



Simcoe Muskoka
Family Connexions

Connexions Familiales
de Simcoe Muskoka

Year

1

*organization.
team.*

Connected.

Annual Report 2015-16



Tracy Fleischmann
President, Board of Directors

I almost can't believe that it has been a year since we amalgamated. Somehow it doesn't feel like a year has gone by, but then when I look at what all we have accomplished - it has to have been at least that long! I am so proud of the agency we have become and the hard work of our staff, board and volunteers that have brought us to this point. I can truly say that we are now one organization, one team - connected. With a staff of 360, we reached and helped over 13,000 children and 5,000 families in our communities across Simcoe and Muskoka this past year. It is truly amazing. Through the support of a compassionate community, we will move forward into the coming years to keep kids safe and help support the growth of strong families.

Susan Carmichael

"I am so proud of the agency we have become and the hard work of our staff, board and volunteers that have brought us to this point."

After serving on the board of two CAS organizations over the past 15 years, and now leading the board of our amalgamated and integrated agency, I am so extremely proud of the work that continues to be done to protect and care for the wellbeing of children and youth in our community.

The strength, stamina and dedication that our board has shown through the merging of two organizations has been incredible. The many extra hours, committee work, and change management efforts have ensured a positive future for a strong, united agency poised to fulfill its purpose. We have accomplished a great deal in this year and yet we continue to look forward to building even stronger ministerial relations, maintaining good governance practices and being transparent in our decision-making and communications.

It feels easy when you are surrounded by a board and staff that is so passionate about and dedicated to this work.

TRACY FLEISCHMANN

"The many extra hours, committee work, and change management efforts have ensured a positive future for a strong, united agency poised to fulfill its purpose."



Susan Carmichael
Executive Director

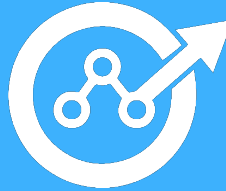
Amalgamation Highlights

When bringing two organizations together as one, there are many visible things that change but there are many other things behind the scenes that happen as well.

Here on this page are just a few small examples of the major initiatives that we have successfully completed over the past year. They highlight the important fundamental work that has and continues to happen as we imagine the future of the agency.



NEW BOARD
POLICIES WRITTEN
& APPROVED



CULTURAL ASSESSMENT &
STRATEGIC PLANNING



CHILD PROTECTION
INFORMATION NETWORK
PLANNING & TRAINING



HUMAN RESOURCES
FUNDAMENTALS &
SYSTEMS



TECHNOLOGY
UPGRADES



OPENING OF FNMI
SACRED LODGE



SERVICE HARMONIZATION,
REDESIGN & PROCESS
MAPPING



NAMING &
REBRANDING



IMPROVED
TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Services by the Numbers

6,424 CALLS



Our professional intake workers received over 6,000 calls from April to March. These amazing staff members are the first point of contact for the public to call and assess next steps when individuals are concerned about a child, family or themselves.

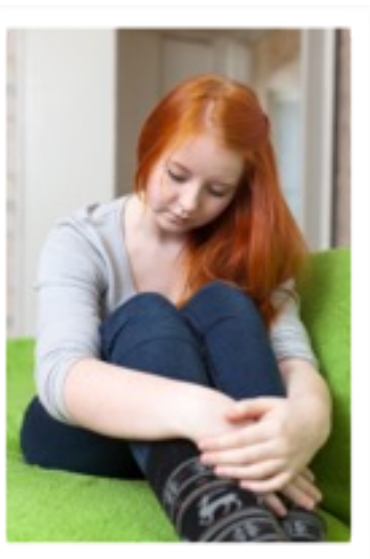


5,763 families



13,253 children 484 in care

In approximately 97% of the situations we investigate, the children involved remain in their homes with their families or legal guardians. This past year we provided services to over 13,000 children in our community. As a Children's Aid Society, we also provide substitute care for children in need of protection from physical, emotional, sexual abuse or neglect. Over the course of the year, a small number of children were removed from their living situations for their safety and well-being. 246 children were admitted to care throughout the year, 223 children were discharged from care and at the end of March 2016, there were 484 children in care.



402 WALK-IN CLINIC CLIENTS

Our Counselling Walk-In Clinic provides immediate access to confidential therapy services for children, youth and their families in Muskoka. Clients meet with trained therapists for problem solving and supportive conversation.

1,006 mental health clients



3,583

Number of investigations conducted by professionally trained child protection workers.

750

Number of open ongoing cases providing protective services for families.



28

A sense of permanence and stability are critical to a child's well-being and development. When that cannot be achieved with their birth family, adoption may become an option. We were successful in finding the right family for 28 children this year.

FINALIZED ADOPTIONS

381 Staff

We are a highly educated professional staff of 381 individuals that are dedicated to the health, safety and wellbeing of children, youth and families in our community. In 2015-16 our workforce was made up of 329 full-time, 14 part-time and 38 casual team members. 212 of them hold bachelor's degrees, 44 a master's and 41 have earned a college diploma. Our employees through their own unique contributions, help enhance the safety and wellbeing of children, youth and families.



189



FOSTER & KINSHIP CARE HOMES

When a child's safety and wellbeing are at extreme risk, it is necessary for them to be removed from their family home. When this happens, we place them with families that have been through a rigorous screening process as well as thorough training to be approved as a foster home. Kin that have been screened to be an alternative place of safety for the child/ren to stay are considered Kinship Care homes. We rely on the caring approach and support these 180 families provide to children during a very difficult time in their lives.

110 volunteers

Volunteers are a valuable team of people that bring many skill sets to the agency. They provide direct supports to families such as drivers, mentors, parent assists, or child care volunteers. In addition to the family support work, some help us with office projects, special events and activities in the community. They come from all walks of life including retired professionals, former crown wards, and university students with a view to a career in child protection. One program of note that has been solely volunteer driven is The Welcome Kit Program. An idea from a former youth in care, the kits provide a few necessities and comforting items to help reduce the trauma for children coming into care.



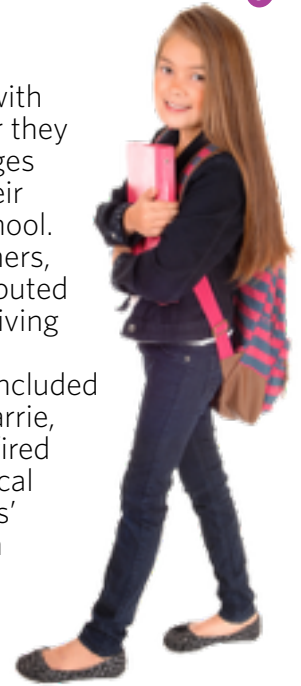
Fundraising & Community

105 FAMILIES

Each month staff contribute money from their paycheques into the "Piggy Bank" fund. This fund is used to provide emergency basic needs for families and children that we work with. This year, 105 families accessed over \$11,000 of the piggy bank funds for groceries, diapers, clothing, and other items to help them during a crisis.



Many of the families we work with struggle to make ends meet. Or they are facing much bigger challenges than worrying about getting their children ready to go back to school. Through local community partners, we collected, packed and distributed 365 backpacks to children receiving protection services in the year. Community partners involved included Emmanuel Baptist Church in Barrie, PIE Education led by Pie Woodfired Pizza Joint and supported by local businesses in Barrie, Decorators' Edge in Bradford, and Staples in Alliston.



365 backpacks



303 kids sent to camp

\$43,653 DONATED TO THE CAMP FUND

For children, summer should be a time to escape the classroom, head outdoors and experience the wonders of nature. Unfortunately, for many of the children we work with, summer is a lonely time without schoolmates or activities to keep them engaged, healthy and spark their imaginations. Thanks to the generosity of individuals and businesses in our community who donated \$43,653, over 300 disadvantaged children were given the opportunity for a summer experience that will shape their future.

Summer camp and recreational programs offer children the opportunity to try new things in a safe setting, engage with new friends, and gain confidence and skills that can be applied for the rest of their life. We partner with many camps across the County of Simcoe and the District of Muskoka to provide a variety of experiences including leadership, sports, music, culinary and the arts.



25 TOY DRIVES \$228,965

Families in our community continue to be challenged to meet the needs of their children. Lack of full-time employment, scarce affordable housing, and the cost of food remain the main contributors to poverty. So at the holiday season, families living in poverty are left to feel

further despair when they are unable to share a small gift with their children. With the generosity of groups, organizations and individuals coming together for toy drives across our region last year, we were able to bring smiles to children's faces and help create happy family memories that will last a lifetime.



423
FAMILIES
88 YOUTH

Thanks to many thoughtful, giving families, businesses and staff members; 423 families and 88 independent youth received full holiday sponsorship hampers to help make the holiday season a little brighter. Hampers included personalized gifts, clothing, snowsuits, pyjamas, and grocery gift cards.

\$140,242
in sponsorships



387 families

Sharing a meal together can be an important social and emotional time for families and friends, especially at special occasions. In addition to full sponsorships of families at the holiday time, 387 families received help with their holiday plans in the way of grocery gift cards, pyjamas, winter coats, and other items that would help them create special memories.

A Few Words...

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During any transition or amalgamation there are always some moments of misunderstanding and concern. When you have two well established identities coming together you will always have to reconsider how the process of doing business may change, for the better, and how we need to make those changes going into the future to continue giving the best

possible care for our children and families.

I believe we are well on the way to working as one identity and continuing to provide the service our clients have learned to expect in all of Simcoe Muskoka.”

Steve Clement
Board member

“Congratulations on the completion of a highly successful first full year as Simcoe Muskoka Child, Youth and Family Services, now re-branded as Simcoe-Muskoka Family Connexions, demonstrating your identity as a unified organization.



You have accomplished so much in a truly short time. I commend in particular the volunteer Board of Directors and Executive Committee for their commitment to oversight, and the extraordinary devotion of their skills and time. I also appreciate that staff have coped with the challenges of significant change, - and not just limited to amalgamation activities, while remaining focused on providing high quality services to children and families. And, while all of these internal activities were underway, the organization also ensured an on-going contribution with community partners and to broader changes happening in the service environments.

Thank you, and we look forward to continuing to work with you.

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Danette Blue
Program Supervisor
Ministry of Children and Youth Services

“ Rarely in my experience of working with a wide variety of organizations over the past 25 years have I come across a group of people so profoundly shaped by and committed to their purpose. Enhancing the safety and wellbeing of the children, youth and families they serve really is at the centre of all their actions and decisions, and that is so commendable.”

Peter Dickens, PhD
Principal, The Iris Group

“I would like to congratulate the staff, leadership team and board members of the Simcoe Muskoka Child, Youth and Family Services for your achievement in meeting post amalgamation milestones. Your accomplishment have set the foundation for moving forward and beginning a new chapter. Congratulations!

Peggy-Ann O'Connor
Program Supervisor/Superviseure de programme

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WHERE TO FIND US:

Alliston

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(705) 435-4348 or 1-800-661-5311

Barrie

60 Bell Farm Road, Unit 7 L4M 5G6
(705) 726-6587 or 1-800-461-4236

Bracebridge

49 Pine Street P1L 1K8
(705) 645-4426

Bradford

5-157 Holland Street East, Box 643 L3Z 2B3
(905) 775-4336

Collingwood

186 Hurontario Street, Unit 105 L9Y 4T4
(705) 444-9160

Gravenhurst

205 Steamship Bay Road P1P 1Z9
(705) 687-3326

Huntsville

81 Main Street West P1H 1X1
(705) 645-4426

Midland

741 Yonge Street, 7 & 8 L4R 2E1
(705) 526-9341

Orillia

94 Colborne Street, West L3V 2Y9
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