



FACS

Family and Children's
Services Niagara



TRANSFORMATION - STRIVING TOWARDS EXCELLENCE

Constantly striving to serve families better, to protect children more effectively and to ensure their safety - we must continually review and re-examine our practices to develop the best outcomes for those we serve. The Transformation Agenda introduces sweeping changes across the province, with more emphasis on community involvement, permanency for children and alternatives to court. Stronger families, safer children and a more responsive system - that's what Transformation is all about. Let us embrace the changes that will help us get there.

William J. Charron, Executive Director

JUST THE FACTS

Family and Children's Services is your local Children's Aid Society- mandated by the Child and Family Services Act to investigate the abuse and neglect of children and to provide protection, foster care and adoption services. FACS offers a wide range of programs to prevent and treat the problems of abuse and neglect and to support the children, youth and families of our community.

Serving Niagara from offices in St. Catharines, Welland and Niagara Falls; we are a charitable, non-profit agency reporting to the community through a volunteer Board of Directors. Funded by the Ministry of Children and Youth Services, and the Ministry of Community and Social Services, our vision- **Every Child in a Caring Family.**

CHILD PROTECTION AND FAMILY SERVICE

Throughout 2005/06 we responded to 5 903 child protection concerns and conducted 3 888 investigations, slightly more than in the previous year. Ongoing protection service was provided to 1434 families. *For help or to report your concerns about a child, you can call your local office of Family and Children's Services 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at (905) 937-7731.*

FOSTER CARE

This past year, the average number of children in foster care was 641 and the number of active and approved homes available to care for them was 249. There is an urgent need for homes for teens and for homes of all cultural backgrounds. Extensive training and support are provided. *Please call if you can open your home to a child in need- (905) 937-7731, ask for home finding.*

ADOPTION

Offering more support to post and pre adoptive homes, our new Support Group meets monthly to discuss issues regarding the adoption experience. In 2005 we finalized 27 adoptions and placed 37 children with adoptive families. We anticipate a substantial increase in adoptive placements this year and have undertaken a cooperative effort with four agencies in our region with respect to adoptive planning, recruitment and the production of a training video.

2005 ANNUAL REPORT

SERVICES FOR YOUTH

Last year 51 youth were served at our **Regional Adolescent Centre** - a home and treatment centre for youth under the care of FACS. We can accommodate 20 youth (aged 12 to 16 years) from an overnight placement to several years depending on their needs. The Centre is staffed 24 hours a day and offers an on-site classroom, psychiatric support, a visiting nurse and case management. Our goal is to assist young people in crisis with a successful transition back into the community.

New Outlooks and Beginnings assisted 93 youth in care with the transition to independent living through group work and one to one support. Communication skills, budgeting, hygiene and self-esteem are just a few of the topics discussed at the group level. The Youth Advisory Committee works with board members to improve the in-care experience for all children and youth served by FACS.

EARLY LEARNING AND PARENTING CENTRES

In response to changing community needs we discontinued our afternoon family resource centre at Rose Seaton Public School in Fort Erie and converted our Western Hill program to a full-day childcare centre in St. Catharines. Our Fallsway program relocated, joining the Regional Child Care Centre at the new Branscombe Centre in Niagara Falls.

In March we were awarded a Best Start program, supporting children and their families as children prepare to enter school full-time. Located at St. Martin School in Smithville, we are a half-day program and hope to offer a full-day program by September 2006.

A total of 470 children attended our Early Learning programs past year. We accept children as young as 18 to 24 months and offer transportation, subsidies and parent groups. Call the location in your area to register your child.



- Bridgeburg: Rose Seaton Public School**, 255 Emerick Avenue, Fort Erie (905) 871-6416
- Bunting: Ina Grafton Gage Seniors Centre**, 413 Linwell Road, St. Catharines (905) 937-0170
- Central: Connaught School**, 28 Prince Street, St. Catharines (905) 687-7393
- Fallsway: Branscombe Centre**, 6271 Glengate Street, Niagara Falls (905) 354-5850
- Rainbow: Plymouth School**, 111 First Street, Welland (905) 788-1836
- St. Martin Child Care Centre**, 186 Margaret Street, Smithville (905) 957-9531
- Western Hill: Edith Cavell School**, 1 Monck Street, St. Catharines (905) 684-6288

ONTARIO EARLY YEARS PROGRAMS

In our 4th year as a community-based bilingual program, we served many families, caregivers and their young children (0-6 years) during their 10 082 visits at our **main location at 12 Young Street in Welland**, offering programs in a fun and stimulating play environment. Promoting healthy child development and positive parenting skills, our Early Childhood Educators plan interactive activities, lend out educational resources, offer informative workshops and make referrals to other services. The ECE team is trained in Infant Massage Classes, the Roots of Empathy program and our school readiness program, School's Cool. All of our programs are free of charge.

Our 3 **Satellite Sites in Fenwick (1) and Grimsby (2)** enjoyed a total of 17 573 visits! The Interactive Play Program is a favorite, along with the new Grow & Learn Together workshops for parents and children, along with the Infant Massage Classes.

The **Mobile Resource Program** offers Interactive Play at 5 locations in the Niagara Centre riding (Welland, Pelham and Thorold). We enjoyed 1 801 visits from parents, caregivers and their children. Two new locations were established - Elisha House in Welland and the Welland YMCA, joining existing sites at the Church of the Nazarene in Thorold and at the Fonthill Public Library.

The **Toy Lending Library** travels to 11 locations across Niagara, including the 4 OEYC main sites (Port Colborne, Niagara Falls, St. Catharines and Welland). Locations include Beamsville Church of Christ, Bethlehem Early Learning Centre in St. Catharines, Campden Public School, the MacBain Community Centre in Niagara Falls and the Fort Erie Public Library. We lent out thousands of educational toys and equipment during the 4 378 visits made to the program, all at no charge.

Make the most of your child's early years. Call us at (905) 734-3563 to find out where you can access Early Years services in your community.

*Design/Production
compliments of:
Anne Kubu*

"I am a 17 year old boy who has come a long way from what I started off with. I owe much of my positive progress to my foster family and FACS, "

Adam, youth in care and bursary recipient.

THE FAMILY COUNSELLING CENTRE

Providing confidential counselling to address issues including depression, anger, stress, grief, parenting, trauma and violence. The quality of our service was confirmed through the accreditation process with an unprecedented overall rating of 99% this year!

Family Group Conferencing (FGC) is a culturally sensitive, alternative approach to child protection that empowers marginalized families. We bring together family members to craft a plan of care for their children, addressing concerns identified by child welfare and children's mental health professionals. These plans enable many of these children to return to, or remain within, their extended families.

The Intergenerational Trauma Treatment Model is a three-phased program for children, adolescents and caregivers. The primary caregiver is involved in all phases of the program, including a six session educational series and individual sessions with the child. ITTM complements our Child Advocacy Therapy program.

Launching in September, "Caring Dads" is aimed at fathers who abuse or are at-risk of abusing their children. This group intervention helps men end abusive parenting strategies, recognize attitudes, beliefs and behaviors that support healthy father-child relationships and appreciate the impact of child maltreatment and domestic violence. "Side by Side" and "For Me and My Mom" are programs for women and children who have experienced family violence, and "Partner Assault Response" helps men overcome abusive behaviors and attitudes.

Strong demand continues for our single session Walk-In Counselling Clinic in Niagara Falls, our Regional Adult Protective Services program for developmentally delayed adults and our Family Mediation Centre at the St. Catharines courthouse. All Niagara residents are eligible for service. Some programs are fully funded, others have fees geared to income. We are pleased to have the ongoing support of the United Way. *For more information call (905) 937-7731 extension 3345.*

VOLUNTEERS

In 2005, our 300 volunteers gave 55 467 hours as special friends, tutors and in a variety of helping roles. Our volunteer drivers covered 1.9 million kilometres transporting children to camp, family visits and important appointments. *For more information about volunteer opportunities with FACS, contact our Volunteer Department.*



FOUNDATION NEWS

In 2005 nearly \$425 000 was donated to the Foundation to help bring hope, happiness and many important opportunities to the children and youth served by FACS. Twenty young people were awarded \$37 500 to help with the costs of post secondary education and nearly 500 children attended summer camp, including 13 siblings separated by foster care, reunited at Camp to Belong for a week of fun, togetherness and bonding.

Donations enabled us to sponsor a youth holiday party, refurbish the youth room and hire a youth liaison to speak on behalf of youth in care. We helped youth leaving care with a small allowance to help set up house keeping and we provided opportunities for our kids to nurture a special talent for sports, the arts and other special interests.

Special thanks to our Foundation Board of Directors: Chris Rupp, President; Anne Kemp, Vice President; Phil Sheehan, Secretary-Treasurer; Ron Hogan, Judy Wade, Mike Boucher, George Hostick, Deanna Lawson, Gino Paolone, Mary Anne Seppala and Bill Charron.

Have you remembered the Children's Aid Society in your will? Please call the Foundation office for more information, to make a donation or to find out how you can help kids and families in need. (905) 937-7731 ext 3304.

"I am so thankful for all the support that was given to me over the years from FACS and the Bursary Program. I am sad to know my stay with FACS is ending at 21 (years of age)"

Patricia, youth in care and bursary recipient

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

I want to commend our staff for their perseverance and fortitude in a year that has been more difficult than most. The tragedies we've experienced only serve to underscore the vulnerability of those we serve. And while the Province's Transformation agenda promises many positive changes, it will also challenge our staff with aggressive timelines and extensive reform.

I know that our staff, foster parents and volunteers will face these challenges as they have past challenges- with courage, strength and the best interests of children at heart. I also want to express my appreciation for our dedicated board members. Your contributions and insights have been many. With regret we accept the retirement of long-term board members Doug Hunt and Karen Zanutto as well as the departures of Tim Condon, Marilyn Hyatt and Mary Anne Seppala.

It takes many to achieve our vision of Every Child in a Caring Family and I am proud to say, we have some of the best. Thank you for the opportunity to serve.

John F. Bird, Board President

BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2005

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Vice President	Thomas A. Bielby
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Executive Director Mr. William J. Charron

Thanks to all the volunteer models who appear in this report



FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

for the 12 month period ended March 31, 2006

REVENUE	(IN \$000)
Child Welfare Budget	
Province of Ontario (Ministry of Children and Youth Services and Ministry of Community and Social Services)	\$35,841
Other	
Special Family Allowance	1,556
Maintenance from Parents, Interest, Other	
Income and recoveries	773
Total Child Welfare Revenue	\$ 38,170

EXPENDITURES

Child Welfare Budget	
Child Welfare	\$ 37,610
Operating Surplus of Revenue over Expenditures	\$560
Contracts and Programs (net)	
Province of Ontario	53
Surplus of Revenue over Expenditure	\$613
Surplus, Beginning of Year	359
Prior year's funding	41
Transfer to Private funds	(499)
Surplus, end of year	\$514

All Locations (905) 937-7731 or toll free 1-888-937-7731

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