



# Business Plan 2021–2022

Catholic  
Children's Aid Society  
of Hamilton



Société d'aide à l'enfance  
catholique  
de Hamilton



## Introduction

The Catholic Children's Aid Society of Hamilton is committed to protecting the children and youth of our Catholic community from abuse and neglect. We work in collaboration with community partners through our community-based and equity lens to ensure the well-being of children and youth and to strengthen the capacity of families in the Hamilton Catholic community. The Society has operated for 67 years and continues to evolve and adjust based on the needs of our local community and legislative requirements. The Society's professional and well-trained staff provides a complete range of child protection services to children, youth, and families.

The 2021–2022 Business Plan for the Catholic Children's Aid Society of Hamilton examines the provincial context, local strategic directions, work processes, pressures, and operational requirements in order to determine the opportunities and/or challenges that the organization should address over the 2021–2022 year.

To accomplish this, the agency looks back over the past year, examining corporate and services performance, including quality assurance, organizational development accomplishments, strategic activities, and results as well as provincial influences. We developed the 2021–2022 organizational business plan based on our strategic map and organizational priorities.



# Mandate

The Catholic Children's Aid Society of Hamilton is a child protection agency mandated under the Child and Family Services Act in Ontario. Our responsibility is to protect children from harm or the risk of harm due to neglect and physical, sexual or emotional abuse.

In June 2017, the Ontario government passed the Child, Youth and Family Services Act (CYFSA).


The CYFSA followed an extensive review of the previous legislation with significant consultation, puts children at the centre of decision-making, and supports more accountable, responsive and accessible child and youth services. It also strengthens oversight for children's aid societies and licensed residential care, including:

- Raising the age of protection from 16 to 18 to increase protection services for more vulnerable youth in unsafe living conditions, to support their education and to reduce homelessness and human trafficking;
- Strengthening the focus on early intervention, helping prevent children and families from reaching crisis situations at home;
- Making services more culturally appropriate for all children and youth in the child welfare system, including Indigenous and Black children and youth, to help ensure they receive the best possible support;
- Improving oversight of service providers, including children's aid societies, so that children and youth receive consistent, high-quality services across Ontario;
- Privacy and disclosure of information requirements.

This legislation and the supporting regulations, directives and standards prescribe specific and detailed requirements for what services Children Aid Societies must provide, how they must provide these services, including services to Aboriginal children and families, and French language services, as well as the timelines in which these mandatory services must be provided.

Children's Aid Societies protect and safeguard most children while they remain with their families in the community. This family-based support takes the form of intensive assessments and service plans, contacts with numerous other professionals and service providers, as well as ongoing supervision of the child while the child remains in the family home. These are complex cases in which child protection concerns have been verified and there are risks of, or actual, abuse and neglect. As such, the work must be performed by skilled, qualified child welfare staff. Serving these children in the context of the home – when it is safe to do so – is consistent with the legislative and regulatory mandate and with the policy direction of government.

On July 29, 2020, Associate Minister Dunlop announced the government's strategy to redesign the child welfare system by focusing directly on the needs of children and youth by creating solid foundations to support strong families. The redesign, as announced, will focus on enhancing community-based prevention services so that services are high quality, culturally appropriate and truly responsive to the needs of children, youth and families. More emphasis will be placed on ensuring that all sectors understand the importance of supporting families and to



work together to address the challenges that families are facing that can lead to involvement with child welfare. The focus of the redesign will be to address systemic issues in the child welfare system, prioritizing family-based settings, improving the overall quality of care that children and youth receive and supporting societies to balance their budgets.

Clearly stated is the vision of the government is that the strategy will lead to “an Ontario where every child and youth has the support they need to succeed and thrive.”

There are five (5) pillars that will guide the redesign to create change across the service continuum and at the system level that are focused on prevention, early intervention and seeking more permanent homes for children and youth in the child welfare system:

1. Child, youth, family and community well-being;
2. Quality of care;
3. Strengthening youth supports;
4. Improving stability and permanency; and
5. System accountability and sustainability.

Additional details regarding the frameworks to support the redesign as well as outcome measures (targets) are expected to be released in 2021. This also includes considerations of a new funding model to support and align with the government’s vision and priorities for child welfare.



# Vision, Mission and Values

## Our Vision

Safe and Thriving Children and Youth. Empowered Families.  
Stronger Communities.

## Our Mission

Guided by Catholic values and teachings, we serve and offer bilingual (English/French) services to children and youth within the Hamilton community by protecting their safety and well-being, strengthening their families and nurturing lifelong relationships.

## Our Values

- Success for children, youth and families
- Compassion and caring for one another and the people we serve
- Equity and inclusion
- Family, church and community partnerships
- Transparent communication and collaboration
- Shared accountability
- Social justice



# CCASH Strategic Directions

In 2018, 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.

Our ongoing priority is supporting the safety, permanency and well-being of children and youth in the family and community. To achieve this CCASH of Hamilton is committed to 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.

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 is our ongoing environmental scan whereby we collect and analyze 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. As a result, 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, youth and families we serve.

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:





## 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. We recognize the uniqueness of each child, youth, family, and community and provide services that respect their cultures, traditions, race and social identities. Our staff works from a child-centred perspective to develop individualized plans that respond to the needs of each child and youth and ensure cultural safety and security plans are embedded in practice and documented for children and youth who are placed in our care. 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 and ensuring children, youth, families and their community participate in the decision-making processes that impact them.

## Equity

The agency is committed to the priority of ensuring that those who are involved with the Society receive equitable services and are affirmed in their identity and lived experiences with all areas of oppression. In the agency's work with families, we are committed to an anti-oppressive practice in which we challenge the impacts of power and privilege, reduce barriers, and are inclusive and affirming of the broad range of diversity in the Hamilton Catholic community.



## Equity Statement

At the heart of the Catholic Children's Aid Society of Hamilton is a recognition of the sacredness of human life and the dignity and worth of each person. We are inspired by the rich traditions rooted in our Catholic moral and social teachings and serve in a spirit of solidarity with our church and community partners in seeking justice and peace in our society.

The Catholic Children's Aid Society of Hamilton acknowledges the historic and present impact of colonial practices, particularly for Indigenous Peoples and African-Canadians, that have contributed to the oppression of children, youth and families. We also acknowledge the impact of our own practices on maintaining systemic barriers within the organization for these communities. As an agency we must do better and be held accountable for the results and work we do.

We are committed to actively and continuously working towards cultivating a culture of inclusion, identifying and eliminating all forms of discrimination and systemic barriers, particularly for those who have suffered in the past because of race, colour, religion, place of origin, ancestry, creed, family status, marital status, citizenship, disability/ differently abled, ethnicity, sex, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status and/or age.

Through our operationalization of our Equity Principles, we strive to honour the differences that make each person unique and are committed to equity, inclusion and empowerment for all of our staff, service recipients, stakeholders and community helping them to participate fully in decisions that impact their lives.

## Equity Principles we lead by:

- We believe it is important to be better than our past to ensure our work does not create generational harm. We will embrace the unique perspectives, values, and traditions of diverse cultural communities. We will listen, learn, and engage authentically with all of our staff members and community stakeholders in a culturally responsive and safe manner.
- We will remove barriers that cause overrepresentation and create inequity of outcomes for service users, particularly for Indigenous, Black/African-Canadian, 2SLGBTQ+, Francophone, Immigrants and Newcomers communities.
- We will ensure that all leadership and decision-making at every level within the organization will be centered through a critical equity, anti-racism analysis that is informed by our Catholic values and teachings.
- We will achieve Service Excellence through acknowledging and dismantling any inequities within our service delivery framework paying specific attention to our policies, practices and programs.
- We will ensure that diverse communities are fully represented, authentically engaged through collaboration, and that the voices of children, youth and families are listened to and central to our partnerships.
- We will implement the recommendations presented through the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action and the One Vision One Voice Race Equity Framework.
- We will ensure that a critical analysis of data and disaggregated data will be utilized to inform all organizational systems, service provisions, programs and practices.

Our progress will be measured through the transparent sharing of all data with staff, service recipients and communities, who will hold us accountable to the aforementioned Equity Principles. The Catholic Children's Aid Society of Hamilton has embarked on an environmental scan through the implementation of an Equity Audit, which will set the direction for all our future diversity, equity and inclusion endeavours.





## **Spirituality to Work – Faith Inspired Care, Compassion, Community**

Our employees, youth, families and partners always comment that there is something special about working with the Catholic Children's Society of Hamilton. People described it as "a warmth," a real dedication to family, compassion and the sense that the work of the Catholic Children's Aid Society of Hamilton was "a calling." The Society 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.

## **Our Team**

Our employees are the Catholic Children's Aid Society of Hamilton'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 in providing the opportunity to touch, protect and shape lives. Whether on the front line or working in support roles or management, our employees possess the skills, expertise and experience needed to make a difference.

## **Volunteers Cast a Beautiful Shadow**

Our team of volunteers strengthens the Catholic Children's Aid Society of Hamilton 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 and 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 the Catholic Children's Aid Society of Hamilton's children, youth and families.

## Resource Families Open Hearts & Homes

Every day in neighborhoods across Hamilton, foster, kin and adoptive families open their hearts and their homes to 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.

## Key Activities supporting Strategic Directions for 2021-2022

Over the next five years, the Catholic Children's Aid Society of Hamilton will take action across four strategic pillars that will allow us to achieve our Vision.

1. Create Brighter Futures
2. Passionate and Prepared team
3. Excellence in All We Do
4. Public and Stakeholder Confidence

The pillars are reflected in our Strategy Map and supported by our Faith Statement.





## Strategy Map 2021–2023

WHO WE ARE: Our Mission	WHAT WE DO: We create brighter futures	HOW WE DO IT: Excellence in all we do	Passionate and prepared team	Public and stake-holder confidence
<p>Guided by Catholic values and teachings, we serve and offer bilingual (English/French) services to children and youth within the Hamilton community by protecting their safety and well-being, strengthening their families and nurturing lifelong relationships.</p> <p><b>WHAT WE VALUE: Success for children, youth and families</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Success for children, youth and families</li> <li>• Compassion and caring for one another and the people we serve</li> <li>• Equity and inclusion</li> <li>• Family, church and community partnerships</li> <li>• Transparent communication and collaboration</li> <li>• Shared accountability</li> <li>• Social justice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children and youth are safe and have a strong sense of well-being</li> <li>• Children and youth experience a range of positive life outcomes</li> <li>• Parents, families and communities are supported to safely care for their children</li> <li>• African-Canadian, Indigenous, 2SLGBTQ+ and all other marginalized youth and children experience equitable outcomes</li> <li>• Children and youth have meaningful, lifelong connections to their family members</li> <li>• Children and youth sustain strong ties to caring and culturally responsive communities</li> <li>• The voices of children, youth and families are listened to and acted upon</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We deliver strength-based, equity focused and faith-inspired services</li> <li>• We strengthen family, extended family and resource family capacity</li> <li>• We acknowledge and strive to remove oppression and inequities across our service system</li> <li>• We work with our community and cultural partners to design and deliver resources, services and supports that meet the needs of our children, youth and families</li> <li>• We partner with families, youth and children in all planning and decision-making</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Courageous and inspiring leadership at all levels</li> <li>• Highly competent, empowered and supported staff and resource families</li> <li>• Welcoming, inclusive, and culturally responsive processes and spaces</li> <li>• A culture where we are always learning, collaborating and embracing ways to improve</li> <li>• Caring, compassionate, agile and spirited team</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community outreach, engagement and philanthropy</li> <li>• Effective communication and advocacy</li> <li>• Balanced risk management</li> <li>• Continuous quality improvement</li> <li>• Fiscal stewardship and accountability</li> </ul>



## Statement of Faith

At the heart of the Catholic Children's Aid Society of Hamilton is a recognition of the sacredness of human life, and the dignity and worth of each person created in God's image.

Our vision and mission are inspired by the compassion and mercy of Jesus Christ who cared for the most marginalized persons of his community and who reminded his followers that "Whatever you did to one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me." (Mt. 25:40)

Governed by civil legislation and our provincial charter to protect children and youth, we are also guided by the teaching and tradition of the Catholic Church, responsive and accountable to the local community which it serves.

## Our Calling to Serve

Drawing on the heritage of our Catholic faith, our vocation as an agency is to help build a world in which children and youth can live safely and thrive, families are empowered to flourish, and the bonds of community are strengthened through compassion and justice. Coming from diverse faith traditions and philosophies, we are grounded in the Christian values of love and humble service, united in our commitment to care for all people, especially the most vulnerable. We take a holistic service approach that honours the mind, body, and spirit of each person and that upholds their human rights in society.

## Our Culture Of Care and Community

We foster a culture of care and community in our workplace in which priority is always given to nurturing healthy relationships with one another and hope and healing for the families that we serve. This relational culture is strengthened by giving spirituality a place of honour and recognition in the workplace, and offering the gift of hospitality where every voice can be heard and positive change can take place. We promote timely, child-focused decision-making and healthy relationships for children and youth in the communities where they live.

## Our Commitment to Social Justice

Our agency services are inspired by the rich tradition of Catholic moral and social teaching, which upholds the sacredness of the person, family life, and the common good. We serve in a spirit of solidarity with our church and community partners in seeking justice and peace in our society. We focus especially in our mission on the needs and rights of the children that we serve. We honour the differences that make each person unique and are committed to equity, inclusion and empowerment for all of our staff and service recipients, helping them to participate fully in decisions that impact their lives.

## Our Dedication to Service Excellence

We are devoted to serving children, youth, and families with ethical integrity, compassion, and professional competence. We are leaders and advocates for positive social change and believe that our holistic and faith-based approach enriches the lives of our service recipients and the child welfare system as a whole, ensuring it is more caring, responsive, just and effective.

## The Strategic Pillars are then translated into Strategic Directions and supporting goals.

Within this strategic direction, we have prioritized four goals, which are outcome based. 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.

Our project priorities and operational initiatives for 2021–2022 with focus on the following priorities that will translate the strategy map into action and achieve desired results.

- Equity, Diversity and Inclusion – focusing on Indigenous Truth and Reconciliation, One Vision One Voice Implementation and LGBTQ2S+
- Staff Wellness Program – review and development
- Quality assurance data-driven process across the organization

Each of these priority projects is aligned with provincial priorities in child welfare and will impact all staff across the organization. The Catholic Children's Aid Society of Hamilton will continue to adopt best-practice change management strategies to support the successful achievement of these priorities.



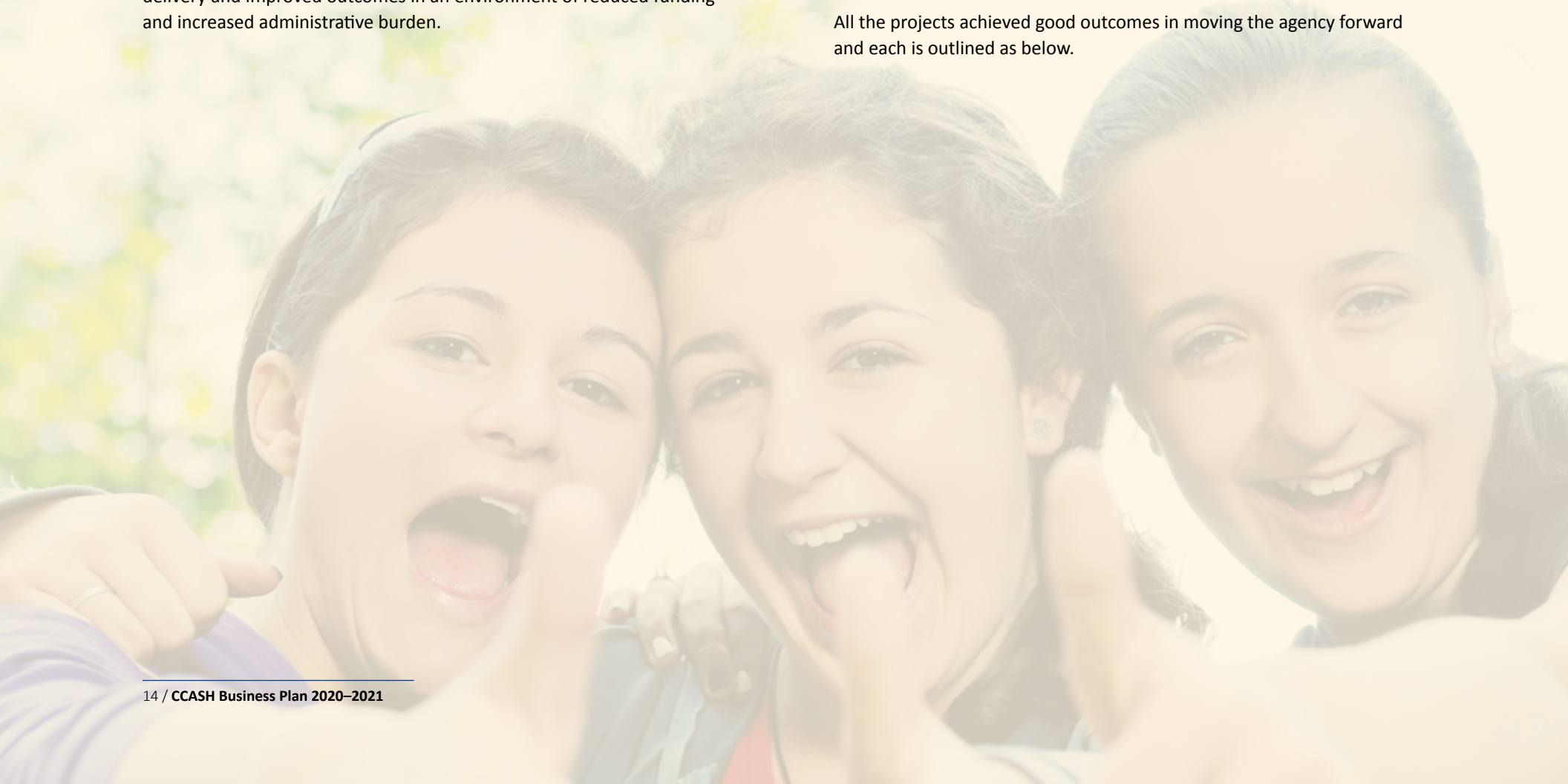
## Our Key Accomplishments in 2020–2021

A Service Plan advancing the strategic priorities is developed annually and incorporates key projects to support the Strategy Map. The Service Plan meets the requirements of the Accountability Agreement with the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services. As an agency we continue to move key initiatives forward. Throughout the year the overriding objective has been maintaining capacity for quality service delivery and improved outcomes in an environment of reduced funding and increased administrative burden.

This past year our key projects emanating from the Strategic Map were in three key pillars:

1. Increase Use of Kinship Network
2. Indigenous Truth and Reconciliation and One Vision One Voice Implementation
3. Rediscovering Our Catholic Identity Leadership Development Initiative

All the projects achieved good outcomes in moving the agency forward and each is outlined as below.







## 1. Increase Use of Kinship Network

### OUTCOMES:

- Reduce number of admissions to care;
- Children do not grow up in care but are placed with their kinship network when unable to return home; and
- Increase family finding capacity across the organization.

The agency continues to make good progress in increasing the use of kinship to reduce admissions in care, while ensuring that children are placed in culturally appropriate familial network. The agency has achieved a decrease in admissions to care and an increase in kinship arrangements. There has been good planning to review which children/youth in our care can be safely placed back home with their caregiver or kin. The agency Pathway Home initiative functions to determine if a pathway home or placement with kin can be developed.

As a result of the four planning conferences the following has occurred: all four of the children/youth have an identified pathway home. One youth will obtain permanency via adoption with her current foster parent and three children/youth are having increased contact with birth parents with the goal being return to home. Two children that had been previously conferenced with a detailed pathway home plan have returned to their birth parents this year.

Our Family Finder staff continues to work with children and youth to locate family and to build connections and pathways for children and youth to their family and community.

## 2. Indigenous Truth and Reconciliation and One Vision One Voice Implementation

### OUTCOMES:

- Commitment to Courageous Leadership;
- Collect and analyze data to measure racial disproportionality and disparities;
- Enhance Human Resource management; and
- Increasing the knowledge and capacity of Child Welfare staff to provide Service to Indigenous children, youth and families.

This strategic initiative is well aligned with the provincial direction of reimagining child welfare, focused on the Truth and Reconciliation and the implementation of One Vision, One Voice. There has been investment at all levels of the organization including the Board. The agency has been engaged in an equity audit (workplace assessment) which includes a review of human resource policies that will provide the organization with findings and recommendation that will support the agency's diversity, equity, and inclusion plan moving forward in 2021–2022.

Leadership staff have continued to deepen their learning about white supremacy and the concept of white fragility to determine how it directly impacts our service users. The Quality Assurance department continues to evaluate and look at service data related to African Canadian/Black families and outcomes. The agency will be collaborating with the Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton in further analysis of data as well as obtaining feedback from African Canadian/Black families on their service experience with the Catholic Children's Aid Society of Hamilton. The agency has worked at ensuring that there was full compliance on the collection of Identity Based Data for children and youth receiving service.

The organization continues its ongoing work to support, strengthen and celebrate African Canadian/Black children and youth's identities. Ubuntu, our Catholic Children's Aid Society of Hamilton Affinity group for Black staff, continues to be encouraged to attend All Black Staff meetings that are conducted on a quarterly basis by the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies. The Diversity, Equity and Inclusivity department continues to work in establishing a professional relationship with the local black and racialized community to facilitate collaborative educational/recreational activities to benefit our Black children and youth in care. Our newly hired African Canadian Community Engagement worker will be directly engaged in these initiatives.

There continues to be ongoing engagement with the Indigenous Child Welfare Collaboration. As an organization we continue to participate in this collaboration and have engaged in a collective process to establish more fulsome strategic directions to deepen our work within the Indigenous community and amongst its service providers. The Catholic Children's Aid Society of Hamilton and the Children's Aid Society of Hamilton will collaborate to create a joint Indigenous strategic plan that will address how we as organizations will meet our commitments to Truth and Reconciliation. The agency has designated two staff specific to providing service to Indigenous families.

### 3. Rediscovering Our Catholic Identity Leadership Development Initiative

#### OUTCOMES:

Series of self-directed eLearning modules to integrate over a two-year period to:

- Enrich staffs' understanding of the agency's Catholic identity;
- Develop core competencies in spiritual care and faith-based leadership; and
- Evaluate and improve quality of faith-based service delivery.

The implementation of the "Rediscovering our Catholic Identity" initiative continues to make progress, despite the impact of the pandemic. An online learning platform has been created and pilot tested with the agency's management staff. The program integrates perspectives from Catholic social teaching with our current initiatives in equity and inclusion and is intended to build awareness, literacy and competency in our leadership on how to approach issues of equity within a larger Catholic theological framework. This strategic program was funded by the Ex Corde Foundation.





## Contact

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