

# FROM DREAMING....

# TO BELIEVING...

# **TO ACHIEVING...**

# CELEBRATING SUCCESS THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS AND EDUCATION



117<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL REPORT 2016-2017

### MISSION STATEMENT

The Windsor-Essex Children's Aid Society is dedicated to the well-being and safety of every child by advocating for, and partnering with, our children, families and communities.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2016-2017

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# A MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT AND INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The 117th Annual General Meeting provides the Windsor-Essex Children's Aid Society an opportunity to celebrate the many successes that have been achieved over the past fiscal year. Our primary work of child protection, combined with a mandate to strengthen families, is a result of collaborative relationships through community partnerships. In that same way, we recognize and uphold the elements of diversity, accountability, and the provision of services offered in an organized, coordinated and efficient manner. All of this is the result of co-operative efforts.

For the fourth consecutive year, the Society has been able to finish its year-end with a balanced budget while continuing to provide a high level of service and programs. We continue to focus on a strengths-based service delivery approach and working with families and children in their homes, with an emphasis on early intervention. This has resulted in a decline in the number of children in care and the number of children placed in Outside Paid Resource (OPR) group care.

During the week of March 27th, the Ministry of Children and Youth Services attended the Society to conduct an End-to-End Review. The purpose of this review was to support continuous improvement at the Society and Ministry levels by determining where our performance meets expectations, identifying our Society's strengths and/or challenges, sharing best practices and identifying any systemic issues across the sector.

The many months spent on preparing for this review afforded the senior staff an opportunity to evaluate our practices on a whole and 'dive deeper' into our processes. By doing this, we were able to identify areas that we felt we could improve upon, and also reaffirmed many of the effective programs and services that we currently have in place.

Upon completion of their review, the Ministry held an exit meeting with Senior staff and expressed that they were very pleased with their findings. We anticipate areas for improvement once the full detailed analysis of the review is received. In the meantime, we continue to work on areas we have identified with respect to our own findings.

*Education* is the catalyst for positive change. As you will note in this report, the emphasis continues to grow in terms of providing opportunities for our youth to achieve. This is evident in terms of the growth of the number of donor-based bursaries that provide financial assistance both for pursuing post-secondary studies as well as an incentive upon completion of studies. This may include university, community college or apprenticeship/training courses.

**Partnerships** with organizations such as New Beginnings and United Way Centraide have opened new doors for youth contemplating a path for the future. The Society is indebted to the Windsor-Essex Children's Aid Foundation Board of Directors who made the decision to provide \$1,500 (an increase from \$500) per semester to every youth enrolled in an education, apprenticeship or training program. Having said this, the Foundation is in the process of establishing an endowment that will assure support for our youth for years to come. The second year of the "You Can Write A Child's Story" campaign has been a success in terms of financial support for programs but also as a vehicle to make new sectors of the community aware of the work that we do. This has been realized through the various marketing initiatives that have been put in place with our media partners. Dr. Sandy Venditti, Board President





Terry Johnson, Interim Executive Director

"Alone, we can do so little, together we can do so much."

Helen Keller

# A MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT AND INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (CONT'D)

Our mandate is to be as inclusive as possible in order to embrace the individuality of all who receive our services. We do this through ongoing dialogues, establishment of protocols, and mutual respect and understanding of the differences that we share. This report highlights a number of these symmetric relationships.

In terms of the broader community, the Society took pride in being a finalist for the 2016 Windsor-Essex Regional Chamber of Commerce Business Excellence Awards. The agency was well represented by over 70 staff, foster parents and volunteers who attended the April 20th ceremony.

Services to Essex County took a major step forward as the Society in collaboration with four other community partners cut the ribbon for Community Hub 33 at 33 Princess Street in Leamington on May 26th, 2016. The Windsor-Essex Children's Aid Society together with the City of Windsor's Employment & Social Services/Ontario Works team, the Windsor-Essex County Health Unit, Community Living Essex and Children First offer a model that provides one-stop availability of resources that create a synergy and cohesive approach to service delivery. The Society was instrumental in seeing the vision of the Hub evolve into an innovative partnership that has also sparked the re-development of uptown Leamington.

As we entered into a new fiscal year, we unveiled four 'Smilezones'. Upon the recommendation of the Windsor Spitfires organization, and as a legacy project of the 2017 Memorial Cup, four areas of the Bill & Dot Muzzatti Child & Family Centre were transformed into child-friendly areas. Complete with murals, furniture, technology and tactile play equipment, these rooms are inviting spots for families to visit and children to thrive. We are very grateful to the Smilezone Foundation and the Windsor Spitfires for this wonderful gift.

This is a time of transition at the Windsor-Essex Children's Aid Society as we bid farewell to our Chief Executive Officer of 18.5 years. Bill Bevan came home to Windsor in 1998 to complete the amalgamation of the former Essex County Children's Aid Society and the Roman Catholic Children's Aid Society of Windsor and Essex County. Throughout his tenure, Bill has been a champion of WECAS in the community. He will also be remembered for his tireless efforts in bringing some of the Society's largest philanthropic and capital projects to fruition. This includes the main headquarters of the Society on Riverside Drive, the Bill & Dot Muzzatti Child & Family Centre and Community Hub 33. We wish Bill a healthy and happy retirement. The Board is now conducting a search for a new Executive Director who will build on the many successes of the organization and chart the course for a new era.

In closing, as we discuss partnerships, we need only to look to our own organization. Without the compassion, commitment and professionalism of our staff, volunteers and foster parents, the well-tuned machine just would not function as it should. Together, this group of individuals assures the safety and protection of children. They also work to strengthen families and make every effort to assure that every child should have the opportunity to aspire to his or her dreams. The commitment, compassion and dedication to our children in care also must be applauded. Our youth have become a strong voice in the agency and they are a part of our fabric. Thank you to each and every one of you who makes a difference in the life of a child.

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Dr. Sandy Venditti, DDS, MBA, Board President

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Ms. Terry Johnson, BSW, MSW Interim Executive Director

# MESSAGE FROM BILL BEVAN



As I reflect back on a career in child welfare that has spanned five decades, I am awed by the impact that those of us in the field have on making a difference in the lives of children and families. In many cases, this has required making tough decisions and balancing creative thinking with practicality. During this time, I have, at no time, thought of my work as "a job", but rather, a passion for bettering the lives of others.

I am most proud of being an agent of change – when working with children and families earlier in my career, and then when leading a large organization through several transition periods and having to face many obstacles along the way. Throughout all of this time, it was my ability to embrace the idea of adaptability and change, and even encourage it, that allowed our agency to overcome the obstacles and to continue to move forward.

Many projects were accomplished here in Windsor-Essex: a major amalgamation; a new building on Riverside Drive and its addition in 2013 (the Bill & Dot Muzzatti Child & Family Centre); and the development of Community Hub 33 in Learnington. These are all fine objectives we accomplished that have served to improve our services and helped to bring further respect for our role in the community.

I am most proud of the people associated with us - a fabulous set of management staff and frontline workers, who really own their responsibilities and put their heart into their work. Having the support of the community – foster parents, volunteers, board members, donors or community professionals who work hand-in-hand with us – is what makes for a great team of rich resources who make a difference in the lives of many children and their families.

I think we stood tall together as an organization and as a community to improve the opportunities for children and youth. These benefits are being realized today and will continue to be fulfilled well into the future, creating and writing the best child's story that we can!

Sincerely,



# PARTNERING FOR SUCCESS CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACHIEVEMENT

As a result of working together with our fellow community partners, our children, youth and families benefit from the many resources that are available through our abundant networks. The following are some examples of what can be accomplished when we work together.

- The **United Way**: On Track to Success program has provided a coaching/mentoring program designed to support youth in Grades 9 through 12.
- **New Beginnings** has provided a youth employment opportunity initiative. This includes a part-time school year program (10 hours per week) and a full time summer program (35 hours per week) where youth are given paid employment in areas that inspire future career interests. TD Bank, via the Windsor-Essex Children's Aid Foundation, has been an investor in this program for our youth.

Also, in collaboration with New Beginnings, a joint First Robotics team was formed. This is designed to gauge the interest of youth from both organizations in current and future technologies through team robotic competitions.

- The Society, together with the **Greater Essex County District School Board** and **Regional Children's Centre**, offered Camp Wonder, a three week summer program where 25-30 children in care ages 5-7 have the opportunity to attend an extended school program that enables them to refine or enhance their academic and social skills.
- Legal Assistance of Windsor has provided the Society with a Youth Transition Worker-Human Trafficking. This individual works closely with the Society and its youth in the prevention of and the extraction of youth who may be caught up in human trafficking.
- **Big Brothers Big Sisters of Windsor Essex** offers an In-School Mentoring program to children involved with the Society. These children are matched with in-school mentors from the Big Brothers Big Sisters organization.
- The Windsor-Essex Children's Aid Society works with the **Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption** as recipients of a 'Wendy's Wonderful Kids' Recruiter grant for several years. This program allows us to provide child-focused recruitment in securing permanency through adoption for children in care.

- Through a grant from the **Children's Aid Foundation** (Toronto), the Ted & Loretta Rodgers Foster Care Transition Program is designed to significantly improve the experience of children and youth entering the care of the Society. Each child/youth is provided with a care package containing a variety of appropriate items that assist them with their immediate transition into care.
- WECAS and the **House of Sophrosyne** have developed a coordinated and collaborative approach for families and children who are receiving services from both the Windsor-Essex Children's Aid Society and the House of Sophrosyne. This collaboration has allowed our agencies to work together, utilizing best practices for addicted women through outreach, counselling and crisis interventions.
- As a result of a grant from **Green Shield Canada**, the Family Assertive Community Treatment (FACT) targets families with children/youth who have received children's mental health services and are also involved with the Children's Aid Society. This integrated and coordinated intervention plan by the two sectors is characterized by a multidisciplinary team from WECAS and the **Regional Children's Centre (RCC)** focusing on children with complex needs.
- Several partners along with police services have combined their efforts to bring a Child Advocacy Centre to this community. A grant was received to run a pilot project to begin to enhance services to child victims. Windsor-Regional Hospital, Metropolitan **Campus**, has agreed to house the project within the existing Sexual Assault Treatment Centre (SATC), as a child-friendly environment (known as Safekids) currently exists, complete with the space and equipment required for the project. The Child Advocacy Steering committee is of the view that this pilot project will demonstrate the value and effectiveness of a multi-disciplinary approach to the forensic investigation and assessment of child maltreatment involving the police, child welfare, medical professionals, and victim services advocates in a collaborative fashion.

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- Sun Life Financial (Anchor Drive) and Sobey's (Manning Road) teamed up for the third consecutive year to provide Food for Families on Family Day, and for the second year a Thanksgiving Dinner Drive. Families who receive services from the Windsor-Essex Children's Aid Society are recipients of these generous gestures which strengthens our families in so many ways.
- The **Windsor Essex Regional Youth Council** (WE R Youth Council) was born out of the Windsor Essex Youth Strategic Action Committee (WEYSAC) which was a consortium of approximately 30 youth

serving agencies, including WECAS. The group collectively saw the need and the value of supporting the development of a Council where youth (13 - 25 yrs.) from across the region, many already engaged in services, could share their life experiences, concerns, and their wants and needs for a successful future. The Society continues to lead this project and will work to recruit more youth out of care receiving ongoing protection services, as well as our youth 18 - 21 years on Continuing Care & Support (CCSY) to actively participate on the Council.



# **BUILDING BRIDGES – PARTNERSHIPS IN DIVERSITY**

The Windsor-Essex Children's Aid Society (WECAS) is committed to delivering programs and services that are effective, fair, inclusive, respectful and culturally competent. The Society has established an Anti-Oppressive Practice (AOP) Advisory Committee and sub-committees that support the agency in remaining inclusive with its service delivery. In order to address these needs, we continually liaise with the following community partners to enhance communications, working relationships, and to improve outcomes for children, youth and families.

#### **ISLAMIC SOCIAL WORK ASSOCIATION (ISWA)**

A part-time staff person provides frequent on-site visits on behalf of the ISWA and Windsor Mosque to assist in case consultation and cultural teaching to staff. The Society and ISWA are collaborating on providing "Foster Parenting and Adoption" information sessions, as well, have produced a video with one of our Muslim foster care families to help recruit additional foster homes to meet the cultural needs of Muslim children. ISWA encourages these families to care for any child, not solely of Muslim faith.

#### **FIVE/FOURTEEN**

The Society has worked closely to support the establishment and licensing of Five/Fourteen, Canada's first LGBTQ-dedicated Foster Care agency. The Society is currently exploring opportunities for joint program delivery, training, and services which would benefit our community, youth in care, protection and kin families, foster parents, and staff.

#### FIRST NATIONS CAN AM INDIAN FRIENDSHIP CENTRE

As part of the Truth and Reconciliation (TRC) strategy, the Society has entered into a contractual agreement with Can Am for a full-time position that will specifically service our First Nations community. As an aboriginal liaison, this individual will assist in strengthening the family bonds, provide culturally relevant services and education specific to the family's heritage.



#### WINDSOR ESSEX LOCAL IMMIGRATION PARTNERSHIP (WELIP)

The Society continues to work in partnership with WELIP to enhance information and services to newcomer families.

#### BLACK AFRICAN CANADIAN CARIBBEAN COMMITTEE (BACC)

WECAS is actively participating in the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies (OACAS) led, One Vision One Voice project, designed to improve the outcomes of African Canadians in Ontario's child welfare system. In October, the Society hosted a Town Hall Meeting with our African Canadian Caribbean community partners, which resulted in the development of recommendations of an action plan. The expectations of the action plan are not only to engage and educate the community but also, and more importantly, to build relationships and reduce the incidences of BACC families and children being involved with WECAS services.

#### **"SHARING A GOOD HEART"**

As part of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada report, OACAS developed with First Nation partners a document with specific recommendations: "Sharing a Good Heart". This initiative holds great promise to transform the relationship between Children's Aid Societies and the First Nations, Inuit and Métis families and communities served. Together with our Indigenous community and regional partners we have drafted goals under the "Sharing a Good Heart" framework. In the near future, workgroups and committees will take these goals and put in place an integrated local action on this path towards reconciliation and improved outcomes for Indigenous children and families.

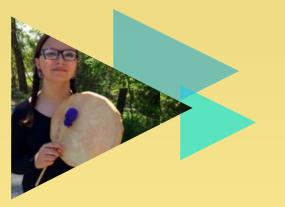
#### LOW GERMAN MENNONITE COMMUNITY

WECAS works with the co-ordinator of the Mennonite cultural committee which assists with bridging discussions with the Low Mennonite leaders of the faith community to address emerging issues.

# **EXAMINING ETHNICITY DATA**

In this past year, the Society committed to examining ethnicity data based on a province-wide concern about the overrepresentation of children and families from racialized groups involved with Children's Aid Societies. To this end, WECAS is working to strengthen data collection in order to monitor against local population statistics and to address disparity in services.

These figures represent our first attempt and are based on individuals who self-identify.



#### ETHNIC BREAKDOWN OF ONGOING FILES



#### ETHNIC BREAKDOWN OF CIC AT WECAS



# THINKING FORWARD – DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS/SOCIAL MEDIA

As a branch of our overall communications plan and marketing strategy, the Windsor-Essex Children's Aid Society (WECAS) together with the Windsor-Essex Children's Aid Foundation (WECAF), have made great strides in moving forward with programs and outlets that capture the realm of digital communications. Networks such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram have enabled us to promote our programs, services and relevant information to segments of the population who had minimal knowledge of our work in the past.

Both WECAS and WECAF websites, wecaf.on.ca and wecas.on.ca are updated regularly with new information, features and timely news related to such items as donations, job postings, testimonials and media advisories. The marquee on the front lawn of the Riverside Drive headquarters provides ongoing digital messaging to the thousands of drivers who pass this way each day.

An exciting introduction of a monthly eNewsletter occurred this past fall. This provides an electronic snapshot each month of some of the highlights impacting both the Society and the Foundation. Videos are also now being produced internally. Some of the topics are the impact of educational bursaries and the advantages of becoming a foster parent. These are being featured on our web-sites and via YouTube. Another strategy has been the launch of Social Media "Saturation Days". During a chosen day, all Social media channels are flooded with a message, campaign or program of the day.

The results continue to be impactful as we have proven to pursue the many options and resources that are available through this progressive means of communication.

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Teajai Travis entertained us with his jambai drum. Celebrating #BlackHistoryMonth \*

G WindsorEssexCA8

In the heat of battle! #WEGLR @FIRSTRoboticsWE #6202

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# YOUTH ADVISORY COMMITTEE (YAC)

This past year, YAC, a child and youth in care led group, has grown to 30 active and strong voices. Advocating for youth in care has been top on the list as members of the group travelled to meetings and forums throughout the province and abroad. YAC is also a social outlet for our youth as many enjoyable activities bring the group together. As a cohesive team of teens and young adults, YAC has taken on fundraising projects to assist other children and youth locally and globally. The following are just some highlights of a very successful year.

- Celebrated Child & Youth in Care Day, May 15th at Queen's Park
- YAC member received Honourable mention for the Peter Henderson-Bryce Award from the First Nations Child & Family Caring Society of Canada
- The Society and YAC hosted the Office of Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth
- YAC participated in the Our Voice, Our Turn Project for the Advocate's office
- YAC became a member of Youth in Care Canada. WECAS youth featured in Youth in Care Canada newsletter
- Former Society youth in care received the Ontario Medal of Young Volunteers, the highest volunteer recognition given in Ontario at a ceremony at Queen's Park
- YAC members attended the Unicef Conference presented by the Student Commission of Canada

- By invitation, YAC members attended the W.E. Day Change the World conference in Chicago
- Society youth in care participated in the Bark Lake Conference – an Indigenous youth conference
- Completed first YAC Lifebook
- Participated in First Robotics, the only Children's Aid Society team in Ontario
- Launched the YAC Caring, Sharing Library
- YAC members attended the Youth Can Conference at McMaster University
- YAC members volunteered for the Windsor-Essex Children's Aid Fundraiser, Fireworks Night raising funds for Summer Camp
- Past YAC President attended Brazil Olympics with other local youth as a result of the generosity of Mr. Bill Van Wyck
- A Gay Straight Alliance was born out of WECAS at the request of the youth
- Held a Lemonade Sale with all proceeds directed to a school in Kenya
- Participated in a food drive
- Collected and donated personal care items to the Windsor Youth Centre

In the Words of an Old Song, "We're Getting Better, Growing Stronger"

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# **PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

Through the implementation of the Provincial Performance Management and Measurement System, Children's Aid Societies across Ontario have been collecting data to monitor service outcomes. Performance Indicators play a key role in strategic performance management, as well as in continuous service improvement and ensuring that children, youth, and families have positive outcomes. Five of these indicators are reported publicly on an annual basis to the Ministry of Child and Youth Services and posted on the MCYS and Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies websites.WECAS also posts them on our agency website. The chart below shows the most recent three years of publicly reported indicators. Results for 2016/17 will be published in next year's reporting cycle.

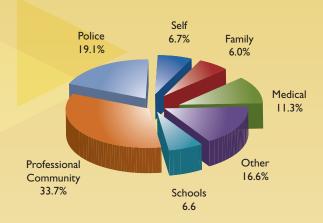
RECURRENCE OF PROTECTION CONCERNS IN A FAMILY AFTER AN INVESTIGATION The percentage of cases closed at investigation in the fiscal year that were re-investigated within 12 months of closing where allegations of maltreatment / protection concerns were verified2012/13 >> 15.7% 2013/14 >> 16.6% 2014/15 >> 15.9%				
RECURRENCE OF PROTECTION CONCERNS IN A FAMILY AFTER ONGOING PROTECTION SERVICES WERE PROVIDED The percentage of cases closed at ongoing services in the fiscal year that were re-investigated within 12 months of closing where the allegations of maltreatment/protections concerns were verified				
DAYS OF CARE BY PLACEMENT TYPE* Family based care is the preferred option for most children and youth	FAMILY B/   2012/13 >> 73.6%   2013/14 >> 80.5%   2014/15 >> 84.2%	ASED GROUP ALL OTHER 19.2% 7.2% 12.2% 7.3% 9.0% 6.8%		
TIME TO PERMANENCY2012/13For all children brought into care during the fiscal year, the percentage who exited by 12 month intervals. (Where data is missing, the interval has not yet elapsed.)2014/15	>> 56.3% 18.4	<mark>% 8.3%</mark> 23.3%		
QUALITY OF THE CAREGIVER-YOUTH RELATIONSI FOR CHILDREN IN CARE* The average score 8 for all children ages 10 to 17, who have been society care for over a year. Each child rates hi her relationship using a 4 question scale	Dut of 2012/13 >>   in 2013/14 >>	10-15 (MEAN) 16+ (MEAN)   6.4 6.3   7.0 5.7   6.8 6.0		

\*These PIs were validated and reported to OACAS

# STATISTICAL AND FINANCIAL REVIEW

#### OUR WORK: WHAT IT'S ALL ABOUT

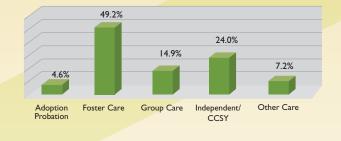
**How our Community Assists in Keeping Children Safe:** A referral is when someone in the community has a concern and believes that a child or family would benefit from WECAS assistance. As noted in the chart below our referral sources remain consistent with previous years.



The table below reflects the primary reason for eligibility for service at the time of referral.

Section I	I Physical/Sexual Harm		694	21.76%
Section 2	Harm by Omission	Total	458	14.36%
Section 3	Emotional Harm	Total	731	<b>22.92</b> %
Section 4	Abandonment/Separation	Total	141	4.42%
Section 5	Caregiver Capacity	Total	1101	34.51%
Section 6	Request for Counselling	Total	4	0.13%
Section 7	Request for Adoption Services	Total	17	0.53%
Section 8	Family Based Care	Total	44	1.38%

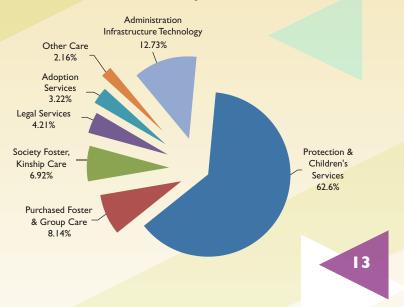
As reflected in the chart below when children are admitted into the care of WECAS the most appropriate resource is utilized to meet the child's needs.



Child Welfare Data	2016/2017	2015/2016
Intake Services - Investigation & Assessment		
New child protection referrals	3,392	3,214
Investigations completed	3,125	2,963
Family Services - Ongoing Protection		
New ongoing protection cases transferred from Intake	1,018	913
Average open ongoing protection cases	١,499	I,456
Kinship Service Home Studies	185	170
Family Visitation Access Program - Annual Visitation	17,999	16,911
Family Well Being Program - Admission Prevention		
Families Served	695	678
Children's Services		
New admissions into Care	268	213
Total children served	817	866
Discharged from Care	311	317
Average CCSY (18+)	122	136
Average Children In Care	529	593
Resources and Adoption Services		
Average foster homes available	167	177
Average Kinship Care homes available	27	43
Children adopted during the year	32	37
Volunteer Services		
Total volunteers	237	210
Total volunteer hours	66,000	70,000
Volunteer kilometers driven	2,987,704	2,809,300

Child Welfare- Expenditures*	2016/2017	2015/2016
Boarding and Client Services	17,209,696	18,133,489
Staffing Wages, Travel and Training	40,032,051	38,252,521
Administration	3,617,238	3,067,814
Total Gross Expenditures	60,858,895	59,453,824
Other Income	2,262,661	2,227,553
Net Expenditures	\$58,596,324	\$57,226,271

#### How the Dollar Was Spent - \$58.6 Million



# COMMUNITY HUB 33 – COLLABORATION FOR SERVICE EXCELLENCE IN ESSEX COUNTY

The Windsor-Essex Children's Aid Society has for many years had a presence in Leamington. We have valued the long standing relationships with partner agencies and community organizations. It has always been a priority of the Society to provide quality services to the citizens of Essex County. The opening of Community Hub 33 on May 26, 2016 served to enhance this mandate. The one stop availability of services provided by the City of Windsor Employment & Social Services, The Windsor-Essex County Health Unit, Children First, Community Living, Essex and the Windsor-Essex Children's Aid Society, creates a synergy and cohesive approach to service delivery.

To accommodate this expansion, the staffing levels were also increased to provide for two teams of Intake workers and four teams of Family Service workers. The Family Well Being presence has also been enhanced to offer groups in the Leamington office. The goal is for WECAS county clients to have access to the same level of service as they would in Windsor and eliminating transportation as a barrier. Family Visitation has increased their hours to meet the demands for family access in the Leamington area. This greater presence in Learnington has enabled WECAS to have a higher profile in the community, which has resulted in enhanced relationships with our families and communities.



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