



We Value

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

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR THE PERIOD OF January 29th, 2020 - February 25th, 2020

In February, we recognize and honour Black History month. There will be a presentation and food shared in the February staff meeting as well as ongoing social media posts. We are grateful to the Black staff at our agency who met together and provided input on how to recognize the month and the important contributions of Black Canadians.



Chasing Zero

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.

I met with the former provincial advocate for children & youth, Irwin Elman, and Faith Goodman, the founder of an organization called [Until the Last Child](#). They were particularly interested in Chasing Zero and how we achieved no children in group care. We had a discussion about the child welfare sector and Faith's desire to work alongside the sector in innovation. Her organization provides funding and has connections to corporate businesses. I have connected them to Nicole Bonnie at the OACAS.



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, genders and sexual

orientations are welcome to pull up a chair and have their voices help shape our services and decisions. Success Markers: Family involvement in case conferences increases by 10% a year beginning in 2016. Families have a way of telling us if our services were helpful and why.

Equity training with the Board of Directors for Sarnia and Chatham was held in February. I believe it went very well in terms of learning and providing an opportunity to connect with members of another Board. Next steps for the Board on Equity will be included as an agenda item at the February Board meeting.

Updates on our progress with the agency's Equity Plan are included [HERE](#).



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 Nations children, youth and families. Success Marker – a minimum of 80% of staff, foster parents, Board members and volunteers have participated in at least one local training or [learning opportunity](#) per year regarding Indigenous People.

The locks on the Indigenous meeting room have been removed – it was a long time coming. I am grateful to the working group who were thoughtful and thorough in their analysis and recommendations – Sondra Gilbert, Diana Cryle, Andrea Dalziel, Terry Button, Dylan Stelpstra and Brandon Ceschan. I am also very thankful to Lynn Rosales, Sharon Elaine Coyle and Sondra Gilbert for reviewing the report & recommendations and meeting with me to make a decision about the removal of the locks. There was unanimous support for the removal. Another incident in the Indigenous meeting room has resulted in an updated risk assessment. Once completed, it will be shared with all staff.

Cecil Isaac from Walpole Island First Nation provided a teaching on drums and helped us work through the concerns with the drums that were created by the management team and in the Indigenous meeting room. Learning, a deeper understanding and healing were part of the process.

An Indigenous Working Group meeting occurred in February with two Band representatives from two local First Nations meeting with us. Topics covered included sharing updates with each other, current challenges in our work together, the hiring process and the upcoming foster care recruitment campaign. There is a full day meeting scheduled in April for discussion, understanding and planning related to the new federal legislation – An Act Respecting First Nations Inuit and Metis children youth and families.

Our progress to date on achieving the success marker for one local training or learning opportunity per year regarding Indigenous people is as follows;

Staff – 63%

Foster Parents – 7% -

Board - 9 %

Volunteers 5%

Learning Opportunities can be viewed [HERE](#).



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. Success Marker: We have an annual communication plan that provides the public with more information about the work we do.

In March we will be launching a foster parent recruitment campaign. A media release will go out, there will be radio ads and boosted Facebook posts. Our hope is that we have 20 new foster homes in 2020 – 10 homes for teens and 10 homes for tots – these are the two greatest areas of need. Together with families and partners, we have made a lot of progress on Chasing Zero and supporting children with families. We have no children in group care. In order to maintain the progress we have made and keep kids in their communities, we need to increase the foster homes that are available. We encourage Board members to participate in the Facebook posts & to reach out within their networks to help us demonstrate the community wide support for “Young People Matter.”

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YOUNG PEOPLE MATTER

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Young People Matter



John Honitt, Director, Education
Lambton Kent District School Board

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Terry Welsh
Nick Salaris, Executive Director
Lambton County Developmental Services

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CARRIE MCEACHRAN
Executive Director
Sarnia-Lambton Homelessness

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My Circle

Each of us has the 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: everyone has a personal goal that helps us achieve our strategic goals.

We have achieved our success marker in this area. Here are a couple of circles:

“I will continue to share the importance of keeping family connections for our children in care as we explore permanency.”
- Christine Porter

“I will strive to promote Diversity, Equity and Inclusiveness through my commitment to building and strengthening relationships with families in the Indigenous community and relationships in the workplace. I will do so through education, reaching out, listening and learning from those we serve.”

- Margaret Price



Getting Better Together

Wellness in the workplace continues as a priority for our agency and we believe we are making progress. I will continue to report on this area in my monthly reports to the Board.

Thank you very much to Kim Godin, Lynn Rosales and Anne Marie Cosford for helping the management team cook breakfast at the [second annual staff recognition event](#). There was positive energy and good feedback from staff about the event. We recognized 13 staff for service awards – we recognize staff in 5 year increments.

20 Years of Service – Wendy White

15 Years of Service – Melody Bourque

10 Years of Service – Kim Doyon and Charlene Taylor

5 Years of Service:

- ✓ Andrea Gaudenzi
- ✓ Brandon Ceschan
- ✓ Dylan Stelpstra
- ✓ Karl Felgel
- ✓ Karleigh Acton
- ✓ Leah Croft
- ✓ Lynda Cull
- ✓ Nikki Lightfoot
- ✓ Trish Stewart

The [Wellness Expo](#) that is being organized by the Getting Better Together Work Group is on track to occur with a variety of vendors on Wednesday April 29th, 2020 at the Point Edward Arena. Board members are welcome to attend and extend an invitation to staff in their own workplaces. A flyer for the event will be circulated once it's available.

Submitted by:
DAWN FLEGEL, M.S.W., R.S.W
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR.