



# Protecting Children

## Strengthening Families

# CAS



Annual Report  
2006 / 2007

The Children's Aid Society of the  
County of Lanark and The Town of Smiths Falls

# Vision

A community fully engaged in securing the safety and well being of children and youth.

# CAS



# Working Together

## Board of Directors

### Officers

Jeri Lunney, President  
Tony Pratt, Vice-President  
Kevin Orser, Treasurer  
Sylvie Powell, Secretary

### Directors

Kieran Broadbent  
Danielle Bell  
Paul Couvrette\*  
Joy Hodgkinson  
Denise McGregor\*  
Pat Messner  
Gena Morrow  
Ann Munroe  
Jim Stienberg  
Denise Valley  
Sandra Veeneman

### Community Committee Members

Joyce Clinton  
Chris Hawthorne  
Jacque Guige-Glaspell  
Connie Jamieson  
Vicky Winter

\*Resigned / Retired

## Mission Statement

The Children's Aid Society of the County of Lanark and The Town of Smiths Falls is committed to:

- Protecting children from abuse and neglect, while supporting the safe and healthy development of children in their families and community
- Providing a high standard of care for those children who cannot remain at home
- Energizing the community in the cause of children at risk

## Human Resources

### Manager of Financial Services

Dianne Adshead

### Service Managers

Allison Adamovits  
Sheena Dunham  
Pat Finnagan  
Dana LeBlanc  
Judi Lightford

### Manager of Residential Services

Joanne Crate

### Legal Counsel

Nicola Edmundson

### Manager of Human Resources

Patrick Lefebvre

### Manager of Information Systems

Donna Derouin

### Foster/Adoptive Families 86

### Volunteers

Drivers 16  
Tutors 1  
Special Projects 26  
Youth 2

**Board Members 14**

**Community Committee Members 5**

**Employees 84**

**Senior Management: Executive Director**

Suzanne Geoffrion

**Service Director**

Sheila Stanfield



# CAS

2006/2007

# President and Executive Director's Report



**Serving the most vulnerable** children, youth and families is, as always, an honour. Doing it to the best of our abilities however is a challenge as we manage the changes brought about as a result of the proclamation of Bill 210, an amendment to the Child and Family Services Act in November of last year. Valiant efforts have been made by our professionals, caregivers and volunteers to learn and apply the following:

- New policy and legislative directives
- New work processes related to Differential Response, Permanency Planning and Alternative Dispute Resolution
- New accountability measures, including an ever-changing funding model
- New automated tools
- New service agreements and protocols

The completion of the final phase of the retrofit of our new site, although trying at times, has had a most positive impact on all aspects of our operations.

On a daily basis, we first and above all remain mindful of the changing needs and other risk factors affecting the safety and well-being of those we are mandated to serve. Too many very young children are being admitted to our care and are not likely to go home. Too many parents are struggling to cope with the impact of poverty, addiction and mental health problems. Too many of our youth still require intensive supports as they transition to adulthood.

Over the next year it is imperative that we begin to evaluate whether or not all of the changes underway are actually producing better outcomes for our clients. Have we done the right thing at the right time for those in greatest need? Do we have what it takes to deliver better service? Are our practices evidence-based, are we alert and open to new ways of achieving our objectives?

All would agree however that the Society can't achieve better results, without the active participation and contribution of our partners. The creation of the Lanark County Planning Council for Children, Youth and Families affords all the opportunity to plan on a community-wide basis, collaborate and pursue service integration strategies. Employees at all levels of our organization are involved in sub-groups responsible for defining unmet community needs, setting priorities and strengthening our most strategic partnerships. Of particular note is the Substance Abuse Work Group's determination to build our capacity to minimize the destructive impact that addictions are having on families.

Our children and youth also benefit greatly from our public education and fundraising efforts. Presentations made to our municipal councils across the County outlined the Society's current issues and priorities; their response clearly confirmed that our mandate is respected and our work is appreciated. Our fundraising activities including the development of a Corporate Ask package enable us to maintain our commitment to the Snowsuit Campaign and the Opportunities Fund. Much more needs to be done to better inform the public at large of our Vision, the dynamics of child maltreatment and neglect in our community, and how the public at large can be most helpful. All of us have a part to play.

We are very fortunate to have highly energetic and determined professionals, foster parents, volunteers and community partners who always strive to provide the best possible service.

We thank you all.

Together  
we make a  
difference.

# Service Highlights

## Intake/Assessment



Intake is a specialized function of child protection services. Reports of children and youth who may be in need of protection are received 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

This has been a very busy year for Intake in getting ready for Differential Response, a program that was implemented April 1, 2007. Intake is responsible for investigation and assessment of all new and re-opened Child Protection matters within Lanark County. On average the Intake Department has approximately 150 cases opened at any given time. One of our goals over the last year was to reduce this number to 100 which to date has eluded our department. This goal was achieved in December 2006 only to be surpassed at the end of March by having only 62 opened files

at Intake. This was possible as we had an unusually quiet February and March and a dedication to record by the Intake Staff so that we could enter into Differential Response without a large carry over. Training has been a huge endeavor over this past year, from train the trainers to training the entire staff at the Society. At this time the Intake Department in particular is becoming familiar with the new recording format and we anticipate computer training on this shortly. There has been some minor training with community partners around some of the changes; this will be a focus for the next year. The Intake Department was thrilled to move into our new space. The expanded reception area is bright and very welcoming to all who enter our front doors. This past year has been challenging for the Intake Department yet balanced with great accomplishments.



# Child Protection

This past year saw many changes for the Family Services Teams at the Agency. In February 2006 we implemented the Ministry directed criteria around kinship care and kinship service arrangements.

The teams have embraced these changes and have enjoyed the links with our Resource Unit who have done the majority of the kinship in care homestudies.

This past year has also brought us the long anticipated changes regarding Differential Response. We are still in a period of learning and growing with respect to all the changes and look forward to the next step of the transformation of our information system.

As a team, we continue to see the trends of alcohol and drug addiction with our young families, often coupled with mental health concerns. Due to the vulnerability of the children, we have noted an increase in the number of young children in foster care. The Agency is joining together with community partners to address this most important issue.

After a period of hiatus, the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies is once again offering a range of training for family service workers. Most recently, several family service workers and child protection

support workers traveled to Oshawa to participate in training on High Risk Infants. This was reported to be an excellent few days that meshed information and hands-on experience with infants. We look forward to some more training opportunities this coming year.

Both Family Services teams have undergone some significant changes with respect to the make-up of the teams, including changes in managers. These changes have been handled well by the team members. The Carleton Place and Perth Family Service Teams have committed to meeting on a regular basis to address and strategize on issues, as well as to share information pertinent to our work. Sometimes these meetings are formal and at other times they are a little more relaxed. They have been known to end with a little team competition at the bowling alley at Christmas. The Perth team is the current reigning champion.

We are committed to push forward with the transformation and hope for smooth transitions in the year to come. As always, we are moving "onward and upward".

# Residential Services

## Foster Care

At a recent child welfare conference in Toronto, colleagues shared experiences of a trip to North Carolina to view child welfare services. A Toronto worker described the North Carolina model as being equivalent to child welfare heaven. While this may be a contradictory term, I celebrate her enthusiasm and see it daily in Lanark CAS when colleagues and foster and adoptive families describe their experiences with similar passion.

As one of our foster parents and representative to the Board of Directors, Gena Morrow said when asked to participate in foster licensing – “I’m happy to participate – I love talking about what I do.” It doesn’t get any better than that.

With all agencies across the province implementing the Transformation Agenda, Lanark CAS has introduced the Pillars of Permanency – Admission Prevention, Kinship service and care, Foster Care, Legal Custody and Adoption Planning.

We have now completed our 11<sup>th</sup> session of P.R.I.D.E. – a model of service for preparing new foster, adoptive parents and staff; and we have implemented S.A.F.E. – Structured Analysis of Family Evaluation – the home study process.

The last session of P.R.I.D.E. consists of a panel of participants across the continuum – a child in care, concurrent resource parents, foster parent support worker, adoptive parent, family service worker, intake worker, and youth independence worker. Participants are often moved by and learn from experiences shared. Feedback has included “I am a better parent having participated in the P.R.I.D.E. process”, and “Your agency’s mission and values are well understood and communicated by committed workers and families.”

The willingness of our families to work as a team, to support one another and their children in trying situations, our staff’s passion to prepare and support foster and adoptive families is a record we can all take pride in and is motivation for the years ahead.





# Adoption

Lanark Children's Aid Society continues to be fortunate to recruit many adoptive families who are willing to foster children until they are available for adoption. This practice, otherwise referred to as concurrent fostering, allows the agency to place children in homes that are prepared to welcome them as permanent family members if they can not be safely returned to their birth families. As workers, we continue to be impressed with the compassion, strength and flexible nature of these adoptive families, as they live with the stress of waiting, while the often-lengthy court process is resolved.

One of the key changes to adoption, effected by Bill 210, is the provision for openness agreements and orders. In the past, a child's potential for a permanent adoptive home was often terminated by access orders that meant that the child was not legally available for adoption, even if they were a permanent ward of the Society. Openness agreements or orders allow for some contact to occur between the child and their birth family even after the child has been placed for adoption, provided that the relationship being maintained is one that is meaningful and beneficial for the child. These agreements must be made with the consent of the

adoptive family and they do not impinge upon the rights of these parents to make decisions about their child. If for some reason, the adoptive parents decide not to allow the contact with members of the birth family, this decision does not change or void the adoption. Lanark Children's Aid Society has set up a focus group, consisting of both staff members and adoptive parents to determine how this agency might best incorporate these new openness concepts.

Other new developments in adoption that continue to unfold are the changes to Adoption Disclosure law that permit an adoptee, after they become 18 years of age, to access a copy of their original birth certificate. The birth parents of adopted persons will also be able to access some of their birth child's adoptive information after the adoptee has reached the age of 19 years. Both birth parents and adopted persons are now able to register "no contact" requests to be placed on their files; this measure is meant to allow access to the information while allowing the parties to state if they do not want to be contacted. Bill 183 does allow for confidentiality to be maintained in circumstances where child protection concerns existed, however, the process for addressing this issue has not yet been defined.

# Children & Youth In Care

The Child in Care Team is active in carrying out our guardianship role of children in long term care and increasingly supporting our youth as they prepare for independence.

Our younger children benefit from the day-to-day care and support of foster parents. Social workers work collaboratively with the foster parents to ensure that all of the children's developmental, emotional and educational needs are addressed.

As youth transition toward independence they lose that daily support and the role of the social worker changes. Currently we have 19 youth who are living independently but maintaining their connection with this agency. These youth need emotional support, counselling and assistance with the many practical challenges of everyday living.

When a youth brings a request or a query to us, our job is to respond by asking ourselves "what would a

good parent do?" Our child in care team assists our youth in searching for and setting up apartments, providing assistance with moving and storing furniture, providing advocacy with landlords, education planning and other services. We try to ensure that our youth are able to participate fully in special opportunities and occasions that are available to them. This role can often be as simple but as important as shopping for a graduation dress, accompanying a youth while they take their G-1 driver's licence, a trip to check out a college campus, providing support while a youth attends medical appointments, and just providing an opportunity for a caring second sober thought.

When children in care are unable to move on to independent living, careful planning and coordination is required to ensure that they transition to other supportive adult services.

## YouthCAN

Recently there has been an initiative in Ontario to give youth in care a voice in the care and supports offered to them. Our agency is an active member of the Ontario Youth Communications and Advocacy Network (YouthCAN).



"Just Voice It" is this agency's youth advocacy group which is a member of YouthCAN. They are closely connected. It is an exciting time for youth in care, as programs are developing to give youth a voice and optimize their life chances while in care and receiving support as they transition to independence. Our youth are very active in the Eastern Zone, and have been participating in leadership and team work activities on weekend retreats and attending the YouthCAN

conference in Toronto. One of our youth even went to Vancouver for the World Youth Forum in November 2006. Within the agency they have met with Foster Parents and the Program Committee; hosted two workshops on subjects of interest for youth and hosted an Open

House at the agency. They developed and initiated the 'going out bags' (bags put together by the group containing some of the basics required for apartment set-up such as dishes, towels, toiletries etc. for youth entering independent living). "Just Voice It" wants to hear from the youth in the agency about their ideas and suggestions. They have an email address, voice-mail and a mail slot at the Perth Office.

# Community Outreach

It is the responsibility of the Community Outreach Coordinator to develop a network of strong and lasting relationships throughout the community. These relationships are not only pivotal in creating a greater understanding of the function of our CAS, but are critical in the acquisition of financial support and volunteers. It is this support that allows the Society to provide a wide range of auxiliary services and programs beyond those mandated by the province. We feel these services and programs are essential to the nurturing and well-being of our children and youth.

## *Together for Kids:*

The Together For Kids Committee, which is comprised of Board members, staff and community volunteers, spearheads the fundraising activities of Lanark CAS. The monies raised are used to enhance life experiences of children at risk of abuse and neglect.

The resulting Opportunities Fund was created to help provide children and youth with the opportunity to experience a wide range of activities that are generally associated with growing up in a healthy, vibrant community. It is the experiences that these programs offer that give our children a sense of normalcy while enhancing social skills and forming bonding friendships. The fund is designed to enrich the lives of children and youth in care through:

- Summer Camp
- Tutoring/Education programs
- Music/Art/Dance lessons
- Sports activities and equipment
- Scholarships/Bursaries

In our community there are a number of families that lack the financial means to meet the essentials required in every day life. Lanark CAS attempts, wherever possible, to offer assistance to help address the needs of children who are not in our care. Nowhere is this better exemplified than with the annual snowsuit campaign, which is coordinated by our Society. The United Way of Lanark County helps fund the coordination of the campaign. Our fundraising program enables the purchase of snowsuits to ensure that every request is filled. The motto of the campaign is *"We were warm... shouldn't all children be?"*

Another example is the Angel Tree program, which is realized through a partnership with the Lanark detachment of the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP). This program helps to ensure that there is a gift under the tree Christmas morning for children in need in our community.

We are fortunate to receive help from a number of local businesses – for example; over the past 25 years we have worked with Perth Loeb to distribute Christmas hampers containing everything needed to help families experience a joyous holiday season.

It indeed does take a community to raise a child. We rely upon an extended caring community and a partnership approach to help provide these services. None of the 'extras' would be possible without our dedicated volunteers who give so generously of their time and expertise.

To all our partners we extend our heartfelt thanks.

# Statement of Operations



## STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS FOR THE YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 2007

	2007	2006	2005
<b>REVENUES:</b>			
Province of Ontario	9,237,512	8,791,804	7,754,334
Recoveries	634,707	673,812	553,421
	<u>9,872,219</u>	<u>9,465,616</u>	<u>8,307,755</u>
<b>EXPENSES:</b>			
Salaries & Benefits	4,469,713	3,895,262	3,481,208
Amortization	128,003	110,406	66,036
Direct Costs	3,861,758	3,514,759	3,592,613
Travel	548,720	410,193	349,146
Administration	681,019	944,745	600,451
	<u>9,689,213</u>	<u>8,875,365</u>	<u>8,089,454</u>
EXCESS (DEFICIENCY) OF REVENUE OVER EXPENSES	183,006	590,251	218,301
LESS: CAPITAL EXPENDITURES	(284,283)	(1,084,223)	(1,709,962)
NET	(101,277)	(493,972)	(1,491,661)

## CHILD PROTECTION SERVICE DATA

	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07
<b>NON-RESIDENTIAL SERVICES:</b>				
Referrals Received, No Investigation Required	418	621	664	706
Investigations Completed, No Further Protection Required	586	595	610	520
Cases Open for Protection	241	259	268	284
Ongoing Family Services Cases	133	163	163	175
<b>RESIDENTIAL SERVICES:</b>				
Children and Youth In Care Per Month	117	127	136	140
<b>Total Days of Care Provided</b>	<b>45,237</b>	<b>47,213</b>	<b>49,796</b>	<b>50,455</b>



# CAS

## Office Locations

### Head Office:

Perth

8 Herriott Street

Perth, Ontario

K7H 1S9

613 264-9991 or 1-866-664-9991

Carleton Place

123 Patterson Crescent

Carleton Place, Ontario

K7C 4R2

613 253-2111 or 1-888-485-5651

### Access Sites:

Perth

Carleton Place

Smiths Falls



The Children's Aid Society of the  
County of Lanark and The Town of Smiths Falls



United Way of Lanark County Member