



# Halton Children's Aid Society 2022-23 Annual Report



The DREAM Canvas was inspired and created by Crown Wards from the Dufferin/Halton/Peel Crown Ward Education Championship Team (CWECT) to encourage all youth to never give up on their dreams, hopes and goals for who they want to be and what they want to achieve for their future.

The DREAM Canvas symbolizes the creativity, talent and dreams of a bright future that all youth possess. It embodies a statement of courage for youth to pursue their dreams in the midst of every obstacle they face. It represents the diversity and freedom of expression for all youth in care.

**Vision—Children, Youth and Families Thrive**

**Mission—We protect children and youth, strengthen their well-being and support lifelong, enduring relationships**



# Land Acknowledgement

**Let us acknowledge together that Halton Region stands on the traditional territory of the Anishinabe, Haudenosaunee and the Huron-Wendat; now home to many First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. We acknowledge the current treaty holders, the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation.**

**As settlers, we are grateful for the opportunity to meet here and we thank all the generations of peoples who have taken care of the land and for those who continue today.**





# A Message from Our Executive Director and Board Chair

The past year can be assessed as one of resilience and perseverance for the Halton Children's Aid Society (Halton CAS).

Over the past year, Halton CAS—like other social service organizations in our community—accommodated itself to conditions of the post pandemic era in which ongoing vigilance and adherence to public health guidance became part of our daily experience. Throughout the year, the pandemic continued to heavily influence Halton CASs service delivery approach and workspace environment. Our pandemic plan, *Building Better Together* (BBT) was modified according to changes in public health and government guidance as well as staff feedback gathered through continuous consultation. As the tidal wave of the pandemic receded, we found ourselves returning to community placements, a more natural way of being together in the office and, of course, increased interpersonal contact with children, youth and families. The pandemic was a graphic reminder that child welfare work is the community's work and that our relationships with community partners require constant engagement. We are proud of Halton CASs role as a reliable and supportive community partner. It is an exceptional example of the resilience of the agency.

Community collaboration was increasingly highlighted over the past year as communities struggled to coordinate services for children and youth with chronic or multi-faceted needs. Responding to these children and youth requires ongoing dialogue and creative problem solving across ministries and within each local community. This is an issue which absolutely requires the type of perseverance the families of children with complex needs have shown all their lives.

As the pandemic required less of our attention, Halton CAS turned its focus back toward the journey we have undertaken in becoming a diverse, equitable and inclusive agency. The work we had begun toward making the workspace safe and inclusive for all staff gained a new level of expertise and support. Our implementation of the Our One Vision, One Voice race equity practice framework was supported through the interpretation of data and hearing the stories of marginalized families. The outcomes sought require a consistent, intentional, and humble practice approach. It is deep and far-reaching work requiring constant perseverance.

In January 2023, we welcomed our first ever Truth and Reconciliation Lead. Truth and Reconciliation work is critical and far reaching. It is complex and nuanced and has to be built upon a solid foundation of training. Locally, we developed and nurtured relationships with colleagues of Six Nations of the Grand River and Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. We responded to all requests for information from First Nations Leaders and Community members searching for their children, youth or families who may have been involved with Halton CAS. We mourned the news of the finding of thousands of children's remains in unmarked graves on the sites of residential schools across Canada and close to home at the Mohawk Institute in Brantford.

Restoration of jurisdiction to First Nations Communities for the well-being of their own children is taking place all across the country. In Ontario, there are 12 Indigenous Child and Family Well-Being Agencies whose mandate is the provision of child welfare services in their own communities within their own service philosophies. The development of Indigenous Child and Family Well-Being Agencies enriches the child welfare system in Ontario through Indigenous ways of knowing and teachings. Halton CAS stands with and supports Indigenous Child and Family Well-Being Agencies in persevering toward this restorative process.

Last year, the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services continued to socialize the sector on the five pillars of Child Welfare Redesign (CWR). CWR is a multi-year policy and service overhaul of the child welfare sector in Ontario with a focus on community service collaboration to achieve good outcomes for children and youth. Halton CAS is well positioned for CWR having solid community partner relationships and protocols in place.

It has been observed that resilience is the ability to achieve a positive outcome despite significant adverse circumstances. Resilience is a quality that contagiously inspires others. With great pride we celebrate the resilience of our staff and everyone else who persevered through the past year with a dedicated focus on the safety, well-being and success of children, youth and their families. Our staff are talented and compassionate professionals who creatively work with families to chart pathways to lasting and positive change. They continually respond to situations of increased complexity in the post-COVID era, which has left lasting effects on the health and wellness of our community.

The gratitude we feel for foster, kin, and adoptive caregivers is immense. Their capacity for love and support for children is unparalleled and we recognize their critical role in our work. We honour and thank the volunteers who dedicate so much of their lives to supporting children, youth, and families. The support of volunteers is uniquely personal and impactful for any individual with whom they work. We recognize and thank our community colleagues across Halton Region who show up to case conferences, share their expertise, and assist us to help families. The Children's Aid Foundation of Halton is a lifeline for Halton CAS, supporting the work we do both tangibly and generously.

We thank the Halton CAS Board of Directors. They are a constant source of guidance, support and wisdom, for all Halton CAS staff, but most particularly for the Leadership Team, working together with us unwaveringly toward the agency's vision: "**Children, Youth and Families Thrive.**" A vision toward which we work, with resilience and perseverance.

Janice Robinson, Executive Director

Joyce See, Board Chair



# Our Team

## 2022-23 Board of Directors

### Board Executive

**Joyce See**, Chair

**Eslyn Blair**, Vice Chair

**Terry Kelly**, Audit, Finance and Risk Management Committee Chair (until 31-Mar-23)

**Mike Reid**, Audit, Finance and Risk Management Committee Chair (as of 31-Mar-23)

**Terry Spearin**, Governance Committee Chair

**Brendan Neil**, Director at Large

**Emad Elsayed**, Past Chair

### Board Members

**Jason Barr, Steve Cranna, Muhammad Faizan, Karen Marshall, Janice May**

**Jacqueline Dinsmore** (until 31-Jan-23), **Kamran Niazi** (until 11-Sep-22), **Reena Vanza** (until 31-Mar-23)

## Leadership Team

**Janice Robinson**, Executive Director

**Steve Levac**, Director of Service, Child and Youth Services (effective June 1, 2023)

**Jennifer Binnington**, Director of Service, Community Protection

**Michelle McGaw**, Director of Human Resources and Administration

**Donna Miles**, Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

**Andrew Pike**, Interim Director of Finance and Property Management (effective June 12, 2023)

**Teresa Zonneveld**, Manager of Organizational Development (effective July 4, 2023)

**Robyn Connolly**, Executive Assistant to the Executive Director/Communications Specialist





# 2023 Youth Awards

## **McPhie Award — McKenna D**

McKenna is a hardworking student who has successfully finished another year of high school amongst all the challenges that have come her way. McKenna continued to attend class 99% of the time throughout the time she experienced homelessness in Halton Region.

## **Elizabeth Interiors Award — Elijah I**

Elijah graduated from private school in Fort Erie where he achieved good standing in academics and was highly involved in competitive basketball. Elijah has been scouted by junior colleges in both Canada and the United States. Elijah is currently attending University of Waterloo studying geography and environmental management and is on the varsity basketball team. Elijah is connected to the Halton Youth Collective Impact Program and plans to start mentoring in the fall.

## **Youth in Action Award — Lindsay B**

Lindsay has been a standout this year in not only managing her own affairs, but has pursued her artistic career from modelling and singing to selling visual artworks and working in the trades. Lindsay has a dream of combining these skills to create a Tiny Home. Lindsay has leveraged all this through reasonable avenues whether that be her modelling career, doing more in singing, selling her art or through her education to learn more about carpentry.

## **Youth Leadership Award — Kai S**

Kai is an amazing advocate and very creative. Kai has been actively requested for their work by Peel Children's Aid Society and has been a stand-up leader who is a model for other youth in their age group. Kai is an active advocate and member of the YouthSAID Advisory Group and is the first to volunteer their time where it is required. Kai also likes animals and used to volunteer at a local animal shelter.

## **Joan Marshall Achievement Award — Lilly R**

Lilly has become a YouthSAID Advisory Group member this past year and has dedicated her time to attending weekly meetings. Lilly always offers to help with set-up and tear-down at events and participates as a youth leader/role model when attending activities.

## **Scott Waterhouse Leadership in Equity and Inclusion Award — Arlo C**

Arlo attends Sheridan College full-time and is connected to the Halton Youth Collective Impact Program. Arlo is involved in the 2SLGBTQ+ community in school and online. Being diagnosed with high functioning autism, Arlo is a strong advocate for themselves and others for supports and services at school. Arlo is able to problem solve and work with others to achieve their goals in all areas of their life and has been able to demonstrate success in difficult situations.

## **Nancy MacGillivray Award — Jessica M**

Jessica has shown outstanding effort and resiliency this past year. Both Jessica and her partner lost a parent; however, she managed to attend school and take care of her one-year-old child. Jessica goes above and beyond for her partner and their child. Despite everything, Jessica managed to make time for school and community engagement.



# 2023 Youth Awards

## **Honourable Mention — Abiola A**

Abiola has completed the Real Estate Course and has developed a very professional website to help promote himself. He also works at "i Dream of Coffee" to help supplement his income. Abiola is always trying to better himself.

## **Honourable Mention — Jordan S**

Jordan attends Humber College for Hospitality and Tourism Management and is connected with the Halton CAS Halton Youth Collective Impact Program. Jordan is hardworking and committed to her schooling, but strives to achieve success in her personal life. Jordan takes initiative in engaging with supports that will aid in her success such as connecting with onsite school events/programs (for tourism management events) and advocating for mental health supports for herself and others. Jordan recently moved into her own apartment in a new city and is able to manage her own finances. Jordan has been busy applying for jobs so she can achieve more independence.

## **Honourable Mention — Kyel B**

Kyel is an active member of the YouthSAID Advisory Group and an active community member living at the Oakville House. Kyel constantly keeps youth issues at the forefront and pushes for more to be done for youth services. Kyel is an incredibly strong advocate and an amazing artist.

## **Honourable Mention — Quen C**

This year, Quen was dealt with many challenges, both personally and financially. In the face of extreme hardship and isolation from family members, Quen made the difficult decision to stand up for himself and seek justice. Quen demonstrates the qualities of a leader.

## **Honourable Mention — Rai T**

Rai has been an incredible student who is finishing his fourth year at Trent University studying Philosophy with a specialization in Ethics. Rai works at Trent University's Office for International Students and has achieved a balance of school and work.



# 2023 Youth Awards



# Our Work by the Numbers

**97%**

of cases enable children and youth to remain with their families

**69%**

of children and youth are discharged within one year of coming into care

**71%**

of children and youth return to family or kin

**2**

adoptions finalized (or in process)

**136**

active volunteers, mentors and drivers

**1,416**

volunteer driver and 'other' volunteer hours (mentors, tutors, special events, seasonal)

**147**

number of children and youth in our Society's care

**78%**

of our children and youth in care are over the age of 12



# Our Work by the Numbers

516

cases linked to community services

92%

of our work  
is completed at investigation

54

children and youth placed with kinship families  
when they could not remain in their own homes

**\$23,941,303**  
(revenue)

**\$24,808,228**  
(expenses)

2022-23 deficit = \$866,925

The above is a summary of details from the Halton CAS 2022-23 audited financial statements prepared and audited by SB Partners. Access to our full audited financial statements is available on our website.

**\$400,000**  
cash donations

**\$119,200**  
in-kind donations

received from the Children's Aid Foundation of Halton to support additional programming to enhance the lives of children and youth in Halton

- ◆ **Bursary Program**—financial support for youth to attend post-secondary education
- ◆ **FUTURES Educational Program**—life skills initiatives and recreational programs
- ◆ **Outreach Services**—from Bridging the Gap's homeless program for youth aged 16-24
- ◆ **YouthSAID Advisory Group Program**—including Children and Youth in Care Day, YouthCAN conference and Grand River Zone events
- ◆ **Halton Youth Collective Impact Program**—supporting youth in education, training and employment while they transition from care
- ◆ **Holiday DREAMS Program**—providing support throughout the year with seasonal support, gift cards, holiday celebrations and gifts
- ◆ **Dreams Begin at Home Program**—providing beds and other emergency supplies during times of crisis and transition
- ◆ **Bikes for Kids Program**—community partnership providing new bikes for those in need of transportation or just for fun!