



## **Retirement Announcement**

### **Monday, January 31, 2022**

It is with a mix of sadness and gratitude that the Board of Directors announces the retirement of Rocco Gizzarelli as Executive Director of the Catholic Children's Aid Society of Hamilton. Rocco will be leaving the agency June 30, 2022.

Rocco Gizzarelli has long been an integral part of the Society with his career spanning 36 years. In his time as Executive Director, Rocco has demonstrated an ability to mentor and lead that is second to none. Over his long career and since being appointed as Executive Director in 2015, Rocco has been a strategic and effective presence at the agency.

While facing one of the most challenging events we have ever experienced, a global pandemic, Rocco has played a critical role in maintaining morale, our commitment to the vision and mission of the organization and inspired a tangible spiritual evolution at the Catholic Children's Aid Society which will endure for years to come. As a resilient and bold leader, we have been blessed to have been able to put our trust in Rocco as he continues to encourage progress within the organization. His exceptional vision and leadership will be greatly missed.

Rocco has led the Catholic Children's Aid Society of Hamilton through many accomplishments and his distinguished record of achievements includes:

- Promoting a faith based organizational culture through the development of a faith statement, installation of a chapel, leadership development program and serving as Bishop's delegate for the Safeguarding Protocol.
- Strong advocate for Equity and Social Justice by promoting active change in service delivery to improve outcomes for marginalized, Indigenous, racialized, 2SLGBTQ+ members of the community.
- He has been actively involved in fostering and developing collaborative partnerships with several diverse agencies to strengthen the circle of care to the marginalized children, youth, and families in the Hamilton community.
- He is recognized for his leadership in implementing many initiatives and programs such as addressing the needs of homeless youth, implementation of a French Language services model in the Hamilton-Niagara child welfare agencies, French Language designation for the agency and several child welfare community-based partnerships within the Hamilton community.

- Rocco has been a strong advocate for children, youth, and families at provincial levels on various committees and as a board member such as the Anti-Oppressive Practice Roundtable, Provincial French Language Advisory Committee, Child Protection Information Network (CPIN) Advisory Committee; and Board member of Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies (OACAS), Practice and Research Together Agency (PART) and the Provincial LGBTQ2S+ Committee.
- Rocco was also instrumental in the redevelopment of sexual abuse treatment programs while serving as a Board member and Chair of the Board of Directors for Thrive, Child and Youth Trauma Programs. He was recognized for his contribution to the work of Thrive with the Leader for Kids Award in 2012. In 2019, he was awarded the Festitalia Heritage Award for Community Development and Social Inclusion.

Through it all, Rocco has always demonstrated a quality of humility we wish to celebrate and thank him for. Rocco always made time to acknowledge the hard work of the senior leadership team, full management team and all agency employees for the successes we achieved together for the organization, and ultimately for the protection and wellbeing of children, youth, and families in our communities.

The Catholic Children's Aid Society embodies an organizational culture that is transparent and collaborative, open to re-imagination and adaptability. These characteristics of our organization would not have been made possible without strong and compassionate leadership like Rocco's. We offer you our deepest thanks, Rocco, for providing a foundation from which we will strive to continue your inspiring legacy.

We wish Rocco all the best in his future endeavours. Please join me in congratulating Rocco on this significant milestone.

A Board of Directors committee will oversee the process to choose Rocco's successor and will be hiring an Executive Search Firm to assist with the transition.



David Hennick  
Board Chair, Catholic Children's Aid Society of Hamilton