



Catholic
Children's Aid Society
of Hamilton

Care beyond belief

Annual Report 2008/2009



Catholic Values

Advocate



Well-being

Strengthening Families

Protect



Message from the *President and Executive Director*



Cathy Wellwood



Ersilia DiNardo

Over the past year the Catholic Children's Aid Society of Hamilton has continued to build on a service philosophy that is collaborative and strength-based within our child protection mandate. We have taken advantage of a number of opportunities that have enabled us to enhance and expand our services.

CCAS Opportunities Centre

With financial assistance from the Homelessness Partnership Initiative the Catholic Children's Aid Society of Hamilton has constructed an Opportunities Centre at our offices on King Street. This Centre will allow our staff to offer new programs and services to children, youth and families which will allow them to grow, learn and flourish. Our objective is to give the right tools to the people we serve so that they can excel in life.

Better Understanding of the Diverse Community We Serve

Over the past 12 months we have invested in the opportunity of better understanding the people we serve and to teach our staff to be more aware of our changing and diverse community. Last year, each member of the CCAS staff underwent the first phase of anti-racism/anti-oppressive child welfare training. Under the direction of Dr. Gary Dumbrell we were given important tools to help better serve our changing community. An anti-racist organizational needs assessment has been completed by the Social Planning and Research Council, which will inform future plans regarding organizational change. At the same time CCAS created a new position of Anti-Racism/Anti-Oppressive Initiatives Supervisor to take the lead in developing an inclusive work environment and building partnerships with agencies servicing diverse communities.

Community Outreach

Working with community partners gives the CCAS a rich opportunity to reach out to the people we serve. We have expanded our highly successful school-based program in the Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board to include a partnership with Conseil scolaire di district catholique Centre-Sud. A bilingual child protection worker is assigned to 2 Hamilton area Catholic French language schools.

This past November we officially launched a pilot project – Child Abuse Agency Team (CAAT) in partnership with Hamilton Police Services and the Children's Aid Society of Hamilton. The 12 month project is an extension of our protocol for the coordination of investigations with the police and has a dedicated child protection worker onsite at the

Child Abuse Branch (CAB). Having child protection workers located at CAB will not only facilitate immediate consultation and responses but will afford a more seamless working relationship and provision of services.

In partnership with McMaster Children's Hospital we have embarked on a pilot project for the development of a new Medical Clinic for children who are in the care of CCAS. This clinic has been designed to provide consultation for children with complex medical needs and paediatric concerns. The clinic also attends to children who require immediate medical attention but do not have a primary care physician.

Working for the Best Outcome for our Children

A primary focus of the Catholic Children's Aid Society of Hamilton is to achieve a timely plan of permanency for each child in our care. CCAS has a long standing commitment to permanency which is enshrined in our policies and well integrated into all aspects of service delivery. Our overarching goal is to work toward the most emotionally and legally permanent outcome for all children. The Society is firmly committed to having children grow up within their birth families wherever possible. Where this is not achievable, we look to alternative options that will result in a secure home with enduring relationships for the child.

An increasing focus on maintaining children's connections to their kinship networks has led to a successful CCAS kinship program which encourages the consideration of family members when developing permanency plans. The CCAS kinship program provides a spectrum of options for children in partnership with kin. These options include family members supporting children as foster parents or providing informal care through kin services. In response to the child's needs, the Society encourages kin to consider obtaining legal custody or to make a commitment through kin adoption.

In closing, we would like to acknowledge those who have reached out to provide "Care Beyond Belief" to our children and families during the past year. We are blessed to have skilled staff, devoted foster parents and volunteers, a committed Board of Directors, generous donors and willing community partners all of whom play a significant role in making the many programs and services we offer possible. We would like to acknowledge Bishop Tonnos for his ongoing support and spiritual leadership. It is through these sustained alliances and partnerships that the Society will continue to support our children and families in realizing their potential.

Opportunities Abound in New CCAS Opportunities Centre

All parents want to see their children grow into successful adults and live a good life. The vision of the Catholic Children's Aid Society of Hamilton for the many children and youth that come into our care is that they have the same opportunities to succeed. We are committed to helping our youth transition successfully into adulthood and independence with confidence and capability.

The new Opportunities Centre that has opened in the basement of the Catholic Children's Aid Society of Hamilton takes CCAS a step forward in its goal of providing every possible opportunity for our children and youth to develop and thrive in adulthood.

Through the Homeless Partnership Initiative, funded by the Government of Canada and managed by the City of Hamilton, CCAS received a capital grant which facilitated the construction and equipping of the Opportunities Centre.

Consisting of a skills development area, a computer lab, training kitchen and recreation area, the Opportunities Centre allows us to introduce new programs for our children, youth and parents and as well as expand current programs.

This Centre is an important addition to CCAS as it provides a facility conducive to working with youth and preparing them for independence. Many of the youth for whom we are responsible have little, if any family support and rely heavily on their workers and the Society to assist them as they prepare to leave the child welfare system and achieve successful independence. However, often these youth struggle to maintain suitable housing as their life skills development has been cut short by their premature launch into independence.

Youth leaving the child welfare system have been identified as a population at high risk for homelessness. The Opportunities



Centre, and the various skill development programs it will house, will assist CCAS to mitigate and reduce this risk for our youth.

In this Centre, youth are coached to develop necessary life skills, from healthy and affordable meal preparation to opening a bank account and managing money. Youth will be taught how to negotiate the process of securing appropriate housing and how to seek employment. CCAS offers assistance and guidance with the development of skills for daily living which is a priority for parents as they raise their children to adulthood.



CCAS now has the necessary tools in one central location to support youth in their development of the abilities needed to not only survive in independence, but to thrive. We are now able to provide youth with a safe and accepting environment in which they will learn life skills, pursue educational goals, and develop interpersonal relationships and social skills while building a connection that will support them through the emotional struggles that come with launching into adulthood and full independence.

Current programs that will make use of this Centre will be a weekly youth Drop-In Program and a series of youth Life Skills training programs. The new Opportunities Centre also gives us the resources to assist the young parents we work with to become successful in their parenting journey.

The parenting classes that will soon be offered in the Opportunities Centre will provide our young parents with additional learning opportunities and will cover specific topics that will enhance and strengthen their parenting abilities. Topics chosen will be based on the needs of the population we serve. This Centre will also be used for individual sessions with our parents to teach instrumental care tasks such as bottle preparation and bathing.

The new Opportunities Centre will offer so much for so many of the children, youth and parents that we serve. Its warm and friendly atmosphere will provide a safe place for learning, socializing, and skills development – tools that are essential for future life success.



Service Statistics

For the year ending March 31, 2009

Catholic Children's Aid Society of Hamilton Statement of Revenue, Expenditures & Budget Surplus (Deficit)

	Apr 2008 Mar 2009	Apr 2007 Mar 2008		2008/2009	2007/2008
REVENUES					
Intake Services					
Report Received, further investigation not required	1,410	1,437	Province Ontario - Grants, Child Welfare	26,312,761	25,138,028
Investigations, completed and closed	949	864	Other Revenue: Child Welfare	1,199,054	1,248,003
Investigations, completed and transferred	228	393	Other Revenue: Non Child Welfare	716,254	790,275
				<u>\$26,628,218</u>	<u>\$27,176,306</u>
EXPENDITURES					
Ongoing Family Services					
No. of Families at End of Period	335	358	Salaries & Wages	10,213,126	10,379,482
No. of Families Served	608	672	Benefits	2,524,280	2,522,124
New Investigations in Ongoing Cases	66	215	Travel	888,006	849,753
			Training & recruitment	241,862	204,326
Children's Services			Building Occupancy Costs	475,544	370,307
No. of Children at End of Period	358	334	Professional Services, Non Client Related	459,566	123,750
No. of Children in Care Served	500	512	Program Expenses	35,831	14,097
Days Care for Children in Care	128,251	121,565	Boarding Rate Payments	8,566,576	8,615,569
			Professional Services - Client Related	778,914	890,119
Resources Services			Client's Personal Needs	628,003	580,293
No. of Foster Homes Served	148	152	Health & Related	474,532	451,036
Foster Home Studies - completed	26	26	Financial Assistance Provided	16,354	9,194
Foster Home Studies - approved	19	32	Promotion & Publicity	129,337	77,894
			Office Administration	478,844	342,258
Adoption Services			Capital Acquisitions: Non Client	854,807	284,879
Children on Adoption Probation	42	21	Miscellaneous Expenditures	285,163	219,090
Adoptions Completed	13	12	Technology	361,000	360,573
Adoption Homes Approved	17	20		<u>\$27,412,285</u>	<u>\$26,294,744</u>
			CHILD WELFARE EXPENDITURES	<u>570,704</u>	<u>355,078</u>
Volunteer Services			NON CHILD WELFARE EXPENDITURES		
Approved Volunteers	166	159			
Hours of Service Provided	26,562	26,175	TOTAL EXPENDITURES	<u>\$27,982,989</u>	<u>\$26,649,822</u>
Kilometers Driven	1,062,730	1,153,539			
			Excess Revenue Over Expenditures Before Amortization	245,080	526,484
Other Programs					
Preparation for Independence	88	74	Amortization	(161,480)	(213,180)
Summer Camper	175	159			
			DEFICIENCY (EXCESS) OF REVENUE OVER EXPENSE	\$83,600	\$313,304

Message From Bishop Tonnos

"Every child deserves to live in a safe and nurturing home. As you know, providing a loving environment to a child is truly acting in a Christ-like manner. I encourage you to consider opening your heart and home to children and youth in need, by becoming a foster parent."

