

Children First



2023
Community
Impact
Report

Catholic
Children's Aid Society
of Hamilton



Société d'aide à l'enfance
catholique
de Hamilton



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Leadership Message



This past year, the Catholic Children's Aid Society of Hamilton has remained steadfast in our commitment to hold the safety and wellbeing of children at the helm of all we do. In this second installment of the Children First Annual Report, we reflect and acknowledge the important work that was accomplished this year. Through various challenges and complexities, our dedicated team of staff has ensured that the CCASH uphold the mission, vision and values set forth.

The theme of our 2022-2023 Annual Report, *Children First*, highlights our Agency's journey over the last year to support children, youth and families through various initiatives, and philanthropic efforts to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children continues to be our top priority.

Children First also reflects our Agency's continued efforts over the past year to develop meaningful relationships with organizations and professionals who can support the unique needs and identities of the children, youth and families receiving services from our agency. As we work to support the number of families who intersect with child welfare, our team has worked diligently to develop initiatives and services that are culturally appropriate and operate as support networks to assist the development of individuals and strengthen family units.

This report will show how the CCASH has put Children First into action. There are many individuals who have contributed to our successes in child, youth and family wellbeing, quality of care, strengthened youth supports and building system accountability and sustainability. Our extended and passionate community, including our kinship and foster caregivers, continue

to work alongside us with a shared goal of keeping children and youth safe and strongly connected to their home, communities, and culture. We are grateful for our partners in the community who have held us accountable to ensure our work is always built on the foundation of equity, diversity, and inclusion.

Our staff has worked tirelessly to uphold our mission, vision and values to meet a higher standard of service delivery while respecting the dignity of each human life. As you digest the highlights from this report, it should be noted that none of this would be possible without the team of dedicated staff here at the CCASH.

Thank you to our valued board members, foster parents and volunteers who dedicate their energy, time, and efforts to create safe spaces and opportunities for children to thrive. We are grateful to our dedicated senior leadership team for their continued focus to drive and enhance service delivery and elevate the way in which we put children first.



Toni Kovach
Chair,
Board of Directors



Donna Zan
Executive Director



Children First in Action

Child, Youth, Family and Community Well-Being

As we operate in a culture where we are always learning, collaborating, and embracing ways to improve our service delivery and planning, we are finding ways to listen and act upon the voices of children, youth and families. This fiscal year, the CCASH has held child, youth, family and community well-being at the forefront as we launched a new conference planning model within the Agency. Voices of youth are actively being sought during independence planning. Along with the voice of the youth, it is vital that we understand their identity and how that can work in tandem with planning for appropriate care. Kadie, a youth who has been in and out of care since four years old, expresses the significance of being placed in a culturally appropriate home and how working with the Agency made a difference.

1286
families
served

69
children in
care with kin
at year end



“

I moved to Canada from Africa when I was four years old. Initially, I was transitioned into a different home with an alternate caregiver from age five to 12 before my mom passed away. After my mom died, I was moved into a foster home until I turned 16. My workers and I identified that it would be better for me to be in a more culturally matched home with fellow Black-African people, so I was then moved to another home. This experience made me feel like my needs were listened to.”

– Kadie





98%
of children
remained in own
homes or with kin
while receiving
service

“The opportunity to provide kin care came to us when our daughter was no longer able to provide a safe living environment for her child. We knew that as parents, we wanted to help our child, and as grandparents we wanted to make sure that our grandson had a place to call home. The CCASH approached us initially, and while we didn’t have much hesitation, we knew that it would be a large undertaking. It is important for people in the community to know that the CCASH worked closely with our family to help this transition be as smooth as possible, especially for our grandson. While not only supporting my daughter’s recovery, they have also been a great support to us as we navigate this new dynamic in our family. At the end of the day, we are all working together with a common goal, and that is so my grandson is happy. Every child deserves to feel happy, safe and have positive childhood memories.

– Susan



Quality of Care

The CCASH works to enhance the natural capacities that children and youth already embody. Our focus remains on enhancing the quality of care for the individuals that are in front of us, taking into consideration all that makes them who they are. This means that we work to ensure that the infrastructure is in place for them to accentuate who they truly are. With a higher quality of care, we can fill the gaps and be silent supporters allowing them to be successful given the barriers they face while being children in care.

This year, we were faced with an issue of having several children in need of foster care with a lack of foster families available. To address this need, the CCASH developed a public campaign which resulted in a positive increase in foster parent recruitment that our organization would not otherwise have had.

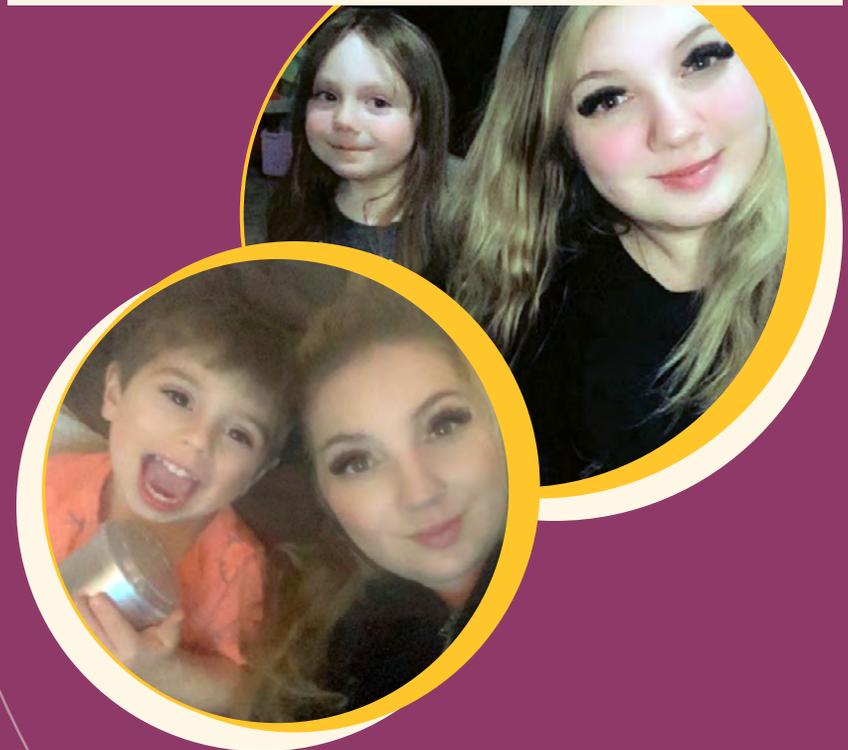
Since May 2022, the CCASH has had many individuals come forward expressing interest to learn more about fostering. We have had a total of nine families approved to foster through active recruitment. We currently have three families completing PRIDE (Parent Resources for Information, Development, and Education) and two families that will be starting the assessment process.

Reasons for referral:
physical maltreatment
caregiver with a problem
domestic violence
neglect
emotional harm



The CCASH has showed that not only my safety, but my child's safety is a priority when I was having issues with the father of my son, and they provided me with a cell phone, so I was able to call the police if need be. In addition to assisting in the purchase of necessities such as a car seat and crib, the CCASH has helped me with rent payments, and has provided me with a therapeutic referral for daycare. This helped me secure a daycare spot for my son and broke down the barriers that would have worked against our application. Their involvement and support have molded me into a different person, and I feel confident in my ability to keep my child safe. Their support has helped me get me and my family on a path to a better life."

– Alisha



Values in Action: Community Partners Working Together

Strengthening Youth Supports

With the help of community partners, the Catholic Children's Aid Society of Hamilton has worked to get one step closer to our commitment to prioritizing the safety and wellbeing of children and youth, by remaining steadfast in our efforts to raise funds for key initiatives and programs that do not receive government funding such as recreational activities, skills development, and mental health supports for youth.

Our organization remains driven in our philanthropic commitment to raise funds for these types of life-enhancing opportunities for the children and youth we serve, and for other key initiatives and programs, to ensure they can receive the same opportunities as their peers.



Roger Ali and Donna Zan



Ron Preyra, Donna Zan and Ian Preyra



Donna Zan and Larsen Family

The annual Golf Tournament saw another successful year with \$60,000 raised to strengthen supports available for youth aging out of care. We are grateful for the many loyal community partners like the Larsen and Preyra families, who have continued to show dedication and unwavering support over the last 13 years.





The Give the Gift of Joy Campaign raised over \$70,000 with the help of local schools and parishes coming together to raise funds. With the Diocese of Hamilton matching donations up to \$25,000, we were able to exceed our initial fundraising goal. The power of community inspires us, and we wouldn't have been able to strengthen the supports available to those we serve without it.



We are guided by the teaching, tradition and witness of the Catholic Church, responsive and accountable to the local community that it serves. Our vision and mission are grounded in our faith in the Risen Christ and the compassion and mercy he showed to the most marginalized persons in his community. The staff and students at the Hamilton Wentworth Catholic District School Board have exemplified a shared vision of social justice, respect and fairness to all through their generosity and collaborative efforts to raise funds for the Give the Gift of Joy Campaign.

24 schools
and **8** parishes
contributed to the
success of the
Give the Gift of
Joy Campaign





This funding opened opportunities for kids like me that really need support and otherwise, we would not be able to access it. I can receive counselling services bi-weekly with a professional that I feel safe and comfortable with, because of the funds granted by these donors. For me, therapy is a positive space where I can work through my struggles. Being able to access counselling services helps me get through day-to-day life in a more productive and healthy way.”

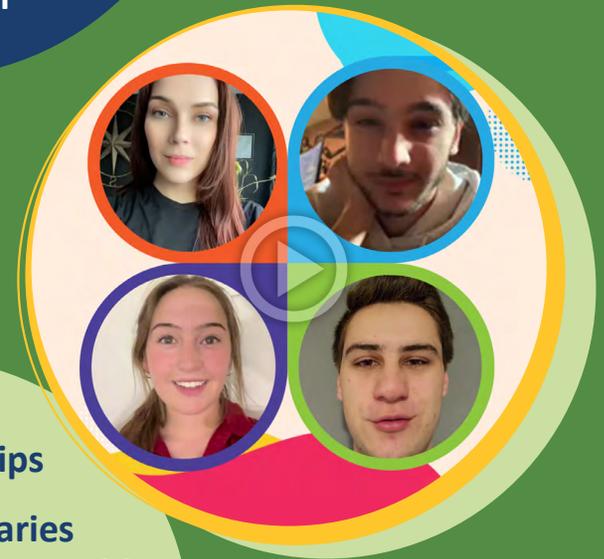
– Corey



I have gone through a lot of challenging times in my life, and as I get older I have realized I need additional help learning to manage my traumas and experiences. With funds granted to the CCASH, I have been able to access mental health supports and work through things in a healthy way. It is easy to get overwhelmed with things I have been through with my family, but thanks to donors like the Bell Let’s Talk Community Fund, I am able to grow into adulthood with a clearer mind and focus on moving forward.”

– Chantel

36 youth
(like Corey and Chantel)
were helped with accessing
mental health supports and
life-enhancing opportunities
through funds granted by
Bell Let’s Talk Community
Fund and Edith Turner
Foundation



3 scholarships
and **10** bursaries
were granted made possible
with funds donated by
community supports such
as the Sazio and Lancaster
families, and Hamilton Golf
and Country Club
Foundation



Equity in Action



System Accountability and Sustainability

To strengthen our practices we take into account all races, religions, creeds or sexual identities to ensure we are putting children first.

Engagement with the Indigenous community has resulted in strides made through the Heart & Spirit initiative. We have maintained the commitments made to hold ourselves accountable for colonial practices, and to improve the way we conduct service with our Indigenous community. The foundation has been set to establish the Heart & Spirit initiative as a sustainable path that will help alleviate barriers. This initiative has become a thread of our organization as we partner with the Indigenous community to develop alternative care practices that are culturally appropriate. We look forward to launching the program in the next fiscal year.



CCASH is working to change the culture of the agency and create a safer space for their clients. They have embarked on a new initiative called Heart & Spirit. We believe collaboration and safety is critical to engaging our people.”

– **Niwasa Kendaaswin Teg**

“We at the Hamilton Regional Indian Centre have been working with the CCASH on the Heart and Spirit Initiative and believe that it is a key step in the right direction on the path to Truth and Reconciliation.



– **Hamilton Regional Indian Centre**



Together, we are committed to making the assessment and alternative care provider experience more positive, less traumatizing for Indigenous people and creating safer homes for Indigenous children.”

– **Aboriginal Health Centre**

For the betterment of the children and youth in our care, we strive to remove oppression and inequities across our service system. The CCASH staff now includes a Sexual Orientation Gender Identity and Expression Lead (SOGIE). The SOGIE lead has facilitated six sessions of the OACAS SOGIE training for staff within the organization. In addition, the agency SOGIE lead has provided staff with supplementary training on Gender 101 and coordinated a community panel of trans-serving agencies to provide ongoing learning opportunities.

19
adoptions
finalized

“At first, before we got to know the agency, we had a specific idea from our own LGBTQ+ community perspective around how the Catholic Church has treated our community in the past. We haven’t had the best experience with the church growing up, and really, when it came to our adoption experience with the CCASH we felt extremely well supported, and had a phenomenal experience right from the beginning. Our misconceptions about the agency were quickly put to rest.

Quick intervention by the CCASH was crucial to make sure that our son was able to get to adoption. I think that it was the work of some very experienced and knowledgeable and insightful protection workers to be to recognize that his birth family situation really is not going to improve and the best outcome for this child is adoption.

We work hard to make sure our son is connected in some way to his birth family. With that comes challenges, but we want to ensure that we foster those connections in a healthy way for him.

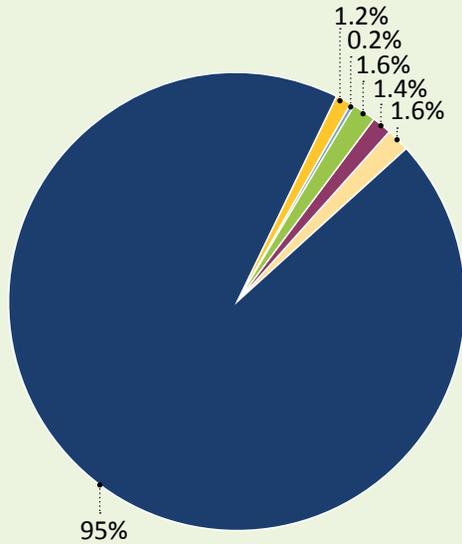
Early specialized services such as OT and speech/language were essential for our son to get where he is today. We are so lucky for the help we received. CCASH is one of these agencies that’s on the front line and is really motivated to work towards inclusive practice and anti-oppressive practice and is one of the most progressive children’s aid societies in our opinion.

”

– Luke



2023 Financials



Revenues

- Province of Ontario
- Donations
- Events
- Government of Canada
- Inter-Agency
- Miscellaneous

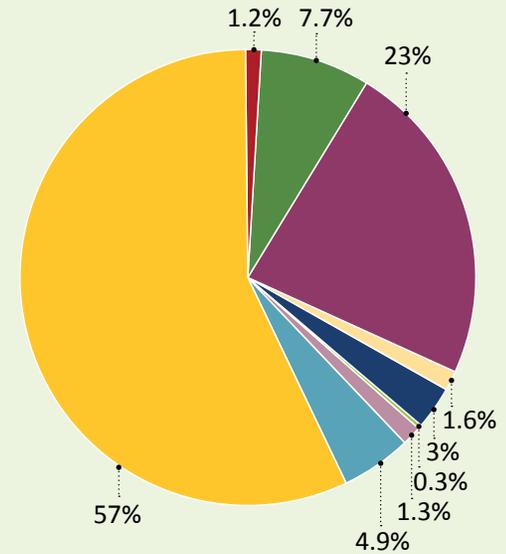
TOTAL REVENUES **24,701,076**

Financial Note

The Catholic Children’s Aid Society of Hamilton is reporting a deficit of \$70,093 for the fiscal year. The deficit was a result of differences in the accounting treatment of expenses for Ministerial reporting versus public sector reporting. For the purposes of financial reporting to the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services a balanced budget was submitted.

This is a summary of details in the 2022–23 audited financial statements prepared under Public Sector Accounting Standards (PSAS) and audited by HGK Partners LLP.

[Click here](#) for a full audited financial statement.



Expenditures

- Salaries & Benefits
- Travel
- Financial Assistance, Scholarships and Special Programs
- Boarding Rate Payments
- Children’s Personal Needs
- Office Administration and Other
- Training and Recruitment
- Building Occupancy
- Technology and Purchased Services

TOTAL EXPENDITURES **24,771,169**

Deficit **-70,093**

