



We Value

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

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR THE PERIOD OF June 26th - October 29th, 2019

The Ministry's work on the Modernization Strategy continues with broad input from a variety of stakeholders including young people, families, the general public, service providers, adoptive parents, Indigenous agencies and FNIM communities. I have participated in all meetings of the Modernization Table. An additional meeting has been added to complete the work and review the recommendations.

Minister Dunlop visited the agency on October 2019 and met with Directors and Board member Mariah Amor. Thank you to Mariah for attending this meeting. We focused on our Chasing Zero strategic direction and provided her with a summary information sheet. She appeared engaged and asked questions. The importance of supporting and properly resourcing kinship families was highlighted.



We received our 19/20 Funding Allocation from the Ministry and it was \$232,532 less than we had projected in our internal budget prepared in March 2019. The reduction is the result of an increase in the administrative constraint requirement and no priority funding for service to 16 and 17 year olds. We have revised the budget and it will be presented

to the Board for review and approval at the Board meeting. We continue to anticipate balancing our budget this year with the use of the Balanced Budget Fund.

The annual Child Welfare Leadership Conference was held in in Sudbury this year. Jen Thrasher and I attended. Minister Dunlop attended and gave opening remarks. She focused on the importance of permanency and family based care for young people. She also announced an extension of the time for people to complete the Ministry's online survey about child welfare modernization. She intends to visit all Children's Aid Societies and Indigenous Child Well Being Agencies in the province. During the conference, the leadership also heard a presentation and analysis on the provincial financial landscape in child welfare. The slide deck was later leaked to the Toronto Star who ran an article citing some of the slides. During the November Board meeting, I will review the financial information and analysis that was provided. It is helpful to understand some of the overall cost drivers in child welfare and where opportunities exist for change.

There was a break-in at the 167 Building of our agency. Three laptops and a cell phone were stolen. Police are investigating and our insurance company was notified. Board members will be provided with more details 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.

We continue to maintain a list of young people at risk of growing up in care. The young people's situations are regularly reviewed and the Directors are aware of who they are. Permanency for them is a constant focus.



We continue to have zero young people in group care. The research with Dr. Kiaras Gharabaghi on this continues. Focus group and individual meetings with staff have occurred. The proposal to present this research at a Residential Conference in San Diego in April 2020 was accepted.

On October 25th, 2019, for the first time there was a joint southwest zone meeting with Executive Directors of both Children's Aid Societies and

Children's Mental Health agencies. There was a high level of alignment in terms of priorities (early intervention and help for families) and a desire to work in closer partnership at a community, regional and provincial level. Many of the young people and families are served by both child welfare and children's mental health and a recognition that we can improve in our coordination and service delivery to them.



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 through the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies is scheduled with all managers and staff. This is an intensive three day training that is an initial part of our overall equity plan. Equity training (an evening session) for Board members is anticipated to occur in the new year and in partnership with Chatham CAS.

Over the past two months, I have met individually with each Director and Manager and have asked specific questions in a number of priority areas including equity and white privilege and power. Their answers will be used to help inform the equity plan for the organization.



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.

The annual Southwest Indigenous gathering was hosted in Chatham this year. We were honoured to have Chief Dan Miskokomon from Walpole Island First Nation attend and

provide opening remarks. A variety of topics were covered including the work that has occurred on the provincial commitments, protocols, training, accountability mechanisms within the child welfare sector and a discussion about identity & requirements from some of the courts. Mnaasged Child & Family Services also provided an update on their designation process. There was a commitment to bring forward a couple items (reporting back on the progress of the commitments that were made following the apology and protocols) to the Board of Directors at the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies.

Gathering of First Nations and the Southwest Children's Aid Societies



Every Child Matters

Jen Thrasher and I attended a lessons learned day that was hosted by Dnaagdawenmag Binnoojiyag and their 5 partner non-Indigenous agencies. They are the most recently

designated Indigenous child well-being agency and shared very helpful information about the process, the importance of partnerships, relationships and starting early.

The agency observed Orange Shirt Day on September 30th honouring and recognizing those who survived Residential Schools and those who did not return from them.

**SEPTEMBER 30TH IS
ORANGE SHIRT DAY**

We wear orange to support the survivors of residential schools and to honour the memories of those who did not.
#OrangeShirtDay #EveryChildMatters

We continue to expect Board members, staff, foster parents and volunteers to complete one training or learning each year about Indigenous people. We have achieved this success marker four years in a row.



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.

Our Fall/Winter newsletter was completed and shared. [You can view it here.](#)

We also had an article in the not for profit version of First Monday on the importance of listening to the voices of youth. [It can be viewed here.](#)

The complete video highlighting a kinship from Kettle & Stony Point First Nation can be [viewed here.](#)



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 strive to implement Signs of Safety tools, practices, and strategies into my everyday work with families, as well as always strive to develop and strengthen families support network.”

- Mikayla Wilson

“I will treat every person with respect and dignity and will acknowledge, at all times, their inherent worth.”

- Amal Yusuf



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 work of the Getting Better Together Committee has continued. A Wellness Expo is planned for April 2020 which will bring together different aspects of wellness with vendors invited to set up booths and our community partner agencies and First Nations invited to attend. An inventory of all the local community resources related to different aspects of wellness is also being created with the goal of having it up to date and accessible by the end of the year.

Progress is being made with the completion of annual performance reviews:

February – 20%

April – 30%

June – 39%

October –

Submitted by:

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