



**Children's
Aid Society**
THUNDER BAY DISTRICT

Annual Report 2023-2024

**COMMUNITY
IS
STRENGTH.**

Working together to protect children, youth and families

Message from the Board Chair

As President and Chair of the Board of Directors for The Children's Aid Society of the District of Thunder Bay, I am delighted to present this year's Annual Report. This has been a landmark year for the organization, marked by numerous accomplishments and significant progress towards our mission of improving the lives of children, youth and families in Thunder Bay and District.

One of the most notable achievements is the release of the new Strategic Plan for 2024 to 2029. This plan outlines the organization's vision and strategic priorities for the next five years, emphasizing the integration of core values such as safety and accountability, which are fundamental to the work in the child welfare sector. Prioritizing these values ensures that every decision made and every action taken is centered on the well-being and protection of children, youth and families. Moreover, the plan underscores the importance of amplifying the voice of children and youth in decision-making processes and their interactions with the organization. The Board believes that actively listening to and incorporating their perspectives is essential to nurturing an environment where children and youth feel valued and heard.

Additionally, I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and extend heartfelt gratitude to esteemed, retiring Board Directors, Ryan Bhopalsingh, Helen Eaton, Julie Goulet and Jessica Bruce, for their dedication and commitment to children, youth and families.



Trevor Kavalchuk
Board President and Chair

Message from the Board Chair continued

A special acknowledgement to Helen Eaton who completed nearly nine years of distinguished service. Helen's contributions have been invaluable, and her unwavering dedication has significantly advanced the organization's mission. Helen has been instrumental in shaping the direction of the organization, and her impact on the lives of children, youth and families in Thunder Bay and District will be felt for years to come.

I would also like to express deepest appreciation to the resource parents, kinship caregivers, adoptive parents, dedicated volunteers and community partners. Their unwavering support and commitment to children, youth and families are truly inspiring. Their efforts play a crucial role in providing safe and nurturing environments for children and youth, ensuring their well-being, and helping them thrive. Our mission could not be achieved without their partnership and dedication.

Looking ahead, the Board remains steadfast in the organization's commitment to protect and nurture the children and youth in Thunder Bay and District. Together, with the continued support of dedicated staff, Board members and community partners, we are poised to make even greater strides in the years to come.

Thank you for your ongoing support and dedication to The Children's Aid Society of the District of Thunder Bay.

Sincerely,

Trevor Kavalchuk,
Board President and Chair

Message from the Executive Director

The Children's Aid Society of the District of Thunder Bay continues to be committed to the safety, well-being and protection of children, youth and families.

This past year has seen many changes in the child welfare sector that promote better outcomes for children, youth and families, including the introduction to the Ready Set Go (RSG) Program, the continued implementation of the Quality Standards Framework and changes to the operations of the Kinship Services Program.

The RSG Program was implemented April 1, 2023, with the age of youth in care extending from 21 years to 23 years. The program provides youth with education and support to help them transition out of care successfully.

The Quality Standards Framework was implemented in the late summer of 2022 with changes to strengthen the quality of care provided by Resource Homes (also known as Foster Care Homes). The implementation of the framework continued into the 2023 – 2024 fiscal year and the Society underwent its first Ministry review in the Fall 2024. The Ministry review included Children in Extended Society Care and Foster Care licensing. Both reviews went well.



Carmela Hardy
Executive Director

Message from the Executive Director continued

Another change for the Society is the operations of the Kinship Services program. In the Fall of 2023, a designated team of Kinship Service Workers and Leadership began to support children and youth to be placed with kin (family or someone known to the child or youth). This operational change places value on children and youth remaining with kin.

This year the Board and Society also completed the process to develop a new Strategic Plan that will guide services over the next five years, from 2024 to 2029. The three pillars of the Strategic Plan are Operational Excellence, People and Culture and Partnerships. Thank you to all that gave feedback and provided valuable information and suggestions during the information sessions.

Continued collaboration and partnerships happened over the last year with a protocol being signed between The Children's Aid Society and The Children's Aid Foundation of the District of Thunder Bay and with the Union with a new four-year Collective Agreement, negotiated and ratified in December 2023.

Overall, this last year encompassed dedication to relationship building and strengthening of partnerships. These lasting relationships will only improve services and allyship and help the Society meet the changing needs and demographics of children, youth and families we serve.

Sincerely,

Carmela Hardy
Executive Director



2024-2029 STRATEGIC PLAN



MISSION

A future that embraces thriving children and youth, empowered families and strong communities

VISION

To protect families and communities by ensuring the safety and well-being of children and youth to reach their full potential

VALUES

Safety & Accountability
Equity, Diversity & Inclusion
Collaboration
Unity & Understanding
Respect & Integrity
Excellence & Innovation

Strategic Themes



Operational Excellence

Establish a service delivery model that equitably meets the diverse needs of children, youth, families and communities

OBJECTIVES:

- Establish a service delivery model
- Establish a robust accountability framework to ensure timely and extensive follow up and ensure the follow through on the commitment to Indigenous and Black children, youth and families
- Develop an organizational commitment to system analysis (internal) and process improvement
- Commit to ensure financial sustainability



People & Culture

Build supportive staff relationships where staff are engaged, supported and provide excellent service delivery to produce exceptional results

OBJECTIVES:

- Build supportive staff relationships by empowering staff
- Create a mission focused environment
- Enhance and develop a recruitment and retention program



Partnerships

Promote inclusivity, responsiveness and the well-being of all those we serve through collaboration and comprehensive support

OBJECTIVES:

- Develop Board-to-Board partnerships
- Advance community partnerships that meet the diverse needs of children, youth, and families
- Strengthen partnerships with other child welfare and Indigenous child and family well-being agencies and services



Champions for Children and Youth

Each year The Children's Aid Society of the District of Thunder recognizes companies or individuals who have made a significant contribution to the Society and by extension to those we serve. We are happy to announce that this year's Champions for Children and Youth Award goes to Fresh Air and Ungalli Clothing Co.

CHAMPIONS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH Fresh Air



Fresh Air is a local company that serves a wide range of outdoor activities including skiing, running, cycling, and board sports.

Fresh Air has been supporting children and youth participating in the 10-week, Team Unbreakable, Learn To Run Program, since 2019 by providing running shoes to participants who need them.

When the young athletes arrive at Fresh Air for their shoe fitting, they are greeted by owner Jeff and staff member Mark, who are there 'every step of the way' to complete the extensive process and to ensure every child and youth receives the most appropriate shoes. Every athlete leaves Fresh Air knowing how to properly tie their shoelaces and the importance of properly fitted running shoes. Volunteers and coaches have shared how appreciative the children and youth are for their new shoes as they run stronger, further and faster each week of the program.

This year Team Unbreakable has grown from 25 children and youth to 35, and with that growth the costs have also increased. Fresh Air continues to ensure that every child and youth can participate in the run program, even if they do not have running shoes. In 2024 Fresh Air donated over \$2, 000 worth of shoes!

We would like to thank Fresh Air for their dedication and commitment to supporting children and youth and honour them as a Champion for Children and Youth.

CHAMPIONS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH Ungalli Clothing Co.



Ungalli Clothing Co. is a local clothing brand and manufacturer. Their clothing is made ethically in Canada from recycled and organic materials.

Ungalli Clothing Co. offers custom screen printed apparel that helps other businesses and organizations be more socially and environmentally conscious by providing them with branded merchandise they can be proud to put their logo on. They also have a local retail store here in Thunder Bay.

Each one of Ungalli Clothing Co.'s shirts saves 10 plastic bottles from the landfill, 41 days of drinking water, 7 hours of lightbulb energy, and 1 KM of driving emissions are avoided.

For the past five years Ungalli Clothing Co. has been donating their shirts to the Society's Holiday Party for youth living independently. Their generous contributions have played a significant role in making the event a great success, spreading joy and festive cheer to everyone involved.

Ungalli Clothing Co.'s commitment to social responsibility has enriched the lives of countless young individuals and demonstrates the power of generosity in supporting a brighter future for youth. The Society looks forward to continuing to work with Ungalli Clothing Co. in creating impactful initiatives for the betterment of the community.

We would like to thank Ungalli Clothing Co. for their dedication and commitment to supporting children and youth and honour them as a Champion for Children and Youth.

PROGRAMS & SERVICES

Volunteer Services



Hilary Mettam
10 Years Volunteering

It is wonderful to volunteer one-on-one with a child over a number of years as this allows me to help them set goals, encourage their dreams and watch their confidence grow as they mature.

It is a great way to get involved in the community and do the things that you love doing with a child/youth who really benefits from it.



Kelsi Dangelo
10 Years Volunteering

Being part of TBCAS has been rewarding because I've seen firsthand how our efforts make a difference for kids, teens, and families. Seeing children enjoy all types of sports and activities and enjoy carefree play is the easiest way to see how providing small amounts of time can be so substantial to others. You'll meet awesome people and you'll be part of something bigger than yourself.

102 TOTAL
VOLUNTEERS

5,000 lbs
HOLIDAY HAMPERS DELIVERED
TO THE DISTRICT

TOTAL VOLUNTEER
HOURS **1,627**

BACKPACKS ASSEMBLED
125

13,250 KILOMETERS
DRIVEN

PROGRAMS & SERVICES

Volunteer Services continued



Marlene DeLorenzi

10 Years Volunteering

I really enjoy phoning the youth who live independently from their biological families. They appreciate being asked for feedback, had thoughtful, intelligent input, and valued my time checking in on them.

I just wish I was available more often! I have fun and it fills time in a positive manner! At 84, my volunteering keeps me active and engaged so I too benefit and would recommend volunteering to others!



Samantha Read

5 Years Volunteering

We all know the joy of receiving a happy text message. Knowing that I can make a small smile happen in someone's day makes me happy!

I have worked several volunteer roles at TBCAS including recreation buddy, parent aide, event support volunteer at recruitment fairs and now text messaging project. The work is so rewarding and enjoyable!



Elizabeth Kelly

5 Years Volunteering

As a tutor you not only assist youth with their class work but you also take on a mentorship role which is just as important as helping youth succeed in school.

Through that I saw a direct positive impact it has on their confidence and their success later on in class. The TBCAS team is amazing and does great work in the community.

Every
moment
matters

PROGRAMS & SERVICES - Intake and Disclosure



1, 930 Referrals Received

107 People who Requested Access to their File

PROGRAMS & SERVICES - Child Protection Services



792

Investigations
Completed

75%

of Families
we Serve, Children
are at Home

172

Families Receiving
Ongoing Services

PROGRAMS & SERVICES - Children's Services



74 Children in Care
Under the Age of 18

Youth Over the Age of
18 Receiving Service

55

CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN CARE DAY

May 14th is Children and Youth in Care Day. On this day we celebrated current and former youth in care and the valuable contributions they make to communities across Ontario.

This year's campaign continued with #ForgetMeNot. Forget-me-not flowers symbolize love and respect and represent a promise of remembrance. These tiny blooms are known for their resilience and their ability to grow in difficult circumstances and across environments. Like the forget-me-not flower, children and youth in care are resilient and adaptable. But despite that strength, they still need consistent care, attention, and tangible support to thrive. They cannot be forgotten.

PROGRAMS & SERVICES - Alternative Care Services

Alternative Care is a short or long-term placement for a child/youth/sibling group whose parents are unable to care for them. Alternative Care Providers provide a safe and stable home, and are usually a temporary solution for children/youth/sibling groups while the Society works collaboratively with their family to help make the changes needed to enable their children/youth to return home.

The most used Alternative Care arrangements by the Society are Kinship Care, Kinship Service, Resources (also know as foster care), Adoption, Respite, Room & Board and Emergency Receiving Homes.



A **Kinship Care** placement is when a child/youth/sibling group, **in the care** of a Children's Aid Society, is placed with ****Kin**. Kinship Care applicants are required to undergo the same process as Resource (also know as foster) and Adoptive applicants. (e.g. SAFE Home Study, PRIDE, parent preparation training)

13

Kinship Care
Homes

17

Children in Kinship
Care Placements

A **Kinship Service** placement is when a child/youth/sibling group, **not in the care** of a Children's Aid Society, is placed with ****Kin**. Kin Service placements are voluntary and require a Kinship Service Assessment.

20

Kinship Service
Homes

29

Children in Kinship
Service
Placement



Resource Placements (also known as Foster Care) are the most common Alternative Care arrangement where Resource Caregivers provide day-to-day care of a child/youth/family group in a family setting.

59

Resource
Homes



Adoption is a legal means for another family to permanently take on the responsibility of raising a child/youth/sibling group and become the new family for the child/youth/sibling group when there is absolutely no possibility of reuniting the child/youth/sibling group with their parent(s) and there is no suitable or available ****Kin**. Note that sometimes ****Kin** will adopt.

11

Adoption
Homes

8

Finalized
Adoptions

****Kin** are individuals who have a relationship with a child or youth and may include biologically related kin or individuals without a biological connection but with a significant social connection. Examples include a friend, teacher, coach or neighbour.

PROGRAMS & SERVICES - Children's Developmental Services

The Children's Developmental Services (CDS) program provides services and supports on a temporary basis for the purpose of providing caregiver relief. The program also promotes family functioning and child and youth health to avert or delay crises and to reduce the need for long-term out-of-home placements.

The children and youth that CDS serves have one or more disability related needs resulting from a developmental disability and/or a physical disability and they require support for participation in daily living activities.

Referral sources can include Children's Mental Health, Child Welfare and Self/Family/Friends.



Sarah with her CDS respite worker Trisha



Kolton sitting in his new chair



Hunter starting school for the very first time

Families Currently
Receiving Service

37

Families
Served in the
Year

59

The primary reason for service of
children/youth we support is currently
Autism Spectrum Disorder

PROGRAMS & SERVICES - SPRING Therapeutic Support and Education Program

The SPRING program is a therapeutic program that takes a holistic approach in providing intervention using the Attachment Regulation and Competency (ARC) Framework.

The ARC Framework consists of three primary domains of intervention to support trauma-informed care:

Attachment - focuses on strengthening the caregiving system by enhancing the supports, skills and resources of the adult caregivers

Regulation - focuses on increasing children and youth's awareness and skill development in identifying, understanding, and managing their own internal states with the help of their caregiving system

Competency - focuses on key factors related to building resilient outcomes. Goals include increasing opportunities for youth empowerment and effective decision making; self-development and identity; and relationship building and sustainment

The SPRING Program's services and interventions are distributed among all three areas.

37 active
referrals

Trauma and the Beautiful Brain Training
233 participants

In Home Support

- Training (Circle of Security, Trauma and the Beautiful Brain)
- Enhanced Homes - Placement, Support and Permanency Planning

School Support

- Education Liaison
- Training (Zones)
- Teach Your Children Well Reading Program
- School Transitions/Support

Individualized Social/Emotional Supports

- Youth Independence Support/Advocacy
- Youth Advisory

Teach Your Children To Read Well
Reading Program
10 participants

Educational Liaison support to
54 children/youth
(in and out of care)

Other training (OnLac, ARC reflections/ARC and Us)
38 participants

STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIPS

Protocol signed between

The Children's Aid Society and The Children's Aid Foundation of the District of Thunder Bay



**Children's
Aid Society**

THUNDER BAY DISTRICT
thunderbaycas.ca

**Children's
Aid Foundation**

THUNDER BAY DISTRICT
thunderbaycaf.ca

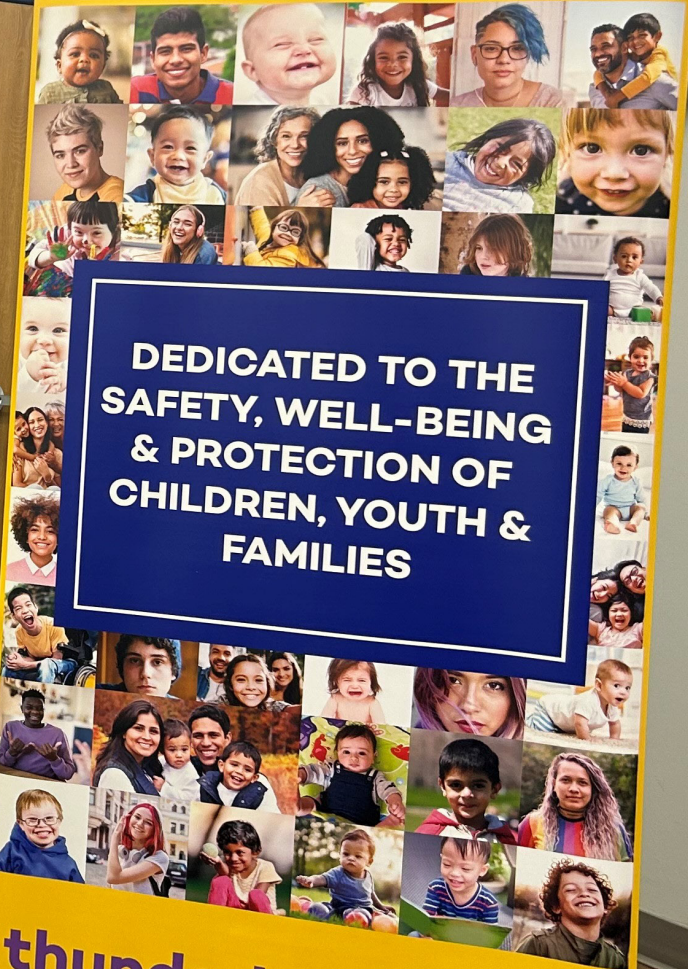


**Children's
Aid Society**

THUNDER BAY DISTRICT

**Children's
Aid Foundation**

THUNDER BAY DISTRICT



**DEDICATED TO THE
SAFETY, WELL-BEING
& PROTECTION OF
CHILDREN, YOUTH &
FAMILIES**

thunderbaycas.ca
thunderbaycaf.ca



potato grown in our garden!



A GARDEN FULL OF LOVE, KINDNESS & GROWTH

TO PLANT A
GARDEN IS
TO BELIEVE
IN
TOMORROW.

-Audrey Hepburn





The Children's Aid Society of the District of Thunder Bay's community garden has been providing children, youth and families with fresh vegetables since 2017!

Building of the garden began in April 2017 and was an opportunity to come together and build something that would benefit families receiving services from the Society. Staff, families and friends volunteered their time and talent to build the garden - cedar, irrigation system, deer fencing, crushed rock, flag stones, picnic tables and cedar/stone benches. Construction was complete on June 18 and planting began that very same day.

The Society covered the cost of the initial build of the garden and the first few years of growing seasons. In 2019 The Children's Aid Foundation of The District of Thunder Bay approved a yearly contribution of \$1, 000.00 to help sustain the garden dream. In 2024 the Society provided a one-time contribution to purchase four additional garden boxes to increase garden production.

The garden produces a variety of vegetables: potatoes, carrots, peas, beans, cucumbers, zucchini, kale, radishes and celery. Each year the garden committee adds new things to try. This year the committee will try beets and turnips!

There have been well over 75 people involved in the garden project since 2017 including staff and family members, resource parents, and youth in care working on their volunteer hours. A special thank you to all of you and to the Foundation for your dedication and commitment to children, youth and families.

Good things come from gardens: fresh food, generosity, community spirit/pride, a place to relax/destress and take in the beauty of nature and a reminder to those passing by.



STAFF RECOGNITION

Years of Service to June, 2024

30 Years

Cathy Quinte

25 Years

Charmaine Cades
Trevor Clifford
Shelby Legacy
Penny Linkewich

20 Years

Patricia Maxton
Tara Tesolin

15 Years

Jessica Charlton
Robyn Melanson
Sara Miller
Amy Mueller
David Valente

10 Years

Patricia Butler
Kara Savas

5 Years

Renee Hadley
Linda Molenda



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Officers and Directors

Trevor Kavalchuk - President
Tomi Akinyede - Vice President
Rob Barrett - Treasurer
Rima Mounayer - Governance Lead

Katherine Steele - Director
Brad Gottfred - Director
Lise Haman - Director



Thank you to retiring Board members Ryan Bhopalsingh, Helen Eaton, Julie Goulet and Jessica Bruce for your committment and dedication to children, youth and families

Combined Balance Sheet
as at March 31, 2024

	<u>2024</u>	<u>2023</u>
Assets		
Cash	3,303,778	2,688,772
Accounts Receivable	166,458	257,140
Prepaid Expenses	54,385	51,033
Capital Assets, net	805,701	832,596
	<u>4,330,322</u>	<u>3,829,541</u>
Liabilities and Net Assets		
Accounts Payable	2,250,312	1,776,927
Due to Province of Ontario	850,479	908,142
Unexpended Program Funds	913,699	849,571
Deferred Revenue	17,910	-
Deferred Capital Contributions, net	78,379	82,854
	4,110,779	3,617,494
Unrestricted Net Assets	(666,401)	(688,821)
Non-Statutory Fund	158,622	151,126
Invested in Capital Assets	727,322	749,742
	<u>4,330,322</u>	<u>3,829,541</u>

Combined Statement of Operations
as at March 31, 2024

Operating Revenue		
Province of Ontario	15,226,332	14,072,707
Other	802,511	755,538
	<u>16,028,843</u>	<u>14,828,245</u>
Operating Expenditures		
Salaries & Benefits	9,942,171	9,354,045
Direct Client	4,342,953	3,876,301
Service Support	1,736,223	1,572,014
	<u>16,021,347</u>	<u>14,802,360</u>
Surplus for the Year	<u>7,496</u>	<u>25,885</u>
Comprised of:		
Non-Statutory Fund Surplus	7,496	25,885

Note: The above financial information is summarized from statements audited by Grant Thornton LLP. The Auditor's Report and Financial Statements for the year March 31, 2024 may be examined at the Society's office at any time and are available on the Agency website.



**A TEAM DEDICATED TO THE SAFETY
AND WELL-BEING OF CHILDREN,
YOUTH AND FAMILIES**

THE CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETY OF THE DISTRICT OF THUNDER BAY



www.thunderbaycas.ca

