

Catholic
Children's Aid Society
of Hamilton



Catholique
Société d'aide à l'enfance
de Hamilton



STRATEGIC PLAN 2013 - 2018
BRIGHTER FUTURES!



INTRODUCTION & STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

The Catholic Children's Aid Society of Hamilton (CCASH) stands at a juncture of past, present and future. We *look back* at the things that have made this organization strong and resilient – our remarkable heritage and legacy of quality.

Today, we take pride in the huge contributions that CCASH makes to Hamilton. As we celebrate our 60th birthday, CCASH has evolved into an organization that is stronger because of our Catholic traditions, our community connections, our passion and the exceptional people that have made CCASH what it is today.

Most important, we look to the *future* and towards the opportunities we can seize to create an even greater organization; an agency whose mandate it is to protect, support, nurture and care for our most vulnerable children and youth.

To prepare for this future, we have reached out and listened to our stakeholders. By engaging over two hundred individuals, including youth, birth parents, foster, kinship and adoptive parents, volunteers, our employees, community service partners and government representatives we have shaped a strategic plan that embodies the immense power of collaboration. The plan builds on our assets and directs our efforts and resources to our most critical priorities.

Our sincere thanks to all who contributed to creating our mission, vision and five-year strategic plan ... you helped to shape the future of this organization for the immediate years to come. The degree of engagement demonstrated by our staff and stakeholders in creating this plan assures us that together, we can continue to build on our heritage and legacy and create an even greater CCASH for Hamilton's children, youth and families.

Our Strategic Planning Process

In April 2013, the Catholic Children's Aid Society of Hamilton embarked on the first strategic planning process that had been undertaken by the agency in over a decade. Through collaboration with our Board of Directors and our Internal Strategic Planning Committee, comprised of employees and board members, we named our Strategic Planning Process, 'Brighter Futures.' Our 'Brighter Futures' strategic planning process was designed to engage many diverse voices, accentuate the passion we have for the important work we do at CCASH, and create progressive results, ultimately in the form of a Strategic Plan. In addition, 'Brighter Futures' exemplified our focus on helping to shape brighter futures for children, youth and families.



The strategic planning approach we chose to use was based on the Balanced Scorecard planning methodology. This model identifies strategic directions in direct alignment to our vision and mission and from *four distinct pillars*:

- 1 CHILD, YOUTH AND FAMILY PILLAR
- 2 OPERATIONS PILLAR
- 3 ORGANIZATIONAL READINESS PILLAR
- 4 CAPACITY PILLAR

Goals are established to link with the strategic directions and ultimately performance indicators are created that allow us to measure our progress once we move to implementing the plan.

A vital component in the strategic planning wheel was our thorough environmental scan whereby we collected and analyzed data, information, evidence, research and best practices in tandem with obtaining feedback, ideas and experiences of employees, community service partners, youth, birth parents, resource families and volunteers. More than 220 individuals stepped forward to contribute to this strategic plan. As a result of this comprehensive assessment, we identified organizational strengths and several critical forces of change in the internal and external environments that ultimately shaped our Strategy Map. The following is a review of the areas we identified as strengths and strategic forces, as well as a snapshot of the children we serve.



Celebrating our Strengths

CHILDREN FIRST!

Our work is guided by our respect for the rights of all children and by our commitment to honouring the uniqueness of each child and youth we serve. Our staff works from a child-centred perspective to develop individualized plans that respond to the needs of each child and youth. We also believe that helping children means working with their parents and helping them with their problems. We are committed to involving and engaging parents to improve outcomes for children, youth and families.

OUR TEAM – THE HEART OF THE MATTER

Our employees are CCASH's greatest assets. Child welfare is challenging work and it is only through the fortitude, caring and commitment of our staff that we can serve our clients and improve outcomes for children, youth and families, every single day. Our work is rewarding providing the opportunity to touch, protect and shape lives. Whether on the front line or working in support roles or management, our 180 employees possess the skills, expertise and experience needed to make a difference.

"My worker helped me become a better parent for my kids. CCASH saved my life."

CCASH Biological Dad

VOLUNTEERS CAST A BEAUTIFUL SHADOW

Our team of 135 volunteers strengthens CCASH and helps us to achieve our goals. Today, our volunteers are involved in more ways than ever before, from driving children and youth to appointments or family visits, to providing tutoring to lending a hand with other tasks. As well, our Board of Directors dedicates many hours to our agency, providing leadership and a true commitment to the work we do each day. We commend and recognize the service and dedication that our volunteers provide to benefit CCASH children, youth and families.

RESOURCE FAMILIES OPEN HEARTS & HOMES

Every day in neighbourhoods across Hamilton, over 100 foster, kin and adoptive families open their hearts and their homes to over 300 vulnerable children and youth. It takes special people to make this commitment. We celebrate the skills, compassion and dedication of these special individuals and thank them for providing safe, loving and nurturing homes for our children and youth.

"My foster mom really tries to get to know me and gives us a family structure and great opportunities."

CCASH Youth in Care



Jesus said, *“Let the little children come to me, for the Kingdom of God Belongs to Them.”*

TEAMWORK - COMMUNITY SERVICE PARTNERS

As a community, we bear responsibility for every child. It takes all of us, working together, to make a difference. CCASH is proud and fortunate to collaborate and cooperate with a vast array of dedicated and skilled partners across Hamilton. Over the last few years, together, we have developed robust partnerships that are community-based, trusting, sustainable and action-oriented and have demonstrated tangible benefits and better outcomes for the children, youth and families we collectively serve.

BRINGING OUR SPIRITUALITY TO WORK

During our consultations with employees, youth, families and partners, many participants commented that there is something special about working with CCASH. People described it as ‘a warmth’, a real dedication to family, compassion and the sense that the work of CCASH was

‘a calling.’ CCASH is a Catholic agency and as such our work is a vocation guided by Catholic values, teachings and traditions and this truly impacts how we approach our work. We believe our staff weave spirituality and mindfulness into everything they do, thus improving the well-being of all those we serve and connect with.

CONNECTED - OUR ONTARIO NETWORK

We are fortunate to be part of Ontario’s large network of Children’s Aid Societies mandated by the Ontario Government to protect children from harm. As a member of the Ontario Association of Children’s Aid Societies, we have the opportunity to learn, share and work with other agencies to improve our services; assume leadership roles within the association; promote and advocate for child welfare; and positively influence public and government support.

Critical Strategic Influences

“Powerful social, economic and cultural factors drive the demand and necessity of child welfare services. It has become increasingly clear that external conditions, which contribute most to a child’s risk are conditions that the child welfare system does not have the mandate or capacity to address on their own.”¹

The following are strategic influences, both external and internal, that shape the CCASH’s Strategic Plan.

POVERTY

Living in poverty is stressful. There is an increased chance of interaction with child protection services as a result of the stress of poverty, which has been linked to instances of abandonment and emotional or physical abuse.²

Like other cities in Ontario, Hamilton continues to face increasing income inequality. Hamilton has a higher share of residents under the low-income cut off (LICO) and one of the highest poverty rates and incidence of child poverty rates in Ontario and across Canada. In 2009, 26% of Hamilton’s children lived in families, experiencing poverty. Furthermore, only one Hamilton neighbourhood had a poverty rate lower than 10%, whereas three neighbourhoods exceeded 50%. Sadly, within this context, recent immigrants, lone parent families, and Aboriginal people are more than twice as likely to experience poverty.³

A clear sign of poverty is that food banks continue to provide significant amounts of food in Hamilton. The total number of people who used a food bank in March 2011 was 18,432 and of this, 8,157 (44%) were children under the age of 18. Obtaining affordable housing is also a significant challenge for many struggling families. In Hamilton, there is a shortage of subsidized housing units and wait lists are intimidating. In fact, the number of people on the waiting list for social housing is at its highest point since 2002 and even worse the wait for single-family homes can be over five years.

Getting access to services and programs is an uphill battle due to the expenses associated with public transit. Although \$5.10 for an adult two-way bus fare may seem reasonable, for someone in poverty, this amount can be unbearable, particularly when children’s fares also need to be covered. In 2012, CCASH provided almost \$40,000 in bus tickets to families in need and other agencies, such as the Hamilton Community Foundation also supported neighbourhood hubs to meet the immediate transportation needs of Hamiltonians.

For children living with poverty, the results can be life altering. Poverty suggests that the children’s basic needs may not always be met or they may be living with huge stressors in their home environment, such as family breakdown. Sadly research shows that poor children suffer higher incidences of adverse impacts on their physical health (i.e. low birth weight), cognitive ability (i.e. learning disability), school achievement (i.e. high-school drop-out rate) and emotional and behavioural factors.⁴

¹ Saskatchewan Child Welfare Review Panel Report, 2010

² I’m Still Hungry, Child & Family Poverty in Ontario, Singer, 2003

³ Vital Signs Hamilton, 2012

⁴ The Effects of Poverty on Children, Jeanne Brooks-Gunn & Greg J. Duncan



“BE FAITHFUL IN SMALL THINGS BECAUSE IT IS IN THEM THAT YOUR STRENGTH LIES.”

Mother Theresa

DRUG AND ALCOHOL ABUSE

“The Canadian Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect (2010) reported that in 38% of substantiated child maltreatment investigations the primary caregiver had issues of alcohol or drug abuse”.⁵

Parents who abuse drugs are often incapable of creating nurturing relationships and a stable home environment, central factors in a child’s development. Additionally, parents who abuse drugs frequently raise children who are at an inflated risk of abusing drugs themselves, both because they view drug use as an ordinary indulgence or because they may think they need to rely on substances to cope with emotional or social problems.⁶

Unfortunately, drug and alcohol abuse is a serious issue in Hamilton. Besides alcohol, the most common drugs abused in Hamilton include: Cocaine, Crack Cocaine, Crystal Meth, Heroin, GHB, Oxycontin, Ecstasy, Marijuana and prescription drugs. Last year, 5,968 men participated in sessions at Suntrac Addiction Treatment Centre alone.⁷ However, the waiting lists for a funded bed in a residential addictions treatment center can be over a year.

There is also an alarming increase in the number of babies born dependent on prescription painkillers and healthcare professionals are seeing more children with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder.⁸

MENTAL HEALTH

Hamilton’s Crisis Outreach & Support Team (COAST) handled 2,533 cases in 2011, 1,983 from adults and 550 of them from people under the age of 18. Of COAST’s 30 staff, four are dedicated to the child and youth team. “When you look at the (youth) referrals that have come into COAST in the last 15 years, it just keeps going up. The community of Hamilton is quite stressed.”⁹ There are not enough resources to support the growing needs related to teen and adult mental health so waiting lists can be long and the risk is that by the time they access services, their situation may be worse. According to Dr. Jean Clinton, a McMaster Hospital Psychiatrist, from a funding perspective, mental health has been “the orphan of the health care system and youth mental health is ‘the orphan of the orphan.’”

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

The number of domestic violence occurrences reported to police in Hamilton in 2012 was 3,798. And, according to our local police service, there is no slowdown in these incidents. The situation is evidenced by the demand for support from women’s shelters. For example, at Martha House, the city’s largest shelter, around 200 women a month are being turned away and at Inasmuch House they turned away 648 women in 2012 due to lack of capacity.



⁵ *Children’s Well-Being, The Ontarian Perspective, 2011*

⁶ *The Child Welfare Information Gateway*

⁷ *Mission Services Report to the Community, 2011-2012*

⁸ *The Star.ca, Ontario’s surge in babies born addicted to opioids, June 22, 2012*

⁹ *Terry McGurk, COAST Founder And Executive Director*

COMMUNITY SERVICE CAPACITY

Many vital components of our social service delivery fabric in Hamilton are working significantly beyond their capacity. There is inadequate staffing coupled with scarce resources to respond effectively and meet demand in a timely manner. Long wait lists exist for people to access mental health services, counseling, addictions services and even access to a family physician can be challenging for many. Unfortunately, when we are trying to help parents or children and plan for them to attend a program or to access help through a specialized service, it may be months before they can obtain an initial appointment. By then, the impact of the long wait may have worsened the situation.

COMMUNITY AWARENESS & SUPPORT

Naturally, the importance of ensuring the safety of children and youth is of paramount importance to the public. However, the average person does not have a full picture of the complexities of child protection and what our work entails. Furthermore, there is a lack of understanding about the valuable benefits we produce and the countless number of children and families we help each day. As a result, misinformation and myths have surfaced over the years that create hurdles for us to achieving our goals. Raising awareness about the complex role we play and the importance of **'working with us'** to help Hamilton's most vulnerable citizens is an ongoing priority.

CONSTRAINED FINANCIAL RESOURCES

In April 2013, the Government of Ontario introduced a new funding model for the child welfare sector, which includes multiyear funding allocations within a fixed provincial envelope. Through the model's calculation the agency's funding allocation will be reduced by 2% over each of the next five years. CCASH is required by statute to submit and work within a balanced budget, which does not exceed the agency's budget allocation set by the government. The Board of Directors is required to enter into an accountability agreement with the Minister, which

sets the terms and conditions for funding. Accordingly, we must continue to provide mandated services and achieve positive outcomes for the children, youth and families we serve, with less funding. Given the negative socio-economic factors that exist in Hamilton, such as child poverty, this financial situation poses new hurdles. However, the timing for implementing our new strategic plan is favourable, as it will allow us to ensure we are aligning limited resources to the greatest priorities that will ultimately achieve the best results, in the most efficient and effective way.

BUREAUCRATIC WORK ENVIRONMENT

The child welfare system is one of inherent risk and therefore, over the years, many statutory regulations, standards and directives have been introduced. Furthermore, the requirements of bureaucracy, without supporting technologies and processes, have increased the administrative workload and impeded our capacity to spend the bulk of time working directly with children, youth and families to reduce risks at the source, and improve outcomes.

EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT

In our work, we must always prioritize the quality of frontline practice, including assessments, case management and planning, and the proficiency of our employees in applying professional judgment and helping families and children who are involved with the child welfare system. Our staff must be fully prepared with the necessary knowledge and skills to deal with many complex situations and to keep the child's needs at the forefront. However, our employees cannot build this expertise without the right organizational training, mentoring and support. We will focus our attention and resources on developing staff capacity so that they have the necessary skills and knowledge as they work with families and children in our community.

AGENCY CULTURE

Overall, there is agreement among all staff that we have much to celebrate about our heritage and culture. We also agree that we should renew the CCASH culture and move towards a more adaptive and learning culture. During our due diligence process, we heard from staff that our current culture has many strengths, such as our child-focus, our teamwork orientation and our resilient and steadfast mindset. Still, our culture can be enriched in a few important ways. For example, due to the complexity and emotional intensity of work with families and children, we can do more to support and coach our employees, and learn from our successes and our disappointments. We also believe there are opportunities to enhance two-way communication, collaboration and staff engagement which will support better outcomes for children, youth and families.

YOUTH IN CARE



- 59% Special Educational Needs
- 70% Behavioural Problems
- 89% Special Needs

Many of the children and youth we care for experience multiple struggles, compared to the average Ontario child. For instance, 70% of CCASH's Crown Wards experience behavioural problems, 59% have special educational needs and 89% are assessed as having special needs. The top three diagnoses are:

ADHD, Learning Disability, Medical Condition & Intellectual Disability¹⁰

Moreover, in Ontario, only 42% of youth in and from care graduate from high school contrasted to 81% of Ontario youth. And, unfortunately, youth in and from care are overly represented in the youth justice system and will become homeless at a greater rate than other Ontario youth.¹¹

¹⁰ Hamilton CCASH Crown Ward Review Report, 2013

¹¹ Final Report of the Youth Leaving Care Working Group, January 2013

OUR CHILDREN

In a perfect world, all children would grow up in safe, stable and nurturing families and all members of our community would share responsibility for protecting the well being of every child. Regrettably, we live in an imperfect world and some children and youth fall victim to neglect, abuse and abandonment. Their stories are sad, difficult to fathom and sometimes very traumatic, but there is always hope. Our role is to protect and help them, and whenever possible, support them to remain with their families. Sometimes that is not possible and children must be placed in foster or kin care for a period of time.

In 2012 / 2013,¹² we received over 2,600 referrals to our agency. As a result of those referrals, we conducted 1,160 investigations and we provided ongoing services to 835 families. The top three reasons for conducting a child protection investigation were:

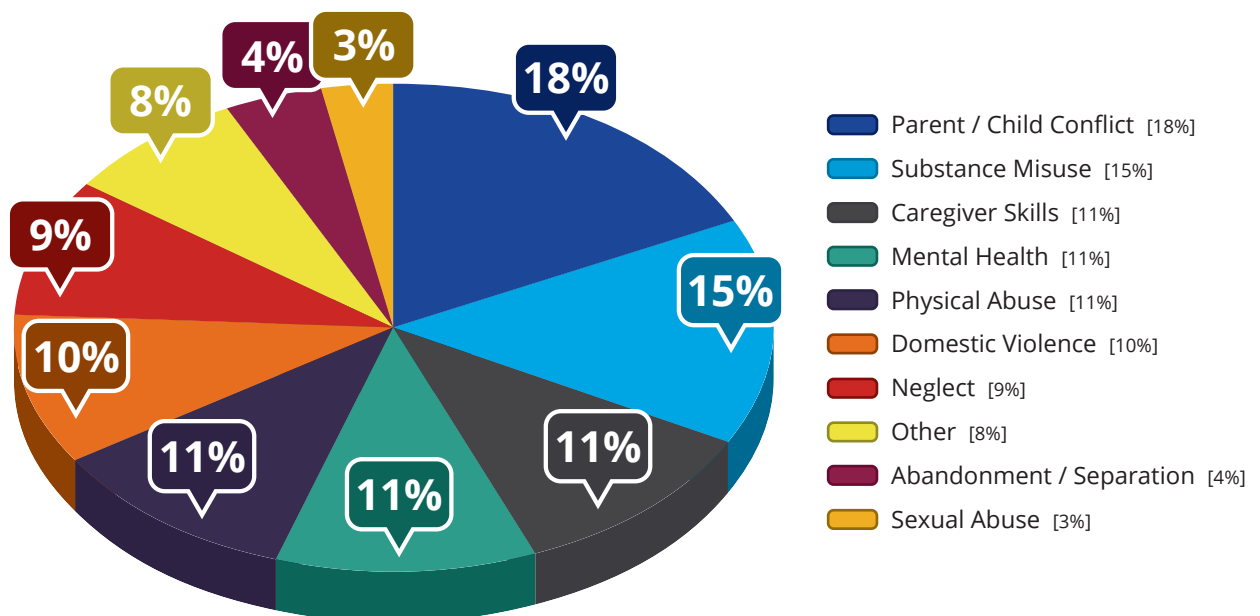
Child experienced physical maltreatment

Child was living with a caregiver with a serious problem that impacted their caregiving skills

Child was exposed to partner violence

In addition, as of March 2013, 336 children were in the care of CCASH, most often with foster or kin families. The primary reasons for the difficult decision to move a child out of their family and into our care are outlined in Diagram One.¹³

REASONS CHILDREN COME INTO CARE



¹² CCASH Statistics, 2012

¹³ CCASH Statistics, March 2013



THE VOICES OF THE CHILDREN & YOUTH WE SERVE

As part of our strategic planning process, it was critical to hear from the people we serve – those at the heart of our work, the children. We facilitated a focus group with 14 youth in care with CCASH. We also reviewed the work of the Ontario Youth Leaving Care Hearings, summarized in the report entitled My Real Life Book. The input from youth was sincere, heartfelt and stimulating. They told us what they appreciate and value about their experiences with CCASH; what they feel has to change; and what they feel is most important to a child or youth involved with CCASH. This is what they told us they expect from us, and fortunately there are countless examples of these needs being realized.

- ✓ Respect me and believe in me.
- ✓ Learn about me – my family, life experiences and what has shaped me and develop a plan based on my needs.
- ✓ Communicate with me and “help me make good decisions.”¹⁴
- ✓ Help me to live as normal a childhood as possible, even when I am in foster care.
- ✓ Provide me with stability in relationships with my foster family, worker, school, neighbourhood and communities.
- ✓ Help me build lifelong relationships.
- ✓ Help me to prepare for and to successfully transition to adulthood.
- ✓ Help me reach my full potential.

“

Help me build stable relationships. It is really hard to have to tell your story over and over and rebuild relationships.

”

CCASH Youth in Care

“

When you have a say, then you care about what happens and you care about yourself. And you don't feel as invisible or as worthless anymore. Just knowing that there is someone there that will be able to help with your needs, is what all children and youth need.¹⁵

”

Ontario Youth in Care

¹⁴ CCASH Youth in Care, Focus Group 2013

¹⁵ Youth in Care Hearings, page 13



Our Balanced Scorecard Strategic Plan

OUR MANDATE

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) provides a child-centred charter, which clearly expresses the basic human rights that the world's children have, including:

1. The right to survival;
2. The right to develop to the fullest;
3. The right to protection from harmful influences, abuse and exploitation; and,
4. The right to participate fully in family, cultural and social life.

The focus of our work is clearly aligned to the CRC and dictated by the mandate legislated to us by the Ontario Child and Family Services Act. Our mandate is as follows:

We must:

- ✓ Investigate all reports or evidence of possible abuse or neglect of children.
- ✓ Ensure the safety of children who are in need of protection.
- ✓ Provide care for those children who are unable to remain in their own homes due to child protection concerns.
- ✓ Supervise the children under our care.
- ✓ Provide guidance, counseling and other services to families for protecting children or for the prevention of circumstances requiring the protection of children.
- ✓ Place children for adoption.



OUR ROOTS

Our environment is more complex than ever and the work we do has never been needed as much as it is today. To fulfill our mandate, we must be grounded and clear about what we stand for and believe. Our new mission, guiding beliefs, vision and values, all developed in direct collaboration with CCASH staff, board members and the people we serve and work with, are our North Star, that will guide us in the years ahead.

OUR MISSION

Our Strategy Map begins with our mission. It clarifies our agency's purpose and acts as the benchmark against which we judge our actions and decisions.

Guided by Catholic values and teachings we serve children and youth within the Hamilton community by protecting their safety and well-being, strengthening their families and nurturing lifelong relationships.

OUR GUIDING BELIEFS

Our beliefs guide us in this important, valuable and often difficult work that we perform, day in and day out.

WE BELIEVE:

- ▶ In the sacredness of human life, and the dignity and worth of each individual.
- ▶ Every child, youth and family is unique and has the ability to positively change.
- ▶ In anti-oppressive practice, which supports equity, inclusion, empowerment and social justice.
- ▶ Children and youth should be cared for within their family and community, as long as it is safe to do so.
- ▶ It is vital for children and youth to establish stable, dependable and lasting relationships.
- ▶ Employees and resource families must be supported and prepared to carry out this challenging and important work.
- ▶ The voices of children, youth and families must inspire and influence how we work and make decisions.
- ▶ It takes a community to ensure the safety and well being of children.
- ▶ When families and children receive help early, children and youth are safer.
- ▶ Our work is a vocation guided by Catholic values, teachings and traditions.

“It always seems impossible until it is done.”

Nelson Mandela



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

How Will We Achieve our Vision?

The Strategy Map

“A picture is worth a thousand words.” A strategy map is just that, a picture. It brings the strategy to life, in the form of integrated, cause and effect relationships. Our mission and vision are clear. The map allows us to translate our mission and vision into concrete goals for the children, youth and families we serve and in turn, identifies the processes, people, support systems, technologies and resources that need to be in place to achieve those goals. Ultimately, the strategy map has been shaped by our stakeholders and is a balanced representation of our strategic plan that CCASH staff can understand and translate into concrete actions.

Over the next five years, CCASH will take action across **FOUR STRATEGIC PILLARS** that will allow us to achieve our Vision. Our four strategic pillars answer key questions about how we will serve children, youth and families.

STRATEGIC PILLAR	STRATEGIC QUESTIONS WE ASK OURSELVES
Child, Youth & Family Pillar	To achieve our vision, what are the desired outcomes for the children, youth and families we serve?
Operational Pillar	To achieve our vision and meet the needs of the children, youth and families we serve, at what processes and operations must we excel?
Organizational Readiness Pillar	To excel in our operations, what type of culture, staff and technology do we need?
Capacity Pillar	To achieve our vision, how will we use our financial and other resources?

The Strategic Pillars are then translated into four STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS and supporting goals. For example, the ‘Child, Youth and Family Pillar’ was transformed into the strategic direction, **BRIGHTER FUTURES – brighter futures for children, for youth and for families**. Within this strategic direction, we have prioritized **SIX GOALS**, which are outcome based.

1. Safe and secure children and youth.
2. Children and youth are involved in their own lives.
3. Parents are the best parents they can be.
4. Children and youth achieve a range of positive life outcomes.
5. Children and youth have strong and stable connections to their communities.
6. Children and youth have lifelong relationships to a caring, nurturing family or person.

Achievement of the six ‘Brighter Futures’ **OUTCOME-BASED GOALS** is then enabled by the Strategic Drivers, represented by the remaining three strategic directions:



The CCASH Strategy Map follows. Rooted in our values and guided by our beliefs, CCASH will use our resources wisely, and build a strong and prepared team, so we can operate with effectiveness and efficiency, and meet the needs of the children, youth and families we serve, thus achieving our Mission and Vision.



Strategy Map

Thus achieving our MISSION & VISION	OUR VISION						
	SAFE AND THRIVING CHILDREN AND YOUTH. EMPOWERED FAMILIES. STRONGER COMMUNITIES.						
And, MEET the NEEDS of the CHILDREN, YOUTH and FAMILIES we serve.	OUR MISSION						
	Guided by Catholic values and teachings we serve children and youth within the Hamilton community by protecting their safety and well-being, strengthening their families and nurturing lifelong relationships.						
So we can operate with EFFECTIVENESS & EFFICIENCY.	BRIGHTER FUTURES						
	Safe and secure children and youth.	Children and youth are involved in their own lives.	Parents are the best parents they can be.	Children & youth achieve a range of positive life outcomes.	Children and youth have strong and stable connections to their communities.	Children and youth have lifelong relationships with a caring, nurturing family or person.	
We will build a STRONG & PREPARED Agency.	EXCELLENCE IN ALL WE DO						
	Strength-based, holistic, anti-oppressive practice.	Delivering a child / youth focused experience.	Permanency planning.	Child, youth and family engagement.	Consistent, clear and proactive communication.	Effective and efficient administrative practices.	Collaborative actionable relationships and partnerships.
And using our RESOURCES wisely.	PASSIONATE & PREPARED TEAM						
	Supportive and inspiring leadership, at all levels.	Learning culture.	Skilled, empowered and valued workforce.	Interdependent teamwork.	Flexible and accessible technology, tools and resources that add value.		
By acting on our BELIEFS.	PUBLIC & STAKEHOLDER CONFIDENCE						
	Fiscal stewardship and discipline.	Effective risk management.	Resource diversification, allocation and investment.	Continuous quality improvement.			
	OUR GUIDING BELIEFS						
	<p>WE BELIEVE:</p> <p>In the sacredness of human life, and the dignity and worth of each individual.</p> <p>Every child, youth and family is unique and has the ability to positively change.</p> <p>In anti-oppressive practice, which supports equity, inclusion, empowerment and social justice.</p> <p>Children and youth should be cared for within their family and community, as long as it is safe to do so.</p> <p>It is vital for children and youth to establish stable, dependable and lasting relationships.</p> <p>Employees and resource families must be supported and prepared to carry out this challenging and important work.</p> <p>The voices of children, youth and families must inspire and influence how we work and make decisions.</p> <p>It takes a community to ensure the safety and well being of children.</p> <p>When families and children receive help early, children and youth are safer.</p> <p>Our work is a vocation guided by Catholic values, teachings and traditions.</p>						
OUR VALUES							
Success for Children, Youth & Families - Service Excellence - Integrity - Human Dignity & Respect Communication & Collaboration - Compassion - Shared Accountability - Our Team							

Implementing our Strategic Plan

Our thoughtful and well-crafted Strategy Map provides us with our plan, but even the best strategy inadequately implemented will surely fail. Therefore, in the months ahead, we will shift our attention to implementation of the plan and deploy our limited resources to the critical projects and tasks that will move us forward.

Our strategic implementation processes will actively engage employees in this next stage of our journey. Together, we will learn all about project management and will have access to a toolkit of resources to support us in this significant endeavour. We will define our year-one project priorities and operational initiatives to focus attention on the most important performance improvement needs and through project teams, we will translate the strategy map into action and achieve desired results.

Measuring our Vision - The Balanced Scorecard

We have always strived to provide excellent service to those we serve, but our new Vision and Strategy Map raises the bar for all of us and inspires us to accelerate our efforts. We will measure these efforts and our progress in several different ways such as:

- ✔ Through the eyes, ears and voices of the children, youth and families we serve. Their experiences with CCASH will tell us a story about how we are doing in achieving our goals, particularly the “Brighter Futures” strategic direction.
- ✔ We will seek feedback from resource families who provide care for our children and from our community partners and volunteers.
- ✔ We will harness the diverse perspectives and ideas of our greatest resource - our employees - to gauge how we are doing and what we can improve.

Finally, through our Balanced Scorecard, meaningful performance and outcome measures will be developed for each of the Strategic Directions and targets established, that focus us on what is most important. Through our Balanced Scorecard we will monitor the implementation and effectiveness of our Strategic Plan, determine the gap between actual and targeted performance and identify opportunities for improvement or celebration. Ultimately, this process will move CCASH closer to being a true learning organization, that learns from both our successes and our disappointments.



“We’ll be Friends Forever, won’t we, Pooh? asked Piglet. Even longer, Pooh answered.”

A.A. Milne,
Winnie-the-Pooh

Closing Words

Proudly, our new strategic plan has been shaped by the input, ideas, insights and feedback of youth, parents, resource families, volunteers, employees, Board of Directors and community partners. It is a thoughtful and bold declaration of what our organization is all about, the complex environment we operate in and where we are heading in the future.

We are proud of CCASH's past and our tradition of excellence, however as we turn 60 years old, we now devote our energy to the next segment of our evolving journey. Our strategic plan challenges all of us – employees and partners, alike - to bring together our strengths and work collaboratively to achieve our goals and the Catholic Children's Aid Society of Hamilton's vision of:

**SAFE AND THRIVING
CHILDREN AND YOUTH.**

EMPOWERED FAMILIES.

**STRONGER
COMMUNITIES.**

We have the resolve to begin this journey, and with our Strategic Plan, we have the way!

*"There are three constants in life...
change, choice and principles."*

Stephen Covey







I am with you!
I will strengthen you.
I will hold you up.
I will help you.

Isaiah 41:10

Catholic
Children's Aid Society
of Hamilton



Catholique
Société d'aide à l'enfance
de Hamilton

