

COLLABORATE

BUILD

SUPPORT

LEAD

STRENGTHEN



Ontario Association of
Children's Aid Societies
The voice of child welfare in Ontario



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Executive Message

Annual Report 2014-15

The past year at the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies (OACAS) was full of challenge and change but it was also a year where we saw hard work rewarded.

These rewards have not come too soon. In the past couple of years we have heard loud calls from the media and the public for improvements in the way the child welfare works as a system. This is something we also heard from the Commission to Promote Sustainable Child Welfare in 2012. The Commission's challenge to us — to develop the system while not losing the strengths of the Ontario model of local, independently governed CASs — has been one of OACAS's key priorities in the past few years.

submissions on influential pieces of legislation such as the review of the Child and Family Services Act, face-to-face meetings with the Ministry on funding and Accountability Agreement issues, and youth-in-care presentations to MPPs. It's this kind of persuasion that creates the conditions that agencies need to provide the best service in the world to the families in their care.

Changing the system for the better also takes leadership and this past year OACAS has seen

OACAS prides itself on being the voice of
child welfare in Ontario

System development is the broad theme that unites the accomplishments and successes of this past year. To reach these goals we have relied on the three pillars of OACAS engagement — advocacy, leadership, and service excellence — as well as hundreds of hours of consultation and project development with the talented and dedicated professionals who work at the 46 agencies that provide child welfare across the province.

OACAS prides itself on being the voice of child welfare in the province and we have used our voice in an ongoing dialogue with key stakeholders in the system including cabinet ministers, MPPs, ministry staff, and all the community organizations that play a role in the well-being of children and families. This year we advocated for a better child welfare system through oral and written

significant progress with many of its initiatives. We have launched the process of authorizing child welfare workers and started to pave the way for regulation of workers with the Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers. We have made huge strides in strengthening child welfare governance and come up with a short list of 16 opportunities for shared services in the sector.

One of the most daunting challenges OACAS and our member agencies took on in 2013-14 was "big data." Rising to this challenge has paved the way for significant system development. This year, five Children's Aid Societies became the first to go live with the Child Protection Information Network, a process which required migrating over 17 million records, and marked a critical step forward in modernizing child welfare information networks.

It is also **the year of performance indicators**, five of which were publicly reported this past March. Identifying 26 performance indicators based on 196 data points from six case-management systems followed by migrating and validating them into data systems at the University of Toronto and the University of Ottawa was no small challenge. It took 600 CAS staff, board members, university partners, IT vendors, and 52 pages of definitions and calculations to get there, but get there we did. It was a testament to the ability of the child welfare field to work together. The performance indicators will enable OACAS and the field to measure performance in an entirely new way. They will also enable us to do what we care most about — improve the outcomes for the children and youth in our care.

Service excellence is the final pillar that supports OACAS as it tackles the challenge of system development. The inquest into the death of Jeffrey Baldwin spoke to the need for high-quality training of child welfare staff. As the principal trainer for all child welfare staff in Ontario, OACAS has responded with an ambitious redesign of its training curriculum that will move the child welfare education system in Ontario forward.


There are two **other highlights** from this past year that we wish to celebrate. First is the designation of Kina Gbezhgomi as a Children's Aid Society. Children, youth, and families who are member First Nations within the Districts of Manitoulin and Sudbury will now receive care that is based on their beliefs, traditions, and values. A successful, sustainable, and progressive child welfare system is one that supports Aboriginal communities and their right to develop and deliver services to their own people.

Finally, youth in care are significant stakeholders in the child welfare system and their energy and voice has contributed to many positive changes. One of the most satisfying accomplishments of the past year has been to watch the resounding success of the Aftercare Benefits Initiative (ABI). This past August, registration for benefits at Green Shield Canada opened for youth in care aged 21 to 25 who do not have coverage through another plan. Seven hundred and thirty-one youth and 154 of their dependents are now receiving health, dental, vision, and extended health benefits, as well as counselling and other life skills support through Morneau Shepell. The lack of support for youth in care who are over 18 is a failing of the child welfare system and this year we have begun to see it rectified.

This is an exciting time to be working in child welfare. We have a clear vision of the sustainable, accountable, and modern child welfare system that we want for Ontario's children, youth, and families. We have undertaken much of the hard work needed and we are well on our way to reaching our goals.



Mary Ballantyne Executive Director



Marilyn Dumaresq Board President

LEAD

members and engage with partners in the development of a seamless, integrated children services system that responds effectively and respectfully to the diverse realities of children, youth, and families across Ontario.

The province with the largest population in Canada needs a child welfare system that works seamlessly with a wide range of community services to respond effectively to vulnerable children and families. It also needs a system that is sensitive to a wide diversity of cultural backgrounds, identities,

and needs, including the unique requirements of youth in care. Their voices play an important role in the advocacy that OACAS undertakes on behalf of its member agencies to help shape the programs, policies, and legislation that have an impact on the well-being of children and youth.

731 youth and 154 of their dependents now have extended health coverage.

Since 2006, OACAS and youth in care have been advocating for extended health and dental benefits. In August 2014, registration for aftercare benefits opened for youth aged 21 to 25 who do not have health coverage through another plan. Through the Aftercare Benefits Initiative they now receive health, dental, vision, and extended health benefits from Green Shield Canada and counselling, well-being, and life skills support from Morneau Shepell.

21 to 25.
R U COVERED?
OACAS AFTERCARE BENEFITS INITIATIVE

If you're between the ages of 21 and 25*, not eligible for other health coverage and were a youth in CAS care (Crown ward), you may qualify for these benefits:


- Prescription Drugs
- Dental
- Vision
- Extended Health
- Counselling and other life skills supports, including career coaching, financial planning, legal advice and more

To find out more about the OACAS Aftercare Benefits Initiative, go to www.oacas.org/abi today!

*ABI coverage ends on 25th birthday.

Logos for Green Association of Ontario and Children's Aid Societies, Ontario, gsc, and shepell.

YOUTH: Ask your Children's Aid Society Worker to help you sign up.
WORKERS: Register your youth online at:
WWW.OACAS.ORG/ABI | E-MAIL ABI@OACAS.ORG | CALL 1-800-718-1797 ext 2133



“Children and Youth In Care Day reminds us that we are unique, valued, and important. It reminds us that we need to continue discussing the issues in the system and bridge the gaps. It reminds us that stigma for youth in care needs to be challenged.”

– Brian Van-Du, YouthCAN coordinator

OACAS Youth Civics Day
at the Ontario Legislature

250

YOUTH
PARTICIPANTS

The day marked the first
Children and Youth in Care
Day, which was pro-
claimed law in 2014.

FROM
20
AGENCIES

three

Nº OF DAYS SPENT BY
250 YOUTH IN CARE
@ HUMBER COLLEGE

EXPLORING POST-SECONDARY
EDUCATION OPTIONS AND CAREERS,
WHILE DEVELOPING SKILLS IN:

- communication
- networking
- advocacy
- leadership

25 **RECEIVED**
YOUTH **\$3,500**
2014 CLARK AWARDS

Annually for up to 4 years of post-secondary education and training.


68+

youth currently pursuing
post-secondary education
through Clark Bursaries,
Clark Grants, and Clark
Graduating Grants.

\$1,000

**ONE-TIME CLARK GRANTS
GIVEN TO**

20
YOUTH



“The Framework represents a turning point in the relationship between OACAS/CASS and the African Canadian community.”

– Kike Ojo, Project Manager, Practice Framework
“Serving the African Canadian Community”

1 Practice Framework “Serving the African Canadian Community” is underway.

The disparities in child welfare outcomes among children, youth, and families from the African Canadian/Black communities are a major concern in the child welfare sector. This year OACAS seconded Kike Ojo as Project Manager to lead our work to improve outcomes and service in this community.

OVER
16
OPPORTUNITIES

for Shared Services
in the child welfare sector
have been identified.

OACAS contributed oral and written submissions on 4 pieces of legislation

- ✦ Bill 42, Ombudsman Amendment Act
- ✦ Bill 88, Child and Family Services Amendment Act
- ✦ Bill 8, Public Sector and MPP Accountability and Transparency Act
- ✦ Review of the Child and Family Services Act, 2015

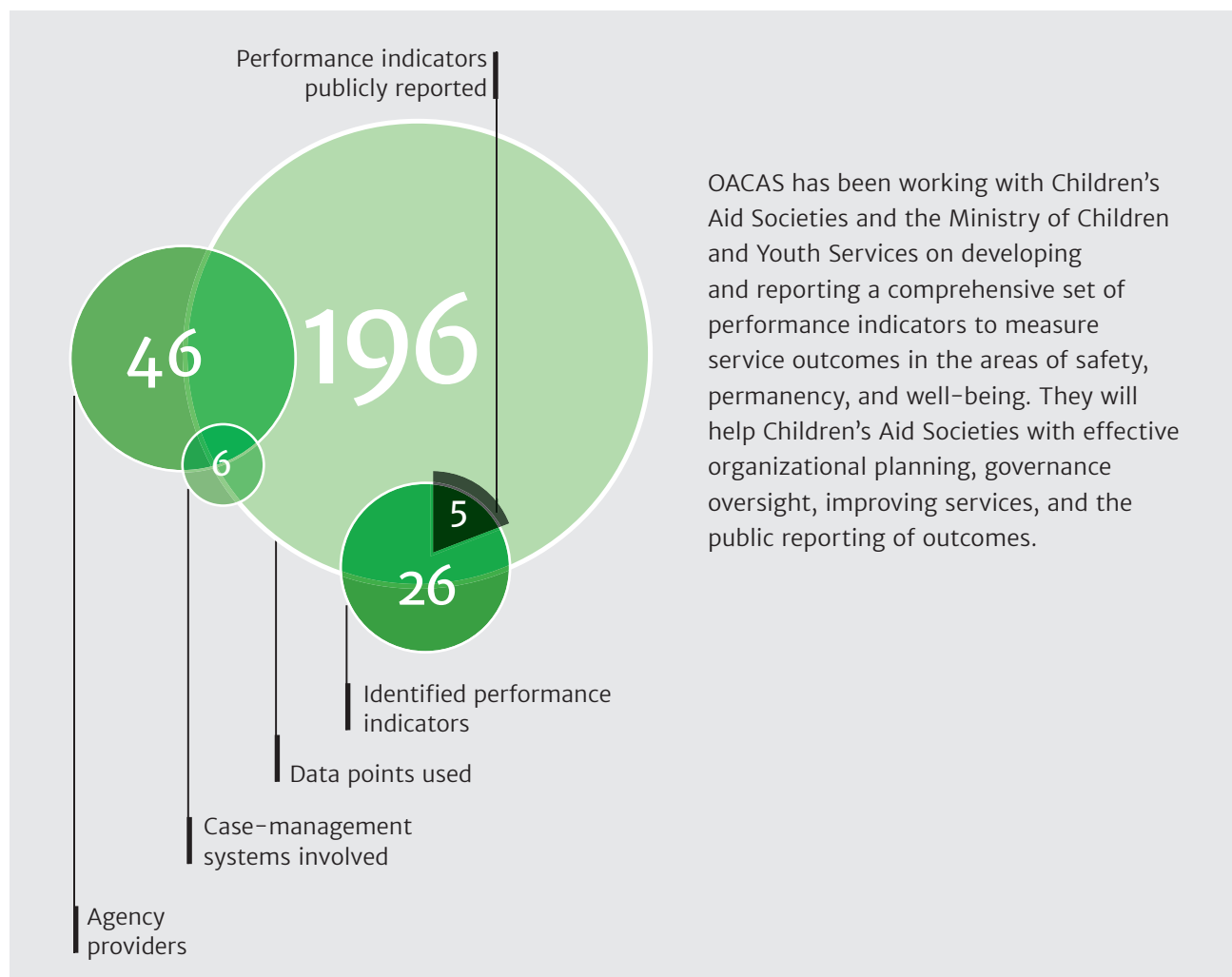
OACAS and its member agencies and partners believe an effective Shared Services Program will contain costs while strengthening capacity, improving services, and providing the approaches needed for a more sustainable child welfare system. Sector participation involved over 70 consultation sessions with agencies, which provided extensive input and advice.

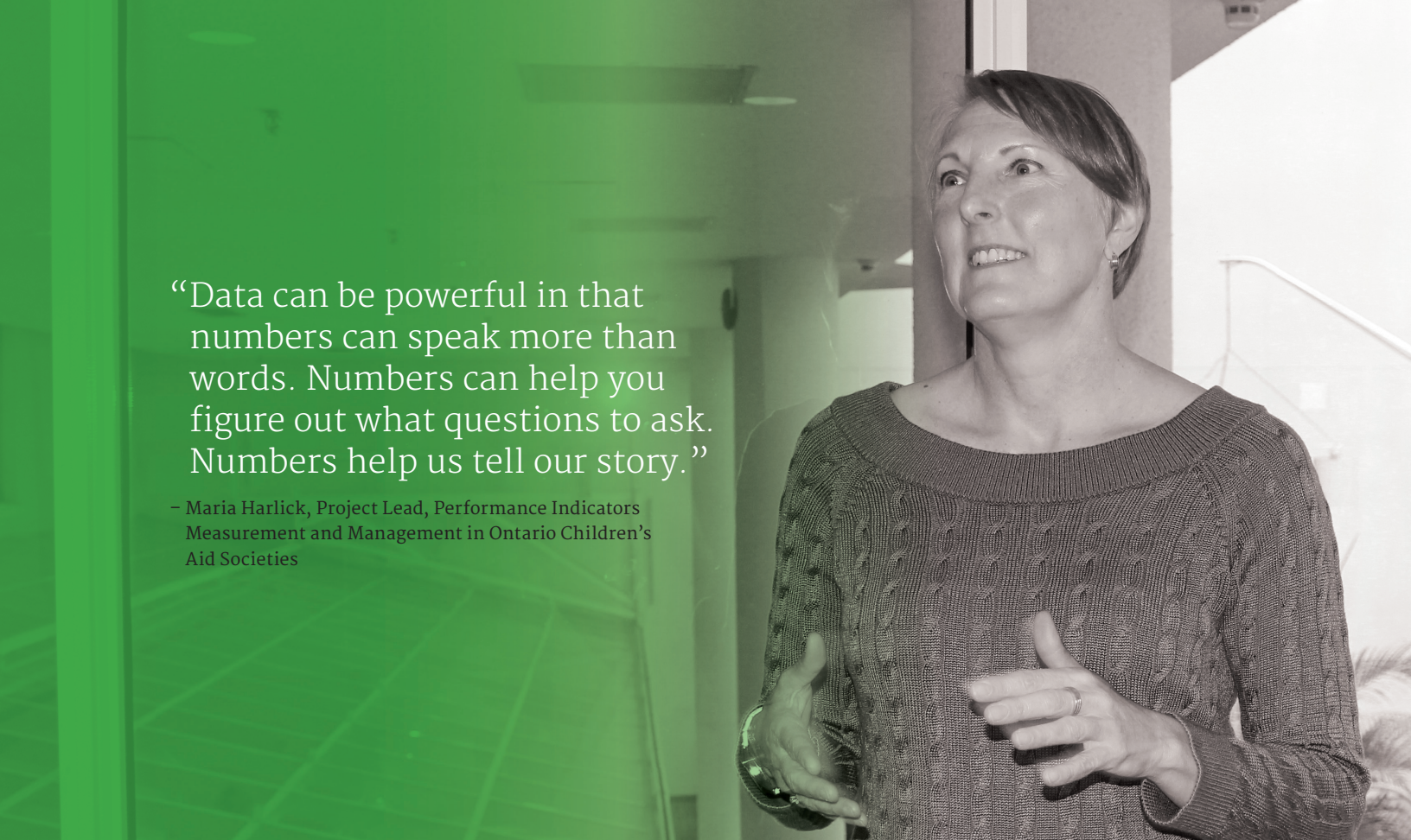
BUILD

the public's confidence in and engagement with child welfare through an accountable and transparent system.

Over the past five years, beginning with the work of the Commission to Promote Sustainable Child Welfare, the child welfare system has undergone significant change to improve accountability and transparency. This year marked a significant

milestone in building public confidence with the release of public performance indicators. The use of data and analysis will be an important way in which the child welfare system will communicate with the public moving forward.





“Data can be powerful in that numbers can speak more than words. Numbers can help you figure out what questions to ask. Numbers help us tell our story.”

– Maria Harlick, Project Lead, Performance Indicators Measurement and Management in Ontario Children’s Aid Societies

1 **Final Report** from the Professional Regulation Working Group with 9 recommendations

The OACAS Board endorsed the Professional Regulation Working Group’s final report, which recommends that OACAS undertake a process to move the child welfare sector towards professional regulation with the Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers.

Child Welfare Report with 6 recommendations to fix systemic problems

- ✦ support families to protect children at home
- ✦ extend the age of protection to 18
- ✦ broaden subsidy programs to give all children and youth a chance to settle in a permanent family
- ✦ change the culture of care so that youth stay at home until they are finished school
- ✦ support an agenda for sustainable Aboriginal and First Nations, Métis and Inuit (FNMI) child welfare services defined by Aboriginal and FNMI communities
- ✦ continue to develop a sustainable, accountable, and transparent child welfare system

4,250+

STORIES IN THE MEDIA

An engaged and transparent relationship with the media is key to building public confidence. On behalf of its members, OACAS worked closely with *The Toronto Star* on a 13-part series that featured the Ontario child welfare system.

SUPPORT & COLLABORATE

Along with its member agencies, OACAS will support and collaborate with the Aboriginal communities in bettering the health, well-being, and life chance of Aboriginal children in Ontario.

A successful, sustainable, and progressive child welfare system is one that supports Aboriginal communities and their right to develop and deliver services to their own people. Aboriginal and First Nation, Metis, Inuit (FNMI) children are overrepresented in the number of children in care. OACAS recognizes the importance of an open dialogue

to understand the legacy of the past and achieve reconciliation. This past year saw many initiatives to foster this dialogue, including a conference for support workers and supervisors working with Aboriginal children called “Bridging Cultures: New Beginnings.” The name symbolizes the spirit in which the child welfare sector moves forward.

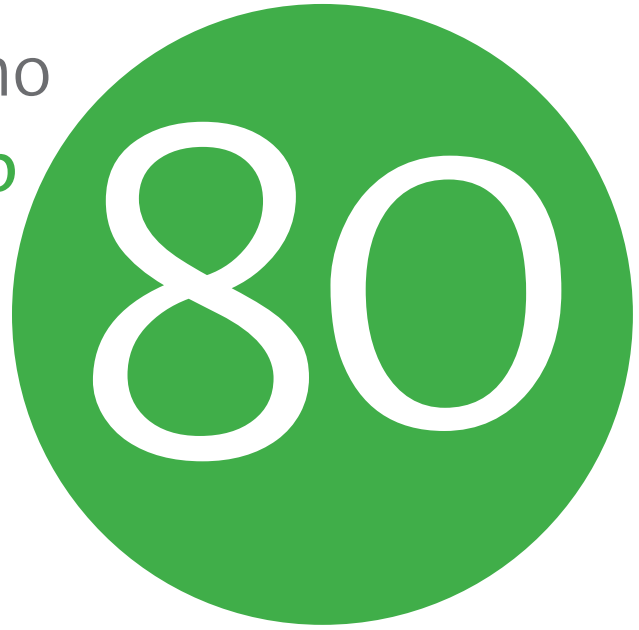
3,000

Aboriginal Practice Guides distributed.

“The Other Side of the Door: A Practice Guide for Child Welfare Professionals in Working with First Nation, Inuit and Métis Peoples” was developed after a review of the OACAS training curriculum revealed the need for an introductory document to teach child welfare professionals about the history of Aboriginal child welfare and its impact on Aboriginal children and families. The Practice Guide was written by Kenn Richard, features artwork by the Aboriginal youth program Seventh Generation Image Makers, and was translated into both Ojibwe and French.



Number of youth who developed **leadership skills** and **positive cultural identities** at the Aboriginal Youth in Care Gathering.



OACAS hosted the 2nd Annual Aboriginal Youth in Care Gathering in July 2014 at the Bark Lake Leadership Centre near Irondale, Ontario. The activities at the Gathering are based on the belief in the value of personal development by connecting with nature. Activities included sweat-lodge construction, rattle making workshops, and clan team-building activities.

Congratulations to Kina Gbezhgomi Child and Family Services, which received designation as a Children's Aid Society on April 1, 2015.

KGCFS has been working towards designation for over 20 years and will be serving children and families who are member First Nations within the Districts of Manitoulin and Sudbury. "The vision to develop our own Child and Family Services Agency was based on our inherent right and sacred responsibility to take care of our children," says Denise Morrow, the Executive Director of KGCFS.

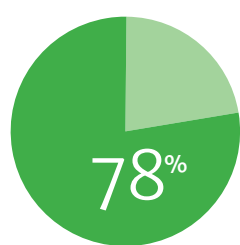


STRENGTHEN

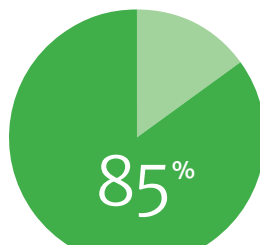
the capacity of the Association and its member agencies to fulfill their mandates.

Excellence in child welfare service depends on a system where the professionals and volunteers who deliver child welfare service in Ontario are equipped with the right tools. This means education, state-of-the-art information systems, and safe working places. As the trainer of the 8,000 professionals who work in child welfare, OACAS is leading the way with an educational curriculum redesign. Education for the volunteer boards who make the community model in Ontario work was also a key priority this year.

Year-over-year change in boards reported as Good Governance Boards



2013 total number of boards reporting 36



2014 total number of boards reporting 45

 Boards reported as Good Governance Boards

The aim of the Strengthening Child Welfare Governance Initiative is to provide CAS Boards and Executive Directors the tools to lead in their accountability role, to monitor and evaluate their governance, Executive Director and society performance, and to foster intraprovincial dialogue between CAS leaders.

1 new child welfare education system for Ontario

The Child Welfare Education Services Redesign is an ambitious project to ensure that Ontario's children and families are served by competent child welfare professionals. As part of its redesign initiative, OACAS collaborated with the Ontario Provincial Police to redesign two courses into a hybrid/blended learning format.

The "Forensic Interviewing" and the "Investigating Child Sexual Abuse: A Joint Forensic Approach" courses will serve as prototypes for OACAS's ongoing redesign work. These two new courses address recommendation #66 from the Jeffrey Baldwin Inquest, which called for the development of joint investigation training.

“The governance strengthening work is the most tangible support I have seen given to the volunteer Boards in our sector in my 30 plus years in the field.”

– Marty Rutledge, Executive Director,
Family, Youth and Child Services of Muskoka



5,800 Child Welfare Workers
surveyed on worker safety



RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE WORKER SAFETY PROJECT REPORT

The aim of the Worker Safety Project was to improve worker safety in the child welfare sector. The report on worker safety has been widely distributed across the province and the Labour Relations/Worker Safety Subcommittee is now actively engaged in developing a work plan to implement the 46 recommendations in the final report.

IN MEMORY OF

Nicole Bélair 1980–2014

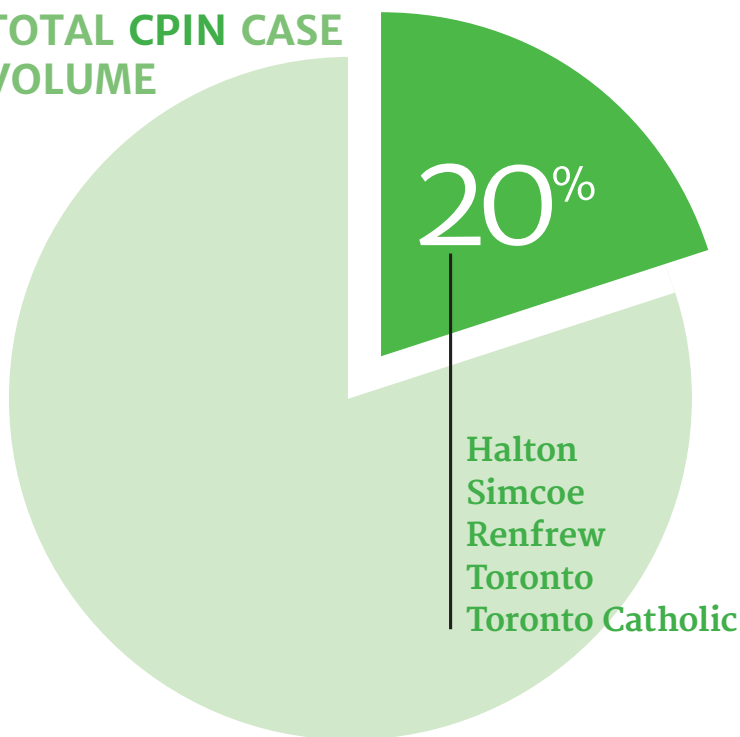
On May 13, 2014, Nicole Bélair, a child welfare worker at the Children's Aid Society of the Districts of Sudbury and Manitoulin, succumbed to injuries she sustained while on a home visit a day earlier. When an explosion fire erupted in another unit, Nicole helped to evacuate her client and returned to help others. She was overcome by smoke and fire. Nicole left her colleagues at Sudbury-Manitoulin with fond memories of her brilliant smile and her passion for working with youth. Nicole never gave up hope that we can help youth create brighter futures, and her legacy continues.



The Worker Safety Project report found that “CAS employees are regularly placed ‘in harm’s way’ and, over the course of their career in child welfare, may be exposed to thousands of incidents of violence (assaults, threats, verbal and written abuse, and stalking) and harassment.”

CHILD PROTECTION INFORMATION NETWORK (CPIN) STATS YEAR-TO-DATE

TOTAL CPIN CASE VOLUME



CAS STAFF
ACTIVELY
USING CPIN



The Child Protection Information Network (CPIN) reached a significant crossroad this year when Halton CAS, Simcoe CAS, Renfrew CAS, Toronto CCAS, and Toronto CAS launched CPIN.

Bridging Cultures: New Beginnings



"I loved this conference and feel that if this format were a course in universities for BSW and MSW students that the field would be challenged but also changed for the better."

The Bridging Cultures: New Beginnings was an experiential symposium that brought together Aboriginal Elders and experts in the field to share culture and strategies with the aim of shifting the perspectives of child welfare practitioners. The event included a sacred fire located in a tepee and a sweat lodge that accommodated 45 participants.

Statement of Revenue and Expenses

Year ended March 31, 2015, with comparative figures for 2014

REVENUE	2015 TOTAL	2014 TOTAL
Government of Ontario	\$ 6,924,832	\$ 5,847,093
Membership fees	3,322,383	3,240,009
Donations	502,995	943,300
Other	645,476	851,338
Registration fees	455,414	355,256
Publications	70,644	34,813
Writeoff of deferred capital contributions	141,248	—
	12,062,992	11,271,809
EXPENSES		
Salaries	4,694,797	4,506,949
Purchased services and training services	3,692,486	2,720,334
Employee benefits	1,085,365	1,113,215
Office	450,652	440,493
Facility rentals	309,070	306,124
Travel	273,159	205,068
Occupancy	265,419	265,835
Amortization of capital assets	204,615	204,534
Disposal of capital assets	141,248	—
Other	156,011	142,977
Equipment	99,509	120,414
Resources & Memberships	83,016	70,366
Publications & Promotions	67,529	84,990
Loan interest	52,544	56,020
Staff training	21,383	28,116
Busaries awarded	323,250	317,750
	11,920,053	10,583,185
Excess (deficiency) of revenue over expenses	\$ 142,939	\$ 688,624
Fund balances, beginning of year	\$ 3,537,442	\$ 2,848,818
Fund balances, end of year	\$ 3,680,381	\$ 3,537,442

Balance Sheet

Year ended March 31, 2015, with comparative figures for 2014

ASSETS	2015 TOTAL	2014 TOTAL
Current assets:		
Cash	\$ 1,524,416	\$ 1,173,012
Investment	152,496	152,136
Accounts receivable	1,020,788	1,006,334
Prepaid deposits and expenses	102,076	83,305
	2,799,776	2,414,787
Capital assets	3,577,109	3,962,498
	\$ 6,376,885	\$ 6,377,285
LIABILITIES AND FUND BALANCES		
Current liabilities:		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	\$ 1,049,479	\$ 974,482
Deferred revenue	443,668	446,322
Credit facilities	1,203,357	1,277,791
	2,696,504	2,698,595
Deferred capital contributions	\$ -	\$ 141,248
Fund balances:		
Invested in capital assets	2,373,752	2,543,459
Externally restricted	172,212	259,113
Unrestricted	1,134,417	734,870
	3,680,381	3,537,442
	\$ 6,376,885	\$ 6,377,285

OACAS Board of Directors 2014/2015

Harry Emmott *President**

Marilyn Dumaresq *Past President*

Avanthi Goddard *Central Zone Agency Board Director*

David Rivard *Central Zone Agency Staff Director*

Wayne Weaver *Southwestern Zone Agency Board Director*

Bill Bevan *Southwestern Zone Agency Staff Director*

Deirdre Thomas *Eastern Zone Agency Board Director*

Rachel Daigneault *Eastern Zone Agency Staff Director*

Margaret Bowman *Grand River Zone Agency Board Director*

Nancy MacGillivray *Grand River Zone Agency Staff Director*

John Stopper *Northeastern Zone Agency Board Director*

Marty Rutledge *Northeastern Zone Agency Staff Director*

Vincent Lacroix *Northern Zone Agency Board Director*

Rob Richardson *Northern Zone Agency Staff Director*

Dr. April Rietdyk *Director at Large*

Abram Benedict *Aboriginal Agency – Director at Large*

* resigned June 2014 and past president Marilyn Dumaresq resumed as president for the balance of the year.

OACAS
Looking
Forward
2015/2016

Youth Engagement

Reconciliation

Stratégie de gestion des données

Active Offer of French Language Services

Diriger

Nouveau site Web public / site Web des membres de l'AOSAE

Worker Safety

Rapport au public sur les IR

Child Welfare Education Program Redesign

Primary, secondary and post-secondary education needs

Appui aux familles afro-canadiennes

Besoins en éducation primaire, secondaire et postsecondaire

New OACAS public website/New Members' website

Support

Support to LGBT2SQ youth

Réconcil

Renforcer

Campagne sur le devoir de faire rapport

Amélioration des service

enfants et aux familles autoch

Protection jusqu

Le 100 jours d'ouverture à la vieillesse

Duty to Report Campaign

Services partagés

Soutien aux jeunes LGBTQ

Offre active des services en français

Strengthen

Data Management Strategy

Sécurité des intervenants

Réglementation et surveillance professionnelles

Protection to 18