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SUPPORTING TODAY'S FAMILIES &
INSPIRING TOMORROW'S FUTURE
WECAS STAFF MAKING A DIFFERENCE



A MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Ms. Dana D'Andrea,
BEd, MSW, RSW
Board Chair



Mr. Derrick Drouillard,
BSW, MSW, RSW
Executive Director

As we look back on the 2018-2019 fiscal year, we are mindful of the fact that this has been a time of significant change for the Windsor-Essex Children's Aid Society. There is new leadership in terms of the appointment of Derrick Drouillard as the agency's Executive Director. In November, the agency launched the Child Protection Information Network (CPIN). This system links all Children's Aid Societies in Ontario with file, financial and reporting data. This was a significant undertaking that continues to impact all staff and management within the organization. WECAS staff and management have demonstrated resilience and true commitment in terms of operationalizing this major change. Building on efforts from the previous year, the agency continued to exercise fiscal responsibility and adopt to new ways to carry out business and deliver services.

WECAS is funded by the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services. Being good stewards of public funds, we have adopted new business practices and reviewed all areas of the organization to assure that our work is being completed in a responsible, efficient and financially effective manner. This has taken us from a deficit position a year ago to a financial surplus at the end of this fiscal year. As always, we continue to be fully transparent and accountable in terms of our operations.

We are grateful for the diligence and patience of our management and CUPE negotiating committees who collectively achieved consensus on new contracts. Both contracts were ratified by their respective memberships.

WECAS continues to celebrate its partnerships in the community. Derrick has met with a number of leaders in the social services and business communities as well as local politicians in the past year. As well as being an orientation for him, it has been an opportunity to review our working relationships

and explore expanded or new partnerships and protocols. In all areas of the organization, we continue to ensure that our staff and management interact in a manner consistent with Anti-Oppressive practices by prioritizing diversity, equity and inclusion. We have also included this as a priority in terms of hiring procedures. The Board of Directors received Diversity training this year and will be approving an updated Diversity and Inclusive policy in September.

In terms of charting the course for the future, we refer to a quote from Stephen R. Covey, "Live out your imagination, not your history". A re-imagined child welfare system starts with each of us asking the question, "What needs to happen..."? What needs to happen in order for us to provide services to best address the needs of children, youth and families? This would be based on the premise of providing support to families so they may remain together and thrive in their community, with access to the services and resources that they need to be successful.

Child welfare is but one service provider within a complex social service system. Child welfare's part is to assure the safety and well-being of the children and youth in its communities. The families, children and youth that we serve are amongst the most vulnerable. They face major social problems; poverty, mental health, marginalization, addictions; and intimate partner violence, just to name a few. So what would need to happen for us to achieve successful outcomes? Collectively, the mindset must be that children, youth and families need to be treated equitably. They need to be engaged and empowered. Social service providers must come together to assure flexible responses and accessible offerings that are well resourced and funded. We will be encouraging a dialogue in the year ahead that will bring all involved to the table to re-imagine child welfare. A refocus on the safety and well-being of children and youth by enhancing families' strengths will be key in terms of achieving successful outcomes. It's imperative that we preserve lifetime family connections. Together, we can make a difference!

The theme for this annual report is, "Supporting Today's Families & Inspiring Tomorrow's Future. WECAS Staff Making a Difference". You will find some examples within this booklet of the many success stories that reflect the dedication of our staff and management in terms of encouraging and inspiring our children, youth and families to maximize their potential. Staff and management at WECAS really care about making a difference. They rise above the call of duty to support any initiative or help those we serve at any time. Any organization is only as strong as the people who believe in what it stands for. We take pride in this special group of people who are playing such an important role in changing lives for the better. Also, many thanks to our volunteers, foster parents, Society and Foundation Board members who are also key team players in fulfilling the mission of the agency.

Dana M. D'Andrea

Ms. Dana D'Andrea, BEd, MSW, RSW
Board Chair

Derrick Drouillard

Mr. Derrick Drouillard, BSW, MSW, RSW
Executive Director



TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Windsor-Essex Children's Aid Society acknowledges the sacred land upon which we are located. We recognize that this land has been inhabited by Indigenous peoples from the beginning. This is the Traditional territory of the Three Fires Confederacy of First Nations, comprised of the Ojibway, the Odawa, and the Potawatomie people. We are grateful to have the opportunity to live and work on this land. We are especially mindful of our commitment to Truth and Reconciliation, and acknowledge that we walk upon territories and original nations of the first peoples of this land.

We polled our staff.
This is what they said...

WHAT MAKES YOU FEEL VALUED?

"I feel valued when I am being listened to, heard, and that action is then taken to address the concerns I presented."





KEN'S STORY

This story is about a father named Ken and his three children, ages 12, 9, and 2. A number of years ago, Ken became involved with a woman who had struggles with drug use which led to domestic violence, and poor parenting skills. Ken is 65 years old and a survivor of pancreatic cancer. In June 2018, Ken was still living with this woman and the family was being evicted from their home. The Society's involvement was primarily for crisis management, as the family was going to be homeless. Ken was given a very short amount of time to find housing, or the children would be brought to a place of safety.

When a WECAS worker started working with the family, Ken made the difficult decision to end his relationship with his partner, as her substance use (current) and relationship with her past ex-partner was a significant concern. Ken and the children were very hesitant to co-operate with the Society. Initially upon meeting Ken, the worker knew she had to quickly develop a trusting and positive rapport with him and the children in order to ensure the family remained together with as much support as the Society could provide.

Ken and the children transitioned from living with a relative and sleeping on air mattresses and couches, to the Welcome Centre and staying at a few hotels in between. His worker visited him at each location weekly. She wrote letters on his behalf to landlords, she had meetings and phone calls with Welcome Centre staff, Central Housing and the City of Windsor to advocate for him to ensure that they did not discharge Ken and the children as they had planned to do so. Ultimately, Ken secured a private rental and moved into a home with the three children.

Over the course of his involvement with WECAS, Ken has been receptive to support and donations from the community to help him get settled in his home. He has benefited from the Foundation's Back Pack and Holiday programs, a turkey donation, food cards, items/toys for the children, Spitfire tickets and also tickets to a play in the community. Two of the children attend the Homework Program. The kids are doing well in school (The 9 year old just received Student of the Month for resiliency) and are now attending the Regional Children's Centre for counselling. Ken also worked with the Family Well-Being program. The WECAS worker has been working with the family for close to a year and has seen Ken change from essentially being homeless to now being a protective parent that has made positive choices for the children. Ken and his WECAS worker have worked together effectively to ensure the safety and well-being of the children.

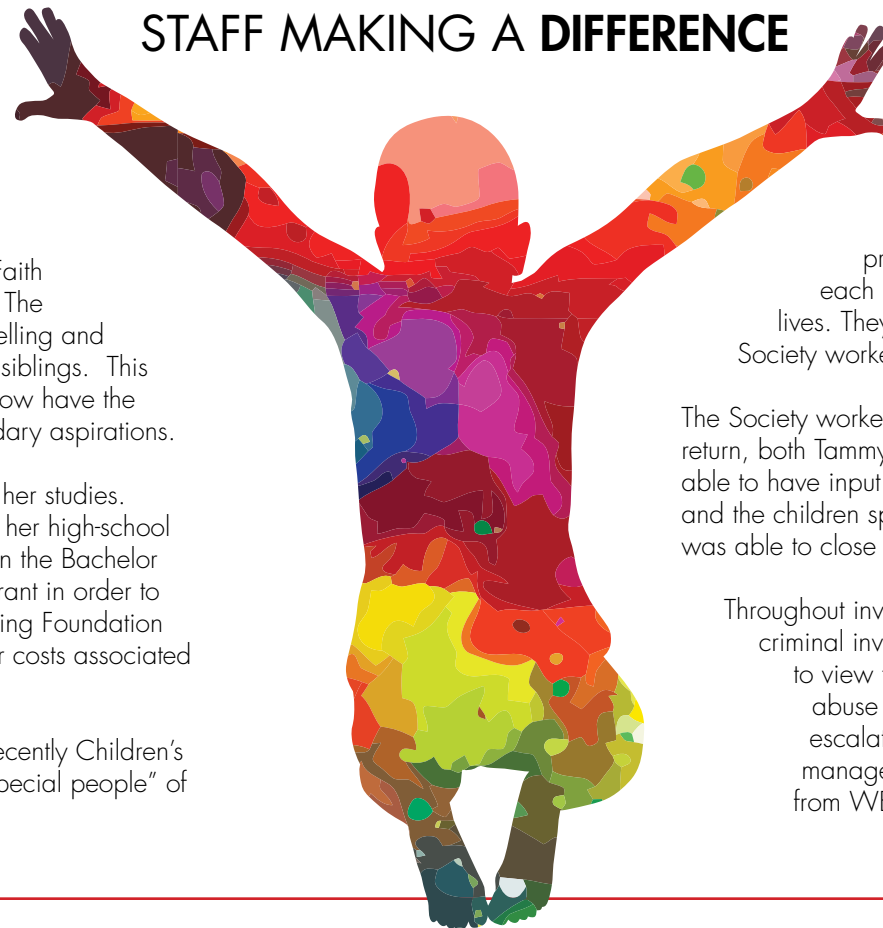
FAITH'S STORY

Faith is a very resilient 17 year old. She is sweet, kind, responsible, and driven. Faith has watched her mother struggle with addiction and mental health issues her entire life. Her father is also not someone she can rely upon. As a result, Faith has made several moves in her life. Faith moved into a kinship arrangement with her grandfather and she and her sister did well there. The Kinship worker provided them with supports and connection to community resources for counselling and financial supports. They then transitioned to the step-father as he has custody of their two half siblings. This placement did not work out and they were returned to the grandfather's home and both girls now have the supports of a worker. The worker is arranging for Faith to obtain a bursary for her post-secondary aspirations.

Faith has always maintained a positive outlook on life despite the challenges and focusses on her studies. Faith takes her education very seriously and has maintained a high grade average throughout her high-school education. She is currently in grade 12. She was just accepted to the University of Windsor in the Bachelor of Arts program for Psychology. She received a laptop from the Scotia Bank Stay in School Grant in order to assist with her academics. The Family Well-Being worker also supported her with a Silver Lining Foundation request and was able to get her financial support to assist with costs of a dress, hair and other costs associated with celebrating the conclusion of her high school journey.

Faith has been involved with the WECAS Kinship Department, Family Well-Being, and most recently Children's Services. She is very appreciative of the assistance and support that, as she calls them, "the special people" of the agency have provided to her.

SUPPORTING & INSPIRING STAFF MAKING A DIFFERENCE



Calum is a 19 year old former crown ward who is currently involved with our Continued Care and Support for Youth (CCSY) program. Calum has significant mental health needs as he suffers from paranoia and social anxiety.

Given Calum's struggles with his mental health, he had not attended school for over a year, was not able to attend medical appointments, and typically did not leave his house aside from attending his back yard for very short periods. With the support of his CCSY worker, Calum started to attend monthly medical appointments at the Teen Health Centre. Initially his worker was very creative in helping Calum get comfortable with the idea of attending a medical appointment. She began by simply driving around the block, next steps were to enter from the back door, to eventually entering through the front lobby and entering the waiting room.

Given the progress Calum was making with his medical appointments and leaving the house he expressed a desire to return to school and work on obtaining his high school diploma. Calum acknowledged that he was not prepared or ready to take the city bus and his worker was a great advocate in helping to secure him a volunteer driver through financial support from the Windsor-Essex Children's Aid Foundation.

Calum continues to make gains and inspires to achieve new goals he sets out for himself. He has now started to practice taking a city bus with assistance from a worker at CMHA, has attended Youth Advisory Committee events and CCSY groups, and is also involved with New Beginnings. Calum's worker is beyond proud of all the hard work he puts in to taking care of his mental health, working towards his goals, and has truly enjoyed seeing first hand all the progress he has made. Despite his worker being so very humble and feeling that Calum deserves all the credit, it is without a doubt a testament to his worker that there has been such tremendous progress made with Calum this past year.

CALUM'S STORY

AUSTIN'S STORY



Tammy and Dennis are parents of three teenagers. This family became involved with the Society due to parent/child conflict as the father, Dennis, was charged after he hit his teenage daughter during an escalated argument. As per his conditions at the time, Dennis was to have no contact with his daughter and was not to attend the family home.

During their involvement with the Society, the family was completely engaged in all services recommended by workers especially with the Society's Family Well-Being program. After each session, they took the time to decide how each skill that they learned could be implemented in their daily lives. They were enthusiastic about the strategies they learned, and they were always eager to share with Society workers about how these new skills and strategies were working in the home.

The Society workers safety planned with Dennis and Tammy to ensure a safe return home for Dennis. Since his return, both Tammy and Dennis are now more collaborative with their children by ensuring that the children are able to have input in household decisions and are clear on the rules of the home. Conflict has been mitigated, and the children speak positively about their current relationships with their parents. Due to this progress, the file was able to close to the Society.

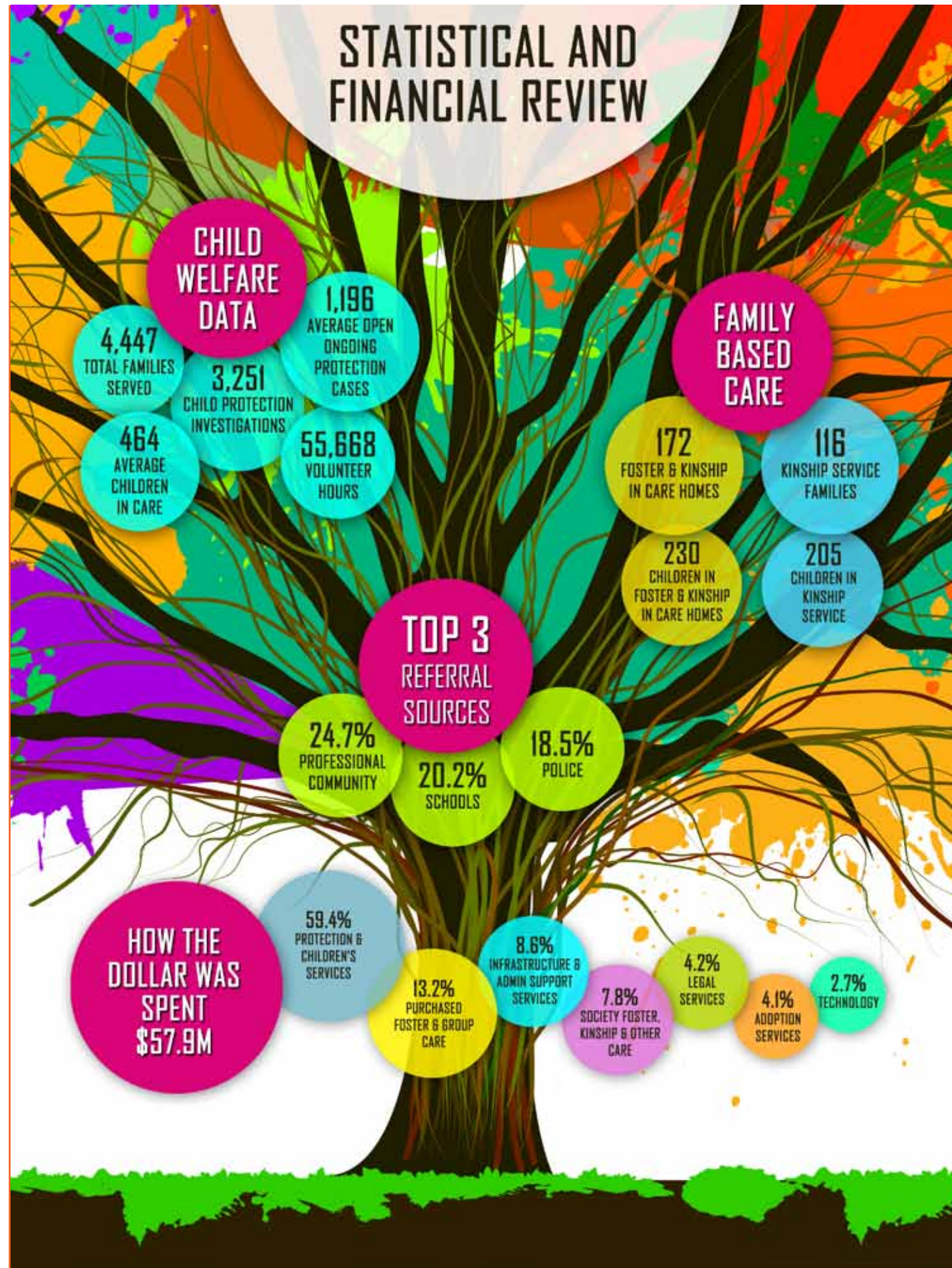
Throughout involvement with this family, instead of viewing the Society and the criminal involvement as strictly a negative, Tammy and Dennis were always able to view the positives of the situation. They were able to realize that, had the abuse not been reported, conflict in the home would have continued to escalate, and they would not have the skills and strategies to stop it or to manage their children. They are grateful for how the support they received from WECAS staff can help them to parent more effectively moving forward.

**WHAT MAKES
YOU FEEL
VALUED?**

**"Being
part of a
supportive
team."**



STATISTICAL AND FINANCIAL REVIEW



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SENIOR MANAGEMENT 2018-2019

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 Ms. Jaclyn Beaudoin, Human Resources Manager

WHAT MAKES YOU FEEL VALUED?

"When I am encouraged and supported in creating out of the box solutions to issues facing our youth and foster parents. I like the collaborative relationship between the Children's Services and Resource department."

"I feel valued when I get positive feedback on my work from my supervisor and co-workers. We have the best team!"

"Being told what a great job I did, having a supervisor who understands and is willing to problem solve with me."

