



# 2023-2024 ANNUAL REPORT

# A Message from the

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# BOARD CHAIR & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



The past year has been exceptionally challenging for the child welfare sector, and our agency has not been immune to these pressures. We have faced significant financial constraints, served families with complex needs, and grappled with the shortage of essential services, such as residential placements. These challenges underscore the urgent need for a comprehensive overhaul of the social service system to better support children, youth, and families in our community.

Despite these obstacles, we are immensely proud of our dedicated staff and their unwavering commitment to the children and families we serve. Their hard work and dedication have been instrumental in achieving positive outcomes through our collaborative efforts with community partners, stakeholders, and service providers.

## PROGRESS

### **STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS:**

In alignment with our mission to protect and promote the well-being of children and youth, we have focused on our strategic priorities. Our staff have been committed to ensuring we practice through a lens of cultural humility and competency, working alongside families we serve to reduce issues of overrepresentation in our priority populations. We are pleased to report significant progress in this area.

### **CHILD PROTECTION AND FAMILY SUPPORT:**

Our dedicated staff have worked tirelessly to ensure that every child in our care receives the necessary services and resources. We supported 3501 families, with a focus on keeping families together in the community and reducing the number of children that require alternative formal care with us.

### **COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATION:**

Our collaborative work with community partners like the City of Windsor, New Beginnings and the Windsor Essex Community Housing Corporation, has been impactful. Together, we've ensured enhanced services

and supports for our Ready, Set, Go (RSG) Youth Program through the Crawford Supportive Housing Initiative. In addition, our partnership with the Maryvale Children's Mental Health Treatment Centre is underway to assist youth with complex needs in finding viable solutions to best support their needs.

### **EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION (EDI):**

We have implemented several Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) initiatives, including staff training, policy reviews, and community outreach efforts. These are crucial to ensuring that our services are inclusive and accessible to all members of our community. We held events recognizing our priority populations, such as celebrating Black History Month with the Black African Caribbean Canadian (BACC) community and acknowledging the various Nations we serve during Indigenous Peoples Day and the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. We also hosted an Iftar Dinner in celebration of Ramadan and held our own Pride flag raising ceremony during Pride Month alongside community partners and allies of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community and more!

## CHALLENGES

### **FUNDING CONSTRAINTS:**

Like many not-for-profit organizations, we are experiencing funding challenges, which have impacted our ability to expand programs and services. We continue to advocate for increased funding and investments to meet the growing needs of our community.

### **INCREASED DEMAND FOR SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH WITH COMPLEX NEEDS:**

In the wake of the unparalleled demand for mental health/complex needs and family support, our agency

has seen a surge in families in our community seeking help that the child welfare system just can't fulfill alone. Our dedicated staff are working tirelessly to address the demand, but it's clear that more support is desperately needed.

### **STAFFING AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT:**

Attracting and retaining top talent remains a challenge. We are committed to creating a supportive work environment that fosters professional growth and development.

## Financial Overview:

Our financial position remains precarious, but our commitment to prudent fiscal management has allowed us to allocate resources efficiently for maximum impact. The current community context and demands for service have placed immense pressure on our budget, but we remain dedicated to serving those in need.

## FOCUSING ON THE FUTURE

### Enhancing Service Delivery:

We will continue to explore innovative ways to deliver services more effectively, including leveraging technology and data to improve outcomes for children and families.

### Strengthening Community Ties:

Building stronger connections with our community

partners will remain a priority, ensuring that we can provide comprehensive support to those in need.

### Advocacy and Public Awareness:

We are committed to advocating for policy changes and increased funding to better serve our community. Raising public awareness about the importance of child welfare will also be a priority.

In closing, we would like to express our sincere gratitude to our Board of Directors, staff, volunteers, foster/kin caregivers, and community partners for their commitment and support. Your dedication and passion for our mission make a difference in the lives of the children and families we serve every day. Together, we are making a positive impact in the Windsor-Essex community.

## RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,



A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'K. Virk'.

Mr. Kulveer Virk  
M. Eng. PMP  
Board Chair



A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'D. Drouillard'.

Mr. Derrick Drouillard  
BSW, MSW, RSW  
Executive Director

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## 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.

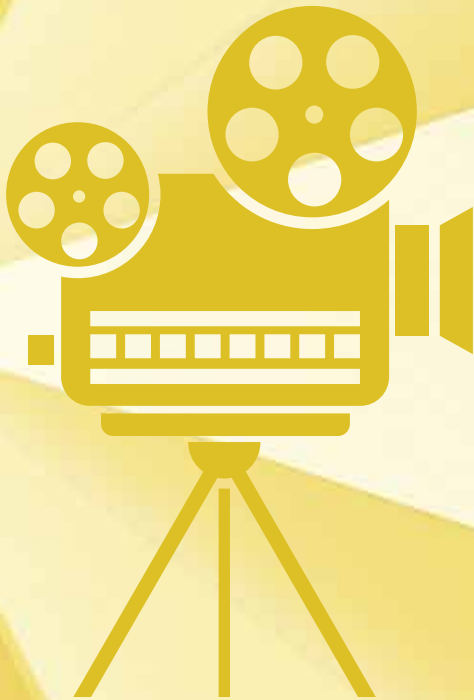
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## LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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 acknowledge the traditional ancestral and unceded territory and waters of Caldwell First Nation. These are the original People of Pelee Island, Point Pelee and what is now known as Southern Ontario. 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.



# 2023-2024 At a Glance



**NATIONAL DAY FOR AWARENESS OF MISSING & MURDERED INDIGENOUS WOMEN, GIRLS & TWO-SPIRIT PEOPLE (MMIWG2S+)** - On May 5, 2023, WECAS acknowledged MMIWG2S+ Day through a virtual all staff meeting. RED dresses were displayed outside the building to signify the importance of recognizing the violence that Indigenous Women, Girls and Two Spirit People continue to endure. (1)

**GOURMET GARDENS 2023** - WECAF's signature event, Gourmet Gardens, was held on Sunday, May 7th at Sprucewood Shores Estate Winery.

**WE R HERE, WECAS BOARDROOM MURAL PROJECT** - In partnership with Art Windsor Essex (AWE) and local artist Talysha Bujold-Abu, WECAS hosted a series of art workshops which culminated in a mural in WECAS's Boardroom that is inspired by community and designed by muralist Julie Hall. (2)

**WECAS ALL-STAFF MEETING & APPRECIATION BBQ** – On June 12th, WECAS hosted an all-staff meeting and Staff Appreciation BBQ.

**PRIDE RECOGNITION CEREMONY** - Our agency held a Pride Recognition Ceremony on Thursday, August 3rd in recognition of Pride Month 2023 and to affirm WECAS' ongoing commitment and solidarity to the 2SLGBTQIA+ community. The theme for this year's ceremony was 'Becoming the Affirming Community that Children & Youth Need'. (3)

**VISIT FROM MCCSS DEPUTY MINISTER, DENISE COLE** - On August 24th, WECAS hosted the MCCSS Deputy Minister, Denise Cole. The purpose of the visit was to provide the Deputy Minister with an opportunity to connect with staff and discuss the programs offered by WECAS. (4)

**NATIONAL DAY FOR TRUTH & RECONCILIATION** - On September 27th, WECAS staff came together to acknowledge the National Day for Truth & Reconciliation. (5)





**FORTIS GROUP GOLF TOURNAMENT** - The Fortis Group Golf Tournament held at Ambassador Golf & Country Club, August 10th was a huge success with \$90,000 raised for WECAF programs. A cheque presentation took place on September 19th. (6)



**RISE FREQUENCY TOUR EVENTS** - In partnership with R.I.S.E. Edutainment and Randell Adjei, Ontario's first Poet Laureate, WECAS was pleased to host a stop on the RISE Frequency Tour by facilitating two events for local youth on October 2 & 3. (7)

**DRESS PURPLE DAY 2023** – WECAS held a Dress Purple Day Pancake Breakfast on October 27th and spotlighted 10 community partners who shared the prevention and early intervention programs/ services they provide to vulnerable children, youth and families in our community. (8)



**HOLIDAY DINNER FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING/RSG YOUTH** - The dinner was held at the Hellenic Centre on December 5th.

**BLACK HISTORY MONTH** - February was filled with Black History Month celebrations largely led and coordinated by some of our staff who identify as Black, African Canadian and/or Caribbean (BACC). On February 12th, an all-staff meeting was held.



**FOOD FOR FAMILIES ON FAMILY DAY** – Four local businesses joined forces on February 19th, to provide 1,200 bags filled with groceries for families supported by WECAS. (9)

**WECAS PODCAST** – On February 24th, WECAS launched an innovative new podcast, Inspiring Community.

**CRAWFORD SUPPORTIVE INITIATIVE HOUSING** – WECAS, the City of Windsor and the Windsor Essex Housing Corporation (CHC) partnered to create a youth supportive housing complex with dedicated life skills programming.



# FINANCIAL SUMMARY



	2023-2024	2022-2023
Province of Ontario	\$ 57,198,677	\$ 56,919,069
Other Income	693,040	451,921
Non-Retainable Revenue & Expenditure Recoveries	2,282,004	2,079,625
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>60,173,721</b>	<b>59,450,615</b>
Salaries, Benefits, Travel and Training	41,398,212	41,189,362
Boarding Rate Payments	13,842,402	11,983,987
Child, Youth and Family Costs	4,897,163	5,226,076
Administration and Technology	4,250,584	4,115,413
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>64,388,361</b>	<b>62,514,838</b>
<b>Deficiency of Revenue Over Expenditures</b>	<b>\$ (4,214,640)</b>	<b>\$ (3,064,223)</b>

Audited financial statements available at [wecas.on.ca](http://wecas.on.ca)

## SERVICE statistics

... **3,501**

Families Served in Community with Protection Concerns

... **2,753**

Investigations Completed

... **748**

Average Families Served at Ongoing Protection



... **341.6**

Staff \*Full-time Equivalent

... **123**

Volunteers

... **256**

Community Links

... **98**

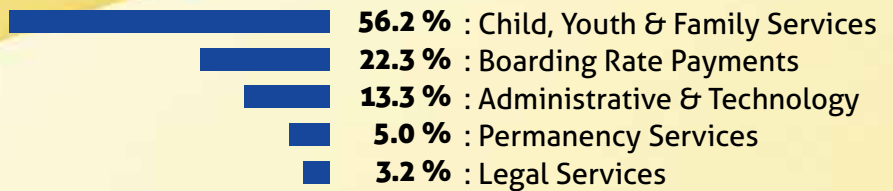
Kinship Service homes

... **110**

Foster & Kinship Care Homes



## HOW THE DOLLAR WAS SPENT

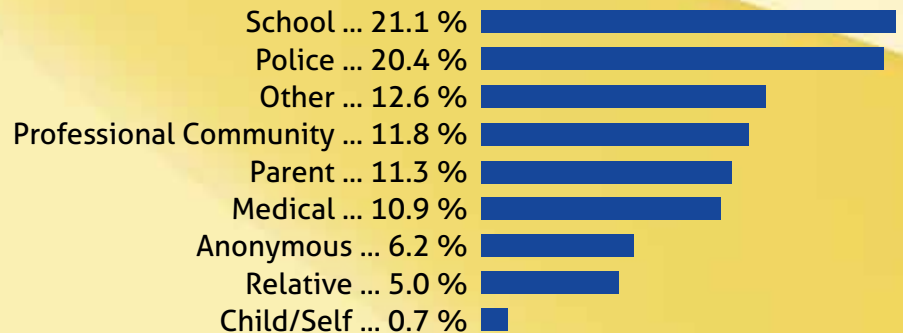


**TOTAL / Year ended March 31, 2024**  
**\$62,106,375 (NET)**

## CHILDREN & YOUTH served

- ... 223 ... Children and Youth Served in Care
- ... 190 ... Youth Served Through RSG Program
- ... 131 ... Children and Youth in Kinship Service
- ... 6 ... Transitional Aged Youth
- ... 21 ... Adoptions Completed

## REFERRAL sources



**Total 3,801**



# 2023-2024

## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Mr. Kulveer Virk, Chair

Ms. Stephanie Savoni, Vice Chair

Ms. Melissa Cuzzocrea, Treasurer

Ms. Stephanie Williams, Secretary

Cst. Shane Renaud, Services Planning Committee Chair

Dr. Mohammed Hussain

Dr. Vikesh Maraj

Supt. Brendan Dodd

Dr. Nila Das

Ms. Princess Small

Mr. Adam Coates

Ms. Kendall Dunlop, Youth Representative

## **SENIOR LEADERSHIP**

Mr. Derrick Drouillard, Executive Director

Ms. Olivia Carlini, Director of Finance and Administration

Ms. Jaclyn Beaudoin, Director of Human Resources

Mr. Leonardo Gil, Senior Director of Services (started June 2023)

Dr. Kim Brisebois, Director of Intake and After Hours

Mr. Bill Morris, Director of Resources, Permanency and Volunteers

Ms. Loran Dutka, Director of Family Services

Mr. Lyle Ward, Director of Children Services (retired June 2023)

Ms. Jacqueline Bobyk-Krumins, Director of Children Services

Mr. Hugo Vega, Director of Equity, Diversity & Inclusion

Ms. Claudine Wilson, Director of Legal & Privacy Services

Mr. Siju Simon, Director of Family Services (August 2023 – May 2024)





The Windsor-Essex Children's Aid Society (WECAS) is excited about offering an innovative audio podcast, *Inspiring Community*. WECAS is very aware of the diverse, multi-faceted elements of our community that come together to support children, youth and families as they celebrate success and rise to overcome significant financial, social and mental health challenges. Hosts Mike Clark and Tina Allen will be reaching out to many of WECAS' community partners and resource organizations to provide insight and helpful suggestions. These will in turn provide a tool kit for listeners to apply in terms of managing parenting issues, financial strain, strengthening relationships, self-care and so much more.

Join us as we look at new ways to reach for a better tomorrow.

**Listen on Apple Podcasts, YouTube Music, Spotify or Podbean**

For more information contact 519-252-1171 / 1671 Riverside Drive East / Windsor, ON N8Y 5B5  
wecas.on.ca