Mission Statement

Native Child and Family Services of Toronto strives to provide a life of quality, well-being, caring and healing for our children and families in the Toronto Native Community.

We do this by creating a service model that is culture based and respects the values of Native people, the extended family and the right to self-determination.

Board of Directors

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Report to the Members

From NCFST’s
Board President and the Executive Director

We are pleased to present a combined report from Mae Maracle, President, and Kenn Richard, Executive Director. Once again this report is written in recognition of our collective efforts, staff and Board alike, and will highlight the successes and challenges of the past year.

Although dogged by fiscal challenges, we managed to do many things of import and significance. One of the biggest challenges was the completion of the inquest into the death of Katelynn Sampson. NCFST was highly, and appropriately, scrutinized in this inquiry and we wanted to ensure that our role within it honored Katelynn, our first consideration. However we also wanted to prevent any imbalanced or distorted perception of our actions by others on this matter. We believe that our agency behaved with integrity throughout the Inquest and further believe that in the end the jury got it right. We are now actively studying and acting on their recommendations, many of which have already been implemented.

As part of the strategic planning process the Board received and approved the staff generated operational plan that will carry us forward over the next few years. Under broad headings including cultural considerations, the issues confronting our clients, service pathways, best practices, leadership and systemic change, staff are now engaged at the line level in this important part of agency life. We are well aware that if we do not have our vision clear and our planning in place, other forces can take over and influence the agency in accordance with other agendas which may not be in the best interests of the agency or the clients we serve.

Perhaps the most significant action taken by the agency has been the careful and considerate implementation of a succession plan regarding the Executive Director. NCFST has had but one Executive Director over its entire history and the hiring of his replacement has been a concern as to appropriate timing and phasing. Thankfully previous Boards have put their minds to the eventuality of Kenn Richard’s departure from that role and we have a clear blueprint that will complete itself in the coming fiscal year. We are further pleased to report that while Kenn is leaving the post he is not leaving the agency and will continue on a part time basis to assist in transitioning, and, among other things, to develop a very much needed foundation for Native children. Needless to say the Board will have more to say on this at a later date, as will, no doubt, Kenn himself.

As has been reported at past meetings our fiscal scenario, in specific reference to Child Welfare, remains the most predominant and persistent issue confronting this agency. The search for fairness within both the Toronto agency context and across the Province has been elusive and without tangible improvement over the last number of years. This has bled the organization, Board and staff alike, of vital energy and compromises our capacity to achieve the excellence to which we aspire. We are satisfied that we did manage to complete the required responses to the fiscal review of 2014, and now consider that file to
be closed. We are also relived to continue to receive mitigation but are well aware that this approach to the issue can be seen as part of the problem, not the solution.

On the service front NCFST has carried on in our tradition of continuous improvement and innovation. We are pleased to see that in our work with youth we are in expansion mode with our location at 655 Bloor Street West, increasingly being seen as the go to place for youth at risk and needing support. We served well over 10,000 meals at this site and while doing so engaged youth in numerous program and service opportunities. The Scarborough Child and Family Life Centre graduated 15 youth from various accreditation programs, including 8 from our GED program alone. Solstice celebrations, community feasts and other community building programs characterize this site and we are proud of the work being done there. This agency believes in following the client and the Scarborough work, as well as further expansion into the Mount Dennis area exemplifies this.

Our clinical work has been tremendously enhanced through the revitalization of the Mooka’am Program, a foundational and culturally based service now operated out of our site at 489 College Street. With wait times reduced to less than two weeks and the innovation that comes from a cultural base this program is destined to lead others in getting services to kids and families who need it the most. We are also challenged to find our place within the Children’s Mental Health reorganization through lead agencies and are anxious to build a new kind of relationship with our sister agencies through such mechanisms as the LHIN, in which our Executive Director has become active through the Indigenous Health Advisory Circle.

Through our work in our Early Years program we have demonstrated state of the art cultural based programing and collaboration through our Ninoshe and Zhishay programs (Auntie and Uncle). Working closely with Toronto Public Health we managed to prevent apprehensions in 74% of high risk cases, where apprehension and removal of children appeared imminent. Being able to demonstrate this kind of direct impact is what we’re all looking for and we are pleased that the benefit of these investments are so obvious.

Of course this agency has many more initiatives and related stories that can be referenced here. Please read the case stories highlighted throughout the body of this report to get an even better picture of the work we do.

Perhaps the most significant event of the past year was the completion of a process of Reconciliation with our primary relationship, the clients themselves. Tonight you will hear from Dr. Suzanne Stewart, key facilitator and author of the report ‘Native Child and Family Services of Toronto: Reconciling the First Ten Years of Child Welfare”. Inspired by the Truth and Reconciliation Committee itself the report acknowledges the legacy of colonial child welfare and further challenges NCFST, in this post-colonial period, to live up to the true meaning of our original instructions as embodied in our mission and crafted by our Indigenous leadership many years ago. This report, and the commitments contained within it, will chart our work for the next two years to come.

We would like to close by thanking all those who have contributed to the successes of the past year. We want to especially acknowledge those clients who gave of themselves, through their stories, and in the giving helped us understand what we need to do to go forward, as they say, “in a good way”.

Miigwetch

Mae Maracle, President
Kenn Richard, Executive Director
Child Welfare

With a legacy of terrible trauma, Dawn found herself addicted, depressed and alone with three small children. Desperate for help she contacted NCFST. Diagnosed with Bi-Polar Disorder, she placed the children in care and later, they were placed with their father, who cared for them as best as he could over the next seven years. Despite his best efforts, and not having any healthy extended family, the children were re-admitted to care via a voluntary agreement.

It was this situation that motivated Dawn to make some changes. She sought treatment and other support to deal with addiction issues and really connected with staff at NCFST. All three children were returned to her care in early 2016. Dawn has expressed that she could not have accomplished her goals had it not been for the Circle of Care Team at NCFST, who continue to support her efforts, and her continued journey to wellness.

Men’s Transition House

NCFST staff first met Jason through the agency’s Youth Justice Workers service to incarcerated youth at the Syl App’s Youth Detention Center. With no discharge plan and at risk of being homeless upon his release, Jason was accepted into the NCFST Transitional Housing Program in the fall of 2015. Initially Jason thought his future as bleak and seemed without hope. Once stabilized in the house he began visiting the Native Youth Resource Centre, benefiting of the varied services provided there. After some time, with lots of encouragement and support, he began to find more confidence, got more connected, and became purposeful. Jason recently entered the Canadian Armed Forces after passing a rigorous screening process. He has chosen the path of several of his ancestors, in becoming a warrior.
Ninoshe Program and Family Services Worker

The Family Home Visitor Program consists of both the Ninoshe (Auntie) and Zhishay (Uncle) programs. These voluntary programs are open to Aboriginal families with children 0-6 years or prenatal women.

The Ninoshe program received a referral to provide services to Jane - a pregnant single mom with a history of addictions, family violence and child welfare involvement. Jane did not really want our services, but with a child in care she agreed to work with us. The Ninoshe remained consistent and visited with Jane on a weekly basis to develop a trusting working relationship. Over time this relationship became pivotal for Jane who eventually decided to make changes. At times the Ninoshe would meet with Jane in a coffee shop and they would discuss her hopes and dreams. Jane really wanted support for her addictions, housing and fleeing her violent relationship. Jane began to work with internal support services at Native Child and engaged in counseling, women’s empowerment and addictions supports.

When Jane was 32 weeks pregnant, the agency called a case circle with Jane and all her supports. A mutual wrap around plan was created ensuring the safety of the pending birth of her daughter. She was working effectively with many NCFST services and had a safety plan in place with regards to her ex-partner. This was not an easy journey for Jane.

She worked at this, moment by moment, with a strong will to bring this new daughter home from the hospital. She wanted a chance to be a mother. When Jane’s baby was born, the Ninoshe visited Jane a minimum of three times per week. Jane feels that the support of her Ninoshe was the key to her bridging the connections with other supports that has allowed her to continue to parent successful on her own today. Jane’s daughter will be one year in August 2016 and child welfare feels that if she continues on her path, then they will close their services by her daughter’s first birthday.
Students from our Native Learning Center East, a joint initiative of NCFST and the Toronto District School Board, undertook a project to promote cross curriculum learning and to gain credits toward high school graduation. The students chose a Woodland artist that they admired and interpreted images from that artist’s work to create their own unique imagery. Some of the artists studied were Norval Morrisseau, Mark Anthony Jacobson and Jay Bell Rebirg. Images were transferred onto plywood then cut out and painted. These plaques were then mounted on a birch tree frame on the exterior of the school. The students learned to work with woodworking tools, learned the proper preparation of wood for decorative painting, and tested their creative potential on the images themselves. The pieces were mounted around a Medicine Wheel and represented the flyers, four-leggeds, swimmers and crawlers. The final project was entered in Historica Canada’s – Arts and Stories as a group submission.

From the top clockwise;
Eagle- Caitlin Judge
Thunder Bird- Anita Wynne
Butterfly- Terra Sinclair
Spider- Elijah Wasicuna
Wolf – Jennifer Brown
Buffalo- Tony Newton
Frog – Justin Morrow
Turtle – Mariah Harrison
Wolf/Moon – Quianna Scott
Woodpecker- Daniel Downey
Owl- Alana Rogers
At a Glance

Child Welfare
# of Service Participants

- Society Foster Resources (Homes): 33
- Formal Customary Care Agreements: 49
- Kinship Families Served: 75
- Children Served: 328
- Families Served: 346
- Investigations Served: 368
- Reports From the Community: 711

Prevention & Support Services
# of Service Participants

- Transitional Houses: 110
- Men’s Healing: 151
- Family Skills Building & Support: 212
- Women’s Counselling: 292
- Children & Youth Mental Health: 366
- Mental Health: 454
- Service Coordination: 562
- Early Years Services: 566
- Ontario Early Years Centre: 596
- Youth Services & Camps: 1033
Her Royal Highness the Countess of Wessex, The Lieutenant Governor of Ontario Elizabeth Dowdeswell, and invited guests on the rooftop - November 2015

Mayor John Tory
Kenn Richard
Councillor Mike Layton, Ward 19, Trinity/Spadina

Kenn Richard carries the Torch on July 9, 2015 in the TORONTO 2015 Pan Am Games Torch Relay
Board

• Supported staff in difficult circumstances related to the inquest into the death of Katelynn Sampson.
• Received the Lieutenant Governor and the Countess of Wessex to expose her to and to share on Urban Aboriginal issues and experiences.
• Respectfully and successfully engaged senior Ministry officials in problem solving the fiscal issues confronting the agency.
• Began implementation of succession plan in the recruitment of a new Executive Director, expected in the coming fiscal year.

Executive

• Completed required responses to the Fiscal Review, 2014.
• Undertook a community reconciliation process after ten years of being a Children’s Aid Society.
• Created an operational plan in response to the Strategic Plan of 2015.
• Processed and managed NCFST’s role in the Katelynn Sampson Inquest.
• Executive Director delivered a keynote speech at the Association of Native Child and Family Service Associations of Ontario, speaking on systemic issues confronting our children.
Child Welfare

- Enhanced our development of innovative culture based services to both young mothers and single fathers through such services as our Ninoshe/Auntie and Zhishay/Uncle programs.
- Creative partnerships, as with our work with Toronto Public Health, have reduced apprehension rates in younger inexperienced parents.
- For children requiring alternative ‘care’, our use of voluntary agreements to facilitate Customary and Kinship care arrangements has increased significantly.
- Began reporting on five (5) Performance Indicators that are available to view on our web-site.
- Launched our first integrated team encompassing Child Welfare and Clinical Services at our Scarborough Hub.

Clinical

- Reduced wait times to less than two weeks for mental health services.
- Developed innovative new programming in Mount Dennis area, increasing access to services for an isolated and underserved Aboriginal community.
- Increased collaborations with 11 different hospitals, government partners and children’s mental health services, creating opportunities for partnerships and new funding prospects.
- Launched the Mooka’am Clinic, our culture based clinical program at a stand alone site at 489 College Street.
Early Years

- Our annual Children’s Christmas Party and Winter Solstice Celebration provided 150 participants with donated toys, a feast, traditional teachings, and giveaways.
- A survey of participants found a 92% satisfaction rate for those in receipt of Early Childhood Development Programs.
- The Ninoshe (Auntie) in collaboration with our High Risk Infant Family Service Team (Child Welfare), prevented apprehensions in 74% of cases opened as protection files.

Youth/Transition Homes

- The Women’s Transitional Homes supported 36 women and 36 children while our Men’s Transitional homes supported 38 men with 20 moving to independent living and/or moving back to their home communities.
- Native Youth Resource Centre (NYRC), our stand alone center in Christie/Bloor village, is now seen through the eyes of many youth as their ‘home away from home’.
- NYRC served 10,633 meals and 8,220 snacks to at risk youth.
- Our partnership with the City of Toronto, Youth Space, is fully operational and has expanded capacities in the arts (7th Generation Image Makers) and Music Studio programs.
Scarborough Child and Family Life Centre

• Successfully staged Walk in MY Mocs Event – Why Youth Self Harm?: a multimedia showcase including cultural displays, art exhibits and speakers, all organized by youth themselves.

• Opened a community Library with community members assisting in all aspects of development including a book drive, data entry and organizing books with recognition received from Gary Anandasangaree, Member of Parliament for Scarborough-Rouge Park; Elizabeth Dowdeswell, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario and Kathleen Wynne, Premier of Ontario.

• Held a Winter Solstice event with 160 people in attendance run entirely by volunteers with the Headstart children and the SCFLC Women’s Drum Group performing, a big drum (Pat Green), a Youth outreach table, a feast, and community members serving and cleaning up.

• Graduated 15 youth from various accreditation programs including eight (8) from our GED program alone.
Financials

Gross Revenue by Source

- Federal
- MCYS
- Other Provincial
- Municipal
- Other

74%
8%
6%
8%
4%
Cost of Services

- Salaries/Benefits: 52%
- Client Personal Needs: 33%
- Occupancy: 4%
- Programs: 4%
- Professional Service: 2%
- Administration: 3%
- Amortization: 2%
Thank you sooooooo much to the lovely person(s) for all of the amazing presents!!! It was quite unreal when I was literally stock piling my tree with gifts. I let the kids open one gift each, Christmas eve and the eve of Christmas eve. That’s how much there was to go around! The boys loved tearing apart the wrapping papers on their presents. I was so happy to see that they did get much of what I suggested/requested for them, which was mostly learning stuff. They received an awesome “very hungry caterpillar” learning book and pen, and they have been bringing it to me throughout the day for us to sit down and do together. They love it. I loved and couldn’t believe that they received full winter coat with snow pants! I was like whaaaaat! Brand new, nice style winter coat. Krista even received an awesome winter coat too, which she loves. She got super excited when she opened a gift that was an art set as well as a karaoke mic. Krista and I also received super comfy pyjama pants (which we both wore the next night). The boys were gifted so much, I had to go buy a couple toy bins today to organize it all.

They are so happy and that’s all I want. I am so very thankful for this program and thank you Sophia for inviting me to be a part of it. Thank you to the family or team that went out of their way to shop and wrap gifts for my family and I. You guys are amazing! I hope that soon I too, can be in a position to give a family a Christmas like you have because I know exactly what it feels like to receive. My wish for the family who opened their big hearts to do this generous deed is that you too receive everything you could want and ask for over 2016. That it comes to you easily and abundantly!

Best,
Kathy and kids xo
Aboriginal Labour Force Development Circle
Anglican Church of Canada
Arts for Children and Youth
Child Development Institute
Children’s Aid Foundation
City of Toronto
CP24 CHUM Christmas Wish
East Metro Youth Services
Hedge Funds Care Canada
Human Resources and Skills Development Canada
Kinark Child and Family Services
Metis Nation of Ontario
Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs
Ministry of the Attorney General – Victim Services
Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration
Ministry of Children and Youth Services
Ministry of Community and Social Services
Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport
Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities
Miziwe Biik Aboriginal Employment and Training
Ontario Arts Council
Ontario Association of Children’s Aid Societies
Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres
Ontario Ministry of Education
Ontario Native Women’s Association
Public Health Agency of Canada
Rotary Club
Toronto Central Local Heath Integration Network
Toronto District School Board
Toronto Police Association
Toronto Star Fresh Air Fund
Tides Canada Initiative - East Scarborough Storefront
United Way Toronto & York Region
Waninawakang Aboriginal Head Start Resource Centre
YMCA
Keep the Connections.

Consider being a Foster, Adopt or Customary Care Parent.

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