



The Children's Aid Society
OF HAMILTON
La Société d'aide à l'enfance
DE HAMILTON

Care UPDATE

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Changes to Age of Protection

On December 8, 2016, Bill 89, the Supporting Children, Youth and Families Act, 2016 was introduced in the House of Commons. The proposed bill replaces the Child and Family Services Act (CFSA) with the Child, Youth and Family Services Act (CYFSA) and amends the current CFSA to raise the age of protection for children up to age 18 prior to proclamation of the CYFSA. As a result, effective January 1st, 2018 the age of protection amendments came into effect.



The objective of the new directive is to support the delivery of child protection services for 16 and 17 year old youth in need of protection, enabling them to be eligible for a full range of protection services. This support serves to give youth a better opportunity to receive the services they need to reach their full potential and have better outcomes as they transition into adulthood.

The agency will be working collaboratively with youth-serving organizations to develop protocols and processes to support services for 16 and 17 year old youth in need of protection.

In partnership with the Catholic Children's Aid Society of Hamilton, the Society will be hosting a forum for front-line staff of youth serving organizations in the community in March to provide further information and answer questions regarding this change.

Reporting

The legislated duty to report will continue to apply to children under 16 years of age. The act states that members of the public, including professionals who work with children, have an obligation to report promptly to a children's aid society if they fear a child under the age of 16 years old is unsafe or being harmed. This includes physical, sexual and emotional abuse, as well as neglect and risk of harm.

A person may make a report where they have a reasonable suspicion that a youth age 16 or 17 years old is or may be in need of protection.

For more information, please visit the agency's website at www.hamiltoncas.com.

**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.

Community Shows Compassion & Generosity at Christmas

With the Christmas season behind us, it provides an opportunity to reflect on the sincere kindness and generosity of the Hamilton community as witnessed through the support of the Society's Christmas Toy Room and Hamper Programs.

Many of the youth and families working with the Society struggle financially and the holiday season can amplify the burden of making ends meet. The agency's holiday programs aim to help lessen the stress for these families and provide much needed support.

Through the generosity of individual donors, families, organizations, small businesses and toy drives, the agency filled 317 hampers for families and youth living independently - supporting 1,050 individuals - who were referred to the program by their workers. Generous cash donations allowed the agency to purchase necessary items to ensure that all family referrals and needs were met over the holidays.

In addition, volunteers and staff delivered more than 1,600 toys, snowsuits, gifts and gift cards to youth and families who were not referred to the Hamper Program but needed support to help get them through the season.

On behalf of the children and families who have benefited from the compassion and generosity of everyone who contributed to the 2017 holiday programs,



Thank you!

Community Shows Compassion & Generosity at Christmas



Beginning the Path Towards Reconciliation

Submitted by: Kristin Roe, Manager of Diversity & Outreach

Over the past year, the child welfare sector has taken the courageous step in our journey towards Reconciliation with the Indigenous community. On October 1-3, 2017, the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies (OACAS) hosted a gathering called "A Moment on the Path" at Geneva Park and Rama First Nation to acknowledge and apologize for the harmful role child welfare has played historically, and continues to play, in the lives of Ontario Indigenous children, families, and communities.

Indigenous participants - including survivors of the Sixties Scoop and Residential Schools - spoke about the devastating impact the child welfare system has had, and continues to have, on their communities.

The child welfare system has committed to nine key actions in order to move forward towards reconciliation:

- *Reduce the number of Indigenous children in care.*
- *Reduce the number of legal files involving Indigenous children and families;*
- *Increase the use of formal customary care agreements;*
- *Ensure Indigenous representation and involvement at the local Board of Directors;*
- *Implement mandatory Indigenous training for staff;*
- *Change the inter-agency protocol to include Jordan's Principle as a fundamental principle;*
- *In consultation with Indigenous communities, develop a unique agency-based plan to better address the needs of the children and families from those communities;*
- *Continue to develop relationships between their local agency and the local Indigenous*

communities;

- *Assist those individuals wanting to see their historical files by accessing and providing the information they request.*

The Children's Aid Society of Hamilton has also made a courageous step towards reconciliation in forming a working group with advisors from the local Indigenous community that will lead our agency in this important work. We have put together a five year timeline and look forward to seeking input and collaboration from agency stakeholders such as foster parents, as we embark on this important journey.

In order to make plans to move forward in this work, we acknowledge that we have made some efforts to learn from our history and to provide more equitable services to local Indigenous families involved with our agency. Here are some examples:

- Indigenous Resource Room is open to any Indigenous families who are receiving services in the building. The room also has an Indigenous focused children's library;
- Smudging policy created with consultation from the Aboriginal Health Centre;
- Staff continue to receive ongoing training on Reconciliation at Six Nations;
- Supervisors have attended "The Other Side of the Door" training led by Indigenous leaders in our sector, Karen Hill and Kenn Richard;
- Teachings from Native Women's Centre have been offered on the Circle of Care Parenting Program;
- Cultural programming opportunities at Aboriginal Health Centre and Hamilton Regional Indian Centre for Children in Care;
- Local Indigenous speakers are incorporated at each Anti-Oppressive Practice training for new staff, foster parents and volunteers;

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Muslim Families Respond to call for Foster Parents

Submitted by Rachel Threlkeld
Coordinator, Homes for Kids

The Society wishes to thank the Muslim Association of Hamilton for their efforts in partnering with the Society to encourage more Muslim families to consider fostering. In December, a foster parent information session held at the Hamilton Mountain Mosque on Stone Church Road attracted almost 100 people.

Ideally, foster families should reflect the diversity of our community, but currently only three out of approximately 170 agency foster families are Muslim. One of the reasons for this imbalance is that for newer Canadians, the concept of fostering is not familiar, as many countries do not have a formalized foster care system. An interest in helping to care for children, however, is a central component of the Muslim faith in much the same way as it is for the Christian community.

While there are currently only three Muslim families serving as foster families, that number is about to change. At least four of the families who attended the session at the Mosque are already proceeding with a foster family application and further interest is anticipated in the coming months.

Encouraging people to consider fostering is not without challenges. Nowadays, families live busy lives and fostering is a tremendous commitment. The Society has long known that one of the key motivators for families in their decision to foster has been their faith. With this in mind, about three years ago, the Society launched a faith-based foster family recruitment initiative, *Children Need Families & Families Need Communities*, which speaks to the need children have for a caring family, as well as to the supportive role faith communities play for foster families.

The initiative began with a focus on Hamilton's



ABOVE: Rania became a foster parent for the Society about a year ago, bringing the total number of the Society's Muslim foster families to three. She served as a panelist at the presentation at the Mosque to share her experience and encourage other families to consider fostering.

BELOW: Foster mother Ashley, pictured here with her daughter, is a Christian member of the agency's faith based recruitment initiative. For the information session at the Mosque, she respectfully wore a hijab while sharing her experiences with the many Muslim families in attendance.



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Muslim Families Respond to call for Foster Parents

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Christian community and is now reaching out to other faith groups and in some ways, bridging different faith communities in their interest in caring for children in our community.

The session at the Mosque featured a panel of foster parents, including both Muslim and Christian families.

The Society wishes to extend further thanks to the Muslim Association of Hamilton for their warm welcome, which following the presentation included a home cooked meal for everyone.

The Muslim Association of Hamilton continues to play an instrumental role in promoting fostering among Hamilton's Muslim community and supporting families as they embark upon this new path. The Society looks forward to welcoming more Muslim families into their new role as foster families in the coming months.



CPIN coming to Hamilton

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

Both The Children's Aid Society of Hamilton and the Catholic Children's Aid Society of Hamilton will be joining the database in the spring of 2018 and preparations are well underway. The ultimate goal of CPIN is to increase safety of children.

Please watch the CPIN video on the agency's website at www.hamiltoncas.com for details.



Volunteers Needed

Help make a difference in the lives of children, youth and families in our community by becoming a volunteer with The Children's Aid Society of Hamilton.

Our volunteers represent a diverse mix of cultural, ethnic, racial, and religious groups. Our volunteer team is made up of a wonderful pool of skills, talents, personalities, and backgrounds, all sharing a common passion for the well-being of children.

The Society is seeking mature, responsible and dedicated volunteers to join our team in the following roles:

- Child Caregivers

- P.A.L. (mentor)

- Volunteer Drivers
(drivers needed most often between 3:00 - 6:00 pm)

To learn more about becoming a volunteer with The Children's Aid Society of Hamilton visit:
www.hamiltoncas.com
or email:
volunteer@hamiltoncas.com

Bursary Program Receives Generous Donation

The Society extends sincere thanks to Peter and Karen Turkstra and Victoria Walzak-Mosca, who chose the agency's Crown Ward Bursary Program as the recipient of a \$10,000 gift from Turkstra Lumber. The gift was presented to Mrs. Walzak-Mosca at the Turkstra Lumber annual Christmas party for donating to the charity of her choice.

As Past President of the Society's Board of Directors and former member of the Crown Ward Bursary Selection Committee, Mrs. Walzak-Mosca is well aware of the impact bursaries can have on Crown Ward youth pursuing post-secondary education. Mrs. Turkstra currently sits on the agency's Board of Directors, and was delighted knowing this gift will be supporting youth in the Society's care.



Peter & Karen Turkstra

Beginning the Path Towards Reconciliation

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- Protocol in place with Hamilton Regional Indian Centre (training provided to staff);
- Partnership with Hamilton Regional Indian Centre on "Healthy Babies, Healthy Children" program;
- Continue to offer Aboriginal Alternative Dispute Resolution and Family Group Decision Making opportunities to families;
- Mentorship program with Six Nations new Child Wellbeing agency Ogwadeni: deo has occurred on three separate occasions at this agency.

We know that this journey includes all our community and all of the agency's stakeholders. If you have any particular questions or wish to learn more about our reconciliation work, please feel welcome to get in touch.

A graphic for the Grape Expectations Gala Spring. It features the text "Grape Expectations Gala" in green, "Spring" in a large, elegant cursive font, and "The Children's Aid Society of Hamilton's 15th Annual Grape Expectations Gala" in green. Below that, it says "Michelangelo Banquet Centre" and "Monday, May 28, 2018". The background is decorated with various colorful flowers in shades of pink, orange, and yellow.

Join us for a delightful evening of fine food, craft beer and Ontario wine sampling, as well as an incredible silent auction. Proceeds from the evening provide bursaries to youth seeking to pursue a post-secondary education.

Through proceeds from the gala and donations from our community, last year the agency presented 40 bursaries to Crown Ward youth. The Society is extremely proud of the of the academic accomplishments of our youth and know that pursuing an education will serve them well in their future.

To reserve tickets call 905-522-1121, ext. 6414
or email tsilvestro@hamiltoncas.com.

Be sure to follow us on social media for event details!

Ogwadeni: deo Receives Children's Aid Society Designation

Effective January 29th, 2018, Six Nations of the Grand River, as represented by the Six Nations Elected Council and whose child and family services authority is known as Ogwadeni: deo, is designated, as a children's aid society pursuant to subsection 15(2) of the Child and Family Services Act.



The Children's Aid Society of Hamilton would like to extend a huge congratulations to the staff of Ogwadeni: deo for completing the process towards designation – the first Indigenous Child Wellbeing agency in the region. Ogwadeni: deo will begin to respond to new referrals on April 1st, 2018.

Over the past year, the Society played a small but vital role in the designation process by engaging in three separate mentorship experiences, acting as mentors to seven staff from Ogwadeni: deo. This mutually beneficial experience provided Society staff the opportunity to engage in important educational and collaborative experiences. Many staff have reflected on the abundance of knowledge gained that will assist in the agency's goal for a more equitable provision of services for First Nations, Métis and Inuit children and families.

The Society is confident that the working relationship with Ogwadeni: deo staff and this new designation is the beginning of a positive and collaborative relationship where the voices and needs of children at Six Nations of the Grand River are at the heart of our decisions.

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makes a difference. 

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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:

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