



FAMILY &
CHILDREN'S SERVICES
OF THE WATERLOO REGION

ANNUAL REPORT 2023



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Karen Spencer, Executive Director

Our work begins by collaborating with the children, youth, and families we serve. Many of the people we work with fear the role of child welfare or do not initially see the need for change in their current circumstance, therefore, our help is not always readily accepted. Working through resistance and engaging people to discuss difficult and personal situations takes a lot of skill. I want to begin my report by thanking our frontline staff for their hard work and dedication; without you this important work for our community could not be done.

The important work we do is keeping children safe, while maintaining a focus on the family and keeping families together wherever possible. We are the primary agency in our community with the mandate to keep children and youth safe. While this is our primary responsibility, we know that we cannot do this work alone. The challenges facing families today are complex: racism and discrimination, trauma, addictions, mental health, poverty, and social isolation. In a post-pandemic environment, we see an increase in families in our community struggling to meet basic needs – as basic as food and proper housing. The rise of homelessness and encampments has created more complexity in our community. We are proud to be part of a fabric of agencies in Waterloo Region all working together to support many of the families impacted.

An important partnership for us this year is the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), endorsed fully by our Board of Directors, with Ojibwewin: deo and Six Nations that commits to the transfer of our Indigenous Services to Ojibwewin: deo. This MOU will take some time to complete but it is one way we are demonstrating our commitment to Truth and Reconciliation and honoring Six Nations' responsibility to ensure the wellbeing of Indigenous children living on the Haldimand Tract. Thank you to Cathy Brothers and Capacity Canada for honouring this commitment and journey with the Social Innovation Award. It means a great deal to have the support of our community as we embark on this journey.

On May 2, 2022, our agency lifted all pandemic restrictions in keeping with the direction from the province. We have enjoyed informal gatherings like our ice cream socials over the summer months, and hot chocolate and Lady Glaze donuts to say goodbye to winter! We have especially enjoyed the increased laughter and buzz of activity in the Family Centre. After a three-year lull, we are forging new partnerships. We are excited about one of our newest programs; The Aandanjige Café, a partnership with White Owl that promotes Indigenous values around food.

This past year we had to say goodbye to Our Place – a valued Family Centre partner. I want to acknowledge this organization and their work in helping parents with young children for many years in our community. I also want to thank Our Place for supporting our work by directing funding that they were unable to use, to maintain our System Navigator Program. System Navigators are situated with the following partners: African Family Revival Organization (AFRO), Healing of the Seven Generations, Adventure 4 Change and Kinbridge Community Association. The work of System Navigators is to assist Indigenous, Black, and racialized families navigate the social service system, including child welfare.

Through the generous support of donor Heidi Henschel and the Fairmount Foundation, the Family Centre now has a prominent youth space. Work is underway to engage youth in planning for this space. This space is accessible to all Family Centre partners and their youth. Special thanks to Heidi who has been a supporter of youth resilience for many years.

Valuing the youth perspective was evident in the unveiling of a mural depicting Indigenous culture and representation. The mural is the creation of our youth in the Land-Based Indigenous Pride

group who worked under the guidance of local artistic Michael Cywink. Thank you to the Ontario Trillium Foundation for supporting this group for our Indigenous youth.

It has been a privilege to be invited to participate in the activities of our very own Resilient Rebels and to see the growth and potential in our young people: our future leaders. Helping our youth reach their full potential is a privilege and we are grateful for the Ministry's Ready, Set, Go, program which provides increased supports for youth. Under Ready, Set, Go, we will prepare youth for independence beginning at age 13, increase financial assistance for youth living independently, and provide support to eligible youth up to age 23 years of age.





I hope you will enjoy reading this report and learning more about our work. We are pleased to profile, new SOGIE (sexual orientation, gender identity, and expression) lead Victor Santiago and our collaboration with the VAW (violence against women) sector profiled by Jennifer Hutton, CEO, of Women's Crisis Services. You will also learn about our incredible donors, who support our Foundation in providing children, youth and families with programs and emergency financial assistance that is not funded by the government.

In closing I would like to extend special thanks to the Chair of our Foundation Board Ami Tsarfati for his visionary work with the Foundation. The collaboration between the Foundation and Agency means the agency and its partner agencies can provide early intervention programming to reduce the need for more intrusive child welfare services. It also means that much needed financial assistance can be provided directly to children, youth, and families. Much of the success of our Foundation is attributed to commitment of the Foundation Board of Directors, the work of our talented Foundation staff, and the leadership of Dr. Jill Stoddart, the incoming Executive Director of the Foundation.

I would also like to thank Trisha Robinson our Agency Board Chair for her guidance, who works

alongside a committed Board of Directors who care about the work of child welfare in our community, and who take seriously their oversight in ensuring good quality services to at risk children and youth and their families. Thank you to our community of support: our funder the Ministry, special thanks to our area office for their support, all the staff who support our vision, the foster parents and kin providers who care for children and youth, and the many volunteers who give so freely of their time. Most importantly, thank you to the children, youth, and families we serve, it is our sincere pleasure to work with you along your life's journey.

Warmly,

Karen Spencer





Board of Directors: Agency 2022/2023

- Trisha Robinson (Chair)
- Kelly Laurila (Vice-Chair)
- Lindsay Day (Secretary)
- Ann Marie Beals
- Jim Boles
- Christopher Goss
- Saliha Haidar
- Mema Imahe
- Darren Kelly
- Paulette Lewis
- Joanna Nicol
- Angie Pham
- Aubrey Sherman
- Joe Stuart
- Connie Vanin

Trisha Robinson, Agency Board Chair

The mission of Family and Children's Services of Waterloo Region is to build relationships with families and communities for the wellbeing and safety of children and youth.

2022–2023 was a challenging and productive year. The post-pandemic era that we are currently living in continues to have an impact on the families and children we support, as well as the agency operations and employees.

Waterloo Region has one person who is living less resourced out of every eight residents. Children make up about 15,000 of these people, and poverty is especially prevalent among racialized people.

One of eight residents in Waterloo Region live below the poverty line. Nearly 15,000 of these residents are children and if you are racialized you are more likely to live in poverty.

Children's mental health issues are at an all-time high, we have a housing crisis, and the price of necessities is going up, making it more difficult or often impossible to buy food and other basic needs and racism and hate remain and seem to be growing.

The Board is acutely aware how all these problems

impact the agency; staff workloads are increasing; family issues are becoming progressively much more complex, all the while the organisation is having to cope with less resources to address these issues puts unbelievable strain and stress on the agency.

We have been challenged financially with the reduction of funding while trying to stay optimistic the new funding model reflects our priorities and sector desires for better outcomes for children, youth, and their families and that the funding will be linked to these desired outcomes.

We must concentrate and invest in prevention strategies to keep our children safe while doing everything we can to keep them out of the system and care. This will not happen without Ministries' investments and a comprehensive community approach. To accomplish these outcomes, we must collaborate.

Our work on prevention, reconciliation, and anti-Black racism is ongoing and will continue. We have deep rooted issues in the community and within the agency and we need more Black and Indigenous leaders in our community and organization. People need to see themselves represented on the Board of Directors and within the agency. This will lead us in the needed transformational change.

Despite all the challenges the agency and staff continue to do good work. We are committed to doing what is right for the wellbeing of our families and children. For example, the nomination committee has put much effort into making sure this Board reflects the diversity and representation we require and will keep doing so in the future. The Equity Committee is creating a Board Equity Statement and has adopted a model of consensus for their decision making.

While as a Board we were saddened with Karen's resignation we are very happy for her new journey. Karen is an incredible leader and Executive Director, she advanced the work of the agency and sector with innovation, grace and humility and will be greatly missed.

On behalf of the Board, I want to thank the amazing staff and volunteers led by Executive Director Karen Spencer for their dedication, passion, and good work in helping to make a caring community where children and their families can thrive. The Board of Directors values your efforts, and we celebrate the progress you have made and the work that is being done every day for the children, youth, and families we serve.





OUR CORE VALUES

Transparent

Being open and honest about the activities and actions of FACS Waterloo, including performance and outcomes related to service delivery.

Collaborative

Working together as a united organization, with partners, and with the community towards common goals that support the mission and vision.

Evolving

Consistently learning and growing while adapting and responding to a changing environment.

Respectful

Always treating others in a kind and fair manner.

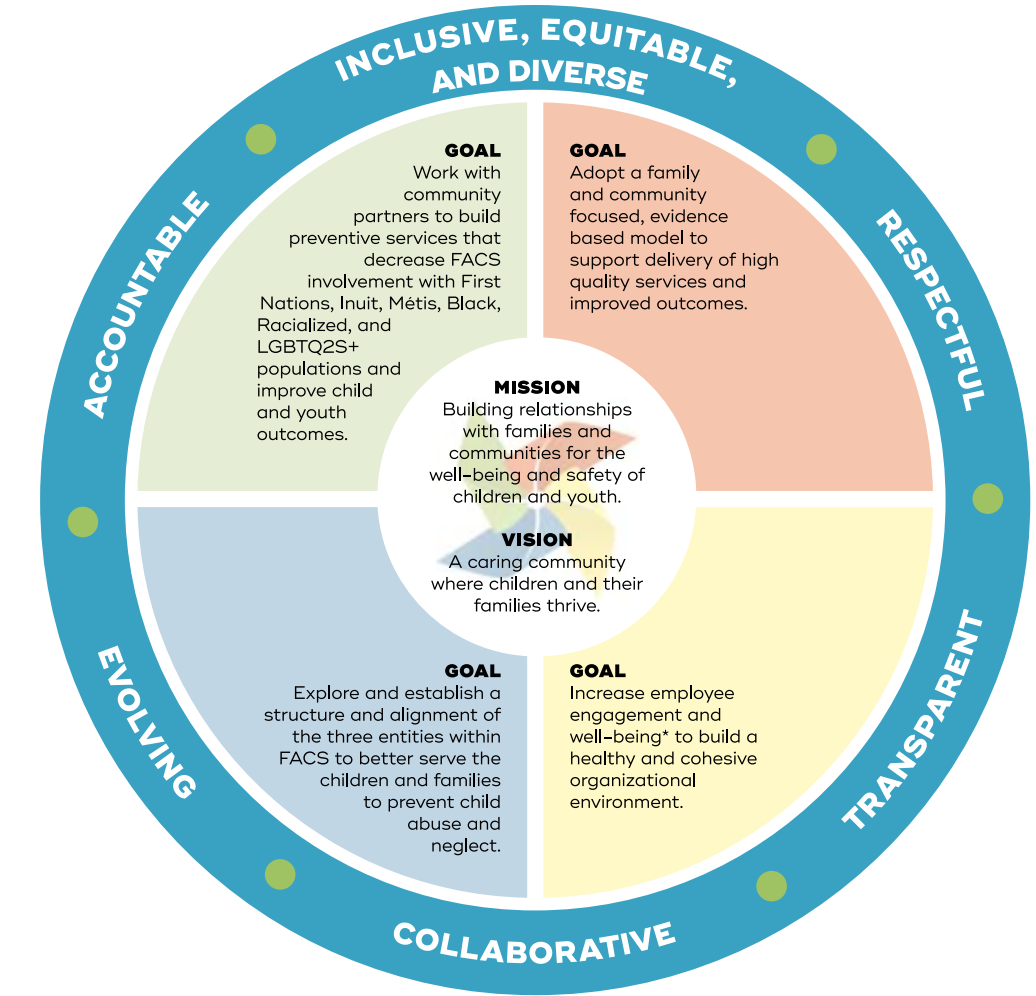
Inclusive, Equitable, and Diverse

Creating an environment where all individuals with different abilities, races, ethnic backgrounds, sexual orientations, and gender identities and expressions are treated with the care that they require.

Accountable

Accepting responsibility and ownership of actions and being a dependable resource for the community.

Strategic Plan 2021-2026





‘All volunteers have an impact – with drivers, there is always great chats in the car, and you feel like you are a small part of that child or youth’s life. This is not a taxi service it’s a relationship.’
Bonnie Caza

Bonnie started with our Agency in September of 2022 as the Manager of Volunteer Services.

Bonnie started at a time when we were just coming out of the Covid19 pandemic which had left a gap in volunteer recruitment after a 3-year hiatus. This was an opportunity to build a new foundation for our volunteer program and build it back stronger than ever.

In the summer of 2022, we started the process of reimagining volunteer services by conducting interviews with key stakeholders including leadership. In addition, we launched a survey for staff, volunteers, clients,

and key partners and hosted several focus groups. In December we received the final report with the findings and recommendations. The survey responses we received were in line with provincial and regional trends of an increase of informal volunteering, virtual volunteering and short-term or episodic volunteering and group volunteering. Post pandemic we are not seeing the same volunteers that we have traditionally seen in the past and we are seeing a new volunteer emerge who has different motivations and expectations. It takes time to implement a good foundation.

So, where are we now?

The report provided us with five (5) recommendations that are very complex and have many moving parts. The implementation for any of the recommendations is not as easy as turning on or off a switch. It will take more conversation and relationship building to continue along this path and ensure we are building a solid volunteer program while continuing to provide meaningful and appropriate volunteer positions.

We started with a whole new volunteer recruitment that was more generalized and not specific to each area to assist new applicants being matched to opportunities that fit their skillset. Since January of 2023 we have welcomed 30+ brand new volunteers

who joined us because our agency means something to them. We are seeing younger volunteers wanting to assist in many ways.

We are focused on diversifying our volunteer database to support our Black and Indigenous children youth and families and the growing diversity of Waterloo Region. We understand we cannot do this work alone and volunteers are an integral part of our team supporting children and families.

Where are we heading?

The plan for 2023 will be to focus on building a good

REIMAGINING VOLUNTEER SERVICES



foundation for us to build on for the future of our volunteer program. We are reviewing and updating all our onboarding and training materials, working on policy development, and reviewing positions and positions descriptions. Along with this foundational work we are also developing a communication strategy that includes in person and virtual meetings, emails, and newsletters to provide opportunities to re-engage with our volunteers. We are looking at new concepts for placement matching and building on new relationships with volunteers, staff, and our community partners.

In Their Words

‘Being a regular driver is fun because if a youth share something with you (i.e., they are going to a movie) you can always follow up the next day asking them how the movie was. I’ve found that these little details mean a lot to the kids I drive, and it is something so simple.’

‘The best conversations happen in the car (as I’m sure a lot of people can agree). They don’t have to be serious conversations... the kids I drive always talk about their favourite music, their weekend plans or how their previous day at school went.’



Robert Pham

‘I have loved working with these youth and the team and seeing the change in the youth! I started with some of these youth in Smiles, then Me-to-We and now Resilient Rebels. Very gratifying that the little I do I can see over the years has impacted some of these youth.’

Volunteer Profile

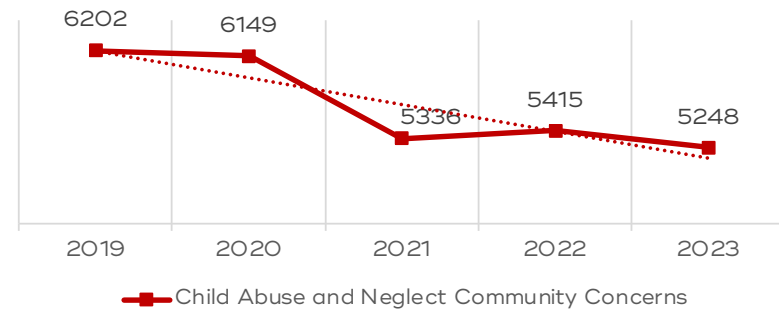
Robert has been a volunteer with FACS for three and a half years. Throughout his time, he has taken on various assignments, including mentoring, tutoring, childcare, special events and groups. Every time one assignment comes to an end and Robert reaches out looking for something new to do. Workers and clients always tell us how outstanding and remarkable the support is that they receive from Robert. Every time he commits to a project, he gives it his all. He is punctual, caring, knowledgeable and approachable. It is wonderful to see the commitment and passion he has for the work he does with children and youth. We are so lucky to have volunteers like Robert!



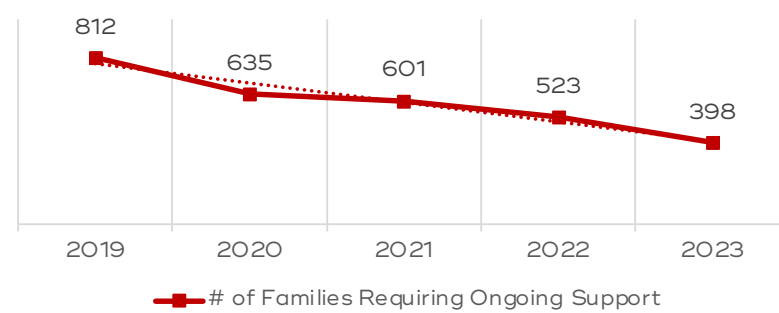
Rita Hemmerich, Peter Schnurr, Adam Metcalf



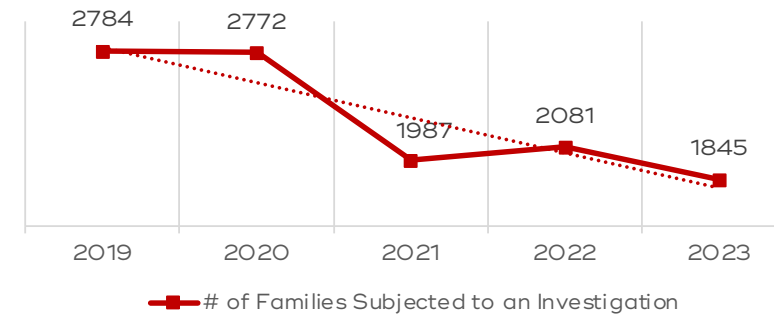
We have seen a 15% decrease in community concerns from 2019 to 2023



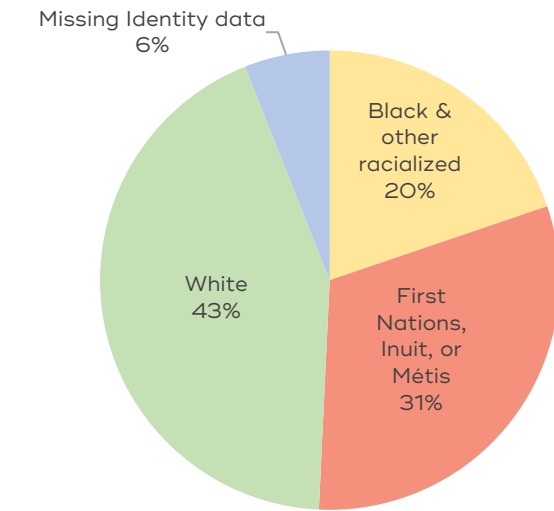
We have seen a 51% decrease in families requiring ongoing support



We have seen a 34% decrease in families subjected to an investigation from 2019 to 2023



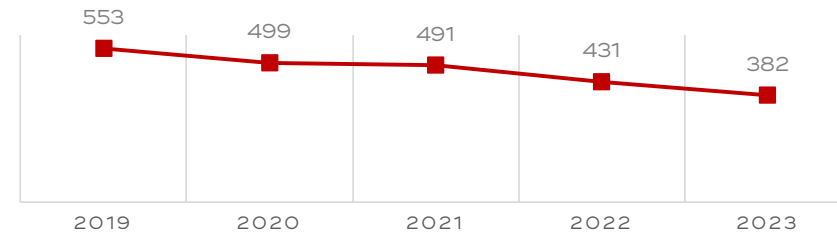
What are the Ethnoracial identities of Families requiring ongoing support?



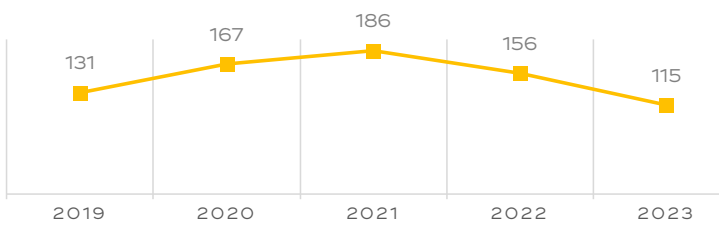
DATA



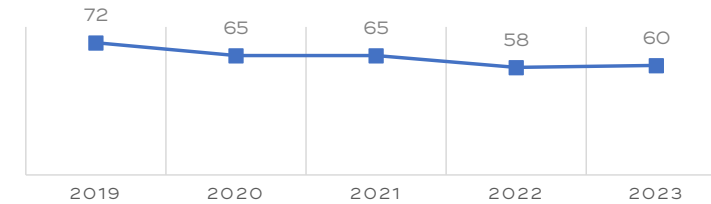
We have seen a 31% decrease in children/youth requiring to be placed in foster care or with extended family from 2019 to 2023



We have seen a 12% decrease in Black and other racialized families requiring their children/youth to be placed in foster care or with extended family from 2019 to 2023



We have seen a 17% decrease in First Nations, Inuit or Metis families requiring their children/youth to be placed in foster care or with extended family from 2019 to 2023



DATA

Where are children and youth placed when they are removed from their homes?



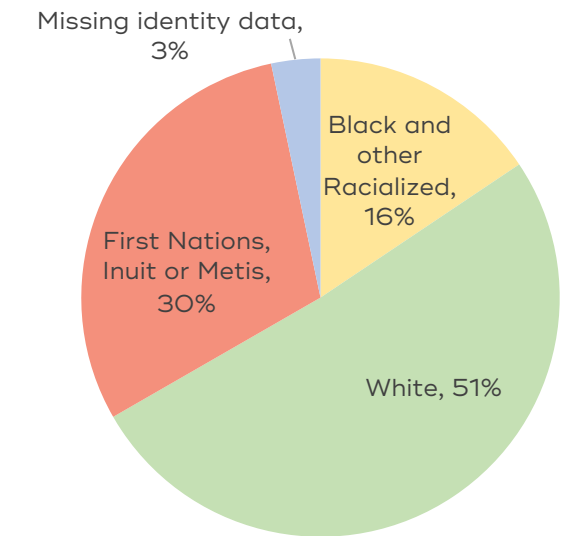
73% are placed in foster care



27% are placed with their extended family

- The ethnoracial identify of children and youth placed in foster care or with extended family is depicted in the pie graph.
- While we continue to see a decrease in First Nations, Inuit, Metis, Black, or other racialized children/youth needing to be placed in foster care or with extended family, we still have more of these children/youth away from their parents than expected.

What are the Ethnoracial identities of children and youth staying in foster care or with extended family?





Family & Children's Services of Waterloo Region Agency

2022-23 Condensed Financial Report

CHILD WELFARE					
REVENUE BY SOURCE	2022-2023	2021-2022	EXPENSES	2022-2023	2021-2022
Province of Ontario	\$ 50,566,542	\$ 51,252,689	Salaries and benefits	\$ 34,358,071	\$ 34,998,763
Grants from Foundation	439,933	546,639	Child in care and client related	14,819,224	14,678,794
Family benefit and Child Tax Benefit	1,349,423	973,461	Operating expenses	5,743,138	6,091,639
Other *	1,738,695	2,363,372			
	<u>\$ 54,094,593</u>	<u>\$ 55,136,161</u>		<u>\$ 54,920,433</u>	<u>\$ 55,769,196</u>

* Rebates, interest, miscellaneous income, administration fees

SUMMARY OF OPERATIONS	2022-2023	2021-2022
Revenue	\$ 54,094,593	\$ 55,136,161
Expenses	54,920,433	55,769,196
Excess of revenue over expenses before the undernoted	<u>\$ (825,840)</u>	<u>\$ (633,035)</u>
Non-vested sick leave benefits	14,447	15,940
Other expenditures	-	(450,000)
Gain on sale of capital assets	-	648,113
Other funding (recovery)		
Province of Ontario - deficit funding	951,811	2,427,295
Province of Ontario - prior years' recoveries	(1,300,156)	(2,052,897)
	<u>(1,159,738)</u>	<u>(44,584)</u>

SPECIAL PROGRAM FUNDING

	2022-2023	2021-2022
Sexual Abuse Treatment Program	\$ 530,020	\$ 561,428
Education Liaison Program	113,114	111,114

All special programs are 100% expended

(Extracted from Audited Statements audited by KPMG LLP Chartered Professional Accountants, Licensed Public Accountants.)
Details for other programs are contained in the audited financial statements.

Family & Children's Services of Waterloo Region Foundation

2022-23 Condensed Financial Report

REVENUE	2023	2022
Donations	\$ 1,612,556	\$ 1,318,252
Investment Income	71,835	45,352
Other Income	62,415	3,326
Change in fair value of investments	(76,232)	47,444
	<u>\$ 1,670,574</u>	<u>\$ 1,414,374</u>

EXPENDITURES

Grants to Agency	\$ 484,413	\$ 547,639
Scholarships	56,000	92,000
Other Grants	680,042	887,508
Office and administration expenses	78,209	102,425
Professional and investment fees	22,625	21,048
	<u>\$ 1,321,289</u>	<u>\$ 1,650,620</u>
Net Surplus (Deficit)	<u>\$ 349,285</u>	<u>\$ (236,246)</u>

(Extracted from Audited Statements audited by KPMG LLP Chartered Professional Accountants, Licensed Public Accountants.)
Details for other programs are contained in the audited financial statements.

DATA



In September 2022, our agency hired our first ever SOGIE (Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression) Lead, Victor Santiago. Victor is very passionate about this work and has a strong history working for the community in many ways including organizing educational events, Prides across Ontario, including Toronto Pride, supporting Rainbow workers at the Provincial level with OPSEU as a union leader, and even serving as one of the Canadian Delegates to the ILGA (The International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, and Intersex Association) world conference. Victor is openly queer and has been married to his husband for 14 years.

The first four months of the role focused on completing Authorization Training and OACAS (Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies) SOGIE facilitator training to best provide workers with consults and in-house SOGIE training.

This year was the first Provincial Queer Youth Symposium for OACAS, with Victor taking a lead

role in the organization of this event and Waterloo was one of the most well represented in terms of youth attendance.

We cannot do this work alone and collaborations such as those with Spectrum and the Waterloo Public Library help promote our messages and amplify our voices in the community. In November of 2022 our agency sponsored a Drag Queen Story Time in Waterloo at the WPL and Spectrum has supported recruitment workers onsite hosting a foster family recruitment session for our community with many more to come.

For Black History month, we hosted a Black and Queer in Waterloo Region event, with a youth guest speaker and important dates such as the Trans Day of Remembrance, Pride Flag Raising, Trans Day of Visibility and more are both acknowledged and celebrated.

Victor is currently working on an assessment of the agency as it relates to the OACAS Provincial

recommendations on SOGIE, which will help achieve strategic plan goals for the agency as it relates to 2SLGBTQIA+ children, youth, and families. Despite an official consult policy not being out yet, many workers have already reached out for consults and supports as there is a clear need for this work.

The statistics are clear that 2SLGBTQIA+ children and youth experience significant challenges in the child welfare system and are over-represented. This is compounded further when looking at the intersectionality of being queer as well as Black and/or Indigenous. The goal of this position is to better support children, youth, families, workers, resource families and volunteers to improve outcomes and help our agency to be one of many community partners in Waterloo Region that helps to improve the lives of the Rainbow community.

SOGIE LEAD



'I am very passionate about social justice and providing families the tools they need to better understand their rights and to provide families with the least intrusive support from us as workers.'
Stephanie DeBoer

The Harambee Team lead by the Director of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, Clayton Greaves was incepted in 2021. This team is dedicated to working with Black and racialized families in Waterloo Region and providing them with equitable access to services and supports in our community. Harambee means all pull together which underpins the service delivery model, based on the Nguzo Saba principles.

Stephanie started with the team as soon as it was formed and has never looked back. With a focus on embedding the team principles into her work. Stephanie speaks to the importance of truly listening to the families she is working with, allowing them to be their own subject

matter experts when it comes to their children. For example, when working with one of our Black families who had one of their children placed in a foster home outside of their culture she listened to their concerns and worked with a community to provide kinship placement, which was a cultural match. Happy to support this placement Stephanie notes there were language barriers to overcome and so using the principle of UMOJA meaning unity there was a team member that spoke the language and we were able to support the placement with the child's community.

The kin provider also assisted mom and within a year move the child back home with their mom. Allowing mom, the time and space she needed

to heal while providing wrap around supports using our team's principles supported the family reunification.

'This experience has made me look at access visits differently and the connection that we want to support and preserve – NIA meaning purpose, was wrapped throughout this process in preservation, spirituality, and emotionality.'

The principles need to work together to provide the best supports for families; they cannot work in isolation. We need to be creative in our approach and work with each family using their own timelines and using the principles to constantly guide our work.

Stephanie speaks of her own learning and some of the things she has learned as a white person working with a predominantly Black team. Learning the principles for the families we serve gives the language needed to be able to provide the best possible support.

'This process has helped me to define myself in my work.'

The team all comes together, we all come from different walks in life and bring different perspectives for the benefit of our families. Stephanie speaks of "her advantages" which are unearned, and it helps keep her grounded to see what her families are dealing with and the barriers they face based solely because of their identity and the body they are born in.

'I am very aware of my intersectional privileges and advantages and how it secures my place in society while keeping other oppressed.'

We are doing a disservice to families if we are not aware of the barriers. Our families are not necessarily incapable of taking care of their children, they just have an insurmountable number of systemic barriers to overcome. If do not take a bold approach, then are we really in child protection and child services at all?

I am aware of my privilege every day which allows me to step in and step out of the situations and barriers facing our families and my colleagues who do not get that same privilege.

ALLYSHIP



Throughout my learning journey I have used the anti-racism lens from Ibram X. Kendi in which he speaks to white supremacy and how it often wants us to use good, bad, and binary. White folks then don't need to act. Stephanie uses confession and action when she feels her own white fragility rising, because the heart of racism is denial.

'The changes I have been making are not just for social justice but what I need to do to be a good and ethical human, a good ancestor, and take an active role in decolonialization.'





Women's Crisis Services has worked in close partnership with Family & Children's Services (F&CS) for many years. This partnership began when it was unheard of for a violence against women organization to work with a child welfare organization. Over time our relationship and the number of co-delivered programs has grown. This started with an F&CS worker working on-site at our emergency shelters, and in more recent years, a WCSWR Outreach Worker began working on-site at Family and Children's Services. This partnership has enabled us to complete joint interventions with families when domestic violence is present. Together, our workers visit families in their homes to help safety plan and mitigate risk.

One family that recently needed support involved a woman and her child, as well as her abusive partner. Our workers went together to their home because the woman was not permitted to leave the house

and her phone was being monitored by her partner. When the workers arrived, the woman and the abusive partner were both at home. The F&CS worker was able to meet with the person of concern while the WCSWR worker met with the woman. Our worker told the woman about WCSWR's services and shared some safety strategies. Following the initial meeting, another meeting was set up at a park, so that the woman would be permitted to leave her home on the condition she was taking her child to the park. At that meeting, a more thorough safety plan was completed. Several months later, the woman reached out to WCSWR for support. She had kept our worker's contact information and wanted support leaving the relationship. Together, F&CS and WCSWR met with her to develop a safe exit plan and help her move forward.

Working together, we are able to better support entire

families experiencing domestic and family violence. This was especially helpful during the pandemic when domestic violence was increasing and escalating. During the lockdowns, the increased isolation meant that families did not have access to their usual support networks and it was more difficult for people to reach out for help, especially if they were isolating with an abusive family member.

Thirteen agencies joined together to launch the Keep Families Safe campaign and raise awareness about the increasing violence against women and children due to the isolation and stress caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Through the campaign, we encouraged the community to look out for their neighbours and reach out for support services if they needed help.

WCSWR PARTNERSHIP





FAMILY &
CHILDREN'S SERVICES
OF THE WATERLOO REGION FOUNDATION

ANNUAL REPORT 2023



Foundation Board Members

Ami Tsarfati
(Board Chair)

Christine Senior
(Vice-Chair)

Ryan Murphy
(Treasurer)

Benjamin Bach

Tara Bedard

Rick Bolzon

Alana Halapija

Darren Kelly

Matt Kirby

Steve Milijasevic

Pete Travers

Tapiwa Ziyenge

Reflecting on my second term as your board chair provides an opportunity to share how much our foundation has evolved in the past year to meet the changing needs of our community. As I commented with our board earlier in the year, we have replaced C-19 tallies with daily CPI and inflation numbers. The communities that we serve have dynamic needs that require new skills and approaches to provide meaningful supports. A strategic shift would be required to continue to provide our community the service excellence that our team strives for.

Our board undertook the challenge to work with our management team to rethink and reimagine how our foundation would service our community's changing needs. Fundraising, donor stewardship and managing how our services were managed in our community would need be rethought. In parallel, we needed to reimagine our governance structure and establish our own identity through the establishment of our own direction under the leadership of a dedicated executive director.

Our fundraising approach required a major pivot with the cancellation of our traditional Radiothon during the Christmas period. Our management team's acceptance of the offer from CHYM to conduct a 50/50 draw not only resulted in a boom in fundraising dollars, drawing on the results of the inaugural success; the draw freed up important human capital to allow our team to focus on donor stewardship. Engaging with our supporters has not only supported our financial sustainability – we are now able to better forge a relationship with our financial partners.

How we serve our community is evolving in tandem with how we can use innovation strategies to fund our community's needs. Our foundation management team has taken to regular updates on our program funding and budget to show how our monies are going back into the community. We have been fortunate to have our recipient programs join us in our meetings to share the work they are doing and again, explain the impact of our dollars.

The elephant in the room was always how to continue to drive this innovation and work – how do we chart our own direction – establish our own identity – but still maintaining support to our agency. We, the board and management knew we needed to have our own executive director to lead our foundation – but how do we get there.

When Karen Spencer announced her retirement as Executive Director of our Agency and Foundation in February, it came as a shock. But Karen's also recognized that this also presented our board with the opportunity to pursue our goal to recruit and hire our own Executive Director. Indeed, from February to date, our board has moved mountains to ensure that we have been able to achieve our final goal of establishing our own, independent Executive Director to our Foundation.

I would like to take this opportunity to formally

introduce our Foundation's incoming Executive Director, Dr. Jill Stoddart! Our foundation will not only benefit from Jill's leadership and dedication to child welfare – we will benefit from the continuity of leadership as we chart our own identity and direction.

Jill and Karen have been behind much of our Foundation's innovation, research and donor stewardship over the past few years. Under Jill's leadership, our foundation has developed, monitored and executed our new fundraising strategies. Most importantly, Jill has gained the trust of not only our board and management team, but of the many donors that choose support our foundation with their hard-earned funds.

Karen will continue with her leadership of our foundation until her retirement on July 28th. Jill will begin her leadership of our foundation July 31, so our foundation will not experience a break



FOUNDATION BOARD CHAIR REPORT



in leadership. More importantly, Jill will be able to hit the ground running as our planning for our major fundraisers start in late summer/early fall.

Thank you to all our amazing foundation staff and our volunteers who have worked tirelessly to further our mission and goals. Without you, none of this would be possible. A big thank you to the agency staff as well. Your support has been incredible and your dedication to this often-difficult field is inspiring.

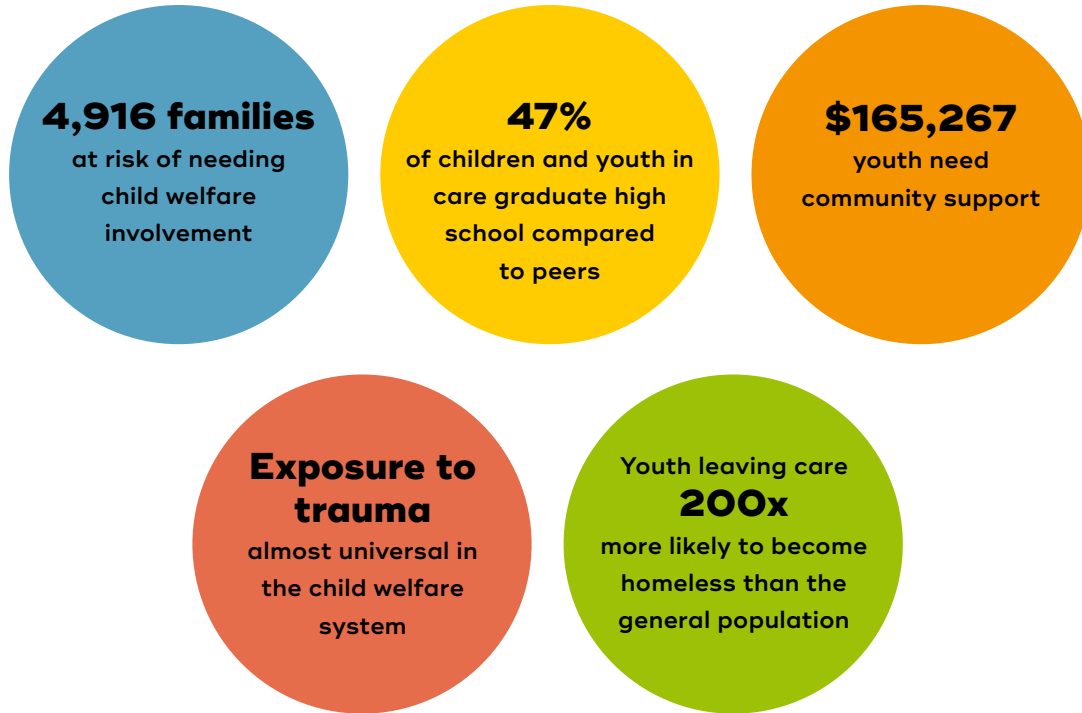
On behalf of the foundation's board of directors, I wish you all a safe and happy summer.

Sincerely,
Amichai Tsarfati, Foundation Chair

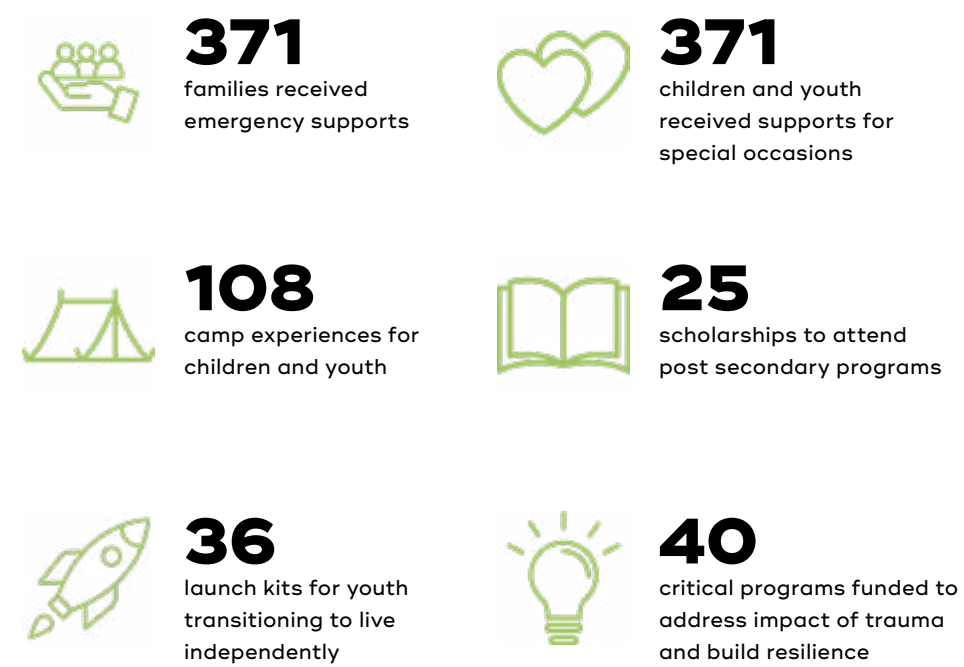




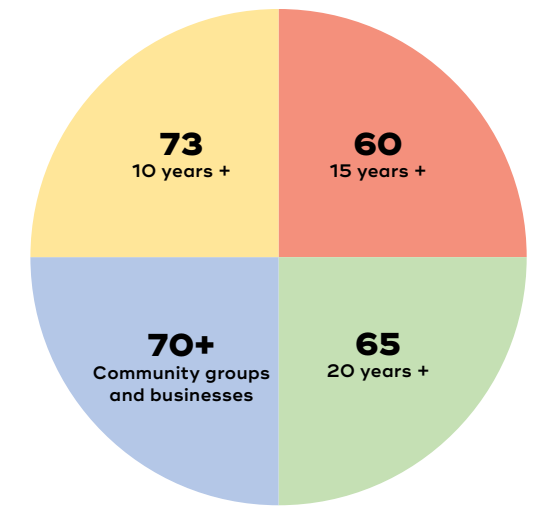
The Need in the Waterloo Region



The Impact It takes a community



Dedicated Donors



FAMILY & CHILDREN'S SERVICES FOUNDATION PRIORITIES FROM 2022-23



In Fall of 2022 we were the grateful recipients of the Lowe's Heroes Campaign. Lowe's Kitchener spent the month of September collecting donations to support the Truth and Reconciliation Fund. These funds enable the Two Row Understanding Service Team to provide support by offering a variety of well-being services that are inclusive of mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual needs. For example, this supports a range of opportunities such as cultural supports and assisting families in meeting their basic needs. This also includes connections to their Indigenous communities and exposure to traditional Elders and Healers who can provide the teachings and guidance to begin their journey to healing from inter-generational trauma caused by colonization, residential school and 60's Scoop.

The staff team at Lowe's got creative throughout the month. Some of their efforts included

a staff bingo game for prizes, 'dunking a manager' based on donations from colleagues and collecting donations at the check-out as staff shared information about the Truth and Reconciliation Fund with customers. It was an incredibly successful campaign, with their store far surpassing their goal of \$8,000 and winning against the other Lowe's locations in our Region! We were humbled to receive a total donation of \$10,874.00 from their efforts.



LOWE'S HEROES CAMPAIGN





This year we placed a special focus on sharing the story of Youth aging out of care and the unique challenges they face at this vulnerable time. It has been wonderful to also see our government supporting their needs, too, with new regulatory amendments coming into effect this year. This means that Children’s Aid Societies will place a greater focus on better preparing Youth for transitioning out of care through increasing age limits for support and additional available funding and programming. In addition to the Government, our community heard the message of the Youth’s needs loud and clear, and the generosity from all of you left no doubt that you wanted to be part of their support network.

While it was incredibly exciting to have so many new

individuals and organizations show their support for Youth, we also want to reflect on our gratitude for the longstanding support of a few individuals and organizations who have had a special place for the Youth in their hearts for many years now. This year, DARE Foods is going on 20 years of awareness and fundraising. As the needs of the Youth have changed over the years, so too has their support, pivoting to meet the emerging needs. One thing that hasn’t changed, though, is their commitment! As well, Dondra from Build a Bag Angels has been making complete care kits for the Youth for over 5 years, and each year at the holidays the youth look forward to receiving her packages that they know are made with love.

In 2007, Bloomingdale United Church also began

YOUTH SUPPORT

supporting the Foundation. In 2015, upon learning of the specific and urgent needs of Youth in our community, the congregation changed their focus to stocking the Youth Pantry. As Mary shared with us, this need resonated with the group, as “we wanted these kids to know that somebody cares about them”. In addition to doing the shopping and donating food items every 3 months to keep the pantry well-stocked, Mary also makes treat bags for the youth around special holidays. She told us how these are “just a little bit of love”, and how important it was for her and the Bloomingdale members that the youth know they are in their thoughts.

While it is a small group, with fewer than 10 members all in their 70s and 80s, they certainly are mighty! Supporting Youth has become a big part of their lives. Mary shared enthusiastically that “we have done it for so long – life would be boring without it!”. Making an incredibly generous donation this year to support Youth aging out of care in addition to their work stocking the pantry, it seems like Bloomingdale isn’t slowing down anytime soon!

Thanks to Bloomingdale, Dondra, and DARE Foods’ longstanding commitment – almost 40 years combined! – and the support from many just learning about the needs of the Youth for the first time this year, we were able to show the Youth that their community cares about them and their futures.

In a beautiful speech delivered this year by Vanessa, a Youth aging out of care this year, she let us know that she certainly feels the love. *“On behalf of all youth in Care, in Waterloo Region...who all will face this day of aging out – we are so grateful to you, our community. You continue to show up to support and embrace us as part of your family. We see you and feel your warmth and love and care...for our wellbeing, for our future and for our survival. We truly appreciate it.”*



Sandra Gordon, Jim Gross, Joan Gross, Mary Schwartzentruber and Heather Trakalo



October 27th saw a big change for the Foundation. After 29 years of the Radiothon, our 30th year of partnership with CHYM 96.7 saw the inaugural Tree of Hope 50:50 Raffle launch.

The Foundation saw tremendous support from the community, staff and friends. Tickets sales were steady throughout October and November. When December came things really started to gain momentum. The final total sold reached \$196,520!! Half to the winners and half to fund the prevention work of the Foundation.

But the story doesn't end there. On December 23rd when Brady and Tara from CHYM 96.7 called the Hergott family to share the good news of their win, Kevin blew everyone away by committing to give half of the big jackpot back to the Foundation. Thank you, Kevin and Anita!

These funds enable the Foundation to support programming, resources and innovations that

prevent child abuse and maltreatment that are not provincially funded. The Foundation supports Family & Children's Services of the Waterloo Region in fulfilling their mandate and to fight social inequities and promote and protect family wellbeing by providing trauma-informed, evidence based psychosocial supports and other non-western ways of healing.



Thank you to our community for your ongoing support to Make Something Good Happen.

Thank you to CHYM 96.7 FM for continuing to partner and championing the work. We're happy to share November 2023 will see a second raffle in Waterloo Region.



RAFFLE LAUNCH

A STORY FROM TREE OF HOPE



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OF THE WATERLOO REGION

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