



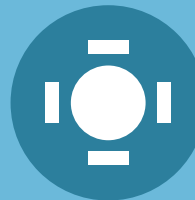
SARNIA-LAMBTON
CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETY

Annual Report

2019-2020

Children, Youth & Families

...at the  heart of everything we do!



Sarnia-Lambton Children's Aid Society is a trusted ally to families, communities & cultures in creating safe, nurturing environments for children and youth to grow and succeed.

ANNUAL MEETING AGENDA

Children, Youth & Families

...at the  heart of everything we do!

Tuesday, September 29, 2020 at 6:00 p.m.

1. Welcome & Call To Order
2. Approval Of Agenda
3. Guest Speaker - Nicole Bonnie, CEO of the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies
4. Motion To Approve The Minutes From September 24, 2019
5. Motion To Approve The President & Executive Directors Report
6. Motion To Approve The Actions Of The Board
7. Motion To Appoint The Auditor
8. Motion To Elect And Re-elect Directors
9. Adjournment

2019/2020 Board of Directors

President: Ryan Bell

Vice President: Kim Godin

Vice President of Finance: Todd McNeil

Secretary: Lynn Rosales

Directors: Johann Lewis, Steph Brown, Mariah Amor,

Joy McLean, Sharon Elaine Coyle,

Anne Marie Cosford, Kathy Alexander, Mark Williams



Board President & Executive Director Annual Report

How to write an annual report in the year 2020? Since mid-March, the pandemic has been all consuming and caused us to make very quick changes in almost every part of our service delivery with limited information and continuous uncertainty. Examples include most staff working from home, working virtually and engaging with people in a different way. Inequities that existed were magnified – those with money had access to the virtual opportunities and new ways of interacting. We purchased technology and provided it to young people and families to allow us to continue with providing our services and supports.

The pandemic has greatly exposed the pre-existing inequities and has differentially impacted particularly Indigenous and Black people. This is because of the ongoing systemic racism and resulting impacts. The worldwide protests and demands for justice are taking place within the context of the pandemic experience. Our work has continued and is part of the systemic racism that exists and the need for change. Below we provide some highlights and successes from each of our strategic directions.



CHASING ZERO

We are chasing having all children and youth growing up safe with families. It is at the heart of everything we do.

- The vast majority of children and young people we serve remain with their families. We have connected with families and their networks in different ways throughout the pandemic offering services and supports virtually and in person.
- During the 2020 Ministry review, there were zero Indigenous children in long term foster care.
- There remain zero children in group care. We have partnered with Dr. Kiaras Gharabaghi from Ryerson University to do research on Chasing Zero.
- A recruitment campaign was initiated to ensure that we have enough families to care for children in our communities.
- We continue to use Signs of Safety in our service delivery which is a strength based approach to building partnerships with the families we serve.



JOURNEY BESIDE

We will continue to work beside our First Nation partners to ensure the safety, permanency and well-being of their children and youth. We commit to learning from one another and sharing our agency's resources to support First Nation children and youth.

- Five years in a row we met our success marker - over 80% of all staff, foster parents, Board members and volunteers completed at least one training or learning opportunity regarding Indigenous people.
- We continue to partner on an ongoing basis with the First Nations to provide service to their members.
- The new federal legislation, an Act Respecting First Nations Inuit and Metis children youth and families came into effect on January 1st, 2020. This is a significant change and marks the government's affirmation of the right of self-government which includes jurisdiction over child and family services. The legislation also set out national principles and standards for serving Indigenous people with an intended purpose of contributing to the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples



ALL AT THE TABLE

There is a place for everyone at our table. No one person or group sits at the head. People of all ages, abilities, backgrounds, races, cultures genres and sexual orientations are welcome to pull up a chair and have their voices help shape our services and decisions.

- We created a five point equity plan that we have been implementing
- Employees and Board members participated in Equity Training.
- We released a public statement in support of racial justice and acknowledging the existence of systemic racism in child welfare.





OUR STORIES

By sharing our heartfelt stories, challenges and the changes we are making, we can better educate our community about the valuable work we do with children, youth and families.

- Staff wellness remained a strong focus over the past year with many people contributing in different ways. The level of support provided to each other during the pandemic has been incredible and much appreciated.
- Two break ins at our agency occurred in the fall of 2019 which resulted in improving our security measures.

ahead to the horizon and what may be coming. There have been some difficult challenges and unprecedented changes this year and throughout it all we have been impressed with the ways in which we are collectively working through them.

2020 was the final year of our strategic plan and we will be taking some time in the fall to determine next steps and our next future directions. We are proud of the successes of our agency over the past five years and deeply grateful to each of you for your contributions to the important work. We know that the creativity, resourcefulness and positive energy among all of you will contribute to success in our future for the benefit of families and communities.

Thank you.



Ryan Bell
Board President



Dawn Flegel
Executive Director



MY CIRCLE

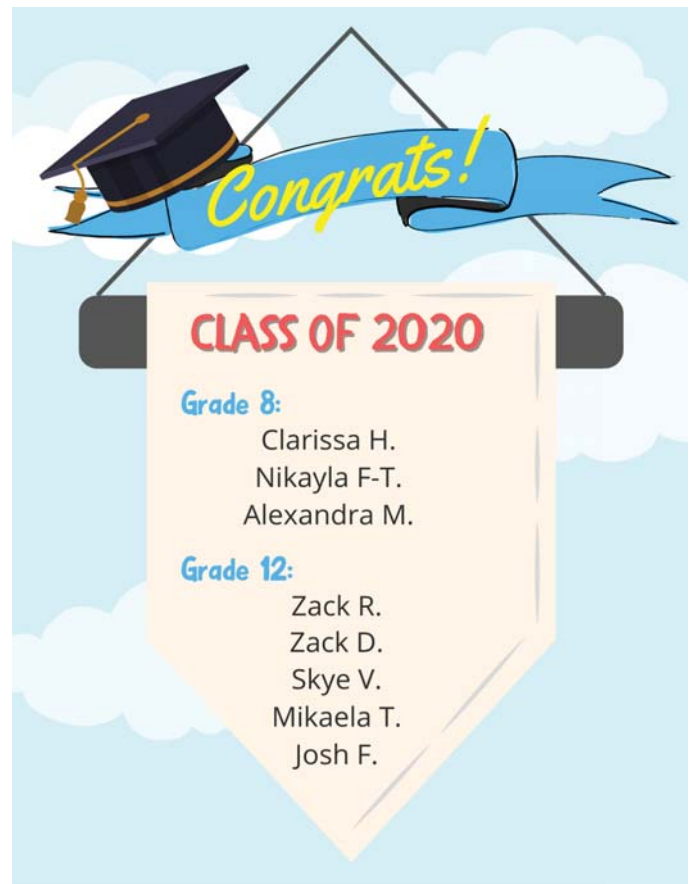
Each of us has the personal responsibility to ask ourselves "What role do I play in helping us meet our goals?" and "How am I committing myself to our mission?" This is your circle.

- Every staff, foster parent, volunteer and Board member has a personal goal that helped us achieve our strategic directions.

A new law and requirements related to privacy and confidentiality came into effect on Jan 1st 2020. Our staff have been trained and we have made changes in our work ensuring that families know what information we are collecting about them and what we will be using it for. The Ontario government announced plans for Child Welfare Redesign which includes 5 pillars. Details and implementation of the 5 pillars will be forthcoming in the months and years ahead.

- Supporting Child, Youth, Family and Community Well-Being – with a focus on prevention and early intervention
- Improving Quality of Care in residential services and minimizing the use of group care
- Strengthening Youth Supports and ensuring children, youth and families have a strong voice in decisions about their care.
- Improving Stability and Permanency - children and youth deserve supportive and loving homes that respond to their needs and identities.
- Increasing System Accountability & Sustainability

We are pleased to report that we have navigated the bumpy and unpredictable waters of 2020 well and are looking



CLASS OF 2020

Grade 8:

Clarissa H.
Nikayla F-T.
Alexandra M.

Grade 12:

Zack R.
Zack D.
Skye V.
Mikaela T.
Josh F.



Supporting our Youth through COVID

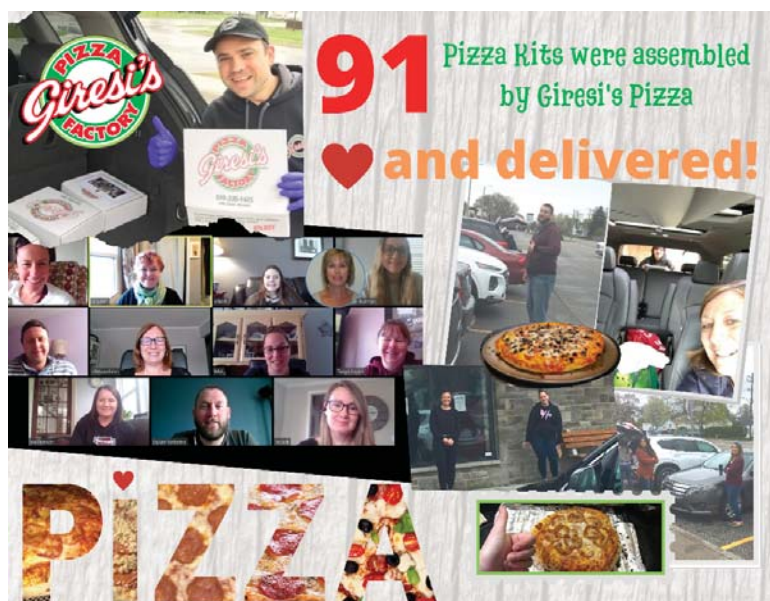


At the onset of COVID, we approached youth we serve to obtain their feedback on what youth felt they required in this new COVID situation. Their feedback led us to providing weekly support with activities, socially distanced interactions as well as regular food support. In our partnership with the Inn of the Good Shepherd, we deliver between 14 to 17 food boxes bi-weekly that support over 17 young people/their children throughout Sarnia-Lambton. The youth are excited and eagerly wait for their delivery and to have a socially distanced visit with their worker. The Inn has been incredible in supporting youth we serve and often are able to supply additional food and often special treats such as candy and chocolate. The worker noted that there was so much extra that she barely was able to fit it all into her car and she saw lots of smiling faces when they saw the bonus treats!

On the alternate week from the food box delivery, Family Support Workers drop off a themed activity/self-care package to provide youth with creative ways to entertain themselves and stay connected. These activities have included baking or decorating baked goods, meals or new recipes to try, crafts or art activities. Workers also included positive mantras and challenges to distribute. We supplied summer tips for heat waves with sunscreen, summer themed activities, tie dye and more. The drop off themes rotate through self-expression, arts and crafts, cooking, baking and life skill development. They receive all items, ingredients or supplies required for each activity as well as directions and are encouraged to use their own creativity when completing. Each drop off includes a letter to the youth from workers sending some words of encouragement, directions, and 2 self-care tips per week. We received positive feedback from youth who identified this was something to look forward to and these activities gave them something to focus on or do while things were limited and closed in the community. Youth were encouraged to send pictures of their completed activity to workers and this reinforced for us that youth we serve are amazing, talented and resilient. Many new skills were learned, and talents uncovered, and it provided youth an ability to practice a skill or try something new.



2020 Youth In Care Day



Due to COVID, we had to be creative in how we were going to acknowledge Youth in Care Day for amazing children and youth in care. It was a tremendous success with 91 pizza making kits delivered throughout Lambton County. We asked children/youth /caregivers to take photos of children and youth making their pizzas and we received many. We did a draw for specific age groups and handed out prizes. All of the children and their caregivers had very positive comments to say about this activity. It was also rewarding to hear stories of foster families and children all working together to create their pizza and sitting down and sharing it as a family. The Children's Services staff were just as excited in delivering the kits to their children and foster families as the kids were to receive them!



Fostering During the Pandemic

Foster parents to a child have been an incredible support during a very difficult time for a child's mother. From the first meeting the foster parents passed no judgement about the mother's substance misuse. They recognized the intergenerational trauma and barriers she was facing and honoured these. They acknowledged to the mother how hard things must be for her. The foster parents took some very concrete steps to forge a supportive relationship with the mother of the child they were caring for:

- They asked about things the child had in his bedroom at home and got him a car bed just like he had at his mom's place
- They asked his mom for photos of her to display in the child's room to help him be comfortable
- They included his mom in nighttime phone calls and routines and went at the child's pace
- The child was unsure at bath time and so they got him a bathing suit so he could feel respected and still get soapy and clean
- They followed the child's lead in regard to providing physical comfort and hugs; waiting until the child was ready
- They attended all meetings and made time so mom could have some extra time with the child afterward that she did not expect
- They provided a weekly flash drive of photos, updates, and any crafts that the child was making that they provided to mom at visits
- They ensured that the holidays and birthdays were recognized by the child for mom
- They provided an iPad to mom that they were no longer using so that mom could have better quality phone and video calls and daily updates; they allowed mom to just watch her child play through the video calls
- The foster parents attended the grandfather's home so that mom and grandpa could see the child and play from a physical distance especially on Mother's Day; they then invited grandpa to their home for a father's day visit in the backyard with mom so that she could see where child was living

Mom reports being incredibly grateful that these individuals do not judge her and include her in everything for her child and that she can feel confident he is safe and she is not kept from him. This is an incredible step as the mother was initially very afraid of the type of care that he would receive while in foster care. Mom reports that the foster family are going to be life-long supports to her and her child.

This family approached mom from a place of inclusion recognizing the importance of this child's bond with his mother. They made every effort to include her in a safe way in the child's life during his time in care and during a pandemic. The child is now moving to a kinship home and the foster parents have had visits with the kin and mom. The family developed a transition plan, visits and shared concerns on their own with minimal facilitation or guidance from the Society. This kept the power within the family and the network to meet the child's needs in the ways they felt were best.



MY CIRCLE

Each of us has the personal responsibility to ask ourselves “What role do I play in helping us meet our goals?” and “How am I committing myself to our mission?” This is your circle.

Success Marker: Every staff person, Board member, foster parent and volunteer has a personal goal that will help us achieve our strategic goals.



“I am committed to ensure that access to personal records is accomplished in a timely manner, with the utmost respect to the emotions, and privacy of those we serve; also to act with compassion with handling the histories of those who request their files.”
- Sarah Irwin

“I am committed to work diligently, collaboratively and respectfully for happy, healthy, and thriving children and families.”
- Mary Jane Moynahan

“I will support youth working towards independence and meeting their goals, as well as supporting children in foster care. I will advocate for the children and youth I work with, so their voices are heard.”
- Emma Ikert

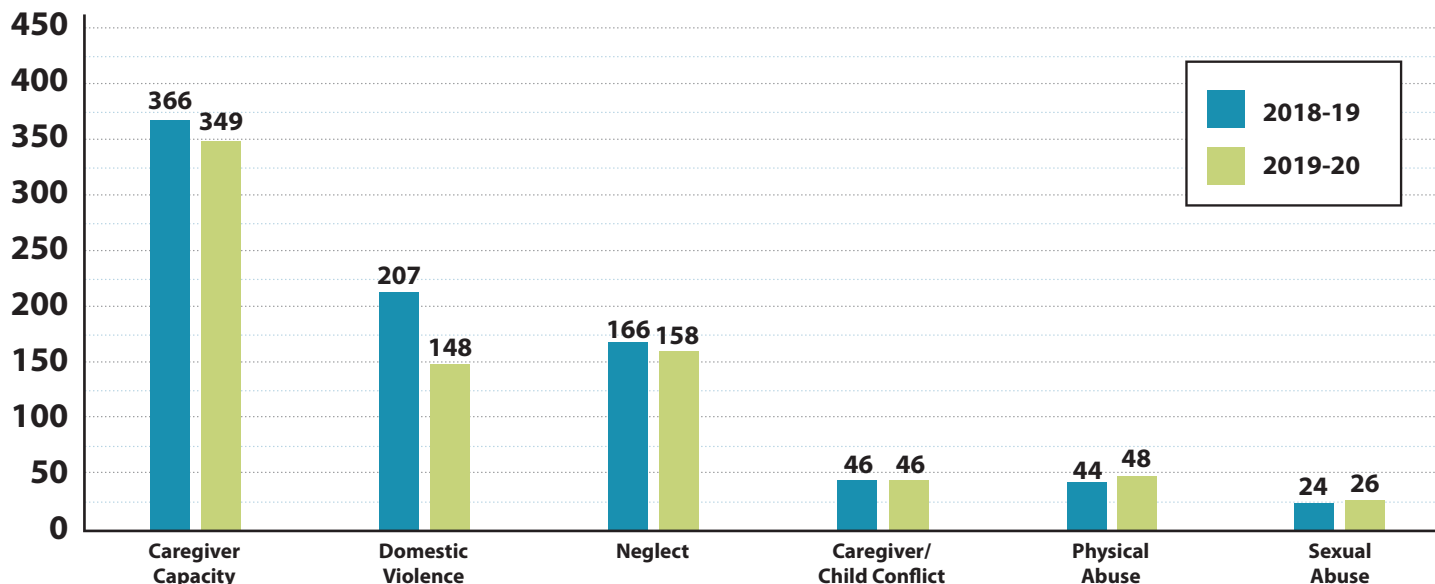
“I am committed to listening to the children I support and putting their voices at the centre of our work. I will implement the Signs of Safety framework to develop strong working relationships with families to empower and support them in reaching their goals.”
- Justine Willison



“I am committed to working alongside the children, youth and families we serve to highlight the child’s voice at the centre of all our work we do together. It is imperative that everyone who the family identifies is at their table, is welcome in supporting the family to ensure that children are able to thrive in a safe, positive and healthy environment.”
- Taryn Lee



Types of Allegations



Financials

Expenditures

	2019	2020
Salaries & Benefits	10,740,550	11,128,167
Travel	572,940	467,211
Training & Recruitment, Promotion & Misc.	57,233	52,118
Building Occupancy	358,615	287,986
Professional Services – Clients	231,708	233,878
Board Care	2,101,469	1,792,370
Personal Needs – Clients	1,070,983	772,907
Health & Other Related – Clients	138,361	146,520
Office Administration Supplies & Professional Services	497,255	426,638
Technology	132,107	98,989
Total Expenditures	15,901,221	15,406,784

Revenues

Expenditure Recoveries & Other	788,697	701,896
Provincial Subsidy	15,055,911	14,730,581
Total Revenues	15,844,608	15,432,477
Net Surplus (Deficit)	(56,613)	25,693
^a Balanced Budget Fund (Contribution) - Utilization	0	0
Ministry Managed Fund		
(Deficiency) excess of revenues versus expenditures per audited statement	(56,613)	25,693
Add back expenditures recognized for GAAP Audit Compliance	23,936	83,722
Net Operating Surplus/(Deficit)	(32,677)	109,415

^a The Ministry of Children and Youth Services has created the “Balanced Budget Fund” to support Children’s Aid Societies in meeting the balanced budget requirement set out in Regulation 70 and to proactively manage the risks associated with a multi-year budget planning process. During the year ended March 31, 2018, Sarnia-Lambton CAS generated a surplus that may be eligible for access in subsequent years under the Balanced Budget fund. ****Audited Statements are available on the agency website.**

