



Business Plan: 2020-2021

Introduction

The Catholic Children's Aid Society of Hamilton (CCASH) is committed to protecting the children and youth of our Catholic community from abuse and neglect. We work in collaboration with community partners through our community-based lens to ensure the well-being of children and youth and to strengthen the capacity of families in the Hamilton Catholic community. The Society has operated for 66 years and continues to evolve and adjust based on the needs of our local community and legislative requirements. The Society's professional and well-trained staff provides a complete range of child protection services to children, youth and families.

The 2020-2021 Business Plan for the CCAS of Hamilton examines the provincial context, local strategic directions, work processes, pressures and operational requirements in order to determine the opportunities and/or challenges that the organization should address over the 2020-2021 year.

To accomplish this, the agency looks back over the past year, examining corporate and services performance over the past year, including quality assurance, organizational development accomplishments, strategic activities and results as well as provincial influences. We develop the 2020-21 organizational business plan based on our strategic map and organizational priorities.

Mandate

Children's Aid Societies are independently governed agencies that are responsible for providing mandatory and critical services, which are a safety net for the most vulnerable members of our society – infants, children and youth who are at risk of or are experiencing physical, sexual and/or emotional abuse, neglect or abandonment. CASs are mandated to intervene if a caregiver cannot adequately care for or provide for a child.

Children's Aid Societies have been providing these services to communities in Ontario for over 100 years.

They are legislated to perform certain functions under the provisions of the *Child, Youth and Family Services Act (CYFSA, 2017)*. The mandate of CASs, as described in this section of the *CYFSA*, includes the following functions:

- Investigate allegations or evidence that children who are under the age of sixteen years or are in the society's care or under its supervision may need protection;
- Protect, where necessary, children who are under the age of sixteen years or are in the society's care or under its supervision;

- Provide guidance, counselling and other services to families for protecting children or for the prevention of circumstances requiring the protection of children;
- Provide care for children assigned or committed to its care under this Act;
- Supervise children assigned to its supervision under this Act;
- Place children for adoption under Part VII; and,
- Perform any other duties given to it by this or any other Act.

This legislation and the supporting regulations, directives and standards prescribe specific and detailed requirements for what services CASHs must provide, how they must provide these services, including services to Aboriginal children and families and French language services, as well as the timelines in which these mandatory services must be provided.

Children's Aid Societies protect and safeguard most children while they remain with their families in the community. This family-based support takes the form of intensive assessments and service plans, contacts with numerous other professionals and service providers, as well as ongoing supervision of the child while he/she remains in the family home. These are complex cases in which child protection concerns have been verified and there are risks of, or actual, abuse and neglect. As such, the work must be performed by skilled, qualified child welfare staff. Serving these children in the context of the home – when it is safe to do so – is consistent with the legislative and regulatory mandate and with the policy direction of government.

Vision, Values and Strategic Direction

Our Vision

Safe and Thriving Children and Youth. Empowered Families. Stronger Communities.

Our Mission

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

Our Values

Compassion and caring for one another and the people we serve

Equity and Inclusion

Family, church and community partnerships

Shared Accountability

Social Justice

Success for Children, Youth and Families

Transparent communication and collaboration

CCASH Strategic Directions

In 2018, through collaboration with our Board of Directors and our Internal Strategic Planning Committee, comprised of employees and board members, we named our Strategic Planning Process, 'Brighter Futures.' Our 'Brighter Futures' strategic planning process was designed to engage many diverse voices, accentuate the passion we have for the important work we do at CCASH, and create progressive results, ultimately in the form of a Strategic Plan. In addition, 'Brighter Futures' exemplified our focus on helping to shape brighter futures for children, youth and families.

Our ongoing priority is supporting the safety, permanency and well-being of children and youth in the family and community. To achieve this CCAS of Hamilton is committed to a strategic plan that embodies the immense power of collaboration. The plan builds on our assets and directs our efforts and resources to our most critical priorities.

The strategic planning approach we chose to use was based on the Balanced Scorecard planning methodology. This model identifies strategic directions in direct alignment to our vision and mission and from four distinct pillars:

1. Brighter Futures
2. Passionate and Prepared Team
3. Excellence in All We Do
4. Public and Stakeholder Confidence.

Goals are established to link with the strategic directions and ultimately performance indicators are created that allow us to measure our progress once we move to implementing the plan.

Key Activities supporting Strategic Directions for 2020-2021

Over the next five years, CCASH will take action across four strategic pillars that will allow us to achieve our Vision. The pillars supported by our Faith Statement are:

1. Create Brighter Futures,
2. Excellence in all we Do,
3. Passionate and Prepared team,
4. Public and Stakeholder Confidence.

The Strategic Pillars are then translated into Strategic Directions and supporting goals. Within this strategic direction, we have prioritized four goals, which are outcome based. Our thoughtful and well-crafted Strategy Map provides us with our plan, but even the best strategy inadequately implemented will surely fail. Therefore, in the months ahead, we will shift our attention to implementation of the plan and deploy our limited resources to the critical projects and tasks that will move us forward. Our strategic implementation processes will actively engage employees in this next stage of our journey.

Our project priorities and operational initiatives for 2020-2021 with focus on the following priorities that will translate the strategy map into action and achieve desired results.

- Increase Use of Kinship Network
- Indigenous Truth & Reconciliation and One Vision One Voice Implementation
- Rediscovering Our Catholic Identity Leadership Development Initiative

Each of these priority projects is aligned with provincial priorities in child welfare and will impact all staff across the organization. CCAS of Hamilton will continue to adopt best-practice change management strategies to support the successful achievement of these priorities.

Our Key Accomplishments in 2019-2020

A Service Plan advancing the strategic priorities is developed annually and incorporates key projects to support the Strategy Map on annual basis. The Service Plan meets the requirements of the Accountability Agreement with the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services.

As an agency we continue to move key initiatives forward. Throughout the year the overriding objective has been maintaining capacity for quality service delivery and improved outcomes in an environment of reduced funding and increased administrative burden. This past year our key projects emanating from the Strategic Map were in three key pillars:

- Signs of Safety Implementation Model Implementation
- Diversity, Inclusivity & Equity (Indigenous Commitments and One Vision One Voice)
- Strengthening Our Faith-Based Services

All the projects achieved good outcomes in moving the agency forward and each is outlined as below:

Signs of Safety Implementation Model

During the past year there has been significant progress with our agency's Signs of Safety initiative. The Signs of Safety practice framework is commonly used in child protection cases. To further a consistent practice, user guides in each service area are being completed. Our agency continues to contract with Safe Generations to strengthen our implementation. Signs of Safety has contributed to our agency's goal of preventing children and youth from entering care by strengthening families and their networks.

The underlying tenants of the Signs of Safety approach are consistent and strengthen our commitment to faith and equity principles. Signs of Safety highlights the importance of finding strengths in even the most difficult situations and building hope for families, youth and children. The approach is collaborative and builds partnership, promotes transparency and recognizes the strengths and contributions of family members. Service users feel respected and empowered to develop the solutions that best meet the needs of their family. Signs of Safety is an inquisitive approach that is informed by the perspectives of service users. By asking

questions and reserving judgements, we're better able to understand the importance of their faith and connection to their Catholic faith community. These connections are able to be strengthened and utilized to enhance safety for children and youth.

Strengthening Our Faith-based Services

This past year many successful steps have been made. In terms of major accomplishments, the following priorities have been achieved.

- **Strengthening Faith-based Organizational Culture** - This process is reflected in growing agency awareness of our roots in the Catholic faith and our core values of care, compassion, and community in working relationships with each other and with service recipients.
- **Strengthening Faith-based Practices** – This process is focused on building awareness and integration of faith-based values in our decision-making and policies.
- **Strengthening Faith-based Service Delivery and Spiritual Care**
Ongoing consultations and collaboration with senior and middle management leadership teams allowed for the development of a leadership development program for management. The agency has also developed a balanced scorecard evaluation strategy on how our values are translating into improved service.
- **Enriching Faith-informed Equity Initiatives and Community Outreach**
The agency has initiated consultations with integrating faith-based implementation strategies that equity based and how these can be grounded in Catholic social teaching and tradition. Consultations and collaboration with other Catholic and Faith based services providers has provided access to pastoral resources to offer high-quality spiritual care.

Diversity, Inclusivity & Equity (Indigenous Commitments and One Vision One Voice)

This past year, the agency equity journey focused on the intersectionality of the Seven Catholic Social Teachings and the Social Work Code of Ethics. The Catholic Social Teachings beckons that we pay attention to the most vulnerable, marginalized and oppressed amongst us. Equity emanating from a Board and Senior Leadership perspective, allows it to become both a process, outcome and measurement of our organizational cohesiveness. Facilitated educational sessions of Becoming an Ally-Culturally Safe Child Welfare Practice with Indigenous populations, Out and Proud's focus on the LGBTQ2S+ community, and discussions with white staff about Anti-Black Racism where essential training to shift our focus to organizational structure and how this needed to be disrupted. This disruption was widened through the hiring

of both the OVOV and Reconciliation Lead. Staff began to understand that they could no longer speak on behalf of those identities or define what the problem and solution needed to be.

One Vision, One Voice and Reconciliation Leads continued to strengthen and nurture a positive cultural identity within the children and youth through celebrations during Black History Month, Indigenous Peoples Month, and individualized mentorship opportunities. LGBTQ2S+ youth's specific mental health needs were to be addressed through AFFIRM a cognitive behavioural therapeutic approach and acknowledgement of LGBTQ2S+ celebratory events like National Coming out Day & Trans Day of Remembrance.

The year culminated in the preliminary engagement of a service delivery model entitled 360 Family Engagement which supports the fusion of signs of safety, family finding, trauma and attachment, embedded in an equity framework, whilst strengthening lifelong family connections and increases permanency for children, youth and families we serve.

Contact Information

For more information about CCAS of Hamilton, please visit our website at:
www.hamiltonccas.on.ca

For media inquiries, please contact:

Rocco Gizzarelli, Executive Director

905-525-2012 x 3110