

# FINDINGS OF THE 2008/2009 GREENWOOD MFRC COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT (CNA)

## OVERVIEW

Mar 2009

### **Purpose of the Research:**

In accordance with DMFS policy, all MFRCs are required to conduct Community Needs Assessments (CNAs) on a three-year basis. The aim of the 2008-2009 CNA was to identify the needs and interests of the military family community. In addition, the CNA will generate valuable data to incorporate in the GMFRC strategic and business planning processes.

### **Participants:**

The target demographic was the family members of current serving Regular and Reserve personnel, and civilian DND & NPF employees of 14 Wing Greenwood. The aim was to have the family member most familiar with GMFRC services to complete the questionnaire - often this is a civilian spouse. For this reason the questionnaire was delivered to all military housing and a sampling of civilian neighbourhoods within the Greenwood/Kingston area. Randomly selected streets in the following subdivisions received CNAs: Fales River, Ravenwood, Planesview, Pine Ridge, River Ridge and Forest Brook. To increase dissemination, surveys were also available at the MFRC front-desk, Base gym, Base Library and Base Arena.

### **Process:**

The start date of the CNA was Thursday December 4<sup>th</sup> 2008, with the survey ending the following week on Friday December 12<sup>th</sup> 2008. The CNA questionnaire was presented in a bilingual 6-page paper format. GMFRC volunteers placed the CNAs in plastic bags at individual residences. The participants were given a 2-day minimum to complete the questionnaire and then place it in the bag provided on their front doors/mail boxes. GMFRC volunteers returned after 2 days to collect the questionnaires from the selected neighborhoods. Participants were also able to drop the CNAs at the front desk of the GMFRC. Volunteers collected the CNAs at the Gym, Library and Arena on an ongoing basis from 4-12 December. In total, 506 questionnaires were disseminated. The total return was 104 CNAs. The response rate was **20.5%**. This is a statistically relevant response rate. **The staff and volunteers of the GMFRC are to be commended on a job well done!**

### **Methodology:**

Basic demographic collection determined the participant's: primary language; age; gender; relationship to CF; number and age of dependants; and area of residence. This data was then used to establish correlations with specific service and program usage. In this manner, the GMFRC highlighted those populations that stood-out from the general trends and looked at methods for providing further support/services if required. Likewise, overall trends may be used to determine future programs. By way of illustration, 62% of respondents with children indicated that they would like additional child casual care for both evenings and weekends. Given this level of interest the GMFRC will examine the feasibility of providing this service.

As well as providing feedback on current and future GMFRC services and programs, the analysis included a difficulty rating of challenges associated with the military lifestyle such as finding civilian employment, frequent moves etc. Those areas rated as most difficult were identified as possible seminar and focus group topics for future GMFRC adult programs.

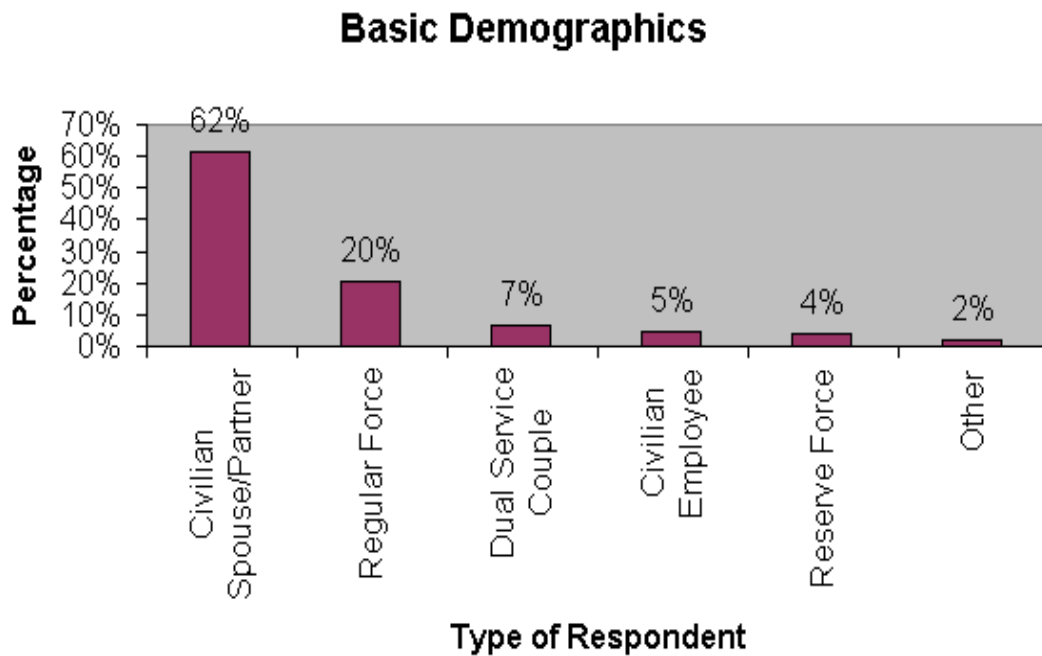
**Ethical Considerations:**

To ensure confidentiality, the CNA was an anonymous questionnaire and participants were instructed not to write their name anywhere on the document. As well, upon completion of the analysis all questionnaires were destroyed. The general results and trends are available on our website [www.greenwoodmfr.ca](http://www.greenwoodmfr.ca) and/or by request to the Board of Directors and/or the Executive Director. This policy was clearly outlined on the first and last pages of the questionnaire.

**NOTABLE FINDINGS**

Complete results of the CNA are archived at the GMFRC and will be made available at the discretion of the Executive Director. The following discussion **highlights** key trends and findings of each GMFRC service and program as presented in the CNA. More details, tables and analysis are located in the attached Microsoft Excel document entitled “CNA Database”. Board members and staff are encouraged to review this document (simply open the bottom tab associated with service/program you wish to examine). Please bear in mind that although the CNA contained several questions that evaluated current GMFRC services and programs, the focus was on future offerings. The CNA may be used as a tool to measure current user satisfaction however it is best suited to help guide future planning.

**Part 1: Demographic Information**



As anticipated by the dissemination method, civilian spouses/partners made-up the largest category (62%). A very healthy response rate from the target population was achieved. This satisfied one of the aims identified in the CNA process.

The largest age range was 30-39 years of age composing 42% of respondents. 40-49 years of age was second at 26% and 20-29 years of age at 18% was the third largest range. Significantly, 87% of respondents were between the ages of 20-49.

55% lived in civilian homes in Kingston/Greenwood. Participants living in military housing were 28%. Wilmot, Nictaux and Other comprised 17%. Incredibly, 83% of the participants live within the Kingston/Greenwood area.

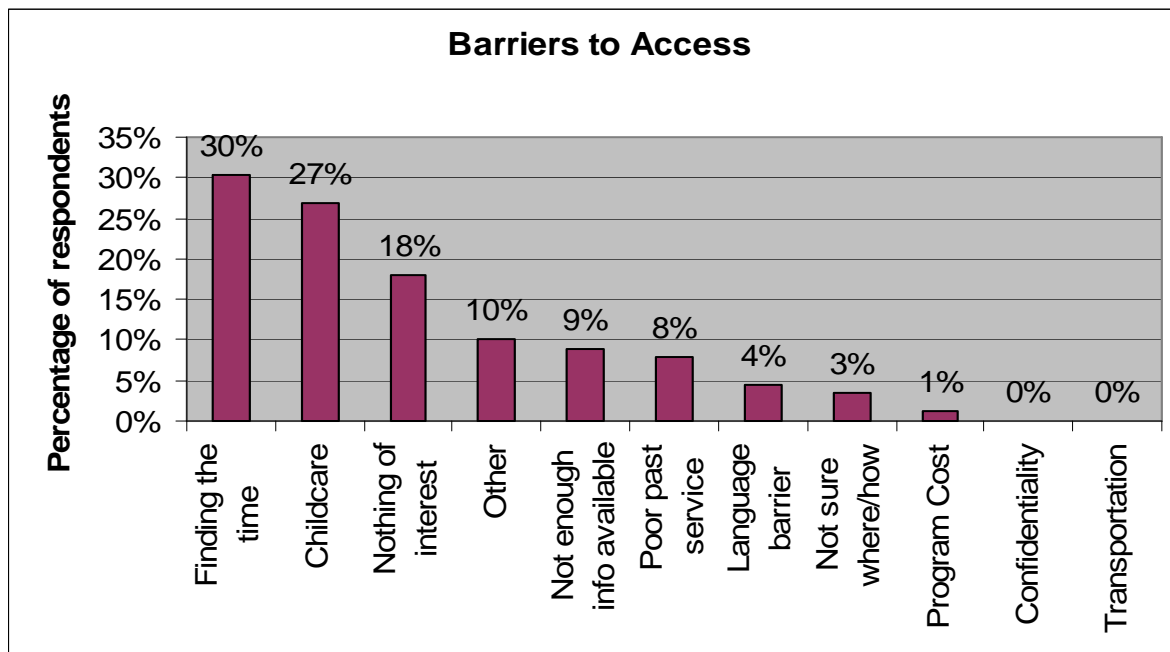
At 77% the majority of participants have dependants living at home. The greatest population of dependants was 0-5 years, followed by 6-8 years and then 9-12 years (at 42%, 22% and 18% respectively). Child, Youth and Parenting Services can now focus programs on age appropriate activities to reflect these demographics.

The Aurora Newspaper was far and above the number one method for participants to find out about the GMFRC. Clearly we need to continue using the Aurora and perhaps look at “spicing-up” the articles and layouts we submit to draw even more attention to our services.

The next two most frequently used methods were friend and GMFRC website.

**Part 2: GMFRC Evaluation**

Overwhelmingly, participants indicated that they knew where the GMFRC was located, had no trouble finding it and had used the services in the past year. As seen below the greatest barriers to access were finding the time, childcare and nothing of interest.



Other barriers to access include:

Always on during work hours. Have no requirement Home location Just moved here No need in my position No need of services at this time. Not looking right now Not suited for timings we work (i.e. childcare or preschool) Nothing in French!!!
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89% of participants found the staff professional and accommodating, 11% chose “somewhat” and 0% rated staff as neither professional nor accommodating. **This is a real achievement on the part of staff – excellent customer service.**

In general, participants were satisfied with the hours of operation; however the greatest request was to open the GMFRC on Saturdays. In response to the question, 2.8 “Are the hours of operation sufficient?” some additional comments included:

No - Not a lot offered on Fridays that is the day my spouse doesn't work and would like to use services
No -- I work during these hours
No - It should be open Saturday during winter months
No - It would be useful to have activities on the weekends.
No - Leisure hours nights and weekends
No - Open on Saturdays
No - Open Saturdays
No - Should be open on weekends
No - Should be open Sat

Overall Satisfied with hours of operation?		Percentage
<b>No</b>	11	<b>14%</b>
<b>Yes</b>	70	<b>86%</b>
Grand Total	81	

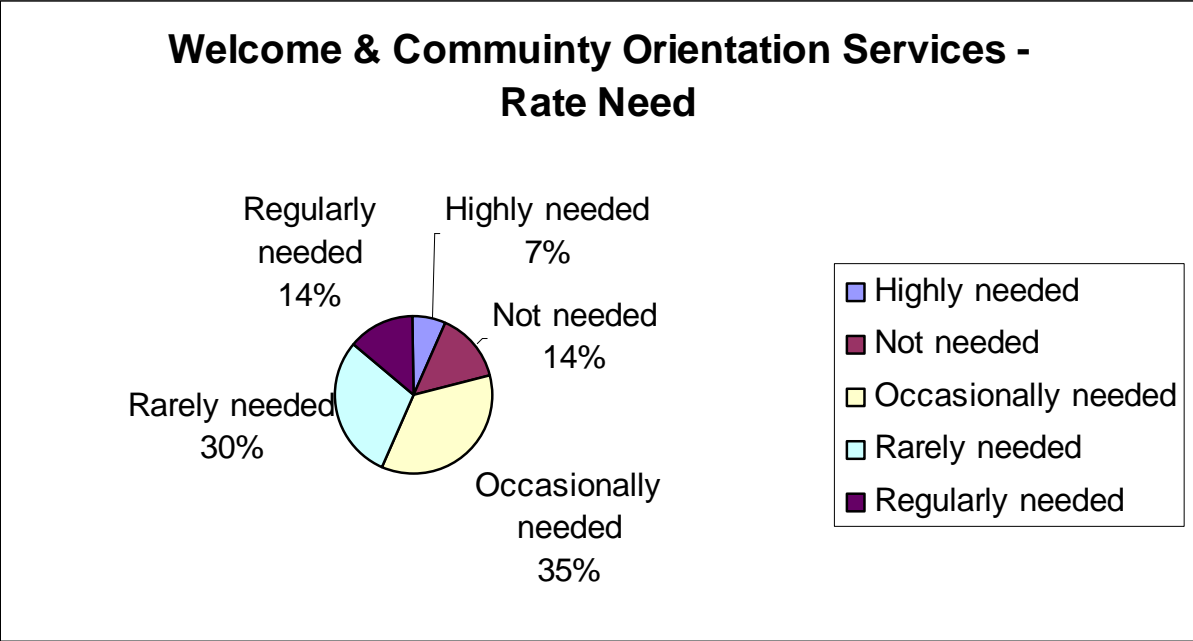
Final comments with respect question 2.9, improving our customer service included:

Better childcare
Bigger advertisements for programs/activities
Can't imagine how. So appreciative
Daycare over lunch time
For a military member who works from 0700-1530, the hours offered do not accommodate our needs. We are unable to use the programs available due to work schedule and the requirements to leave work several times a day to pick up our child. There should be
Full day casual childcare would be nice.
Had no idea the MFRC was open late
More for special needs children
More programs at night & weekends.
No info in French, need to translate services and activities.

Not much French programs and few French staff
Open the Centre on weekends and offer French activities or English language training for dependants.
The setup of the centre is not welcoming- needs to be more open. People can wander the halls aimlessly.

**Part 3: Welcome & Community Orientation Services Results**

With respect to this service, 44% of participants had used it in the last year, with 76% feeling that it met their needs. At 60% the majority indicated they would likely use these services in the future and most (65%) felt that they are “occasionally needed” and “rarely needed”.

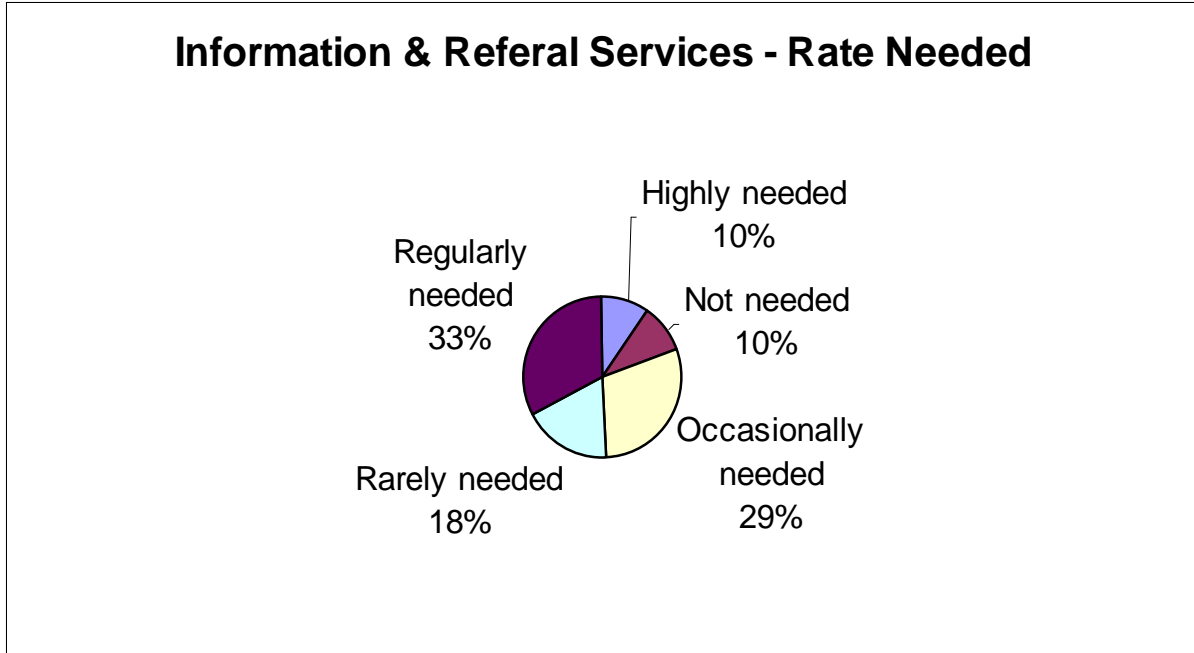


Some further comments on this service were:

At the moment we only require the minimum of services. However, once we have children, and if my husband has to serve overseas then we will likely require more.
Had trouble getting a welcome package from the front desk even though we should have gotten one from the other unit
I think it is great and needed but we just don't need it yet
Just can't believe how you've "taken us under your wing". Everyone has been so helpful and friendly to me. I do know if I ever need you, you are there for us. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts.
More gifts ... he he he :)
the children LOVE the fun days
Translation and bilingualism.
When we arrived in Jan 2005, we were not welcomed by the GMFRC. No welcome package centre visit, gift, call. Our family sought them out to offer our services as volunteers; even now and in that capacity we are rarely contacted.

**Part 4: Information & Referral Services**

66% of participants have used this service in the last year, with 81% feeling that it met their needs. At 76% the majority indicated they would likely use these services in the future and most felt that they are “Regularly needed”.



Other comments to improve service included:

Aurora GMFRC is not attractive/readable. A new clearer layout would help- not so squished.
Clearly state who is eligible (or not) for each program advertised in the Aurora
More French in aurora
More in French.
More info on boards.
Needs to be updated more frequently.
Website is hard to navigate. Newspaper, I always miss the section

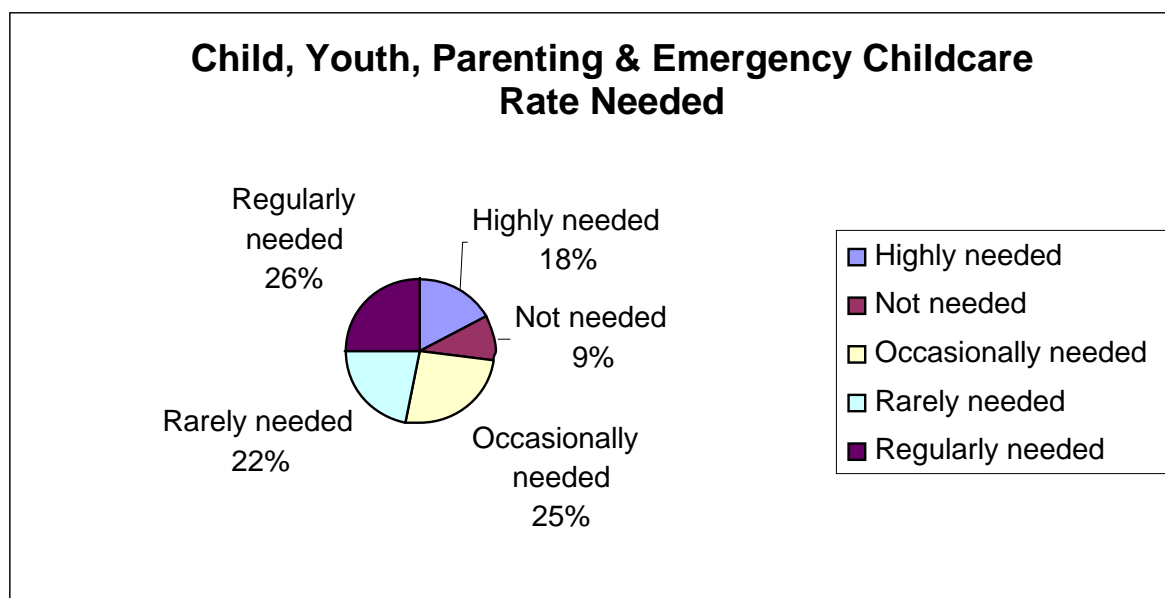
**Part 5: Child, Youth, Parenting & Emergency Childcare Services**

During the last year 38 % of all respondents used this service. However, of participants with dependants 50% indicated that they used this program. At 70% the majority of users felt that the services met their needs. Comments for improvement focus on **increasing casual care hours** as well as:

Casual care everyday fulltime.
Casual care open all day
Casual care over lunch.
casual child care over lunch hour
Casual childcare books up quickly. Closure over lunch hour inconvenient.
Evening childcare would be great

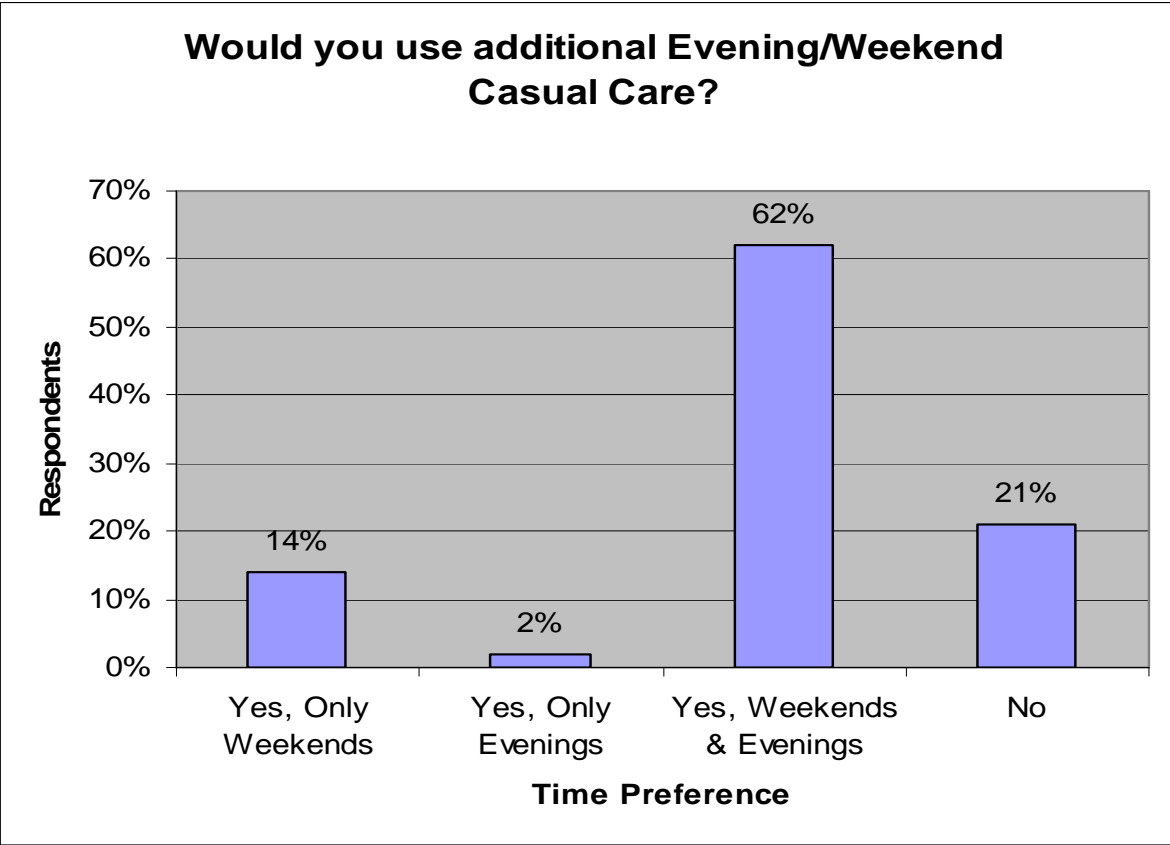
Full day casual care
Longer casual hours, over lunch.
More casual care hours especially over lunch
More hours for casual care, evenings would be nice
Need French groups
Open during lunch to allow longer outings, eg doctor visits to new Minas
Parent & Tot could be 1.5 hours it wouldn't be so rushed and healthier snacks. Full-day casual childcare.
Provide similar activities in French.
Timings not suitable for standard working hours of military members.

With respect to future usage, 68% felt it was likely they would use the services. Perceived need was fairly high with 69% viewing the services as needed (includes occasionally needed, regularly needed and highly needed).



Interest in attending a French Mom & Tot program was low at 38% among current users of the English-based program. Furthermore, only 56% would continue to attend Mom & Tot if a minimal drop-in fee was instituted.

With respect to a full-time daycare program (Mon-Fri: 0700-1700), 60% of those with young children indicated they would attend. Perhaps even more significantly, 79% of respondents wanted increased casual care to include weekends and/or evenings. The breakdown is illustrated in the following table:



At present, only 50% of respondents were aware that the GMFRC has an updated list of local childcare facilities. More encouraging was the result that 68% knew about the list of teen & adult childcare providers. At 89% the majority are aware of the GMFRC Emergency Childcare Service. As well difficulty in accessing the Emergency service was low at 13%.

Final comments for child, youth, parenting and emergency childcare include:

A full-time daycare would be marvelous!
Accessing emergency childcare is unclear. Is our unit responsible (i.e. sponsor) or does the MFRC?
Nothing in place for parents with teenagers.
All day casual care
Casual care open all day and all weekdays
Emergency childcare is amazing although more parents need to be aware
Emergency childcare is essential for single female service parents like me.
Full day casual care
I think it is great that they offer these services to families. You never know when an emergency will come along.
If the daycare idea is followed through, it would benefit many people in the military.
Info in French, especially for emergency childcare (you don't want to try translating on such occasions).
It would be beneficial that the province review the laws to accommodate military families
It's appreciated.
Keep casual care open all week ALL day.

More casual care times
More work needs to be done to properly maintain the parent and tot room.
Need more on Fri. & weekends for working parents
The children really enjoy the programs

**Part 6: Adult Programs, Employment & Second Language Training**

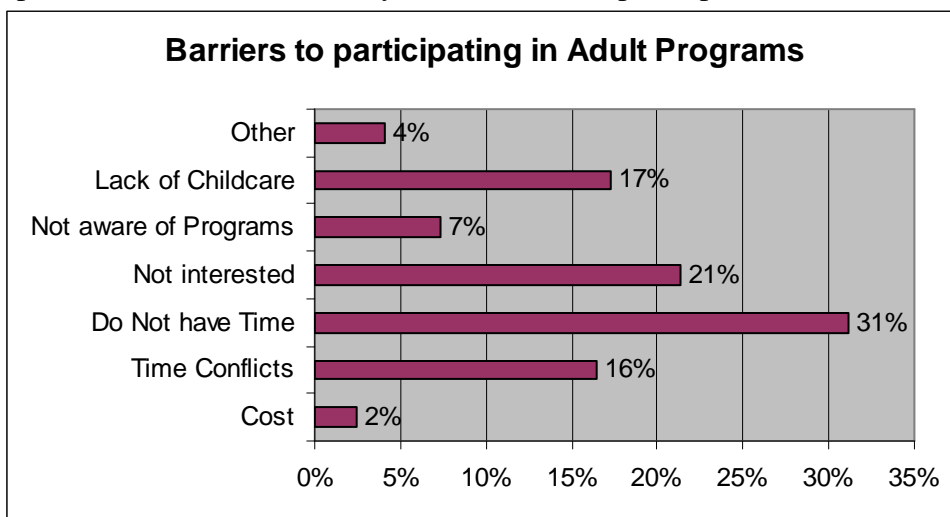
With respect to Adult Programs 63% felt “yes” their needs were met, 25% indicated “somewhat” and 13% said “no”. Suggestions/comments to improve the program include:

Evening Classes
Excellent couples workshop
I think they are currently fine, just not looking right now
I wish I had the time
I would like more activities that are craft/artsy activities daytime or evening i.e. card making, crafts.
Make certain programs available to non-military, i.e. dependants
More courses and seminars
Partnerships with PSP

Other suggestions for classes are:

computer courses
Cooking classes, painting.
- Courses on how local politics function, how 14 Wing operates, the education system and the place of dependants relative to these subjects. - More general interest classes
- Fitness class & daycare done with PSP & MFRC as a joint program during the mornings ex: M,W,F 9:30-10:30 boot camp at gym with childcare at MFRC. - Knitting, drop in coffee.
Incorporate more personnel development workshops that teach how to reduce eliminate stinking thinking

Although Adult Programs has low participation scores, this is not surprising given that many respondents do not feel that they have the time to participate as demonstrated below.



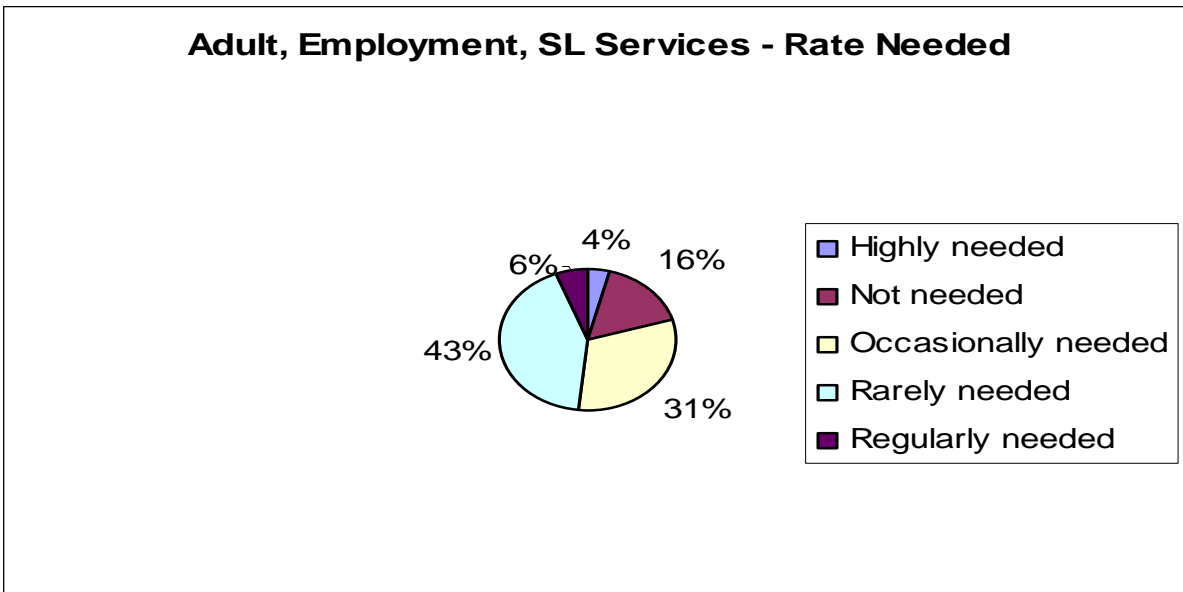
With respect to Francophone participants who took Second Language courses, 100% felt either fully or somewhat satisfied that their needs were met. The high level of participant satisfaction is commendable. Clearly the GMFRC needs to continue with this program and to also ensure that as users gain stronger language skills that higher levels of instruction are offered. Regrettably, with Anglophone users of Second Language services, only 50% felt that their needs had been met. The two most common critiques were not enough courses offered daytime and/or evening and not enough advanced level courses. The GMFRC should examine the feasibility of providing more courses and with higher levels of French. Francophone awareness of the Monthly French Activity was high at 60%. Additional suggestions for SL Services were:

Completely translate all documents.
Evening Classes
- Have MFRC provide free translating services and pay francophones to translate for you. - Offer classes during the day.
Having extra material for practice.
Make all notice boards/signs bilingual
Offer advanced level conversational French courses

Employment Services had 74% express that “yes” their needs were met, 16% selected “somewhat” and 11% indicated “no”. Comments for employment included:

Be bilingual.
better publicity
Looking for more ideas.
More evening opportunities

Overall, participants felt that Adult Programs, Employment & Second Language Training was rarely needed and 61% felt they were “unlikely” to use these services in the future.

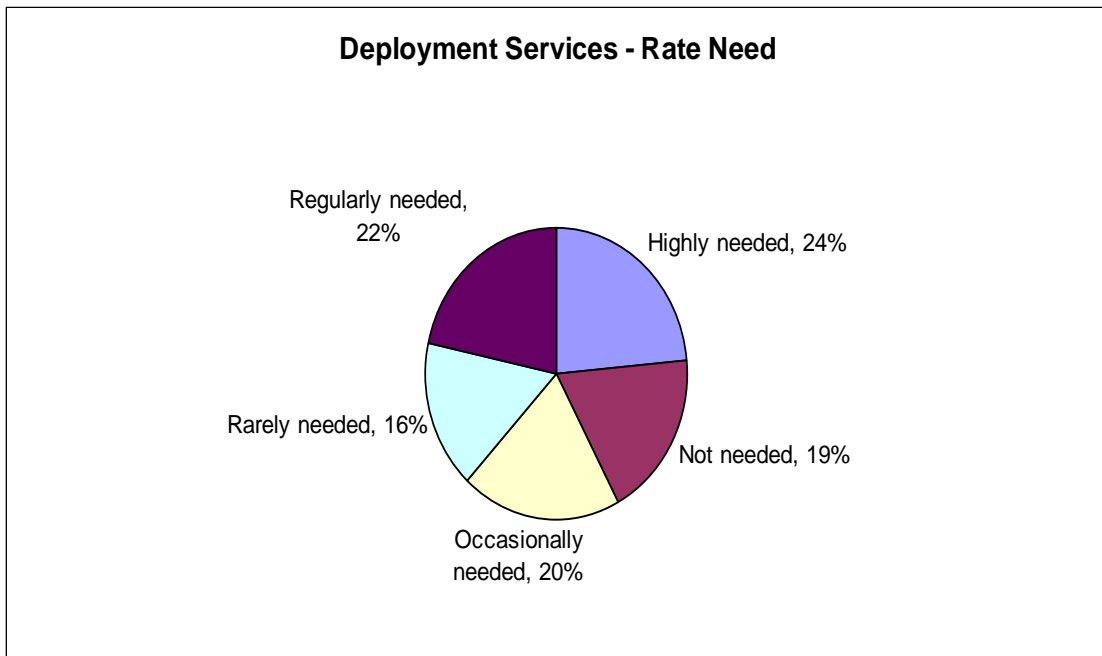


**Part 7: Deployment Services**

For Deployment Services, 28% of participants used it in the last year, with 71% feeling that they were supported during the deployment/separation period and 29% feeling “somewhat” and 0% at “no” – Good Work!. Most participants at 90% were aware of the services available to CF family members. Comments included:

-Be responsive to spouse's needs. Listen to identify true problem. Offer viable solutions or referrals rather than dismissing or down playing concerns.  
 -Excellent program for members and family.  
 More frequent warm line calls. More respite care dates - times for small children

At 71% the majority indicated they would likely use these services in the future and most felt that they are needed, as noted below.



The following table breaks down the overall time & day preferences for deployment services to be offered:

7.7 Time & Day Preferences	
Weekday Mornings	6
Weekday Afternoons	5
Weekday Evenings	21
Weekend Mornings	8
Weekend Afternoons	13
Weekend Evenings	17
No Preference	70
Total possible per response	98

More significantly, Time & Day preferences can be linked to dependant age groups as follows to help staff plan activities etc.

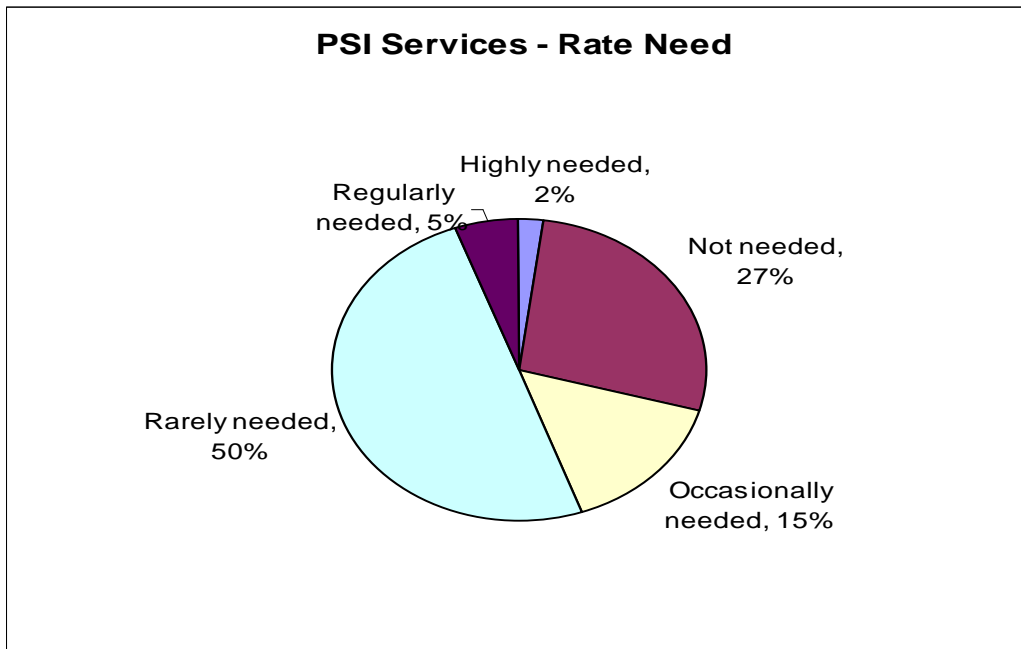
7.7 Relation to age of dependants	
Time & Day Preference	Dominant Age Group (ranked most to least)
Weekdays Mornings	0-5 years
Weekday Afternoons	0-5 years
Weekday Evenings	6-8; 9-12; and 13-15 years
Weekend Mornings	0-5 years and 6-8 years
Weekend Afternoons	6-8 and 9-12 years
Weekend Evenings	9-12; 13-15; and 16-19 years

Lastly, comments on Deployment Services included:

How long does the deployment/tasking have to be to be eligible for these services?  
 I love that these services are offered to families  
 Military spouse felt very support through receipt of X-mas and Easter parcel and weekly newspapers  
 Some kind of discount for deployed families using casual childcare during regular hours would be nice.

**Part 8: Prevention, Support and Intervention(PSI) Services**

With respect to this service, 17% of participants had used it in the last year, with 72% feeling that “yes” their needs were met, 22% felt “somewhat” and 6% stated “no”. At 77% the majority indicated they would be unlikely use these services in the future and most felt that they are rarely needed. Low levels of predicted usage may indicate a positive sense of family mental health. Given the increasing number of deployed personnel from 14 Wing this is a reassuring trend.



Respondents did not access PSI services for the following reasons:

Barrier to Access	Percentage
Availability	1%
Confidentiality	0%
Unsure of services offered	7%
No need of services	89%
Other : I am too busy Social skills classes on again off again. Unable to garner support.	2%

Suggestions for additional PSI services were:

Adult counseling including marriage in Greenwood Do these services exist in French? Families with special needs bi-monthly support meetings. Personal development programs to support individuals to have a positive outlook.
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One noteworthy comment was that “Shannon is a great support. She is very effective at succinctly paraphrasing people and keeps meeting moving forward and on track”

### Part 9: Volunteer Services

29% of respondents volunteered last year and 87% said “yes” it met their expectations, 10% were “somewhat” and 3% stated “no”. A whopping 90% felt trained and supported and 97% were recognised/thanked for their contribution!

Barriers to Volunteering (identified by those not having volunteered at the Centre in the past 12 months)	Percentage of Responses
Not interested in volunteering	23%
Work full-time	25%
Do not have time	26%
Require childcare	13%
Not sure in what area I could volunteer	8%
Nothing at the Centre interests me	3%
Other: on IR travel a lot; would like to volunteer in French	2%

Special Events and Deployment Support led the way for areas of interest for volunteers, and the other programs were as follows:

Area of Interest for Volunteering	
Deployment Support	23
Child/Youth Programs	10
Special Events	24
Board of Directors	9
Admin Support	10
Welcoming Support	10

## Part 10: Military Lifestyle Challenges

The CNA outlined 8 challenges associated with the military lifestyle. Respondents were given five rankings “Very difficult”, “Difficult”, “Somewhat Difficult”, “Not at all difficult” and “No opinion”. *Please note that the excel database has significantly more analysis; the following results are merely highlights.*

<b>Most "Very Difficult" Responses (Descending Ranking)</b>	Frequency of Response
Separations due to deployments	48%
Anxiety for CF member with potential danger	39%
Loss of social support from friends & family	36%
Finding quality child care	29%
Finding civilian employment	18%
Frequent moves	13%
Finding medical services	4%
Language barriers	4%

The unique challenges of separation are best accommodated by more robust Deployment Services. At the same time, even the best services can do only so much to reduce feelings of anxiety for CF members deployed to dangerous areas. With respect to childcare, expanded casual care hours and perhaps full-time daycare could meet this need.

<b>Most "Difficult" Responses (Descending Ranking)</b>	Frequency of Response
Frequent moves	32%
Finding civilian employment	23%
Loss of social support from friends & family	22%
Finding medical services	20%
Separations due to deployments	19%
Finding quality child care	17%
Anxiety for CF member with potential danger	13%
Language barriers	2%

<b>Most "Somewhat Difficult" Responses (Descending Ranking)</b>	Frequency of Response
Frequent moves	37%
Loss of social support from friends & family	26%
Anxiety for CF member with potential danger	16%
Finding civilian employment	16%
Language Barriers	15%
Finding quality child care	14%
Separations due to deployments	12%
Finding medical services	10%

<b>Most "Not at all Difficult" (Descending Ranking)</b>	<b>Frequency of Response</b>
Language barriers	45%
Finding civilian employment	13%
Finding quality child care	9%
Anxiety for CF member with potential danger	7%
Loss of social support from friends & family	7%
Frequent moves	4%
Finding medical services	3%
Separations due to deployments	1%

**Special Notes:**

When filtered for Francophones only, language barriers take the average rank of “Difficult”. Likewise, when filtering for Anglophones only, results in language barriers taking an average ranking of “Not at all difficult”.

As well, average ranking of "Difficult" finding quality childcare for respondents with dependants.

**Additional lifestyle challenges were:**

Children who do not speak English (posted to an English location) Finding French products.
Finding a variety of extracurricular activities for teens. Accessing quality mental health care. Personality changes in spouse due to years of service causing stress on marital relationship
Home schooling/special needs children
The numerous times you raise your children on your own.
The uncertainty is the most difficult part of military life.
The incertitude of transfers and postings (when or where). The lack of control/choice for postings and the obligation to follow even if the location does not interest you.

**Some suggestions on how the GMFRC could help address these lifestyle challenges:**

Can't its part of the job
Focusing more on families with two military members and their needs.
Good welcome of people who are separated from their spouses temporarily due posting dates.
Have base meetings with new families to address their needs each posting season.
More social activities
Provide English language courses for children.
Unite military home schooling families, offer a meeting room

**Lastly, additional programs/services that respondents would like to see:**

Anger management for teens. Connect fathers not just mothers.
Better childcare full time and casual for babies to preschool
Cheerleading for young girls.
Child care programs from 0700 to 1700hrs

Childcare available at a time convenient for using a PSP class or program.
Course on wood painting
Daycare from 0700-1730, and offer a lunchtime service.
Evening childcare and weekend childcare
In house daycare program
Medical centre for military families.
No Comments
Packages for kids and teens.

**Part 11: CNA Evaluation & Final Comments**

All participants responded that they were happy with the manner in which the CNA was conducted. One respondent commented that it was a little too long. Overall, it took most respondents less than 10 min to complete.

Final comments included:

Although I do not frequent the Centre often, I am conscious of its importance and I am sure that I could find any help that I might require. Continue the good work.
Childcare at gym or at night.
Continue - there are people with needs.
Francophones have to feel a part (of the team) and nothing is translated. However on other bases "all information is bilingual".
Great services to the member and dependants
I'm liking my new community and the adjustment has been good for my family. We are looking forward to the rest of our lives here on the East Coast.
Of the staff I have encountered thus far all have been gracious helpful and accommodating.
Thank you
Thank you for taking us into your lives. Thank you, thank you thank you.
Thank you for the welcome evening with my spouse's CO.
The MFRC is doing a great job

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

Overall, participant satisfaction with the GMFRC services and programs was high. Areas singled out for success included:

- (a) Strong endorsement of the staff as professional and accommodating;
- (b) Recognition of where the GMFRC is located and the type of programs and services offered;
- (c) High percentage of users during the past 12 months;
- (d) Overwhelming majority of participants who felt supported during deployments;
- (e) Very high satisfaction with PSI services;

- (f) High numbers of volunteers who felt trained/supported and thanked for their contribution;
- (g) Satisfaction with how the CNA was conducted.

Areas that need attention/exploration:

- (a) Offering casual care over the lunch-hour (no break in services);
- (b) Offering casual care evenings and weekends;
- (c) Examining feasibility of full-time daycare;
- (d) Providing more services, programs, advisements and documents in French;
- (e) Providing translation services when possible;
- (f) Running higher-level French language courses for Anglophone users;
- (g) Running more language courses during the daytime with childcare;
- (h) Providing English language courses for Francophone children (possibly on weekends);
- (i) Focusing on 0-5 years of age activities for deployed families during weekdays; and 6+ years of age for activities in the evenings;
- (j) Providing a meeting room for families with special needs dependants to get together evenings or weekends;
- (k) Getting the word out that volunteers are often provided with childcare while they are volunteering. Lack of childcare is a perceived barrier to volunteering at the GMFRC.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CONDUCTING FUTURE CNA PROJECTS**

The 2008-2009 CNA was a paper-based questionnaire. It is my strong recommendation that the next CNA be conducted on-line. Delivering the surveys door-to-door required a dedicated team of volunteers particularly as they had to be delivered first and then picked up at a later date. A 6-page questionnaire looks like a daunting task to many people, whereas a well-organised on-line survey would include pop-up screens for each section providing the user with the sense of brevity. In addition, if a user decided to quit after filling out only a portion of the survey this data would not be lost (whereas most respondents will not bother dropping off a semi-completed paper-based survey). Lastly, entering the raw data took 30+ hours and is open to typos and errors. In contrast, an on-line survey will automatically put the answers in a database and accurately record comments. The greatest challenge of an on-line CNA would be to ensure adequate participation. An advertising campaign in the Aurora as well as on the website and in the GMFRC newsletter would likely garner sufficient interest. It is further recommended that an incentive/prize continue to be included. In an on-line version, your “ticket” would only become accessible after completing the entire survey.

Some MFRCs choose to hire a consultant to conduct the CNA. The advantage of hiring a consultant is speed and an assured level of quality. The disadvantage is cost. The GMFRC chose to use volunteers for the 2008-2009 CNA. Anyone with a background in survey techniques is capable of designing the survey, however I would caution that a volunteer is not the best person suited to navigate the DMFS organization while trying to submit the research proposal. Likewise they may have little knowledge of the steps involved in getting federal approval to conduct surveys of DND families. I would suggest that a GMFRC staff member

handle this portion of the process. The division of duties would likely result in a far faster approval process.

Archiving the data is necessary if trend analysis is to be conducted in the future. Entering in the data in a true database, vice simply listing the basic results, will also provide for more robust analysis and give staff more direction and feedback.

Lastly, despite sometimes feeling like a mouse chasing down the proverbial phantom cheese, (oops, I mean approval) in the DMFS maze; I am confident that the survey is statistically valid and more importantly a true reflection of user needs. It is my hope that it will prove useful at the upcoming strategic planning session and in designing a business plan. My heartfelt thanks to all the staff and volunteers who made this survey a success. Great Work!

Cathy Cook  
GMFRC Board Member