

Practice and Research Together (PART)

AIM IS TO IMPROVE OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES THROUGH EVIDENCE BASED PRACTICE

PART exists to increase the ability of child welfare agencies and staff members to utilize research to create an organizational and systemic learning environment that promotes critical thinking

in order to improve our practice and resultant outcomes for children and families.

Learning events include: large scale conferences, mini learning events and Webinars; PARTicles, which are literature reviews of important child welfare related issues; Evidence Informed Practice (EIP) toolkits, which are infor-

mative kits developed for and by child welfare practitioners. Some of the Learning Opportunities presented to date in the form of PARTicles are: Understanding and Promoting Resiliency; Placement Stability; Youth Substance Abuse and Sexual Behavior.

You may access this information on: www.partontario.org;

username: partontario
password: huronpartontario
Our PART agency representative is Director of Service, Maxine McCauley.

For more information contact our PART agency representative Director of Service, Maxine McCauley.

Champions for Children: CKNX Radio "Our Partner in Community Service"

CKNX Radio has, for decades, been a model of community service in private radio and their rural outreach initiatives are exemplary by any standard. The Huron-Perth Children's Aid Society is very fortunate to have enjoyed their full cooperation in every venture that promotes the

well being and safety of the children and families in their listening area.

CKNX Radio is always on Board to help us promote prevention and awareness of child abuse during October, Child Abuse Prevention Month and to highlight various

issues and campaigns throughout the year, such as Adoption Awareness Month in November. CKNX Radio is the media sponsor of the Huron County Christmas Bureau. Through commentaries, interviews and promotional minutes, the staff at the Station are diligent in their efforts to en-

sure that all families in the County who need support over the holiday season are aware of the service provided by the Agency. Whatever our need, CKNX management and staff cheerfully accept the challenge.

Quality News: So Once Again, What is Quality?

By Malcolm Chadwick

The senior managers have all developed their initial cut of 'exemplars'. These exemplars identify some things our agency might reasonably do (or what we've already done) to meet the criteria and descriptors laid out in the first level (i.e., Foundation) of the National Quality Institute's Progressive Excellence Program.

These exemplars have been posted on the Quality Corner Bulletin Boards and made available to all agency staff via the shared drive for their comment and input. The next big step will be to 'finalize', prioritize and select the exemplars to be included as objectives in the next round of the agency's annual business plan.

Also, the Quality Council held its latest meeting on November 26 in Stratford. The key item under discussion was identifying the next steps in how the agency was going to continue moving the quality initiative forward. For the next several months, it will be 'business as usual'. The Quality Council will continue to meet on

a regular basis to provide high-level guidance for the agency's Progressive Excellence initiative and it will report directly to the Executive Director. Suzanne Elliott will continue in her role as co-chair; however, Maxine McCauley will assume responsibility as chair of the Council.

Letter from the Committee Chair Transformation Phase 2

By Arijana Tomicic

Let it snow.....

... nature has a way of allowing us to take a break. The winter is a time of magic and reflection, as we prepare for the lovely and colourful spring. This is the time to rest, reflect on what we have accomplished and time to wonder and imagine the possibilities that this New Year will bring.

We have been on this path for over two years, and much has been very successfully accom-

plished. The new wave of transformation began with the focus on reviewing present changes and enhancing services to children and families by thorough examination of model of service for our children in care and support services that we provide to our protection families and their children. As we move forward, we are focusing on the areas of permanency, protection support and children in care.

We continue to be committed to

provide timely, continuous and effective communication to all staff about the activities, goals and progress of the transformation team, and therefore have implemented the following communication strategies:

- Transformation Bulletin Boards
- Coffee break sessions
- Community Luncheon
- Transformation articles in agency newsletter "In the Loop"
- Transformation added as standing item to all team meeting agendas

Presently, we are reviewing recommendations obtained through the transformation survey, and will be further recommending enhancements to present service model and agency activities. I have asked all managers to facilitate the discussion with their teams, your honest and candid opinions are encouraged.

So, let's enjoy the snow, the hot chocolate, the snow that keeps us at home and allows time to reflect and appreciate what we have accomplished.

In the Loop

Huron-Perth Children's Aid Society

January 2010

Public Engagement Plan



The Huron Perth Children's Aid Society has partnered with agencies throughout Ontario to implement A Public Engagement Campaign. The theme of the campaign "I Am Your Children's Aid" tells the personal stories of youth, families, foster parents and workers' positive involvement with CASs and how CASs have transformed their lives.

the featured "worker" in the print ads, posters, on T.V. and in the cinema.

The purpose of the campaign is to engage people in all communities and educate Ontarians about the good work done by CASs in protecting and caring for children and working with families. It is also a "recruitment tool" for agencies to recruit foster and adoptive parents, volunteers and

supporters of Children's Aid.

The campaign will feature ads for print, television, radio, web banners and a Microsite useyourvoice.ca. Staff, managers, foster parents, adoptive parents and youth are being asked to add their own stories by following the link provided on the website.

From your home computer you may wish to send emails with the

useyourvoice.ca link to distribute to your contacts. If you are a Facebook user you may sign up and invite friends and family to join the Facebook Fan Page for the campaign.

This viral marketing approach seeks to use the internet to spread the message far and wide and ensure that all Ontarians are aware of the positive stories about Children's Aid Societies. Be a part of the campaign.

Our own Jennifer Evans will be

Message from the Desk of the Executive Director

By Tom Knight



2009 has been a very interesting and eventful year in the life of child welfare in Ontario. There have been many changes to practice in the province that have resulted in both potentially better practice and also due to the associated funding issues, far more pressure on the agencies and staff.

The field through the provincial association has developed a Public Engagement Campaign that was introduced in cinemas, print, radio and television in January.

The Minister announced in late June that a "Commission to Promote Sustainable Child Welfare" would be appointed for a three year term. The purpose of the commission is to review the practice of child welfare and to bring forward recommendations intended to place child welfare on a "sustainable footing" into the future. H-PCAS hosted the group of "northern" agencies in the South West Region in mid January to meet with the Commission. While the Commission's purpose does not include dealing with the current crisis in funding in the field, there is a sense of hope that through their work they will be able to bring about changes within the system to make it

more rational and positive.

During the course of the year resulting primarily from the economic downturn in the province and internationally, we have seen a hardening of the position of the Ministry with regards to funding for mandatory services. While the services that MCYS requires that the child welfare system provide should be connected to the funding available to deliver them, the current funding model does not make that basic connection.

The position taken by the Minister in 2009 combined with the disconnect between the funding model and the service delivery system, has resulted in an unprec-

edented crisis over the course of the fall months. Many CAS's continue to face bankruptcy. 49 of 53 agencies are running deficits and 37 of these agencies have filed for and undergone Section 14 reviews of funding allocation. No announcement about the results of these reviews has yet been made.

The upcoming months will be challenging and filled with opportunities to advance the practice of child welfare in Ontario. I look forward to working with you to achieve these ends during the 2010 year and into the future.

Our Parent Child Resource Centre on Franklin Drive



The Yours, Mine and Ours Community Centre, situated in a housing unit on Franklin Drive has a warm and welcoming atmosphere. The Centre is a hub for activities which support families and children in this low income housing complex.

In 1986, a community need to provide accessible programming for Franklin Drive residents was identified by the Perth Children's Aid Society. Franklin Drive in Stratford, was mainly comprised of single mothers and their children with limited resources. Perth CAS obtained monies through the Ministry of Community and Social Services (Child Care Initiative) to implement a pilot project to address concerns such as social isolation, inappropriate role models, minimal parenting skills, low self esteem and a cyclical generational pattern of problems.

In 1992, approval from the Stratford Housing Authority converted a unit at the Franklin Drive townhouse complex for use as a community centre and thus was born the "Yours, Mine and Ours Community Centre".

Currently the Huron-Perth Chil-

dren's Aid Society operates the Parent/Child Resource Centre and staffs three part-time program workers within this project. The project offers on site programming at the housing complex on Franklin Drive and has expanded to include parent education programs for anyone in the community. Programs offered at the Franklin Drive Community Centre make programming available to many who otherwise find such programs inaccessible. By servicing these families in their own community, we are able to circumvent issues such as lack of transportation, lack of resources and lack of social contact. The children and families benefit by having such programs available on their own doorsteps. All programs are offered to support families and are seen as a tool of prevention before a family is in crisis. Programs include the Breakfast Club, After school children's program, Mutual Aid, and a summer day camp.

The Breakfast Program has been a tremendous success and is a very important part of the child's day. This program has taught the children the advantages of going to school with a healthy start to their day and a snack to help them through the morning. Life skills such as brushing teeth, combing hair and general hygiene are part of the program.

After-school programs offer educational discussions about such topics as bullying and street safety and teaches social skills such as learning to share and play cooperatively. The reading circle program has been a huge success. Avon School and the Rotary Club are partners in this venture. Rotary members visit and read to children along with their par-

ents. Avon school has supplied a computer and suggestions for programming. Teachers at the school have commented on the improvement in students reading skills and their increased interest in learning in general. Parents comment on the increased confidence levels of their children.

"Aside from the programs that we are running, these children are not only learning to read better or getting a better breakfast, they have also learned to have respect for each other and parents. They have come to know that they have many people that they can count on in this community" Sandra Schwartzentruber

Programs for adults seek to improve life skills and parenting skills of participants, as well as, to make the community a positive neighborhood for all residents.

"It was wonderful for me because I feel I have been given tools to work with my daughter and not lose my mind" Surviving Your Adolescent participant

"I am less stressed because I get a

break a way" Mom's & Kids participant.

Tenants form the Franklin Drive Association. Sandra Schwartzentruber, Chair for six years of the Association, indicates that through the Association with the assistance of the HPCAS workers, the community is now a safer, cleaner neighborhood to live in where the children are more respectful and residents have more pride in their community. Such ventures as the community garden, family days, children's summer day camp, cooking classes, Teddy Bear Picnic, Recycling Program and Green Day improve the lives of all residents.

"As a community, when problems arise, we have worked together to fix the situation before it gets worse. When problems arise, we sit down together and discuss the problems, what impact it will have on our children and what we want to do about it. Working together has Solved a lot of problems that otherwise would have been out of control."

Sandra Schwartzentruber



Caring Dads Program

The Caring Dads program is an intervention program designed for men who have abused or neglected their children and exposed them to domestic violence. Developed and piloted over 5 years, the 17-session group program draws from best practices in the fields of male batterer intervention, parenting, behavior change, child maltreatment, and working with resistant clients. The program is currently being piloted in Perth County through a collaboration with the Huron Perth Children's Aid Society, Emily Murphy Centre and the Huron Perth Centre for Children and Youth. Since October 21, 2009 five participants, who live in Stratford and rural areas of Perth County meet weekly in Stratford for the two hour group session.

"Caring Dads" focuses on helping men recognize attitudes, beliefs and behaviours that support healthy and unhealthy father-child relationships, develop skills for interacting with children in healthy ways, and appreciate the impact on children of controlling, intimidating, abusive and neglectful actions.

Abusive men who are parents pose particular challenges not

often met by more generic parenting education programs. Children of these men often have been adversely affected by their exposure to domestic violence in ways the abusers fail to recognize or misunderstand as problems of the children or their mothers.

During Caring Dads, fathers develop skills to cope in healthy ways with frustrating situations, including:

- Understanding how different fathering strategies and choices effect children
- Increasing their awareness of controlling, abuse and neglectful attitudes and behaviours
- Developing strategies to strengthen the father-child relationship

Priority is given to the safety and well-being of children and mothers and therefore the focus is on a fathers' accountability for abuse, countering the attitudes linked to abusive and neglectful behavior. A father's abuse of the children's mothers is recognized and addressed as part of intervention. In addressing these issues the program seeks to promote healthy relationships between fathers and their families.

Service is coordinated in partnership with Violence against Women's Services, Children's Mental Health, Child Welfare and the Criminal Justice System.

"The partnership of three supporting agencies all focusing on the needs of the children has been tremendous. The flow between the facilitators has been strong and is reflected in the progress the group is making." Kathy Young, Facilitator.

Research on the Caring Dads Program is ongoing. Results to date shows that men who complete the group show increased emotional availability to their children, lower levels of coercion and angry arousal and less hostility towards their children and their children's mothers.

The team of facilitators and participants are involved in an ongoing research and evaluation project through Katreena Scott, Canada Research Chair in Family Violence Prevention and Treatment; OISE University of Toronto. All participants have agreed to be part of the research compo-



nent of the program.'

Facilitators indicate that the men are now fully engaged in the process and there have been a significant number of disclosures of the men's own past abusive experience in childhood, as well as, discussions of emotional difficulty in developing and maintaining intimate relationships.

"It is interesting to watch the development of the group and start to see fathers move from a parent centered mindset to one of being child centered. The men are committed to the process and are taking ownership for the group. They now will stop each other and reflect child centered values when necessary." Kathy Young, Facilitator

Clinical Enhancement and Development Team is Underway

Based on staff feedback and requests for a consistent approach to training and mentoring, the Clinical Enhancement and Development Team was implemented to provide new staff and practicum students with a comprehensive and coordinated approach to this process.

New workers and students on the team will have an opportunity to be mentored throughout their learning process and will be involved in the development of their own learning plan. The

aim of this plan is to help them to achieve their professional development goals and maximize their potential as an employee with this agency.

Both front line and management staff at the Huron-Perth Children's Aid Society have expressed excitement and enthusiasm and have recognized the need for such a program. Programs and services offered will include peer support groups, professional development and growth for the mentor and mentee, ongoing

introductory and advanced training with respect to both practical and clinical skills, fully supported student placements, and development of mentorship plans.

Jennifer Evans, Manager of the new team says "the team aims to ensure that workers feel supported in their role at the Society and receive full training but also know where to go for help if needed!"

It is hoped that through increased foundational knowledge,

strengthened peer relationships and strong communication between all departments, that staff feel a "fit" with the agency and dedicate themselves to child welfare in Huron and Perth Counties. With this commitment, the agency can continue to build on services and training offered within the specialized departments, enhance relationships with community service providers, and enjoy the positive energy that will abound!