

# BRIGHTER FUTURES

## Catholic Children's Aid Society of Hamilton Strategic Plan 2018-2023



### *Our Shared Vision*

**Safe and  
thriving children  
and youth**

**Empowered  
families**

**Stronger  
communities**

On June 16th, 2013, we launched our 5-year Strategic Plan, entitled Brighter Futures. The plan built on our assets and strengths and directed our efforts and resources to our most critical priorities. Now, five years later, we have travelled many roads, imagined and tested new ideas and embraced and implemented some key strategic milestones. Today, as an agency, we are stronger and more united and passionate about our mission and vision.

The children, youth and families of Hamilton expect our services to be child-centred, responsive and culturally relevant. They expect and need high-quality and caring services that honour each person's mind, body and spirit and that celebrate the differences and stories of our children, youth and families. Our Strategy Map has been crafted, with extensive input from staff, partners, youth, foster parents and biological parents. Our plan builds on our Catholic heritage and our traditions of excellence, while charting a distinctive course forward. A future that ensures Brighter Futures for the children, youth and families we serve.

We have the resolve to begin this journey, and with our Strategy Map, we have the way! Please join us and help us bring this plan to life.

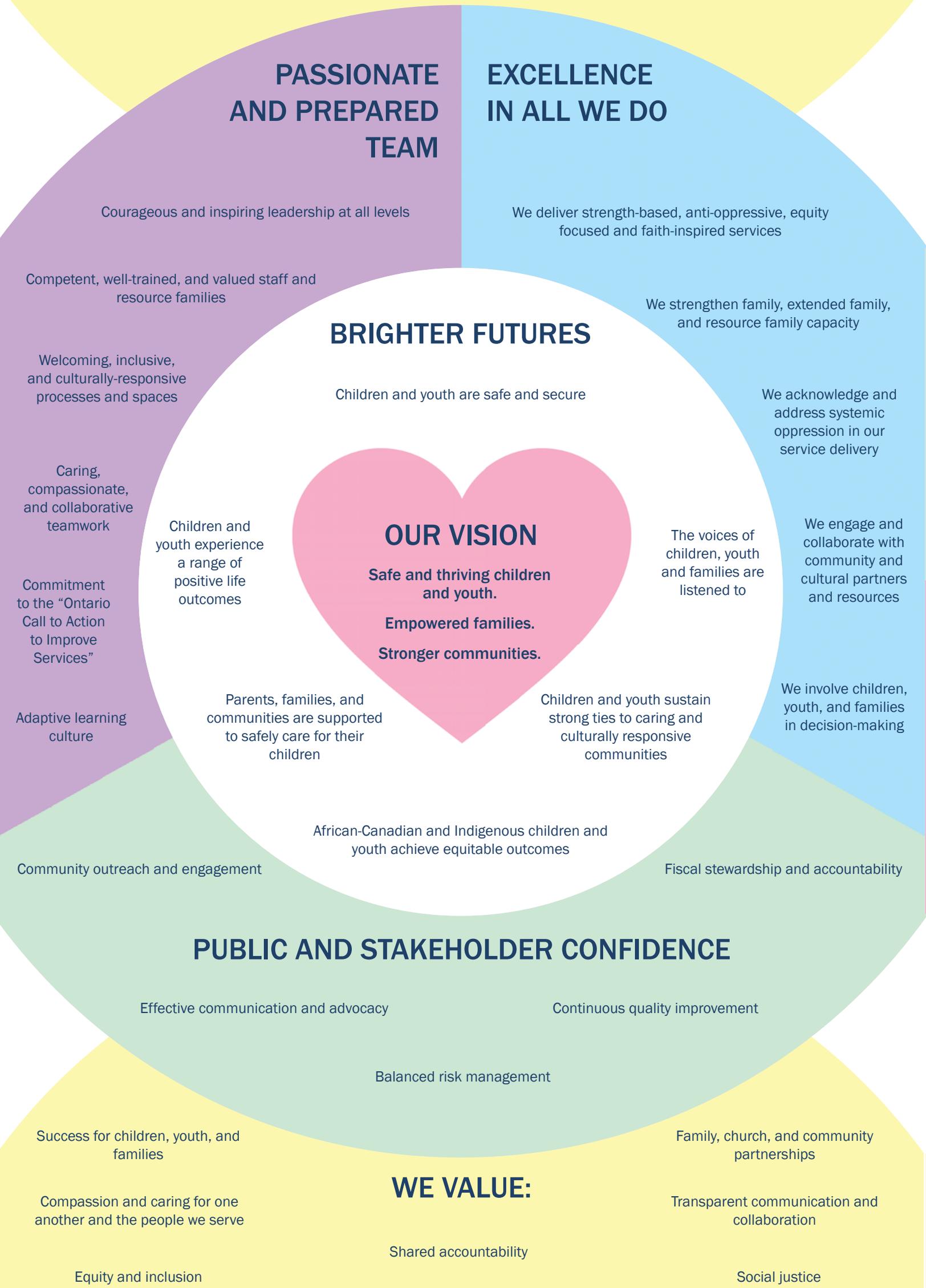
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# OUR STRATEGY MAP

Guided by Catholic values and teachings, we serve and offer bilingual (English/French) services to children, youth, and families within the Hamilton community to protect their safety and well-being, strengthen families and nurture lifelong relationships.



# OUR STATEMENT OF FAITH

## FAITH. CARE. COMPASSION. COMMUNITY.

At the heart of the Catholic Children's Aid Society of Hamilton is a recognition of the sacredness of human life, and the dignity and worth of each person created in God's image. Our vision and mission are inspired by the compassion and mercy of Jesus Christ who cared for the most marginalized persons of his community and who reminded his followers that "Whatever you did to one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me." (Mt. 25:40)

Governed by civil legislation and our provincial charter to protect children and youth, we are also guided by the teaching and tradition of the Catholic Church, responsive and accountable to the local community which it serves.

Drawing on the heritage of our Catholic faith, our vocation as an agency is to help build a world in which children and youth can live safely and thrive, families are empowered to flourish, and the bonds of community are strengthened through compassion and justice. Coming from diverse faith traditions and philosophies, we are grounded in the Christian values of love and humble service, united in our commitment to care for all people, especially the most vulnerable. We take a holistic service approach that honours the mind, body, and spirit of each person and that upholds their human rights in society.

### OUR CALLING TO SERVE

We foster a culture of care and community in our workplace in which priority is always given to nurturing healthy relationships with one another and hope and healing for the families that we serve. This relational culture is strengthened by giving spirituality a place of honour and recognition in the workplace, and offering the gift of hospitality where every voice can be heard and positive change can take place. We promote timely, child-focused decision-making and healthy relationships for children and youth in the communities where they live.

### OUR CULTURE OF CARE AND COMMUNITY

### OUR DEDICATION TO SERVICE EXCELLENCE

We are devoted to serving children, youth, and families with ethical integrity, compassion, and professional competence. We are leaders and advocates for positive social change and believe that our holistic and faith-based approach enriches the lives of our service recipients and the child welfare system as a whole, ensuring it is more caring, responsive, just and effective.

### OUR COMMITMENT TO SOCIAL JUSTICE

Our agency services are inspired by the rich tradition of Catholic moral and social teaching, which upholds the sacredness of the person, family life, and the common good. We serve in a spirit of solidarity with our church and community partners in seeking justice and peace in our society. We focus especially in our mission on the needs and rights of the children that we serve. We honour the differences that make each person unique and are committed to equity, inclusion and empowerment for all of our staff and service recipients, helping them to participate fully in decisions that impact their lives.

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## CELEBRATING OUR STRENGTHS

### Our People

Our staff, resource families, volunteers and Board of Directors are the heart of this organization. They bring a wide range of skills, talents and interests to their roles and are passionate about the agency's mission. We strive to make a meaningful difference in the lives of the children, youth and families we serve.

### Our Work is Inspired by Our Communities and our Faith

Our work is guided by our faith. We are deeply committed to placing the voices and unique needs of the children, youth and families we serve at the centre of everything we do. Each child and youth's story is significant and we listen to and involve them in decisions that affect them. We ensure services are culturally safe and we support children as they develop their identity therefore, achieving well-being, safety and their full potential.



### Service Excellence

Our processes and practices are strength-based and focused on providing holistic care that honours the intellectual, spiritual, physical and emotional needs of each child, youth and family served. We continually strengthen and design our services in response to the voices of the children and families we serve, as well as their linguistic and cultural needs. We are devoted to being a progressive, effective and responsive agency that supports children, youth and families to thrive.

### Partnerships

We are proud of the vibrant and valuable partnerships that we have developed with partners across the Hamilton region through our community-based approach. We acknowledge the important work of reducing the overrepresentation of Indigenous and African-Canadian children and youth in care through our partnerships with these communities. We will continue to work with the community in partnerships that improve the delivery of our child welfare services to all equity seeking groups.

### Ontario Call to Action

The Catholic Children's Aid Society of Hamilton is an active member of the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies (OACAS). We are committed to the Call to Action to transform Child Welfare in Ontario so we can achieve the best outcomes for children, youth and families. We have been active in many provincial projects focused on improving services to better promote equity of outcomes and to ensure services are culturally responsive. Additionally, we have worked hard to strengthen the competence and expertise of our staff and leaders to ensure the highest standards of service delivery. We are committed to OACAS's Strategic Plan that "re-imagines the child welfare system."

## CELEBRATING OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

Together, as a team, we have achieved transformational goals that have advanced outcomes for children, youth and families. A few of our key milestones include:

- Safely keeping over 98% of our children and youth with their families, instead of coming into care with CCASH.
- Reducing the number of children living in care with resource families.
- Implementing PACE, (Practicing Achievable Collaboration and Efficiency) which encourages foster and birth parents to meet, establishing relationship building and increasing trust so they can better support children and youth. Some key outcomes from this program were that children returned to a parent earlier, there was better communication and more collaboration.
- Expanding our Anti-Oppressive Practice emphasis on developing a fulsome understanding of the needs and cultures of African-Canadian, Indigenous, LGBTQ2S+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer, Two-Spirited, Plus) and Newcomer – Immigrant populations.
- Expanding our family finding and kinship programs, thus enabling children and youth to remain within their communities and sustain relationships with the people and resources closest to them.
- Introducing more Spiritual Care initiatives to strengthen the culture of care and community.
- Implementing a program to provide better support and provide services to youth who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.
- Improving the scope and impact of training for staff and resource families to enhance their skills and effectiveness.
- Supporting young people who are in our care to continue their education in post-secondary programs and skills training.
- Better preparing our youth for adulthood and enabling them to become contributing members of communities, through such programs as Leadership Development, Life Skills, Camps and Tutoring programs, and more.
- Implementing the new Child Protection Information Network (CPIN), a single enterprise provincial database that allows sharing of information with CASs across Ontario.
- Pursuing designation under the French Language Services Act of Ontario, to acknowledge our ongoing commitment to provide French-language service on an active, permanent basis.
- Updating our bylaw and governance policies to ensure excellent organizational oversight.

