



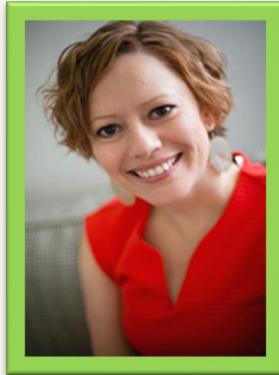
Annual Report

2020 | 2021



Year in Review

MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



**Glenna Banda,
Board Chair**



**Sheila Markle,
Executive Director**

2020-2021 was a year of extraordinary circumstances for our organization, our community, everyone who works for or volunteers with us, and the people who receive our services. The pandemic affected the world and laid bare for all to see the inequities that exist for those who have inadequate or no housing, are unemployed or underemployed, and have inadequate access to health, mental health or addiction supports. We also watched the systemic racism that existed long before the pandemic play out before us as countless events unfolded in the United States and here in Canada. We watched the systemic issues and barriers that already existed become amplified during the pandemic, as governments, organizations, and communities struggled to address the needs of people coping with stressors at a time when human contact was limited and technology was often the only way to stay connected. For many, this was yet another barrier.

At FCSGW, an organization that has Advocacy as a key Strategic Direction (i.e., to identify and reduce barriers that make it hard for children, youth and families to thrive), this was a year that shone, not a spotlight but a floodlight on the barriers that exist for many in our community. While we continued to provide service to children, youth, and families in our community, our staff were challenged to help at times when so many services and supports were closed or were offering limited services due to necessary public health restrictions to keep our community safe.

Those who faced barriers and challenges before the pandemic often saw those barriers and challenges become even greater over the past year.

And yet, it has been incredible to watch our community and our own organization rally to pivot services where possible to online formats, get technology into the hands of families so that children could continue their schooling, see food programs expand and increase to make sure everyone could have access to healthy food, and so many more inspiring examples of pulling together in the toughest of times.

MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



This year, our organization had stark reminders that the equity work we have been focused on has never been more important. While we continue to acknowledge and understand the barriers our racialized service recipients and staff face on a daily basis, we have renewed and increased our commitment to address equity for Indigenous and Black children, youth, and families, and we are moving to action to identify and address barriers that exist for many equity seeking groups through the use of data and by identifying specific actions that can be taken.

We have watched with pride the work happening in our community to address homelessness and the work of our sister organization, Kindle Communities, to create a Permanent Supportive Housing project in the Shelldale area of Guelph that will house approximately 30 individuals who desperately need a place to call home.

We look forward to the year ahead and are proud of the way we have managed in spite of the challenges this past year.

With many having received their vaccinations and looking forward to second shots, we anticipate being able to return to aspects of life before COVID, such as more interactions without masks, time outside in the good weather, gatherings to celebrate with one another, and seeing friends and family with fewer restrictions. We recognize and embrace that the future can include keeping things that we have learned work well during COVID—increased use of technology for meetings and connecting with those we serve, while balancing the need to come out from behind screens to connect in person again.

Glenna and Sheila

2020-21: Providing Services in a Year of Pandemic

REFERRALS

2019-20 2020-21
3,373 2,850 **↓ 16%**

new calls were received from people worried about a child

2019-20 2020-21
1,913 1,709 **↓ 11%**

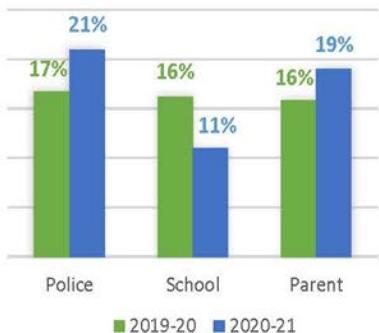
- file opened for support services
- referrals to other community organizations
- assistance to other children's aid societies



2019-20 2020-21
1,460 1,141 **↓ 22%**

families had worries big enough to look into

TOP 5 CALLERS



2019-20 2020-21
292 243 **↓ 17%**

families needed ongoing help to address the worries

Children and Youth in Our Care

2019-20 2020-21
51 52 **↑ 2%**

children and youth were admitted to our care to help keep them safe from harm

Top 3 Reasons children/youth were admitted to our care

	2019-20	2020-21
Parent requires support to care for child:	29%	46%
Child abandonment/separation:	27%	13%
Emotional harm, exposure to conflict or violence:	16%	
Physical Harm:		15%



Top 3 Reasons for children/youth leaving our care

	2019-20	2020-21
Child/Youth returned home:	39%	29%
Adoption Completed:	23%	24%
Youth turned 21:	13%	
Child/Youth transferred to another CAS:		26%



Support for Youth Aging Out of Care During the Pandemic

At the start of the pandemic, the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services issued a moratorium to maintain supports and services for youth who turn 21 during the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, our agency has been able to continue to provide support to 11 youth whose care agreements would have ended during the pandemic, allowing them to have a longer period of certainty and security.



2019-20 2020-21
20 24 **↑ 20%**

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

**A heartfelt
THANK YOU
to our staff for
the service they
provided during
COVID.**

An exciting NEW PROJECT: **Village Finding!**

On a future oriented note, we are about to launch a pilot project called “Village Finding”. This project will aim to increase the number and quality of relationships with safe adults in a child’s life. We know that when caregivers are struggling, children are impacted. We will be partnering with community leaders, other agency leaders, and the ACES (Adverse Childhood Experiences) Coalition to build intentional neighbourhood and cultural relationships in the life of a child where there may be struggles at home. Our long-term goal is to increase safe adults for children at risk, reduce the number of children who need to be removed from their homes, or if they do need to be removed, ensure they are kept within their communities. This project will take a community development approach and will be guided by community leaders.

We look forward to giving an update on our progress in next year’s annual report!

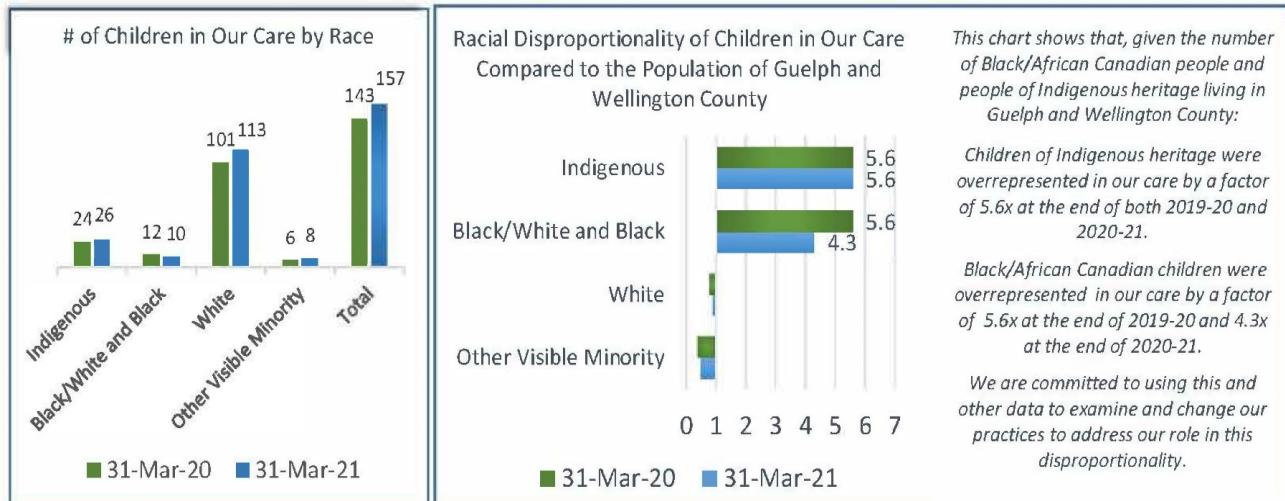


We have very dedicated staff who worked diligently during the pandemic to provide service to our community during a very challenging time. Many were managing children at home while working full-time and were key supports to elders or other vulnerable people in their lives. For parents with school-age children, teaching was added to the list of responsibilities, in addition to managing the complexity of increased isolation from family and friends. We want to say a heartfelt thank you to our staff who have continued to provide quality service to the children, youth, and families we serve, despite the difficulty of delivering that service amid so many restrictions. We recognize this was done under increased pressure from COVID restrictions and at a time when everyone was subject to heightened stress, including our own staff.

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



This chart shows that, given the number of Black/African Canadian people and people of Indigenous heritage living in Guelph and Wellington County:

Children of Indigenous heritage were overrepresented in our care by a factor of 5.6x at the end of both 2019-20 and 2020-21.

Black/African Canadian children were overrepresented in our care by a factor of 5.6x at the end of 2019-20 and 4.3x at the end of 2020-21.

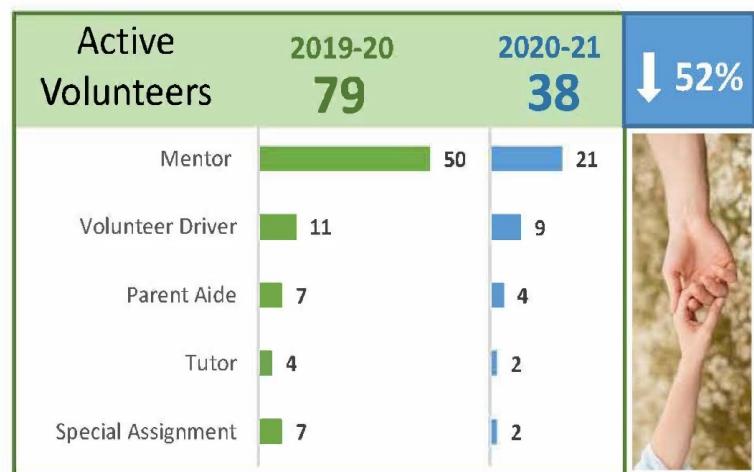
We are committed to using this and other data to examine and change our practices to address our role in this disproportionality.



The pandemic has significantly impacted Volunteer Services in many ways:

- Some volunteers were recruited, approved and trained but were not able to be matched with a volunteer role
- Some volunteers have decided to become inactive until COVID is less of a health and safety concern
- Some volunteers have completed assignments and are waiting for new ones, but are unable to be matched
- Onboarding of new volunteers has been on hold

Volunteer Services



OVERVIEW OF EQUITY INITIATIVES



In 2020, the world came to a halt with the COVID-19 pandemic, and we saw the most vulnerable people, including Black, Indigenous, and racialized groups, those living in poverty, those struggling with addictions and mental health, and 2SLGBTQ+ communities, be disproportionately impacted.

In addition to the pandemic, there were several horrific displays of anti-Black racism, anti-Indigenous racism, and anti-Asian racism in Canada and across the world. Although experiences of racism, discrimination, and violence are not new to the individuals who were/are impacted, it clearly highlighted the systemic racism, oppression, and white supremacy that exists and the desperate need for social justice and change.

This past year showed us how racism and inequities lead to overrepresentation and disproportionality of Black/African Canadian and Indigenous children and youth in care.

To really change our practice, our organization, together with the sector, must work hard to address individual and systemic racism, bias, and discrimination and reduce barriers for families. We have a responsibility to provide services that are inclusive of one's identity and lived experience and to honour the diversity of our community.

In 2020-2021, the organization committed to several Equity initiatives with a focus on reimagining how we do our work, specifically with Black, Indigenous, racialized and LGBT2SQ+ communities. Even during a pandemic, we were able to provide Anti-Oppression (AO) and Equity training and development for staff and managers. In addition to training, AO-Equity focused discussions have occurred at staff and team meetings.

There was a dedicated focus on the collection of data, and we came close to one hundred percent compliance last summer. The agency also engaged in a process to improve upon equitable hiring practices to reflect the diversity of our community.

OVERVIEW OF EQUITY INITIATIVES

The agency is represented on several zone and provincial committees and initiatives. We focused on communication and messaging from an AO-Equity lens and especially around social justice issues. To keep taking steps forward, the management team took part in a 3-day Equity planning process to develop priorities for 2021-2022.

The organization has been on an Equity journey for over a decade, but we recognize we have a long way to go. We are committed to changing our practice so that we can improve the lives and outcomes for the children, youth, and families we serve.

Training Testimonials

"The training made me feel very inspired to work on my own AO journey and getting more comfortable with being uncomfortable."

"I learned that I want to be more aware of the assumptions I make, and I can always be better, and it's a process."

Murals Eramosa Office





Children First Fund

IMPACT REPORT - 2020-2021

Leaving care can be a challenging and isolating experience, but the Children First Fund can make the transition a little easier for youth like Mikayla.

"I'm a youth in care with the Guelph agency and this year I've received support from the Children First Fund to help furnish and move into my own first apartment. I just wanted to take the time to thank the Children First Fund for what you do as it helps a lot! I'm so happy to be able to furnish my own place without worrying about money so much as I was before."

It really felt like a breath of fresh air I never knew I needed. I even mentioned to my worker it felt like winning the lottery! I'm so grateful to everyone who made this support possible. Because of you wonderful people, I'm now able to make my first place feel like a home. It's been a long time since I've felt at home, so I really am beyond grateful for this help financially; it has saved so much stress for me."

-Mikayla, Former Youth in Care and Children First Fund Recipient



BUILDING YOUTH SUCCESS THROUGH EDUCATION



14 Youth

received educational awards & scholarships



11 Youth supported

through skilled trades programs



\$23,245

in scholarships & awards granted

SUPPORTING YOUTH TRANSITIONING OUT OF CARE



1 Youth supported

through a skills training program



\$7,494 Granted

to make the transition out of care a little easier



6 Youth supported with furniture & other needs

MEETING BASIC NEEDS

26

Youth & Families supported in meeting their basic needs



20 Youth & Families received housing supports



14 Youth & Families received support for clothing, food and personal needs



5 Families received support for baby and children's needs



9 Youth & Families received health and mental health support



2 Youth received support for other basic needs

ENRICHING LIVES



73 Youth received special holiday meals and stockings



5 Children & Youth received academic enrichment support



1 Parent received a skill building opportunity



132

Children, Youth & Families Supported

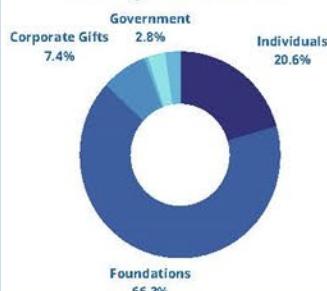
Community Programs
49%



\$222,226 in support provided through



Giving Breakdown



\$176,225 in donations & grants from

135 donors



Children First Fund

Family & Children's Services
of Guelph and Wellington County



Children First Fund

IMPACT REPORT - 2020-2021

When Nicole didn't have anywhere else to turn, we were there to give her the support she needed to overcome some big challenges in her life.

I am writing this letter to wholeheartedly thank you for your donation to F&CS. It has made a huge difference in my life!

As a former crown ward of Guelph and Wellington county, I worked in the restaurant industry in order to support my passion as an artist. However, when Covid hit, I could not work and found myself without the same support nor resources that most other young people had, such as parents to return home to.



Kieran, my social worker, has always held space for me with open ears. Yet, due to social distancing, funding limits, and the fact that I was over the age of 21, it just was not enough.

I went searching for my biological parents hoping they would provide me a safe place to stay. Needless to say, that did not happen and consequently I ended up on a trauma ward for three weeks.

After my discharge, Kieran called me and he was able to provide financial support thanks to you. It was life changing! With your donation, I managed to afford medicine for my PTSD which led me to a sound mind, and thereafter had the financial ability to secure a safe and nourishing living environment. That had a huge impact on me.

What's more, the ability to pay off my previous student loans has now allowed me to apply for school in September for massage therapy, a place to heal others.

Thank you for giving me a chance to survive and succeed!

-Nicole, Former Youth in Care and Children First Fund Recipient

DONORS

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Amy and David Estill
Anna MacQueen & Drew Shannon
Brian and Kathy Magee
Bo Cheyne & Jeff Smith
Children's Aid Foundation of Canada
Danby Appliances
Debbie Schenk
Debbie Zen
Barbara & Donald McKay
Doug and Susan Lane
Fred Primoli, Anne Lockie & Family
Friends of Children First
Glenna Banda
Greg Franks
Guelph Driving School
Guelph Storm
Halwell Mutual Insurance Company
Heather Broddy

Heather McDonald - Insight Psychology
Jan Lord
Jeanne Forsythe
Jeff and Sharron Watson
Jenna and Aaron Afshar & Family
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Karan Mann
Kate Wilcox
Katie Saunders and Steven Jacobs
Katrina Bell and Adam Snell
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Rosalyn LaRochelle
Sandra and Kevin Pitts
Sarah Haanstra and Ryan Van Engen
Shagg Salon Guelph
Sheila and Edmund Markle
Sport Chek
Suzanne Welstead
Tracy Dollois
Wilfried Rausser
Zehrs - Eramosa

Child Welfare Operations

Year-end for 2020-2021

Audited financial statements available on request.

EXPENDITURES

Direct Service

Staffing	\$ 12,249,792
Boarding Rates	3,591,455
Adoption Subsidies & Probation	794,455
Client Support	527,683
Legal & Professional	340,670
Travel	218,730
Sub-total	\$17,722,785

Infrastructure and Administration

Staffing	\$ 1,819,577
Infrastructure (Occupancy, Technology)	1,210,789
Administration (Professional, Office)	567,749
Sub-total	\$3,598,115

EXPENDITURES TOTAL **\$ 21,320,900**

REVENUE

Child Welfare Funding	\$ 20,692,524
Other non-recurring revenue	627,204

REVENUE TOTAL **\$21,319,728**

NET SURPLUS (DEFICIT) * **(-\$1,172)**

*The deficit will be carried forward into 2021-22.

we invest in children, youth, and families

Board of Directors

as of March 31st, 2021



Board Chair:

Glenna Banda

Vice Chair:

Don McKay

Secretary Treasurer:

Mike Hallet

Executive Director:

*Sheila Markle
(not a Board member)

Directors:

Sabil Arshad

Hilary Blackett

Heather Broddy

Chase Colver

Cathy Dean

Dave Estill

Al Potma

Nancy Power

Delbert Williams

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