



2015-2016 Annual Report



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



*The Children's Aid Society of
London and Middlesex
protects and cares for
children at risk and promotes
the healthy development
of children, families and
communities.*

Message from the Board Chair and Interim Executive Director

The Children's Aid Society of London and Middlesex ended the 2015-2016 year on a good note. It has been wonderful to see the successes achieved during the year and how the Society has progressed as a result.

The fiscal year has seen the child welfare field make a collective commitment to accountability, consistency and transparency in working with the public and the Ministry. The results of this work are seen through the Performance Indicator Project which publicly reports key performance indicators of child welfare agencies across the province of Ontario. Our board of directors and leadership team have been highly engaged at the provincial level and our staff have worked diligently in supporting the data collection that will improve outcomes for the children, youth and families we serve.

Through the significant and strategic efforts of both staff and board members, the Society continued to ensure prioritization of the safety and wellbeing of children and youth in our community all while achieving a balanced budget for 2015-2016.

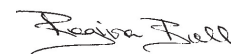
We are very proud of the past year's accomplishments, as illustrated in this annual report. We see the true value of these achievements through the confidence of our community partners who continue to invest resources and time in collaborative community services; through the pride and commitment of our staff, care providers, volunteers and board members; and finally through the trust and acceptance gained in the positive relationships with children and families we serve.

Building on what we have already achieved, our mission continues to be clear and our vision of Safe Children... Bright Futures remains strong. Through the valuable input of stakeholders, we have finalized the Society's 2016-2018 Strategic Plan which defines the following three key priority areas: Protection, Permanency and Preparation for Life. In the fall of 2016, the Society will welcome a new Executive Director. We are confident there will continue to be strong leadership and engagement at the local and provincial levels with a clear view to achieving service excellence.

We wish to take this opportunity to recognize the commitment and hard work of our staff, care providers, volunteers and board members. We also extend a heart-felt thanks to our community and friends of the Society. We appreciate your support.



Lisa Harrison
Board Chair



Regina Bell
Interim Executive Director

Making a Difference

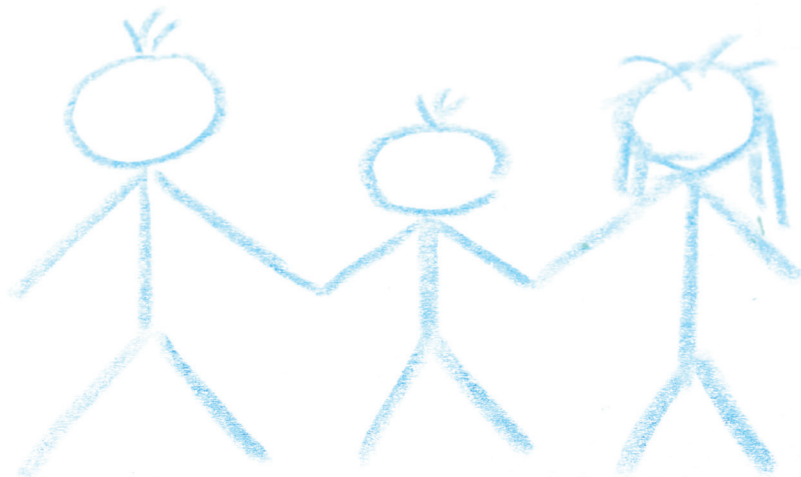
The Children's Aid Society of London and Middlesex has a long history of supporting children and families. We continue to provide child-centred services through family strength-based approaches.

Our vision of Safe Children... Bright Futures is realized by providing services that emphasize and reinforce the strengths of the family in caring for their children.

The work of CASLM is carried out by 322 dedicated staff, 273 care providers, 125 volunteers and 14 board members.

We are proud to be part of a comprehensive social service delivery system in London and Middlesex. Collaborative partnerships are key to keeping children safe and families whole.

We extend our thanks to the Ministry of Children and Youth Services for its support and funding. This cooperative relationship reinforces our ongoing efforts to provide the best possible protection and advocacy services for children in our community.



Our Services To The Community

Did you know?

- CASLM received **7,609** referrals during 2015-2016
- There were **2,792** children and youth in London and Middlesex receiving support services on March 31, 2016
- CASLM completed **2,557** investigations and assessments of child abuse and neglect
21% of these files were transferred to ongoing services
- CASLM facilitated **300** family meetings
- CASLM completed **216** family feedback interviews
- CASLM linked **638** families to community service partners
- CASLM referred **72** families to Alternate Dispute Resolution
- There were **608** children in care on March 31, 2016
- Kinship services were provided to **164** children and youth
- CASLM approved **62** foster, adoption and kin home studies
- CASLM finalized **49** adoptions



Notable Accomplishments



- Awarded 38 bursaries to youth in care through our Bright Futures Bursary Program to support their post-secondary education
- Participated in the Annual Pride Parade to support our diverse community and share our belief of respect and value for all families
- Participated in the African Canadian Council community consultation project "One Vision, One Voice: Changing the Child Welfare System for African Canadians"
- Provided 109 subsidized camping opportunities for children in the community
- Received French language designation from the Ministry and assigned French speaking staff to each core service area within the organization to ensure accessibility where required
- Organized a successful Holiday Giving Campaign to support children and families in the community during the holiday season
- Organized a group of youth in care to attend Youth Civics Day at Queens Park
- Facilitated 5,528 family visiting sessions supporting 195 families
- Engaged in the City of London Poverty Panel Community Conversations and provided input on recommendations
- Provided support to 46 elementary school students, 134 secondary school students and 31 post-secondary school students through the Educational Success Program
- Completed roll out of the agency's mobile technology strategy by providing laptop computers to staff; allowing employees to securely access and record client information while working in the community
- Participated in over 20 speaker's bureau presentations
- Developed a new collaborative strategic plan with our Native communities

The Strength of Family...

Angela's Story

Angela is the mother of two children, a four year old boy and a two year old girl. She was raised in a middle class family with a loving and strong support network. Angela became involved with the Children's Aid Society when a referral was received from the London Police Service following a domestic assault occurring in the family home, in the presence of both children. An assessment revealed significant concerns regarding the father's mental health, substance use and involvement in criminal activity. To ensure the safety of the children, a plan was developed for the father to reside outside of the home. During this stressful time, Angela struggled with her own mental health which resulted in her using drugs and alcohol. Angela was not coping well and the Society received several reports from the community regarding the impact this had on her ability to care for her children. As a result, Angela's children were removed from her care and placed in a foster home.



Following the children's apprehension, Angela had regular supervised visits, but continued to struggle and reunited with her partner. However, after she experienced a second physical assault, she made the courageous decision to leave the abusive relationship. With strong family support, Angela was able to receive the treatment she required and made significant gains. Angela's parents provided tangible support in the form of housing and transportation thus providing the opportunity for Angela to focus on her recovery. As Angela improved, she developed a positive relationship with her children's foster parents and began to have visits in the community.

Angela thrived with the support of her parents and extended family members and continues to access addictions treatment and counselling services. Over recent months, her physical appearance and health have dramatically improved. Angela was able to secure her own housing and the children were returned to her care. Today, the children are doing well and Angela demonstrates an ongoing commitment to ensuring their safety and well-being. Angela continues to seek support from family and friends, including the children's foster mother who she has maintained a relationship with.

CASLM works together with families to find the resources they need, such as parenting or treatment programs for issues like addictions and mental health, helping them get on a stable path.

Community Partnership Highlights

CASLM is involved with 78 community partnerships and strengthening activities. The Society continues to invest resources in liaison and committee roles to significantly contribute to areas focusing on infants, adolescents, domestic violence, addictions and mental health.

Family Centres London

CASLM is part of a network of Family Centres being developed in neighbourhoods by London's Child and Youth Network (CYN), a collective of over 170 agencies and individuals committed to strengthening children, youth and families. The Family Centres are designed to offer a service system that makes the full range of social services more easily accessible to families through a single door approach. There are currently four Family Centres; Argyle, Carling-Thames, Westmount and White Oaks. CASLM has a supervisor assigned to each centre and offers family visiting through the Carling-Thames location.

Joint Protocol for Student Achievement

The Joint Protocol for Student Achievement (JPSA) facilitates the collaboration between CASLM, the Thames Valley District School Board, the London District Catholic School Board and the Conseil Scolaire Catholique Providence in an effort to enable Kindergarten to Grade 12 students who are in the care of, or are receiving services from CASLM to benefit from learning opportunities and supports available in schools and to achieve academic success.

The HEART and SPIRIT Indigenous Family Development Model

The HEART and SPIRIT Indigenous Family Development and Assessment program developed by Mnaasged Child and Family Services, provides a culturally appropriate model and approach to training and assessing prospective customary care, indigenous foster and adoptive care providers. The approach, endorsed by the Association of Native Child and Family Services Agencies of Ontario (ANCFSAO) incorporates the key goals and objectives of OACAS's PRIDE and SAFE program while reinforcing the critical importance of Indigenous culture, history, family systems and learning styles. In collaboration with Mnaasged and in consultation with ANCFSAO, CASLM rolled out a modified version of the training program to care providers of indigenous children in care. Throughout this training, care providers learned about the practices and traditions of the Indigenous culture so that they could better support the cultural needs of the children they care for.

Families and Infants Together Program

By way of a collaborative partnership comprised of CASLM, Merrymount Family Support and Crisis Centre, Vanier Children's Services, and Youth Opportunities Unlimited, the Families and Infants Together (FIT) program provides a continuum of care services ranging from identification/referral, crisis/respite support, intensive support services, treatment and group programs to community support. In 2015-2016, 25 families and 31 children were referred to the FIT program by the Society. As of year-end, 23 families have been discharged from the program following an average length of service of 7 months. Eighty-eight percent of these families were able to safely keep their children in their homes.

Quick Response Program

In an ongoing partnership with Western Area Youth Services, Craigwood Youth Services, Vanier Children's Services and the Ministry of Children and Youth Services, the Quick Response Program provides brief, intensive service offering in-home supports, parenting training, services coordination and advocacy for families with youth ages 12-15 at risk of leaving the home. Two objectives of this service are to reduce the number of youth needing out-of-home placements and increase the number of youth returning home within a month. In 2015-2016, CASLM referred 43 youth to the Quick Response service, resulting in the prevention of 38 admissions to care.

In-School Mentoring Program

In January 2016, CASLM began a new partnership with the Big Brothers Big Sisters of London and Area (BBBSOLA) through the BBBSOLA's In-School Mentoring Program. The In-School Mentoring Program matches children ages 6-12 years old from CASLM with a BBBSOLA role model and friend to talk to and share the experiences of growing up. For one hour a week, mentors meet with the mentee at their school to provide support, fun and advocacy for the child. Mentors also play a role in promoting the importance of staying in school, developing healthy relationships with family and peers and instilling trust and self-confidence in the child.



Working together is paramount to keeping children safe and helping families obtain the supports they require in an effort to prevent the need for referrals to CASLM.

Community Supporters

The Children's Aid Society of London and Middlesex acknowledges and thanks all our donors for their generous contributions during the fiscal year and we extend our heartfelt gratitude for their support. These gifts sustain and nurture the programs benefitting the children, youth and families we serve.

In the 2015-2016 fiscal year, donations to CASLM supported the following established programs and services:

- Bright Futures Bursary Program
- Holiday Giving Campaign
- Hopes and Dreams Fund
- Prevention and Emergency Services

A combined total of \$95,317 was received from generous community donors to support the needs of children living with their families and receiving services from CASLM and youth in transition.

We especially recognize those groups who have made significant and long-term contributions to the Society.



EllisDon

EllisDon has been a significant supporter of our Holiday Giving Program for many years. Through their collective staff contributions and corporate gifts, our families receive food vouchers during the Holiday Season so that they are able to have a true holiday experience complete with a family dinner.



Filion Wakely Thorup Angeletti LLP

Filion Wakely Thorup Angeletti LLP have been friends of the Society for many years. Their support included in-kind gifts of professional services and sponsorship of special agency events. They continue their ongoing commitment through supporting our youth by donating to our Bright Futures Bursary Fund.

Smilezone Foundation

In the latter part of the fiscal year, the Children's Aid Society of London and Middlesex officially opened its new Smilezones for the Family Visiting Program; a program providing a safe, neutral and child-focused setting for children in CAS care to visit with their biological parents.

Over the course of one weekend the Smilezone Foundation, along with their partners, completed two major upgrades to the family visiting group space and an individual access room. The Smilezones feature a brand new kitchen (including appliances, a kitchen island and upgraded storage), a breast feeding room, custom made children's furniture, painted windows and murals, as well as cubby spaces and new storage areas.

The Smilezones helps strengthen families by letting kids be kids and by providing opportunities for families to participate in meaningful daily tasks, such as family play, cooking and eating a meal together, or simply just watching a movie. CASLM is privileged to be the first Children's Aid Society in Ontario to receive a Smilezone upgrade.

The Smilezone Foundation is an independent charity committed to "putting smiles on children's faces." Smilezone's mission is to create, build and transform areas (zones) in hospitals, private treatment and development centres, and children's clinics, in order to improve the lives of children facing illness, disabilities, and physical and emotional obstacles – ultimately putting a smile on their faces.



Strathroy-Caradoc Family YMCA

Over the last 9 years, the Strathroy-Caradoc Family YMCA has offered an additional free week camp experience to children and youth of families we work with in the Strathroy area participating in their weekly day camps. This gift provides the best way for children and youth to play, build relationships and develop healthy lifestyles.

Sisters of St. Joseph

The Sisters of St. Joseph were the very first donors of CASLM's Bright Futures Bursary Fund. Through their ongoing commitment to support the educational success of our youth in care, 210 youth have received a bursary.

TD Bank Group

In 2008, a gift to the Children's Aid Foundation from TD Bank Group enabled the launch of the Educational Success Program. The Bank's support has made it possible to reach a greater number of young people who need additional support to complete high school and go on to a post-secondary education program.

People Can Change

A Kin Story

Crystal is a survivor of abuse and domestic violence. She had a lengthy involvement with CASLM with her children being brought into care.

In 2009, Crystal entered into a healthy relationship and became pregnant. When she found out about her pregnancy, she felt it was important for her to take some parenting classes to increase her skills and become the best parent she possibly could. She attended the “Building Families” program at Merrymount Children’s Centre; an intensive 23 session program fostering the development of parents’ self-efficacy through effective life management skills and enhancing parental capacity by building a parenting style that supports a child’s development and their attachment security. Crystal felt the program gave her a greater understanding of child behaviour helping her to become a better parent. She and her partner have raised their son for six years without any CAS involvement.



In 2015, one of Crystal’s older children, Lindsay, who was a crown ward of CASLM, was due to have a baby. There were challenges and potential risks associated with Lindsay’s ability to parent due to her mental health issues. Despite Crystal’s involvement with the Society, she knew she wanted to provide Lindsay’s child with stable, loving, quality care; care that she herself was unable to provide Lindsay and her siblings.

Crystal and her partner were assigned a Kin Assessment Worker and the process of reviewing Crystal’s history began. Crystal was very forthcoming about her history. Although the process was very difficult and potentially re-traumatizing, she willingly went through all of the historical concerns and discussed what has changed in her life. Crystal was observed to be a very caring and vigilant parent to her son. She was very genuine, motivated and did everything asked of her during the assessment process. Crystal’s intention was to ensure the baby was raised in the family. She wanted the baby to know how much his family loves and cares for him. She also wanted the baby to have an opportunity to know his mother but in a safe and still natural way. The Assessment Worker believed in Crystal and the decision was made to accept Crystal’s plan of care, mitigate risks wherever possible and place the baby with her. People can change and as workers, we have to believe that.

On November 9, 2015, baby Jacob was placed with Crystal and her partner under the terms of a Supervision Order. Weekly visits were made by the Child Protection Worker, as there were high expectations around the level of care for Jacob. Crystal and her partner have provided nothing but stellar care to Jacob.

Crystal has graciously attempted to support and advocate for her daughter Lindsay and has provided access within her home when safe. Crystal has new insight and determination in ensuring Jacob is provided with the best of care. Jacob is now 7 months old, happy, and has completely thrived in Crystal’s care. Next month, the matter will be going to court and the Society will be in support of Crystal obtaining custody of Jacob. Bravo Crystal!

Adoption Reunification...

A Mother's Wish

Lisa, a 40 year old adoptee, was raised in a loving adoptive family. She never felt the desire to seek out information on her birth parents, but like many children adopted through CASLM, Lisa always wondered what they were like. One day, Lisa received a telephone call from the Ministry of Community and Social Services. The Ministry had urgent medical information to share. Lisa's birth mother applied for post-adoption birth information and was approved through Service Ontario's Severe Medical Search. Lisa's birth mother was very ill. Her condition was terminal, and she wanted to meet Lisa.

Following instructions, Lisa contacted the Adoption Disclosure Worker at CASLM. The worker counselled her through her options. Lisa agreed to read non-identifying information from the child protection worker before making a decision about meeting her birth mother. Lisa learned that her birth mother cared for and breast fed her in the hospital. The case notes described her birth mother's difficult choice to put her up for adoption. Lisa also learned that her birth mother routinely contacted CASLM to inquire about her. She wrote letters, cards and sent pictures of herself that were held in the file. Lisa's birth mother registered on the Adoption Disclosure Registry more than 20 years ago hoping Lisa would some day be ready for a reunion. Lisa felt terrible that she had not searched for her, and decided to connect.



The Adoption Disclosure Worker helped Lisa exchange letters and eventually Lisa had the opportunity to meet her birth mother in person. Although Lisa's birth mother was quite ill, she was still able to see many similarities in personality and appearance. Lisa learned that her birth mother was an amazing woman who thought about Lisa constantly.

Over the course of six months Lisa spent a lot of time with her birth mother as her health declined and was there to hold her hand the moment she passed away.

Lisa is a shining example of how resilient people can be. She found the strength to speak at her birth mother's funeral and about the connection they made in their short time together. While at the funeral, Lisa met the circle of friends that supported her mother. One woman knew Lisa's birth father and was able to connect her via email. Lisa has started her second reunion story that includes her birth father and half-sister. Despite the loss of her birth mother, she has an expanded sense of family. She understands where her life began and can speak with warmth about the woman who carried her to term and lovingly placed her for adoption.

2015-2016

Board of Directors

The Children's Aid Society of London and Middlesex is governed by an independent board of directors.

EXECUTIVE MEMBERS

Lisa Harrison	Chair
Sandy McCallum	Vice Chair/Treasurer
Paul Digby	Member at Large
Ashley Conyngham	Member at Large

DIRECTORS

Andrea Brown
Paul Caplan
Mike Elkassem
Vishal Kothari
Dr. Barbara Lent
Dr. Laura Lyons
Susan Rabkin
Chris Sinal
Purveen Skinner
Dora Tam



2015-2016 Financial Report

Financial statement information is prepared in accordance with the Public Sector Accounting Standards (PSAS) under an accrual basis of accounting. Financial results on the audited financial statements can vary from the surplus/deficit reported to the Ministry of Children and Youth Services due to adjustments required under PSAS.

This is a summary of details in the 2015-2016 Audited Statements prepared under PSAS and audited by Deloitte LLP.

INCOME	2015-2016	2014-2015
Province of Ontario	\$64,032,998	\$64,609,362
Income and expenditure recovery	\$ 2,642,220	\$ 2,963,938
Total income	\$66,675,218	\$67,573,300

DISBURSEMENTS

Salaries and benefits	\$32,625,679	\$34,840,737
Children's boarding costs	\$21,130,010	\$25,207,845
Client support services	\$ 5,827,755	\$ 7,937,252
Administration	\$ 4,150,822	\$ 3,973,554
Total disbursements	\$63,734,266	\$71,959,388

The following chart is the income and expenditures prepared under modified accrual accounting required by the Ministry of Children and Youth Services.

	2015-2016	2014-2015
Revenue	\$65,105,128	\$68,590,454
Expenditures	\$65,013,220	\$69,842,663
Surplus/(deficit)	\$1,908	(\$1,252,209)





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LONDON & MIDDLESEX

Safe Children... Bright Futures

To find out more about how to foster, adopt, become a volunteer or make a donation, please contact us at:

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