



DURHAM
Children's Aid Society



ANNUAL REPORT 2023/2024

we acknowledge

We acknowledge this land is situated within the traditional and treaty territory of the Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation, signatories of the 1788 Gunshot Treaty and 1923 Williams Treaties.

This land is home to the Indigenous Peoples.

Let us acknowledge the deliberate acts and traumas of the past through authenticity, solidarity, truth, and reconciliation.

Let us celebrate Indigenous communities by being leaders of action in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's recommendations.

Let us move forward together with kindness and respect.



The Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation moved into southern Ontario from their former homeland north of Lake Huron around the year 1700. The Mississaugas are a branch of the greater Ojibwa Nation, one of the largest native groups in Canada.



The Johnson-Butler Purchase of 1787-88 (the "Gunshot Treaty," referring to the distance a person could hear a gunshot from the lake's edge) is one of the earliest land agreements between representatives of the Crown and the Indigenous peoples of Upper Canada (later Ontario).



The Williams Treaties were signed in 1923 by the governments of Canada and Ontario and by seven First Nations: Alderville, Chippewas of Beausoleil, Chippewas of Georgina Island, Chippewas of Rama, Curve Lake, Hiawatha and Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation.



This Declaration provides a road map for the Government of Canada and First Nations, Inuit, and Metis peoples to work together to implement lasting reconciliation, healing, and cooperative relations.



The Truth and Reconciliation Commission provided those affected by the legacy of the residential schools policy with an opportunity to share their stories and experiences. The Commission released its final report detailing 94 calls to action.

Message from the Board President

This is my final Annual General Meeting in this seat as Board President. It has been an absolute pleasure serving the Durham CAS for these years. Having a seat at the table is a common phrase so many of us use today, but what does that really mean. For me, this means I have an opportunity to show up, disrupt inequities, represent communities, build bridges, create access and opportunities and impact change.

As president of the Board of Directors, I am extremely proud of the work of both the staff and board members. However, this will be my last annual report for Durham CAS as I am retiring from the board this year. This report highlights the dedication and hard work of many people, including staff, board members, foster and kin caregivers, community partners and many others.

This year we continued to see significant systemic and service changes both caused by and influenced by factors such as settling into a new normal after the pandemic, Ministry directives, financial pressures, a rise in challenges faced by marginalized communities, and increasing barriers to community services.

Throughout these challenges, our board and staff demonstrated remarkable resilience and a commitment to working together to ensure sustainable, effective and culturally responsive services. Staff have had to become creative and flexible to ensure that families have

access to the supports they need when they need them.

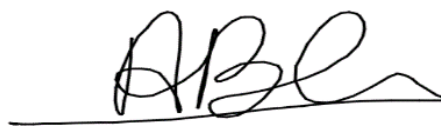
I would also like to recognize our partners in the community. The child welfare sector cannot do this work alone. Our collaborative efforts are fundamental to addressing the challenges of the communities we serve. Together we can further enhance the quality of services available for children, youth and families.

Along with a commitment to ongoing service excellence, I believe strongly in the work of the board and staff to recognize, challenge and dismantle systemic oppression and inequity against racialized and historically marginalized populations. Ensuring that we address the unique circumstances and needs of Black, Indigenous, 2SLGBTQI+ communities, individuals with varying visible and invisible abilities, and those facing the hardships of poverty must always be at the forefront in all our decision making.

As I near the end of my tenure, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the staff, caregivers and volunteers for your dedication and commitment to supporting all children, youth and families in the most appropriate manner for each family.

Thank you to my colleagues on the board for your trust in my leadership and your unwavering passion for helping the children, youth and families in Durham Region.

Nuff love and blessings,



Andrew B. Campbell (DR.ABC)



Message from the Executive Director

In preparation for this year's annual report, I reflected not only on our achievements of this past year but also on all the challenges and accomplishments of the last five years. After five years at Durham CAS, I am retiring this fall. This will be my last annual report for Durham CAS. It has been my honour to work alongside our remarkable staff and board members through some unprecedented obstacles to bring innovative and effective services to support families.

As we approach the final stages of our current Strategic Plan (2021 to 2025) I am proud to share updates on some of the goals established in the plan.

Our strategic plan identifies three pillars that outline our commitments:

- **Services**: Support families to care for their children and youth in safe and healthy environments within their cultures and communities.
- **Service systems**: Collaborate with diverse organizations, communities and agencies to build comprehensive networks and effective systems for families.
- **Agency**: Ensure staff, volunteers and caregivers reflect our diverse communities and have the support and capacity to serve them to achieve the goals of child welfare re-design.

Our strategic plan is a living document, we strive to ensure that all aspects of our work contribute to these commitments with the

ultimate goal of providing access to quality services that empower families to ensure their own health and wellbeing.

At a time when services in the community are stressed, families are experiencing more and more complex challenges and are intersecting with the child welfare sector. To support families more effectively, we continue to restructure our services delivery model to ensure more responsive, successful, and culturally appropriate services for families. We know that children and youth thrive best when connected to their family networks, therefore finding, seeing and maintaining those family networks remain the core of all our services.

We continue to enhance and adjust changes to our services model as we gather feedback from families and community service providers. We have introduced measures to improve communications with the community including family feedback surveys and Public Accountability Town Hall (PATH) events. The feedback we receive is one of the tools that informs our service planning.

We continue to experience some positive impacts as a result of our work over the last five years. This includes the continuing trend of fewer investigations and fewer cases with ongoing involvement. With a greater emphasis on connecting families with other community-based supports we are seeing a reduced need for more intrusive child welfare involvement.

Message from the Executive Director, cont'd

We continue to build on our commitment to Truth and Reconciliation by ensuring that we remember and learn from the history of Indigenous communities with the child welfare system and work to ensure service delivery honours that unique relationship.

As I conclude my tenure at Durham CAS, I would like to express my sincere gratitude for the dedication and tireless devotion of our staff, foster, kin and adoptive caregivers, volunteers and our community

service providers. I am equally grateful for the hard work and passion of our volunteer board of directors. The efforts of the many people come together in a complex web that ensures that we remain committed to the health and well-being of children, youth and families in our communities.



Steve Woodman
Executive Director



Our story in statistics

On the following pages, we are sharing statistics that reflect the evolution of our services. We have not previously published numbers for some services, therefore we are including only this year's numbers. These numbers help illustrate how we are working to ensure more responsive and equitable services for children, youth and families.

Community Links: Connecting families and services

As part of our efforts to provide less intrusive and more supportive and responsive services for children, youth and families, we have enhanced our Community Links services. When families are connected to and engaged with proper and effective resources, the need for CAS involvement is minimized or eliminated. Working with our community partners results in more families receiving the support they need, in a timely manner without the need for additional CAS intervention.

African Canadian Services: Eliminating barriers and embracing strengths

To address the overrepresentation of Black families in the child welfare sector and related challenges, we continue to enhance our services for Black families. This year, we expanded the capacity of our African Canadian Services (ACS) by establishing two dedicated teams. These teams strive to eliminate barriers and biases, providing services that are culturally respectful and safe for Black families.

We have also expanded and formalized the use of anti-Black racism consultations. These consultations offer an opportunity to assess cases and ensure we proceed in an appropriate manner. Additionally, we have broadened our community partnerships, adding services to our network through both informal networking and formalized service agreements.

People we served 2023/2024

| Services to Families | 2023/2024 | 2022/2023 |
|-----------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Referrals/Calls to Intake | 9,545 | 9,227 |
| New child protection investigations | 3,668 | 3,269 |
| New Family Service Cases | 265 | 245 |
| Open child protection cases at year end | 247 | 295 |
| Families served by Prenatal Support | 44 | 44 |

| Services to Children | 2023/2024 | 2022/2023 |
|-----------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Children admitted to care | 50 | 48 * |
| Children discharged | 106 | 111 |
| Children in care served during the year | 359 | 369 |
| Children in care at year end (under 21) | 253 | 285 |
| Adoptions finalized | 6 | 7 |
| Community Links** | 1,226 | n/a |
| Anti-Black Racism Consultations** | 1,149 | n/a |

*This number has been amended to reflect the accurate definition

**See note on previous page

| Accountability | 2023 |
|------------------|------|
| Privacy Breaches | 10 |

As part of our commitment to accountability to the children, youth, and families we serve, as well as to the people of Ontario, we believe it is important to share information about all aspects of our services. This includes providing information on maintaining ongoing standards to ensure quality service and the integrity of those services. This encompasses both financial and ethical accountability.

Going forward, one of the items we will be reporting is privacy breaches. We are required to track and report privacy breaches to the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Ontario (IPC), who publishes data for public institutions in Ontario. Additionally, we must respond to all breaches by informing those impacted and introducing measures to mitigate their impact and prevent future breaches. This includes implementing policies and procedures regarding technology, service delivery, and staff training.

The IPC tracks data on a calendar-year basis; therefore, the numbers provided here are for the 2023 calendar year.

Financial Summary 2023 / 2024

| Operating Revenue | 2023/2024 | 2022/2023 |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Province of Ontario | 56,784,022 | 55,330,052 |
| Other | 4,265,417 | 4,734,174 |
| Total | 61,049,439 | 60,064,226 |
| | | |
| Operating Expenses | 2023/2024 | 2022/2023 |
| Salaries and benefits | 33,480,106 | 33,241,534 |
| Boarding and client services | 22,812,581 | 19,887,641 |
| Adminstration | 5,659,674 | 6,862,783 |
| Total | 61,952,361 | 59,991,958 |
| | | |
| (Deficit) / Surplus | (902,922) | 72,268 |
| | | |
| | 2023/2024 | 2022/2023 |
| Fund balances, beginning of year | 7,245,088 | 7,172,818 |
| Excess of revenue over expenses (<i>expenses over revenue</i>) | (902,922) | 72,268 |
| Fund balances, end of year | 6,342,166 | 7,245,086 |

Board of Directors and Senior Staff 2023/2024

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Vice-President

Vera Mercier

Treasurer

Nana Ayiku

Secretary

Stacey Lepine-Fisher

Honourary Past President

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