



We Value

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

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR THE PERIOD October 28th, 2020 – November 24th, 2020

The first week of November is recognized as Treaties Recognition Week to honour the importance of the 46 treaties in Ontario and educate people about treaty rights and relationships. The Ontario government recently introduced curriculum about treaties into schools and it's great to hear what kids say about what they're learning:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wt5tdGo1_vQ

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/treaties#section-3>



We acknowledge Trans Day of Remembrance which was held on November 20th. We think about, remember and honour all the people who have lost their lives due to transphobic violence.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xAVyIAJS4vA>

<https://egale.ca/egale-in-action/trans-day-of-remembrance-2020/>

We also honoured National Indigenous Veterans Day and Remembrance Day and Black veterans.

Plans are well underway for this year's Youth Holiday Event. Thanks to the Taylor Family, extended family and friends, each youth will be provided with a holiday meal. The Sarnia Journal will be covering a story about this. If you wish to make a donation, sponsor and shop for a youth, please connect with Nicole Hillier.

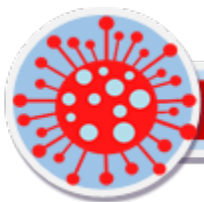
You may have seen the final report of the York Children's Aid Society's Operational Review by the Ministry following a number of concerns that were reported. While the report is specific to York, we have all been encouraged to view the recommendations and lessons contained within it as an opportunity to reflect on our own workplaces. Below is a paragraph I've copied from a memo from the Assistant Deputy Minister, David Remington. In the York report, racism, anti-Black racism and micro aggressions at all levels of the organization were found to be a very serious concern. York CAS is not alone in this. There have also been recent allegations of anti-Black racism, oppression, and inequity at the Peel CAS. We will be taking some time to review and discuss the recommendations in the York report; there are Board considerations as well that we will bring forward. We will continue to collectively work



very hard at our agency to address these important issues.

From ADM memo - In collaboration with the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies, I am sharing the report with you and all children's aid societies (societies) across the province. We ask that you consider the findings and recommendations as part of your ongoing responsibility to address workplace concerns, particularly where they could affect quality of service. This could include determining whether you have the necessary frameworks and policies in place to support staff wellness. Similarly, it could include reviewing and embedding diversity, equity and inclusion into human resources policies and procedures.

<https://news.ontario.ca/en/statement/59203/ontario-addressing-allegations-of-racism-and-harrasment-at-york-region-childrens-aid-society>



COVID-19

COVID Update

We continue to monitor the increasing numbers of COVID-19 and the second wave. We've made no changes to our service delivery over the past month.

In the most recent staff survey, we asked staff the following question:

It's been a month since the offices were re-opened to the public and we've had a minimum number of staff in the offices. Please choose the statement that best fits for you:

- a. Overall, the physical safety measures that have been put in place in the buildings are working well (masks; PPE; plexi-glass; physical distancing indicators; hand sanitizing stations; disinfecting wipes; closing reception over lunch & breaks etc.). I feel my physical safety has been adequately addressed and I don't have any suggestions to make.
- b. The physical safety measures in the buildings are reasonable but I have a few suggestions to improve things further.
- c. The physical safety measures in the buildings are not adequate. I don't feel my physical safety and protection is being taken seriously enough. I have a list of suggestions to make

Of the 94 responses, the overwhelming majority said that the physical safety measures put in place are working well and that their physical safety has been adequately addressed (100% of Indigenous and Racialized staff and 91% of White staff). 7% of White staff said the measures were reasonable, however, had suggestions to make and 2% said the measures were not adequate. Staff were provided with an opportunity to make suggestions for further improvements and these included:

- Further clarity and information about PPE availability and use (masks/wipes);
- Concerns about the decision about who is providing supervised access and completing drives;
- COVID testing protocols for staff;
- A recommendation to have no face to face at all unless necessary until COVID passes completely;
- Gratitude for being able to work from home;
- Gratitude to Jason and Gagan for all their work including the cleaning and disinfecting.

We will be sending out further information sharing the results with all staff and addressing the suggestions that were made.



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.

In October, we began the Quick Response Program in partnership with St. Clair Child & Youth Services. This is a pilot where a mental health worker will be able to quickly attend a family's home along with a Society worker. The focus is families with youth aged 12 to 17 who are at risk of placement breakdown and where the youth is experiencing mental health challenges. We plan to reassess the program along the way.

Additional funding has been provided to support adoption in Ontario. The \$1.5 million in funding is being used to support a centralized adoption intake and matching process and to expand post adoption services and training. Other facts shared in the announcement include:

- The proportion of adoptions of children and youth in care in Ontario has increased from approximately 11 per cent in 2012-13 to 19 per cent in 2019-20.
- Adopted children and youth are more likely to graduate from secondary school, be employed and have higher incomes than those who age out of Ontario's child welfare system.
- Adoption is not an appropriate permanency option for all children and youth in the care of a Children's Aid Society. Options for permanency arrangements also include legal custody and, for First Nations, Inuit and Métis children and youth, customary care.

<https://news.ontario.ca/en/release/59278/ontario-making-adoption-process-easier-for-families>



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.

Phase III of One Vision One Voice (OVOV) includes a toolkit that has been developed to help Children's Aid Societies assess and implement the 11 race equity practices. We will be participating in the assessment and using that to help inform next steps within our current equity plan.



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 congratulations to Jason Henry who was re-elected as Chief on Kettle and Stony Point First Nation. Carm Rogers was elected to Council (former member of our Board of Directors) as well as Ron George (previous Band representative and lawyer who we worked closely with).

The Indigenous room has new art work and it looks amazing. It is bright, colourful and joyful. We look forward to seeing the rest of the changes that are planned for the room thanks to the work and vision of the Indigenous team members.

The Sarnia-Lambton Native Friendship Centre purchased a screening license for a documentary called Gather and they have graciously shared it with the community. The link to the documentary will be open until December 7th giving people an opportunity to watch the film on their own. The Friendship Centre will then host a post film discussion over Zoom on December 10th at 2 p.m. Board members are welcome to participate.

FILM LINK

<https://illumine.vids.io/videos/119cd6bd1f1ae3ce98/gather-screener-university>

Password: Gather2020

ZOOM INFORMATION

Topic: Gather Discussion

Time: Dec 10, 2020 02:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/95240093912?pwd=NzNubVlvZTIBVkJrFrTzkwVzdYN2Y3QT09>

Meeting ID: 952 4009 3912

Passcode: Gather2020

By Phone

Meeting ID: 952 4009 3912

Passcode: 7780223563

Find your local number: <https://zoom.us/u/adwVN10oP>



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 Marilyn Dennis show has featured a family working with the child welfare system under Formal Customary Care. It's an incredible story that highlights both the importance of customary care for Indigenous children and the frustrations that families experience when trying to work with the child welfare system under this form of care. Here is the link: <https://www.marilyn.ca/Life/video/This-incredible-young-woman-adopted-her-seven-younger-brothers-so-they-wouldnt-go-into-foster-care-vid2012668>

We were very humbled and honoured to be nominated for an International Peace Award. We don't know

who nominated us. My thanks to Andrea Dalziel who did an excellent job providing the information that was requested as part of the process.

<https://internationalpeaceawards.com/>

I'm sharing a local good news story that includes businesses providing a meal to families during these times. The article says foster families, however, most of the meals have been provided to kin families. Our thanks to our resource department for helping with the coordination of this.

<https://thesarniajournal.ca/incredible-group-a-force-for-good-in-difficult-times/>

Our agency recently purchased gift cards from Cosmos restaurant for foster and kin families for recognition. Due to the pandemic, the usual recognition activities could not take place. Cosmos appreciated the business and has graciously offered to hold a fundraiser for our agency on December 7th and we thank them for their contribution. Feel free to participate and share.



PASTA WITH A PURPOSE
Supporting the
Sarnia-Lambton Children's Aid Society
On Monday Dec 7th, for every Family Meal purchased \$4 will go directly to Children's Aid Society
Cosmo's Family Restaurant
181 Capel Street
519-344-5225
Pre-order today, or please allow 2 hours notice on Dec 7th



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:

“As part of the Children’s Services department, my role is to support the children & youth in care. Through meeting the youth where they are at, working collaboratively with them to achieve their goals, and encouraging them to always do their best, my responsibility and commitment within the agency is to uplift our young people, foster positive relationships with family/ peers, and ensure each youth feels ready and able to conquer independent living. Actively Chasing Zero, fostering relationships to bring everyone All at the Table, and also empowering young people to know that regardless of their current situation, they are capable of achieving amazing things! ” Maggie Devine

**“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

The Getting Better Together committee has continued to organize weekly physically distanced outdoor walks. They've been creative in setting up a variety of wellness activities and initiatives. Examples include:

- Chanelle Lobo, Life Coach, providing a six week program called '*Self-Centered.*'
- Canopy Wellness providing Vinyasa Flow Inspired Practice - stretches that are low impact and beginner friendly.
- Jessica Lynn Fitness offering a variety of Pilates, Barre and Yoga.
- Virtual Stress Rescue Workshop with Laura Louise from the Royal Healing Academy - looks at stress in the era of the pandemic and focuses on tools and strategies to work through these unprecedented times.
- Liz Akiwenzie, a Traditional Healer offering an in person wellness session for Indigenous staff.

Submitted by:
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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR.