



We Value

Safety – Families – Relationships - Collaboration – Being Open & Willing to Change

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR THE PERIOD OF April 28, 2021- May 25, 2021



Equity & Indigenous Services

Asian and South Asian Heritage Month:



We recognized May as Asian and South Asian Heritage Month. It has been celebrated across Canada since the 1990s and is a time to reflect on and celebrate their contributions. One of our managers, Leena Singh will be presenting at our staff meeting. Her presentation can be viewed [HERE](#).

Virtual Museum of Asian Canadian Cultural Heritage:

<http://www.asian-heritage-month.org/>

Anti-Asian Racism

An announcement was made by the Ontario government that they will provide funding to support equity programs and initiatives with community partners. From the news release:

The initiatives will help ensure students learn in more inclusive classrooms and are supported by their educators and communities.

The COVID-19 pandemic has seen a concerning rise in instances of discrimination and hate crimes directed towards Canadians of Asian descent. Between March 2020 and February 2021, a year into the COVID-19 pandemic, there were 1,150 cases of racist attacks from across Canada. Most of these incidents, 40 per cent and 44 per cent of all cases of racist attacks and incidents, were reported from Ontario and British Columbia respectively. In many instances, these racially motivated attacks have targeted the vulnerable, including children and the elderly.

<https://news.ontario.ca/en/release/1000111/ontario-acting-to-combat-anti-asian-racism-in->

[schools](#)

National Day of Awareness of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls

On May 4th we raised awareness of the missing and murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. It's also known as Red Dress Day. The Sarnia Native Friendship Centre hosted a free online event for anyone to attend. This was shared with our staff.

In June 2019, the National Inquiry on MMIWG released its final report. The report and further information can be found at the link below. Calls to Justice were part of the report and there were 15 specific to social work and those implicated in child welfare. I encourage you to take the time to review them. Here are two:

We call upon all governments, including Indigenous governments, to transform current child welfare systems fundamentally so that Indigenous communities have control over the design and delivery of services for their families and children. These services must be adequately funded and resourced to ensure better support for families and communities to keep children in their family homes.

We call upon provincial and territorial governments and child welfare services for an immediate end to the practice of targeting and apprehending infants (hospital alerts or birth alerts) from Indigenous mothers right after they give birth. *(There is now a Directive in Ontario that child welfare agencies not use birth alerts. We have worked with community partners to implement this directive).*

<https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/>

POLICE POWERS DURING STAY – AT – HOME ORDER

In April, the Ontario government made an announcement giving enhanced power to the police to stop people at random; asking where they live and why they are not at home in an effort to reportedly stop the spread of Covid 19. Multiple police forces (including the local OPP detachments and Sarnia police) stated that they had no intention of following these regulations. The government quickly changed course and now police are permitted to stop vehicles or people only if they are suspected of participating in a public event or social gathering that is contrary to the stay at home order. We have been directly reassured by our local police officials on more than one occasion throughout the pandemic that they are taking an approach of engage and educate when it comes to possible violations of Covid 19 restrictions. Given the police brutality that has been witnessed and experienced across Canada both historically and more recently, we recognize that verbal assurances from the police may offer little comfort or protection for those staff who

identify as Indigenous, Black, racialized or members of the LGBT2SQ+ community. We drafted a letter for staff to request confidentially to HR that identifies them as an employee of the Sarnia. We also encouraged staff to carry their employee ID with them.

OACAS ALL BLACK STAFF MEETING

A child welfare sector all Black staff meeting was held on May12, 2021 and our staff were invited and encouraged to attend.

NEW RESEARCH STUDY- Examining child welfare investigations involving First Nation, Inuit and Métis children

The Child Welfare Research Portal and the Association of Native Child and Family Services Agencies of Ontario (ANCFSAO) have released a new study examining child welfare investigations involving First Nation, Inuit and Metis children and their overrepresentation in the child welfare system. The report, authored by Amber Crowe and Jeffrey Schiffer, is called [*Mashkiwenmi-daa Noojimowin: Let's Have Strong Minds for the Healing*](#), a name gifted by ANCFSAO Elder-in-Residence Danette Restoule.

Jordan's Principle

May 10th was Bear Witness Day, an important date in the history of Jordan's Principle.

<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=K400DWGt5bE&feature=youtu.be>

Bear Witness Day

MAY 10 is Spirit Bear's birthday and an important date in the history of Jordan's Principle. The Canadian Human Rights Tribunal's first non-compliance order called for Canada to fully implement Jordan's Principle by May 10, 2016. Sadly, it took several years and further non-compliance orders against Canada before any real progress was made.

Jordan's Principle is a child-first principle and legal rule named in memory of Jordan River Anderson. It ensures First Nations children receive the services and supports they need when they need them.

Show your support and "Bear Witness" to Jordan's Principle by bringing your bears to daycare, school or work on May 10th. Host a "Bear Party," coffee break or lunch to learn more about Jordan's Principle and to honour Jordan River Anderson.

Find out more about Jordan's Principle and don't forget to tweet and post your photos using the hashtags [#BearWitnessDay](#) and [#JordansPrinciple](#).

 jordansprinciple.ca | fncaringsociety.com | [@caringsociety](https://twitter.com/caringsociety)

 First Nations Child & Family Caring Society of Canada

New Rebound Service - Transparent

Rebound is offering a new service to support young people (age 12-24) who identify as transgender and their parents/caregivers. Information has been shared with all staff.

LOCAL EVENT



As previously mentioned by Adam Kilner during the last Board meeting, there is a local free event coming up and we are pleased to support: Gender, Sexuality, and Faith Forum is a response to the need for shared, communal conversation on LGBTQ+ issues as expressed by local LGBTQ+ individuals and their families, LGBTQ+ support groups, faith

leaders and faith communities, students and educators, and support agencies and service groups throughout the county.

- Gender, Sexuality & Faith will take place:
- June 8 (1-4pm) - theme - Faith Leaders
June 9 (3-6pm) - Youth
June 10 (6-9pm) - Education

Tickets are through Eventbrite for one or all of the events: <https://www.eventbrite.ca/.../gender-sexuality-faith...>



Getting through the Pandemic High Quality Service Delivery

Family Based Care Gathering

We enjoyed a successful and engaging morning on April 29th during a gathering on Family Based Care. 400 employees from 8 different child welfare agencies met to talk about how to increase family based care and reduce group care use. Our resource manager, Dawn Stewart, was part of a panel and did a great job sharing her experiences and responding quickly on her feet to the many questions that were asked of the panel members. While our agency has not used group care for over two years, it is necessary and helpful for us to be engaged in broader provincial conversations about family based care and share our experiences. There was also learning during the gathering that could be applied to other areas of our work – the importance of truly listening to children, youth and families and the importance of embedding equity.

We received positive feedback and are hopeful that it was a start to more children and youth remaining with families and not group care. At the conclusion of the event, Amber Crowe who is the Executive Director of Dnaagdawenmag Binnoojiiyag Child & Family Services provided reflections from the morning. For those who weren't able to attend, I'd like to share a couple with you:

- Far too often in child protection, we focus only on the physical safety of children. We need to be more holistic and consider a child's mind, body, spiritual and emotional well-being.
- It's not that we haven't been getting things right – we are getting it right in pockets and there are efforts to improve. It's that we need to get it right a lot more often.
- Use what we know and learn to do better.

97% of participants said they were very likely or likely to implement at least one idea or concept from the gathering. We are now completing a roll up of the notes from the breakout room discussions, reviewing the comments made in the chat box, reviewing the 3 question survey that was completed at the end and figuring out next steps.

Kim Godin also attended a provincial meeting with other Board Chairs and provided her input and perspective on the Board of Directors' role in supporting agencies in their efforts to reduce group care use. Thank you Kim!

Mental Health Week

MENTAL HEALTH WEEK 2021
May 3rd - May 9th, 2021

Get Ready to #GetReal about how you feel.

MONDAY 03	TUESDAY 04	WEDNESDAY 05	THURSDAY 06
Gratitude Join CMHA Lambton Kent & Fincor for an event all about mindfulness and self-care. Posted on CMHA Lambton Kent Facebook Page and IG TV @ 2pm.	Connect Join the C.K.S.S Parent Council along with community partners to discuss youth mental health and community resources. Live Zoom Panel Event @ 7:00pm.	Move Join CMHA Lambton Kent & Louren for a LIVE Pilates Class. Live on Zoom @ 9:00AM. Join CKCS as they share a kids yoga video on their social media!	Be Kind Join in the fun by sharing Humana Community Services social media posts all about KINDNESS.
FRIDAY 07	SATURDAY 08	SUNDAY 09	
Create Join CMHA Lambton Kent for a LIVE Zoom Design Therapy class at 10pm. Learn how you can use the body as a resource for mental wellness and self-care. Don't forget to enter in CKCS poster contest! Be on the look out for a video on their page on how to create a glitter jar!	Talk Let's talk about mental health! Join in on the conversation by following our social media accounts for promoted advice, articles and information to help you #GetReal about how you really feel.	Self-care Tune in to CKCS social media pages for tips and tricks for self-care!	Logos for Canadian Mental Health Association, ACCESS, St. Clair Children's Services, and Humana Community Services.

May 3-7 was mental health week this year's theme was Get Ready to #GetReal about how you feel.

Child & Youth in Care Day

On May 14th we celebrated Children and Youth in Care Day – an opportunity to recognize the enormous contributions that current and former youth in care make, as well as celebrate their strength, bravery, and resilience.



Our amazing children's services team along with Giresi's pizza & Just Blain Sweet Catering created a day to remember. We thank them for planning this very important event for making all the deliveries and for taking the time to connect with children and youth.



Also, on May 14th the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies launched Take 5 – a new website with lots of resources. Please share with all young people living in alternate care (foster, Formal Customary Care, kin). It covers things like:

- Self-care & compassion
- Culture & Identity
- Harm reduction
- Rights and the law, & more!

www.take-5.org

Other good news – Ontario announced they will be increasing funding to support educational needs for child & youth in care.

<https://news.ontario.ca/en/release/1000125/ontario-strengthening-educational-supports-for-children-and-youth-in-care>

STAY AT HOME ORDER & VACCINES:

With the extension of the Stay at Home Order, we will be maintaining our services 'as is' with everyone working remotely from the agency and will reassess by the end of June as cases begin to decline and more people are vaccinated.

Great news that vaccine eligibility for vaccines has been expanded to individuals age 12 and up.

We continue to track vaccine rates with our staff.



Strategic Planning

The strategic planning team has completed its interviewing, is reviewing all the information and expects to have proposed directions in the next few weeks. We are looking forward to their recommendations.



STAFF WELLNESS

Extra Long Weekend (by 1 day)

We know that our staff are exhausted and doing their best to get through these challenging times. In recognition of that, we gave the staff an additional day off on **Friday, May 21st** and encouraged them all to take the opportunity of an extra-long weekend to rest and recharge. We appreciate everything they are doing in our important work together for children, youth and families and all that they are managing through. Arrangements were made for our After-Hours team to cover the day to make it possible.

Indigenous Healer

We continue to have an Indigenous Healer who attends the agency and has been working with the Indigenous staff. More recently, she has started working with the non-Indigenous staff on the Indigenous Services team.

Social Committee & Getting Better Together Committee

The two committees continue to plan activities, some health workshops, exercise programs, and the occasional fun challenge with a game. It has been well attended and appreciated by staff able to make the time to join.

DAWN FLEGEL, M.S.W., R.S.W
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR.
