



The Children's Aid Society  
of Haldimand & Norfolk

# ANNUAL REPORT 2019-20



## STAND UP, SPEAK OUT AMPLIFYING VOICES OF CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES

**Our Vision:** *A community that nurtures the lives and dreams of children.*

**Our Mission:** *The Children's Aid Society of Haldimand and Norfolk values and supports children, youth and families so they thrive in safe, nurturing environments, enabling them to reach their full potential.*

## Message from the Executive Director and Board President Shannon Chevrier and Craig Mannell

“When the whole world is silent even one voice becomes powerful”

*Malala Yousafazi*

Welcome to our 26<sup>th</sup> Annual General Report. This year’s theme is Stand up, Speak out – Amplifying the voice of children, youth and families in the child welfare system. At the close of the 2019/2020 year we were thrust into a new reality with a global pandemic. While COVID-19 has impacted the organization in significant ways and will continue into the foreseeable future, this report will highlight organizational achievements and community impact over the past year.

As the world grew quiet amid the pandemic, many poignant voices were amplified following the unspeakable acts of anti-black racism and horrific violence against marginalized individuals. These messages were a stern and sobering reminder of systemic racism and the role child welfare has played throughout history in the harmful impact to racialized people and overrepresentation of Black and Indigenous children in the care system. As an organization, we renewed our steadfast commitment to take action to address systemic racism and oppression and embed equity, diversity and inclusion in all areas of our operations.

### Our Equity Journey

Over the past year we have continued our work to honour our commitment to the recommendations from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. As an organization we have promised to fulfill our commitment to the following:

- Reduce the number of Indigenous children in care.
- Reduce the number of legal files involving Indigenous children and families.
- Increase the use of formal customary care agreements.
- Ensure Indigenous representation and involvement at the local Board of Directors.
- Implement mandatory Indigenous training for staff.
- Change the inter-agency protocol to include Jordan’s Principle as a fundamental principle.
- In consultation with Indigenous communities, develop a unique agency-based plan to better address the needs of the children and families from those communities.
- Continue to develop relationships between their local agency and the local Indigenous communities.
- Assist those individuals wanting to see their historical files by accessing and providing the information they request.

We still have much work to do to strengthen our relationship with our neighbouring Indigenous communities: Six Nations of the Grand River First Nation and Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. This remains a service priority for the upcoming year.

The Society has successfully implemented a system to obtain identity-based data on the children, youth and families engaged in our service. This critical information will be used to help us better understand who we are serving and address gaps and disproportionality of services.

## **Service Delivery**

The Society's approach to service delivery integrates three models of service across the spectrum of child welfare services. Service provision centers around the goals of wellbeing, safety and permanency for all children.

**Signs of Safety (SoS)** - Signs of Safety is an integrated framework for child protection practice using a range of tools to engage families, children, youth and their support networks in decision-making and planning.

**3-5-7 Model** – Guides our work with children, youth and families in grieving losses and rebuilding relationships

**Family Finding Model** – This model provides methods and strategies to locate and engage relatives of children currently living in out-of-home care. The goal of Family Finding is to connect each child with a family, so that every child may benefit from the lifelong connections that only a family provides.

Each model supports our commitment to amplifying the voice of service recipients so that they can truly contribute to decisions and plans that impact them.

## **Part X**

In January 2020 Part X of the *Child, Youth and Family Services Act* (CYFSA) was enacted. Part X is a new section of the CYFSA that sets out a legislative privacy framework for the collection, use, and disclosure of, and access to, personal information held by Children's Aid Societies. This legislation bestows important responsibilities on Societies in protecting personal information and enshrines the rights of a service recipient to access their entire record and seek corrections/amendments.

## Child Welfare Modernization

In August 2019, the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS) announced the launch of an extensive engagement process towards building a stronger child welfare system in Ontario. This consultation process gathered input from stakeholders across the province through on-line surveys, the creation of consultation tables and direct engagement with local societies. Our Agency held a consultation session with staff who shared their vision for modernization and highlighted the strengths of our organization with emphasis on our philosophy of service and strong engagement with our youth in care. Our Leadership team and Board of Directors participated in this process and demonstrated their unwavering commitment to the local community while recognizing our collective responsibility to transform child welfare for the benefit of all Ontario's children.

## Amalgamation Discussions

In January 2020 our Agency began amalgamation discussions with Brant Family and Children's Services with the vision of building a stronger, more sustainable organization for the families, youth and children of our communities. The onset of COVID-19 necessitated placing a hold on these discussions to address the unprecedented challenges of operating an essential community service during a global pandemic.



The organization is committed to creating an amalgamation process that is meaningful and engaging and will resume this work when the time is right for all involved.

## THANK YOU!

It is with sincere appreciation and gratitude that we thank our dedicated staff for their steadfast commitment to the organization's mission and vision. Especially over the last few months they have persevered and amplified the voice of our communities most vulnerable citizens.



To our volunteers and caregivers: our foster, kin and adoptive parents; thank you for the care, compassion and unquestionable commitment to the children that you openly welcome into your hearts and homes.

To our community partners, we cannot do this work alone and we thank you for working together in the spirit of teamwork and collaboration. We remain committed to strengthening our relationship in service to the children, youth and families of Haldimand and Norfolk. I am honored to share the following message received from one of our community partners:

*I just wanted to reach out to you to let you know how impressed we are with your child protection workers that have stayed in contact with us, checking in on their clients during this pandemic. It is clear to see the dedication they have to their clients. We appreciate the contact and the support and direction they give to us as we help our mutual clients choose parenting lessons as they work towards becoming better parents.*

Thank you to our generous donors and corporate partners for your belief in our mission and your investment in initiatives and activities that benefit local children and youth.

Finally, thank you to our Board of Directors for guiding the organization on the right path towards its vision: *A community that nurtures the lives and dreams of children.*

### Board of Directors 2019-20:

Craig Mannell, President  
 Kat MacRae, Treasurer  
 Bruce Mitchell, Secretary  
 Susie Dyck, Director  
 Helen Miller, Director (Leave)  
 Haley Saunders, Director



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## **Service Priorities**

### **Kelly Wright, Director of Service**

Over the course of the 2019-2020 fiscal year, the staff at CAS-HN continued to focus on the provision of service to the children, youth and families within our communities. As always, this focus is rooted in our touchstone that children, youth and families should be at the center of all decision making.

Amplifying the voices of those with whom we work, building collaborative working relationships and attending to the unique and diverse characteristics of service recipients, are priorities for the organization and as such, work throughout the last year focussed on strengthening areas that aligned with these philosophies.

Our Family Connections program is an example of a service priority area. Family Connections provides support to children, youth and families engaged with protection services, to co-develop informal support networks and family care plans that help prevent admission to care and increase overall family resources. Much of this work is done in collaboration directly with children, youth and families, that explicitly seeks out all the voices involved. During 2019-2020, the Society increased resources within the Family Connections department to better facilitate this good work.

Over the course of 2019-2020, the Society embarked upon a pilot project to create two service teams that would provide service for families from the beginning of engagement until service was concluded. The aim of the pilot project was to build capacity within the organization to successfully manage workload fluctuations and to provide families of the community with continuous service via one assigned child protection worker, ensuring the opportunity for the development of good working relationships whereby, families felt supported and fully engaged without experiencing any gaps in service provision. Initial feedback indicates that there are many positive outcomes to this model of service delivery that promotes better working relationships and improved service delivery.

The Society's commitment to Truth and Reconciliation and working with our local Indigenous communities stands a high priority. Over the past year, the Society participated in the development and implementation of a new service protocol with The Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation and facilitated joint training with our Indigenous partners, for all CAS-HN employees. The Society also began a partnership with Six Nations of the Grand River to complete formal, collaborative case conferencing, with Band Representatives for families with Six Nations affiliation. The purpose of these consultations is to include the Band in key case decision making points, elevate the voice of our Indigenous children, youth and families, provide the Society the opportunity to receive feedback and wisdom from the Indigenous community and to continue our efforts to reduce the number of legal files involving Indigenous children and families.

## Our Children and Youth

Our engagement and attention to children and youth in care remains steadfast and a passion of our organization. We have more recently focused on building youth supports, particularly amidst the global pandemic that we know impacts marginalized and racialized groups more significantly. Many of the individuals we serve including children and youth in care, are members of marginalized groups. As such, CAS-HN service provision was intentional in its attention to those impacted by the pandemic and particularly our youth who live independently without many of the typical supports, providing additional resources to strengthen their stability. This additional support was much appreciated and is captured in the quote:

Improving the everyday experiences of all children, youth and families that we have the privilege to work with, is a commitment that remains critical as we move forward into the future years and the challenges and changes, they bring.

*"I specifically think the agency has been a premium source of help because they've always been there even in my moments of panic. They've also helped me save a bunch this year and I feel comfortable with where I am in life once again. I couldn't have done it myself." – youth in care*

## A Snapshot of our Work

<b>1437</b>	<b>Calls received about protection concerns for children and youth</b>
<b>814</b>	<b>Reports of child abuse and neglect investigated</b>
<b>518</b>	<b>Open child protection files</b>
<b>1118</b>	<b>Children under 18 served in their own homes</b>
<b>186</b>	<b>Children served in care (annual average)</b> 28% decrease over the last 5 years
<b>8</b>	<b>Adoptions finalized</b>
<b>86</b>	<b>Foster/kin families (annual average)</b>
<b>141</b>	<b>Staff members</b>
<b>71</b>	<b>Volunteers support our work</b>



**April 1, 2019 – March 31, 2020**

<b>128</b>	<b>Children attend camp or recreational activities</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>Children in care graduated from high school</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Youth in care graduated from post-secondary school</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>Youth received assistance to attend post-secondary school or a training program</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Youth received the Dustin Glass Bursary (graduated high school while living independently)</b>

## **THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS!**

Donations help local children and youth with the *little dream* of attending camp or participating in recreational activities, and the *big dream* of pursuing a post-secondary education. Both dreams will have a lifetime impact!

<b>Procter &amp; Gamble</b>	<b>KWIC Internet</b>	<b>Koncir Automotive</b>
<b>Ron &amp; Nancy Clark Foundation</b>	<b>Paul &amp; Danielle Glass</b>	<b>Fisherville &amp; District Lions Club</b>
<b>Grace United Church</b>	<b>ACS Valves</b>	<b>CAS Staff</b>
Royal Canadian Legion Branch 123 Delhi Church Women	Royal Canadian Legion- Ladies Aux TriCounty & Morison Ins.	First Ontario Credit Union  Bowyer Family
Ladies Aux. Army Navy AF Veterans-Canada Simcoe Lions Club	Simcoe & District Real Estate Board BDO Financial	Simcoe Lady Lions  Jarvis Lions Club
Aitken Chevrolet Buick GMC	myFM 98.9 Radio	Wanda & Scott Salverda Memorial Foundation

## 2019-20 Financial Report

<b>Revenue Child Welfare</b>		<b>Child Welfare Fund Balance, Beginning of year</b>	\$ (549,744)
Province of Ontario	\$ 18,309,704	Transfer for capital purchases and mortgage	(156,834)
Other Income and expenditure recovery	811,286	Excess of Revenue over Expenses	(343,000)
Total revenue	\$ 19,120,990	<b>Child Welfare Fund Balance, End of Year</b>	\$ (1,049,578)
<b>Expenses Child Welfare</b>			
Salaries and Benefits	\$ 13,465,376	Other Operating Balances End of Year	2,984
Boarding costs for children and youth in care	2,899,086	Restricted Fund Balance, End of year	2,653,318
Children in care and family support costs	2,124,014	Endowment Fund Balance, End of Year	132,819
Building occupancy and administration	975,514	<b>Total Fund Balances, End of Year</b>	\$ 1,739,543
	\$ 19,463,990		
<b>Child Welfare Excess of Revenue over Expenses</b>	\$ (343,000)		

This financial information is a summary from the audited financial statements. Full copies of the audited financial statements are available upon request.

“Thank you for thinking of us on Children & Youth in Care Day – what a wonderful surprise – I love popcorn!”

“Been very helpful. Especially with bringing supplies I need. As well as emotionally being there.” - youth in care

“CAS has helped me greatly throughout the pandemic by providing me with the necessary income to purchase new necessities like masks, and sanitizer, as well as with the higher prices for groceries. They have also given me the opportunity to still visit my mom through the pandemic, even with the new restrictions and limitations.” – youth in care