



COLLABORATE  
SUPPORT  
STRENGTHEN

ANNUAL REPORT  
2017 - 2018

# COLLABORATE SUPPORT STRENGTHEN

## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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His Eminence Cardinal  
Thomas Collins

### **Executive Committee Members**

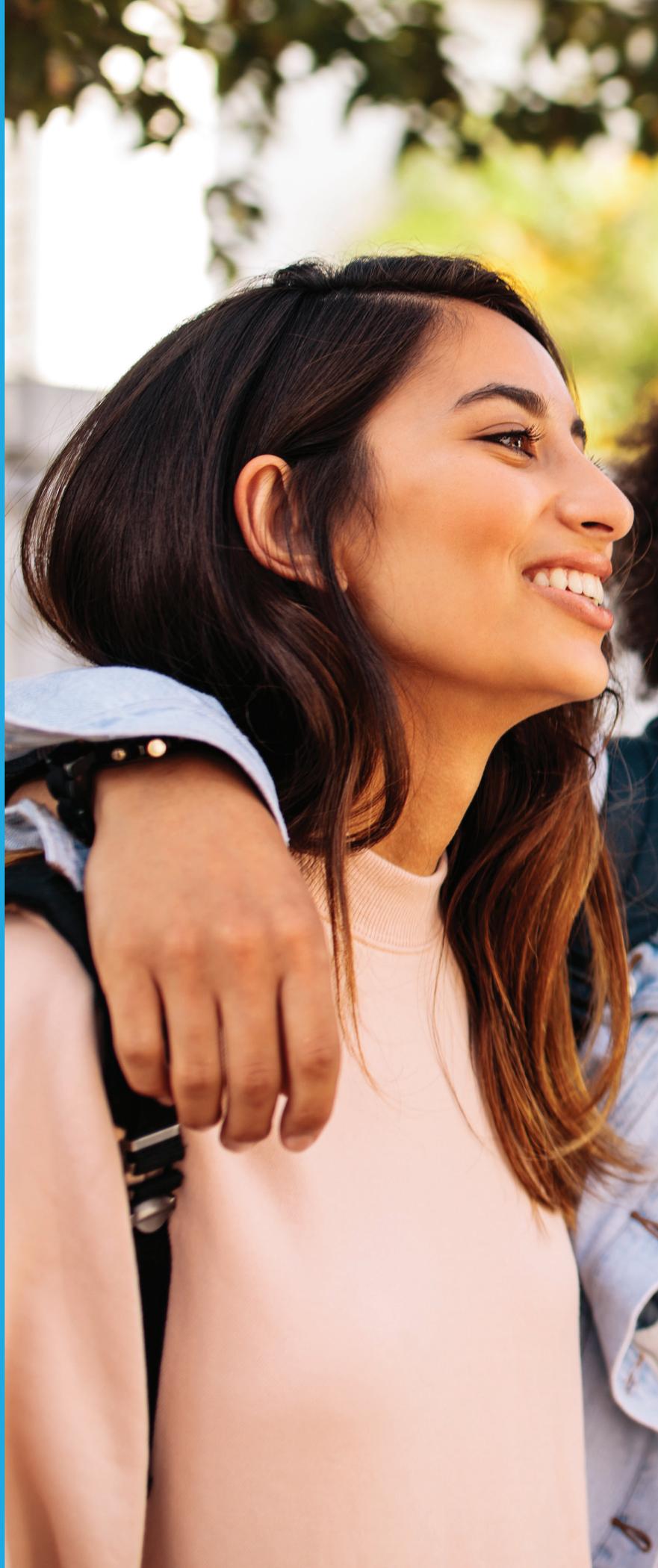
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### **CCAS Executive Team:**

Janice Robinson, Executive Director  
Mary Juric, Director of Service  
Domenic Gratta, Director of Service  
Renu Manocha, Director of Human Resource Services  
Sunil Ghai, Director of Finance, Administration and  
Information Technology





**5** Letter from the Executive Director & Board President



**6** Evidence Informed Practice



**8** Child, Youth & Family Services Act 2017



**10** Anti Racism & Anti Oppression



**12** Hope For Children Fund



**14** Service Stats & Financials





# For the love of children

## WE VALUE:

Human Dignity

The Courage and Integrity to Take a Stand

Partnership and Teamwork

Professional Excellence

Cultural, Racial and Individual Differences

## MISSION STATEMENT:

The Catholic Children's Aid Society of Toronto, on behalf of the Catholic community, is committed to providing social services that protect children and strengthen family life.

## Letter from the Executive Director & Board President

**This year, CCAS has made substantial progress on many fronts. This includes collaborating with provincial partners to implement historic child welfare legislative changes, advancing our work to support equitable service delivery, and strengthening our service framework to better serve our recipients.**

At the core of these initiatives lies the theme for this year's annual report - Collaborate, Support, Strengthen. This theme reflects a deeper understanding of the roles our areas of service play in protecting children and strengthening families across the continuum.

We believe that the best outcomes are achieved through collaboration and multi-stakeholder action. The strong advocacy efforts of Ontario's Children's Aid Societies, including CCAS, and the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies are reflected in the new Child, Youth and Family Services Act (CYFSA). The legislative amendments centre around principles we already incorporate in our work - inclusion, respect and diversity.

The increase in Age of Protection to include 16 and 17 year olds came into effect on January 1, 2018. This new age group will engage with Children's Aid Societies on a voluntary basis, in recognition that older youth require a different service approach. As we gain experience offering protection services to this new population, we will adjust our approaches to continually improve service.

CCAS furthered its commitment to improving services to children, youth and families of African Descent, by hiring the Society's first Anti-Racism Anti-Oppression (ARAO) Supervisor – Tope Adefarakan. ARAO is a



Anne Creighton, Board President

Janice Robinson, Executive Director

pillar of CCAS's Service Framework and is critical to our success in reducing and eliminating disproportionality, disparity, anti-black racism and discrimination towards our service recipients of African Descent.

We continue to build upon our reputation as a learning organization. Our ability to learn from and implement best practices continues to be our biggest strength. Last year, CCAS further integrated the use of Evidence Informed Practice (EIP), another pillar of our Service Framework, to give child protection workers increased access to decision-making support tools. EIP is particularly relevant to the critical thinking process in child welfare, which guides decisions about important events and issues in the course of our service delivery to children, youth and families.

We are grateful for the compassionate work that our staff, caregivers, volunteers and community partners undertake every day. We would also like to express our sincere gratitude to the Board of Directors for their guidance and for their courage, integrity and commitment to our community partners, service recipients and to the Society.

We encourage each and every one of you to continue your remarkable work in the safe knowledge that we can move ahead together, even when the path may not be clearly marked; to find new and better ways to contribute to the safety, well-being and happiness of our service recipients and to collaborate with our community partners, foster, kin and adoptive parents. There is much we can do alone, but we achieve a lot more if we collaborate, support and strengthen our processes, and policies and come together for the love of children.

Anne Creighton, Board President

Janice Robinson, Executive Director

# Strengthening our Decision-making Framework by Adopting Evidence Informed Practice



*EIP Committee Members (L-R): Mariana Garcia & Charles Dannah-Appiah*

## Providing higher quality services and improving outcomes

Decisions about child protection have a lasting impact on children, youth and families. As child welfare professionals, we consider the potential impact of our work and decisions throughout the service continuum.

Last year, CCAS expanded the adoption of Evidence Informed Practice (EIP) to give child protection workers increased access to tools that support

decision-making. EIP is an approach to practice that fosters collaboration, keeps the child at the centre of the discussion, honours the insights and expertise that the family brings, and incorporates research evidence that supports our recommendations for families.

CCAS has the benefit of an EIP Committee which consists of staff from various service departments and is led by the Manager of Quality Assurance. EIP is a way of working with families and can be applied to any case, including those which require complex decision-making, often under time pressure.

## Applying EIP: Carter's story



\*Picture used for illustrative purpose only

CCAS received a referral from Carter's school. Upon investigation, child protection workers were faced with a difficult decision: either allow Carter to remain at home or bring him into care. Carter's child protection worker and the worker's supervisor used EIP for assistance with the decision-making process. Here is how the four EIP pillars played an important role in the final outcome:

### Case context



When Carter was 8 years old, he immigrated to Canada to live with his biological father and step-mother. He was their only child until the birth of two half-siblings.

A couple years later, Carter's behavior changed and he began stealing regularly, lying to his parents and hitting his siblings. Unsure of how to manage Carter's behavior, his father and step-mother decided to keep him confined to his room after school, allowing him out only for meals.

### Practice wisdom and experience



Carter's child protection worker, the worker's supervisor and the EIP Committee drew from their own experiences and wisdom. They reviewed similar cases and their outcomes; established how those outcomes influenced their current thinking; outlined their concerns; and identified the best decision-making framework.

They sought to understand the risks associated with leaving a child at home under these circumstances. Then weighted those risks against the outcomes of children who grow up in care.

### Client values and preferences



CCAS worked alongside Carter's father and step-mother to understand their religious, cultural and societal values and preferences. Using that information as a back-drop, they were better able to understand the family's dynamics and specific needs.

### Best available research evidence



Carter's worker and the worker's supervisor looked to their research to answer questions about:

- the experiences, needs and challenges of children who are reunified with their family through immigration;
- preparing children for the birth of a new sibling in a blended family;
- why young children steal.

### The outcome

Carter remained in the care of his father and step-mother, and the family received ongoing support from our agency. Carter's parents gradually understood that his behavior was related to unmet needs. They were able to address his emotional needs by developing strategies to parent him in ways that conveyed his value within their family.

# Proclamation of Child Youth & Family Services Act 2017

## Preamble:

Since its proclamation in 1985, the Child and Family Services Act (CFSA) has been periodically revised as a way for the government to better understand how its laws, programs and policies are being experienced.

In 2015, Bill 89 of Child and Family Services Act, was extensively reviewed and the province was asked to put forward a wide range of ideas about how the legislation could be amended or reshaped to better meet the needs of children, youth and families receiving service. To this end, service providers, youth and their families wanted the legislation to reflect the social and political changes in the province, and look to the future.

While focus was placed on improving quality, collective action, mutual accountability and transparency, a number of overarching themes emerged on how the Act could help improve outcomes for children, youth and families.

## Call to Action:

Realizing the need to change policies and practices, the Children's Aid Societies in Ontario made a pivotal commitment to work together and with other community partners to create the best child welfare system to achieve the best outcomes.

## Sector Advocacy and Participation:

The Ministry received advice through written submissions and numerous discussion sessions across the province which represented a rich and varied collection of perspectives on how to support delivery of high-quality services to Ontario's children and youth. Some of the key recommendations included:

- Raising the age of protection from 16 to 18 to increase protection services for more vulnerable youth in unsafe living conditions, to support their education and to reduce homelessness and human trafficking.
- Making services more inclusive and culturally appropriate for all children and youth, including Indigenous and Black children and youth, to ensure every child receives the best possible support.
- Placing greater focus on early intervention, to help prevent children and families from reaching crisis situations at home.
- Improving accountability and oversight of service providers, including Children's Aid Societies and licensed residential service providers, so that children and youth receive safe, consistent and high-quality services across the province.

## Next Steps:

On April 30, 2018, Ontario will pass the Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017 (CYFSA). Upon proclamation, CYFSA will provide a modern, child and youth centred legislative framework to strengthen services and help protect and care for some of Ontario's most vulnerable children and youth. The legislation will place children at the centre of decision-making, and support more accountable, responsive and accessible child and youth services.



## CCAS's Efforts:

Bill 170, proclaimed province-wide, marks every October as Child Abuse Prevention Month. The Bill was brought forward to the House in part because of the advocacy efforts by CCAS's Communications Department and by the Boost Child and Youth Advocacy Centre. This Bill marks an important milestone for the child welfare sector as well as CCAS, because it not only promotes awareness and action around recognizing and reporting child abuse, but it also presents an opportunity to spark dialogue on the issue.

To further strengthen our service plan to better serve our youth, meet their needs and support their well-being in a timely and efficient manner, we have developed the 'YOUR VOICE Resolution Process.' The policy also aims to improve the quality of practice, service and policy development within the agency.

Two Youth Advocates have joined our team and will work directly with youth in care to support them through the resolution process and ensure everyone has a voice.

# Building Better Futures for Children and Youth in Ontario

Ontario's *Child, Youth and Family Services Act*, once proclaimed, will strengthen child, youth and family services to better protect and care for some of the province's most vulnerable young people. Ontario is working to give all children and youth across the province the opportunity to succeed.

## Children and Youth at the Centre

- Respects and values the voices of children and youth.
- Recognizes diversity and supports inclusive and culturally appropriate services for all children.
- Consistent with UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and Katelynn's Principle.

## IMPACT

### Prevention and Protection →

- Raising the age of protection to 18.
- Earlier intervention.
- Increased access to services.

- Increased protection for vulnerable youth.
- Preventing crisis situations for children and families.
- Reducing homelessness, human trafficking and involvement in crime.

### Quality Improvement →

- Efficient and consistent services.
- Data collection, including identity-based data.
- Improved information-sharing.
- Culturally appropriate supports and services.

- More consistent services for children across the province.
- Better service planning and delivery to meet the needs of children and youth.
- More children in stable supportive permanent homes.

### Relationship with First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples →

- Culturally appropriate supports and services.
- Supports ongoing engagement with First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities.
- Supports the *Ontario Indigenous Children and Youth Strategy*.

- Respect each child's culture, heritage and traditions.
- Better outcomes for Indigenous children and youth.
- Helping communities to care for their children.

### Accountability and Oversight →

- Stronger rules for service providers.
- Strict financial management requirements for service providers.
- Expert advice for government.

- More accountable service providers.
- Improved administrative spending.





## New Role Supports our Commitment to Improving Services for African Descent Families

Tope Adefarakan

## Activities and Milestones in Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression

### Apology to Indigenous People

In October 2017, CCAS stood alongside Ontario's other Children's Societies as the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies acknowledged and apologized to all Indigenous children, families and communities for the harmful role child welfare has historically played and continues to play in the lives of Ontario's Indigenous people. CCAS remains committed to doing its part to support the reconciliation process and meaningful change toward more culturally appropriate services for Indigenous families.



### Helping Victims of Woman Abuse Through Partnerships

We strengthened our partnerships within the Violence Against Women (VAW) sector by expanding the CCAS/VAW Co-location Program. We partnered with three Toronto shelters to bring a VAW worker to each of our service sites. These workers provide on-site consultation and direct service to women experiencing violence. As a result, our staff can now more easily engage women about VAW services and consult with VAW workers regarding their cases.



**At CCAS, we continue to advance our work in the areas of Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression while supporting the safety, permanency and wellbeing of children and youth of African descent.**

Last year, CCAS hired its first ARAO Supervisor, Tope Adefarakan, to steward the organization's transformation in this area.

The creation of this role is a first-of-its kind in the child welfare sector and a strong signal of CCAS's commitment to reducing and eliminating disproportionality, disparity, anti-black racism and discrimination towards children, youth and families of African descent.



To strengthen that commitment, CCAS created an Advisory Group comprising employees from various areas of the organization, as well as caregivers and community partners who work together to advance anti-racism and anti-oppression practices and improve outcomes for African descent families.

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**“To ensure our success, we are working to create an ARAO culture across our organization,” said Tope.**

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“This includes deepening our understanding of the issues, so that we can ultimately improve our service delivery to African descent families.”

CCAS continues to integrate the principles and recommendations of the *One Vision One Voice* provincial report into its practices and is building upon this further, by listening to and engaging with supervisors, staff, caregivers and families to address issues of racism and oppression.

Through the collection of race-based data, we have access to valuable information which is being used to better plan culturally appropriate services and inform our agency's work to address over-representation of racialized children and youth in our care.



**Gathering Insights and Delivering Training to Better Support Women**

Last year, CCAS conducted focus groups to understand how knowledgeable our staff, supervisors and caregivers are about violence against women. The findings were used to develop a first round of training to help our front-line Intake, Investigation and Ongoing staff further understand the effects of woman abuse and assess and intervene with families where woman abuse is occurring.





## Straight From the Heart

A young mother and her children are evicted. The mother works two jobs just to try and keep up but is temporarily forced to let her children live with relatives. "When I heard about this woman from the Hope for Children Fund, I knew I had to help – that we had to help," remembers Virginia Wells, the group's lead coordinator, referring to the Heart to Hand grocery program that she runs. She gathered her group of volunteers to help support the young mother.

A quick email and a few conversations later, Virginia and her team were able to provide bedding and other essential items to the family just before the holiday season. A silver lining - the young mother's case was closed soon after and she now lives with her children.

Virginia attributes the success of the work that Heart to Hand undertakes, to not just the generosity of volunteers but also to the Hope for Children Fund for actively working with families to determine who needs help.

Their working model is deceptively simple. There are team captains, each with a team of volunteer members. They shop for a CCAS family and the groceries are dropped off at a collection point, and then delivered to clients' homes. "Once you get into a routine, it's pretty much clockwork," she tells us. "I am happy to note that families are surprised and thrilled by the amount we deliver to them." And credit goes to the entire group of 70+ volunteers for their extraordinary dedication and commitment towards helping families and communities in need.

When Carol Mueller, Founder, started the Heart to Hand grocery program, it began with a simple thought – to help and support families in the community who struggle financially by providing them close to \$1,000 worth of groceries. Over a decade later, the program has grown exponentially, not just in size but also in the number of families it supports.

**Heart to Hand is a neighbourhood initiative that delivers groceries directly to families who don't have the resources to obtain them for themselves.**

The program is very simple but extremely effective in helping families when they need it most. A personal connection with the families is formed to let them know there are people who care and want to make a difference in their lives - 'from our Hearts to their Hands'.

**Since 2001, the program has helped around 1,000 children and 340 families served by CCAS.**



L-R: Christine Dunn & Virginia Wells

### SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

**\$255,600**

**83 students supported**

### EMERGENCY GRANTS

**150**

**families supported**

### SUMMER CAMP

**161**

**young campers**



“I am extremely thankful to the **Hope for Children Fund** and our donors for their generous support”

- Jahnaya

*\*Picture used for illustrative purpose only*

## Fighting All Odds

Jahnaya's story is one of grit and determination. The eldest of eight siblings, Jahnaya's life has been nothing short of tragic, but that hasn't deterred this 21 year old's courage and determination to succeed.

Jahnaya grew up in a large family and had to support her mother with household chores from a young age. But despite the hardships, Jahnaya was a bright and happy child. However, this was short-lived as her mother suddenly passed. Apart from trying to cope with the trauma, young Jahnaya was now in charge of taking care of her younger siblings. "I feel as though she was taken away from us before she could teach me how to be a grown up," Jahnaya says. "Her passing has left a deep emotional scar that will take a long time to heal. Now I have to be a grown up and deal with things like paying bills and running a household without knowing how to navigate it."

Jahnaya's case was referred to CCAS following her mother's passing but Jahnaya was determined to keep her family together. She put her career and dreams on the backburner and has been working extra hard to support and care for her four younger siblings. CCAS and the Hope for Children Fund has been helping her by acquiring gift cards for grocery shopping, money to pay bills, guiding her through the process of trying to secure child tax benefits, as well as other support from donors, who they have partnered with.

"I am extremely thankful to the Hope for Children Fund and our donors for their generous support," she says with a smile. "Without your help, my siblings would have had a harder time coping with our mom's passing. You have put a smile on their faces and made this journey less rough for us. This will be close to my heart for the rest of my life. Thank you."

Talking about her future, Jahnaya says that she wants to complete her education and become a social worker. "I want to be a good role model for my siblings," she signs off with a smile.

### ADOPT-A-FAMILY

212  
families  
supported

### REVENUE GENERATED

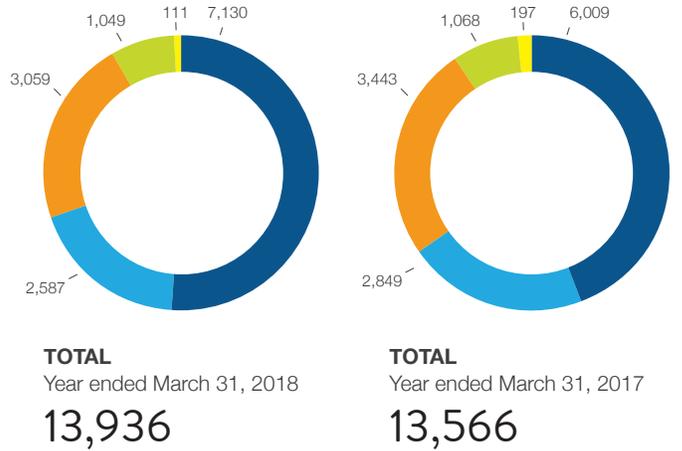
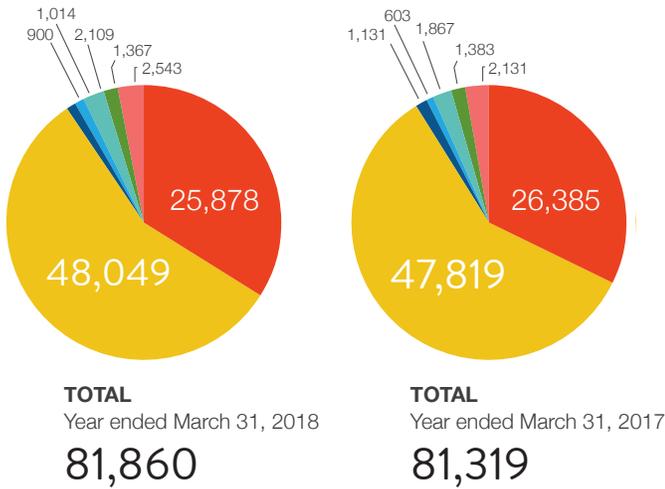
\$635,474  
excludes  
gift in kind

# 2017-2018 Financials

(in thousands of dollars)

## CHILD & FAMILY SERVICES COSTS

## ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS

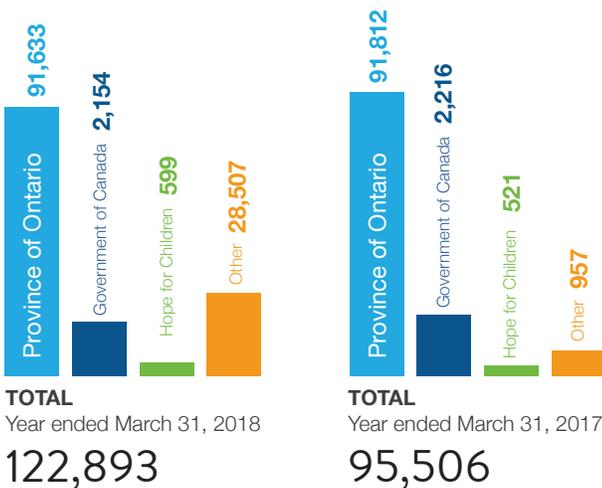


- Salaries & Benefits
- Board Rate Payments
- Financial Assistance and Special Programs
- Travel
- Children's Personal Needs
- Health and Related Services
- Purchased Services

- Salaries & Benefits
- Office Administration and Other
- Building Occupancy
- Technology and Purchased Goods + Services
- Training and Recruitment

## REVENUE

## TOTAL COSTS



# 2018

# 2017

**TOTAL**  
Year ended March 31, 2018  
**95,796**

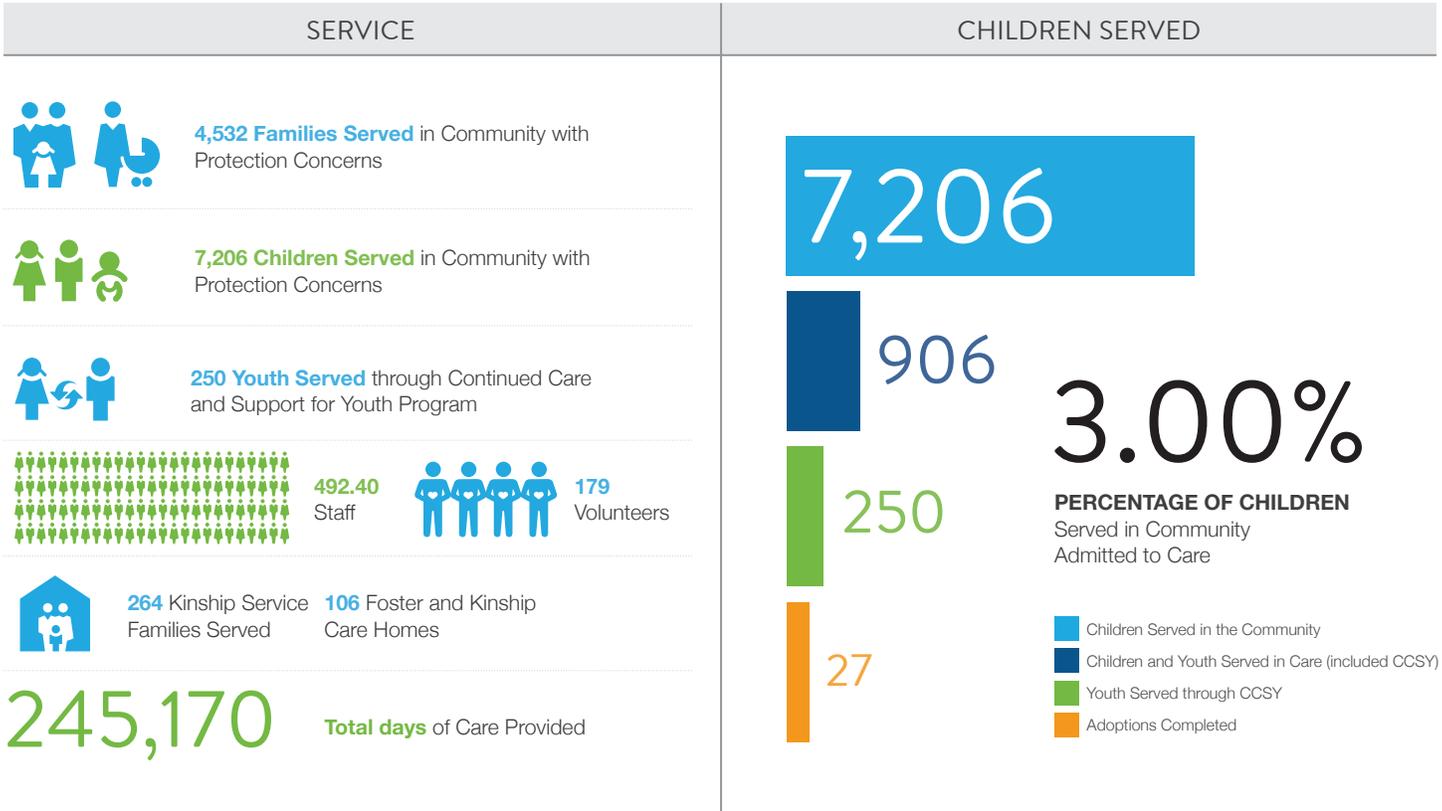
**TOTAL**  
Year ended March 31, 2017  
**94,885**

### Excess (deficiency) of revenue over expenses for the year

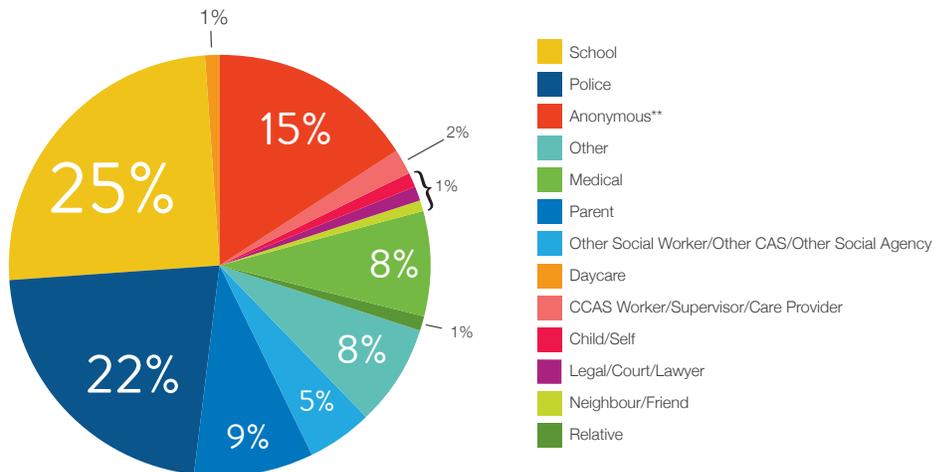
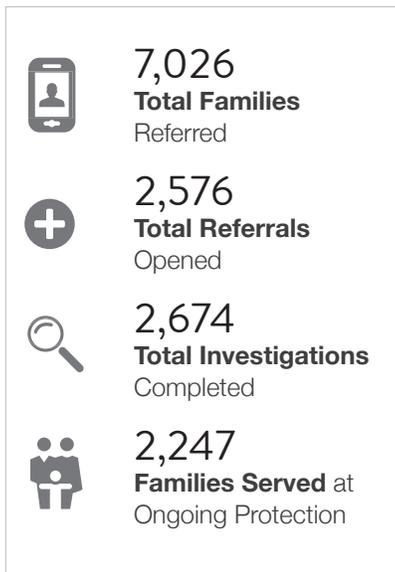
**TOTAL**  
Year ended March 31, 2018  
**27,097**

**TOTAL**  
Year ended March 31, 2017  
**621**

# 2017-2018 Service Statistics



## TOTAL REFERRALS INVOLVING PROTECTION



\*\* Our Child Protection Information Network database allows for anonymous reporting

**Catholic Children's  
Aid Society of Toronto**

**Head Office**

26 Maitland Street  
Toronto, ON M4Y 1C6  
Telephone: 416-395-1500  
Fax: 416-395-1581

**Child Protection Services  
East Resource, Adoption &  
Kinship Services/Child &  
Youth Services**

1880 Birchmount Road  
Toronto, ON M1P 2J7

**Child Protection Services  
North West**

30 Drewry Avenue  
Toronto, ON M2M 4C4

**Child Protection Services  
South Intake Services**

900 Dufferin Street, Suite 219  
Toronto, ON M6H 4B1