



June 5, 2020

During this time of turmoil and upheaval in race relations both in Canada and the United States, we at the **Catholic Children's Aid Society of Hamilton** wish to join our voices in solidarity with all those who are speaking out against hatred, racial bigotry and the systemic violence affecting members of the Black community and all marginalized groups in our society. The killing of George Floyd by Minnesota law enforcement officers is a gross injustice and has revealed once again the roots of structural anti-Black racism in American society and in Canada as well. While we deplore racism in all its forms, we recognize through recent events that it continues to afflict our city, our province and our country. The suffering and death of persons in the Black community anywhere challenges us to confront the forces that fuel it everywhere.

Those of us who work in the child welfare sector are acutely aware that anti-Black racism exists at every level of our profession and the system in which we work. Through broad provincial initiatives such as *One Vision, One Voice*, the leadership of the *Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies* and the sincere efforts of local child protection agencies, many positive steps are being taken to address the over-representation and experiences of disparities by African-Canadian and Indigenous children, youth and families in the child welfare system.

Governed by civil legislation, we are also a faith-based agency that is guided and inspired by the Catholic values of care, compassion, and community. We uphold a deeply held Christian commitment to social justice. As such, we are dedicated to honouring the sacredness of all human beings and the principle of solidarity with all who are marginalized in any way. We humbly confess our complicity in the systems and structures that oppress members of the African-Canadian and Indigenous communities but also profess our determination to work for greater equity, diversity and social justice.

We recognize that the demands of reconciliation and social transformation begin from within and challenge us to greater self-awareness about own fears and biases as individuals. We will also continue to examine our policies, practices and decision-making to better ensure that, collectively, we are removing barriers to equitable treatment in our sector and advancing the rights and the well-being of those who are currently victimized by anti-Black and Indigenous racism. The Christian vision of social justice, peace, and care for the common good call us to uphold the sanctity of all human life and the dignity of all human persons, especially those threatened by racism and systemic violence.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Gizzarelli'.

Rocco Gizzarelli, MSW, RSW  
Executive Director

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Larry Di Ianni'.

Larry Di Ianni  
Board Chair