

OUR NEWSLETTER

Bright Futures

CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETY OF LONDON & MIDDLESEX • ISSUE #1 FALL 2010

**WELCOME
HOME**

Charlie gets a
forever family

Celebrating Foster Families



Children's Aid Society
La Société d'aide à l'enfance
LONDON & MIDDLESEX

www.caslondon.on.ca



Welcome to the Season of New Beginnings

I have always loved Fall and the season of new beginnings it represents. January might launch a new calendar year, but that first day of kindergarten, high school or university marks the start of so many new and exciting possibilities. So it seems appropriate that we have chosen this season to welcome you to a new version of our community newsletter.

Like our newsletter, your Children's Aid Society of London and Middlesex is embarking on a time of change and transformation, and this is just one communication format we will be using to keep you informed.

“Your Children’s Aid Society is embarking on a time of change and transformation.”

You might have heard and read about the financial challenges that many CASs across the province are experiencing, including our own CAS. The recession

has had a direct and devastating impact on child welfare and the daunting accumulative deficits have caused us much concern about our capacity to meet our legislative requirements in protecting our communities' most vulnerable children.

We continue to work with the provincial government and the Ministry of Children and Youth Services and we remain hopeful that their efforts and those of their appointed Commission to Promote Sustainable Child Welfare in Ontario will identify solutions that will stabilize our sector.

To that end, our Agency recently completed a comprehensive strategic planning process. Using the Balanced Scorecard approach, I am excited about our forward-thinking and focused plan. Our plan and our practice will strengthen outcomes for children in our community and it will advance the Ministry of Children and Youth Services' mandate to improve the services for children, youth and families. Through this newsletter and other communiqués, I look forward to updating you on our strategic plan and on our progress in meeting a number of bold transformational outcomes.

Service Trends

This newsletter will also introduce you to Orlena. She is an articulate and outgoing television and radio broadcaster in Eastern Ontario. As a voice for our provincial Public Engagement Campaign and for October's Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Campaign, she tells her story of abuse, from the time she was four until she was fourteen. Orlena proudly advocates that "Children's Aid, with all their support made the difference. I speak for Children's Aid now because they spoke for me."

October is a busy month as we celebrate our Foster Families. With over 300 foster families and more than 30 kinship families caring for more than 880 children in our care, we are certainly grateful for their tireless and selfless commitment. This edition and future newsletters will highlight stories of the foster work in London and Middlesex and across the province.

And wait until you meet Charlie! Welcome Home Charlie is a heartwarming and true story describing the day Charlie received his "forever family". November is National Adoption Month and there are children in our community today waiting for their forever family.

I hope you enjoy our new version of our community newsletter and invite your feedback, comments or questions.



Jane Fitzgerald
Executive Director

OUR Guiding Principles

- *All children deserve and have the right to grow up in loving, safe and permanent homes.*
- *All families can create solutions.*
- *All children have seeds of greatness.*
- *Permanency is a person, not a place.*
- *Language is powerful and each of us must use it wisely.*
- *Strengthening families strengthens communities.*

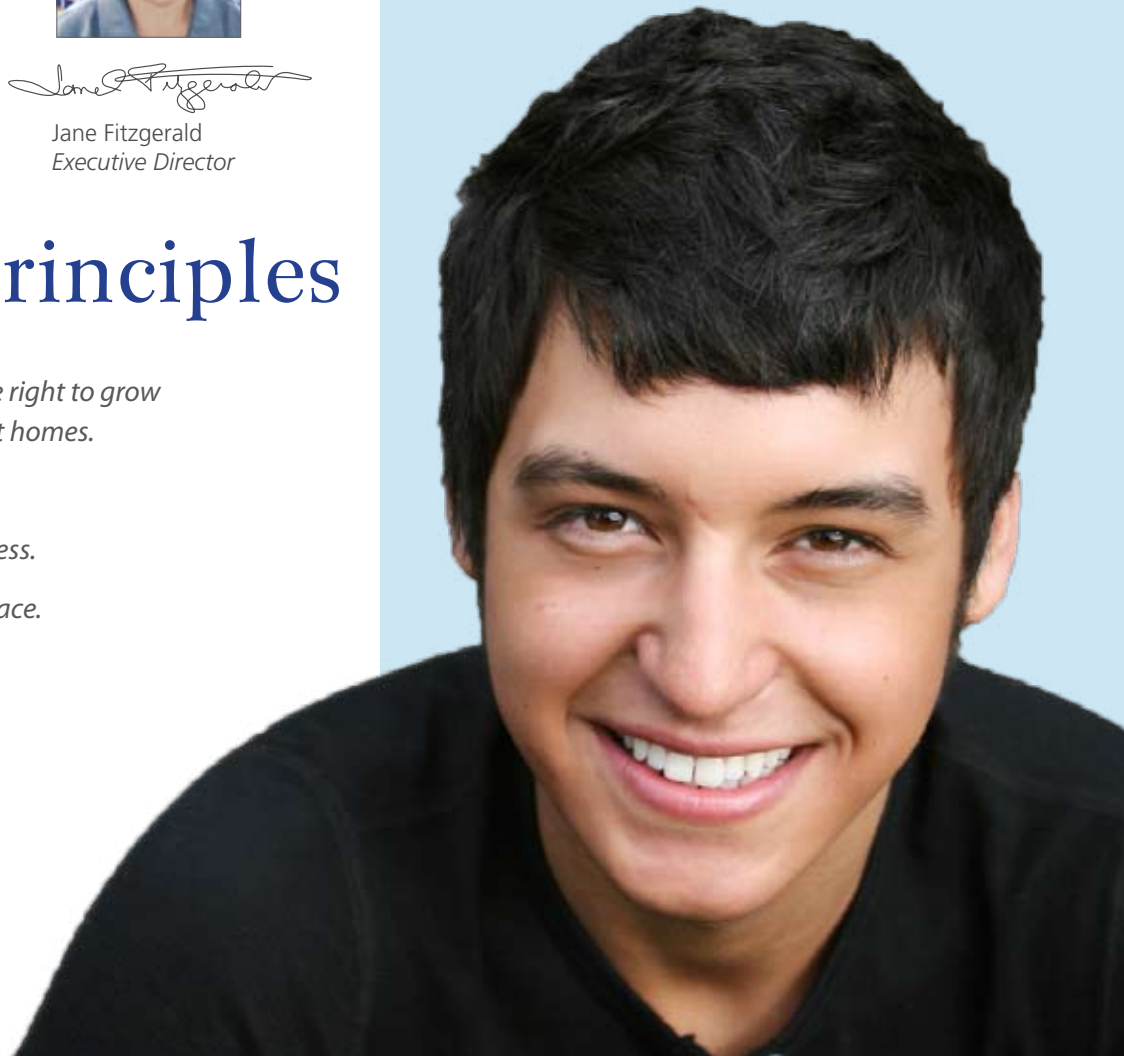
As of April 1, 2010, there were 886 children and youth in the care of Children's Aid Society, and despite the many prevention programs that have been introduced, admissions continue to outpace discharges.

Some of the contributing factors to this level of children in care can be linked to:

- Difficulty of parents to access timely and appropriate local adult mental health and addictions services
- Increase in admissions and re-admissions of infants and pre-schoolers

In 2009-10, the CAS of London and Middlesex received 7,124 inquiries:

- 70% of the calls resulted in information or referrals to other community agencies and resources
- Approximately 2,500 cases were opened for investigation or assessment
- 520 cases were transferred to ongoing care with CAS





"I had years of experience in management," reflected Bob, "but now I was being controlled by a three year-old."

Welcome Home Charlie





It is June 11, 2010.

Today, Charlie got a forever family.

And his parents, Bob and Laura, realized a dream that they thought might never be fulfilled after 17 years of marriage – a child of their own.

This family is just one of 15 whose adoptions were finalized today at “Happy Court” at the London Courthouse, bringing to 21 the number of adoptions that London CAS has finalized since April 1.

It has been three years since Bob and Laura started the adoption process with CAS. They admitted that the nine weeks of PRIDE training and the multitude of interviews and assessments appeared onerous, bordering on intrusive, as they were going through the process. However, they looked back on the experience with understanding as they saw how relevant the steps were to the reality of bringing a three year-old into their home.

“Everyone thinks that once you have completed your PRIDE training, you’re ready and along will come a child,” explained Laura, “but it doesn’t happen that quickly. It took time to find the right fit, and the CAS staff were very careful to ensure that Charlie was the right child for us and we were the right parents for him.”

Bob took five months of parental leave when Charlie came into their home, nearly a year ago. He found that many preconceived notions were quickly tossed out the window.

“I had years of experience in management,” reflected Bob, “but now I was being controlled by a three year-old.”

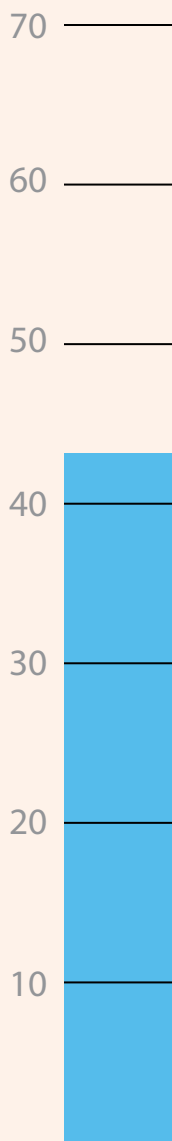
Despite the challenges, Bob and Laura described immense rewards from parenting their new son.

“It has filled a void in our lives,” beamed Laura as she described their new role as parents. “And Charlie’s old foster parents are like grandparents, so we have a whole extended family!”

Laura and Bob agreed that they will probably adopt another child in the future. But for now, they are just enjoying their new roles as Mommy and Daddy.

Welcome home, Charlie!

* All names are changed to protect confidentiality.



The Children’s Aid Society is committed to providing a permanent and loving family for children who cannot remain with their birth parents. Children of all ages and stages, sibling groups, and children from many cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds need a forever family.

Our goal is to finalize 60 adoptions between April 1, 2010 and March 31, 2011, so watch as our adoption gauge reaches for the top. With 44 adoptions already finalized we are feeling optimistic. However there are children in our community right now, today, waiting for adoption and we always welcome calls from anyone who might be interested in adopting a child.

For more information about adopting visit our website www.caslondon.on.ca or call 519-455-9000.



LINDA
Foster Mom

"Don't tell me Children's Aid isn't effective! I remember a young girl who'd been with us two years when one of my sons referred to her as 'his sister.' She ran sobbing into the kitchen and hid under the table. I got under there with her. She felt like she'd never belonged anywhere—ever. Today, this young woman has a stack of awards and volunteers in Tanzania, Trinidad and Ghana. She's determined to give back."

"I AM YOUR CHILDREN'S AID."

Thank You Foster Families

If you are interested in learning more about becoming a foster parent call 519-455-9000 ext 777 or visit our website at www.caslondon.on.ca

CAS is responsible for the safety and protection of children, and while our goal is to keep children with their own families, in some situations this is not possible. Foster care is the first choice in these instances, since most children's needs are best met in a stable and supportive family environment.

Our foster families share their home, their family and their love with

our community's most vulnerable children. They open their homes and their hearts to children...many of whom are victims of abuse or mistreatment and who need a stable, loving home.

There is a need for more caring and compassionate people to consider becoming foster parents, an opportunity to make a difference in our community one child at a time.

Holiday Giving CAMPAIGN

When nature bursts with colour and crisp mornings begin to frost over, volunteers and staff at the Children's Aid Society of London and Middlesex begin looking forward to the spirit of giving during the Holiday Season. Donations from individuals, businesses and corporations helped brighten the season for 1,549 children and youth last year and we know the need will be just as great this year.

You can support the Holiday Giving Program in the following ways:

- Cash (all cash received is used to purchase food vouchers for families and gift cards for teens)
- Gift certificates
- Food vouchers
- New toys
- New clothing

If you have any questions about our Holiday Giving Program, or would like to discuss possible options on how you can donate, please call 519-455-9000, ext 539



*Dear Children's Aid Society,
Thank you for all the gifts
you gave us. It made
a smile on our faces.
Thanks again!*



Help make this
Holiday Season
one filled with
joyful memories
for children in
our community.



May we e-mail this newsletter to you?

Children's Aid Society is always looking for ways to be environmentally and cost conscious. To receive this newsletter electronically, e-mail: info@caslondon.on.ca



OCTOBER IS CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH.

Help protect children in your community.

GET INVOLVED WITH YOUR CHILDREN'S AID. GO TO USEYOURVOICE.CA

"It's shame that really takes a toll on abused children. It's not what happened, the beatings and abuse; but the shame that eats you up from the inside out. You feel like you're not worthy of love, you're like damaged goods. I know. I was abused from the time I was four until I was fourteen. Children's Aid, with all their support, made the difference. They helped me put Orlena back together again. I speak for Children's Aid now because they spoke for me."

ORLENA

Radio and Television
Personality



"I Am Your Children's Aid."



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