



We Value

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

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR THE PERIOD OF November 27th, 2019 - January 28th, 2020



Happy New Year to each of you!

I hope you were able to enjoy some quality time over the holidays with people close to you. I am excited about our work together in 2020 which will include Equity; a Strategic Planning process in the fall and implementing the government's initiatives for child welfare modernization. I am confident we will

continue to innovate and lead in ways that are important for the people and communities we serve.

[Part X of the Child Youth and Family Services Act](#) took effect on January 1st 2020. Training and learning continues as well as policy development and internal changes that are necessary for us to be in compliance. It is a substantial shift in our work and will take time.

Ryan Bell and I attended the December sector leadership meetings in Toronto. Topics covered included a sector financial analysis; Bill C-92 (an Act respecting FNIM children, youth and families); child welfare modernization and Signs of Safety. David Remington spoke – he is the Assistant Deputy Minister with the Ministry of Children, Community & Social Services. Ryan and I will provide an overview of the meetings during the Board meeting.



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 have a meeting scheduled in Toronto in February with the former provincial advocate for children & youth, Irwin Elman, and the founder of an organization called Until the Last Child. It's an introductory meeting to explore possibilities of working together. Dr. Kiaras Gharabaghi made the connections as a result of our Chasing Zero strategic direction.

The Ministry's Extended Society Care Review is scheduled for the week of May 11th, 2020. The Ministry reviews the file of every young person who has been in Extended Society Care for at least two years. In 2015 when we started Chasing Zero, we had 27 young people's files reviewed and 22% were Indigenous which is an over-representation. In 2020, we have 6 young people and none are Indigenous. This is a very positive measure of success with Chasing Zero and Journey Beside – fewer children and youth are growing up in care.

Toronto Children's Aid Society has launched their new campaign, [Journey to Zero](#), and there was significant media coverage about it. Because we are further along in our work toward zero, Sarnia's Directors of Services Jennifer Thrasher and Andrea Dalziel will be presenting at a provincial meeting on our work, the lessons learned and the results. We are now thinking about what comes next.



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 has been scheduled for February 7-8. During the January Board meeting, I will review our agency's equity plan for 2020. I will then start to report to you on our work and progress with the 5 priorities.



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.

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 – 56%

Foster Parents – 7% -

Board 9 %

Volunteers 5%

We have until March 31st, 2020 to complete this goal. If you have completed your learning or training for this year, please let Nicole Hillier know. There are learning events and opportunities being planned. It will mark the fifth year in a row of training. While learning is continuous, we are also thinking about what comes next in this area of work and how we will measure success.

Cecil Isaac from Walpole Island First Nation will be attending the agency to provide a teaching on drums. The management team and Indigenous teams have been invited to attend. I am grateful to Sondra Gilbert and Diana Cryle for arranging this important afternoon.

Indigenous Working Group meetings have been scheduled monthly from February – June. I co-chair the meeting with Crystal George from Aamjiwnaang First Nation. It is the format we use to focus on our relationships with each other, consult about agency services and planning and work through any challenges that arise.



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.



The Signs of Safety video has been completed with Storyboard and will be used for educational purposes with staff and to help families understand the process and framework.



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 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 Petersen

“I will continue to utilize a Signs of Safety approach and expand my knowledge on Signs of Safety to give families a voice in keeping their children safe and maintain transparency in my work.”

-Jordan Huerter



Getting Better Together

Wellness 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.

The second staff recognition breakfast is being held on Wednesday January 29th at 8 a.m. Thank you to Board members Kim Godin; Lynn Rosales and Anne Marie Cosford for helping the management team cook the breakfast.

The Getting Better Together work group provided an update on its work to the Corporate Services Committee in January. The main focus is a Wellness Expo that is planned. Board members are welcome to attend.

There were several activities during the holidays for staff and young people to participate in – Holiday party for youth; Holiday party for staff; Elves (our version of Elf on the Shelf); and the annual Treats and Treasures day. Many people come together to make these events happen and it all contributes to fun, wellness and support within the workplace.



Submitted by:
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