In the April Issue

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***And don't forget, we're changing the way you get The Voice. Don't miss out!***
Kerry Francis, Executive Director of Nogdawindamin Family and Community Services, sat down with us recently to talk about his organization's designation, the journey it took to get here, and what it means to him and to the First Nations communities of the North Shore.

On April 1st, 2017, Nogdawindamin Family and Community Services (NOG) assumed responsibility as the recognized child welfare authority for Lake Huron North Shore First Nations. Congratulations! Can you tell us first what it means to be a designated agency, and the process it took your organization to get here?

What does it mean? Wow. What a celebration. I'm truly honoured in my capacity as Executive Director to have been part of this journey for the past seven years. Nogdawindamin has been around for almost 27 years, but these last seven have truly been the most intensive in terms of building our capacity to accept responsibility for child welfare in the seven North Shore First Nations. So I guess that's how I'd like to answer that question. It's just so powerful. I'm not sure that it's even settled with me yet.

And how would you define what it is to be a designated child welfare agency?

Designation means that we've received approval [from the Ministry of Children and Youth Services (MCYS)] to provide child welfare services under provincial legislation. But for us it's also about providing those services in a culturally relevant way.

Read our full interview with Kerry.
Volunteering in child welfare: It takes a community to keep kids safe

Happy National Volunteer Week!

Volunteers play a significant role in the work of child welfare in Ontario. Women and men across the province donate their time, talent, and resources to assist children and youth in a variety of capacities, including driving, mentoring, tutoring, assisting with special events, and providing administrative support. Check out our infographic below which highlights some of the key facts about Ontario’s child welfare volunteers.

To see the infographic in more detail and to learn how you can get involved, click here.
Average number of volunteer hours per volunteer: 17,030,426
Average number of years volunteers are retained: 425
Total kilometres driven by volunteer drivers:
Number of trips around the world the total kms driven equates to:

DEMOGRAPHICS

72% of volunteers are women
The average age of volunteers is 60+

ROLES

Volunteers perform a variety of tasks and fill a number of different roles in Children’s Aid Societies.

Driver, Mentor, Tutor
I came into the care of the Kawartha-Haliburton Children's Aid Society (KHCAS) a day before my 15th birthday. I had spent most of my childhood living in an unstable environment. My mother is an alcoholic and so growing up was quite hard. It meant
dealing with a difficult parent most of the time and never knowing what sort of environment it would be at home. Home changed often too. Sometimes we lived in hotels, cars, trailers, etc. After many physical and verbal altercations with my mother that only increased in intensity as I got older, I started to reach out for help. At age 13 I called KHCAS to find someone to talk to about what was happening at home. Through their support, I found the courage to leave home and on my 15th birthday I entered my first foster home.

Read Meaghan's whole story here.

5 things you should know about the recently released child welfare performance indicators

Through the implementation of a provincial performance measurement and management system, Ontario's Children's Aid Societies have taken an important step to enhance their accountability and commitment to achieve better outcomes for the children, youth and families they serve.

1. The three core areas of child welfare work are safety, permanency and well-being. These are reflected in the five performance indicators that Children's Aid Societies publicly report on as an annual commitment to increase the accountability and transparency of the child welfare sector. You can find performance indicator results for individual agencies here.

2. The most recent performance indicator results (2014-15) remain on trend and include the highest number of agencies validating, including three agencies using the Child Protection Information Network (CPIN), the provincial child welfare information system.

What are the other three things you should know? Find them here.

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If you've already signed up for myOACAS.org but you aren't sure if you opted to
Resources You Can Use

Conflict Resolution Resource Guide

The Ministry of Children and Youth Services recently released a conflict resolution resource guide to build the capacity of residential care providers to respond to conflict in more restorative ways. It focuses on the strategies and tools that can be used in preventing and resolving conflict, building positive and healthy relationships, and building a group home culture and environment that fosters youth engagement and positive youth development.

Towards Race Equity in Education: The Schooling of Black Students in the Greater Toronto Area

This report, written by in collaboration by Dr. Carl James, Jean Augustine Chair in Education, Community & Diaspora at York University; the African Canadian Legal Clinic; and the Ontario Alliance of Black School Educators provides evidence of the anti-Black racism in the GTA's public education system.

Canadian Association for Child and Play Therapy

The Canadian Association for Child and Play Therapy believes in the value of play therapy and its contribution to an individual's mental, emotional, social and psychological well being. They offer a variety of training and educational opportunities for professionals looking to enhance their toolkit in using play therapy to deal with trauma, abuse, anxiety and other behavioural issues.

Upcoming Events

Childism: Maltreatment of Children Hidden Secrets - Overt & Covert Across Generations, Toronto, ON, April 29, 2017

Adoption Resource Exchange Conference, Toronto, ON, April 30, 2017

International Child and Youth Care Workers' Week, May 1-7, 2017

Adoption Worker Training Day, Toronto, ON, May 2, 2017

6th Biennial Body Image & Self-Esteem Conference, Toronto, ON, May 11-12, 2017


Children and Youth in Care Day, May 14, 2017

25th Harm Reduction International Conference, Montreal, QC, May 14-17, 2017

Missing & Exploited Children Training Conference, Winnipeg, MB, May 16-18, 2017
Send Us Your News and Events!

_The Voice_ has an extensive readership in Ontario and across Canada.

Please forward any child-welfare related news, events, or announcements to public_editor@oacas.org for possible inclusion in our monthly newsletter.