



July 2, 2019

Dear Community Partners:

The Children's Aid Society of Hamilton, in partnership with families and our community, is committed to the safety, protection, and well-being of children and the strengthening of families, while valuing diversity and promoting equity. The events of the past few weeks related to our LGBTQIS+ community do not reflect the values of the Society.


We are writing this letter following the terrible incidents of hate and violence that occurred at the Hamilton Pride festival on June 15 and the subsequent safety concerns experienced by the LGBTQIS+ community as a result. The attacks that occurred at the Pride festival were fueled by white supremacy, racism, homophobia, transphobia and biphobia and have no place in our agency and in our community.

The Children's Aid Society of Hamilton recognizes the widespread needs of LGBTQIS+ children, youth and families and the ways in which they are often impacted by systemic barriers to support services. LGBTQIS+ children, youth and LGBTQIS+ - led families involved with the CAS face particular inequities and marginalization, especially when they feel unsafe in their communities. As a public institution, we are committed to the safety of the entire community where LGBTQIS+ children and youth are celebrated for their unique gifts. We are guided by our values – that *every child is valued, nurtured and kept safe*. This includes those who identify as LGBTQIS+, their families and communities in which they live.

Acts of hate and violence at the Pride festival have also had direct impact on the children and families we serve as well as our staff and community partners. We call upon all community members and city leaders in supporting policy and practices to increase equity and inclusion of all members of our Hamilton community. This includes our humble reflections as leaders and also listening to the many voices in the LGBTQIS+ community. We want a Hamilton that is welcoming, inclusive and safe for all.



Bryan Shone
Executive Director



Neil McMahon
Vice-President, Board of Directors