



### We Value

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

## REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR THE PERIOD OF November 29<sup>th</sup>, 2017 - January 30<sup>th</sup>, 2018

As this year comes to a close and we head into the new year, I invite you to join me in taking time to remember a few of the highlights of our agency from 2017:

1. Nathan received the YMCA Leadership Award. He also did a fantastic job as the co-chair of our Annual General Meeting.



2. The Ministry of Children and Youth Services conducts a Crown Ward Review every year of files of any child/youth who has been a Crown Ward for a minimum of two years. In 2017, we did very well and there were positive comments from the reviewers about the quality of care being provided. There has been a large decrease in the number of files being reviewed every year – a positive indicator that there are fewer children and youth growing up in care in Sarnia-Lambton.

Year of Review	# of Youth who are Crown Wards
2013	39
2014	29
2015	27
2016	19
2017	8

3. We participated along with First Nation partners in the Provincial Apology and continue our work on meeting the Indigenous Commitments that were made to make a positive difference. We are recognized as provincial leaders in our field regarding our work with Indigenous partners. Examples include: We are piloting Heart & Spirit. We began a partnership with Payukotayno James & Hudson Bay Family Services. Jen Thrasher presented along with Mark Atanasoff from the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies at a provincial Director of Service meeting about Our Story and the analysis of it. Our agency was also featured in the Voice which is a publication of the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies.
4. The Protocol between Aamjiwnaang First Nation, Mnaasged Child & Family Services and the Sarnia CAS was signed and a community engagement meeting held. Many people were involved for several years with its creation and revisions. Janice Rising was involved from the beginning.



5. The Board of Directors approved a new Signs of Safety policy. The Signs of Safety principles will continue to be incorporated into other policies and practices within the agency.
6. We are a member of the Rainbow Health Ontario Working Group in Sarnia-Lambton that is chaired by Lambton Public Health. Some staff attended a Gender and Sexual Diversity Conference in June.

7. In May we were honoured to have been the recipient of Shell's Fuelling Kindness event. Shell partnered with Northern High School and students brought lunch to our agency for staff to enjoy. They also provided gift certificates for youth/families we serve.



8. Our community partnerships continued. Examples - A Housing and Hope worker from North Lambton Community Health Centre started coming to our office. A worker from the Canadian Mental Health Association also started working in our office.
9. The Hub opened and so far has been attended by 215 young people who visited more than 3,785 times. We have been an active participant in the Hub including two agency staff attending three days a week.
10. We created an Indigenous Gathering Space, the room is being used and we have received very positive feedback about it.
11. We completed another round of collective bargaining which resulted in a 3 year agreement.
12. Office moves.....we heard from many staff that they not like the changes that were made a couple years ago. We listened and involved front line staff and managers together in creating the new assignments and then worked to make that happen.

I extend my sincere appreciation for the Board's support over the past year. It's incredible what happens in a year and what we can accomplish together. Across the agency, the continued support, commitment and caring toward children, youth, families and communities is humbling and heart-warming. I feel proud to be here.



## 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.

Raising the age of protection to include 16 and 17 year olds has created new opportunities for youth to receive supports and services from a Children's Aid Society without needing to be in care. We will be meeting with youth who are currently Crown Wards to let them know about the new option for them. This aligns with Chasing Zero.



## 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.

The Ministry's Identity Based Data Directive was received and is required to be implemented February 5, 2018 for CPIN agencies. We fully support the intent of the Directive and it corresponds to our All at the Table direction. There will be challenges in implementing including explaining the information and consent to children and youth, how to ask the questions and the length of time it will take to complete the survey with every child and youth and enter the information into CPIN.

The Family Feedback Pilot with families continues. The pamphlet and questions have been completed and we have staff volunteers who will provide them to families to complete.



## 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.

Three Indigenous training and information sessions were provided to foster parents and Board members in December. We have reached our success marker for the year for Board members (100%) and staff (86%). We will be focusing on foster parents and volunteers for the last quarter of the fiscal year.



## 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.

There was an excellent community response for donations for the Youth Holiday party. Photos were taken of donors/volunteers and shared on our Facebook page.



## 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:

My hope is to prevent children from coming into care and keeping them within their family and or community. I plan to do this by supporting families that we work with by preparing them and giving them the tools to support their own family independently. I will do this by connecting them with their community, supporting them in their healing journey and assisting them in reaching out for services in their time of need. I will support them by helping them address current protection concerns and preventing future ones by advocating on their behalf and giving them the confidence to care for their families in a safe and protective manner.

- Miranda Dockstater

“As an initial point of contact, I commit to engage families in a respectful and trauma-informed manner, taking the time to listen to their stories so they feel heard and their strengths are appreciated. I commit to using the Signs of Safety practice principals wherever possible to build trust and bring transparency into my interactions with families.”

- Leah Meidinger

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