

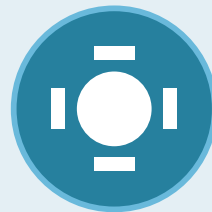


**SARNIA-LAMBTON**  
CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETY

# Annual Report

2016-2017

*"Everyone Has A Story"*



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

# "Everyone Has A Story"

**Tuesday, September 26th, 2017**

1. Welcome – Gayle Montgomery, Board President
2. First Nation Welcome – Melissa Patriquin, Manager of Indigenous Services
3. Youth in Care – Icebreaker
4. Youth Presentation
5. Greetings from Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies – Mark Atanasoff
6. Annual Report – Dawn Flegel/Gayle Montgomery
7. Business Meeting – Gayle Montgomery
8. Recognition of departing Board members
9. Staff Long Service Recognitions
10. Guest Speaker – Shantel Knight
11. Family Awards
12. Youth in Care Awards
13. Closing Remarks – Mark Horrocks, Ministry of Children and Youth Services
14. Adjournment

## 2016/2017 Board of Directors

**President:** Gayle Montgomery  
**Vice President:** Michelle Shelswell  
**Vice President of Finance:** Todd McNeil  
**Secretary:** Lynda Donovan  
**Directors:** Charlene McMahon, Johann Lewis, Ron Geerts, Sondra Gilbert, Ryan Bell, Julie George, Lynn Rosales, Jack Poirier



# Board President & Executive Director Annual Report

We are proud to share with you some of the highlights from the progress we have been making on our strategic plan:

## CHASING ZERO

There are fewer children growing up in care. This year's Crown Ward review had 8 youth being reviewed compared to 39 youth 5 years ago. The average number of total children in care has also dropped significantly. These results are happening because everyone is working together to ensure children and youth are safe with families – birth families, kin families, Customary Care families and adoptive families. We also continue to partner with First Nations and the community to meet the needs of families who are struggling. Caring Connections (House of Sophrosyne), Housing & Hope (North Lambton Community Health Centre) and Mental Health (Canadian Mental Health Association) all have staff at our offices to support the children, youth and families we jointly serve. We greatly value this level of collaboration.

## ALL AT THE TABLE

We are in our second year of implementing Signs of Safety. Families, First Nations and community partners continue to attend planning meetings to collectively ensure that there are safe, nurturing environments for children and youth to grow and succeed. We have been an active participant in the opening of the Hub – a one stop place for youth to go and receive whatever services and supports they need. Youth have been very involved in the dreaming and creation of the Hub. It's been a community partnership with over 35 different agencies all at the table.

## JOURNEY BESIDE

Five years ago, there were close to 50 Indigenous children and youth in care. Today, there are 4. We are working very closely with the First Nations to ensure that their children are growing up safe with their families and connected to their communities. This year, we also started to use Formal Customary Care. For the second year in a row, we met our success marker of at least 80% of all staff, Board members, foster parents and volunteers participating in a local training or learning opportunity regarding Indigenous people. Mandatory training in this area is now a provincial commitment.

## OUR STORIES

The theme for our Annual General Meeting this year is Everyone Has a Story. We look forward to sharing some of our stories with you throughout the meeting. One of the challenges over the past year was our change to the Child Protection Information Network (CPIN) which is a province wide electronic database. While we value and support all Children's Aid Societies using the same system in order to improve child safety, we have lost some of the functionality that we had with our old system and we have encountered numerous difficulties with the new one. It is a challenge that we continue to work through.

## MY CIRCLE

We each have a responsibility to ask ourselves what role we will play in helping our agency meet our goals. Every staff person, Board member, foster parent and volunteer has a Circle which is our personal commitment on what we are willing to do. We share our circles in a variety of ways throughout the year.

With our agency value of being open and willing to change, we know that there is always more work to be done, improvements to be made.

There will be new provincial legislation in the year ahead – the Child, Youth and Family Services Act is expected to be proclaimed in the spring 2018 and the age of protection increased to 18 years in the fall 2017. There is a new plan for improving residential services (foster homes, group homes, Outside Paid Resources, custody) and we welcome the positive changes for children and youth. We also continue to work locally and provincially toward reconciliation with Indigenous people and communities.

We would like to extend our sincere appreciation to all the Board members, staff, volunteers, kinship / foster / Customary Care / adoptive families, First Nations and community partners for their ongoing commitment to the work we do together. We remain honoured to serve the children, youth and families in our communities and thank them for the privilege.



Gayle Montgomery  
Board President



Dawn Flegel  
Executive Director



# THE CHASING ZERO REPORT

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

**Success Marker: Zero children & youth growing up in care by 2020**

## What we are doing to meet our success marker:

*These are just a few highlights of what we have been working on to reach our success marker.*

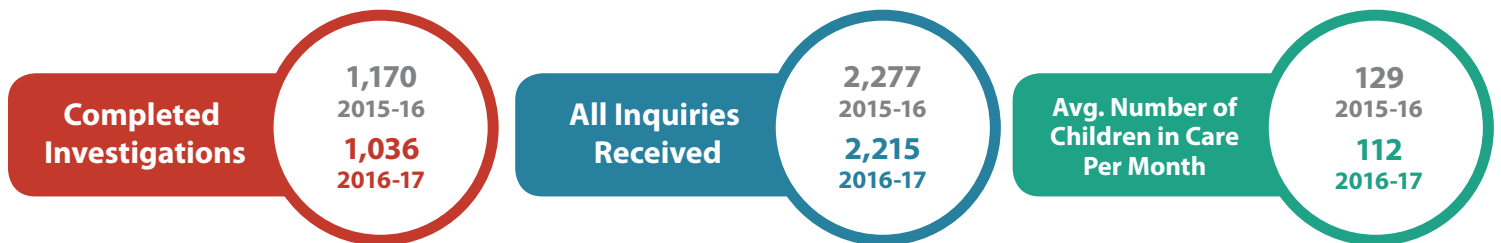
- Using Signs of Safety / Encouraging Family Involvement at Case Conferences
- Chasing Zero has now been incorporated into the community plan for Working Together for Kids Mental Health.
- Conducting Community Presentations on Chasing Zero

## Crown Ward Review: **Since 2013 down 79%**

Every year the Ministry reviews the file of any child or youth who has been a Crown Ward for a minimum of two years. As there are fewer children and youth growing up in care there is a large decrease in the number of files being reviewed every year. In 2013 the Ministry reviewed 39 files and in 2017 only 8.

## Number of Indigenous Children in Care: **Since 2012 down 92%**

We continue to partner with the First Nations and together we have reduced the number of Indigenous Children in Care from almost 50 in 2012 to 4 who remain in care today.



## Highlights

### Indigenous Children and Youth

Together with our First Nation partners, we are pleased to announce that at the end of this fiscal year, there were only 4 Indigenous children and youth in the care of the Sarnia Lambton CAS. Five years ago, there were close to 50. What brought about such significant change? There are many contributing factors, the most important being that we work in true partnership with the First Nations to keep their children safe in their communities. These partnerships have also resulted in the following creative initiatives that provide for culturally appropriate alternate care homes for children and youth:

- This year 2 local First Nations adopted Formal Customary Care to authorize placements for their children and youth.
- Together the CAS and the First Nations have been successful in identifying and approving family placements for children and youth rather than bringing them into care.
- The Walpole Island First Nation approves its own family placements under the license of the Sarnia CAS. This work has now expanded to include children from the Nation who are in the care of other CASs. This year, 6 children from Walpole Island were repatriated as a result.



## Gathering of the Nations and the Southwest Children's Aid Societies

On May 26th, 2017 representatives from 8 First Nations, 1 Indigenous pre-mandated agency and 8 southwest Children's Aid Societies gathered for an opportunity to begin to develop and strengthen our relationships. There is a very difficult history and current challenges that exist between Children's Aid Societies and First Nations people. Together, we talked about what practices were working well and what needed to change to make service to First Nation children, youth and families more responsive and consistent. This was the first time a gathering like this has occurred in the southwest area. We are grateful to Chief Rogers and Aamjiwnaang First Nation for hosting the gathering on their territory and for the generosity they showed. We were proud to participate in this important work.

### Signs of Safety

Signs of Safety is an innovative strengths-based, safety approach to child protection that was created in Western Australia by Andrew Turnell and Steve Edwards. They worked with over 150 front line workers and based it on what those workers know works well with difficult cases. The Signs of Safety approach has attracted international attention and is being used in jurisdictions across North America, Europe and Australia.

We use Signs of Safety in our family meetings and through feedback we have found that this tool helps families and caregivers to work with the CAS and other services to keep children safe. Families (this includes extended family members, friends, support services, etc.) are experts about their own children and therefore it is essential that they are present in planning to improve the situation for their child or children.

### Youth CAN:

#### Youth Communications, Advocacy and Networking

YouthCAN has been a great opportunity over the years for youth from across Ontario to meet and develop connections, network and learn and enhance communication, teamwork and leadership and advocacy skills. More than 250 participants come together for 2 nights and 3 days of motivational speakers, hands-on workshops and activities on a college and/or University environment.

Youth gain a true post-secondary experience through staying on campus. They have the opportunity to work with college and university students through various leadership team and skill building activities as well as various interactive learning sessions. A Career Crawl/Poster session is offered for youth to explore different opportunities in various communities and career options while having a chance to win some fabulous prizes. YouthCAN offers energetic and motivational keynote speakers, opportunities for youth to showcase their talents at a talent show and have some fun at a dance with an unlimited photo booth access.

Sarnia-Lambton Children's Aid has had the opportunity to share this experience with 60 plus youth throughout the past 10 years, with most youth asking to return. Youth come back feeling empowered and ready to continue to network with their new friends and share their new experiences.

**GRADE 12**

Nathan  
Larissa  
Nickoma  
Delon  
Jonathan  
Tiha  
Eric

*Congratulations*  
**2017**  
**GRADUATES**

**COLLEGE**

Carly  
Taylor  
Jessica  
Hailey





"I will commit to my continued professional development which will embrace the 'signs of safety' approach to working with families, challenging oppression and creating best outcomes for the families I serve."

- Avery



"I will continue to ensure that I provide my skills and knowledge to assist in better outcomes for First Nations children, I will also commit myself to learning new skills and gain more knowledge to walk alongside my families in a healthy balance."

- Zelda



"I will be the story keeper. I will collect and holdfast our stories of triumph and humbleness bearing witness to the consuming work that happens here. With a vigilant eye on confidentiality I will transcribe stories as they are told to me as a testimony to our efforts to reach our strategic goals and as a tool for management to better educate our community about the valuable work we do."

- Sherry



"I will continue to develop skills in the areas of facilitation and 'mapping' and ensure that I am supporting family participation in planning for their children."

- Christie



I will implement the strategies that I have learned through AOP, signs of safety training etc. to ensure that I am working with families from a family centered, respectful, collaborative approach while still ensuring child safety.

- Connie



I will ensure that I am using SOS with all my families to support the 'all at the table' direction, by working collaboratively together.

- Dana





“Our goal as foster parents is to have our home remain a loving, nurturing, and safe environment and to help kids in need; whether it be through the goal of reunification with their biological family or eventual adoption.”

- Pritchett Foster Family

“As a person who has strived to build lasting relationships, to foster collaboration and reduce discourse, and carry a personal philosophy that everyone has a fantastic story to share and is capable of providing teachable moments, it is my personal goal to use these skills and life lessons to make a positive impact on the agency’s chasing zero strategic plan. I pledge to observe, listen, share, act and respect. ”

- Jack, Board of Directors

My role is being a role model, mentor. I find that children like it when I share my story with them. They tend to open up and ask more questions when they know I have gone through or witnessed something similar to what they are telling me. It’s a great way to mentor and engage them in conversation. I commit to encourage positive attitudes and pointing out the good in all situations.

- Patti, Volunteer

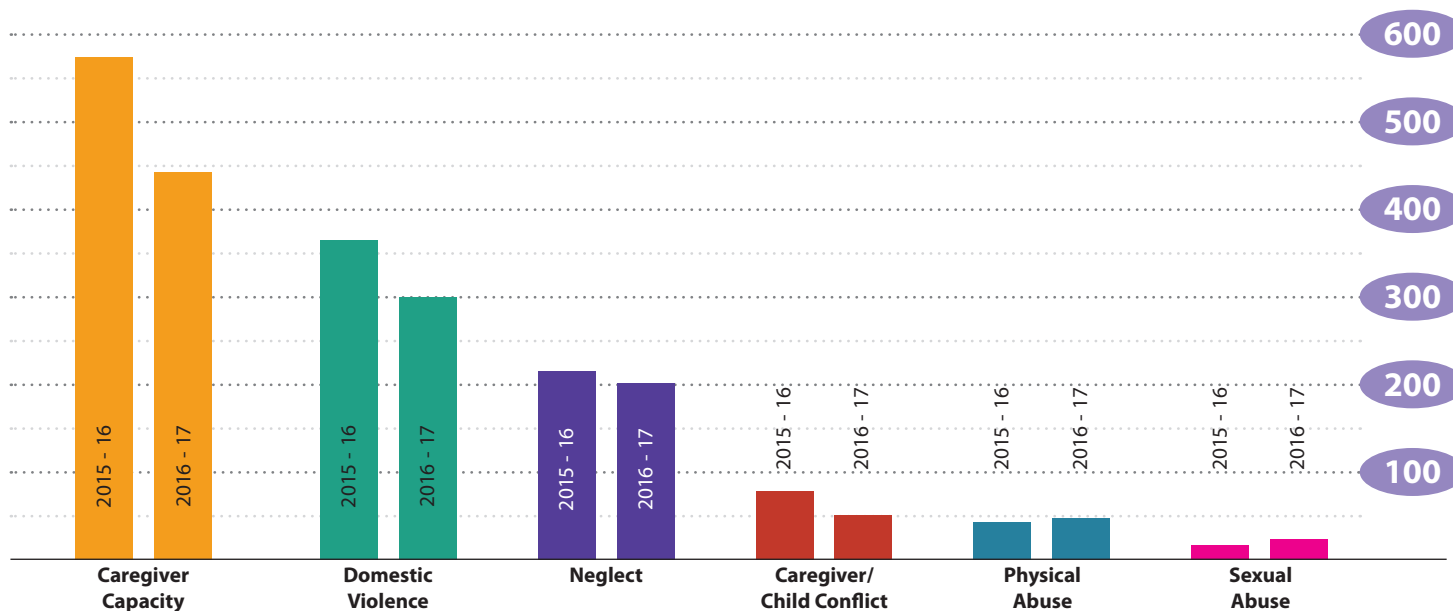
## MY CIRCLE

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.



# Types of Allegations Received



## Financials

### Expenditures

	2017	2016
Salaries & Benefits	10,458,271	10,654,789
Travel	559,625	735,720
Training & Recruitment, Promotion & Misc.	298,146	292,227
Building Occupancy	381,591	705,486
Professional Services – Clients	343,182	372,540
Board Care	2,523,741	3,094,697
Personal Needs – Clients	1,424,798	1,167,024
Health & Other Related – Clients	169,665	269,314
Office Administration Supplies & Professional Services	458,889	421,584
Technology	234,147	145,494
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>16,853,055</b>	<b>17,858,875</b>

### Revenues

Expenditure Recoveries & Other	342,183	163,063
Provincial Subsidy	16,433,128	16,740,517
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>16,775,311</b>	<b>16,903,580</b>
Net Surplus (Deficit)	(77,744)	(955,295)
<sup>a</sup> Balanced Budget Fund (Contribution) - Utilization	373,730	731,633
Ministry Managed Fund		
(Deficiency) excess of revenues versus expenditures per audited statement	295,986	(223,662)
Add back expenditures recognized for GAAP Audit Compliance	(295,986)	222,551
<b>Net Operating Surplus/(Deficit)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(1,111)</b>

<sup>a</sup> 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, 2014, Sarnia-Lambton CAS generated a surplus of \$1,146,614 that may be eligible for access until March 31, 2017. \*\*Audited Statements are available on the agency website.

