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Summer is soon upon us! Flowers are finding their way into our gardens. Time to refresh the RPAP Rural Spousal Hotsheet. This edition of the Hotsheet will update you with initiatives and activities with spouses and their families across Alberta over the past three months.

BE UNDERSTOOD BE EMPOWERED
BE A MENTOR BE TAUGHT BE ENTERTAINED
BE ACCEPTED BE INSPIRED BE YOURSELF

1. ARRIVING FROM NORTHERN AUSTRALIA - INTERVIEW WITH A NEW SPOUSE IN DRUMHELLER, ALBERTA

An interview was held with Anthea Maseka, wife of Dr. Dereck Maseka, who arrived to Canada from northern Australia. She shares her experience in moving to Alberta. Anthea has taken a very active role in her community and wishes to support and encourage other rural physician spouses and their families.

Q. How would you describe settling into your new life in Alberta?

A. Settling into our new life in Alberta was not too difficult but challenging as ever. There were certain basic things we had taken for granted most of our working lives, like shelter and transport. In all the four countries we had lived in, finding a house was not a problem for a doctor. Houses were readily available and organized long before arrival. This part of the world was another story. Even with a work permit and financial backup, finding a financial institution that would give us a mortgage or car loan was a problem. This was so because we were not landed immigrants. We needed to produce countless papers to

finally get a mortgage broker working on our mortgage. Our town could not even offer suitable housing for rent for a family of 6. (We had started looking for a house, while in Australia, months before we came to Canada).

Q. What helped to make the process easier?

A. Dr. Lawrence Olfert and his wife Agnes were wonderful to us. They picked us up from the airport, housed and fed us for over a month, leased a family van under their name for us and bought a cheaper car for Dereck to use. They took their precious time to make sure that we were not missing out on anything that we needed. They made us feel at home and that made our settling down much easier. We

will forever be grateful to them for their generosity and hospitality. God bless them.

Q. Was there anything about Alberta culture and people you initially found hard to deal with?

A. In many ways, Canadian culture is similar to the Australian culture. Having come from Africa, we had just begun to understand and appreciate the Australian culture before moving here. We found the culture here not too different but the language... quite Canadian. Some words, expressions and phrases used here are different. Sometimes it took a while to understand the whole content of the conversation and we miss out on some jokes.

School uniforms were an important part of our upbringing and that of our children. The first few weeks were a little bit strange seeing them off to school wearing their own clothes. We are used to it now.

Many people in small towns have lived here for many years. They have families around the town. Therefore they see no need to get to know new people coming into town. A greeting and a smile is all you get from them.

Q. Do you have any advice or hints for new families relocating to Alberta from overseas?

A. Come with an open mind to learn and discover Alberta. There are so many good things about this province. Get involved in the community activities as soon as you are settled. If you have children, volunteer to help at their school. Have an open mind and let people get to know you. SMILE! There are good people in this province.

For more information contact Anthea at:
admaseka@telus.net

Copies of the RPAP Orientation Guide can be received by contacting the RPAP office at 1-866-423-9911 or by email at Alberta-RPAP@rpap.ab.ca.

2. WISE – WOMEN WHO INSPIRE, SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGE

What wife of a medical student wouldn't want some extra support and encouragement at times? Perhaps that was the thinking several years ago behind the creation of a group named WISE. The name WISE is an acronym for Women who Inspire, Support, and Encourage each other. Our group consists of women who come from various backgrounds – some are students, some have busy careers, some are full-time mothers (and some are more than one of these things!). However, we all have one thing in common: each of us is married to a University of Alberta medical student.

We all look forward to the monthly WISE gatherings. We usually take turns hosting each of these events. Occasionally, a physician's wife who is supportive of our group will host. Most of our activities allow for plenty of socializing and are intended to provide an opportunity for the women to meet others who are in similar circumstances. This past year, some of our activities have included a potluck supper, a cardmaking/craft night, a games night, and going out for dinner together. In addition, each year we have an event where we invite a number of physicians' wives to come and share some of their experiences with us. These ladies give us support, encouragement, and advice concerning our husbands' future careers.

Anyone who attends one of our WISE events finds that our group provides a warm and inviting atmosphere. Our group allows access to a network of "instant friends" willing to provide a listening ear or an encouraging word when it is needed. WISE recognizes that we play a big role in supporting our husbands in their busy lives as medical students. WISE also recognizes that sometimes we need a little support too.

For more information contact Amanda Nunweiler at amanda_n@hotmail.com

3. UPCOMING EVENTS

1. June 27-30, 2006 Alberta Rural Family Medicine Network Orientation - Hinton, Alberta - Spousal and family activities will run over the three days with a "meet and greet" on Tuesday June 27 evening. Dr. Moira Sacks, a speaker sharing perspectives on managing the transition to a new community will meet with spouses on Wednesday June 28 and a wrap up will be held Thursday June 29. Programming will be arranged for children including a movie and cartoons.
2. September 16, 2006 - Peace River Continuing Medical Education (CME) Spousal Event - more information in the next issue of this newsletter.
3. January 19-21, 2007 Banff Rural Emergency Medicine Conference - more information in the next issue of this newsletter.

4. NEW TOOLS FOR PLANNING SPOUSAL EVENTS

The RPAP has developed a new Event Planner to help spouses more easily plan local events. The Rural Physician Consultant will support the spouse(s) in completing the Event Planner. The Planner provides a checklist of things to consider when planning. For more information or to get involved by hosting a local spousal/family event, please contact the RPAP office at 1-866-423-9911 or by email at Alberta-RPAP@rpap.ab.ca.

5. CONSIDER A LOCAL/REGIONAL GET TOGETHER FOR YOUR AREA (TOWN, CITY OR REGION)

Please send ideas to RPAP for a future HotSheet so other spouses can take advantage of the ideas for their own community.

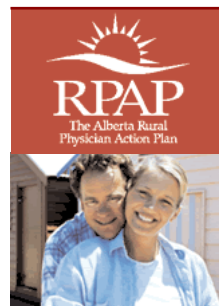
6. KEEP INFORMED - RURAL PHYSICIAN SPOUSAL WEB PAGES

If you're the spouse or life partner of a rural physician, just provide us with your contact information and we'll send you periodic updates about news and events happening across the province. We do most of our communication by regular mail (post) and by email. We never share or sell our contact lists, and you can ask to be removed from our contact list at any time.

Send us your residential contact information including name, address, postal code, home phone, fax, and email address:

- By email: Alberta-RPAP@rpap.ab.ca
- By phone: (780) 423-9911 or toll-free at 1-866-423-9911
- By fax: (780) 423-9917

Keep informed of activities related to spouse and family programs and rural lifestyle through The Alberta Rural Physician Action Plan website: www.rpap.ab.ca.



For more information about the Rural Physician Spousal and Family Programming, contact:

RPAP 1-866-423-9911 or email Alberta-RPAP@rpap.ab.ca or the Rural Physician Consultant in your area:

South: Monica Kohlhammer – 403-283-1480 or kohlhammer@rpap.ab.ca.

North: Nancy Rowan – 780-432-2666 or nancy.rowan@rpap.ab.ca.

Rural Physician Spousal and Family Programming is sponsored by The Alberta Rural Physician Action Plan. Its mission is to "promote the retention of rural physicians in Alberta through spousal and family networking, communication and programs that foster personal growth and satisfaction with rural living."