



Let's start

Annual Report 2019/2020



CHILDREN'S
AID SOCIETY
of TORONTO


LA SOCIÉTÉ
DE L'AIDE à
L'ENFANCE
DE TORONTO

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WHO WE ARE

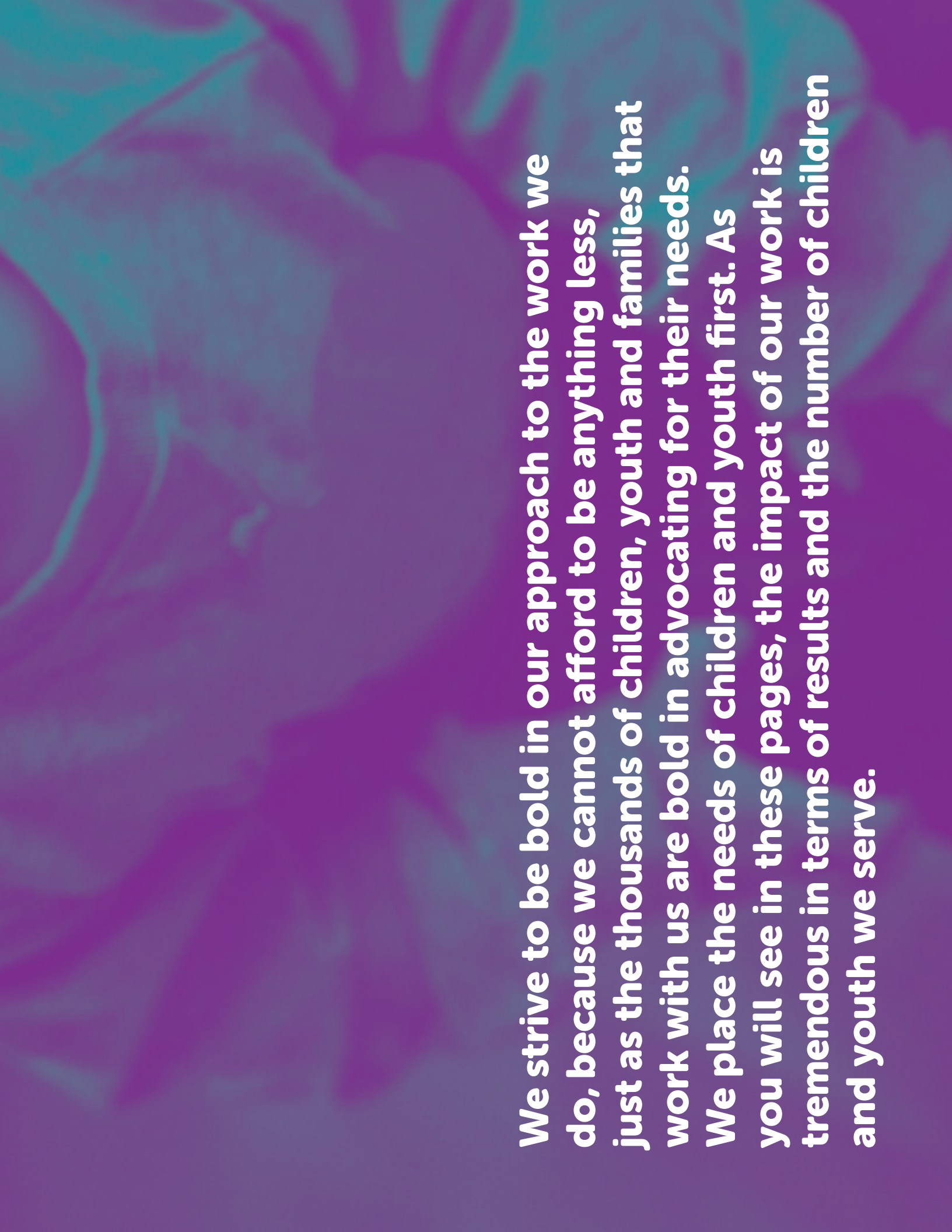


A person wearing a blue long-sleeved shirt and blue jeans is standing on a wooden deck. The person's arms are crossed, and they are looking towards the camera. The background shows a sunset with orange and yellow light reflecting on the water. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

We create an environment that promotes trust, equality, respect, diversity, openness, and honesty; Affirming and valuing our staff, care providers, clients, and volunteers; Promoting enduring relationships for children and youth; Being accountable and transparent; Demonstrating excellence, leadership, teamwork, and innovation.




WHAT WE DO



We strive to be bold in our approach to the work we do, because we cannot afford to be anything less, just as the thousands of children, youth and families that work with us are bold in advocating for their needs. We place the needs of children and youth first. As you will see in these pages, the impact of our work is tremendous in terms of results and the number of children and youth we serve.



HOW WE DO IT



We care deeply about the well-being of children, youth and families. We are looking at all of our processes to ensure that the voices of children and youth are heard when decisions about their lives are being made and we are partnering with families to work with them to find solutions about how to best manage the challenges they face.

It was an eventful, challenging and fulfilling past year at the CAS of Toronto. I can say with confidence that all of our stakeholders played a huge role in helping elevate the lives of many children, youth and families in our community.

We began the year by unveiling a new Strategic Plan to guide our work to improve the kinds of support we provide to children, youth and their families and we finished the year managing an unbelievable pandemic state of emergency that challenged us to rethink how we could deliver services to keep our clients and staff safe while still attending effectively to their needs and interests. Faced with a new and ambitious strategic plan and the onset of the pandemic, we really had to elevate our work this year.

In the pages preceding this message, you may have noticed that you had to turn the report around to read it. We did this intentionally to align the layout with the theme of this year's annual report which is "Elevate". The layout of this report presented us with a powerful way of symbolizing how the agency and all of our stakeholders are working hard every day to elevate the lives of the children, youth and families who we engage with. I can say with confidence that all of our stakeholders played a huge role this past year in helping elevate the lives of many children, youth and families in our community.

The past year was also an exceptional one for advancing major initiatives at CAS of Toronto to improve the services that we provide. In particular we led and demonstrated that a province wide after-hours call screening service could work and that co-ordinated service delivery was possible. We also kicked off our Journey to Zero pilot project that is demonstrating how a variety of intensive early support strategies can positively change the trajectory of life for families and help children and youth to stay safely in the family home. We were delighted to have the generous support of private philanthropy fund this important work for us, and we were further delighted that the Ministry of Children,

Community and Social Services took a strong interest in the project. If our results over time with Journey to Zero continue to be successful, I can see a day when this type of approach becomes the normal way of supporting all families in the future.

I would like to thank the entire team here at CAS of Toronto for their inspired work over the past year and I would like to thank our Board Chair, Margot Trevelyan and our highly engaged Board of Directors for their commendable commitment to the agency and to our community.

Thank you,



Paul Rosebush
Chief Executive Officer

Now more than ever we need to elevate in order to maintain the strong village of care we have all created; focus on the diversity and inclusiveness which make us so much stronger; and love and care for each other.

When I assumed the position of Chair last year, I did so with great humility as I was, and continue to be, in awe of our board members. They include those with lived experience, child-welfare professionals and advocates, community activists, leaders in anti-black racism, professionals in finance, accounting, governance, strategic planning, risk management and program evaluation. All of these valuable voices come to the table and add value when discussing strategic issues.

The year began with the board setting high standards for itself and the agency, adopting not only strong strategic directions but specific goals with agreed-upon ways of measuring progress towards them. By the end of the year, we found ourselves in a world crisis, a pandemic that continues to ravage the world, and in particular, the most vulnerable among us.

At no other time has it been so important for everyone in the child welfare village to support the care of children and youth. Fortunately, we are well positioned to do so.

Under the leadership of CEO, Paul Rosebush, CAS of Toronto has demonstrated a commitment to providing services that are child-centred and to addressing complex systemic issues. In two short years, Paul has modeled a passion to learn, transparency, capacity-building and an amicable professionalism. A leader in the sector, he has sought out partnerships and engaged with stakeholder groups—listening, seeking advice, developing solutions and forging new paths forward.

Paul is supported by a highly skilled and engaged professional senior team, who are among the best in their field. Last year CAS of Toronto was named one of Ontario's top employers. The agency is financially healthy. Its programs undergo regular review to ensure maximum efficiency and effectiveness. Staff have access to training and developmental opportunities. We have dedicated


staff to promote diversity, equity and inclusiveness both at the staff level and in our programs. We have passionate and dedicated volunteers, an invaluable resource.

A huge thank you to our maintenance and cleaning staff, who ensure that employees and visitors have a clean and comfortable environment. We value their work at the best of times, but even more so during a pandemic.

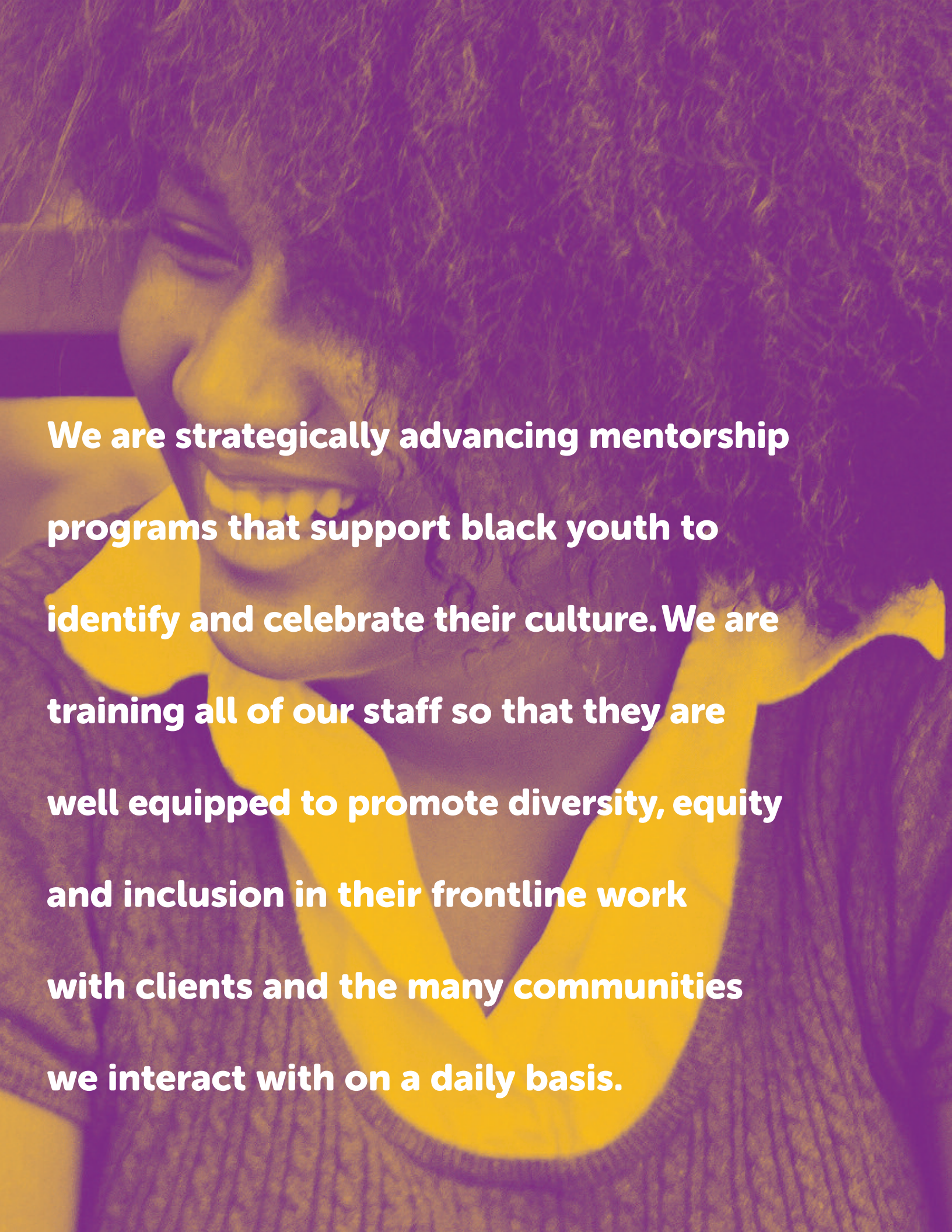
The Child Welfare Institute and the Children's Foundation of Canada are two vital partners. The Institute leads in the areas of research, evaluation and audits, allowing us to make evidence-based decisions, measure our goals, and make adjustments. The Foundation provides key support to our children and youth to help them through adulthood. We also look forward to a continued fruitful relationship with the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services as we work together to provide a child/youth-based focus to our services.

A pandemic such as the one in which we find ourselves, exposes the most vulnerable among us. There are families under extraordinary stress, some who feel they are near the breaking point. Now more than ever we need to elevate in order to maintain the strong village of care we have all created; focus on the diversity and inclusiveness which make us so much stronger; and love and care for each other.

Thank you,



Margot Trevelyan
Chair, Board of Directors



We are strategically advancing mentorship programs that support black youth to identify and celebrate their culture. We are training all of our staff so that they are well equipped to promote diversity, equity and inclusion in their frontline work with clients and the many communities we interact with on a daily basis.

Q / With your leadership, the organization launched 3 new strategic directions for 2019-2022. How do you see Toronto CAS changing in the next three years, and how do you see yourself creating that change?

Our three directions represent the kind of change that children, youth and families have been advocating for and we believe we have listened to those voices and landed on the right priorities. Over the next three years we will keep children and youth front and centre in every aspect of service delivery that we engage in. All over the world, services have been shifting from a "one-size fits all" model to service delivery that is truly based on the needs and desires of the client and in that regard we are no exception. Although we deliver a mandated service, we know the best outcomes occur whenever the client voice guides our work.

On our second priority we are collaborating with our service partners in all sectors to ensure that there is

a strong continuum of care and support available to clients of the agency. No one agency can deliver every service that a client or client family system needs so we need to work hard to develop partnerships with mental health agencies and health services and community agencies and housing services, for example, to ensure our clients have access to the broad range of services and supports that will lift them up and address their needs and goals.

Our third priority is to champion diversity, equity and inclusion through everything that we do. We are therefore passionately advancing numerous strategies to reduce disproportionality and disparity in service outcomes for our clients. We live in a diverse world and we need to ensure that equity is practiced in our work with children, youth and families and we need to make certain that our agency reflects the diversity of our great city. We are therefore challenging ourselves to reduce the number of Black children and youth in care and we are also strategically advancing mentorship programs that support Black youth to identify and celebrate their culture. We are furthermore training all of our staff so that they are well equipped to promote diversity, equity and inclusion in their frontline work with clients and the many communities we interact with on a daily basis.

As the CEO of the agency it is my role to hold the agency accountable to meeting our goals and ensuring that we have the right people, resources, and strategies in place to be successful in all three of our directions. With the help of our Board, our many community stakeholders and our phenomenal staff I know that we will reach our goals and in the process serve and support children, youth and families much better than ever before.

Read more about our Strategic Directions:
<https://www.torontocas.ca/strategic-directions>

I am in the community everyday promoting our work and advocating for our stakeholders to jump on board and help us to help children,youth and families.

Q / Every day, you meet/speak with community, various partner organizations, families, youth, children, government officials and other leaders in the child welfare sector. How do you pitch Toronto CAS' services, and talk about the work that the organization does?

A big part of my job is to strategically promote our agency with other organizations and officials in order to execute our mission and vision and to achieve our strategic directions. That means I am in the community everyday promoting our work and advocating for our stakeholders to jump on board and help us to help children, youth and families. I always tell everyone that I interact with that our children and clients are some of the most vulnerable people in our society, and that our stakeholders and

partners have a real stake in ensuring that we address "need" now instead of later when the social costs of trying to address vulnerable and marginalized individuals and families spiral out of control. Helping children, youth and families now means better outcomes, lower social costs over time, and children and youth who can grow up with faith in people and their world.

Read about the Chief Executive's Officer Paul Rosebush's Mandate letter: http://torontocas.ca/sites/torontocas/files/MandateLetter-PaulRosebush-Sep4_2018.pdf

Q / What do you hope to accomplish within the next year?

In the next year I want to ensure that our staff get through the pandemic safely and that our agency successfully transitions back to engaging with all of our clients and community stakeholders through face to face visits when the restrictions on social distancing are lifted by Public Health and our various levels of government. I also want to see good progress on our three strategic directions and I would like to see our Journey to Zero program results used to encourage other children's aid organizations to develop similar programs and become a model of service that is promoted by the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services.

Read about our Covid-19 response: <https://torontocas.ca/news/covid-19-message-our-ceo>



It is our priority to help families keep their children safe by enhancing and supporting their networks of supports and resources.

SITTING DOWN WITH OUR EXECUTIVE TEAM

Q / What do you value most about our culture and vision?

Marnie: The deep sense of caring for social justice by our workers who advocate for the vulnerable members of society we are serving.

Anthony: I value the supportive nature of our organization. I believe that everyday our people across our organization are motivated to help improve the lives of the children, youth and families that we serve. Whether that is through the direct provision of service and care to individuals, all the way through to our support functions across the organization who enable the day-to-day operations of the organization. Together we all play an important role in fulfilling the organization's vision and mandate.

Mahesh: That we see ourselves as a service oriented organization whose purpose is to improve the quality of the lives of the families, children and youth we serve. We have created a culture of an organization who

fundamentally believes that children belong at home and in their communities. It is our priority to help families keep their children safe by enhancing and supporting their networks of supports and resources. Simply put, our focus is to help families protect their own children rather than protecting children from their families.

Q / The Toronto CAS recently won the Greater Toronto's Top 2020 Employers. As the Chief Human Resources Officer, what do you think winning this award for another year signifies?

Marnie: I like to think that our recognition as a Top Employer highlights the phenomenal work benefits we provide and signals to future employees, and to our community, that we care about our people. They make a significant contribution to society and we respect and value the work that they do and how they show up daily for their clients, families, and communities. We recognize the work our employees perform is emotionally demanding. As a result, we seek to provide comprehensive benefits and act as an industry leader with implementing new leading practices and policies to meet the evolving needs of our staff.

Q / What do you think was the most important thing Toronto CAS did this past year?

Mahesh: We launched Journey to Zero, which is a prevention based program whose goal is to ensure that children at risk do not grow up in Children's Aid Society care. For many years Children's Aid Societies have focussed on a model of keeping children safe through a process of investigating allegations of abuse and placing children in the care of the Society as a means of ensuring safety. By investing in family capacity, and strengthening family networks through prevention focussed initiatives, we wish to focus our work on the prevention of abuse rather than the investigation of

Our organization has shown the humility to acknowledge and begin to address any of our shortcomings so that we can deliver better outcomes to the children and youth we serve.

abuse. Further, we wish to ensure that children do not remain in care for extended periods of time.

Journey to Zero is a tangible example of an initiative that demonstrates how we are working differently to support families to ensure children can remain safe while they remain at home and in their communities.

Anthony: While I believe as an organization we have a lot of notable achievements this past year, I am personally very proud of the work our organization did to lead a provincial pilot for call answering and screening in the after-hours period. Referral sources to our agency now have their calls answered 24/7/365 directly by a trained child protection worker. We were able to collaborate with a number of our peer agencies across the province to bring-to-life this enhanced service to support the children, youth, families and communities that we serve.

Q / What is Toronto CAS doing well, and where is there opportunity to grow?

Mahesh: We continue to do well in implementing our strategies as they relate to a focus on prevention. We have reduced the number of children in our care by more than 50% in the last 3 years and we have also reduced the length of time a child remains in our care. We have developed more community partnerships that focus on building on family strengths and capacity that ensure families have the tools and resources to parent their children successfully.

We also continue to move forward in our desire to hold ourselves accountable to the services we provide to our African Canadian community and ensure that data that highlights areas of disparity and disproportionality, are addressed. We have strengthened and added additional resources to our Equity Department, hired a new Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and partnered with a number of agencies that specifically



Mahesh Prajapat
Chief Operating Officer

Marnie Lynn
Chief Human Resource
Officer

Anthony Battista
Chief Financial Officer

Our strategic directions are rooted in the principal of providing high quality services to those that we serve. As an organization we want to be client-centered in our work.

serve the African Canadian community. We have also provided cultural safety training for all of our management staff focusing on issues of anti-black racism. We understand that this is a long journey and that we are only at the beginning. However, we are committed to its success and we will remain transparent, welcome feedback and introduce clear measures that will allow us to monitor our progress.

An opportunity for growth continues to be our messaging to our community and helping our community both understand and believe that we are focused on a model of service that prioritizes the integrity of the family and ensuring that children remain at home and in their communities while we address issues of safety and risk. Child Welfare, as a sector, has a 100 year old history of being viewed as organizations that have removed children from their homes as the primary model of ensuring safety. We will continue to work hard to promote ourselves as an organization that invests in strengthening family capacity and networks. We know that this is indeed the best way to ensure, not only the safety of at risk children, but to ensure that at risk children thrive and achieve the best outcomes in life.

Q / Why are you passionate about your job?

Marnie: I am an HR idealist at heart, and like many of our employees, I choose to spend a lot of my time working because I truly believe in the work that we do in the pursuit of helping the children and families we serve. I am a visionary and it is my sincere hope and genuine wish that this workplace is pleasant for our employees because of the robust and strategic work my HR team provides behind the scene.

Q / What do you hope the strategic directions say to the public about Toronto CAS?

Anthony: Our strategic directions are rooted in the principal of providing high quality services to those that we serve. As an organization we want to be client-centered in our work. In order for us to achieve this goal it is incumbent on us to build partnerships not only within our sector, but beyond it to ensure that we have the appropriate supports and community links in place to benefit children, youth and families. Moreover, to be a client-centered organization, we must clearly acknowledge where we have had challenges in the past, in particular as it relates to the over-representation of black children in care. Championing diversity, equity and inclusion is part of the journey to reduce over-representation while also bringing awareness of this issue to many of our agency's referral sources whom may not be as further along on this journey.



OUR PROGRAMS

CWI is well-established, easily accessible, valued and well-respected internally and externally for producing quality training and partnering with over 50 different agency and community partners to do rigorous, leading-edge research.

CHILD WELFARE INSTITUTE DEBORAH GOODMAN

The Child Welfare Institute (CWI) is a department of 9 staff with responsibility for three key areas at Toronto CAS: Staff Training & Development, Quality Assurance and Research & Evaluation.

Training & Development

Using a centralized training model, CWI annually offers to staff a range of classroom-based and online training workshops. Examples include: core trainings, onboarding, child welfare authorization, CPIN and specialized trainings. CWI is the lead for recruiting and matching the 80–100 Student Placements each year at Toronto CAS.

Quality Assurance

CWI's auditing work includes working with the IM Department in the quarterly completion of the MCCSS QIP reports, the Office of the Auditor General of Ontario audit, support to the Q&O Board Committee, the annual Extended Society Care Review QIP Report, OCANDS, and any other reporting requirements as assigned.

Research/Evaluation

CWI conducts the internal evaluations for Toronto CAS interventions, programs, projects and areas, which in total are 20–25 internal evaluations annually. CWI also conducts evaluations for various external community agencies and academics. Research/evaluation can be local, provincial, national and international.

CWI is unique for Toronto CAS, Ontario and Canada as a training/research institute that is for child welfare.

CWI is well-established, easily accessible, valued and well-respected internally and externally for producing quality training and partnering with over 50 different agency and community partners to do rigorous, leading-edge research by evaluators who are respectful and understand the work.

To date, the CWI has the lead in matching and processing all Student Placements at Toronto CAS (80–100/year).

In operation since 2007, the Child Welfare Institute (CWI), the research

and evaluation arm for Toronto CAS, is excited to work with past and current partners in knowledge testing, creation and confirmation. Programs include:

Journey to Zero: Family Partnership Meeting (FPM) & Family Group Conferencing (FGC); Early Supports to Adolescents; Multi-disciplinary Intake Team; Early Kinship Services.

Improving High School Graduation Rates & Long-Term Outcomes for Black Youth in Care via Culturally Specific Mentorship;

Infographic: A Toronto CAS Worker's Guide to Informing Children, Youth, and Families of their Rights;

Kuponya: Supporting Black Families through Collaboration;

Client Satisfaction and Feedback Initiative at Children's Aid Society of Toronto;

Macaulay Child Development Centre: 2019 Demographic Survey;

Literature Review: Best Practices for Pregnancy and Aftercare (PAC) Workers to Engage with Vulnerable/Marginalized Women; Non-Social Work Supervision Models for Staff and Management.

YouthLink Shelter Data Capture;

AHCAS onboarding feedback survey;

ABR Learning Sessions: Summary of Staff Feedback;

Intake: Domestic Violence (DV) survey;

Boost CYAC: P.E.P Talk Primary Program Evaluation;

14,899

14,899 screening cases opened
(Total number of calls reporting
abuse, neglect, seeking
information and community
links)

The CAS of Toronto and YSM partnership is growing rapidly with CAS of Toronto's volume of referrals to YSM; feedback to date is positive on the benefits and effective service interventions of YSM with CAS of Toronto families and youth.

YMCA: Play in Action Tool Reliability Assessment;

Out & Proud Infographic;

Connections;

Healthy Teens;

Healthy Families;

Milan—Counselling for African Canadian Caribbean's;

Caring Dads;

Mothers-in-Mind;

Financial Literacy;

Ujima House—African-Canadian Caribbean Fathers;

Experience of Camp for Child Welfare Involved Youth;

Shelter Movers;

Higher State of Mind;

Reducing Waitlist for High Risk Youth;

CAFC—HSBC;

Young Street Mission—Supports to Black Families.

YONGE STREET MISSION BRENDA & CLAUDIA

The Yonge Street Mission (YSM) is a development agency that serves those impacted by poverty needing services in the downtown Toronto area, as well as shelters across the city. As a multi-service provider, YSM works with families and individuals to provide care required to achieve life goals, restoration and stabilization. To date, there are limited culturally specific services to Black families in Toronto that are effective in working with child-welfare involved cases.

Recently, CAS of Toronto and YSM entered into a collaborative service partnership. The aim: to achieve a positive impact for families, children and youth served by CAS of Toronto, with a focus on Black families.

Analysis of service data finds no significant differences between White and Black children in the overall incident of child maltreatment. Yet, professionals and individuals are more likely to report people of African descent than Whites to the child welfare system. An effect the extant literature attributes in part to the

adverse impacts of systemic bias or Anti-Black Racism (Ontario Mentoring Coalition, 2016; York University, 2017). In short, a disproportionate number of Black families are being referred, investigated, and serviced by child welfare which leads to a disproportionate number of Black children entering the care.

The partnership aims to address the disparities in service to Black families through offering more culturally reflective, effective services. The goal: to reduce the number of Black families served by CAS of Toronto and reduce the numbers of Black children entering the CAS of Toronto care by:

Strengthening and stabilizing families currently involved with CAS of Toronto by offering YSM culturally reflective services that aim to minimize the disruption and distress which can lead to generational impacts on the overall wellbeing of the family;



TORONTO CAS STAFF

7,650

7,650 volunteers contributed an average of over 147 hours per week.

70

70 volunteers assisted with over 30 events during 2019

Minimizing the trauma to the family, children and youth through YSM providing prompt, culturally responsive interventions that reduce the likelihood of Black children and youth entering the CAS of Toronto care;

Focusing on preserving the family unit through intensive, wraparound support;

Working with families towards early reunification back home of their children and youth who are in care;

Adopting common outcome measures to capture positive impacts through this partnership with the longer-term goal of advancing an evidence-informed program design.

The CAS of Toronto and YSM partnership is growing rapidly with CAS of Toronto's volume of referrals to YSM; feedback to date is positive on the benefits and effective service interventions of YSM with CAS of Toronto families and youth.

HEALTH SERVICES PROGRAM ROB DAVIDSON

Since the 1960's CAS of Toronto has supported an intra-agency Health Services program, which provides medical, and mental health care to children and youth in care.

The complex interactions of the biological, developmental, psychological and social factors are the foundation for many of the challenges faced by children, youth and families, served by the Child Welfare System.

Health Services at CAS of Toronto embraces a bio-psycho-social model of care necessary to optimally serve our clients.

The care of the children and families we care for are both complex and specialized. Our care is based on the principle of putting children and youth at the centre of care. We resolve to set the standards, and be a centre of excellence, for health care, research and education within the child welfare sector.

The HSP offers an array of specialized care. Our health team provides medical and nursing consultation to workers, foster families, and young people. Within our clinics, we conduct admission medicals and support adoption with both consultations and discharge summaries. The health team provides care along the developmental continuum including assessment, diagnosis, medication management, vaccinations, dental care and referrals to medical specialties. In the community, a specialized nursing team assesses risk and supports and promotes health and wellbeing of children and families experiencing challenging circumstances.

Health services provides comprehensive trauma focused, holistic care along at any point on the care continuum—from prevention to permanency to transition. In partnership with the Child Welfare Institute, The Hospital for Sick Children, The University of Toronto, and other organizations, Health Services harnesses new evidence to inform and improve and expand practice.



TORONTO CAS STAFF

Current Programming

Health Clinic Service — Medical screening, assessments, interventions and recommendations

Infant Nurse Specialist Program — Nursing home visits providing safety and support

Dental Services — Full dental services — Preventative and treatment including orthodontics

Mental health services — Psychology and Psychiatric assessment services

FASD program — Screening, diagnostics and complex case reviews

Foster/Kin/Adoption support — Health information and placement support

Connections — Transitional health care navigation for youth in collaboration with PARC

360,424

360,424 social media
impressions



TORONTO CAS STAFF

PARC CHERYL MANGAR

The Pape Adolescent Resource Centre (PARC) is a preparation for independence program that provides ongoing support to youth leaving the child welfare system up to the age of 29 years old.

The measure of success for many young people is seen in the day to day struggle that blossoms into increased confidence to return to school, overcoming trauma and having meaningful relationships in their lives and empowerment to follow their dreams with hope for the future. One of these young people is Nathan.

Nathan's Story

Nathan came into care at 8-years-old, as his mother was unable to care for him. Nathan had placements in various foster homes and group homes. Nathan said, "The first foster

home was awful, but then I was placed in a group home and I really loved it. I loved the staff and they helped me to move forward."

Nathan always dreamed of having permanency but at age 18, he moved out on his own. Nathan was precariously housed for periods of time and relied on friends for a place to stay.

Nathan started attending PARC when he was a teenager and continues to be a familiar face. He has regularly participated in holiday events and programs offered at PARC such as the One Stop Housing program, YOLO (Youth Living on the Outside), Art Group, Transitions, Financial Literacy, Leaders In Training and Summer Programming. Nathan is always wanting to learn and improve himself.

Nathan was always focused on getting his high school diploma and successfully completed his high school diploma at the Pinball Clemons Foundation Ambassador School Program.

Nathan got involved in the Hip Hop music community and has learned a lot about music videos and production. Nathan states "that music has really helped him over the years when things were 'dark' for him. It was his outlet."

Last year, Nathan stated he wanted to attend a post-secondary music program and started attending the Strive for Success Group so he could prepare for the transition to College

life. While in this group he found out he was not accepted to College as he failed the Literacy test. Nathan stabilized and he reconnected with the Pinball Clemons Foundation Ambassador School where he is actively working on academic upgrading in order to get into the music program at George Brown College.

Nathan also started attending the Ahead of The Game program for Black males facilitated by Jonathon Hood. Nathan expressed that he "enjoyed the opportunities for learning the men's group offered as well as the friendships he made within the group."

Nathan has mental health issues and has faced tremendous grief and loss after losing his mother two years ago. In May 2019, Nathan lost a close friend and sought support from his PARC worker. Nathan tearfully shared he was ready to deal with all of the built up anger, trauma and grief. Nathan started working with the Connections Program (a program that provides short term mental health supports and connection to community supports) and with the support of the Nurse Navigator, began to receive mental health counselling regularly.

This September 2019, Nathan was also selected to be a Youth Leader for the Ahead of the Game program this year for the 12 week Black Males group. Nathan is so proud to be a Leader and he is feeling hopeful about his future.

303

303 engaged volunteers

994

994 children in care served

The measure of success for many young people is seen in the day to day struggle that blossoms into increased confidence to return to school, overcoming trauma and having meaningful relationships in their lives and empowerment to follow their dreams with hope for the future.

"I wanted to give back, because if someone like me can do it, I want to show the youth that they can do it."

CIRCLE OF SUPPORT CLAUDIA LYNCH

On June 7, Toronto CAS held its inaugural Circle of Support Community Fair. There is strength, richness and resilience in the African Canadian community. The Circle of Support community fair aimed to; firstly, strengthen partnerships with community organizations to provide culturally safe, anti-oppressive, and trauma informed support to African Canadian families, children and youth. Secondly, to address the disparities in child welfare services to the African Canadian children, youth and families we are working with. Lastly, to engage grassroots organizations that support for African Canadian families, children and youth.

The Circle of Support Fair included community organizations, big and small that specific criteria directed at helping the black community.

The Circle of Support Community Fair included a series of panel discussions of organizations to showcase their organizations' services by the following categories:

Health/Wellness/Mental Health
Education/Mentoring
Legal Support Family Supportive Services.

It was a rich day filled with discussion, conversations and information. We look forward to next year's Circle of Support Fair.

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM HERE AT CAS OF TORONTO MOLLY BARNES

The Community Development (CD) Program is part of the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Department. You may ask, what do the CD Workers do? We are the hands, feet and voices of Toronto CAS in communities to support these groups to improve their quality of life by tackling some of the tough social issues that could bring families and children through

the doors of Toronto CAS. We help to dispel myths about Toronto CAS in general, by doing prevention work with these community groups who may or may not have direct involvement with Toronto CAS, but they see us working shoulder to shoulder with them in their communities to empower them toward self-development and actualization through mutual partnerships, including:

Community Engagement—Have day to day involvement with residents and other community partners such as Local Immigration Partnership, Rosalie Hall, Agincourt Services Association, Dorset Park Resident Association, Toronto Parks and Recreation, Toronto Library, Salvation Army, ACCESS Employment, Churches, Toronto Crisis Response Team, United Way, Toronto District School Board, Mornelle Court Resident Association, LGBTQ group, The Furniture Bank.



TORONTO CAS STAFF

183,092,986

158 stories totalling 183,092,986 million media impressions

Program Development—Leading role in community engagement and planning Dorset Park Day Summer BBQ and Back to School Supplies Giveaway. Over 800 residents attended an event on August 24 and about 450 bags of school supplies were provided to children PK to high school. Supported Mornelle Court with four weeks of structured Summer Program activities for over 80 children.

Planning—Presently developing stakeholder partnerships with Scarborough LGBTQ group and Local Immigration Partnership developing Faith group partnership. Manage and maintain a key partnership with the Furniture Bank Program so that over 200 Toronto CAS families yearly receive housing support to maintain stable housing.

Promotion/Consultation—Represented Toronto CAS regarding Golden Mile Revitalization project in Scarborough; Provided support to community group on Children of Incarcerated Parents; Provided input to Homelessness research project organized by United Way and Youthlink; Increase community awareness about Toronto CAS by organizing various community booths in communities.

HEALTHY TEENS PROJECT

The Healthy Teens Project (HTP) is a collaboration between CAS of Toronto and Turning Point Youth Services (TPYS).

The HTP worker provides service to the youth in their home or in their

community. The HTP worker's role is to undertake a psycho-social assessment of the youth aged 12–16 living with their parents, provide short term trauma informed Cognitive Behaviour Therapy with the youth; link the youth with appropriate services including but not limited to their mental health (for example with doctors, school and recreational activities); follow up with these youth that they are connecting well with these resources; engage parents in their youths' treatment plan and deliver psycho-educational support for parents about their adolescents' issues.

THE HEALTHY FAMILIES PROGRAM

The Healthy Families Program (HFP) is a collaboration between CAS of Toronto and the Canadian Mental Health Association. Toronto CAS workers assist caregivers who are either suspected or diagnosed with a mental illness and are receiving ongoing child protection services at CAS of Toronto.

The HFP is comprised of a four-person, multi-disciplinary mental health team of nurses, occupational therapists and social workers who are co-located at CAS of Toronto.

The HFP team provides service to caregivers in their homes and/or community. The HFP team utilizes a trauma informed and social determinants of health and recovery lens when working with these caregivers. The interventions by the HFP team focus on rich assessment

and brokerage to appropriate services. The HFP also provide consultation and training capacity for CAS of Toronto personnel.

The aim of the HFP program is to promote optimal parental/caregiver mental health; improved outcomes for families; reduce barriers to service; improve access to mental health and primary health care services; promote efficient use of health care services; increase caregiver and CAS of Toronto's understanding about mental health and wellbeing and reduce stigma associated with mental health and addictions.

ABOUT THE TED AND LORETTA ROGERS FOSTER CARE COMFORT KIT PROGRAM

Children's Aid Foundation of Canada's Ted and Loretta Rogers Foster Care Comfort Kit Program aims to improve the experience of Canadian children coming into the care of the child



TORONTO CAS STAFF

434

434 black/bi-racial children
in care served

60

Over 60% of volunteers
are between the ages of 19
and 39.

welfare system by providing them with a backpack that aids in bettering their well-being, safety, and sense of security. For many of our children, being removed from their homes is traumatic and disorienting. Depending on the nature of the situation at the time, many of our children may have to leave with nothing but the clothes on their backs or very few possessions which are often packed in garbage bags.

The Ted and Loretta Rogers Foster Care Comfort Kit Program provides high-quality backpacks ("comfort kits") filled with age appropriate items and supplies to these children and youth as they face one of the most overwhelming experiences of their lives.

KUPONYA PROGRAM DORIAN KING AND ODELIA FRANCIS

Kuponya project is a collaboration between the Children's Aid Society of Toronto, Caribbean African Canadian Social Services (CAFCCAN) and the Jean Tweed Centre to offer a twofold approach to working with Black families from a trauma informed perspective. The project entails:

The delivery of two groups for parents entitled Trauma 101 and Parenting through Trauma. Each of these groups are offered at least twice in the 12 month period and are designed to support parents to better understand how trauma and trauma reactions can impact on parenting with a view to developing effective coping strategies. Trauma 101 is a short, six week group that works with clients to begin

to connect with trauma and trauma responses. Parenting through Trauma groups then connect trauma with impact on children with a view to developing strategies and supports. These groups are co-led by child welfare staff and CAFCCAN staff and are delivered in the community.

A Community Resource Liaison position to assist in connecting families with culturally appropriate and relevant clinical and support services in a timely and practical way. This is a co-located model which will enhance capacity building opportunities between Toronto CAS and CAFCCAN, as well as with the larger Black community. The collective responsibility of child welfare and community agencies to respond to the needs of the Black community is paramount and through this proposal the relationship between the two systems will be enhanced and strengthened leading to stronger communities.

JOURNEY TO ZERO SHARON CABRERA

Journey to Zero is a joint initiative between the Children's Aid Society of Toronto, the Children's Aid Foundation of Canada, and several Canadian philanthropic foundations and donors. It was officially launched within Toronto CAS on November 1, 2019 and publically launched on November 20, 2019. The first two demonstration projects: Early Response Family Partnership Meetings and Intensive In-Home Supports for Adolescents were implemented. Each intervention reflects a formal



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partnership between Toronto CAS and a community partner. The George Hull Centre is partnering with Toronto CAS to provide Early Response Family Partnership Meetings and YouthLink is providing Youth Outreach Workers intensive in home support for adolescents and their families. Referrals for both programs far exceeded expectations in the first 2 months of implementation. The third demonstration project, Intensive Family Network Builders is set to be launched on November 1, 2020.

Toronto CAS' Child Welfare Institute (CWI) and community partners designed the evaluation plans for the first two demonstration projects focusing on Clinical/Service Goals and the Impact on Operational/Overall Program Goals.

The primary aim of Journey to Zero continues to be to reduce the number of children and youth from coming into care and the amount of time children and youth stay in care.

CAS of Toronto has taken many steps to adjust the way service to children, youth and families is delivered while ensuring the safety of clients, volunteers and staff.

On March 17th Premier Ford announced a state of emergency in the province because of the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Most businesses were required to close, with the exception of essential services, including child welfare agencies. CAS of Toronto has taken many steps to adjust the way service to children, youth and families is delivered while ensuring the safety of clients, volunteers and staff even after the branch sites have closed. All decisions continue to be made in accordance with the agency's mandate, mission and values.

Preparation and outreach

As an organization we understand the multi-dimensional impact the virus has on people's physical and mental health, family relationships, finances and housing stability. This is why protection and service staff have been maintaining regular contact with their clients by phone or video calls. Staff have also been provided with the necessary Personal Protective Equipment in order for home visits with children, youth and families to continue.

We continue to work closely with our community partners including the Violence Against Women sector given the impact this pandemic has had on increased incidents resulting from isolation, job loss, reduced access to services and other barriers. Additionally, with the support of the Children's Aid Foundation and branch funding, staff are also providing emergency money as needed to clients. We are also grateful to Telus, who gave us funds to pay for cell phones for children and youth in care.

Collaboration and planning

Access for children and youth placed on Supervision Orders and those in the Society's care has been carefully considered. Service teams have reviewed all of these cases because access is a right for children and youth and therefore requires thoughtful and informed planning. Staff in collaboration with their clients and caregivers have developed plans in order for safe access to continue. For some families this has meant telephone and video calls, for others face to face access has occurred. Plans are now being developed to re-open the agency's three locations in order for in person office access to begin.

At the end of April, the agency re-opened the Gablehurst residence in Scarborough for children or youth who require placement that are considered at risk of COVID-19. The home is operated by Fresh Start for Youth Services who is providing the day to day operations of the home including school programming, medical support and a rigorous health and safety plan that ensures that the health of residents and staff.

The CAS of Toronto has had an anti-oppression policy in place for over a decade, and its workforce reflects the diversity of the communities it serves.

Unconscious bias on the part of well-meaning individuals and organizations can contribute to systemic discrimination in the way young people and families from marginalized communities are treated by child welfare agencies. Addressing this issue has been a major priority for the Children's Aid Society of Toronto (CAS of Toronto) over the past few years.

"It's a really large goal that's a major focus for me," says Farrell Hall, director of diversity, equity and inclusion. "For example, newcomers to Canada may have different behaviours with children, so a Canadian teacher may be concerned about the lunches kids bring to school and refer them to us."

"Our top three sources of referrals are the police, schools and hospitals. Each of those groups should have internal ways of educating their people, but we also have a role in helping them strip back biases about race, religion, sexual orientation and so on, and to treat youth through an anti-oppression lens."

"This applies to our own people too. While we've raised our level of consciousness, we still have a long way to go."

The CAS of Toronto has had an anti-oppression policy in place for over a decade, and its workforce reflects the diversity of the communities it serves. As part of his role, Hall leads or participates in various equity committees and resource groups. "The way I see it, to be a really good organization, you need to be an equity practitioner," he says.

A particular problem in Toronto has been a disproportionate number of black and biracial children in care, relative to the city's population. "Historically, some of our own practices have contributed to overrepresentation," Hall

says. "It's a result of unconscious bias among referrers and our workers. We're working hard to turn this around."

Brenda Smith is playing a key role in that effort, as anti-black racism (ABR) lead for the downtown Toronto branch. With a bachelor's degree in social work from Ryerson and a master's from the University of Windsor, she has been with the CAS of Toronto for 10 years, most of that time as a frontline child welfare worker.

"In February 2018, I was seconded to the ABR position on contract," she says, "as part of a pilot project to improve services to the African-Canadian community based on our chief operating officer Mahesh Prajapat's vision for ABR. He'd thought through ideas to address disproportionate representation for black families. Over the past two years, I do think progress has been made."

In November 2019, Smith's role was extended, "our approach to diversity, equity and inclusion is very robust," she says. "Our priorities are improving the experience of African-Canadian children and families."

She also works on ABR issues internally. "Part of our role has been to see how to build capacity and knowledge and monitor how ABR is impacting decision-making. We have an employee resource group at Toronto branch and we hope to expand this to all branches. And recently we held a black staff wellness event, attended by more than 90 black and biracial staff. It was a huge success."

Smith was first attracted to the CAS of Toronto by its reputation for innovation. "We have a research component, the Child Welfare Institute, whose data drives our thinking and work. We often blaze a trail — there's a push for excellence and outside-the-box thinking."

Executive Members

Margot Trevelyan
Chair

Marv Bernstein
First Vice-Chair

Audrey Lee
Second Vice-Chair,
Diversity Lead

Mark Foerster
Secretary

Yeugenia Kazantseva
Treasurer

Board Members

Christine Bradley
Randolph (Randy) Carter
Silvie Crawford
Uppi Doshi
Catharine Dutt
Gerald Mak
Marlon Merraro
Irene Mukasa
Cheyanne Ratnam
Marshall Schnapp
Eva Serhal
Salim Zulfikar Somani



Instagram: Toronto_CAS
Twitter: TorontoCAS
TorontoCAS.ca

(In thousands of dollars)	2018-2019	2019-2020
	\$	\$
Revenue By Source		
Government of Ontario	160,360	161,241
Government of Canada	3,886	3,744
Children's Aid Foundation	4,375	3,145
Sundry	2,183	2,873
Total Revenue	170,804	171,003
Government of Ontario Revenue By Program		
Child Welfare Program	157,841	157,999
Generic contracts	2,050	2,912
OCBe	469	330
Total	160,360	161,241
Expenses		
Salaries & Benefits	88,902	88,281
Boarding	42,197	43,590
Other	34,280	35,181
Total Expense	165,379	167,052
Summary of Operations		
Revenue	170,804	171,003
Expenses	165,379	167,052
Excess of revenue over expenses	5,425	3,951

Audited financial statements are available upon request.

OUR BRANCHES



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30 Isabella Street



Northwest
20 De Boers Drive



Scarborough
843 Kennedy Road