



We Value

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

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR THE PERIOD OF October 31st, 2018 - November 27th, 2018

The new Chief Executive Officer for the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies is Nicole Bonnie. We welcome her to this new role and will be supporting her and OACAS through this transition period. She starts January 14th, 2019.

There are plenty of indications with the new provincial government that change is coming to the child welfare sector, including amalgamations. Most of the agenda at the sector leaderships meetings December 2-4 will be spent on discussions related to this. Thank you to Kim Godin who will be attending on behalf of the Board. There will be time during the Board meeting to hear more context and for the Board to provide direction.



As we head into the Holiday season, I would like to wish each of you quality time with family and friends.



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.

Work continues every day to support children and youth growing up safer with families. We continue to implement all the various strategies to reach our goal.



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 project is leading the work to address the over-representation of Black families receiving child welfare services. In November 2018, the Black staff symposium was held and 3 of our staff attended. By all accounts, it was a success – both in terms of the attendance of over 300 Black staff from across the province and the content and discussions that occurred. We look forward to sharing more with the Board about this important work in the New Year.



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.

A southwest meeting was held in November with 4 First Nations (Aamjiwnaang, Chippewas of the Thames, Munsee-Delaware and Walpole) and 4 Children's Aid Societies (Sarnia, Chatham, Windsor & London). We were honoured to have Walpole Island Chief Dan Miskokomon provide opening remarks. Each Nation and agency was provided an opportunity to share updates. There was in depth discussion about how we work together, the continued need to improve partnerships, and the concerns about lack of consistent service provided by Children's Aid Societies.

Protocol revisions are underway with Walpole Island First Nation. The changes reflect the new legislation and the inclusion of three Children's Aid Societies (Sarnia, Chatham & Windsor) who have agreed to provide service to Walpole members in a consistent manner across the three agencies.

Aamjiwnaang First Nation hosted an Open House on November 1st. The purpose was to provide Aamjiwnaang members with information and education about all the various departments and services provided by the Nation. We had staff who participated alongside Crystal George, the Band Representative and Manager of Social Services for the Nation. We were very pleased to be included and participate in the well-attended and successful event. It provided an opportunity for people to learn about the changes that have been made over the past several years in our partnership and work together.



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 production of two videos for recruitment of foster/kinship families and recruitment of staff is underway with Storyboard. We are excited to see the final products that will be used in a variety of ways, including social media.



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:

“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

“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



Getting Better Together

Wellness in our workplace was identified as a priority for the year because of ongoing concerns and a 50% increase in sick leaves. As a result, I have started to report on this area in my monthly reports.

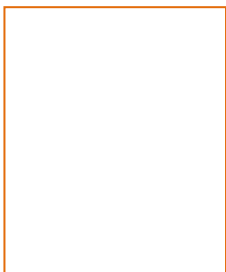
We have front line staff hired and assigned to teams and are in the final stages of hiring 2 managers. Over-hiring to address the workload pressures that were impacting wellness is a strategy that is in place and approved by the Board of Directors.

The Getting Better Together Working Group is meeting regularly and making good progress. The co-chairs presented on the work and progress to the Corporate Services Committee.

Working Minds is a standardized mental health training which provides a common understanding and strategies to support all employees. The managers have received the training and we are now in the process of all staff being trained.

We have started meeting with representatives from management and the Union to review our current sick leave adjudication process. Alternatives to the existing service are being considered and we are further analyzing our sick leave data to gain a more in depth understanding.

A Halloween Social was organized by the Social Committee and included a costume competition and treats. The management team also hosted a pumpkin decorating contest. Thanks to all the Board members who voted last month. The winner was....



The Admin Team

The annual tradition of Treats & Treasures was a great success again with high staff participation. This has been running for over 20 years by a committed group of current and former staff – Wenda Lowrie, Verna Jennings, Anne Marie Cosford. Thankfully, other staff agreed to help out and continue on with it.

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