



The Children's Aid Society  
OF HAMILTON

# Care UPDATE



Volume 16, Issue 2  
September 2017

## Children's Aid Societies to Dress Purple and Raise Awareness

October is Child Abuse Prevention Month and children's aid societies across the province will be actively raising awareness about the importance of calling your local child protection agency if you are concerned about the safety and well-being of a child or youth.

"Our community members play a vital role in ensuring that children are kept safe. That's why it is extremely important to educate the public and dispel some of the myths related to the work we do," says Dominic Verticchio, Executive Director, The Children's Aid Society (CAS) of Hamilton.

"Child Abuse Prevention Month and the 'I Break the Silence' social media campaign are focused on raising the public's awareness that a call to a children's aid can provide much needed help to a family in crisis."

There is a long-standing misconception that children will be placed in foster care when a children's aid society is involved with a family. In reality, this is not the case. Ontario's leading research study on child abuse and neglect shows children remained with their families in 97% of CAS investigations, a statistic



that comes as a surprise to many people.

"Our key message to the community, is that we all have a responsibility to protect children from harm," says Mr. Verticchio. "We understand it is not always easy to pick up the phone and call but it is the right thing to do. Your call could be crucial in a child's life and enable that family to get the help they need."

The majority of calls received by the Society continue to be from police, schools and self-referrals. Last year, the agency received 6,986 calls from the community about a child's safety and well-being. Of those, 2,805 calls

resulted in a child protection investigation.

While the number of referrals received last year may appear to indicate the community's awareness of one's duty to report suspected abuse or neglect, inquests from recent years have revealed that there is still a lack of awareness among professionals about their "duty to report" safety concerns to a children's aid society (as described in Section 72 of the Child and Family Services Act).

October serves as an opportune time to raise awareness with professionals such as teachers, as well as the general public.

*continued on page 3*

**Serving Hamilton's  
children & families  
since 1894**

Our Mission: The Children's Aid Society of Hamilton, in partnership with families in our community, is committed to the safety, protection, and well-being of children and the strengthening of families, while valuing diversity and promoting equity.

# Celebrating Success of Young Moms

Members of the agency's Young Parent Team were thrilled to be included in a number of graduation ceremonies this year. Ten young mothers affiliated with the Young Parent Team were recognized for either graduating or attending this year's academic programs at Angela's Place, Grace Haven and St. Martin's Manor.

The Young Parent Team works with community partners through the Get Connected Program at St. Martin's Manor (part of Catholic Family Services of Hamilton) to help coordinate and deliver supports to pregnant and parenting youth to support academic achievements, positive parenting outcomes and potentially reduce the intensity or further involvement of CAS.

The Young Parent Team was established as a pilot initiative in 2016 to aid young mothers and mothers-to-be ages 13-25 years, who were brought to the attention of the Society. The team has experienced significant growth over the year and is currently serving 46 young moms to ensure the safety and well-being of their infants and children.



Lori Ann Paquette and Vicki Peirce from the agency's Young Parent Team were pleased to be included in the recent graduation ceremonies for young moms.

## Examining the Intersection of Immigrants' Integration/Acculturation and Child Welfare

Dr. Mirna Carranza, Associate Professor of Social Work at McMaster University, recently authored a report on the experience of newcomers in the context of child welfare in Hamilton. This report was a collaborative inquiry with The Children's Aid Society of Hamilton, Catholic Children's Aid Society of Hamilton, and The Immigrant Working Centre of Hamilton.

The research included interviews with parents involved in the child welfare system as well as child welfare and settlement workers. These participants represented a diverse range of countries of origin that included Afghanistan, Romania, Kuwait, India, Pakistan, Eritrea, Egypt, Iraq, Syria, Chad, Burma, Jordan, Somalia, Guatemala, China, Poland, Kurdistan, El Salvador, and Colombia.

Dr. Carranza and her Project Steering Committee shared the findings from the participants and suggest the following recommendations:

1. Training for child welfare workers around specialized knowledge of immigrants and refugees;

2. Integration of anti-oppressive and social justice principles;
3. Increased use with translators and interpreters;
4. Increased community engagement with newcomers;
5. Development of family interventions and programming that include better understanding of acculturation, family systems, collectivist models, etc.

The final report can be found by visiting the agency's website at [www.hamiltoncas.com](http://www.hamiltoncas.com). The Society is looking forward to future learning opportunities with Dr. Carranza based on the report.

The Children's Aid Society of Hamilton is located at:  
26 Arrowsmith Road, Hamilton  
Mailing: P.O. Box 1170, Depot 1, Hamilton, ON L8N 4B9  
**Main Phone: 905-522-1121**

After Hours Emergency Service: 905-522-8053  
[www.hamiltoncas.com](http://www.hamiltoncas.com)

Facebook: @casofhamilton Twitter: @CASofHamilton

**Care Update** is produced bi-annually by the Communications & Development Unit of The Children's Aid Society of Hamilton  
*Editor - Stacey Birett*

# CPIN is coming to Hamilton



Amongst child protection agencies in Ontario, the CPIN acronym has become quite common place, yet it is still rather unfamiliar to many community members and agency partners. In Hamilton, this is about to change with The Children's Aid

Society (CAS) of Hamilton and the Catholic Children's Aid Society of Hamilton scheduled to join this database in the spring of 2018.

The Child Protection Information Network, aka CPIN, is a single, modern information system developed by the Ministry of Children and Youth Services to enhance child welfare services across the province.

Following the five-year implementation period, the CPIN information system will allow children's aid societies to securely share confidential child protection information with one another and better manage case files and finances using a single database. Privacy and confidentiality remain key priorities and as such, all existing safeguards at CASs will continue to be implemented. In addition, access to information will be limited and dependent on role and assigned cases of staff.

Above all else, the ultimate goal of CPIN is to increase safety of children across the province.

Secondary goals include: sharing/easy access to confidential information across the province; a fully integrated system; consistency and efficiency; and an increase in transparency and accountability for all stakeholders.

In essence, CPIN implementation will represent a major change to the agency's internal day-to-day activities. What the agency does will remain the same, but how it is done will change.

By year's end, 19 children's aid societies will have already implemented CPIN within their organizations, or be in the process of doing so. While the targeted 'go live' date for Hamilton children's aid societies is not until the late spring of 2018, there is much work to be undertaken in the coming months to prepare for this massive overhaul.

The background preparation for the agency's CPIN deployment has already commenced. As the agency's implementation phase progresses it is anticipated that staff will be busier than usual, and that non-essential services may be temporarily put on hold while staff focus on this substantial change.

The agency is grateful for the ongoing support of all stakeholders and community members. Your patience and understanding are most appreciated during this time of change.

## Dress Purple and Raise Awareness

*continued from Page 1*

The Society is pleased to have the support of the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board and the conseil scolaire Viamonde in helping to share the message. By understanding one's duty to report and recognizing signs of abuse, it is the goal of CASs to help break the silence and have those who can speak up for kids do so.

In partnership with its sister agency the Catholic Children's Aid Society of Hamilton, the agency will be reaching out to many community partners to ask for their support in this awareness campaign. If you would like a purple ribbon to show your support, please contact the Communications & Development Unit today.

While the agency will be working to raise awareness throughout the month, October 24<sup>th</sup> has been deemed

Dress Purple Day across the province. Schools and community partners are being asked to wear purple to show their support and to join in the social media conversation using the hashtag #IBREAKthesilence.



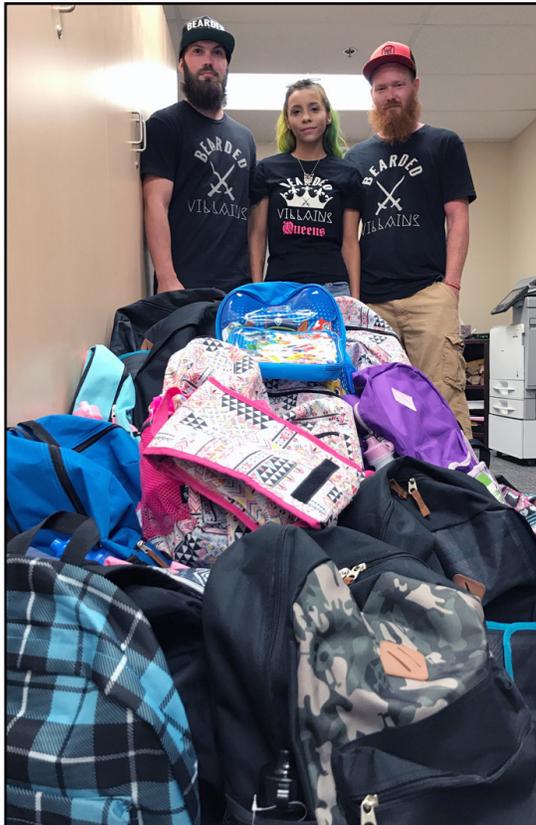
# Oral Health Care Matters

When the Hamilton Academy of Dentistry (HAD) learned there was a limited number of oral health care products readily available to children and mothers in crises situations, the large organization of dentists knew they needed to address the issue and the Society was one of the fortunate recipients of their good will.

HAD has a history of serving the Hamilton community dating back to 1869. Currently, the organization represents over 200 dentists in the greater Hamilton area serving over 570,000 individuals. According to HAD, 20-22% of their clients are within the poverty level. While there are several social service organizations that support basic everyday needs for those living in poverty, HAD says that oral care needs are not often a priority.

HAD has focused its efforts on supplying oral health care products to women's shelters across Hamilton, children's aid societies and other social service agencies who assist children and families.

The Society is pleased to have the opportunity to start distributing oral care packages this fall. Each kit is suited to a particular age group and includes a toothbrush, toothpaste and dental floss.



## School Supplies for SUCCESS

Thanks to the generosity of this community, there will be many confident youngsters starting school with a brand new backpack and school supplies this year. The Society annually collects new items and provides them to children from low income families who are involved with the Society and living in their own home or with kin.

Photo, left: It was quite a spectacle to see the mountain of backpacks – 42 in total – that were brought to the agency by three affiliates of the local chapter of The Bearded Villains - a brotherhood of elite bearded men from all over the world 'dedicated to The Beard, Charity, Family, Respect, and Loyalty'. Brandon (member), Melissa (Bearded Villain Queen) and John (member) stopped by the agency with this unbelievable donation of brand new backpacks filled with school supplies and snacks for children in need.

# Spring Gala A Grand Success

In 2016, the Grape Expectations Gala Planning Committee opted to postpone its annual fall fundraising gala until the spring of 2017 as it underwent a refreshing overhaul. The planning committee took a leap of faith and revamped the event into a spring gala.

Held on May 29<sup>th</sup>, 2017 at a new venue, the 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Grape Expectations Spring Gala came to fruition to the delight of both guests and exhibitors, and it was an overwhelming success. Despite growing needs in and around the Hamilton community, once again the agency received tremendous support through donations, sponsorships and ticket sales.

“We were thrilled with the outpouring of support the gala received this year,” said Dominic Verticchio, Executive Director. “It is hard to fathom with the growing number of worthwhile agencies looking to the community to support their cause that our gala would continue to be so successful. We are truly grateful for the dedication of our supporters.”

Unlike many fundraising activities, the agency’s gala does not involve speeches nor a sit down meal. Instead, guests roam and mingle while sampling food, wine and craft brews from some of the area’s best establishments.

In addition, this year’s event offered guests some amazing items via silent auction, the musical backdrop of The John Sherwood Trio as well as magical entertainment by The Sentimentalists and creative sand art by The Fritz of Art.

Since its inception 14 years ago, the gala has raised over \$1,183,000. Prior to changes in government funding, proceeds supported recreational, therapeutic and educational opportunities for children and youth in the agency’s care.

Now the gala is able to dedicate all of its proceeds toward education, in particular, Crown Ward Bursaries. The \$82,393 raised at this year’s event, paired with donations received throughout the year, enabled the Society to provide 41 Crown Ward youth with post-secondary educational bursaries for the 2017/2018 academic year.



Presenting Sponsor



Special thanks to  
**Alexandra Del Bello Photography**  
for providing photographic services.



# 2017 Hamper and Toy Room Programs

Even though the holiday season is still months away, the agency is already preparing for its 2017 Christmas Hamper and Toy Room Programs.

While the holiday season can be a festive time, for those already struggling to make ends meet, it is often a difficult time of year. The sad reality is, for a number of families served by The Children's Aid Society of Hamilton, they are forced to choose between providing gifts to their child(ren) or buying groceries.

The Society believes every family should have the opportunity to celebrate the season and that every child should experience the magic of the season. As such, the agency annually reaches out to the community to help support these families during the holiday season.

Last year, the Society provided 329 hampers to youth living independently on a tight budget and to families in need ranging in size from two to 11 family members. With the ever increasing cost of living, it is anticipated that the need will be even greater this year.

Each hamper includes gift cards, pajamas for each family member, a blanket/throw, toys or family games, children's activity books, seasonal treats, and wrapping paper. In addition, new and unwrapped gifts for children and teens are collected and distributed through the toy room.

"We are grateful to all of the individuals, families, service organizations, schools, and businesses that give generously to our Christmas Hamper and Toy Room Programs each year," says Dominic Verticchio, Executive Director. With the support of the community we're able to make a tremendous impact on the children and families that our agency is currently working with and help them have a joyous and memorable holiday season."

As you start planning for your family's holiday celebrations, please consider supporting children and families in need through the Society's Christmas Hamper Program or the Toy Room. Please watch the agency's social media platforms and website for more information including donation drop off dates and times.

Your support makes a difference.

Please find my contribution to:

Children's Fund \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Christmas Programs \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Crown Ward Bursary & Educational Fund

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

Summer Camp \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Wherever Needed Most \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Total Donation \$ \_\_\_\_\_**

Please indicate payment by:

Cheque  Visa  M/C  Amex

Card Number:

\_\_\_\_\_

Expiry Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

### Our commitment to donor privacy

The Children's Aid Society of Hamilton respects your privacy. We protect your personal information and adhere to all legislative requirements with respect to protecting privacy. We do not rent, sell, trade, or share our donor mailing lists. We use your personal information to keep you up-to-date on the activities of the Society, including programs, services, special events, funding needs, opportunities to volunteer or to give, and more, through periodic contacts. If at any time you wish to be removed from any of these contacts, simply inform us and we will gladly accommodate your request.

You can do this by:

Phone: 905-522-1121, ext. 6414

Email: [tsilvestro@hamiltoncas.com](mailto:tsilvestro@hamiltoncas.com)

Mail: The Children's Aid Society of Hamilton  
PO Box 1170, Depot 1  
Hamilton ON L8N 4B9

Charitable Business Number  
11885 2136 RR 0001

## Are you DRIVEN to Volunteer?

Help make a difference in the lives of children, youth and families  
The Society is seeking mature and responsible volunteer drivers to transport children, youth and families to appointments throughout the Hamilton area.

**Drivers are needed most often between 3:00 - 6:00 pm.**

To learn more about becoming a  
Volunteer Driver with The Children's Aid Society of Hamilton  
visit: [www.hamiltoncas.com](http://www.hamiltoncas.com) or email: [volunteer@hamiltoncas.com](mailto:volunteer@hamiltoncas.com)