

2015–2016

Catholic  
Children's Aid Society  
of Hamilton



Catholique  
Société d'aide à l'enfance  
de Hamilton

# ANNUAL REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

**SAFE AND  
THRIVING  
CHILDREN  
& YOUTH**



**EMPOWERED  
FAMILIES**



**STRONGER  
COMMUNITIES**



## “MY HEART IS WITH THIS AGENCY”



**GIULIA GAMBACORTA**

**Board president  
Giulia Gambacorta  
says success stories of  
children and youth in care  
are what have made  
her nine-year tenure  
most memorable**

**A**fter nine years of serving on the board of the Catholic Children's Aid Society — 2 of those years as board president — Hamilton crown attorney Giulia Gambacorta is completing her term. Her departure after such a long tenure brings mixed feelings. “I’m sad to go because it’s a wonderful board and a wonderful organization and I will miss it.”

She leaves with a sense of satisfaction about her work with the board: “To believe you’ve played some kind of role in positive outcomes for kids really is a great feeling.”

Giulia is also leaving with a greater understanding of how children in care are assisted by the agency. “As a crown attorney I knew there was an overrepresentation of children in care in the criminal justice system — that broke my heart and I wanted to know why that was happening.”

During her tenure, she learned about the disadvantages faced by children who are marginalized in society, the hardships they encounter and the help they need. “I gained great insight into the work of the agency, how children are affected by being in care and how this agency is able to help them by providing important services.” She recalls recently meeting a former CCASH crown ward. “She talked about how the support of this agency got her through some hard times and if it wasn’t for this support, she might have gone down a different path,” says Giulia. “This young woman also shared how being part of a Catholic organization helped her deepen her faith — and how this, in turn, served as a strong coping mechanism to get her through the challenges she faced.”

Knowing that the agency gives children the supports to help them lead happy and healthy lives is what makes Giulia most proud of her contributions on the board. “It’s the success stories we hear about that are the most gratifying — such as the youth who receive awards and scholarships to transition to university and go on to live successfully on their own. Also very memorable are the foster parent recognition evenings where people who have opened their homes and hearts to care for kids are recognized.”

Other accomplishments that Giulia is proud of during her tenure include the implementation of the balanced scorecard, which measures the success of the agency in all its endeavours; the development of a Strategic Map, which clearly sets out the values and goals that are necessary for the agency to achieve its mission; the selection of a new executive director after a rigorous search process; the expansion of French language services within the agency; and the ongoing success of the kinship program, which allows children and youth to remain within their communities through the support of a trusted member of their family, church or community circle.

“My heart is with this agency,” says Giulia, who emphasizes the faith aspect of the organization is its most distinguishing feature. “The work of this agency is driven by the principles of Catholic teachings. It is a value added that allows people to pursue their faith and allows the agency to be holistic and include the spiritual dimension in all the work it does.”

## MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR & BOARD PRESIDENT



ROCCO GIZZARELLI

Safe and Thriving Children and Youth, Empowered Families, Stronger Communities, our vision statement continues to inspire us. Our staff, caregivers, volunteers, board members and community partners, all share this passion.

Children, youth and families continue to experience positive outcomes through our focus on four Strategic Pillars guided by Catholic values, teachings and traditions. Our approach is to support and strengthen families so that parents and caregivers can provide children with safe and nurturing homes.

Anti-Oppressive practices continue to be integrated into our service delivery and approach to working with children, youth and families. We participated in consultations to change the system to better serve African Canadians and address the needs of Indigenous people.

Family based care and permanency are key components of our service. We continue to maintain children in their own families or kin or through admission

“ Our approach is to support and strengthen families so that parents and caregivers can provide children with safe and nurturing homes.

prevention strategies. Where this is not possible we have sought permanency through adoption, legal custody or independence. The agency marked its first annual youth conference which is detailed later in this report. A Youth Advisory Council has been established to formalize a process for youth to be supported and to provide feedback to the Society.

We continued building French Language Services capacity. As the lead agency we supported our partners in a pilot project to facilitate the presence of child protection workers in a number of schools in the Hamilton and Niagara region. Other initiatives include participation and collaboration (along with 6 local CASs) with McMaster University School of Social Work in the development of a Child Welfare Pathway. The program has an increased focus on child welfare to better prepare students for long-term careers in the field. We also partnered with Practice and Research Together (PART) in a pilot project which involved the development, training and evaluation of the use of evidence informed practice as a tool to guide interventions with families.

Our commitment to accountability and transparency is evident through our balanced scorecard which monitors our progress and executes improvement plans in key areas of our work. Data

collection and quality improvement plans support our efforts to improve services and accountability. As part of our ongoing commitment to improvement, a staff survey was developed to measure perceptions and feedback. Survey participation was high (82%) and the results were very positive. Feedback indicated several strengths in the agency, as well as areas for improvement.

Financially, the agency continues its favourable financial position. This year marked the third year using the new funding formula and we achieved a balanced budget. Despite the current financial landscape we continue to find new and innovative ways to provide quality services. We generated a surplus which will go into the Balanced Budget Fund to assist in managing funding challenges in the future.

CCASH is blessed to have a strong and committed Board of Directors. Special thanks to Giulia Gambacorta and Marni Flaherty for their years of dedicated service. I am grateful to Bishop Crosby for his guidance and enduring support and to the Ex Corde Foundation which enabled the “Deepening Faith” project. My appreciation to Elaine Pilgrim, Program Supervisor, MCYS and our many community partners.

My gratitude to our staff who do the important work serving the children, youth and families. To our foster, kin, and adoptive parents who open their homes to the most vulnerable children and to our volunteers and donors – thank you.

We remain confident in our ability to work as part of a provincial system, to continue to improve the quality of services to the Catholic children, youth and families we serve.



## FINANCIAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDING MARCH 31, 2016



FOR THE YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 2016	2015/2016
Amounts Received from the Province of Ontario	25,237,690
Other Revenue	1,925,209
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>27,162,899</b>
Salaries & Wages	12,096,281
Benefits	3,390,266
Travel	754,092
Training & Recruitment	127,993
Building Occupancy	341,705
Professional Services - Non Client Related	195,036
Program Expenses	510,662
Boarding Rate Payments	6,645,602
Professional Services - Client Related	348,008
Client Personal Needs	921,453
Health and Related	455,700
Financial Assistance Provided	23,378
Promotion/Publicity	99,702
Office Administration	166,394
Targeted Subsidy	252,700
Other	416,069
Technology	221,727
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>26,966,768</b>
Excess Revenue over Expenditures before Amortization	196,131
Amortization	110,300
<b>Excess (Deficiency) of Revenue over Expense</b>	<b>85,831</b>



## SHOWING MERCY TO PEOPLE WHO NEED IT MOST



In this “Year of Mercy” we are reminded that it is all of our responsibility to show “Mercy” to people in our community. We are charged to Feed the Hungry, Give Drink to the Thirsty, Shelter the Homeless and Clothe the Naked. Through the generosity of our friends and supporters this past year the CCASH has been able to act mercifully to so many in need. Here are some of the highlights of our year:

### 2015 SERENDIPITY AUCTION

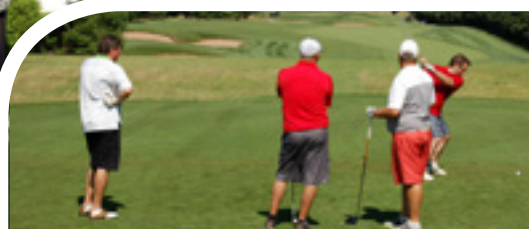
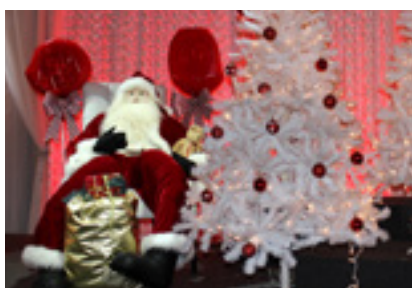
More than 450 guests came together on November 19, 2015 to celebrate “Christmas in Candy Land” at the 26th annual CCASH Serendipity Auction. The night was full of good food, great auction items and wonderful fellowship all in support of our kids.

### 2015 PEDER LARSEN “CARE BEYOND BELIEF” GOLF TOURNAMENT

A full field turned out for the Annual Peder Larsen “Care Beyond Belief” Golf Tournament on September 15, 2015. The day was full of great golf, beautiful weather and a wonderful spirit of friendship which Peder would have loved. It was a perfect day to honour Peder and to raise money for the kids served by the CCASH.

### 2015 CHRISTMAS HAMPER PROGRAM

They say that it takes a village to raise a child, well if that is true it is never more evident than through the commitment and generosity of our village in support of the 2015 CCASH Christmas Hamper Program. This past Christmas our agency was able to provide a brighter Christmas to more than 440 families receiving services from the CCASH.





## MEASURING THE ROLE OF FAITH IN POSITIVE OUTCOMES

A bishop, a board member, a foster parent and a former youth in care — read what they have to say about how faith inspires the work of the Catholic Children's Aid Society.



“The work of the CCASH is about saving lives and promoting family life in a very precious way. In the Catholic church, family life is considered fundamental and needs to be nurtured in every way possible. The CCASH does this by trying to protect and help children who have particular needs and

with a strong focus on trying to keep the family together.

When I meet foster families who care for children, I am so impressed that their work is all about love. The fact that these children are loved and have been brought into families where they can thrive is a very powerful thing. The faith of the child is also nurtured in these homes and enriches these children's lives. It is this nurturing that helps give these children a head start.

I've also been deeply moved by the social workers who help these children, who give them the affirmation they need to help them feel confident in who they are and what they can offer.”

**MOST REVEREND DOUGLAS CROSBY,  
BISHOP OF THE DIOCESE OF HAMILTON**



“The most important influence for me when I was a teenager was being able to go to the weekly drop-in group for youth in care run by the CCASH. There, I could connect with other young people who were having similar experiences and also reflect on religion and my relationship with God. I know that when I was born I was a gift of God and being able to be raised in a Catholic agency, to live in Catholic homes and go to Catholic schools gave me the opportunity to explore my faith, which is a comfort to me and something I turn to regularly.

Now that I am 21, I want to give back to the community — that's why I'm now a youth liaison for young people who are in the care of the CCASH. Because I have gone through the agency myself and have a good understanding of what that's like, I can connect with other young people in a peer-to-peer relationship by providing support — and they feel safe because they know I've had similar experiences. I really believe Jesus' spirit is working in me when I do this work.”

**KYLA STEWART, IN THE CARE OF THE CCASH FROM THE AGE OF FOUR**

**WE BELIEVE:** “ Our work is a vocation guided by Catholic values, teachings and traditions.

## WHY THE ROLE OF FAITH IS KEY IN THE CARE WE PROVIDE FOR CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES



“ My experience being on the CCASH board has shown me how deeply committed the agency is to the whole child, including their spirituality and the development of their faith. The teachings of Catholicism encourage us to follow the values of Jesus Christ. Children benefit greatly from this perspective because it is one of hope, forgiveness and gratitude. Vulnerable children are at risk and that's why it's so important that they receive the teachings of hope that are part of the gospel message, namely that they are a human being who is created in the likeness of God and they are worthy and valuable just for who they are — not for any special ability or because of their social circumstances. This is what helps them aspire to a positive future and to overcome challenges.”

**TONI KOVACH, CCASH BOARD MEMBER  
AND SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION  
HAMILTON WENTWORTH CATHOLIC  
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD**



“ Why am I a foster parent? I like the challenge and I like the fact that I can have a positive impact on kids' lives. My goal is to do the best I can for them so that they can have a chance in life.

I believe religion can be a good influence on one's lifestyle — it can help you choose to try to do the best in life, to help others and give back to society in whatever way you can.

It's really a question of trying to teach the right values so that youth will make good decisions in life. Many of our foster children stay with us for only a year or two. In that time we hope to leave a lasting imprint — to teach them to make choices that don't hurt other people. The CCASH offers spiritual support to children and youth, whether it's someone in the church, at the agency or in the foster family. Many of these foster children will take the values that they were taught and have a greater tendency to want to contribute to society in a positive way.”

**MARIA CERASOLI, WHO HAS CARED FOR MORE THAN 300 TEENAGE  
BOYS AS A FOSTER PARENT WITH CCASH OVER THE PAST 33 YEARS**

### **MONSIGNOR DANIEL HINSPERGER**

This year the CCASH lost a valuable member of our family with the untimely death of Monsignor Daniel Hinsperger. Fr. Dan was a member of the Board of Directors since 2007. His commitment to his faith and that of the agency was evident in all of his dealings with the Society and because of this we are a stronger organization. God Bless You, Fr. Dan.



## PROVIDING HIGH QUALITY SERVICE

18



**Adoption completions  
& finalizations**  
(9 MORE IN PROCESS)

432

**Number of open  
child protection files**  
(AS OF MARCH 31st)



1166

**Children served  
in own home**



33

**Kids who have  
completed or are  
enrolled in  
post secondary  
education**



262

**Number of  
kids in care**  
(AS OF MARCH 31<sup>ST</sup>)



2382

**Number of  
calls received**





243

Number of children  
attending camp



175

Number  
of staff



178

Number of  
volunteers



800

Number of  
investigations



15

Number of  
scholarships  
and bursaries  
awarded



711,000

Total km driven by  
volunteer drivers

# OUR WORK WITH THE COMMUNITY – IT IS OUR VOCATION



Connecting and serving people from a wide range of communities within the city of Hamilton has always been at the core of the work of the Catholic Children's Aid Society of Hamilton. The nature of our work is to respond to the needs of all our communities especially at very difficult points in their lives. This is not always easy and can be a very difficult journey for both the people we are blessed to serve and the dedicated staff who provide the service. This year the CCASH staff continues to connect with our community and enhance lives of the people we serve.

### AOP SERVICES

The CCASH is committed to working anti-oppressively, recognizes the increasing diversity in the city of Hamilton, and is sensitive to the fact that oppressed groups often encounter barriers to full access and participation in the community. The Society's social justice approach to better understand the experiences of those

served stems from the Catholic values of being morally and ethically responsive to the needs of the poor and the vulnerable in society. This past year CCASH has created an Anti-Oppressive Action Plan to help guide our work and better serve the diverse needs of our community.

### CROWN WARD SUPPORT TEAM

Over the past year we have been working hard to ensure the services and supports we provide to youth in our care (or who have been in our care) are addressing the specific needs of these groups. To that end, we have developed our "Crown Ward Support Team". This team is made up of individuals who provide direct programming support to our youth. These supports can help our youth in care better prepare for the future, develop skills for life or provide them opportunities to meet with other youth who are in the same situation so they can work together and share life experiences. The ultimate goal of the team is to prepare our youth for a

brighter future and to give them skills to succeed.

### PASTORAL CARE

The Catholic Children's Aid Society of Hamilton has always been committed to a holistic approach in our dealings with the people we serve. This approach allows our community to include "faith" as a part of their journey. This past year we took two major steps to allow for stronger faith-based service delivery. First, through the support of the Ex Corde Foundation of the Diocese of Hamilton we created our "Deepening Faith Guide". This guide is designed to help staff better understand how our faith based services help guide and inspire our work. Secondly, the agency has hired a new Pastoral Care Advisor whose role is to work with our staff, resource parents and the families we serve to provide assistance and guidance with faith issues as they relate to our work.

## NEW APPROACH SEEKS GREATER COLLABORATION AND ULTIMATELY ENHANCES CHILD SAFETY

The Society introduced a new case planning approach designed to solicit greater involvement from families and their supports — and thus have a positive impact on the safety and wellbeing of children in care.

“The goal is to involve the people we are working with to a greater extent — to encourage them to participate in the decision-making and planning,” says Trevor Allen, Manager of Services. “When parents and children are actively engaged in the conversation, it takes away some of their fear and anxiety because they are participating in the process.”

This new approach involves families in collaborative meetings where they discuss what is working well for them, the concerns they have, and how to determine what the next steps should be. Everyone is given an opportunity to share their opinions and concerns, including parents, children, foster

parents, society workers and others who might be considered a support (such as extended family members, teachers and neighbours).

**IT'S HELPING PARENTS:** This approach gives parents the opportunity to focus on what they are doing well for their children, such as providing a home, food and clothing and regularly getting their children off to school. “When we start by focusing on strengths, it has a way of shaping the discussion in a good way — there’s less defensiveness and there’s a positive energy that’s created.”

**IT'S HELPING CHILDREN:** Children are also part of case planning meetings, either by their physical presence and participation, by providing letters and/or pictures, or by having a trusted adult speak for them. “Children are often able to come up with strengths in their families” says Allen. “With this approach we are more actively involving children

and youth in the planning that affects their lives.”

**IT'S HELPING SOCIAL WORKERS:** “This approach helps workers feel more confident that they have tried everything to engage with families to help them create greater safety for children,” says Allen, who notes it also encourages workers to engage in critical self reflection and be aware of the power and privilege they have in their positions.

The new practice was developed over two years and introduced last September. All of the Society’s frontline workers have received training in this practice and response thus far has been encouraging. “More participation from everyone in the planning process means people are ultimately more likely to take more ownership of any agreement that’s been put in place,” says Allen. “This, in turn, enhances the outcomes for children in terms of their safety and wellbeing.”





# 1ST ANNUAL CCASH HAMILTON YOUTH CONFERENCE BRIEFING

From the very early stages, the planning committee was committed to ensuring the voices of youth were represented in all aspects of our first annual youth conference. The committee was led by two youth representatives and a number of society staff across departments. The theme that emerged among all members was “Let your Voice Be Heard.” On Friday April 29th, 41 youth attended the full day conference to share their experiences, celebrate their success, and most importantly let their voices be heard.

**Let's celebrate  
our success,  
let's voice our  
challenges and  
let's create  
the answers.**

The day began with several interactive team building activities, led by McMaster Altitude Team. Youth had the opportunity to engage with each other to build trust, cooperation and friendships in a safe, open environment. One youth commented it was a great way “to make everyone feel welcome.”

After lunch, participants had the privilege of listening to five current and former youth in care share their unique stories. Youth spoke about the challenges they have faced and

how they have overcome obstacles in their journey to become engaged and empowered individuals. Participants asked questions, shared and learned from each other in a very open and honest way.

“My favourite part of the youth conference was hearing all the amazing youth panels and their stories, it really made a huge positive impact on my life and I loved listening to the stories and being able to connect” (youth in care).

The afternoon also featured motivational speaker, Colleen Taffe, who shared her own inspirational stories of overcoming the challenges of diversity on her road to living a fulfilling and God-filled life. She shared how living a spiritual path has been a source of strength when things have been difficult and used humour to help youth in attendance feel inspired and connected to her story.

We ended the conference with the creative arts. Youth expressed their voices through the creation of murals which represented three themes: Let's celebrate our success, Let's voice our challenges and Let's create the answers. Youth actively engaged in this artistic expression, and the murals represent a collective voice of all our youth in care.

Overall, our first annual youth conference was a huge success. When asked “What was your favourite part of the conference” one youth summed it up so well: “Absolutely everything. Just being in the same atmosphere of kids with similar background and history makes me feel ... whole.”





**WE BELIEVE:**

“ The voices of children, youth and families must inspire and influence how we work and make decisions.



## MONITORING FOR SUCCESSFUL OUTCOMES



**“Measurement is the first step that leads to control and eventually to improvement. If you can’t measure something, you can’t understand it. If you can’t understand it, you can’t control it. If you can’t control it, you can’t improve it.”**

DR. JAMES HARRINGTON

Over the past year the CCASH has continued to focus on measuring the services we provide to the children, youth and families we serve. We are committed to providing services that produce positive outcomes and meet required standards. As an organization we are continually striving to improve in any area where there is an opportunity for improvement. During the past year we have measured our performance through our Balanced Scorecard, Quality Improvement Plan and Public Reporting of Provincial Performance Indicators.

Since 2013, the CCASH has had a Balanced Scorecard which monitors the implementation and effectiveness of our Strategic Plan. Almost sixty performance indicators have been selected through a consultative process that measure what we are doing well and where there are opportunities for improvement. Examples of performance indicators on our Balanced Scorecard include:

- Satisfaction Scores (parent/child/youth)
- Participation Rates in Planning & Decision Making
- Educational Performance of children in care

In April 2016, the Ministry of Children and Youth Services (MCYS) started to publicly report five provincial performance indicators for all child welfare agencies in the province including CCASH. Our results for the following indicators have been publicly reported: recurrence of protection concerns for cases closed at investigation and ongoing protection case, time to permanency, percentage of

children in family based care, and the quality of the child/caregiver relationship for children in care.

In December 2015, CCASH, as well as all other child welfare agencies in the province, began to develop Quality Improvement Plans (QIP) in identified areas due to the findings of the 2015 Auditor General Report for Child Welfare. CCASH has been actively engaging with staff in sharing results and in identifying quality improvement activities. We have recently completed an update to our initial QIP and have seen progress.

The Catholic Children’s Aid Society of Hamilton is continually monitoring our work both through the methods outlined above and through other activities that will allow us to continue to deliver on our vision to have Safe and Thriving Children and Youth, Empowered Families and Stronger Communities.



## CATHOLIC CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETY 2015-2016 BOARD OF DIRECTORS



The Catholic Children's Aid Society of Hamilton is guided in its work by a dedicated Board of Directors who give of their time and talents to ensure that the work of the agency is fulfilling our mission, is true to our vision and is acting within the laws that govern us. The Board of Directors for this past year consisted of the following individuals:

Giulia Gambacorta,  
President

John Lewis,  
1st Vice President

Anna Maria Brownlow,  
2nd Vice President

Larry DiIanni,  
Treasurer

Santina Moccio,  
Secretary

Fr. Peter Ciallella  
(From August 2016)

Dr. Cynthia Cupido

Marni Flaherty

Dr. Marilyn Gregus

David Hennick

Monsignor Daniel Hinsperger  
(RIP July 2016)

Laurence Kavanagh

Antionietta (Toni) Kovach

Deborah Lancaster

Jerome Pepin

John Spatazzo

### THANK YOU AND GOD BLESS

This year the Board of Directors will be saying goodbye to two dedicated members who will be completing their terms. The CCASH Family would like to say thank you to each of them for their commitment to the work of our agency and wish them every blessing for years to come.

### GIULIA GAMBACORTA

Giulia has been a member of the Board of Directors for the past 9 years and in that time served as a member of the Executive Committee in various Officer roles. She has just completed a two year term as President. Giulia has provided outstanding leadership to the organization along with true compassion and commitment to the children, youth and families we serve. This past year Giulia guided the organization in the search for our new Executive Director and through this work has set the organization on a clear path for years to come.

### MARNI FLAHERTY

Marni has been a member of the Board of Directors for the past 6 years serving on the Governance Committee for the last three years. Marni supported the Board's work through her insightful and thoughtful deliberations. Her passion for our children and youth, combined with her background in Early Childhood Development positioned Marni well in advancing the Society's mission.

## VISION

Our vision serves as the framework for our Strategy Map. It comes from the voices of the people we serve and represents our greatest aspirations for those children, youth and families.

Our shared vision is:

**SAFE AND THRIVING CHILDREN AND YOUTH.  
EMPOWERED FAMILIES. STRONGER COMMUNITIES.**

## OUR VALUES

CCASH values are our compass, shaping our actions, reactions and behaviours.

In all we do we value:

**SUCCESS FOR CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES**

**SERVICE EXCELLENCE**

**INTEGRITY**

**HUMAN DIGNITY & RESPECT**

**COMMUNICATION & COLLABORATION**

**COMPASSION**

**SHARED ACCOUNTABILITY**

**OUR TEAM**



Excellence in All We Do

Public & Stakeholder Confidence

Brighter Futures

Passionate & Prepared Team

“ It always seems impossible until it is done.

NELSON MANDELA