



PEEL CAS  
2014-15 ANNUAL REPORT

### **Peel CAS Board of Directors**

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My Van Loc, Youth Member

Pictured here - Harry Mann,  
Board President (l) and Rav  
Bains, Chief Executive Officer,  
Peel CAS





**Thank you** for taking the time to read our Annual Report to the Community. This report is an opportunity to reflect on the past year and share some of the ways we work with our community to ensure the safety and well being of children.

Safety remains the top priority for Peel Children's Aid. Child abuse and neglect are issues that most people would prefer not to talk about. However they do exist in our community. Last year, we received 12,210 calls from members of the community who felt a child may need our assistance. We rely on these calls to help us identify children, youth and families that require support from us. We then work with various service agencies within Peel to assist and strengthen these families so they no longer need our help.

Child welfare is a demanding and complex field. We believe in being accountable to our community and want to ensure our services meet the needs of the children, youth and families we work with. One way we do this is through monitoring indicators which help us measure our performance in different areas of service. These indicators help us to answer questions such as, how well are we serving the children, youth and families in Peel and what impact is our work having on their safety and permanence?

In 2013-14 the Ministry of Children and Youth Services gathered performance indicators from children's aid societies across the province. For the first time, provincial data in three areas – safety, well being and permanency – was publicly reported. Next year, individual agency data will be reported. At Peel Children's Aid we have been gathering data to help us plan our work for quite some time and we welcome any opportunity that helps us to measure and improve our services to children, youth and families in our community.

Throughout the year our Board of Directors continued to advocate for the children and youth involved with Peel Children's Aid. Productive meetings were held with the Honourable Tracy MacCharles, Minister of Children and Youth Services, as well as local mayors and members of parliament to highlight the work of the agency and the need for equitable funding to ensure we are able to serve those who need our support. We also had two youth members join the Board of Directors to integrate youth leadership and give youth an active voice at the board level.

The stories and statistics we are sharing in this report reflect our work within the key areas of safety, well-being and permanency. These are true stories, told from the perspective of those we are dedicated to supporting. It took courage for these three people to share their experiences and we are grateful for their participation.

As you read through the report, remember that this work could not be done without the help of our community partners, the dedication of our staff who do difficult work each day, our foster parents who are the backbone of our organization for children that are in our care and our volunteers that donate their time, talents and provided much needed support. For this we would like to say a big thank you. Keeping children safe is everyone's responsibility and we are committed to continuing this work together.





# SAFETY

**Meet Mariella.** After suffering horrific sexual, physical and emotional abuse from her husband, she finally fled to a shelter when her daughter was harmed. When she met Sarah, a member of Peel CAS's Domestic Violence Team she finally found the courage to admit what happened to her. She has chosen to break her silence and share her story so that other women being abused know they are not alone and there is somewhere to turn for help.

When I was being abused I always felt guilty. I was afraid of failure, afraid of being alone and because I didn't work, I was afraid of not being able to support my family. I didn't realize that I was a victim while the abuse was happening. He knew my weak points. If I didn't do what he wanted he wouldn't buy food for the children and would treat them badly. If I said okay to his demands then everything was peaceful at home. He tried to convince me that I would not be able to work or live without him. It was like a trap - I lived in fear and had no idea how I could get out.

When I went to the shelter with my four children, I was told that someone from CAS was going to come to speak with me. I was so scared. Then I met Sarah. As soon as she came into the room I felt a connection with her. For the first time I was able to share the horrible secret that I felt had been choking me for so long.

Sarah just listened as I told her of the horrible things that had been done to me. I believe that if I hadn't met her I would still be carrying that secret around with me. She gave me the strength and the courage to take my story to the police. For the first time in my life I felt protected.

For a while my life was in chaos, like a broken puzzle. Sarah helped me to put the pieces back together. Now I have a job and I am supporting my family. Each night when I come home to my children, their kisses help me to get through another day. And when I start to remember some of the awful things my husband did to me, I think of Sarah and know that I have someone who will always be there for me.

I have a message I would like to share with other women who are being abused. No matter how much you love your husband or partner, if your child tells you that something has happened to them - please believe them. When your husband or partner tells you that you won't be able to live without him - don't listen. If he says there's nowhere you can go - that's not true either. There are places to go and people to help. And when he hurts you, and you are scared, try to leave. Remember my story and know that you are not alone.

Domestic Violence accounts for more than 30 per cent of the investigations and assessments done at Peel CAS. A dedicated DV team enables the agency us to develop relationships and partner with service providers to ensure families experiencing DV receive the support they need, when they need it. Peel CAS's Domestic violence team is one of only a handful of teams that exist in Ontario. Recently, a second team was created to meet the needs of those experiencing domestic violence and abuse in our community.





## WELL BEING

**Meet Vincent.** After losing both his mother and his grandmother to cancer and not having any other family to take care of him, he came into the care of Peel CAS. His name has been changed to protect his identity but he wanted to share his story of how Peel CAS helped him through a difficult time and “found” family he didn’t know existed.

When I was seven my mom died of cancer. After that it was just me and my grandma. She tried her best to take care of me, but she was older and didn’t always feel good. So I learned how to take care of myself. I got myself ready for school and even learned how to cook. I made grilled cheese and hotdogs. When I was 11 my grandma got sick too. I tried my best to take care of her but she had to go stay at the hospital. For about a week I stayed with a good friend and his family. Then I met someone from CAS and they brought me to live with a foster family.

I like my foster family. They are very nice to me and help me with school. When I first came to live here I got to visit my grandma in the hospital. But then just after her 77th birthday she died too. Cancer takes too many lives. It has been pretty rough at times but some parts have been good. Since I came here I got to meet some family that I didn’t know I had. I even found out that my dad was still alive which I also didn’t know before. I told all my friends at school about it and I am getting to know my family when I go visit with them on weekends.

I’m not sure what I’m going to do next. I want to wait until I finish grade eight next year to make a decision. For sure I know that when I grow up I want to be a mineral scientist because rocks are cool. A lot has happened and I feel that I have changed during this time. I think I have gained strength and got smarter. CAS seems to be able to help kids. They helped me find everything I was looking for.

Creating permanent relationships benefits children and youth by giving them a sense of belonging and identity. At Peel CAS, a new program - Family Finding - helps create support and long term relationships for children and youth involved with the agency. Children and youth help identify who they feel is important to them and staff combine research, relationship building and even a bit of private investigation skills, along with social work, to connect youth with family members and friends. Different ways of developing relationships include having regular visits, being invited over for a special occasion or holiday, helping out with school or attending a sports event or other activity for support. Family finding is about more than finding a permanent home for children. It is about making connections for children and youth so they know there’s always someone in their corner.





# PERMANENCY

**Meet Nancy.** Nancy arrived in Canada from Nigeria at the age of 15 with only a backpack and no identification. Unable to prove her age, she was sent to a detention centre. Scared and alone she never imagined that through the help of CAS she would get the opportunity to go to school, get a job and develop a lasting relationship with her caregiver.

The only thing I knew about Canada was what I had seen in movies. I thought someone would be waiting for me at the airport holding a sign with my name on it when I arrived. That definitely isn't what happened. After spending time in a detention centre, I was relieved when I met the worker from CAS. I didn't know what to expect because before coming to Canada I didn't even know what children's aid was. But the person I met was kind and took me to a foster home.

I didn't have any expectations of what life would be like here, I just knew I couldn't go back to Nigeria. It may sound funny, but even though I was scared and alone, I was amazed by everything I saw on that first car ride. And in that moment I knew I would make it. I remember how happy I was to be given my own room and bed to sleep in and how exciting it was to go to the grocery store.

That's not to say there weren't challenges. Sometimes foster children are judged by the actions of other foster children. I never wanted to cause trouble and I really wanted to belong. But I had never been hugged as a child and had trouble showing affection. We even explored adoption but it didn't work out and I started to believe that something was wrong with me.

Eventually Margaret, who was a foster mom I had lived with, and my child and youth worker Gwen, helped me to see that I am good just the way I am. Through their support I started to believe in myself. I studied hard and finished high school within two years of arriving in Canada. The agency provided support to ensure I had opportunities to apply for bursaries and gain experience to get a job. I am grateful for everything they have done for me.

I am now in my third year of University. I have always been good at math and am thinking about a career in finance. I have a part time job and through good financial planning don't have any debt. I still keep in close contact with my foster mom Margaret and visit her when I feel like going home. And when I visit, the first thing I do is give her a hug. I've come a long way from that scared 15 year old girl who got off the plane five years ago.

Peel Children's Aid's specialized Immigration team works with immigration partners to assist children and youth navigate the complex immigration system. Some of this work involves supporting unaccompanied minors under the age of 16 years such as Nancy who arrive in Canada through the Pearson International Airport. Helping all youth leaving care to achieve success is a priority for Peel CAS. The agency's youth strategy focuses on education and employment. Youth are encouraged to stay in school and are eligible to apply for bursaries to pursue post secondary education. They are also given opportunities to build successful life skills and apply for employment opportunities with some of the agency's key community partners.



# BY THE NUMBERS

## Safety

To be safe means to be free from harm or danger

**12,210** calls from concerned citizens, health care professionals, teachers, and the police about children who might be in need of protection

**10,702** families supported in our community

**7,625** reports of child abuse and neglect investigated by Peel CAS

## Well being

Well-being refers to the social, emotional and physical health of a child

**81%** of clients who feel their workers helped them to identify their strengths

**60** educational bursaries provided by Peel Children's Aid Foundation donors for youth

**76** youth worked for various partners such as the Region of Peel, Peel Police, YMCA, private businesses and other organizations

**30** new, after school jobs secured for youth in care

## Permanency

Permanency is a word used in child welfare to describe stability

**416** Children in Care (CIC) of Peel CAS last year. Peel continues to have one of the lowest number of CIC per capita in Ontario

**110** kinship families provided caring and loving homes for children in need

**53** children cared for by supportive, loving adoptive families

**2.6** placements per child or youth while in care. The less children or youth move while in the care of CAS the better

**74%** of days children spend in care are in family based placements (includes foster, kin and adoption probation placements)

**45%** increase in the average number of children placed with kin over the past 5 years

Numbers are for April 1, 2014 - March 31, 2015 unless otherwise indicated



# ACCOUNTABILITY

## Operating Revenue and Expenses April 1, 2014 to March 31, 2015

	2015 (in thousands of dollars)	2014 (in thousands of dollars)
<b>Revenue</b>		
Ministry of Child and Youth Services		
Current year	63,774	62,691
Prior year	—	84
Income from other sources	159	132
	<u>63,933</u>	<u>62,907</u>
<b>Expenses</b>		
Adoption Costs	647	537
Boarding Rates	11,860	12,296
Building Occupancy	2,793	2,887
Clients' Personal Needs	1,405	1,362
Employee Benefits	8,274	8,051
Health and Related Costs	788	807
Miscellaneous	222	226
Office Administration	298	332
Other Program Costs	123	97
Promotion and Publicity	180	187
Purchased Services-Client	922	1,245
Purchased Services-Non-Client	515	418
Salaries & Wages	35,116	33,620
Technology	555	525
Training and Recruitment	421	299
Travel	1,804	1,853
Amortization	137	151
Total Expenses	<b>64,893</b>	<b>64,893</b>
Expenditure Recoveries	<u>2,503</u>	<u>2,503</u>
	<b>63,817</b>	<b>62,390</b>
Surplus (deficiency) of revenue over expenditures	116	517
Fund balance - Beginning of year	<b>1,858</b>	<b>1,341</b>
Fund balance - End of year	<b>1,974</b>	<b>1,858</b>

Full audited Financial Statements are available upon request. Please call 905-363-6131, ext. 3337.



## **OUR MISSION**

To ensure the safety and well being of children and strengthen families through partnership

## **OUR VISION**

Every child cherished

## **OUR VALUES**

**COLLABORATION** and **DIVERSITY**

**ACCOUNTABILITY** to the children, families and community we serve

**RESPECT** and compassion

**EXCELLENCE**, learning and innovation

In a supportive environment

## **WE CARE**

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For more information about Peel CAS  
please visit **[www.peelcas.org](http://www.peelcas.org)**

Photos - Herman Custodio

Design - Oksana Ruczenczyn