



# ANNUAL REPORT

FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES OF THE WATERLOO REGION



S. Wicks ©

## OUR MISSION

Finding the way forward with our community to protect children, to support all children and strengthen families, and to develop a caring environment for children.

## OUR VISION

A community where all children can grow up being safe, healthy and loved.





**A**t the last Annual Meeting, we reported to you that the agency had continued to make good progress in implementing the directions of the Ministry's province-wide initiative of Child Welfare Transformation. Our progress, however, had been threatened to a degree by funding pressures that had forced some program closures and left the agency with a deficit of \$470,000 at year end.

To review briefly, the goals of Transformation are far-reaching and fundamental, making changes to the ways we deliver services from beginning to end. The magnitude of the implementation has transpired to be truly a multi-year process, one that can perhaps be likened to rebuilding the factory for a new model while business continues as normal. The most prominent themes of Transformation involve redeveloping and reshaping services to be more responsive to the individual needs of children and families, providing children with greater stability and sense of permanence, working in greater partnership and collaboration between the agency, families and community, helping families build on the strengths they have and enabling children and youth to develop and appreciate their own skills and strengths, to achieve goals in education and to transition successfully to independence. The human style and tenor of the service delivery in Transformation are proving to be as or more important than the changes to the services themselves. When complete, Transformation is to have produced a child welfare system that protects children and meets their needs more effectively and does so in a manner that is more sustainable in terms of its cost.

Our priorities in the implementation of transformation this year, have focused on:

#### **INTRODUCING FAMILY CENTRED PLANNING:**

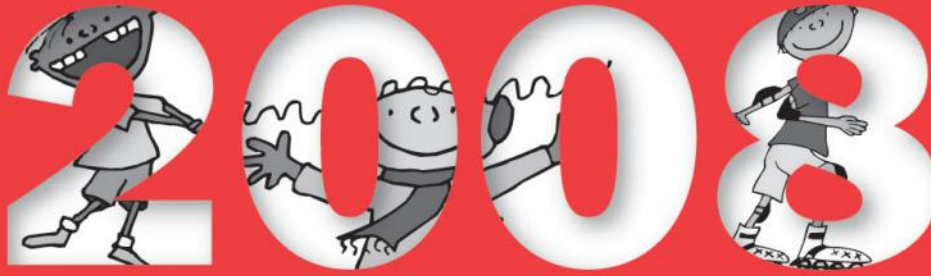
Family Centred Planning is an approach to service planning for children and families that seeks to build safety and reduce risk, that facilitates stronger engagement of families in the planning and delivery of the services they need and that encourages stronger collaboration and partnership between the family and the agency. The introduction of Family Centred Planning has begun with a very successful pilot test of a collaborative case planning process called RED (Review, Evaluate, Decide) using the framework of the Signs of

Safety developed in Australia over the last 15 years. In the first two months of the pilot, 50 complex cases involving 100 staff were conferenced. In many cases, the collective thinking has led to opening a way forward in working with the family where previously conflict or impasse might have resulted, necessitating litigation. An initial ten staff have been trained to act as practice leads to facilitate Family Centred Planning conferences and to mentor other staff in the techniques of the practice as Family Centred Planning is adopted as a general approach in all cases commencing in September. (In terms of the implementation of Transformation, the significance of establishing Family Centred Planning as the normal basis of working with families is as great as the restructuring of our service delivery teams that has already been carried out).

#### **CONTINUED DEVELOPMENT OF SERVICES AND PROGRAMS:**

When the service teams were restructured in 2007 to focus on certain broad service priorities, each team was given the challenge and opportunity to re-design its services and re-apply its resources to better meet the needs of the families and children each team is serving. Highlights of developments this year include:

- **Building capacity to better serve families with mental health challenges:** During the last year, the Parent and Child Capacity teams have engaged in training to expand knowledge and skills for working with families where mental health disorders are present. The teams obtained a grant from the Foundation to pilot a program (SMILES) for children living with a parent who suffers from a mental health disorder. The agency is building stronger partnerships with several mental health service providers in the community and joined them in organizing Mental Health Education Day.
- **Increasing the safety of care for infants:** Following several deaths of infants in the last few years due to unsafe sleeping arrangements (e.g. sharing a bed with the parent), the agency and Public Health are working more closely together in an effort to address the problem. The operation of Public Health's Healthy Babies Healthy Children program on site with Family and Children's Services has been updated and procedures completely revised. Public Health Nurses have provided knowledge to staff regarding best practices for safe sleeping for infants and young children, and negotiations are in process to have the agency included as one of the sites for the "Meet With a Nurse" program, through which a Public Health Nurse would be on site half a day per week to consult with staff and/or meet with families. Further, with the same goal of increasing the safety of care of infants and ensuring families have information about safe care practices and knowledge of services that can assist them, Initial Response staff now carry out personal follow-up to all families with infants referred to the agency, even where it seems likely that a service other than Family and Children's Services is required in the circumstances.



## REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



- **Re-thinking services to children and youth in care:** A major re-thinking of all services providing for children and youth in care was undertaken for a variety of purposes: to increase the availability of family-based care and the stability and endurance of placements; to increase the educational achievement of children and youth and to strengthen their future educational and career opportunities; to increase the exposure of children and youth in care to positive life experiences (asset building) that build the individual's capacity and resilience; and to better support the transition of youth to independence. Service delivery within our Child and Youth Services team is currently being extensively re-shaped in various ways to achieve these goals, including, for the first time, the dedication of ten Children's Services Workers exclusively to the care of Crown Wards.

With regard to those directions for children and youth in care who seek to achieve higher educational achievement, a higher degree of resiliency, social skills and building relationships, and a smoother transition to adulthood, several initiatives of the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities and of the Ministry of Children and Youth Services that have been announced over the last year complement the directions we are taking and promise to provide some welcome resources. For example:

- Ontario Access Grants for Crown Wards (tuition grants for Crown Wards of up to \$3,000 per year for four years)
- Application Fee Reimbursement (up to \$210 for Crown Wards and former Crown Wards applying to University or College)
- RESPs for children 0-6 (using the federal Universal Child Care Benefit of \$1,200 per year)
- The Ontario Child Benefit (equivalent) program (\$600 per child in care per year – to be increased to \$1,100 in 2009, which will not only support these goals but also establish savings accounts for all youth in care 15 and over)
- The Crown Ward Education Championship Teams – extended to Waterloo Region and Wellington County this year, bringing together CASs with Universities, Colleges, Boards of Education and youth employment agencies to collectively devise initiatives to enable Crown Wards to graduate from high school and progress to post-secondary education
- The Crown Ward Success Strategy (announced as part of the Ontario Poverty Reduction Strategy but yet to be defined)

These measures are very positive supports that will help children and youth in care to build better futures for themselves. We are very encouraged by these developments.

After the challenges of the previous year, the course of 2008-9 was a much better one in many respects. To begin with, in addition to a general 2% economic adjustment, the Child Welfare Funding Model was reviewed and updated. Several changes were made within the funding model which resulted in an increase in the allocation to the agency of over 6%. The funding model changes included an updating of the funding factors by one year, making funding for Adoption services volume sensitive, establishing one average funding factor for Boarding Rates (in place of multiple factors), and reallocating funds for technology and minor capital on a per capita basis as opposed to historical allocations. In 2008-9, the agency received allocations from the Ministry of Children and Youth Services of \$45,515,866 for child welfare services and of \$343,211 for Child and Family Intervention (Sexual Abuse Services and other miscellaneous items), and from the Region of Waterloo of \$348,828 for Pre-School Support Services. Within these funding allocations, the agency was able to meet all of its service delivery obligations and was able to end the year with a balanced budget.

As noted already, in many respects 2008-9 was a very successful year. But its accomplishments and successes took place against the gathering storm of the world-wide economic downturn that developed rapidly during the second half of the year. With the substantial decline in tax revenues and governments facing monumental deficits, many in the field are pondering the question of what level of funding allocations child welfare can anticipate in 2009-10 and subsequent years. Tentative advice from government suggests that a 0% economic adjustment in 2009-10 is the best scenario that could be anticipated and that negative adjustments are a possibility. Since some cost increases on the expenditure side cannot be prevented (e.g. negotiated increases under collective agreements, insurance and utility costs, general



inflation), even a 0% economic adjustment means a funding shortfall that has to be offset by reductions elsewhere in our expenditures. This scenario of funding constraints could be a reality for the next several years until the economic situation improves. Consequently, in order to achieve some offsetting economies in the coming years, the agency is actively pursuing efficiencies in various aspects of its operations – through continued review and reshaping of services and programs, through the use of new technology to simplify business processes, and through consolidation of some of our physical facilities. However, despite these actions to generate efficiencies, it will become increasingly likely that the agency will be unable to avoid deficits in the coming years since services to protect are legislated and must be available without waitlists to all who require them and since the demand for child protection services may well increase as the economic downturn continues.

## REVIEWING SERVICE DELIVERY AND THE DEMAND FOR SERVICES IN 2008-9,

- Total referrals to the agency increased by 5%, from 9,919 to 10,391, a significant factor in the increase being the growing number of requests from other CASs for kinship family assessments. Referrals concerning child protection (contained within the grand total), however, remained unchanged from 2007-8 at 7,104. We are expecting the level of child protection referrals to remain similar in 2009-10, but likely increasing after that as the impact of the recession begins to take a serious toll on more families.

Major reasons for service remained very similar to the pattern of the last five years. Twenty-six percent (26%) related to concerns of emotional harm, originating, in most cases, from situations of family violence. Another 26% derived from concerns relating to mental health, substance abuse, or other similar difficulties, and 16% resulted from situations of neglect.

- The number of families requiring longer-term services (ongoing services) from the agency through our Assessment and Service Delivery teams increased by 5%, from 1,966 families served in 2007-8 to 2,074 families served in 2008-9. Viewed as a trend over the last five years, the number of families receiving Ongoing Services has been growing at a small but steady rate while the trend of child protection referrals over the same period has essentially been level. The growing engagement of more families in ongoing services may reflect two things – the growth that has occurred in the agency's capacity to provide families with the services and programs they need to address the kinds of challenges that have placed their children at risk and different approaches to engaging families found in the strengths-based practices that the agency is implementing.
- In Kinship Services, 113 families provided care for children frequently related to them, a slight reduction from 118 in 2007-8. Some kinship families found that they could not adequately manage the needs of the children placed with them without

higher levels of support from the agency. This has led to a small increase in the number of Kinship families becoming foster families in order to better obtain the support and assistance they have required.

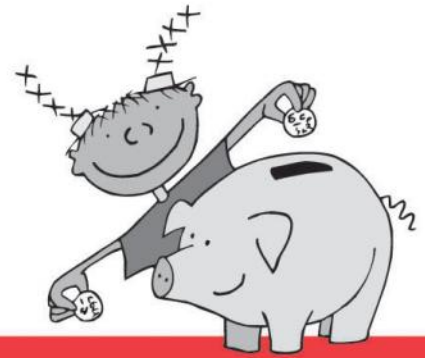
- The total number of children requiring residential care outside of their families in 2008-9 reduced by 24 from 2007-8, to 827. The average number of children in care at the end of each month was 517, 1% more than the average last year. These volumes are well within the range that has been experienced over the last five years.
- Seventy adoptions were completed in 2008-9, ten more than in the previous year. This is the highest number of children reaching permanency through adoption that we have seen in recent years.
- Foster home and kinship care home resources combined increased by 4% in 2008-9 from 285 to 296. The agency is currently implementing a number of strategies to increase the recruitment and retention of foster families. Hopefully, this welcome increase points the way to a sustained pattern of growth in foster families this year and into the coming years.

The implementation of a model of service that responds to children and families more individually and with more help to offer, that protects while building strengths and stability, that encourages family involvement in planning, decision-making and providing solutions, that seeks to build collaboration and partnership wherever possible has been the over-riding priority of the agency for five years now. Much has been achieved but much still remains to be done. The life-blood of what makes service building and service delivery really work is collaboration and partnership – with families, with many different organizations across the community at local level and at provincial level (from neighbourhood to government), and within the agency between all of our players – frontline, residential, support staff in services and administration, lawyers, supervisors and managers, foster parents, volunteers, Board members, and those in the Foundation who work so hard through various events to raise additional resources, to increase public awareness in order to give children better futures. A plan on paper is of little value without the people and the relationships to make it work and keep it working. In Waterloo Region, we are truly blessed in this regard. The reality is that Family and Children's Services and the protection of children in this Region could not function without the level of easy partnership, willingness and sharing that we enjoy. We could not do our work without all of you, but with you everything is possible! A hearty thanks to every one of you!

**Keren Adderley, President**  
**Peter G. Ringrose, Executive Director**

# 2008/2009 CONDENSED

# FINANCIAL REPORT



## 2008 - 2009

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**President** Keren Adderley

**Vice-President** Royston Simon

**Secretary-Treasurer** Ann Eby

### Directors

Marg Barr  
Steve Beckett  
Dharmika Devotta  
Donna Dubie  
Lee Fitzpatrick  
Sadia Gassim  
Anthony Giovinazzo  
Bobbie Goldenberg

Marion Good  
Karen Quigley-Hobbs  
Brian Kelly  
Janice Kroetsch  
Kathy Lind  
Joe-Ann McComb  
Shawn Morrison

## HIGHLIGHTS

### OF SERVICES PROVIDED

	2007 - 08	2008 - 09
Investigations Completed & Closed	2,882	3,539
Investigations Opened for Ongoing Service	786	855
Ongoing Child Protection Cases Served	1,966	2,074
Children Receiving Residential Care	851	827
Kinship Services:		
Average Children Placed	133	107
Average No. of Kin Families	118	113
Days of Paid Care	148,073	149,303
Foster Homes Available	285	296
Volunteers Available	230	280
Children Adopted	60	70

### BALANCE SHEET AS AT MARCH 31, 2009

ASSETS		LIABILITIES AND EQUITY	
Operating Funds	\$ 3,766,355	Accounts Payable	\$ 3,503,631
Special Funds	1,710	Accrued Sick Pay Benefits	106,816
Building Fund	7,657,976	Deferred Revenue	155,908
Ontario Child Benefit Equivalent	219,300	Deferred Contributions	219,300
		Building Fund - Debt	1,836,154
		Special Funds	1,710
		Building Fund	5,821,822
		Fund Balance, End of Year	-
	<u>\$ 11,645,341</u>		<u>\$ 11,645,341</u>

### CHILD WELFARE STATEMENT OF NET EXPENDITURES FOR THE YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 2009

EXPENDITURES		REVENUE	
Salaries & Benefits	\$ 24,430,288	Province Of Ontario	\$ 45,515,866
Child in Care Related		Family Allowance/ Child Tax Credit	1,224,821
- Boarding Rates, Clothing, Health, Education	17,245,276	Interest Income	80,549
Travel & Transportation	1,052,006	Maintenance from Parents	27,798
Professional Services		All Other Income	312,468
- Client	703,827	Grants from Foundation	505,785
Technology	1,025,289	Rebates	148,795
Building Occupancy	709,773		<u>\$ 47,816,082</u>
Capital & Non-Recurring	278,859	Net Surplus (Deficit)	469,861
All Other Expenses	1,900,903	Fund Balance, Beg. of Year	(469,861)
	<u>\$ 47,346,221</u>	Fund Balance, End of Year	\$ -

### SEXUAL ABUSE TREATMENT PROGRAM NET EXPENDITURES FOR THE YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 2009

Expenditures	\$ 324,181	Revenue	\$ 324,181
		Net Surplus (Deficit)	-

### SPECIAL SERVICE PROGRAMS NET EXPENDITURES (12 MONTHS ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2008)

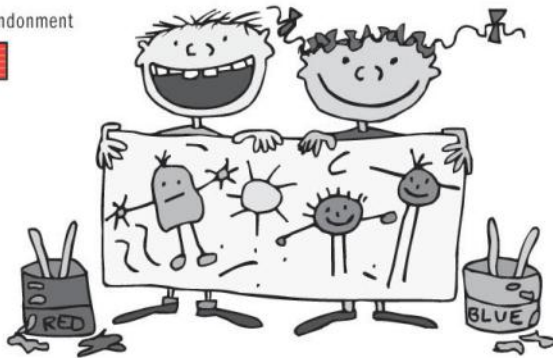
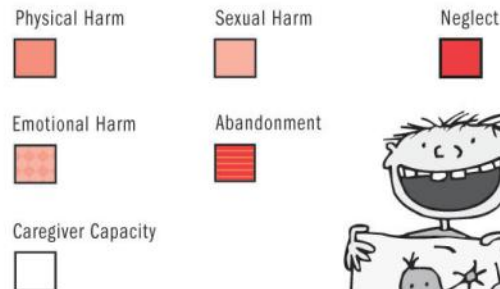
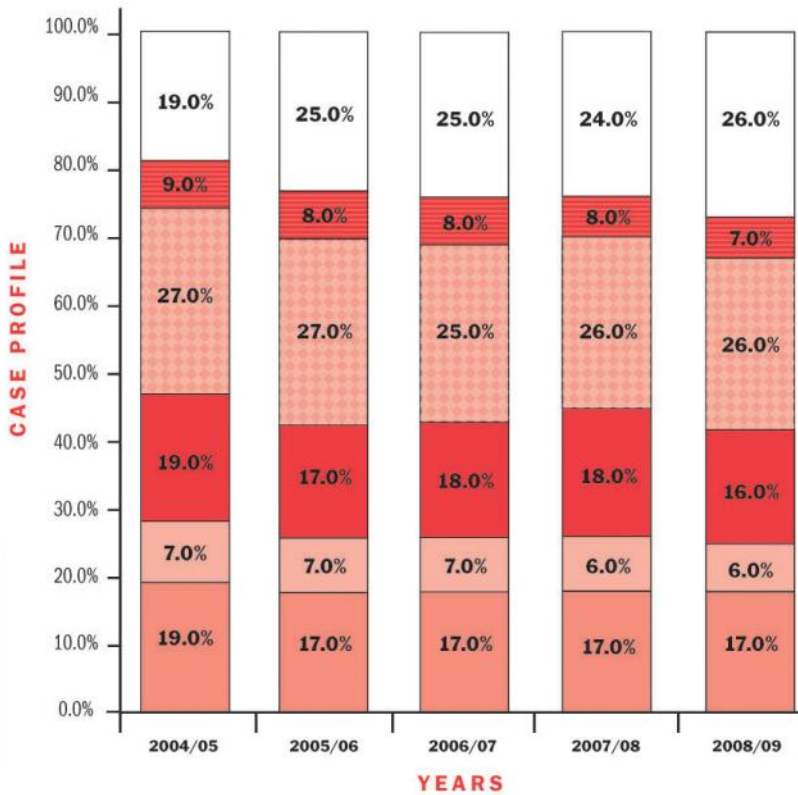
Expenditures	\$ 348,828	Revenue	\$ 348,828
		Net Surplus (Deficit)	-

(Extracted from Audited Statements audited by KPMG LLP Chartered Accountants).  
Details for other programs are contained in the audited financial statements.

# SERVICE TRENDS

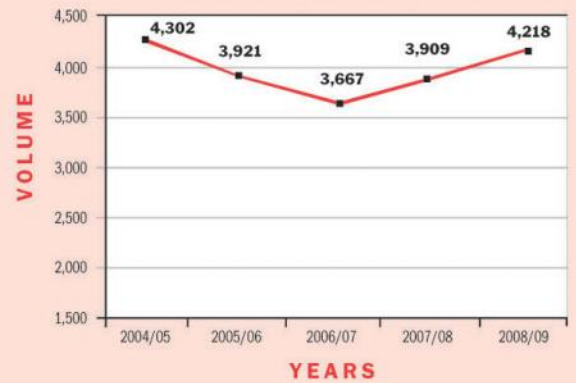
## SERVICE TRENDS 2004-2009

PROFILE OF MAJOR REASONS FOR REFERRAL AT INTAKE



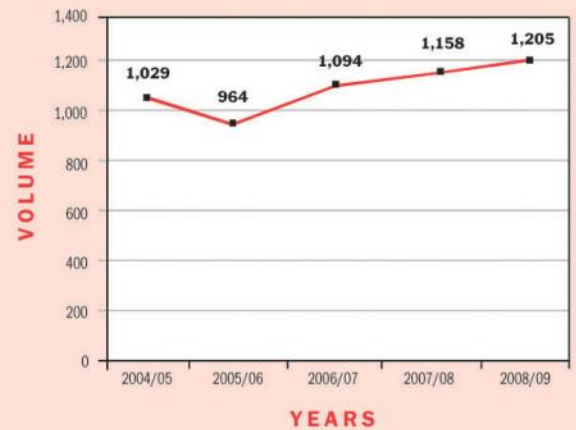
## Service Trends 2004 - 2009

INVESTIGATIONS OPENED AT INTAKE



## Service Trends 2004 - 2009

AVERAGE ONGOING CHILD PROTECTION CASES AT MONTH-END



## Service Trends 2004 - 2009

AVERAGE CHILDREN IN CARE AT MONTH-END

