

Year in Review

Annual Report

2019-2020



Board Chair and Executive Director Report

“The best way to cope with change is to help create it.” LW Lynett

The past year has been one of significant transitions, namely the consolidation of many new initiatives into the way child welfare services are provided. The above quote speaks to how Family and Children Services Guelph and Wellington County (FCSGW) has risen to not only meet those changes, but, in particular, how we triumphed over them. Some were planned, others were not, but in all we have demonstrated our strength and commitment to excellence. Our response to changing circumstances, especially the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, truly exemplifies the ability of our staff to face challenges while maintaining focus on service to children, youth, and families.

What has changed?

CPIN

On April 1st, 2019, FCSGW transitioned to the Child Protection Information Network (CPIN), a provincial database that allows Children’s Aid Societies to securely share with one another confidential child protection information and to better manage case files and finances. Months of work and preparation leading up to implementation led to a seamless transition. Post implementation, a great deal of hard work, adaptation, and working in a “new normal” has occurred. Most staff in the organization had to adjust to a very different system, and a great deal of work to align practice and processes has continued, including ongoing training and support.

Part X legislation

On January 1st of 2020, Part X of the Child, Youth, and Family Services Act legislation came into effect, which gives individuals the right to request access to their records, or to make a request for a correction to be made to those records. Significant work was required prior to implementation, including training of staff, policy and procedure development, and hiring of additional staff to ensure timely information access and disclosure of records. A team of staff worked to prepare us for these changes well in advance, enabling us to make the necessary organizational shifts in time for the January 1st implementation date.

Anti-oppression and equity initiatives

The past year has also included heightened efforts to embed equity approaches across the organization. This has included a restructured Anti-Oppression and Equity workgroup, an Anti-Black Racism steering committee, and internal work with affinity groups, all of which function to achieve equity in the service provided to clients, and, where possible, in the outcomes achieved by those we serve. One critical area of focus is demographic data, which we are collecting to examine who we are serving to understand areas of over-representation or differential outcomes, and to identify areas requiring particular attention in our service delivery approaches or advocacy efforts. As well, increased work within the Leadership Team and our Board of Directors is occurring and will continue to enhance our capacity to understand equity and white privilege.

Board Chair and Executive Director Report

It will further help to ensure equity is at the forefront of the decisions we make and how we allocate our resources.

Provincially, a new service model was endorsed that will require child welfare work to be done through an Equity, Trauma, and Indigenous Justice lens using the practice approaches of Signs of Safety and Family Finding. Not only do we strongly endorse such a model, we are also well positioned to support it since we have been implementing much of this work in our training and practice approaches over a number of years.

The COVID-19 crisis

The fiscal year ended with the COVID-19 pandemic, requiring us to utilize existing and new technological tools to adjust to the new realities before us. All staff are able to work remotely and, as an essential service, we continue to assist those who need help, whether this involves children, youth, or families attending our Eramosa office or having a staff person visit their home. Like many organizations, we are using video conferencing and telephone support to minimize in-person contact with clients during the crisis, but are also conducting in-person visits when required using appropriate safety measures. We worked hard to make certain our children, youth and families had what they needed to manage under the initial stay-at-home requirements. We have also communicated to our community that we are here to help and want families to reach out if they require support, regardless of the issue. In collaboration with our community partners, we are ensuring that families are connected to the service they require without worrying about who to call, emphasizing our message of “No Wrong Door”. We want people to know we are there for them and will always try to help however we can.

What happens next?

As we look toward the coming year, we anticipate further challenges from COVID-19, but we are confident that, like the past year, we will meet them head-on and with measurable success. As we have demonstrated in 2019-2020, “the best way to cope with change is by helping to create it.” This has allowed us to not only cope but to meet change, embrace it, and find new and creative ways to adapt. We will work closely with our community, our child welfare partners, and the government to ensure that the needs of the children, youth, and families within our jurisdiction are met and that all have the opportunity to thrive, both throughout this crisis and beyond.



**Glenna Banda,
Board Chair**



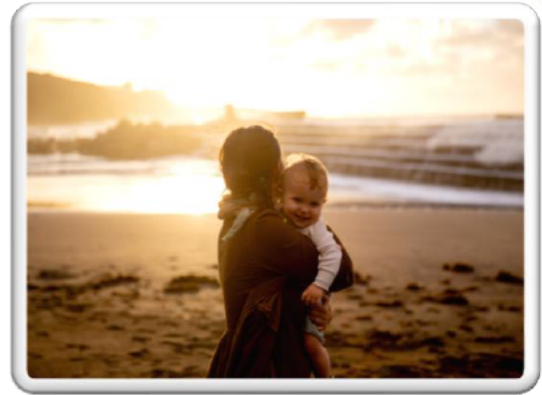
**Sheila Markle,
Executive
Director**

Discovering new horizons...

Inspired Service during COVID-19

The dawn of COVID-19 in 2020 has brought many unexpected changes. Down to the simplest gesture, people across the world move in caution, sometimes in fear, with consideration for those who have fallen sick or died, and for those most at risk. The challenges stemming from this pandemic are numerous and the result widespread, and the future is filled with uncertainty.

Yet, in difficulty lies opportunity. While the pandemic has changed the world, it has, at the same time, altered our thinking, spurring innovation and creativity in new and exciting ways, thanks to the commitment of staff to support our clients through the crisis.



The stories below exemplify the effect this unforeseen impact is having on clients.

Cooperative learning and growth

Melissa Rose, a Clinical Support Worker, shared her experience with a family whose native language is Farsi. At a time when many community services were unavailable, Melissa spoke with the mother to learn about her cultural values and beliefs, then applied the information to find relevant parenting resources and produce customized ones using an online translation tool and the aid of an interpreter to translate English into Farsi. She also worked together with the mother to create bilingual routine charts for the children.

Melissa has continued to educate herself on the culture of her client to ensure appropriate, ongoing support. She believes this effort, combined with conversations held throughout the learning process, help to engage the family and build trust and respect. The mother confirms that her children enjoy the routine chart, and she finds the parenting resources to be very useful. She greatly appreciates Melissa's endeavours to assist, and Melissa, in turn, is thankful she has been able to make a difference. "I genuinely believe putting forth a little bit of extra time and effort in our work can make a big difference for a family," she says. "I will absolutely continue these practices in my work moving forward."

Discovering new horizons...

Inspired Service during COVID-19

Enhanced outreach

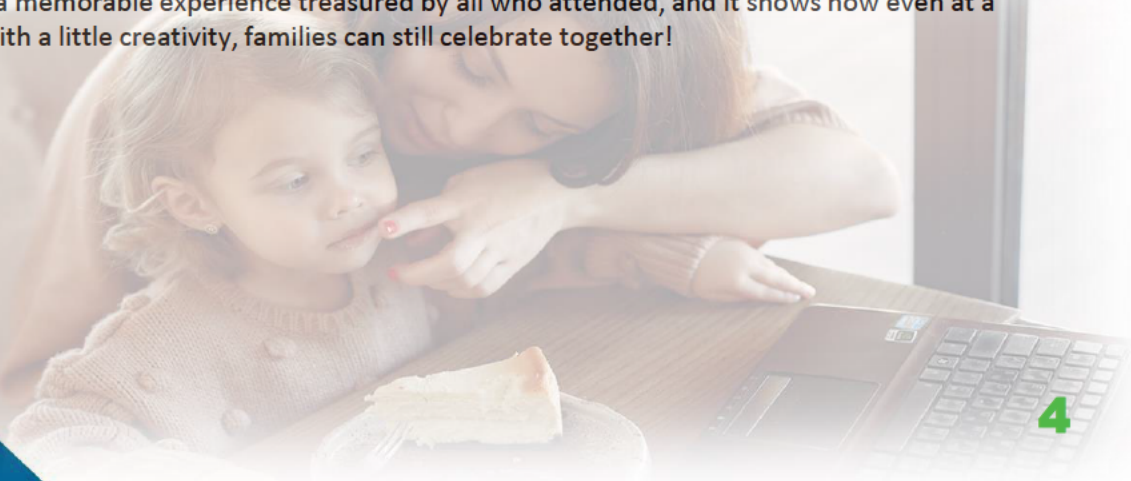
Forced to avoid social activities, youth, in particular, require extra help. Children's Services Worker, Beth Farquharson, has risen to the challenge, reaching out daily and maintaining contact through virtual platforms to keep the youth she works with engaged. Community partners work in tandem to ensure youth do not go without necessities, and Beth provides youth with any personal protective equipment (PPE) they require from Family and Children's Services.

Though safety measures remain a challenge for youth to follow, Beth feels proud of her young clients. "I have never been more pleased and proud of how the youth I work with are managing in this strange time!" she affirms, indicating that her need to connect with youth, both in person and virtually, and her reliance on those conversations to assess how they are doing, are having a positive impact. She has more time to listen, tailor solutions, provide reassurance, and by extension, demonstrate how much she cares.



Moments of innovative fun: A little goes a long way!

One primary downside of COVID-19 is the inability of families and friends to socialize in person. This did not stop Clinical Support Worker, Penny Anderson, and caregivers from throwing a virtual birthday bash for two adorable little boys. Delicious cupcakes were enjoyed by all during the online session – particularly by the children who munched and grinned continuously at the camera. This was a special group effort between the biological parents, several foster parents, and siblings. As shared by Penny, "Everyone worked hard to make this special for the boys..." The party was a memorable experience treasured by all who attended, and it shows how even at a distance, with a little creativity, families can still celebrate together!





Discovering new horizons...
**Inspired Service during
COVID-19**

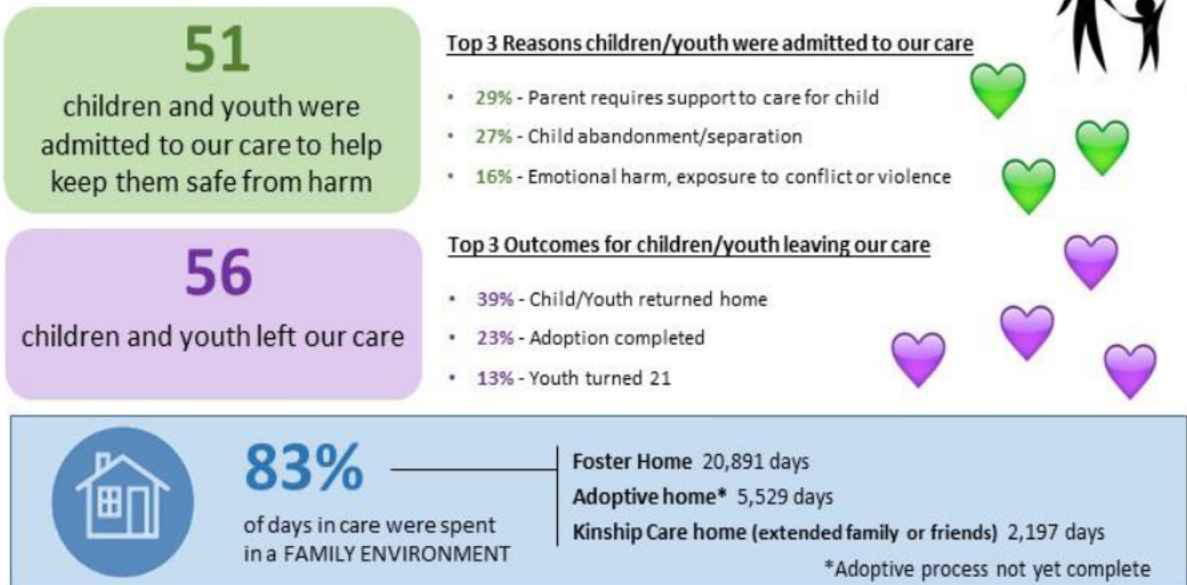
Ingenuity is moving us forward!

Without doubt, COVID-19 is a terrible tragedy, and we anticipate an end to its existence. Meanwhile, it remains our goal to provide service of high quality, and to improve however we can. Fresh avenues are being explored in every area of service. From intake to information technology to family visits, we are considering new ideas and how best we may proceed. Our staff lead the way by brainstorming and adapting, rethinking and modifying, and exceeding expectations to volunteer in the community, soothe hearts, and share a smile. They continue to kindle hope for those who need it most. They are changing lives - not because of COVID-19 but in spite of it – one inspired act at a time.

How F&CS Helped Children and Their Families in 2019-20



Children and Youth in Our Care 2019-20



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Youth aged 16-18 were served on a voluntary basis through a Voluntary Youth Service Agreement (VYSA)

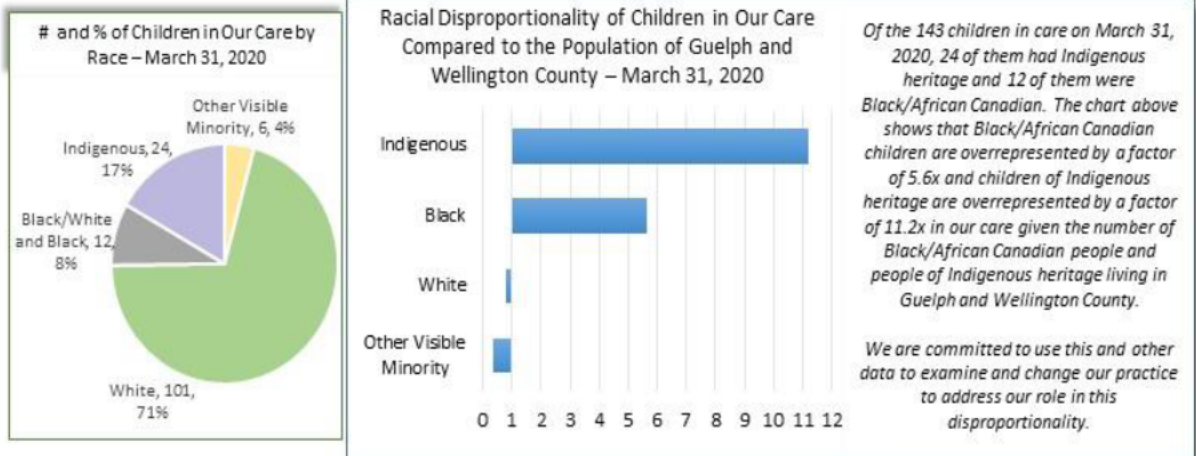
A VYSA provides youth with supports such as:

- Assistance with housing
- Reconnection with family/network
- Educational support
- Mental health support

Racial Disproportionality of Children in Our Care

The issues that give rise to the over-representation of Indigenous and Black children in the child welfare system are complex and multi-faceted. For example, low income, which is one of the inter-generational effects of colonialism, slavery and racism in society, is a major driver of child welfare involvement for Indigenous and Black children. Many Indigenous, Black and other racialized families, communities, advocates and others are also concerned that systemic racial discrimination in the child welfare system plays a significant role.

Interrupted Childhoods Report – Ontario Human Rights Commission, February 2018



Homes and Placements 2019-20

# of kinship home	99
# of children/youth in kinship homes	126
# of adoption homes	51
# of children/youth in adoption homes	28
# of agency foster homes	60
# of children/youth in agency foster homes	78
# of outside paid foster homes	16
# of children/youth in outside paid foster homes	24

Volunteers 2019-20



Learning Organization 2019-20



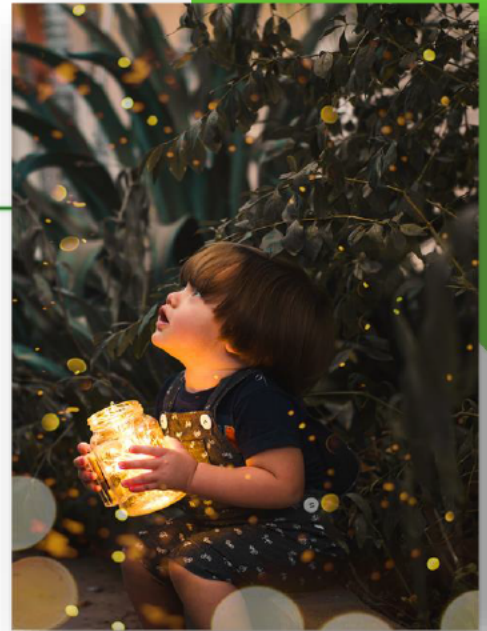
Training topics include:

- Indigenous Workshops
- Equity Training
- Compassion Fatigue
- First Aid Certification
- Child Welfare Pathway to Authorization
- Navigating through the Education System
- Part X Child, Youth & Family Services Act
- Child Welfare Political Action Committee
- Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder
- Supporting Gender Independent and Trans Children, Youth & Their Families



Child Welfare Operations Year-end for 2019-2020

Audited financial statements available on request.



EXPENDITURES

Direct Service

Staffing	\$ 11,919,081
Boarding Rates	3,218,416
Adoption Subsidies & Probation	889,086
Client Support	705,276
Travel (Staff, Clients)	352,497
Legal & Professional	247,725
Program	2,419
Sub-total	\$17,334,500

Infrastructure and Administration

Staffing	\$ 1,955,636
Infrastructure (Occupancy, Technology)	1,904,152
Administration (Professional, Office)	610,258
Sub-total	4,470,046

EXPENDITURES TOTAL

\$ 21,804,546

REVENUE

Child Welfare Funding	\$ 20,778,871
Other non-recurring revenue	600,329

REVENUE TOTAL

\$21,379,200

Excess of Expenditures over Revenues	(\$425,346)
Less: Balanced Budget Fund Withdrawal	410,463
FUND BALANCE *	(\$14,883)

Note: The negative Fund Balance will be carried forward into 2020-21.



Board of Directors

as of March 31, 2020



Board Chair:
Glenna Banda

Vice Chair:
Don McKay

Secretary Treasurer:
Mike Hallett

Directors:
Michelle Adams
Sabil Arshad
Hilary Blackett
Heather Broddy
Chase Collver
Cathy Dean
David Estill
Al Potma
Nancy Power
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