

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

ANNUAL REPORT 2023



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



A MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR

The pandemic has brought about significant changes in our lives. As an organization responsible for providing child welfare services, our top priority has always been to ensure the safety of our staff and those under our care. We are proud of our team members' professionalism and competence as they have successfully adapted to new ways of delivering services and found innovative ways to support families and each other during these challenging times.

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to the dedicated volunteers, resource parents, kinship caregivers and adoptive parents who have shown unwavering commitment throughout the pandemic. Their compassion and dedication have been crucial in improving the lives of those under our care.

Our organization remains committed to advocating for and enhancing child welfare services. To support and advance the sector's progress, we actively participate in various initiatives, including the Strategic Councils of the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies and the Shared Services initiative.

A MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR Continued

We welcome our new Board members Katherine Steele, Tomi Akinyede and Terry Favel-Lagowski, and express our gratitude to our outgoing Board members Adam Shaen, Dylan Mazur, and Sandra Beaulieu.

Our team is thankful for the strong collaborations we have with Dilico Anishinabek Family Care, Tikinagan Child and Family Services, the communities we serve in the District as well alongside the City of Thunder Bay, and the Ministry of Children, Community, and Social Services. These partnerships have played a significant role in advancing our crucial work. We eagerly anticipate another year of success and growth.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ryan Bhopalsingh', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

RYAN BHOPALSINGH
CHAIR



A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

This year we celebrate our 55th Annual General Meeting and this year we experienced so many changes within the child welfare sector and also within the organization.

As child welfare evolves in the province of Ontario, we have experienced more accountability placed on agencies with the expectation for higher compliance for Children in Care reviews, Resource Licensing and with Standards Quality Improvement Plans. There has also been the introduction this year of the Ready, Set, Go program, which not only raised the age of care for youth from 21 years to 23 years, but also provides expectations and guidance for our agency to achieve better outcomes for youth transitioning from care. All these reviews and programs only promote better outcomes for children and youth and our agency has embraced the changes knowing the positive impacts it will have.

For our organization, there have been many changes in senior leadership and changes in the way we do our work as we, this fiscal year, are still in a global pandemic. Senior Leadership changes included myself as the new Executive Director and Senior Leaders Kristi Fuchs, Director of Finance, Glenda Takalo, Director of Services and Amy Wrigley, Director of Human Resources. Dana Leeder, Director of Services is the other senior leader and has been with the agency since September 2020.

A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR Continued

As a new team we have committed to understand the history of the organization but also create plans and changes that complement provincial changes. As we reviewed the history, we did discover that I am the first woman and Indigenous person to lead the organization in the last 55 years.

As for the way we do our work and as a result of the global pandemic, our organization continues a hybrid approach of working and providing services. This promotes our services in the community, but also a better work-life balance promoting health and wellness in a challenging sector.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Carmela Hardy', is positioned above the printed name and title.

CARMELA HARDY
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

SENIOR LEADERSHIP - DIRECTORS

Dana Leeder
Director of Services



Glenda Takalo
Director of Services



Kristi Fuchs
Director of Finance



Amy Wrigley
Director of Human Resources



CHAMPIONS FOR CHILDREN



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 Award goes to Soroptimist International of Thunder Bay and Community Spokes.

CHAMPIONS FOR CHILDREN



Soroptimist International is a global volunteer organization advocating for human rights and gender equality. Soroptimist International's membership work on grassroots projects that help women and girls achieve their individual and collective potential, realize aspirations and have an equal voice in communities worldwide. Soroptimist International of Thunder Bay is one of 13 local Eastern Canada Region clubs.

During this past year Soroptimist International of Thunder Bay hosted a number of initiatives that raised a total of \$2875.00 to help support young women transitioning to adulthood. Soroptimist International of Thunder Bay also donated school supplies, personal care items and food from their Spring Club Event for these young women.

Soroptimist International of Thunder Bay helped stock our Independence Youth cupboard with food, snacks, hygiene products, winter items, school supplies, household items, make up and much more.

Lastly, in March 2023, Soroptimist International of Thunder Bay hosted a day-long conference, Dream It Be It, for secondary school-age girls, where they learned about career opportunities, setting and achieving goals, and overcoming obstacles to success.



We would like to thank Soroptimist International of Thunder Bay for their dedication and commitment to supporting children and youth and honour them as Champions for Children.



CHAMPIONS FOR CHILDREN



Ian Cameron, Owner of Community Spokes

Community Spokes is a local business that rents and sells used bikes, offers bike tune ups and repairs and provides a free do-it-yourself bike repair space with free tool access, free teaching, and affordable used parts.

Over the past year Ian Cameron, owner of Community Spokes, has been volunteering his time, workspace and tools weekly, working with a youth on repairing electronics. Ian has been teaching this young man about sales and services and has also invited him to join the LAN parties (a computer gaming party for youth, hosted by Community Spokes on Saturdays). Ian is busy growing his bike shop but always makes time for this youth.

Ian has worked hard with the youth's worker and his caregivers to understand how to work with the youth from a trauma informed perspective.

Ian has captured this youth's attention and has motivated the youth to continue to learn. Ian even set up a reward system using his own items i.e. I Phone 7.



Ian is teaching the youth to trust again.

Ian is a member of the 2SLGBTQ+ community and a strong advocate for children and youth. Ian also has a teaching degree.

We would like to thank Ian for his dedication and commitment to supporting children and youth and honour him as a Champion for Children.

"No act of kindness *no matter how small*
is ever wasted."
-Aesop

VOLUNTEER SERVICES



Robyn McWatch, 15-Year TBCAS Volunteer

"I receive back by way of the children and youth's simple niceties like 'are you coming next week?', 'I told my mom you're nice!' It is in these moments I get 'paid'" Robyn says with her twinkly smile.



Crystal Clarkson, 15-Year TBCAS Volunteer

"My family came to this country poor and people helped us to stand on our feet. We have all achieved success because of kindness from others so it's time for me to pay back when I can. TBCAS is a great way. It just feels right and good."



Total
Volunteers
117



Total Hours
Volunteered
1, 551



Kilometers
Driven
13, 079



Food Baskets
Delivered
3, 450 lbs



Backpacks
Assembled
120



Margaret Capon, 5-Year TBCAS Volunteer

"At a volunteer fair, after talking to Charmaine, I decided to volunteer to create life books – an excellent way to honour my mother.

As I work on a life book, I try to weave a story for the child to create a memory for them."

VOLUNTEER SERVICES Continued



Dina Gazzola, 10-Year TBCAS Volunteer

"Through volunteering at TBCAS I have learned a great deal in my roles and while attending the various training sessions offered, such as neonatal abstinence, trauma the beautiful brain, etc. I feel a sense of gratitude for being part of the TBCAS volunteer group."



Anna Koné, 5-Year TBCAS Volunteer

"I was honestly never sure if I was making a difference until one day, I received a card from TBCAS stating that if you are making a difference in one life, you have been successful, no need to change the entire world. I realized each of us, with a few dedicated hours weekly can have truly big impacts. Although it's been a lifestyle change, I'm enjoying every minute."



Eric Bron, 5-Year TBCAS Volunteer

"I volunteer with TBCAS, along with a number of other organizations, because I feel that we are called to love our neighbour as ourselves."

54 

General Inquiries

515 

Investigations
Completed

757 

Reports Received,
Not Investigated

146 

Families Receiving
Ongoing Service as
of March 31

79 Children in Care
Under age 18
as of March 31



64 Youth Over Age 18
Receiving Supports
as of March 31

1 

Finalized
Adoption

The Children's Aid Society of the District of Thunder Bay's paramount purpose is to ensure safety, well-being and protection of children, youth and families in the City and District of Thunder Bay

24 

**Children in Kinship
Service Placements

19 

**Kinship
Service Families

105 

People Requested
Access to their File

ALTERNATIVE CARE HOMES as of March 31



68 Resource Homes

15 Adoption Homes

15 Kin In Care Homes

****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 stepparent, godparent, friend, teacher, coach and neighbour.

PROGRAMS & SERVICES

Spring Therapeutic Support and Education Program

The SPRING Program is an Attachment Regulation and Competency (ARC)-informed therapeutic program that takes a holistic approach in providing intervention. The ARC Framework consists of three primary domains of intervention to support trauma-informed care: Attachment, Regulation and Competency. The framework is utilized to inform the Society's provision of trauma-informed training and support to children and youth in care and not in care and their caregiving system.

In Home Support

- Training (Circle of Security, Trauma and the Beautiful Brain)
- Enhanced Homes - placement, Support and reunification planning

School Support

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

Life Support

- Youth Independence Support/Advocacy
- Youth Advisory

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.

ARC Framework

The caregiving system, which can include resource parents, **kin and educators, plays a critical role in understanding, supporting and providing care to a child who may have experienced trauma. By providing trauma-informed care and intervention through our caregiving system, we can best meet the needs of children and youth by addressing key factors to building resilience in their developing brains.

**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 stepparent, godparent, friend, teacher, coach and neighbour.



PROGRAMS & SERVICES

Children's Developmental Services Program

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 longer 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.

The CDS program has been delivering services to families of special needs children and youth for 40 years. The program has seen many changes over the years and has recently undergone a full review in order to continue to enhance services and adapt to the changing needs. The review identified many strengths of the program including the flexibility of being able to cover costs of items and services. For example, the CDS program paid for a fence to be built for a single mother with two small children with Autism Spectrum Disorder to keep them safe in the back yard. The program also purchased an exercise bike for another child.

There are currently two full time employees of the program and to date the CDS program is providing services to approximately 25 families in both the city and district of Thunder Bay. The program continues to receive referrals from various sources including Society staff and community partners.



Ollie and His New Exercise Bike



Our goal is to link families with other community services and help build a circle of care so that the family no longer requires our services and we can provide support to additional families in need.

-Sue Foster St. Jean,
Manager of Support Services,
CDS and Training Coordinator



Providing Services to Approximately

25 Families

STAFF RECOGNITION

Years of Service to June 30, 2023

30 YEARS

Susan Shipston
Ron Slusar
Susan White

25 YEARS

Diana Mellerup
Barbara Novak

15 YEARS

Rylee Melchiorre

10 YEARS

Vanessa Bull
Dan Ezowske

5 YEARS

Melissa Bakovic	Erin Otke
Alex George	Teresa Steinhæusser
Alexandra Marino	Amy Wrigley

**2022-2023
BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

OFFICERS & DIRECTORS

**Ryan Bhopalsingh, President
Rob Barrett, Vice-President
Trevor Kavalchuk,
Secretary/Treasurer and Governance Lead**

**Tomi Akinyede, Director
Helen Eaton, Director
Rima Mounayer, Director
Katherine Steele, Director
Terry Favel-Lagowski, Director**

**Thank you to retiring Board members Adam Shaen, Sandra Beaulieu and
Dylan Mazur for your support and dedication to the community's children,
youth and families**

Combined Balance Sheet

as at March 31, 2023

	2023	2022
Assets		
Cash	2,688,772	2,082,179
Accounts Receivable	257,140	188,819
Prepaid Expenses	51,033	45,907
Capital Assets, net	832,596	887,243
	<u>3,829,541</u>	<u>3,204,148</u>
Liabilities and Net Assets		
Accounts Payable	1,776,927	1,407,753
Due to Province of Ontario	908,142	702,044
Unexpended Program Funds	849,571	792,847
Deferred Revenue	-	27,309
Deferred Capital Contributions, net	82,854	88,033
	<u>3,617,494</u>	<u>3,017,986</u>
Unrestricted Net Assets	(688,821)	(738,289)
Non-Statutory Fund	151,126	125,241
Invested in Capital Assets	749,742	799,210
	<u>3,829,541</u>	<u>3,204,148</u>

Combined Statement of Operations

as at March 31, 2023

Operating Revenue		
Province of Ontario	14,575,484	14,862,927
Surplus repayable to Ministry	(502,777)	(343,932)
Other	755,538	854,705
	<u>14,828,245</u>	<u>15,373,700</u>
Operating Expenditures		
Salaries & Benefits	9,354,045	9,798,941
Direct Client	3,876,301	3,968,756
Service Support	1,572,014	1,376,694
	<u>14,802,360</u>	<u>15,144,391</u>
Surplus for the Year	<u>25,885</u>	<u>229,309</u>
Comprised of:		
Non-Statutory Fund Surplus	25,885	14,382
Partial Settlement of Previous Year's Deficit	-	214,927

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, 2023 may be examined at the Society's office at any time and are available on the Agency website.

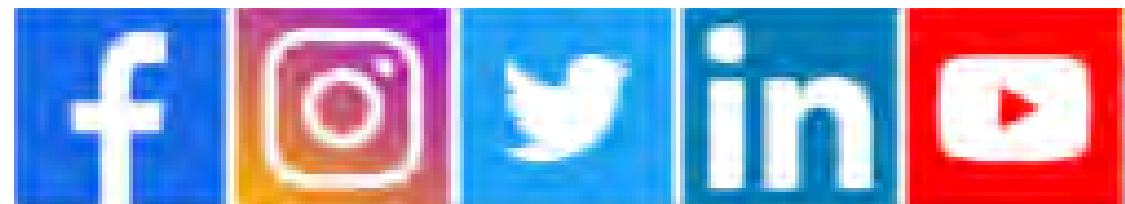
A TEAM DEDICATED TO THE SAFETY AND WELL-BEING OF CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES



**Children's
Aid Society**

THUNDER BAY DISTRICT

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



Thriving Children
and Youth

Engaged Families

Strong Communities

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