

Catholic
Children's Aid Society
of Hamilton



Société d'aide à l'enfance
catholique
de Hamilton

Faith Inspired Care, Compassion & Community



Business Plan

2022–2023



Introduction

The Catholic Children's Aid Society of Hamilton (CCASH) 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 68 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 provide a complete range of child protection services to children, youth and families.

The 2022-2023 Business Plan for the Catholic Children's Aid Society of Hamilton examines the provincial context, local strategic directions, work processes, and operational requirements in order to determine the opportunities and/or challenges that the organization should address over the 2022-2023 year.

To accomplish this, the agency looks back over the past year, examining corporate and service performance, including quality assurance, organizational development accomplishments, strategic activities, and results as well as provincial influences. We developed the 2022-2023 organizational business plan based on our strategic map and organizational priorities.

Mission, Vision and Values

Our Mission

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

Our Vision

- Child and youth safety, well-being and resilience
- Thriving families
- Community partners working together

Our Values

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



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.

Equity Workplan

The CCASH Equity Workplan is grounded in our overall commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion as expressed in our mission, vision and current Strategic Plan. As such, we are committed to creating and maintaining equitable human resource policies and practices, a diverse workforce, and an inclusive work environment.

The CCASH's anti-racism work and creation of a more inclusive and respectful organizational culture will be achieved with the following priorities in our 2022-23 workplan:

Priority 1: Deepen the CCASH's anti-racism work.

Our commitment is not only to inclusion but to meet our legal obligations under the Ontario Human Rights Code to create a workplace free from harassment and discrimination.

Priority 2: Diversify the workforce at all levels.

Our commitment is to strengthen the hiring and selection processes and remove the barriers to hiring employees from diverse backgrounds.

Priority 3: Strengthening Human Resource Policies and Practices.

Our commitment is to create a solid Human Resource infrastructure while also embedding equity within its employment policies and processes and ensuring they align with the Ontario Human Rights Code requirements and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act.

Priority 4: Create a more inclusive and respectful organizational culture.

Our commitment is to focus attention on fostering a more inclusive organizational culture in which employees at all levels feel welcome, safe, and able to contribute their best.



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. We have continued over the last two years to quickly adapt service delivery to ensure compliance with provincial and local public health direction regarding COVID-19 protocols, while continuing to deliver services to children, youth and families in our communities as well as ensuring the safety of staff, volunteers, foster parents and kin parents.

From all of us at the CCAS Hamilton, thank you for the care, compassion and exceptional sense of community that has been shown over the past year. We know that every family, parent, and child has been impacted by the pandemic including our staff, volunteers, foster parents and kin parents. We are driven by knowing that supports and services continued due to community working together. As an Agency we have learned an immense amount about the resiliency of our staff, volunteers, foster parents and kin parents.

As a team we have developed strategies to support the work of the Agency throughout the pandemic and we extend our gratitude to the Union Executive, Joint Health and Safety, our leadership, the board of directors and staff who consistently provided input and feedback into our planning every step of the way. The pandemic opened our eyes to how marginalized communities have been disproportionately and negatively impacted by the results of the pandemic. As an Agency serving some of the most vulnerable people in our community, our supports needed to assist with the impact and pressures the pandemic presented, whether that be emotional or financial. These challenges strengthened our commitment to working with our communities to identify and address systemic issues which put children and youth at risk.

The Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services launched plans to redesign the child welfare system on July 29th, 2020. The vision of the redesign is “an Ontario where every child and youth has the support they need to succeed and thrive.” The primary focus of the redesign is for child welfare, residential and community-based services to build a coordinated range of services that strengthen families, focusing on community-based prevention and early intervention. Services will be high quality, culturally appropriate and responsive to the needs of children, youth and families.

Guiding the work are five (5) pillars:

1. Child, Youth, Family and Community Well-Being
2. Quality of Care
3. Strengthening Youth Supports
4. Improving Stability and Permanency
5. System Accountability & Sustainability

As an Agency and sector, the new vision and pillars of child welfare redesign are welcomed changes which the sector has advocated for. We look forward to working with our community partners to strengthen community services to support children, youth and families in our communities.



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.



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 have 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 is “a calling.” The Society is a faith inspired agency and as such our work is a vocation guided by spiritual values, teachings, and traditions. This truly impacts how we approach our mission – as a sacred responsibility to children, youth, families and the community that we serve. We encourage our staff to weave faith, spirituality and mindfulness into everything they do, thus improving their well-being and the welfare of all those in our care.

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. In addition, 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 2022-2023

Over the next three 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>WHAT WE VALUE: Success for children, youth and families</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children and youth are safe and have a strong sense of well-being • Children and youth experience a range of positive life outcomes • Parents, families and communities are supported to safely care for their children • African-Canadian, Indigenous, 2SLGBTQ+ and all other marginalized youth and children experience equitable outcomes • Children and youth have meaningful, lifelong connections to their family members • Children and youth sustain strong ties to caring and culturally responsive communities • The voices of children, youth and families are listened to and acted upon 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We deliver strength-based, equity focused and faith-inspired services • We strengthen family, extended family and resource family capacity • We acknowledge and strive to remove oppression and inequities across our service system • 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 • We partner with families, youth and children in all planning and decision-making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Courageous and inspiring leadership at all levels • Highly competent, empowered and supported staff and resource families • Welcoming, inclusive, and culturally responsive processes and spaces • A culture where we are always learning, collaborating and embracing ways to improve • Caring, compassionate, agile and spirited team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community outreach, engagement and philanthropy • Effective communication and advocacy • Balanced risk management • Continuous quality improvement • Fiscal stewardship and accountability

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

Within this strategic direction, we have prioritized three 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.

The strategy map outlines what actions the agency will take across three strategic pillars that will enable the organization to achieve our Vision. The Strategic Pillars are then translated into strategic directions and supporting goals. The strategy map is supported by our Faith Statement. The organization has prioritized three key projects for 2022-23 and their progress will be reported to the Board on a quarterly basis. These projects were selected based on feedback from leadership and staff.

1. Equity and Spiritual Care
2. Employee Wellness
3. Service Framework Redesign

Each of these priority projects is aligned with the provincial priorities in child welfare and will impact all staff across the organization. We will continue to adopt best-practice change management strategies to support the successful achievement of these priorities.

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Our Key Accomplishments in 2021-2022

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. Excellence in All We Do - Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (Indigenous Truth & Reconciliation, OVOV, LGBTQ2S+)
2. Passionate and Prepared Team - Staff Wellness
3. Public and Stakeholder Confidence - Quality Assurance Data-Driven Process Across the Organization

All the projects achieved positive outcomes in moving the agency forward and each is outlined on the following page.



Excellence in All We Do

Project: Equity, Diversity and Inclusion – (Indigenous Truth & Reconciliation, OVOV, LGBTQ2S+)

OUTCOMES:

Many of the current and ongoing initiatives are in alignment with the recent release of the Board's Equity Statement which enable the DEI department to anchor itself to the long-term work that is needed within the organization as well as operationalize the Equity statement in the development of new agency policies and practices.

Most of the work in this area has concentrated on helping Senior Leadership/Supervisors and staff to analyze how their decision making and conceptualizing of service users is affected when looking through a Eurocentric or dominant lens. Many critical and courageous conversations have ensued related to white fragility and white solidarity, which help to highlight the disparity of outcomes for Indigenous, Black, 2SLGBTQ+ and other equity seeking groups. This has increased understanding of the need to have a more diverse and inclusive staffing present at all decision-making tables, especially those with lived experience.

The project achieved these key DEI outcomes throughout the course of the past year:

- Our agency embarked on a new consultation process to critically examine and document the provision of services to Indigenous, First Nations, Inuit and Métis (FNIM) families as a component of our strategy to provide equitable services. The consults will provide the opportunity for FNIM cases to be reviewed from an Indigenous and holistic lens, led by our Reconciliation lead. The discussions will focus on understanding identity, strengthening connection to Indigenous services, AADR opportunities and CYFSA requirements. The discussions will explore opportunities to enhance engagement with FNIM families and provide services in the least intrusive manner possible, including case closure.
- Members of the DEI team have developed a training module to be facilitated during the current PRIDE training series related to anti oppression with a specific focus on anti-black racism and anti-colonialism. Our agency has committed to the implementation of Heart and Spirit as the strategy to assess Indigenous caregivers and participated in a three-day training session with ANCFSAO, alongside our local Indigenous community in anticipation of the development of agency specific curriculum related to the Heart & Spirit tool.
- The completion of our Equity Audit by Tana Turner Consulting Group has highlighted for the agency four critical priority areas that will be a prominent focus in the upcoming year: deepen the agency's anti-racism work; diversify the workforce at all levels; strengthen human resources policies and practices; create a more inclusive and respectful organizational culture.



PASSIONATE AND PREPARED TEAM

Project: Staff Wellness Program

OUTCOMES:

The Wellness program seeks to provide health resources and education to employees in order to increase job satisfaction, decrease absenteeism, and support overall wellness.

The wellness initiative is well under way as we wrap up with Q4. The Agency has applied for a grant from the Trillium Foundation for the recruitment of a Wellness Co-Ordinator for 12 months. A committee has been created that compromises of union and management members and they are currently in the process of finalizing the guiding principles and developing a workplan regarding the implementation of this initiative at CCASH. The committee will be guided by the feedback from a wellness survey completed by staff in Q3 as well as best practices other employers have embraced around wellness in the workplace.

The focus of the committee moving forward will be to implement initiatives that address:

- Emotional health
- Mental health
- Work life balance
- Stress management
- Healthy eating

PUBLIC AND STAKEHOLDER CONFIDENCE

Project: Quality Assurance Data-Driven Process Across the Organization

OUTCOMES:

1. Complete and accurate data (directly related to Case Management platforms)
2. Staff are engaged and have integrated data quality into their practice
3. Data driven decision making

There has been significant work by the Quality Assurance (QA) Department regarding the collection and reporting of identity related data for children, youth, families, and caregivers. We have significantly increased the completeness of identity-based data for service recipients and developed reporting mechanisms for planning purposes. This area continues to be a priority and we are working to ensure full completeness of identity-based data.

We are proud to have partnered with the Social Planning Research Council (SPRC) of Hamilton to work with us on the analysis of race-based data. The QA Department also has partnerships with researchers at York University for various project.

We have continued to update the Agency Balanced Scorecard which measures the implementation of our Strategic Plan. The QA department has worked to support staff in meeting compliances and expectations on how data is entered into the child welfare case management system. There is ongoing work in this area. Various feedback surveys were developed and implemented to gather information from various agency stakeholders in order to improve quality of services.



Community Partnerships Established 2021-2022

Shalem Mental Health Network *WrapAround* Program

Our agency and Shalem have been collaborating to deliver WrapAround services to families. Wraparound is a facilitated process that enhances support networks to meet the goals of service users. Its **client driven, strength-based and community focused**. WrapAround is a service and a process that addresses the service system gaps that families with complex, cross-sector needs often fall through. It is a holistic “social determinants of health” approach that serves service recipients experiencing marginalization.

It is strength-based, giving a voice to the child or young person and family in a genuine way and is consistent with the practice principles and philosophy of Signs of Safety. WrapAround is often used successfully to prevent children and youth from coming into care, to reunify children and youth with their family, to prevent kinship placement breakdowns, and to support youth aging out of care. In some cases, WrapAround can be an alternative to children and families needing to be referred to or requiring further child welfare services.

The initiative is aligned with the key pillars of child welfare redesign of early intervention and prevention.

Partnership with Goodwill Amity

Goodwill Amity was fortunate to secure a series of grants to make and provide hot meals and individual boxed lunches to people experiencing food insecurity who may, in the past, have relied on meals in congregate settings and/or for whom shopping, and cooking became difficult in the pandemic. Goodwill graciously agreed to extend their program to the children and families that are serviced by the Catholic Children’s Aid Society of Hamilton. The Goodwill provided the Society with 70 hot meals per week for 4 weeks and 250 boxed lunches per week for 26 weeks. The hot meals and lunches were provided to parents, kinship caregivers, children, and youth in the community.

The program was distributed throughout the organization; Youth Support workers delivered meals on a weekly basis to our youth living independently who were no longer able to access meals at the Youth Drop-In Program at the Society due to pandemic. Children and Families attending the office for visits and appointments were offered meals to enjoy while in office and/or take home for the remainder of the week. Frontline staff provided meals to families during home visits. Many of our service recipients that are impacted by homelessness were pleased to pick up meals at the office and identified lack of meal support services in the City.

Service recipients struggling to feed themselves and their children noted that the support alleviated stress and worry.

Contact

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