



York Region
Children's Aid Society

20/21 ANNUAL REPORT

**Thriving children
Resilient families
Caring communities**

A MESSAGE FROM OUR Board Chair and Interim CEO

This past year has been a time of change for York Region Children's Aid Society.

Since our last report, operating in a pandemic has been one influence, but not the only influence we have experienced. We have heard from staff and the community about the need for our organization to change.

The Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services led an Operational Review as a result of receiving troubling allegations of racism, bullying and harassment in our organization. The resulting recommendations frame our Work Plan and focus on making changes in every part of the organization, from service delivery and planning, through to organizational governance. We acknowledge our shortcomings and this past year our actions have reflected we are fully embracing this opportunity for leading change. Our Work Plan is founded in our organizational commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion within our workplace and as the foundation for all service delivery to children, youth, and families. The work relies on the voices of staff from across the organization. Our Board of Directors has committed to organizational changes that will enshrine a workplace culture and delivery of service in respect, appreciation, and freedom from racism, bullying and harassment.

The actions to achieve our Work Plan have been happening alongside our commitment to provide excellence in every aspect of service delivery to children and families. We are thankful for the advice and collaboration with community advisory groups and service colleagues. Thank you to donors for generously supporting the Stay in School Awards, which provided 72 youth in grades 8-12 with awards for passing to the next grade, and awarded 15 youth with post-secondary bursaries to support their educational and career pursuits. Without your generosity, this support and recognition of youth would not be possible.

Our leadership has changed. Former Chief Executive Officer Nancy French retired in December 2020, and we wish her well. The agency is actively seeking a new Chief Executive Officer to lead the organization into a bright future. Interim CEO Rosaleen Cutler has been providing leadership and has been committed to supporting staff, care providers, and the community since September 2020.

Continues on next page.

Tahir Shafiq
Chair, Board of
Directors



Rosaleen Cutler
Interim Chief Executive Officer



Thank you for continuing to engage with our agency during these times of interim leadership and organizational change. Our Annual Report shows a sample of our financial, service, and organizational development performance over the past year. It demonstrates how staff, foster, kin and adopting parents, along with volunteers, have remained dedicated to providing service, care, and advocacy to ensure children, youth and their families are supported. All of this during times of making significant organizational change and the need for sensitivity and creativity in a COVID-restricted environment. We recognize our staff, care providers, and volunteers for their demonstration of exceptional skills and abilities to guide and contribute to change in the organization. They have done this while doing their part each day to provide child welfare services to the community. We join with the Board of Directors in extending our sincere thanks to each person for their contributions.

We are actively moving forward to realizing an organization free of harassment, bullying, and racism with hopefulness, making needed changes, demonstrating our organizational resilience with confidence that the future is bright. We are committed to the work ahead and ask that you reach out to let us know how you think we are doing on our initial efforts of change.

Best Regards,



Tahir Shafiq

**Chair,
Board of Directors**



Rosaleen Cutler

**Interim
Chief Executive Officer**

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

For the period of April 1, 2020 to March 31, 2021

Tahir Shafiq
Chair

Jennifer Shelton
Vice-Chair

John Rogers
Treasurer

Justin Rangooni
Secretary

Chanice McAnuff

Charline Grant

Maria Papadopoulos

Melissa Froio

Richard Kinch

Susan Bird

Thai Truong

Tim Flemming

Uzo Anucha

Zahid Salman

Zella Phillips

REFLECTIONS ON THE COVID-19 Pandemic

We recognize the incredible strength and resilience of children, youth, and families, staff, kinship families, foster parents, and volunteers during the past year.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had impacts on health and well-being individually and collectively. Social and racial injustice have been brought to the forefront as inequities in the social determinants of health place equity-seeking groups at increased risk.

Recognizing youth are amongst the most vulnerable, YRCAS staff worked to ensure additional supports were in place including:

- Technology to support youth to stay connected with their families, friends, and support people, their worker, and to participate in remote learning
- Educational Liaison support during moves to remote learning
- Ensuring access to services for physical and mental health
- Increased financial supports to offset employment impacts and to purchase PPE
- Educational and bursary supports

The Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services provided additional supports:

- Extended financial support and ongoing benefits to youth beyond their 21st birthday for transition to independence
- Funding to support child and youth mental health
- Funding to enhance employment and training supports to youth leaving care

Youth have demonstrated incredible strength and resilience during this difficult year, and YRCAS continues to advocate with youth for access to opportunities while continuing to provide educational and bursary supports.

Frontline service staff have worked diligently to deliver vital supports to children, youth, and families in creative and adaptable ways. Frontline staff have offered support by maintaining regular contact in person, by phone, and/or video calls, ensuring families and their children have the technology needed to stay connected to those who are important to them, by collaborating and coordinating service delivery with community partners, and by advocating alongside families for access to services and resources.

Families have persevered and remained strong in the face of significant pandemic related difficulties.



320
Staff*

*Total number of staff includes all individuals employed by the agency, including those in casual and part-time positions.



REFLECTIONS ON THE COVID-19 Pandemic

Kinship and foster families have provided exceptional care and support during these challenging times for children and youth while coping with risks related to COVID, as well as personal and professional impacts of the pandemic. Kinship and foster families used additional COVID-related supports such as income replacement, food delivery costs, and additional PPE when caring for a child or youth that tested positive for COVID-19 to keep everyone as safe and well as possible.

VOLUNTEER SUPPORT

YRCAS volunteers provided critical supports. Their roles included provision of transportation, tutoring and distance support, all to keep the environment as safe as possible for children and families.

Volunteers provide support to these important programs:

- Big Buddy Mentoring
- Homework Club
- Tutoring
- Family Visits
- Administration Support
- Special Events and Projects
- Drive Program

To help mentor a child or youth, please visit www.yorkcas.org/volunteeropportunity.asp or email volunteering@yorkcas.org.



50

Kinship Service
Families



11

Kinship in Care
Families



72

Foster Families



69

Volunteers



12

Children/youth
supported through
one-to-one mentorship
from volunteers



74,850

Kilometers driven
by volunteers taking
children and youth to
family access visits,
activities, appointments



4,955

Total hours of
volunteer service
(not including Board
Members' hours)

We celebrate the incredible care, love, and support provided to children and youth during this challenging time.



COMMITMENT TO Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

York Region Children's Aid Society values diversity and inclusion, and respects the dignity, beliefs, and ideas of individuals.

YRCAS is committed to creating an environment of equity and inclusion so that every individual can work and receive services with dignity and respect.

Our organization has been moving forward with clear purpose. We recognize that some work will take time to do properly to create a comprehensive approach that is fully adopted in partnership across the organization and our communities. True change is deliberate and is paced so it is sustainable and embedded in practice – not just the outward appearance of change. Progress will be measured by equitable outcomes for children, youth, and families.

YRCAS has worked to develop a detailed action plan to integrate inclusive practices into service delivery in support of more equitable outcomes for children, youth, and families. Our organization has engaged in initiatives to integrate the One Vision One Voice 11 Race Equity Practices, the Nine Indigenous Commitments, and the recommendations and findings of the Ontario Child Welfare LGBT2SQ+ Organizational Self-Assessment Provincial Report.

YRCAS continues its commitment to challenging and addressing institutional and oppressive practices that produce inequitable outcomes.

We continue working to ensure access to resources, supports, and opportunities that strengthen families, so children and youth reach their full potential within their communities. We have developed monitoring and accountability mechanisms to understand the diverse and intersecting identities of the children, youth, and families receiving service to inform initiatives and service delivery priorities.

Success will be marked by the reduction of over-representation of African Canadian and Indigenous children and youth in care, and families involved with the child welfare system.

We established internal forums for staff to be equipped to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion in their work to support children, youth, families, and the many communities we interact with on a daily basis:

- Allocated and dedicated resources in the development of a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Department to have oversight in integrating equity and inclusion practices across the organization
- The Black, Latency, Adolescent and Continued Care Committee (BLACCC), who strategically advance mentorship programs that support Black youth to identify and celebrate their culture and heritage
- The Black Staff Advisory Council, a forum for Black staff to provide input in the organization's service priorities and delivery
- Renewed the Equity and Inclusion Advisory Council, a forum that has participation of staff from intersecting identities to provide input into the organization's service priorities and delivery



2020 OPERATIONAL REVIEW

of York Region Children's Aid Society

In the fall of 2020, the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services conducted an Operational Review of YRCAS after receiving allegations of racism, bullying, and harassment occurring within the workplace.

The review found that agency staff had been deeply impacted by “an autocratic, deficit-based culture of fear that targeted dissent and enabled oppressive behaviours,” including racism and anti-Black racism. YRCAS embraced the review and the 35 recommendations in the areas of:

- Leadership
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
- Human Resources
- Board Governance
- Change Management
- Service



With the voices of staff and the Board of Directors, a work plan was developed to address the recommendations and reflects our commitment to be an equitable and inclusive organization as a workplace and a provider of service. We see our work plan as the first step, with many projects, initiatives, and actions required to actualize positive change. We acknowledge our shortcomings and commit to making necessary changes to strengthen service for children, youth, and families.

Visit our website at www.yorkcas.org to view our work plan and updates, to track our progress in making the right changes for our organization and the community.

“Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced.”

— James Baldwin,
Activist and Author

SERVICE Delivery

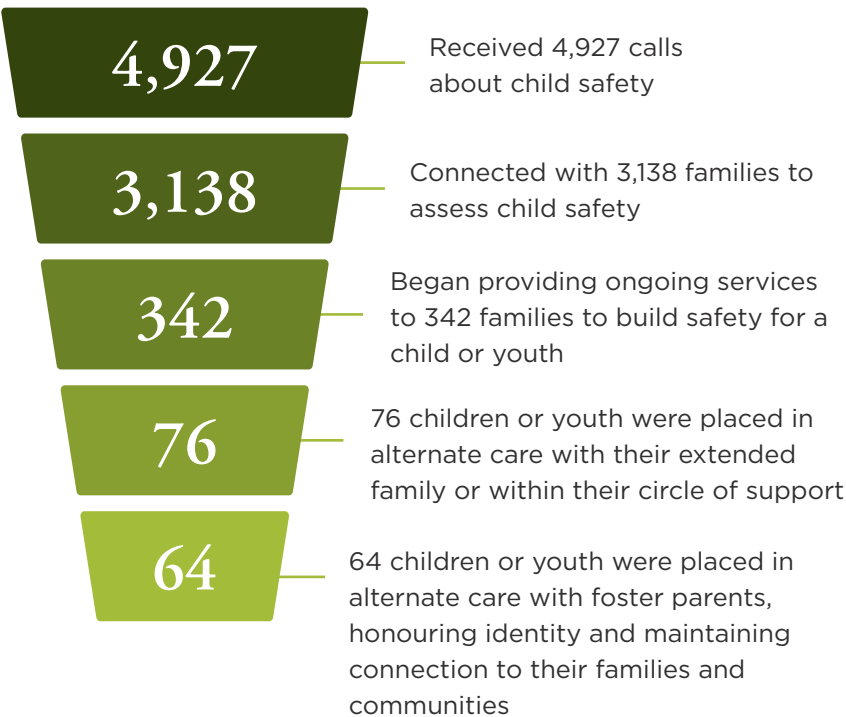
PARTNERING WITH FAMILIES

We are committed to child and youth safety, well-being, and permanency.

When concerns are reported for the safety of a child or youth, we assess the concerns and partner with families, their support people, and community organizations to build safety where needed and to ensure families have access to resources that support them to be healthy and strong. We are engaging in learning about the impact child welfare has had on children, youth, and families so that we provide service that is responsive to an individual's diverse and intersecting identities and lived experiences.

Equity and inclusion will guide our service to facilitate equitable outcomes for children, youth, and families. We will be intentional in that we are delivering service that aligns with reducing the disproportionality and disparity for Black, Indigenous, 2SLGBTQIA+, and equity-seeking children, youth, and families to whom we provide service.

All statistics are for the fiscal year April 1, 2020, to March 31, 2021.



121
youth received
voluntary, ongoing
support

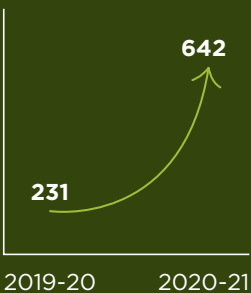


22
children and
youth were
adopted

NUMBER OF COMMUNITY LINK SERVICES

(over past two years)

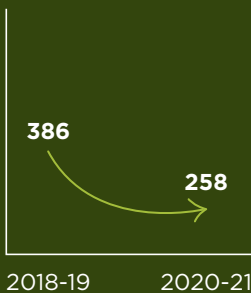
When receiving a call for child safety, we connected families to other community services for support without becoming involved.



NUMBER OF CHILDREN IN CARE

(over past three years)

Partnering with families and their support people has kept children safe at home.



PROTECTING CHILDREN AND YOUTH FROM HUMAN TRAFFICKING

In Ontario, most reported cases of human trafficking involve sexual exploitation, referred to as sex trafficking. According to Ontario's anti-human trafficking strategy, the age of recruitment is as young as 13 years old, with 70% of victims under age 25.

Those at high risk of being trafficked:

- Children and youth involved with Children's Aid Societies
- Indigenous women and girls
- 2SLGBTQIA+ persons
- Homeless and marginalized youth
- Persons living with disabilities
- Persons facing barriers to accessing housing, supports, and basic needs

In York Region, we are actively collaborating with our community partners on raising awareness, identifying risk, intervening early, and providing support and care for survivors.

Collaborative initiatives with our community partners include:

- Updated joint sex trafficking protocol with York Regional Police
- Model of family-based care for children and youth at risk, or when sex trafficking is suspected or confirmed
- Development of a risk screening tool to identify children and youth at risk of sex trafficking

OUR COMMUNITY PARTNERS

- Cedar Centre
- Dnaagdawenmag Binnoojiyag Child & Family Services
- Jewish Family and Child Service
- Simcoe Muskoka Family Connexions
- York Regional Police Special Victims Unit Human Trafficking Section
- York University, Department of Psychology, Teen Relationships Lab

A special thank you to **U-R Home Awareness and Support Services**, a non-profit organization raising awareness and educating the public on local and domestic human trafficking, for their donation of U-R Home Care Bags containing clothing, hygiene products, journals and gift cards for individuals exiting trafficking.



PRIVACY AND ACCESS TO Personal Information

Part X of the Child, Youth and Family Services Act came into effect on January 1, 2020, setting out a legislative privacy framework and establishing new rules for the collection, use, and disclosure of personal information by service providers.

It provides more consistent protections and rights for children, youth, and families related to their personal information and introduced an individual's right to request access to, and correction of, their record of personal information. The Information and Privacy Commissioner of Ontario now provides oversight to ensure adherence to privacy rules.

Throughout 2020, we embarked on a journey of training staff, developing a Part X Knowledgebase, updating policies and procedures, revisiting our service delivery model to comply with Part X requirements, and communicated our information practices to children, youth, and families.



We received
and fulfilled
604
requests for
access to personal
information.



CELEBRATING

Youth Accomplishments

ROSE

Rose is a singer-songwriter who is working on her debut EP to be released this summer.

Rose is also filming a documentary about her experiences growing up in foster care, how she overcame challenges, how music saved her life, and how her album was created. You can support the creation of Rose's documentary and debut album by donating here: [Fundraiser by Rose Jones : Help Rose Jones Share Her Story \(gofundme.com\)](https://www.gofundme.com/fundraiser-by-rose-jones-help-rose-jones-share-her-story). Any remaining funds will go toward grants for youth to support art and music lessons, and purchase instruments and supplies to support youth creativity.

Rose's music is available on:



Rose Jones



Rose Jones



youtube.com/rosetwentysseven

Follow Rose on
Instagram and Twitter:
@rosetwentysseven



CELEBRATING

Youth Accomplishments

MBONG

Mbong is a talented artist who created a three-part series of paintings in honour of Black History Month.

Mbong plans to pursue a career in animation and hopes to attend Sheridan College or Ontario College of Art and Design (OCAD).



To see more of Mbong's artwork, follow him on Instagram: [@mbong_mbong](https://www.instagram.com/mbong_mbong)

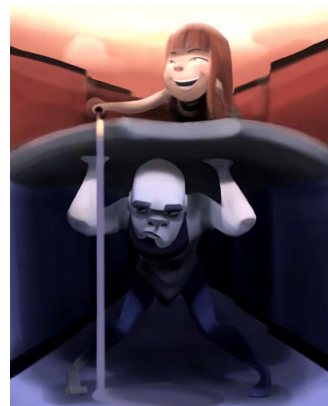
Progression by Mbong

"A physical presentation of the evolution of racism throughout the past 400 years. On the left, things are more grey, and progressively get brighter towards the right. Although the Black man on the right is experiencing more light around him, it may not be the light at the end of the tunnel that he was hoping for as they are the lights of law enforcement. This can be symbolic of the of the long journey that Black peoples have made throughout the darkness, and the long journey that it will still take to get into a comfortable light."



Oppression by Mbong

"Someone of less power (Black) is trapped in a massive hole with someone of more power (white). Taking the initiative to get out of this situation, the Black man, without any praise or recognition, is oppressed and overshadowed by the white woman. This represents the oppression of Black people by whites, even if they may not have the intention of doing so. It can also represent how a Black person's struggle and a white person's struggle may be the same physically, but in society that might not be the case."



Transgression by Mbong

"This painting is located at a public speaking event, intended for one man to give insight into his struggles as a less fortunate Black man. Fortunately, he is surrounded by people that he is comfortable with. Despite this, he's yet to be given a microphone so he can tell his story. This is an example of Black people shoving their own under the carpet, even if they are on the same side. It also represents someone being in a movement physically, but their actions within that movement tell an entirely different story."



AGENCY

Financials

For the fiscal year April 1, 2020, to March 31, 2021.

Expense:

Salaries & Wages	\$23,350,331
Benefits	\$6,711,633
Travel	\$293,473
Training & Recruitment	\$192,075
Building Occupancy	\$1,237,404
Professional Services — Non Client	\$509,678
Boarding Rate Payments	\$8,878,021
Professional Services — Client	\$950,051
Client Personal Needs	\$1,162,268
Financial Assistance	\$236,031
Medical & Related	\$227,001
Promotion & Publicity	\$50,086
Office Administration	\$296,127
Miscellaneous	\$136,184
Mortgage Interest	\$103,175
Information and Technology	\$441,399
Net Amortization of Capital Assets	\$256,759

Total Expenditures **\$45,031,696**

Excess of (expenses over revenues)/
revenues over expenses **\$3,953,777**

Revenue:

Provincial Grant¹ **\$48,010,401**

Income &
Recoveries **\$975,072**

Total **\$48,985,473**
Revenues

¹During the year, the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services provided the Organization with funding of \$399,802 to be applied towards prior years' deficit. As this funding decision was made in the current fiscal year, the amount is included in the revenue for the year ended March 31, 2021.



The York Region Children's Fund has a mission to help improve the quality of life for children and youth in the care and protection of York Region Children's Aid Society through support for vital childhood enrichment, educational support, and compassionate aid.

With the community's help, we can enrich the lives of some of the most vulnerable children and youth, and ensure they have the opportunities needed to help them reach their full potential.

Together, we can make a difference in the lives of deserving children and youth.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

(As of March 31, 2021)

Susan Bird, YRCF Chair

Tahir Shafiq, YRCAS Chair

Tim Flemming, YRCF Board member

Richard Kinch, YRCF Board member

Rosaleen Cutler, Interim CEO of YRCAS

 **\$63,810** **\$12,500**
Total donations Staff donations

Be a part of the community that generously donates: www.yorkregionchildrensfund.org

Charitable Registration Number:
83174 0634 RR0001

Donations of post-secondary bursaries were awarded to 16 young adults supported through the Continued Care and Services for Youth (CCSY) program.

Thank you to our generous donors:

- Canadian Federation of University Women Markham/Unionville: 11 bursaries totaling \$12,200
- Rotary Club of Newmarket: one bursary for \$1,000
- Mark Shillum: one bursary for \$1,000
- Davis Orthodontics: one bursary for \$800
- Charitable Trust of the Canadian Federation of University Women Aurora/Newmarket: one bursary for \$1,500
- Newmarket Lions Club: one bursary for \$1,500

Donations of monetary awards \$500+ were awarded to youth passing to the next grade in high school:

- Canadian Federation of University Women Aurora/Newmarket: \$2,200 in gift cards
- Rotary Club of Newmarket: \$500 in gift cards
- Optimist Club of Newmarket: \$1,000 in gift cards

Thank you to all our donors, and a special thank you to those who gave \$2,000+:

- All Languages Ltd: \$2,000
- Chum Charitable Foundation: \$5,000
- Employee Benefit Plan Services Limited: \$7,500
- Lindsay McGeachie: \$7,500

Donations to York Region Children's Fund were used:

- Bright futures: educational support fund \$30,815
- Possibilities fund: \$16,931
- Urgent infant care: \$6,052
- Camp for kids: \$2,189

CONTACT & Service Locations

Phone

905.895.2318

Toll Free

1.800.718.3850

Web

www.yorkcas.org

Privacy Officer:

privacy.officer@yorkcas.org

Inquiries About Becoming a Foster Parent:

fostering@yorkcas.org

Adoption Inquiries:

adoption@yorkcas.org

Human Resources Inquiries:

human.resources@yorkcas.org

Inquiries about Volunteering:

volunteering@yorkcas.org

Presentations by Our Speakers Bureau:

speakers.bureau@yorkcas.org

FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA!



@YorkRegionCAS



@yorkregionchildrensaidsociety



York Region Children's Aid Society

York Region Children's Aid Society is incorporated as Children and Family Services for York Region.

York Region Children's Aid Society is a member of the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies.

Graphic design by RC Design.



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