



We Are Your Children's Aid

ANNUAL REPORT 2010-11



Message from Board President and Executive Director

“We are your local children’s aid society” is an expression that we often use in our work in the community when describing the role of Family and Children’s Services. In this annual report we are very pleased to introduce a former youth in care, a foster parent couple, an adoptive parent and her daughter, a volunteer and a staff person who make up our local “I am your children’s aid” campaign. In their personal stories you will see our values and principles as an organization in action and you will see the compassion and dedication that people bring to their work, parenting and volunteering within our agency. By working together we are having a positive impact on the children, youth and families that we serve in our community.

We can look back at 2010–11 and feel very positive about our many accomplishments. With the assistance of the Ministry we end the fiscal year with a balanced budget. As an organization we have struggled for many years balancing our legislative responsibilities for delivering child welfare services within a funding model that is inadequate. Our balanced budget occurred for three key reasons: we made some difficult cuts at the end of last fiscal year; we were successful in our Section 14 review with our regional office which brought

to us additional funding eligibility; and, the Ministry provided in-year funding in March. The Commission for Sustainable Child Welfare Funding submitted their recommendation for a new approach to funding and we are waiting to hear from the Minister regarding the direction her government will be taking in the future. We are grateful for the additional financial support this year and are hopeful that a new funding model will provide the financial investments that we need from the ministry.

There are many service achievements and outcomes that you will read about in this annual report:

- We are pleased to report on the continued evolution of Family Conferencing, where we work with families and children together to arrive at a plan for the care and safety of the children. Aligned with this approach are our efforts to improve our work with Aboriginal families and children. We have developed new partnerships that help us achieve a better understanding of the issues that face Aboriginal families and children and improve our ability to understand historical context and be responsive to unique needs.
- Over the past few years we have strategically focused on helping our children and youth in care

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LAURA MAY
Grad Student
Writer
Traveller

“Growing up, I never had a safe place to turn to. At 11, I lost my mother and grew up afraid to come home every day to a house of alcohol, violence and neglect. With no safe place to stay, I came into foster care with Family & Children’s Services of Guelph Wellington when I was 15, where I found a worker who was there for me. I found support, assistance and the life I wanted, waiting for me. Now, I have a university degree in social work and have been accepted to grad school. I’ve travelled around the world and I’m just getting started. Without Children’s Aid, I may not have been here to tell my story.”

Message from Board President and Executive Director

to be successful in school. There are many reasons to spend our energy in this area but perhaps the most important one is that having success in school, including participating in post-secondary education, is one of the best predictors of success in life. If we want our youth leaving care to be successful adults we need to make sure that they have opportunities to do well in school. Along with the many programs that we now offer we have developed strong partnerships with both the Upper Grand and Wellington Catholic Boards of Education and more of our young people are being accepted into post-secondary programs. We are so proud of these young people and we remain determined to build even more supports for all of our children and youth in care.

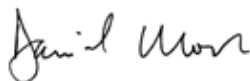
■ As an agency we remain committed to early intervention and prevention as a critical component of our service continuum. With the help of non-ministry funding from foundations and our community partners we continue to deliver our community development program, however, our level of services has been difficult to maintain without long term sustainable funding. We are working very closely with the City and our partners to implement a long term model for supporting neighborhood groups, who have been

very patient through this transition, and we are also researching other promising practices in the area of early intervention. While the programs may naturally evolve we remain determined to deliver services in the most-timely and client centered manner as possible.

As we look towards the next year we see a year of hope and promise. We will move into our new head office in early fall. The Board will lead in a strategic planning process that will engage our staff, foster parents and community to develop a five year map for our Agency to move forward on issues that are important to everyone. We will continue to work closely with the Commission and the Ministry to help develop a policy framework that helps vulnerable children and families in or local community. A heartfelt thank you to everyone who works, provides care or volunteers at F&CS – together “We are your children’s aid society.”



Brendan Soye, President



Daniel Moore, Executive Director



GREG

Engineer
Family man
Volunteer

“I’m Greg Boyajian, and I volunteer with the Family & Children Services of Guelph Wellington as a special friend to an 11-year-old boy. We talk about hopes, concerns, and work together on projects. We built this clock as a Christmas present; the thought of presenting it to his mom made his eyes glow with joy. The shared feeling of happiness was my payback for the few hours a week that I volunteer. Why do I volunteer? Because I believe we all have it in us to give, and that compassion is contagious.”

Our work with families and children in Guelph and Wellington County

FAMILY SERVICES

Reporting Concerns Everyone in the community shares a responsibility to protect children from harm, and in 2010–11 our initial intake team received 3,344 calls from the public with concerns about the safety of children in Guelph and Wellington County. Our Family Services workers are responsible for looking into those concerns, and out of those calls investigations were done on 1,417.

Working with Families We try to help children remain with their families wherever possible, and this is where most of our work is done. Out of the investigations that were done last year, 1,046 of those families did not need service beyond an investigation, and 352 families required ongoing support from family service workers. Where ongoing support is needed many services are provided to help the children in those families remain in their homes. Together with the family, the worker will develop goals, connect with other professionals and community members involved in the family's life, and will work with the family either on a voluntary basis or with a court order.

Family Support This is a voluntary, intensive home-based program where families are supported by a trained staff member. The Family Support Worker can help a family deal with both current and future crises. At any given time these workers serve an average of 55–65 cases, and also provide seven different groups serving well over 100 children and parents.

Family Conferencing We use family conferencing to work with families and children to determine the key people in their life who might help with problem

solving for both the short and long term safety and well-being of their children. In the past year we have completed over 100 family conferences internally and four Family Group Conferences. These meetings have child well-being at the core and have proven to be a productive and solution focused way to work with families that builds on strengths and extends more natural protection for children. One of the ways we are doing this with Aboriginal families is through traditional Aboriginal Circles with the presence of a community Elder. We completed four Aboriginal Circles in 2010–11.

CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Foster Care While most children we work with are able to remain at home while families get help to parent their children safely, in some situations the child may need to be removed from their home. 70 children and youth were admitted into the care of the agency over the past year with an average of 194 children in care at any given time. All were in foster homes except for 8 children who were in Outside Paid Resources (such as group homes or foster homes not operated by our agency). 104 foster homes are open to provide care for the children admitted to care.

Adoption When a child is not able to return to their family, we provide adoption services to find them permanent, loving homes. 24 children found permanent homes through adoption this year; 17 were from our county and seven were from other areas of the province. 126 adoptive families were supported through our post adoption services, and families of 86 adopted children received special supports and/or financial assistance.



YVONNE AND RANDY

Foster Parents
Adopted Child
Truck Driver

“What began as a response to a plea for help from a little girl led to us becoming foster parents with Family & Children’s Services of Guelph Wellington. Most people don’t know what it’s like to get a call asking to bring children into their home until everything is worked out. We have always been as honest as possible about our lives and struggles, our strengths and weaknesses and our gratitude for being trusted with vulnerable young lives. After years of fostering, we are still surprised at the love and protectiveness that we feel for these children. As long as we have life in our bones and as long as we are needed, we will have our door and hearts open for a child.”

Financial year-end for 2010–11

audited financial statements available on request

EXPENDITURES

Direct Service

Staffing Costs (service)	\$ 10,549,084
Boarding Rates	4,356,652
Travel (Staff & Clients)	540,751
Legal & Professional	48,639
Client Support	1,072,621
Adoption Subsidies & Probation Program	482,477
	6,863
Sub-total	\$ 17,057,087

Infrastructure and Administration

Infrastructure (Building/Technology/Capital)	1,341,433
Staffing Costs (Administration)	1,124,317
Administration Costs	502,200
Sub-total	\$ 2,967,950

Expenditures Total **\$ 20,025,037**

REVENUES

Ministry Funding	\$ 19,289,746
Children's Allowance / Parental Maintenance	463,442
Tax Recoveries	218,603
Expenditure Recoveries & Interest	25,866
Inter-agency Fees	27,380

Revenues Total **\$ 20,025,037**

Excess of expenditures over revenues **\$0**

KAREN

Children's Services Worker

Mother

Volleyball Coach



“While many people comment on how difficult this job must be, I have always enjoyed working with youth and their families. Dealing with my sexuality and fighting for gay rights led me towards the path of social work. I love the kids I work with at Family & Children's Services of Guelph Wellington. I use my personal experiences as a point of reference to support young people as they transition into adulthood, because I can relate to many of their issues. I am a strong advocate for diversity and try to be a positive role model. Youth know that they have my support in their lives to be themselves and to be accepted for who they are.”

Board of Directors 2010–2011

(as of March 31, 2011)

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Vice-President

Jan Lord

Secretary-Treasurer

Gilbert Lavalley

Directors

Zakir Akram

Susan Dickert

Gabriella Facchini

Teresa Hewitt

Lesleigh Hunter

Peter Jefferson

Councillor Don McKay

Joan Nandlal

Kendra Pagnan

Michele Preyde

Judy Yarmey

Life Members

Lois Armstrong

Robert Armstrong

Peter Barrow

Lynn Bell

Barbara Brownell

Moe Brubacher

Mary Carlin

Amy Cousineau

Donna Dodge

Stephen Dodge

Cathy Downer

Don Drone

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William Granger

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Barbara Hurren

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John Ridgeway

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Gordon Tosh

Wilma Tosh

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Jeff Watson

Jim Whitechurch

Charlie Whittaker



MARIA

Grade 1 Student
Dancer
Daughter

LIZ

Special Education Teacher
Adoptive Mother
Advocate

“As a child, I became aware of the need for adoptive families for children in Canada, and decided that this would be my path to parenthood. I began my adoption journey as a single parent with Family & Children Services of Guelph Wellington shortly after my 29th birthday because I knew that I could be the right mom for a waiting child, especially one with special needs. When I arrived at Maria’s foster home, I was absolutely terrified, but as soon as I saw her I knew that there was no turning back. I knew I had found my little girl!”



Contact information

Family & Children's Services of Guelph Wellington

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Head Office

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Victoria Road Office

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Shelldale Centre

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County Office

6484 Wellington Road 7, Elora, ON, N0B 1S0