



We Value

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

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR THE PERIOD OF November 28th, 2018 - January 29th, 2019

Happy New Year to each of you & your families!



Nicole Bonnie is the new Chief Executive Officer for the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies and she started in her role on January 14th, 2019. She will be leading the sector through a time of large changes and a new provincial government. There will be time spent during the Board meeting on what some of the messaging has been and what we are anticipating.



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.

There has been a meeting with a few community partners who sit on the Working Together for Kids Mental Health working group. The purpose was to improve our community's response to young people at risk of falling through the cracks in our collective services. We had identified worries about young people coming into foster care due to mental health concerns and not for protection concerns. Overall, it was a positive meeting with participants engaged and willing to work together in this area. There is also caution because of the unknowns with the current political climate and the impact changes will have for most social and health services.

We continue to closely monitor the list of children at risk of growing up in care. They are known and reviewed on a regular basis.

After Huron House Boys Home put out a media release and named our agency's decision as one of the reasons their future is in jeopardy, we responded by putting our own statement on our website and social media clarifying our position. We also sent a letter to their Board of Directors expressing our concerns. In spite of pressure from them to use group care as an option for young people in our care – we remain firmly committed to our strategic direction of children and youth growing up safe with families. This decision is strongly supported by years of research and is based upon what young people have told us in Sarnia-Lambton and across the province.



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 One Vision One Voice provincial work continues with the Ministry contract for its funding ending March 31, 2019. It is not yet known if funding will be provided for Phase 3 of the project. There are now two community workers in place who can assist Black families who want help navigating the child welfare sector and/or Children's Aid Societies serving Black families and requesting assistance in improving their response to the families. We completed the requested survey for this project which will provide us with recommendations for an implementation plan – we are still awaiting the results.

We completed the LBGTQ+ provincial survey which will provide a provincial overview of the work being done in this area as well as an agency report & recommendations. We are still awaiting the results.



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.

An Indigenous Working Group meeting was held on December 18th, 2018. Gail Devlin



from the Ministry attended as an observer. We shared with her some of the work, the progress that's been made as a result of the partnerships between our agency and the three local First Nations as well as some of the challenges. Gail is the assigned lead for Indigenous services in the Ministry Western Regional Office.



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.



Storyboard has finished the filming for the videos and we anticipate being able to share the initial work soon. One video will be focused on staff recruitment; one on kinship families and one on foster families. We are doing these in partnership with Chatham CAS and sharing the costs.



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 commitment is to actively support our families with developing plans that provides a safe, nurturing and supportive environment for children. To ensure that my contact with the families is completed in a respectful, caring and supportive manner that ensures all of the people I am in contact with, feel heard and valued.”

-Beverly Lynds

“My circle brings my past professional experience working as CAS and my current position at Lambton College together to ensure the wellbeing of children and youth served by Sarnia Lambton Children’s Aid Society. I am committed to using my network of professional contacts to link available supports and resources to children and their families who need our help.”

- Anne Marie Cosford



Getting Better Together

Wellness in our 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.

We have started the process for another large hiring in the spring using information known to us about vacancies as well as projections for the year. There has been a good response to a recent posting for Child Protection Workers. Being more proactive in our hiring practices is one of the strategies strongly connected to wellness.

The Getting Better Together Working Group continues its work. There are two new co-chairs – Leena Singh and Christina Jolliffe. They are currently working on their next 6 month plan.

Working Minds is a standardized mental health training which provides a common understanding and strategies to support all employees. Managers and staff have received this training.

We have continued meeting with representatives from management and the Union to review our current sick leave adjudication process. We have worked well together and are the final stages of an agreed upon process. One of the follow up items that is separate but linked to sick leaves is the creation of a more formal attendance management process.

We will be repeating the Guarding Minds at Work Survey in the spring 2019. We will use the same tool as last year so that we can compare the results and see if improvements can be seen.

There were numerous holiday social events throughout December. We really appreciate all the efforts of the staff who put in extra time and energy so that others could enjoy the events.



January 30th we will hold a staff recognition event from 8:30-10:30 a.m. Thank you to the Board members who are able to attend and assist. This is our first time holding a separate recognition event and we will be cooking breakfast for staff. We are looking forward to honouring and celebrating years of services and recognizing the work done by all staff over the past year.

5 Years – Tara Alisherwan (Child Protection Worker); Bethany Howell (Manager); Joanne Henshaw (Family Support Worker); Francys Newton (Legal Administrative Support); Jennifer Dam (Manager)

15 Years – Tanya Louks and Kim Calderon Diaz (both Children’s Services Workers)

20 Years – Dawn Stewart (Manager) and Andrea Dalziel (Director of Service)

25 Years – Jeanne Metcalfe (Legal Administrative Support)

30 Years – Megan Morgan (Manager)



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