



**2019 - 2020
ANNUAL REPORT**



Family and Children's
Services Niagara

Les Services à la famille
et à l'enfance de Niagara





Executive Director and President's Message

With heartfelt thanks and continued commitment

As the 2019-2020 year drew to a close and we began to reflect on the past year, we were just beginning to comprehend the implications of the developing COVID-19 pandemic. As our Niagara community began to experience the impact of the health crisis, we moved quickly to adapt, in order to continue to serve our community safely and effectively.

A Pandemic Planning Committee was formed jointly with our CUPE Local 2328. The commitment of this group to the health, safety and wellbeing of those we serve, the FACS team and the community has been outstanding. In a matter of days, we consolidated our services. Operating remotely and with a limited number of staff at our Hannover Drive location in St. Catharines, we were able to maintain a physical presence in the community. We implemented measures to ensure the safety of the families we serve, our staff and the community, employing guidelines recommended by public health authorities.

As schools went online and other support services became less accessible, we reached out to our families in the community to check on their wellbeing, including families we had previously served, even if our involvement had concluded. We connected with our foster families, children and youth in foster care and those living independently in the community. Concerned about the stress and isolation posed by the pandemic as well as the resulting restrictions and economic fallout, we reminded our community to stay connected to their family, friends and neighbours and to call us for assistance at any time.

We adopted new technologies and enhanced current ones to increase our opportunities for connection. Our Family Counselling Centre offered virtual counselling services via phone or video. Our Foundation launched an Emergency Fund to assist families as community supports and resources became overwhelmed by demand, and we developed the "Summer Smiles at Home" program. Our team delivered care packages and initiated drive-by check ins and front-porch visits with families, foster families and youth. We provided service in homes as needed, with an abundance of caution and measures to protect the health and safety of families and staff.

In the weeks that followed, we were awestruck by the many acts of kindness and sacrifice performed by our team of workers, our foster families and the community. Our staff rose to the challenge with hardly a pause, doing whatever was necessary to keep service flowing to our families and youth. Our foster families persevered while "locked down" in their homes, tackling online learning and supporting our children through this crisis.

The community showed their support with donations of flowers to honour our volunteers, foster parents and staff. What has been heartening throughout this crisis, is surely the strength of human kindness in the face of adversity. We have never been prouder to be a part of this extraordinary organization and community.

Although the pandemic dominated the final month of our 2019-2020 year, there were many achievements that took place since April of 2019 that deserve to be highlighted; including our work with youth and community partners.

FACS Niagara continued to be a leader in the province in supporting our youth with the successful transition from foster care to independence. This support extends to providing life skills and emotional support, sharing a meal during Home for the Holidays events, teaching financial literacy and housing supports, and providing one-to-one support and guidance as young people move on to independent living in the community.

We have enhanced our educational support program to address the unique challenges facing youth in care, providing guidance to both our workers and youth regarding post-secondary opportunities and sources of financial support. Year after year we are seeing an increase in the graduation rate for children in care.

Our Niagara Crown Ward Championship Team, a tri-Ministerial partnership with local school boards, Brock University and Niagara College, helps to support the transition to post-secondary education. Together with our school boards, the Niagara Transportation Consortium helps us achieve placement stability for children and youth in care, enhancing their chances for academic success, which is key to their future.

Together with our partners in the First Nations, Inuit, Métis and Indigenous community, we continue to build upon a relationship that supports Reconciliation and Indigenous rights. Our Memorandum of Understanding with the Niagara Chapter of Native Women (NCNW) reaffirms our commitment to the promotion of the full and effective participation of the NCNW as Indigenous advocates in child welfare within the Niagara Region. This ensures that Indigenous children, youth and their families are fully engaged in all matters that concern them, and that their rights remain distinct, are preserved, and protected including their identity, early attachment and cultural heritage.



New privacy legislation was launched on January 1, 2020 with the proclamation of Part X of the Child, Youth and Family Services Act. This places Ontario's Children's Aid Societies under the oversight of the Ontario Information and Privacy Commissioner, further supporting FACS' commitment to the protection of personal privacy and accountability to the community we serve.

We continue to appreciate our collaborative relationship with CUPE Local 2328. Among the many ways that we worked so well together this past year, the FACS Union Social Executive (FUSE) Committee's support and generosity in sending our children and youth to camp surpassed them all! Thank you to CUPE and the entire FACS team for raising funds through various initiatives and for donating more than \$10,900 towards our 2019 Summer Smiles campaign.

There is no question that this has been an eventful year. Whether responding to a global pandemic or working with local community partners to achieve the best outcomes for children and families, the common themes are all about pulling together and adapting to meet whatever challenges present themselves. Our commitment to serving children and families in the Niagara community remains steadfast. As we continue in this unprecedented time, these are the principles that must continue to guide our actions.

We know that the year ahead will not be without challenges. The global response to the pandemic has required us to change and adapt. Our families, children and youth need our help more than ever. We will embrace these challenges as opportunities to collaborate with our partners to serve those who need us most. We are proud to work alongside the many skilled professionals in the Niagara community who, with great care and compassion, provide valuable and crucial services to children, youth and families.

To our loyal and generous donors - thank you for providing critically needed funds to support the dreams of our children and youth. Thank you to the dedicated FACS team, foster parents and volunteers; our combined efforts have enabled us to focus on our goal of keeping families together and ensuring that children have stability and permanence in their lives. We could not do this important work without you.

With Heartfelt Thanks and Continued Commitment,

Anna Bozza Shaun Adams
Executive Director President of the Board



FACS Niagara Board of Directors 2019-2020

Shaun Adams (President)	David Willer	Betty-Lou Souter
Robert Renaud (Vice-President)	Nadine Wallace	Kim McAllister
Brian Minard (Secretary)	Brian Eckhardt	Rod Hollick
Anita Scholman (Treasurer)	Sean Worthington	

Child Protection and Family Support Services

In 2019-20, FACS Niagara responded to more than 6,000 referrals about the safety and well being of children and youth in the Niagara Region, and provided the following services.

- Child Protection Referrals Received - **6,016**
- Investigations completed - **3,585**
- Families receiving ongoing child protection services - **4,819**
- Children and youth served - **6,925** (93% of children served within their community, 7% in care)
- More than **800** families receiving ongoing services at any one time

Foster Care, Adoption and Volunteer Services

We are grateful for the support of our **150** dedicated foster families and our **206** volunteers. They are a critical part of the FACS team serving children, youth and families in the Niagara Region. When children are unable to return home, adoptive families provide a permanent home and a family for children and youth to call their own.

- Monthly Average of Children in Care - **460**
- Adoptions awaiting finalization - **58**
- Adoptions Finalized - **30**
- Volunteer Hours completed - **44,105**
- Volunteer kilometers driven - **2,035,385**



Family Counselling Centre Services

The Family Counselling Centre is a fully accredited family service agency, offering Adult Protective Services in addition to counselling programs. The Centre is proud to have achieved the Reader's Choice gold-standard award and to have a counsellor recognised as one of the best marriage counsellors in St. Catharines.

With support from a variety of funders, the Family Counselling Centre provided:

- **4,098** scheduled sessions for **945** individuals
- **100** individuals participated in the Partner Assault Response program
- **48** fathers learned to co-parent through the Caring Dads program
- **433** women and children attended **533** hours of individual and group counselling for family violence and the impact of abuse
- **25** family group conferences addressed child protection safety concerns



Thanks to United Way funding, we also provided:

- **525** subsidized sessions and **315** free counselling hours at our Walk-In Clinic
- **578** scheduled sessions for children and caregivers to address physical and sexual abuse



*In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, our Family Counselling Centre swiftly transitioned to providing virtual counselling sessions via phone and video. Responding to an identified need in the community, the Centre also developed the **Helping the Helpers** program for essential service workers and offered free and affordable counselling to anyone in the community experiencing stress, anxiety and other mental health challenges. Our virtual counselling services were so well received that we will continue to offer virtual counselling, which is especially helpful for those not able to attend sessions in person.*

Child Care and West Niagara Resource Consultant Programs

Our licensed child-care facilities; Bunting and Western Hill, are co-located in local school settings, and subsidies are available to qualifying parents and caregivers. Our Child Care Programs are pleased to also host placements for Niagara College Early Childhood Education students. Our Resource Consultants continue to support a growing number of families in helping to assess developmental milestones and to provide referrals to helpful services for their children. In 2019-20, our Resource Consultants provided support to **103** families and children.

"The Resource Consultant has been such a big part of my child's development. We have noticed so much improvement within the last year. She has so many ideas and helpful suggestions at every meeting."

- Parent Participant





Youth Services

We are proud to offer an extensive network of services and supports to our youth. Together with our local school boards, Brock University, Niagara College and in conjunction with the Niagara Crown Ward Championship Team, our "Circle of Care" continues to generate new pathways for student success. Through partnership and innovation, we support our youth in the pursuit of an outstanding level of post-secondary achievement and unlimited opportunities.

Our long-standing partnerships with the local Indigenous community such as the Niagara Chapter of Native Women and the local Friendship Centres provide advocacy for Indigenous youth and promote closer connections with their Indigenous heritage. This includes a dedicated youth worker to provide services and advocate on behalf of Indigenous children and youth, their families and communities.

Our New Outlooks and Beginnings Program assists youth in the successful transition to independence in the community. Emotional and financial support, life skills learning in areas such as financial literacy, housing, education and employment help our youth to achieve success and independence as adults.

- Youth served - **140**
- One to One Service - **41**
- Group Program Participants - **99**



Youth Advisory Committee

The Youth Advisory Committee is comprised of youth in, and formerly in care. Their role is to advocate for, represent and provide a voice for children and youth in care. Our youth members have an opportunity to learn, develop advocacy skills and help to build a sense of community and belonging through volunteer work, civic engagement and advocacy. Events and conferences provide inspiration and promote a sense of belonging within the in-care community.



Our Home for the Holidays Program brings together our youth who live independently, to celebrate family holidays with the FACS family several times a year.

Physical distancing due to COVID-19 did not prevent us from wishing our youth a Happy Easter and sharing a few treats. Drive-by and front-porch visits kept us connected and were a reminder that we were still there for them.



FACS Niagara Foundation

The mission of Family and Children's Services' Foundation is to raise funds and awareness to support Family & Children's Services Niagara in their work to help children, youth and families in the Niagara Region to reach their full potential.



*In 2019, the Foundation released "Imagine" - a video about the work of FACS Niagara and the Foundation.
Imagine: Safe kids. Strong families. Youth and adults at their best.*

In 2019 we celebrated the 20th anniversary of the Niagara Foundation for Family and Children's Services. Thanks to the generosity of our donors, the Foundation has raised \$8.7 million since 1999 and supported thousands of children, youth and families.

FACS' Foundation raises funds so that local kids in need can enjoy a summer camp experience and youth in care have opportunities for college, university and job skills training. The Foundation has also provided support for capital improvements such as our Shelley MacBain Family Centre in Niagara Falls. We are grateful to our volunteers and donors who have been integral to our success.



Annually, the Foundation supports the education goals of youth in or formerly in care through grants and various supports.

Together with our dedicated Foundation Board, we deeply appreciate the generosity, support and commitment of the hundreds of donors who supported the work of FACS Niagara in 2019!

Thanks to the support of our dedicated and generous donors and sponsors, in 2019:

- 33 youth received educational grants to pursue post-secondary studies or job skills training;
- 415 children and youth in care enjoyed a week-long summer camp experience;
- 58 youth attended each of the “Home for the Holidays” celebrations to share in food, gifts and fellowship
- 452 children in 228 families who faced hardships received gifts and support during the holidays.



Leading the pack as the largest Kentucky Derby event outside of Churchill Downs, the second annual Hats & Horses event donated more than \$20,000 to support the work of FACS Niagara in May 2019.

The RBC 21st Annual FACS Charity Gala raised more than \$61,000 in November 2019 - the most ever - thanks to the generous support of sponsors, donors and guests.



As COVID-19 closed camps in 2020, FACS and the Foundation launched, “Summer Smiles at Home;” providing toys, crafts and sports equipment so that children and youth could enjoy some summer fun in the safety of their own homes and backyards.

Foundation Board of Directors

Darlene McDowell (President)

Dave Weeks

Caroline Polgrabia (Vice-President)

Sean Worthington

Chris Accursi (Secretary)

Nathan Gatt

Yar Diduch (Treasurer)

Heather Henry

Anna Bozza (FACS Niagara Executive Director)

Dave Augustyn (Development Director)

Community - It's what it's all about

The safety and well-being of our community's children is a responsibility we all share. We do not do this work alone. During this unprecedented crisis, we learned more than ever, how much we rely upon the support of a caring community. The pandemic has created a sense of community like nothing we have seen before. We can all play a role in supporting families, keeping kids safe and helping youth to reach their full potential.

Join our team. Foster. Adopt. Donate. Volunteer. For more information, please call us or visit our web site. You can make a difference!

Above and Beyond

In partnership with the FACS Union Social Executive (FUSE) Committee and the FACS Foundation, the Above and Beyond peer recognition committee was established to recognize those team members for their outstanding dedication to the families we serve, and those who bring a smile to the face of their co-workers, support one another when the going gets rough and make each day brighter.

Congratulations to our 2019

Above and Beyond Award recipients:

Debbie Anderson

Dan Diggins

Frank Christie

Pauline Irving-Wynia

Meaghan Coopman



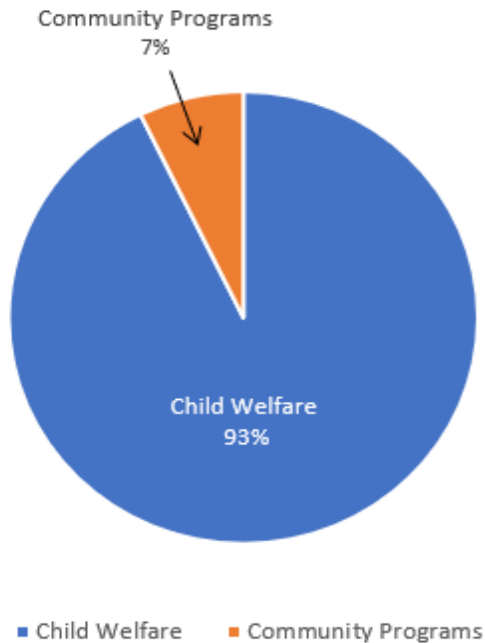
This year we would like to dedicate our Above and Beyond awards to all the hardworking individuals at FACS Niagara. The courage, compassion and teamwork demonstrated every day by our team, especially in the face of the COVID-19 crisis, was truly Above and Beyond. During this difficult time, our courageous team stepped up, continuously adapting to ensure service delivery to the Niagara community. You rose to the challenge every day, and we face the future confident in the knowledge of your continued commitment.

Our Above and Beyond awards this year are dedicated to all of the hard-working individuals here at FACS Niagara. An incredible team. **With heartfelt thanks.**

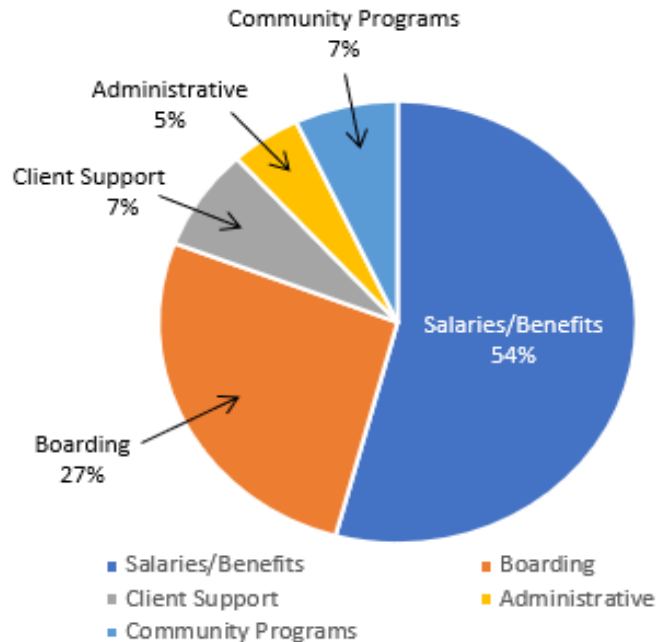
2019-2020 Financial Report

This summary of details of 2019 - 2020
Financial Statements audited by Durward Jones Barkwell

Revenues 2019 - 2020
% Breakdown by Program



Expenses 2019-2020
% Breakdown by Category



Summary \$000s

	Child Welfare	Community Programs	Total
Revenues	\$ 47,661	\$ 3,715	\$ 51,376
Expenditures	\$ 47,659	\$ 3,574	\$ 51,233
Surplus/(Deficit)	\$2	\$141	\$143

Thank you to Our Funders

The Ministry of Children, Community & Social Services
 The Ministry of Education
 The Ministry of the Attorney General
 The Niagara Region
 The United Way Niagara (Family Counselling Centre)
 FACS Niagara Foundation
 Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption
 and our Generous Donors.



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Family Counselling
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