

To be approved at the AGM of May 12<sup>th</sup>, 2021

**PRESCOTT-RUSSELL  
FOSTER FAMILY ASSOCIATION  
CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS**

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**CONSTITUTION**

**1. NAME**

The name of this Association is the Foster Family Association of Prescott-Russell, hereafter referred to in this Constitution as the FFA.

**2. MISSION STATEMENT**

To work in partnership with the Agency for Children and Adults of Prescott-Russell by providing support to foster families in order to improve the quality of life for our children.

**3. DEFINITIONS**

a. All references to the FFA or the Association throughout this document shall mean the Prescott-Russell Foster Family Association (FFA).

b. All references to the Services throughout this document shall mean the Valoris for Children and Adults of Prescott-Russell.

c. All references to foster parents in this document shall mean foster parents of Prescott- Russell.

**4. THE PURPOSE OF THIS ASSOCIATION**

a. To encourage, promote and enhance communication, mutual cooperation and coordination among foster parents, the FFA, Valoris for Children and Adults of Prescott-Russell and the community.

b. To promote and protect the rights and interests of foster parents in their dealings with Valoris for Children and Adults of Prescott-Russell.

c. To provide assistance and support to foster parents regarding any difficulties they may be experiencing in their role as foster parents.

**5. NON-PROFIT ASSOCIATION**

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Prescott-Russell Foster Family Association is a non-profit, non-incorporated Association.

## **6. MEMBERSHIP**

The members of this association shall consist of all Foster Parents for Children and Adults of Prescott-Russell in good standing with the agency.

## **7. EXECUTIVE**

The Executive of this association shall consist of:

- i. Elected Officers
- ii. Non-Elected Officers
- iii. All members of the executive are bound to conduct themselves, both during their service and at all other times, in absolute and binding confidentiality. This being subject to the exception of information that must be divulged upon demand, as required by current laws, and Ministry of Children and Youths Services. The duty to report remains mandated by legislation.

## **8. THE ELECTED OFFICERS**

a. The elected officers of this association shall consist of:

- i. President
- ii. First Vice-President
- iii. Second Vice-President
- iv. Secretary
- v. Treasurer

## **9. ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

The officers of this association will be elected at the annual general meeting as outlined in the association bylaws.

## **10. NON ELECTED OFFICERS**

The non-elected officers of this association are to be the Immediate Past President, the Foster Parent Society of Ontario Representative for PRFFA and FFA members appointed to office by the FFA Executive.

## **11. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

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The annual general meeting of this association shall be held during the month of May.

## **12. OTHER MEETINGS**

Other meetings will be held in accordance with the bylaws.

## **13. AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS**

Amendments to the Constitution and Bylaws of this Association may be made at the annual general meeting providing fourteen days' notice has been given to the membership and providing such amendments receive majority vote.

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**BYLAWS**

**1. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

The bylaws of this association shall set forth the policies and procedures by which members, and the executive may promote the purposes as stated within its constitution.

**2. MEMBERS**

All foster parents approved by Valoris for Children and Adults of Prescott-Russell are members and as such are eligible to vote at monthly meetings and at the annual general meeting.

**3. MEMBERSHIP YEAR**

The membership year shall be from September 1st to August 31st of every year.

**4. ELECTED OFFICERS**

- a. Elected officers must be members of this association, and in good standing with Valoris for Children and Adults of Prescott-Russell.
- b. Elected officers must be foster parents.
- c. The initial term of office for all elected officers shall be indeterminate for up to three years. Additional terms of office shall be in three-year increments.
- d. Any elected officer may be re-elected for a second and third term to the same office.
- e. Continuing length of service in any one office may not exceed nine years.
- f. Any elected officer other than the president, who has served in office for one, two or three terms, may be elected to another office in the executive.
- g. No elected officer of the executive may hold multiple offices concurrently.

**5. NOMINATION OF ELECTED OFFICERS**

- a. Prior to the election of officers at the annual general meeting, the President will appoint a person to preside over the election.

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- b. Election of officers will be by the membership present at the annual general meeting.
- c. All nominations will come from the floor at the annual general meeting and must be seconded. Any person not able to attend the annual general meeting may make known their intent to seek an office in writing prior to the meeting. They must still be nominated and seconded by eligible individuals present at the meeting. Only after the nominations have closed a person may accept or decline that position. If declining that position he or she may stand for another position.
- d. In the case of two persons accepting a nomination for any one office, the election of officers will be by secret ballot.
- e. The election presiding officer shall appoint a scrutineer and tellers who are members of the assembly but whose names do not appear on a ballot. Only the name of the successful candidate will be announced, and tallies will be destroyed. If the count is equal, a second ballot shall be taken, and another equal outcome will be decided by coin toss.

## **6. NON ELECTED OFFICERS**

- a. Immediate Past President.
- b. Foster Parent Society of Ontario (FPSO) Representative for Prescott-Russell.
- c. FFA members may be appointed to an executive office to serve as the chairpersons of various committees such as the Legal Defence Fund, the After Care Fund, the Mentors, the Communicators, Social Media Rep, Officer at large or any other officers as may be deemed essential by FFA Executive.
- d. Non-elected officers of the executive may hold multiple offices simultaneously.

## **7. VOTING AT THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETINGS**

- a. All members present shall have equal voting privileges.
- b. All members present shall have no more than one vote at any one time.
- c. All voting shall be decided by a majority vote. When the voices present are equal, the presiding officer will call for a second ballot. If the voices are still equal, the tie will be broken by a coin toss.

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## **8. VOTING AT EXECUTIVE AND GENERAL MEETINGS**

- a. All voting will be decided by a majority vote.
- b. All members at large may vote.

## **9. DUTIES OF THE EXECUTIVE OFFICERS**

### a. President

- i. Is responsible for the general management of this association.
- ii. When present, will preside at all meetings of the association, except for that part of the annual general meeting set aside for election of officers.
- iii. Will serve as liaison between the Association and Valoris for Children and Adults of Prescott-Russell and other Foster Parent or Family Associations.
- iv. Is responsible for all annual reports.
- v. Is a signing officer for the association.
- vi. Votes only if the vote is by ballot or if his or her vote will change the outcome of the vote. Motions require a majority vote and fail if there is a tie vote. If there is a tie before the President votes, the President may vote either in the affirmative or in the negative causing the motion to be adopted or causing it to fail. If following a vote the affirmative exceeds the negative by only one vote, the President may vote in the negative causing the motion to fail by creating a tie. The President may also vote in the event that the negative exceeds the affirmative by one vote, again creating a tie and causing the motion to fail. The rule is that the President may only vote, if by doing so, the outcome of the vote will change, either from adoption to rejection or from rejection to adoption or to create a tie, thereby causing a motion to fail.

### b. First Vice-President

- i. In the absence of the President, the First Vice-President will assume all duties of the President.
- ii. Is a signing officer.
- iii. Have full voting privileges.

### c. Second Vice-President

- i. In the absence of the President and the First Vice-President, the Second Vice-President will assume all duties of the First Vice-President, except that as signing officer.
- ii. Have full voting privileges.

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d. Secretary

- i. Will have custody of all books of record.
- ii. Will keep a correct record of the minutes of meetings.
- iii. Will give notice of all meetings of this association for which the executive has drawn an agenda.
- iv. Have full voting privileges.

e. Treasurer

- i. Will have custody of all cash, cheques, and books of accounting.
- ii. Will control the collection and receipt of all monies payable to the association.
- iii. Will pay out monies as authorized by the executive.
- iv. Will prepare the annual financial statement and report to the membership at the annual general meeting.
- v. Is a signing officer.
- vi. Have full voting privileges.

## **10. DUTIES OF NON ELECTED OFFICERS**

a. Immediate Past President

- i. Will serve as an officer of the executive for a term consistent with the title.
- ii. Have full voting privileges.

b. Foster Parent Society of Ontario Representative for Prescott-Russell

- i. Will serve on the FFA Executive for a term consistent with the terms of office for the FPSO.
- ii. Will represent the Prescott-Russell Foster Family Association regionally and provincially.
- iii. Have full voting privileges on all matters not pertaining to the Foster Parents Society of Ontario.

c. Appointed Executive Officers

- i. Will perform the duties of the appointed executive officer within the parameters of the constitution' bylaws.
- ii. Have full voting privileges on all matters not pertaining to the office.

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iii. Officers holding multiple positions must vote according to appropriate conflict of interest guidelines.

## **11. BILINGUAL REPRESENTATION**

Bilingual representation will be made on all committees of this association when it is requested or when it is required to meet the needs of the members.

## **12. PROCEEDINGS**

In all cases not provided for herein, the proceedings at meetings of this association shall be governed by *Robert's Rules of Order* and by the usages and customs of the Commons of Canada so far as they may be applicable to the meetings of this Association.

## **13. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETINGS**

a. The place and time will be determined by the executive and notice of the agenda will be given fourteen days prior to the meeting.

b. The accidental omission to give notice to any member shall not invalidate any resolution passed or any action taken at the meeting.

c. The members present will constitute a quorum.

d. The business to be transacted will be as follows:

i. Reading and adoption of the minutes of the last meeting.

ii. Annual report of the president.

iii. Annual financial report of the treasurer.

iv. New business.

v. Amendments to the constitution and bylaws.

vi. Election of officers.

vii. Adjournment.

## **14. EXECUTIVE MEETINGS**

a. Place, date and time will be determined by the executive.

b. The agenda will be such as to accomplish the business of the association.



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c. The executive officers and non-elected officers present will constitute a quorum.

## **15. MONTHLY GENERAL MEETINGS**

a. Place, date, and time will be determined by the executive. The agenda shall be related to the association' business.

b. A quorum shall consist of five of the elected and non-elected officers of the executive.

## **16. MENTORS**

a. Purpose

i. The FFA mentor program provides encouragement, support, suggestions and advice regarding the day to day problems encountered within the fostering community.

ii. Mentors will not be seen as the sole source of support that foster parents may rely upon for assistance. The FFA Executive encourages foster parents to seek support from each other and their workers in ways that are mutually beneficial and productive.

b. Policy

i. The mentors are current foster parents selected by the FFA executive and approved by the agency, preferably with a minimum of five years' experience, and capable of providing quality peers support. They are selected based upon their credibility within the fostering community and the FFA executive.

ii. The FFA executive will appoint a member to become the chairperson of the mentor program as a non-elected officer of the FFA executive, and will be directly responsible to the executive.

c. Procedure

i. Foster parents with any questions or concerns are encouraged to use the services of our mentor program.

ii. Mentors may recommend the services of a communicator, and communicators may refer foster parents to our mentor program should they deem it to be more appropriate.

## **17. COMMUNICATORS**

a. Intent

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- i. It is the intent of the Foster Family Association and the Agency Administration for Children and Adults of Prescott-Russell that foster parents who are subject to allegations, investigations, or service complaint inquiries shall on request have access to a Communicator for peer support.
- ii. It is not intended that the Communicator will be seen as the only person that the foster parents can turn to for assistance. The FFA encourages all foster parents to seek support from each other in ways that are mutually agreeable, and productive. We further recognize that the Communicators may have a role in other non-investigatory matters where foster parents feel the need to have the assistance of a Communicator.
- iii. Foster Parents may decide to have a Communicator for formal support or another Foster Parent for informal peers support, but may not have both concurrently.

#### b. Policy

- i. Communicators are current foster parents, selected by the FFA and jointly approved by the Agency Administration. They are foster parents with a minimum of five years fostering experience who undertake special training in order to provide the best peer support possible. They are chosen because they have credibility with both foster parents and staff and can be trusted with confidential information. They provide information, encouragement and advice to foster parents who may be under investigation, a service complaint review, or who may have other concerns with the Services.
- ii. The Communicator team will select a member of the team to be nominated as Communicator chair to represent the Communicators as a Non-Elected Officer of the FFA Executive.

#### c. Procedures

- i. All foster parents have the right and are encouraged to use the opportunity of consulting a Communicator for information, advice and support.
- ii. Valoris for Children and Adults of Prescott-Russell may consult with a Communicator as necessary.
- iii. The Communicator may arrange a meeting with staff to discuss an unresolved foster parent concern, and when necessary can initiate the complaint procedure.
- iv. Foster parents are encouraged to contact the Communicators for support and advice when an allegation is made.
- v. The Communicator may provide support and assistance for foster parents during agency interviews, hearings and conferences arising from a service complaint or an allegation, case conferences where a plan of care is developed for a child in the foster home, any issues arising from any substantive dispute, or difference of opinion, or other difficulties encountered in the provision of care for a child in their home.

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d. Support from Valoris for Children and Adults of Prescott-Russell

- i. The Services shall inform all new foster parents of the Communicator Program.
- ii. The Services shall remind the foster parents that they may have access to a Communicator at the start of any investigation due to an allegation or complaint.
- iii. The Services shall make the Communicator Team aware of any relevant sections of current and new legislation, ministry standards and guidelines, agency policies and procedures as soon as they are available in translated forms.
- iv. The Services shall cover costs for such things as training, babysitting, phone calls, mileage, meals for the family being investigated as well as the Communicator family when necessary during an investigation, and any other miscellaneous items as may be necessitated by the Communicator Program.
- v. The Services shall notify the Communicators of all new foster home approvals and home closings.

e. Joint Responsibility

- i. Both members of the Communicator's team and the Services Liaison will jointly review the roles and activities of the Communicators prior to the annual general meeting of the FFA every year.
- ii. All revisions or clarifications of the role of the Communicator shall be as a result of consultation with the Services and shall be presented to the FFA Executive for final approval.

**18. PRESCOTT-RUSSELL LEGAL FUND (PRLF)**

a. Purpose of the PRLF for foster parents

The purpose of the PRLF is to assist members with the legal costs for matters of an adoption or an allegation relating to the care of children, Continued Care and Support for Youth, and Voluntary Youth Service Agreement for VALORIS.

b. Definition of Member

Any foster parent who is fostering, retired from fostering, or who has adopted a foster child shall be known as a member of the PRLF.

c. Coverage

Members may request funds from the PRLF to assist them with matters of an adoption or an allegation, or members may request funds to assist their natural and adoptive children

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and their caregivers in the event of an allegation relating to the care of children, Continued Care and Support for Youth, and Voluntary Youth Service Agreement for VALORIS.

d. Requests for the PRLF

- i. All members of the fund shall have access to the Legal Fund.
- ii. Any member may make a request for financial support from the Legal Fund by contacting the PRLF Chairman, a Communicator, or the FFA Executive.
- iii. The chairman will review the request and determine if it meets the requirements of the fund.

e. Requirements of the PRLF

- i. The matter *must not* be covered by Valoris's legal benefits plan.
- ii. Upon approval for a financial grant by the PRLF Chairman or the FFA Executive, the member may hire a lawyer of his or her choice.
- iii. The member *must* submit a copy of the legal invoice to the Chairman. Funds will be paid directly to the lawyer.
- iv. The chairman may grant \$300 to \$1000 be for a single legal matter.
- v. The FFA Executive may grant a maximum of \$2000 for one legal matter.
- vi. Members may have access to the Legal Fund for subsequent matters relating to the care of children and adults for VALORIS.

f. Premium

The premium for the PRLF shall be \$0.05 per day per child who is presently in a foster home. The premium is to ensure the development and growth of the fund. The monies for the fund will be transferred from Valoris for Children and Adults of Prescott-Russell Services to the Valoris for Children and Adults of Prescott- Russell Foundation.

g. Trustee for the PRLF

The funds will be held in trust by Valoris for Children and Adults of Prescott-Russell Foundation.

h. PRLF Committee

The Chairman will be appointed as a non-elected member of the FFA Executive and will administer the fund according to the guidelines contained within this bylaw.

i. PRLF Structure

The chairman will make a financial report at the FFA monthly meetings.

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j. Financial Reporting by the Valoris for Children and Adults of Prescott-Russell Foundation

The Foundation for Valoris for Children and Adults of Prescott-Russell will provide a report prior to the annual general meeting each year to the FFA Executive, detailing the income and disbursements from the PRLF, and at other times upon request of the Chairman.

k. Dissolution of the PRLF

In the event that the FFA Executive elects to dissolve the fund, the accumulated monies will be relinquished to the Valoris for Children and Adults of Prescott-Russell Services for the betterment of all foster children of Prescott-Russell.

## **19. SOCIAL MEDIA**

The FFA Executive will appoint a Non-Elected member to the FFA Executive to manage the FFA Social Media website.

a. Purpose

The FFA maintains a private Facebook page, to encourage all resource families partnered with Valoris for Children and Adults of Prescott-Russell to communicate amongst each other through the Internet. This website will facilitate discussions between its members and will also be a forum to promote upcoming events being organized by the FFA.

b. Policy

At all times and without notice, the group administrators reserve the right to delete any comments that are non-compliant to the general rules of civil conduct and to remove any individuals who repeatedly interact in an unacceptable manner.

c. Procedures

To access this web page you will need to have an active Facebook account. You will then need to search Foster Family Association of Prescott-Russell and request to join the group on Facebook. Following confirmation of your membership in the FFA you will be part of the secured and private group.

## **20. THE AFTER CARE FUND (ACF)**

The ACF shall be administered by the FFA in an independent account and dispersed by the ACF Committee. The ACF Committee must act in accordance with the terms of this constitution.

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a. Purpose of the Fund

The ACF was created to grant money to former foster children of Prescott-Russell to assist them in pursuing educational or career activities. Funds are available to former foster children of Prescott-Russell in order to ease financial burdens, uninsured medical or dental expenses, and other purposes by the discretion of the FFA Executive.

b. Committee Members of the ACF

- i. One Executive member of the Prescott-Russell FFA to chair the Committee.
- ii. Two members of the FFA named by the Association's Executive.
- iii. A member of the Valoris Services for Children and Adults of Prescott-Russell management team.

c. Eligible Recipients of the ACF

The applicants of the ACF must be former foster children, who were in the care of Valoris for Children and Adults of Prescott-Russell on their eighteenth birthday and less than thirty years of age.

d. Conditions of a Recipient

- i. An application for the ACF must be submitted by a current or former Foster Parent of the FFA or a Case Worker from Valoris for Children and Adults on behalf of a former foster child.
- ii. An application must: (i) be in writing, (ii) explain the reason for the application, (iii) include the amount required, and (iv) state whether the application is for an educational, career development or other intention of the former foster child.
- iii. A letter must accompany the application stating that any refunds relating to the grant will be returned to the ACF account.
- iv. The amount of the grant will be made payable to an institution, a professional, or a third party after a review of the estimate or invoice, unless the recipient can show proof of payment for a reimbursement.
- v. If the application does not meet the requirements, the ACF Committee may present the application to the FFA Executive for a decision prior to dispersing any funds.

e. Limitations of Coverage

- i. The ACF Committee may approve a maximum of \$500.00 without the approval of the FFA Executive.
- ii. The ACF Committee may provide a maximum of \$1,000.00 to help a former foster child deal with a *financial burden* or *debt*.
- iii. The ACF Committee may provide a maximum of \$3,000.00 for *uninsured medical* or *dental* expenses to an applicant or for their dependents.

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- iv. The ACF Committee may grant a cumulative maximum of \$5,000.00 to assist a former foster child in pursuing an *education*.
- v. The ACF Committee may, at the discretion of the majority of the FFA Executive, grant amounts of money for other purposes as they see fit.
- vi. The total amount of grants dispersed to any individual shall *never* exceed \$5,000.00.

f. Validation of Grant

When the grant is being used for training and educational purposes, a proof of attendance and a copy of completion certificates must be submitted.

g. Role of the ACF Committee

- i. The ACF Committee will conduct the initial review and determine if the application meets the requirements of the ACF.
- ii. If the application meets the requirements, the ACF Committee may request the secretary-treasurer of the Committee to issue a cheque.
- iii. If the application does not meet the requirements, then the application may be presented to the FFA Executive for discussion, recommendations and approval.
- iv. Within two business days of receiving the approval from the ACF Committee, the application will be forwarded to the Valoris for Children and Adults of Prescott-Russell management team member for approval.

h. Trustee of the ACF

The ACF will be held in trust by the Foundation for Valoris for Children and Adults of Prescott-Russell in an independent account.

i. Preservation of the ACF

- i. The premium for the ACF will be \$0.35 per day per child in the care of a foster home. The premium is to ensure the development and the growth of the fund. The monies for this fund will be transferred to the Foundation for Valoris for Children and Adults of Prescott-Russell.
- ii. In order to maintain the integrity of the fund, a minimum reserve of \$20,000 shall be maintained.
- iii. The FFA Executive may determine an annual spending cap upon the ACF committee.

j. Financial Reporting by the ACF Committee to the FFA Executive and by the Foundation for Valoris for Children and Adults of Prescott-Russell.

- i. The Foundation for Valoris for Children and Adults of Prescott-Russell will provide a report detailing the income and disbursements prior to the annual general meeting and at other times upon request.

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ii. The ACF Committee will report any requests or disbursements at monthly meetings to the FFA Executive.

k. Dissolution of the ACF

In the event that the FFA Executive elects to dissolve the fund, the accumulated monies will be relinquished to the Valoris for Children and Adults of Prescott-Russell Services for the betterment of all foster children of Prescott-Russell.