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Spring is soon upon us! Time to refresh The RPAP Rural Spousal and Family Hotsheet. This edition of the Hotsheet will update you on the initiatives and activities with rural physician spouses and their families across Alberta over the past six months.

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

## 1. THANK-YOU

### RPAP Thanks Advisory Committee Representatives

RPAP wishes to thank the advisory committee representatives who provided a commitment to the development of initiatives for rural physician spouses and their families in Alberta. A foundation has been laid for RPAP in its continuing efforts to support rural physician spouses and their families. Past evaluations and reviews of spousal programming will guide and direct us in the development of future initiatives.

A special acknowledgement goes out to Della Marie Woodruff as chairperson of the advisory committee for her time and passion making a better life for rural spouses and their families.

Research is clear in stating the importance of the support of the spouse and family in the recruitment and retention of rural physicians. Since fall 2005, the RPAP's two Rural Physician Consultants (RPCs) have supported the development of initiatives at both a local and conference level for rural physician spouses and their families.

The RPCs will engage with rural spouses to ensure alignment and support of initiatives and needs of rural physician spouses and their families. Della Marie and the other advisory committee members will continue to provide periodic advice and insight on rural physician spousal and family initiatives.

For more information, to share an idea or to help with a local event, contact a Rural Physician Consultant in your area:

**South:** Monica Kohlhammer - 403-283-1480  
monica.kohlhammer@rpap.ab.ca

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

## 2. SPOUSAL AND FAMILY EVENTS

**10 September 2005** spouses and their children enjoyed camaraderie, friendship and some activities in conjunction with the 10th Annual Rural Emergency Medicine Update CME conference held at the Jasper Park Lodge.

Besides providing entertainment and opportunities for rural spouses and their families to connect with other families, the event afforded RPAP the opportunity to better understand the needs of rural physician spouses and their families.

Ideas suggested for future spousal programming included:

- *Make spousal activities more family-oriented so that all members could spend time together. i.e. sessions could focus on family life;*
- *Provide information on subjects such as:*
  - *Coping with a physician spouse who is a Type A personality,*
  - *Coping with the medical demands of the community in such a way as to provide more family time (i.e. patients are only seen at select times except in cases of true emergency),*
  - *Providing ways to make physicians in the community a more cohesive group, and*
  - *Providing information on managing relationships.*

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Rural Medicine in Alberta  
*A Breath of Fresh Air!*

## 2. SPOUSAL AND FAMILY EVENTS CONT.

**28 November 2005** was the evening six spouses from Fort Macleod and surrounding areas came together at Luigis Restaurant for dinner and to enjoy one another's company, connect with other spouses and share rural experiences. Speaker Maureen Osis, RN, Author, Family Therapist, and Humorist discussed personal challenges of rural living and strategies to manage. One lucky spouse walked away with a book written by the speaker.

**21 January 2006** spouses and their children enjoyed some activities hosted by RPAP during the annual Emergency Medicine for Rural Hospitals conference in Banff. To begin the event a breakfast was available to all the spouses and their children for an opportunity to get to know one another. A networking and education session then followed for the spouses with Maureen Osis discussing the stresses of rural lifestyle and the strategies to manage. During the same time the children saw the Disney movie Madagascar. The event offered camaraderie, renewal, reflection and some fun for the children.

**11 February 2006** spouses and their children enjoyed activities hosted by RPAP in conjunction with the annual Cabin Fever faculty development workshop. A breakfast was available to all the spouses and their children as a way to get to know one another. A networking and education session then followed for the spouses with, back by popular demand author, family therapist, and humorist, Maureen Osis,. During the same time the children ages 5-12 participated in a scavenger hunt.

## 3. NEW TOOLS FOR PLANNING SPOUSAL EVENTS

The RPAP has developed a new Event Planner to help spouses more easily plan local events supported by the Rural Physician Consultant. The Event Planner provides a simple checklist of things to consider when planning an event. For more information or to get involved by hosting a local spousal/family event, please contact the Rural Physician Consultant in your area.

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

Spouses in Lethbridge recently shared their ideas for activities for local spouses and family.

Thank-you to Jennifer Parker for the submission.

- Enjoy a meal together
- Ask the local theatre to do a mommy/baby movie day with a good movie that is playing
- Go swimming together with the kids
- Get a chef's demonstration. Talk to a local restaurant to see if the chef will provide a demonstration for spouses over lunch.

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

## 5. 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](mailto: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 RPAP web site.

**[www.rpap.ab.ca](http://www.rpap.ab.ca)**

For more information about rural physician spousal and family programming, contact the Rural Physician Consultant in your area:

**South:** Monica Kohlhammer - 403-283-1480 or [monica.kohlhammer@rpap.ab.ca](mailto:monica.kohlhammer@rpap.ab.ca)

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