



24 children living in adoptive homes

The Wellington County House of Industry and Refuge officially opened its doors on December 17, 1877 to the poor and homeless in the community; until the turn of the century, approximately 25% of the inmates of the House were children.

This provincially funded relief institute is now the oldest known state supported poor house in Canada that is still standing. Today it is home to the Wellington County Museum and Archives.

"Our focus is on the well being of all students. In that regard, Family & Children's Services has been a long time strategic partner in our mission to support young people. Our collective work has often been the tipping point in creating a hopeful future for many students in our community."

Don Drone
Director of Education & CEO
Wellington Catholic District School Board

"The Upper Grand District School Board has a formalized Collaborative Agreement with Family & Children's Services of Guelph and Wellington. We work together on issues such as the education of Crown Ward children and youth through initiatives such as the Central West Champion Team, policies (higher educational achievement is a joint goal) and programs such as Shared Services activities and joint symposiums. F&CS and the school board benefit from the ongoing dialogue and communication, which characterize this Partnership."

Martha Rogers Director of Education, Upper Grand District School Board

"Congratulations to Family and Children Services of Guelph and Wellington County on your 120th Anniversary. You have a legacy of building strong families with a focus on investing in our most precious resource, our children and youth. The Guelph Police Service is proud to partner with you daily and look forward to a prosperous future."

Bryan M. Larkin, Chief of Police, Guelph Police Service



14 adoptions finalized

Mayor Karen Farbridge

140 of F&CS children are living with families through adoption, foster or kin
62 of these are youth, 18 and over – 12 of these continue to live with their foster families, 47 children living with kin



1940's campaign



Mural of Hope

Family and Children's Services of Guelph and Wellington celebrates 120 years in the community

This year marks 120 years of caring and support to local children and youth by Family and Children's Services of Guelph and Wellington. The non-profit agency provides services to families to ensure that children are protected from physical and emotional abuse or neglect.

1893-2013

The first Children's Aid Society was created out of the Toronto Humane Society in 1891. Within four years, 29 more organizations had been created across the province including societies in Peterborough, Guelph and Ottawa.

In 1893 the Act for the Prevention of Cruelty to and Better Protection of Children was written, stipulating that for every town of 10,000 people or more, a receiving home or shelter must be provided for the temporary care of children apprehended under its authority until homes could be found.

The Children's Aid Society of Guelph and Wellington was created as a volunteer run society with a budget of \$34.61. At the time, the newly founded Guelph Humane Society was beginning to recognize that the protection and care of children had become their primary function, and the two Societies became one.



Promoli Building-55 Delhi

The Society's first children's shelter was located at 1 Waterloo Avenue, and ran from 1897 to 1911. The Society paid \$2 per month for a room and an additional \$1.50 per week to the Matron for the boarding of each child until a foster home could be found.

1910 - A new shelter was built on Clark Street. In the first year of operation the shelter housed 78 children-37 from the city and 31 from the county.

1912 - 60 Children's Aid Societies came together to form an association that would work in partnership with the provincial government and the community to develop a standard and consistent child welfare system.

1924 - The League of Nations drew up a Children's Charter of Rights, which stated, "that no child shall be deprived of his own parent and his own home because of economic reasons alone."

1927 - As it became accepted that most parents held the capacity to learn, change and develop, temporary wardship was introduced and the separation of children and parents was no longer permanent.

1930 - There were over 800 children residing in shelters throughout the province. During the 30's it was common for children to be separated from their homes, not because they were in need of protection but rather in need of food and shelter. By the end of World War Two, shelters were gradually phased out and replaced by small group or receiving homes.

1945 - Foster care began to emerge in response to beliefs that a substitute family was a more appropriate place than an institution for a child to build character and receive positive influence. Children living at the shelter on Clark Street were moved to a more intimate family setting at 106 Essex Street, which was run by an experienced foster mother.

1958 - With a growing staff of 11 workers and an Executive Director, the Agency moved the office from Douglas Street to the old nurse's residence at 55 Delhi Street.



1970 - A new Permanency Planning movement was introduced which focused primarily on keeping children out of care, or having those children in care returned home or adopted as soon as possible. The growing number of children in care with extensive emotional and behavioural challenges meant having permanency plans for long-term foster care or placement in group homes as an alternative for those who needed it.

2012 Eramosa Road



1984 - The Children's Aid Society became Family & Children's Services of Guelph and Wellington County (F&CS). The new name reflected a growing awareness of the child welfare agency's role with children and their families. In 2012 the offices of Family & Children's Services relocated to the newly renovated space at 275 Eramosa Road, providing better accessibility for clients and more efficient delivery of services. The non-profit agency continues to care about the well-being and safety of children and helps families provide caring and safe environments for their children. Last year across Ontario, Children's Aid investigated 83,000 referrals from concerned community members, teachers, and neighbours. Of those investigations, 26,234 families received services. Locally, F&CS received 3265 calls from people concerned about the safety of a child. Of those calls F&CS did 1791 investigations and worked with 760 families through on-going support.

With the support of partner agencies, nurturing neighbourhoods, and neighbourhood groups, 95% of the children F&CS work with remain in their own homes.

Celebrating 120 years
1893-2013



children



families

youth



community



Children and Youth in Care



Although most of the children and youth Family & Children's Services Guelph and Wellington (F&CS) work with are able to remain at home while families get help to parent them safely, in some situations, children may need to be removed from their home. At the end of 2012-2013, 207 children and youth were in the care of Family & Children's Services; 140 of them were living with caring and committed foster families.

Youth Engagement

Of the 207 children and youth who were in the care of F&CS last year, 62 of these were youth in their late teens. It is important for youth to have a voice in how the services that are provided impact them. Youth in care are often actively involved in exciting projects and events both at the agency and provincially. Through a Photo Voice project youth have the opportunity to creatively speak about their experiences of life in care and their hopes and dreams for the future. Their projects can be viewed on display in the lobby of the agency office on Eramosa Road. Youth also attend conferences with other youth in care provincially, nationally, and internationally. They have been active advocates to the provincial government in supporting changes to the child welfare system for youth in care and participated in the provincial Youth Leaving Care Hearings in 2012. All the submissions from youth around the province have been gathered and can be viewed in the report entitled *My Real Life Book* at www.provincialadvocate.on.ca.



Top: Youth Leaving Care Folder; PhotoVoice Wall.

Support parents in your community

Parenting may be the most important job in the world, but it can also be of the most difficult. It can become an overwhelming task when parents have little support from family, friends, or the community; when parents are very young and are not prepared for the responsibility; or when they do not know what to do when their child misbehaves.

Struggles with poverty, a mental health problem, a legacy of domestic violence, or a drug or alcohol abuse problem may also make it more difficult for parents to keep their children safe.

Poverty

More than 12 percent of Ontario's families live below the poverty line. Ontario remains Canada's "child poverty" capital with almost 412,000 children and youth living in impoverished conditions. The reliance on social services has increased by 60 percent since the economic crisis began in 2008.

Mental Health

Twenty-seven percent of the substantiated child maltreatment investigations in Canada reported that the primary caregiver had mental health issues. More than 21 percent of adult Ontarians will be diagnosed with mental health issues such as schizophrenia, depression, bipolar disorder and anxiety disorders in their lifetime.

Substance Abuse

In the most recent *Canadian Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect (2010)*, it was reported that in 38 percent of substantiated child maltreatment investigations the primary caregiver had alcohol or drug abuse issues.

Every day, Children's Aid Societies work with community partners to find the best match between the needs of families and children and local services. In Ontario there is a significant deficiency of youth addiction services, mental

health services, in and out patient psychiatric, behaviour management services and supports for parents with autistic children. Without supports and services, families are not receiving the help they need before a situation or issue becomes a crisis.

Many abusive adults have the capacity to change their behaviour with help, counselling, support and resources. Child abuse and family crisis are community problems. If someone you know is struggling with parenting, offer them care and support. Help families from reaching a state of crisis by referring struggling parents in need of support to F&CS.

"As the community has been able to recognize these difficulties and treat or deal with them, child care within the family has improved," says Daniel Moore, Executive Director for Family & Children's Services.

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Maria Finoro, President

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Family Counselling and Support Services
 FOR GUELPH-WELLINGTON

Congratulations to Family & Children's Services for 120 years of dedicated service to the families of Guelph and Wellington County.

Guelph-Wellington Women in Crisis
 24-hour Crisis Line: 1-519-836-5710, 1-800-265-SAFE (7233)
www.gwwomenincrisis.org

Working to end violence against women and children



Volunteers

In an organization that was entirely run by volunteers over a century ago, today volunteers still play an important part in the day-to-day lives of children involved with F&CS. More than 160 active volunteers give nearly 10,000 hours of time per year, helping at least 75 children and 25 parents with weekly one-to-one support.

Volunteers work with children, youth, single adults, parents and foster parents in a variety of programs.

Parent Aides provide long-term, one-to-one support to parents who are experiencing a variety of challenges in their families. Through weekly support, volunteers help parents to develop skills such as household and child management, financial and time organization, employment and housing searches, and help to arrange medical and counselling appointments.



Special Friends give emotional support to children who are in need of female or male role models. Mentors teach basic life and social skills, provide tutoring, and encourage participation in recreational sports and programs offered in the community.

Other volunteers donate time as program leaders, drivers, tutors, youth group leaders, or childcare providers for foster parents. Opportunities are also available in fund-development, community outreach and special projects.

F&CS welcomes all volunteers who are interested in building safe and loving environments for children and youth. Opportunities are available to fit all time commitments, whether a few hours per week or month, or more frequently.

Purple Ribbon Campaign

October is child abuse prevention month in Ontario. Every October a purple ribbon campaign runs to raise public awareness on community members' responsibility to protect children and how to report suspected neglect or abuse.

The campaign theme is that child protection is everyone's business. All Ontarians have an ongoing, legal obligation to directly and promptly contact their local Children's Aid if they suspect a child is or may be in need of protection. In addition, every person who performs professional or official duties with respect to children is subject to a penalty if they fail to report information related to a child they suspect is or may be abused or neglected. (*Child and Family Services Act s.72*)

It is the responsibility of F&CS to keep children safe when their families are unable to. Family is the most important thing to a child. Families are experts about their own experiences and must be involved in all planning and decision making about their child. In over 90% of cases where Children's Aid must become involved, work is done with the family and the child stays at home.

Abused children do not always show obvious warning signs of abuse or neglect, but sometimes there are subtle indicators.

It is important to realize that the presence of any one indicator does not mean that a child has been abused. Children will usually exhibit a number of indicators. It is not your responsibility to determine if a child is being abused. Call to report known or suspected signs.

Visit www.useyourvoice.ca for information on the signs of abuse.



What happens when you call

Your call is received by a child welfare professional who has been trained to listen to your concerns and ask questions before deciding how urgent the situation is and what type of intervention is needed.

Children's Aid professionals use comprehensive guidelines to determine the risk in each situation and then determine the kind of support and service needed to keep children safe in situations involving maltreatment. If a child is in imminent danger, a child protection worker will respond immediately, 24/7, 365 days per year.

Work in the County

F&CS has an office in Elora to serve families and children in Centre, East and North Wellington. Partnerships with other organizations such as the OPP, hospitals, Centre Wellington Resource Centre, and Family Health teams are extremely important in providing collaborative services to families and children. Its work in the county has a specific focus on the unique needs and circumstances that arise for people who live rurally. F&CS also has a special relationship with the Mennonite community where it works with community leaders to ensure the work is culturally responsive.

Working with Indigenous Leaders

The child welfare sector has a special responsibility to understand the historical context of Aboriginal issues in relation to its work given the terrible legacy of residential schools, the 'sixties scoop,' and the current disproportionate number of Aboriginal children in the care of the state. F&CS has worked hard to educate staff and ensure services are culturally relevant. One of the main ways this is done is through a strong relationship with some key Indigenous leaders in the community. Those leaders continue to help guide the work of F&CS and ensure that the service is responsive. Among other things, F&CS looks to those leaders to run talking circles and healing circles in working with Aboriginal families and children.



The City of Guelph acknowledges
**Family & Children's Services of Guelph
and Wellington County's**
120 years of important work.



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Heart Gallery

Family & Children's Services of Guelph and Wellington County is responsible for ensuring the safety and well-being of children and youth. This involves ensuring that children experience stability and are cared for in homes by adults who love them.

All children need their own family—regardless of age, whether they're on their own, with siblings or have complex life challenges. When children and youth are cared for in families where they feel loved and connected, they have a much better chance of being all they were meant to be. Research indicates they have a better chance of graduating from high school, going on to post-secondary education or fulfilling employment.

"In Guelph, we have more than 100 children and youth in need of a permanent family," says Sheila Markle, Children's Services Director of Family & Children's Services of Guelph and Wellington County.

Launched in partnership with The Adoption Council of Canada, the Heart Gallery is a travelling photographic exhibit created to attract potential parents who will commit to adopting children and youth waiting in foster care. Using the power of photography, pictures of waiting children and youth are taken to capture their individuality. The pictures are then displayed in the Heart Gallery at public locations in the community to raise awareness about the children who need to find forever homes and to obtain support to meet those needs.



Children First Fund

The Children First Fund has been established to provide financial assistance to important programs, which are not currently funded through the Ministry of Children and Youth Services.

These programs assist the Agency's five-year strategic directions of Prevention and Early Help, Leadership for Change and Service Excellence through Organizational Effectiveness in support of the organization's mission to work together with children, youth, their families and the community for the safety and well-being of children and youth.

Education Support Program

Children anticipate with joy and excitement the celebration of their birthdays. For youth in care, each birthday also brings them a growing sense of worry. Each year they are one step closer to something they cannot control and which they feel ill prepared to confront - moving out of home before they turn 18, and being cut off of all Ministry funded support on their 21st birthday.

For many children and young adults who have been affected by abuse and neglect, obtaining an education can be a difficult task. This Program assists youth in foster care with post secondary tuition to the school of their choice, or provides the tools and supplies associated with an apprenticeship.

In 2012, tuition support was provided to eight youth in care pursuing post secondary education and several awards, scholarships or bursaries were granted. F&CS anticipates having at least 12 youth attending programs during the coming school year.

Enrichment Program

F&CS encourages all children to hold a dream for their future and to reach for it.

The Enrichment Program helps to open the doors of opportunity for children, youth and young adults to attain their full potential by providing access to inspiring opportunities and skill building experiences which are outside the Ministry's funding mandate.

Prevention & Early Help Program

F&CS recognizes the importance of working with vulnerable families in Guelph and Wellington County not requiring formal child protection services. Working collaboratively with other organizations the Prevention & Early Help Program provides supports to families to assist them in managing difficulties that have already emerged.

A United Way Guelph Wellington Dufferin grant of \$50,000 to the Prevention and Early Help Program will support building accessible networks, resources and supports in vulnerable communities.

Permanency Pilot Partnerships

When children have forever families to live with who love them and care about them, they have the greatest chance of being all they are meant to be.

Permanency initiatives include Family Finding—a model that focuses on locating family members who have been disconnected from one another. It is used with children in care to locate family members who can establish life-long connections for children and youth needing permanence. It is also used to locate family members who can support parents in ensuring the long-term safety, well-being and permanence of their children.

Last year 38 children were referred to Family Finding and 1076 family members were identified.

Congratulations on your 120th Anniversary!

From your friends at Lutherwood

Children's Mental Health
Employment Services
lutherwood.ca



Hon. Liz Sandals, M.P.P.
173 Woolwich Street
Guelph, ON
N1H 3V4
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Thank You
to F&CS for supporting
Guelph's children for
120 Years

Special congratulations to
Pat McCraw and
Jan Lord who both received the
Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal
for their work with the F&CS

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Handel Messiah Sing-a-long

December 22 at 3:00pm

St. George's Anglican Church

George Frideric Handel was a Governor and a major benefactor of the Founding Hospital in Britain, London's first home for abandoned children.

During his life the Composer's benefit Messiah concerts raised thousands of pounds for the hospital (1749-1759), with annual fundraising performances continuing for another twenty years after his death.

Thought to be unsuitable for concert hall performances, his work became acceptable and overwhelmingly supported when performed in a chapel for the benefit of charity.

This December, Family & Children Services of Guelph and Wellington County and the Guelph Chamber Choir will present the Handel Messiah Sing-a-long, with conductor Gerald Neufeld.

The event is sponsored by BMO Nesbitt Burns and Newton Eastwood Dietrich Wealth Advisory Group. Donations will be accepted in lieu of tickets to support the Children First Fund, where money raised will provide support to important programs, which are not funded through the Ministry of Children and Youth Services.

Enjoy this opportunity to experience your favourite sections of this mastery work with family and friends. The F&CS Heart Gallery will also be on exhibit to raise awareness of children and youth who are in need of potential adoptive families.

For more information call 519-824-2410.

How to help

As a caring community member, there are many ways you can assist the children, youth and families involved with Family and Children's Services.

Foster care

Foster families provide temporary and permanent homes for children who are unable to live with their own families. Depending on circumstance, children may need foster care for a few days, a few weeks, or sometimes months.

Fostering is a rewarding opportunity to make a difference in the life of a child. F&CS is looking for individuals from all backgrounds regardless of marital status, race, religion or sexual orientation, who can welcome a child into their home and provide them with care and support. Homes are needed for children of all ages, from newborns to teens. Foster parents receive ongoing training and support from F&CS and some financial assistance.

Regular Adopt and Foster Information Sessions are held at the Eramosa Road location for people interested in learning more.

Make a donation

Donations to F&CS Children First Fund are always appreciated and help to support programs that are not provided through funding from the Ontario government. Funds help to provide education support, enrichment programs and support for prevention and early help initiatives.

For more information contact Carolyn Tait-Guest, Fund Development Coordinator, at 519-824-2410 ext. 4172.

Adoption

F&CS helps all those involved and interested in the adoption process, where children up to 16 years of age are placed in loving and caring homes, becoming a permanent and legal part of a new family.

F&CS has trained staff who provide counselling for pregnant mothers and information for families who wish to adopt children. We also help adopted adults who are looking for information about their birth families and birth families who are requesting information about a child who was placed for adoption.



The most commonly used words from the community consultation on our new Strategic Plan.



Congratulations to FCSGW on their 120th Anniversary!

Thank you for your continued support and service to the children, youths and families in our area

From your friends at Scutt Signs



F&CS, you've been protecting our children and youth for 120 years. Thank you!

From your friends and partners at the Upper Grand District School Board



Thank you Family & Children Services for supporting our community for the last 120 Years!

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Community Partnerships

Since the early 1990's, Family & Children's Services programs have ranged to include prevention and early help, family support, protection investigation, residential care and adoption.

This level of service is based on the concept that protecting children and youth is a broad community responsibility, one that can best be achieved through a network of formal and informal partnerships.

F&CS works closely with many organizations including Community Mental Health Association, the Guelph Community Health Centre, Wellington Catholic District School Board, the Upper Grand District School Board, the Volunteer Centre of Guelph Wellington, Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Health Unit, Guelph Police Services, Wellington County, the City of Guelph, Immigrant Services and citizen led neighbourhood groups.

Kindle Communities

Kindle Communities Organization is a non-profit corporation formed by F&CS in 2001. It was created to protect F&CS assets, both in real estate and accumulated funds. The organization works to develop and manage properties with partners and community members to serve the needs of at risk children and families. Kindle currently owns the Shelldale Centre and houses in Kitchener and Guelph that operate as foster homes.

The Shelldale Centre

The Shelldale Centre is a former elementary school, which was purchased by F&CS with the assistance of the City of Guelph, partner organizations, and local service clubs. Shelldale is situated within the Onward Willow neighbourhood, an area of Guelph with high rates of poverty. It is also an area where many new immigrant and refugee families settle initially upon arriving in Guelph. Thirty-four different languages have been identified in the one kilometre area surrounding Shelldale.

The Shelldale Centre provides offices and space for programs, meetings and activities for ten partner organizations and the local Onward Willow Neighbourhood Group. These partners provide programs and services in the following areas:

- Onward Willow Better Beginnings Better Futures primary prevention programs
- Child, youth and family recreation
- Prenatal and early childhood programs
- Youth programs
- Parenting support programs
- Employment counselling
- Violence against women support programs
- Clinical health services
- Child welfare services
- Play therapy programs for physically, mentally, and behaviourally challenged children
- ESL instruction
- Support programs for recovering alcoholics



Onward Willow Better Beginnings Better Futures

The Onward Willow Better Beginnings, Better Futures Project operates through a management board, a neighbourhood group, and several committees made up of neighbourhood residents and agency partners. Programs are developed in response to the needs of the community with the goal of working together to help build a better life for children and families in the area.

Onward Willow Better Beginnings, Better Futures provides early years programs, family support and outreach, children and youth programs, and community development services. The community works at making their programs culturally inclusive by having staff available to speak a variety of languages, and friendship groups that are ethno-specific in order to increase access to information.

Give Yourself Credit

Give Yourself Credit is a unique community-based alternative education program where community partners have come together to collaborate in the interest of serving street involved and vulnerable youth.

The program offers community based access to education for these youth that is delivered in diverse and creative ways. The environment is relaxed and accepting. Students are able to design their own learning plans and individualized goals with the support of a teacher or youth worker. While this program has education as a primary focus, success at school can have a positive impact on a young person's self-worth, life skills, and mental and emotional health.

F&CS is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors with a variety of backgrounds and a commitment to the well being of children. The Board consists of 14 members who are elected annually at our annual general meeting.

2013-2014 Board of Directors

- Jan Lord, President
- Joan Nandlal, Vice President
- Patricia Widmeyer, Secretary-Treasurer
- Brendan Soye, Past President
- Zakir Akram
- Susan Dickert
- Gabriella Facchini
- Curt Hammond
- Lesleigh Hunter
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of Guelph and Wellington County

Heather Grummett, Editorial Coordinator, Venture Guelph Publications Ltd.



**Congratulations on
120 Years**
of service to Guelph and Wellington
County and best wishes from your
community partner,
the Guelph Police Service



Happy 120th Anniversary
Family & Children's Services of Guelph & Wellington County
*Your commitment to the children of our community
is invaluable!*
Frank Valeriote, Member of Parliament
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**Best wishes to Family
and Children's Services,
a valued community
partner making a
difference every day.**



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