catto, bringing with them extensive experience volunteering at the local level. We wished the best to Nicole Fisher who left the Board to pursue other volunteer activities but continues to be a national volunteer.

In October 2008 MBC recognized the following volunteers during the AGM and Conference for their dedication and service to MBC.

Five Years: Shelly Blizzard-Jones and Cheryl Wadasinghe

Ten Years: Kimberley Weatherall

Along with the length of service recognition provided, MBC celebrated those who were awarded for their dedication to making a difference in their communities at the local level, at the national level, international level, as an adult multiple, or as a media representative through the Making A Difference (MADA) Awards.

Multiple Births Canada appreciates and congratulates all those who volunteer throughout Canada in support of the multiple-birth community, making a difference in the lives of multiple-birth individuals and families through their passion, dedication and commitment to a cause close to their hearts.

Making a Difference Awards 2008

The *Making A Difference Awards* are presented annually at Multiple Births Canada's Annual Conference. They were established in 1999 to acknowledge outstanding contributions and achievements within the multiple-birth community, and to celebrate those who have demonstrated excellence or exceptional dedication.

The following winners were announced at the 2008, 30th Anniversary Conference held in Markham, Ontario.

LOCAL AWARD

To an individual who has displayed outstanding dedication or has been responsible for outstanding accomplishments of local significance in the field of multiple births in a local community in Canada:

Candi Cuppage
Barrie Parents of Twins and More



NATIONAL AWARD

To an individual who has displayed outstanding dedication or has been responsible for outstanding accomplishments of national significance in the field of multiple births in Canada:

John Withnall
Webcanvas.ca - Ottawa



MEDIA AWARD

To an individual and/or newspaper, magazine, radio or television outlet that printed or aired a story in 2007/2008 that created awareness of multiple-birth issues, individual chapters, or spotlighted MBC and/or chapter initiatives:

Global News Ontario



"Volunteers do not necessarily have the time; they just have the heart."

...Elizabeth Andrew



Multiple Births Canada's Financial Position

Donations & Sponsorships in 2008-2009

Multiple Births Canada received numerous donations and sponsorships, including in-kind donations, from our national volunteers and other generous people, groups and companies. Thank you to everyone who helped MBC through fiscal 2009.

Special Mention:

EMD Serono Canada Inc. for its donations to assist with funding MBC core operations.

Conference 2008

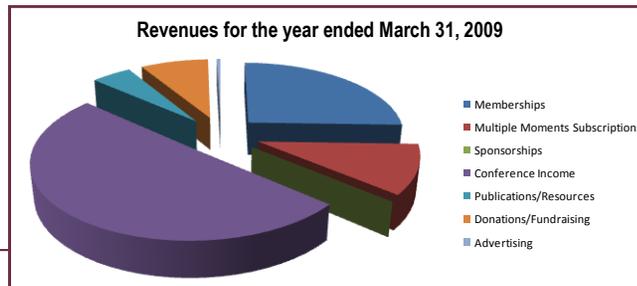
We received many donations for our 30th anniversary conference held in October 2008. We would like to send a thank you to all those who contributed to make the event a success.

2008-2009 Special Acknowledgement to:

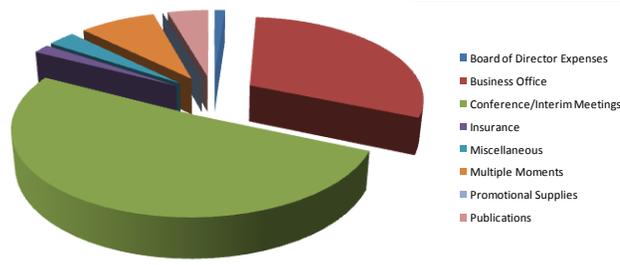
A Perfect Party	EMD Serono Canada Inc.	Kitchener-Waterloo POMBA	Temiskaming Multiple Births	Melanie Dugard	Gail Moore
Arbor Memorial Services	Global News Ontario	Panta Pharmaceuticals	Via Rail	Lynda Haddon	Diane Myers
Chatham-Kent MBA	Grant Thornton	SavvyMom.ca	Whirlpool Canada	Donna Launslager	Vicki Riley
Duchesnay Inc.	Infertility Awareness Assoc. of Cda	SkinFix	Windsor POMBA	Patricia Malmstrom	Bonnie Schultz
Durham Parents of Multiples	Intrawest	Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada	Candi Cuppage	Christian Martin	Kim Weatherall
			Jennifer Dawson	Shannon Matheson	

2009 Financial Report

Our financial results for fiscal 2009 show a break-even position overall. Our 30th anniversary conference was a success, and we were able to defer some of the revenues to support future conferences. We saw growth in membership during the year, which helped us support our operating expenses, as other sources of revenues declined. Thanks go to our Business Services Manager and the Board for strong financial monitoring of expenses and a successful conference result. We look forward to maintaining a similar performance in 2010.



Expenses for the year ended March 31, 2009



Year ended March 31, 2009 (unaudited)	2009		2008
	Actual	Budget	Actual
Revenues			
Memberships	\$ 17,050	\$ 17,500	\$ 15,523
Multiple Moments Subscriptions	7,112	7,500	7,628
Sponsorships	-	2,150	850
Conference Income	33,665	-	-
Publications/Resourses	3,227	4,000	4,994
Donations/Fundraising	5,515	1,500	5,723
Advertising	289	250	448
	\$ 66,858	\$ 32,900	\$ 35,166
Expenses			
Board of Director Expenses	\$ 758	\$ 200	\$ 156
Business Office	20,201	18,600	19,405
Conference/Interim Meetings	34,181	1,500	4,614
Insurance	1,178	1,100	1,088
Miscellaneous	1,997	1,450	3,925
Multiple Moments	5,527	6,200	5,161
Promotional Supplies	-	850	857
Publications	2,940	3,000	3,106
	\$ 66,782	\$ 32,900	\$ 38,313
Excess of revenues over expenses (expenses over revenues)	\$ 76		\$ (3,147)
Surplus, beginning of year	2,854		6,001
	\$ 2,930		\$ 2,854



Multiple Births Canada Resources

Business Office

The Business Office provides a much-needed service by operating as a clearinghouse, filtering information and assisting multiple-birth families, MBC members, chapters, volunteers, health organizations and the media. The Business Services Manager answers questions, offers referrals to MBC Chapters and other multiple-birth support groups, assists with the production of MBC publications, completes orders and processes memberships, maintains the financial books, and regular office duties. The office is run by one part-time Business Services Manager with the occasional assistance of a volunteer. The office also provides services to many families and individuals who lack the benefit of support in their area. The office received 450+ incoming toll-free calls in 2008 and 133 online PayPal transactions.

Website and Facebook

The MBC website continues to be a vital resource to the multiple-birth community, including MBC's volunteers. Facebook has been a valuable tool this year, linking MBC members from all over Canada in discussions of both individual and Chapter concerns. The discussion board is thriving with over 60 topics. The group has over 230 members and is a closed group, open to MBC members only.

Publications

Revisions to Multiple Births Canada's well-respected resource material are well underway. Eight Fact Sheets were revised over the last year while one new Fact Sheet was issued and several others are in production. A new Loss Support pamphlet was produced thanks to the generous sponsorship support by Arbor Memorial Services.

Support Networks

The MBC support networks continue to be important resources for our members. The Special Needs Network is connecting parents with an e-newsletter on a monthly basis—*All Children Are Special*. The Breastfeeding Network also connects via a monthly e-newsletter emailed to its members—*The MilkyWay*; as does the Loss Network with its e-newsletter—*Forever Angels*—all three are now posted online in PDF format. The Higher-Order Multiples Network continues to grow and support these special families with a complimentary Expectant/New Parent Support Kit and parent contacts. The Lone Parenting Network is expected to increase its membership over the coming year while we continue to see interest in the Francophone Support Network.

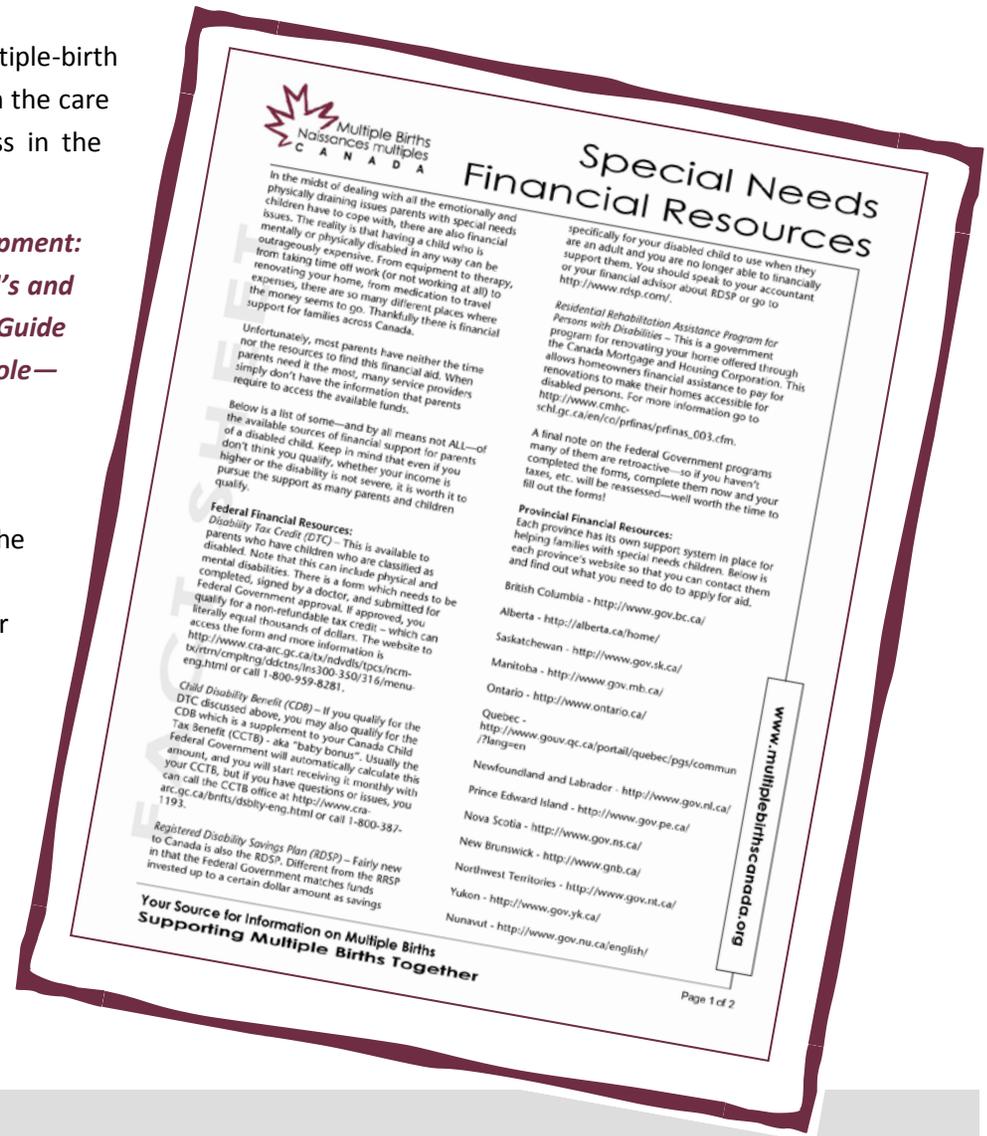




Health and Education at Multiple Births Canada

While continuing to work towards its goals of increasing awareness of multiple-birth issues and encouraging governments and professionals to advance standards in the care of multiple-birth families, the Health & Education Committee made progress in the following areas:

- Updated eight Fact Sheets: *Multiples and Co-bedding; Clothing and Equipment: twins & triplets; Clothing and Equipment: quadruplets & quintuplets; Dad's and Partner's Role; Multiples in School—Parent Tips; Multiples in School—A Guide for Educators; Multiples à l'école—Conseils pour parents; Multiples à l'école—Un guide pour les éducateurs*
- Created one new Fact Sheet: *Special Needs Financial Resources*
- Reviewed the DVD—Your Babies' Journey: Twins, Triplets, Quads
- Presented “*Helping Families to Prepare for Multiple-birth Children*” at the Best Start Resource Centre's Annual Conference in February 2009
- Continued developing the Strengthening Multiple-birth Families Together project, a national, three-year community-based collaborative initiative designed to enable parents of multiples to have a stronger family unit and improve the health outcomes of their children by building their capacity to reduce stressful multiple-birth family environments
- Contributed an article to the Infertility Awareness Association of Canada's (IAAC) magazine, *Creating Families*
- Provided interviews for the media
- Provided research assistance for the EI challenge of parental benefits for multiple-birth parents



What do you value most about MBC?

1) The top-quality information resources for expectant and new parents and health care professionals. The fact sheets and booklets are a huge help for families just starting out. 2) The connections with other families - Support Networks, Chapters, conferences and other ways to get to know others with similar experiences, and the friendships I have made

... (MBC Survey March 2009)



Canadian Representation within the International Multiple Birth Community

Canada continues to be represented on the COMBO Board with Kimberley Weatherall as Board Chair and Gail Moore as Co-Vice Chair of the Council of Multiple Birth Organizations (COMBO); Kimberley Weatherall is also a Board Member of the International Society for Twin Studies (ISTS). COMBO is a working group of the International Society for Twin Studies and represents the interests of national organizations at the international level. One of the objectives of COMBO is to “provide a structure to enable individuals and multiple-birth organizations to share and develop resources”. Over the last year, efforts have been made to bring organizations together physically and electronically, encouraging more interaction between national organizations through conferences such as the ISTS Congress scheduled for June 2010 in South Korea; through the use of tools such as email, newsletters and websites; through a newly established Facebook presence dedicated to volunteers at the national and international levels; and by working together to promote the unique needs of multiple-birth individuals and their families through a new initiative—International Multiple Births Awareness Week, scheduled for 2010.

Connecting, sharing and networking within the greater multiple-birth community has incredible potential for all involved; those volunteering for COMBO are excited about the potential of countries coming together to support all multiple-birth individuals and families worldwide.



“What a difference an international team of dedicated volunteers can make!”

...Kimberley Weatherall, COMBO Chair



2008 — 30th Anniversary Conference

Multiple Births Canada celebrated 30 years of supporting Canada's multiple-birth community with a comprehensive three-day educational and networking event on October 16-19, 2008 in Markham, Ontario.

To commemorate this exciting milestone, the conference program featured many multiple-birth-specific topics of interest to professionals, parents, volunteers and Affiliate Chapters. As well, the Chapter Exchange workshops allowed MBC Affiliate Chapters to share best practices on programs, resources, fundraising, clothing sales, and other Chapter initiatives. The expert panel and their presentation topics included:



- ◆ Dr. Cathy Barr: *Risk Management 101 for non-profit groups*
- ◆ Dr. Jon Barrett: *MBC and the SOGC—Supporting Canada's multiple-birth community together; and The term 'twin' and the Toronto Centre for Multiple Births*
- ◆ Spencer Brennan: *Volunteers—Get 'em, build 'em, keep 'em*
- ◆ Laura Crouse: *Breastfeeding Multiples Guidelines—Best practices for hospital and community*
- ◆ Jo-Anne Cutler: *Conscious multiple-birth parenting*
- ◆ Karen Kerkhoff Gromada: *One size does NOT fit all; and Falling in love times two, three or more—attachment formation*
- ◆ Lynda P. Haddon: *Losses in multiple birth—How caregivers can provide appropriate support*
- ◆ Dr. John R. Mascazine: *Learning needs of multiple-birth students*
- ◆ Patricia Malmstrom: *The art of parenting twins and the joy of watching them fledge the nest; and Zygosity matters*
- ◆ Anne-Marie Mediwake: *News Hour on Global TV—Welcome to the world of multiples*
- ◆ Karen Melnick: *Your child's health & wellness—Parents as advocate and guardian angel*
- ◆ Vera C. Teschow: *Reading magic with twins and more*
- ◆ Debbie Wang: *Us and them—Relationship strategy*



"The workshops were very useful and I am going to take a lot away with me both personally and professionally."
...2008 conference feedback



2008 Annual General Meeting & 30th Anniversary Conference

MBC members, including those who could not attend the Conference, were given access to the workshop handouts through the Members Only section of the MBC website.

The Annual General Meeting was attended by 61 members, representing 182 eligible votes. Updates were provided on MBC initiatives, partnerships, funding applications, and strategic direction of the organization.

During the weekend, MBC's 30-year history of supporting Canada's multiple-birth community was celebrated in displays, speeches, photographs, and with official celebrations during the Saturday evening banquet.



"The AGM [Annual General Meeting] was terrific! Informative!" ...2008 conference feedback





Advisory Board

Dr. Fiona Bamforth, MSc, FRCPC, University of Alberta Hospital, Edmonton · **Dr. Cathy Barr**, PhD., Imagine Canada, Guelph · **Dr. Jon Barrett**, MBBCh, M.D., MRCOG, FRCS(C), Sunnybrook & Women's College Health Sciences Centre, Toronto · **Dr. Alan Bocking**, M.D., FRCSC, Professor & Chairman, Dept. of Obstetrics & Gynaecology, University of Toronto · **Laura Crouse**, R.N., BScN, IBCLC, RNm Mount Sinai Hospital, Toronto · **Jane Denton**, Director Multiple Births Foundation, Herford, UK · **Dr. Audrey Huberman**, Ed.D., Curriculum, Teaching & Learning, Private Practice, Toronto, twin · **Dr. K.L. Jang**, Ph.D. Assistant Professor, Department of Psychiatry, University of BC, Vancouver · **Dr. Louis Keith**, M.D., Northwestern University Medical School, Center for the Study of Multiple Birth, Chicago, IL · **Jean Kollantai**, Founder, Center for Loss in Multiple Birth (CLIMB) Inc., Anchorage, AK · **Linda G. Leonard**, M.S.N., R.N., Twin/Triplet Specialist, University of BC, Vancouver · **Patricia Malmstrom**, M.A., Twin Services Consulting, Berkeley, CA · **Pat Preedy**, PhD., Education Specialist, West Midlands, UK · **Cheryl Wadasinghe**, Government Advisor, Nepean

Support Network Chairs

Lynda P. Haddon, Perth, ON
Breastfeeding Support Network
Loss Support Network

Vanessa Luce, Oakville, ON
High Order Multiples Support Network

Theresa Meininger Sanders, Lefroy, ON
Special Needs Support Network

Melissa Wray, Sarnia, ON
Lone Parents Support Network

Health & Education Committee

Lynda P. Haddon, Perth, ON

Donna Launslager, Waterloo, ON

Diane Myers, Moffat, ON

Melody Parent, Waterloo, ON

Erin Shaheen, Ottawa, ON

Vera C. Teschow, Toronto, ON

Staff

Vicki Riley, Business Services Manager, Wasaga Beach, ON



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Melanie Dugard, Director of Finance, Waterdown, ON

Nicole Fisher, Director of Chapter Development, Waterloo, ON

Gail Moore, **Vice-Chair**, Director of Communications, New Liskeard, ON

Kim Weatherall, **Chair**, Director of Volunteer Management, Acting Director of Funding & Discounts, Orleans, ON

Board of Directors (after October 2008 to April 2009)

Sheila Catto, Director of Chapter Development, Saskatoon, SK

Jennifer Dawson, Director, Toronto, ON

Melanie Dugard, Director of Finance, Waterdown, ON

Sheri Franklin, Director, Coatsworth, ON

Gail Moore, **Chair**, Director of Communications, New Liskeard, ON

Heather Scher, Director, Discounts Coordinator, Aurora, ON

Kim Weatherall, **Past Chair**, Director of Volunteer Management, Acting Director of Funding, Orleans, ON

Sustaining Members

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Diane Myers, Moffat, ON

Bonnie Schultz, Calgary, AB

Kimberley Weatherall, Orleans, ON