



Connecting people.
Connecting families.
Connecting communities.
Connecting the world.

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From the President & the Executive Director

As we look back on 2012-2013, it is inspiring to reflect on the significant work undertaken to bring our strategic plan to life.

This year's focus was on connecting: connecting people and families through Signs of Safety and our new Family Finding program, connecting communities through various initiatives including our commitment to the Triple P parenting program, and connecting the world through the eyes of our youth in care living amazing experiences abroad studying, traveling and volunteering. Throughout this report we showcase many of our initiatives that foster all of these important connections. We encourage you to read the incredible story of Thomas and his father, a real life example of how powerful connecting families can be. From Serah in Travel Your Dreams, to Ashley, the Clark Bursary recipient, and Darcy, who just returned from a year in Serbia, we are connecting each day to amazing youth. We can only write about a few in this report, but we had so many more stories to share.



*Gabriel Gratton,
president*

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One important connection this year was with our employees. Over the past few years, we have made significant changes in our service delivery model and these changes would not have been possible without the dedication and passion of our employees. Recognizing our employees was a priority for us this year, and to do so we created an informal recognition program and a very special formal recognition event to recognize the hard work of all our employees. Through peer nominations, we honoured five employees for their commitment to service excellence. Carole Chenier-Lavigne, our receptionist, received the Heart & Spirit Award for her amazing spirit and energetic personality which makes our front door as welcoming as it can be. Shelly Liston-McNaughton received the Rookie Award of the Year; her dedication to our children and youth is not only remarkable, it is inspiring.

«When they (my girls) found out what and why I won, my oldest said, 'this is much more important than an OSCAR, we're so proud of you mommy'»

*Shelly Liston-McNaughton (left), Rookie Award of the Year,
with Rachel Daigneault Executive Director*



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Roger King-Poitras received the Service Award of the Year for his impressive work with our families and teenagers. Francoise Crosby received the Management Award of the Year for her amazing leadership in SOS, Family Finding and the Kinship team. Kathy Maguire received the Behind the Scenes Award of the Year for her unbelievable organizational skills. Finally, the Partner(s) in Excellence Award, which is awarded by the Executive Director, was presented to Kim Ward for implementing one of our biggest success stories this year, our Family Finding program. To say Kim is passionate is an understatement. Her passion, engagement and dedication to our families is commendable and she truly deserved this award. Overall, the employee recognition event was a beautiful evening and we all look forward to next year's special occasion.



« Although this is an individual award, this would not be achievable without the help of our dedicated teammates since we all do the work needed to move our families forward. »

Roger King-Poitras Service Award of the Year with Rachel Daigneault, Executive Director

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*Alice Haramis (left), Board member
avec Melodie Lemueligou, Finance Director*

We are privileged to have an excellent team which is led by a strong and knowledgeable Board of Directors, taking great strides to enhance the governance model of our agency. I would like to thank Gabriel Gratton for his support and advice throughout the year and also recognize the amazing dedication and commitment of the members of our board of directors David Maclean, Jeanette Despatie, Vincent Foy, Peggy Campbell, Benoit Veilleux, Alice Haramis, Scott Coulter and Natalie Cameron. Our many initiatives are implemented by an experienced and competent staff and supported by generous, dedicated foster parents and volunteers. We are very appreciative of our positive, collaborative relationships with community partners and we would like to thank all of them for their commitment to the children and families of SDG. Finally, we would like to thank YOU for your continued support. Keeping children safe is a shared responsibility. With the help of all our partners, we can ensure that SDG stays connected and that our children stay safe. ■

Rachel Daigneault and Gabriel Gratton

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As our Agency moves forward with transformation, we have been searching for a philosophy that is in line with our strategic plan. We wanted a philosophy that was congruent with our belief that families should be respected and treated as the experts of their situation.

In 2010, we began implementation of the Signs of Safety (SOS) philosophy. Our strategic plan aims to ensure a focus on the protection and healthy development of children and youth while maintaining family and community connections and striving for positive outcomes for children, youth and their families. The Signs of Safety is a collaborative approach to child welfare which fits perfectly with what we want to accomplish in our service delivery model.

Our motto as an Agency is that **“We are Here to Help”**, and to really help families we need to move beyond monitoring files and documenting what we believe the family needs to accomplish. We had the Signs of Safety philosophy to guide our work, but we needed to go further. We needed a program that would offer families parenting tips and strategies and allow them to implement this knowledge into the future, as their children age and different struggles arise. Moreover, this program needed to be consistent with the information being provided by other community services so that the family did not get differing information.



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As a result, our community has embarked on training and the delivery of the Triple P Parenting Program to the families that we work with, from community families to our resource families. This initiative is in line with our strategic priority to strengthen families and keep them together, as it allows families to work through parenting issues and develop strategies that can be applied throughout their children's development.

With an overriding philosophy and a program to help families, the last piece needed to complete our vision and mission is to have a way of measuring our outcomes with families. We need to confirm that we are getting the desired results: ensuring that children are protected, safe, have strong connections with their families and community, have a permanent plan and are achieving the best outcomes to guarantee a successful future. As a result, we have begun the preliminary planning for the roll-out and implementation of Feedback Informed Treatment (FIT). This measurement tool will be used to measure whether we are achieving the best outcomes for our families in every aspect of the work that we do; from our engagement with families, to Triple P outcomes, to outcomes for our youth in care and those exiting care.

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The SOS philosophy, Triple P Program, and FIT measurement tool all work in unison in order to achieve the mission and vision of our Agency. They are all built on the same premise – that the family is the expert and are the ones that should shape the services and planning that they receive.

We continue to strive toward service excellence and will utilize this service delivery model to continually improve our practices and ensure the best outcomes for the youths and families in our community.





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THE GOAL IS ALWAYS CHILD SAFETY!

The most challenging question that can be asked in child protection is: what specifically do we need to see to be satisfied this child is safe? Signs of Safety is a structured approach to child protection practice that addresses the seriousness of alleged or substantiated maltreatment while maximizing the possibility of collaboration between families and workers in order to achieve child safety.

We are approaching the end of year three of our intense, multi-year learning journey into the implementation of Signs of Safety. The Signs of Safety approach is ever evolving and we continue to work hard to keep up with these changes and incorporate them into practice. In 2012, we attended intensive SOS training with co-creator Andrew Turnell, continued our learning partnership with Olmsted County Child and Family Services in Minnesota, held focus groups, and worked at skill development in our team consultations and through supervision. Our agenda in 2013 is packed with many opportunities including Safety Planning training for workers as well as presentations to our community partners and foster parents.

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TRIPLE P

Triple P continues to connect agencies that provide parenting or support services to families in Prescott-Russell, SDG, and the City of Cornwall. The ultimate goal is for all services and agencies to use the same materials, language and framework from Triple P so that parents in our community receive consistent messaging and instruction.

Triple P is an evidence-based parenting program that has been proven to have meaningful and positive effects on children, parents and families. Triple P is designed to give parents the skills they need to raise confident, healthy children and teenagers and to build stronger family relationships. It provides parents with simple and practical strategies they can adapt to suit their own values, beliefs and needs. Triple P connects our practice to our motto, “We are here to help” by moving beyond a monitoring role to providing a service so that parents develop the skills and strategies to fill the challenging role of being a parent.





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This year, staff from 12 local organizations have been trained in Triple P, including most frontline CAS workers. Training is only one way that local staff are connecting through Triple P.

At the Children's Aid Society, a group of nine staff and one supervisor formed the Triple P Champion Committee. The Committee members are committed to connecting trained Triple P staff with the knowledge and resources necessary to effectively implement Triple P in their practice so that parents receive the support and strategies they need. The Committee leads monthly Triple P Power Hour sessions, which are one-hour peer support sessions for Triple P practitioners.

We are very excited about two projects as part of our Triple P implementation. After facilitating our first Group Teen Triple P program, we are now in the process of delivering our first community Group Teen program in partnership with Laurencrest and the Cornwall Community Hospital. Group Teen provides all of the learning of Triple P Standard Teen but with the benefit of peer support and learning. Parenting teens is challenging. Participants in Group Teen have the opportunity to see that their struggles and experiences are shared by others. Parents will have the opportunity to develop the confidence and capacity to manage the challenges of parenting while developing positive, supportive relationships with their teens and other parents.



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Another Triple P community initiative is underway through a partnership with the Eastern Ontario Health Unit, Early Years Centre, Upper Canada District School Board, City of Cornwall Child Care and CAS. We are working to develop a learning and support group for young parents and their children to help them make healthy connections, learn positive parenting strategies through Triple P, and earn a High School credit in parenting. This 22 week pilot project is scheduled to begin this fall.

To conclude, Triple P is an exciting initiative and we look forward to the official launch of Triple P in our communities in the fall 2013.

FIT

We are very excited about an upcoming project for 2013-2014, where we will be moving forward with our goal of becoming more accountable and having better connections with the families and children that we serve.

Feedback Informed Treatment (FIT) is a way of working with families that will allow us to receive comments from adults and youth about the service that they are receiving, and whether or not they feel connected to their worker and to the agency. It is an evidence-based approach that will ensure and improve service delivery and family outcomes.



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Having a more open conversation with the people we are helping will allow us to develop closer and more trusting connections with them, and will allow adults and youth to have the opportunity to speak about how they are doing and what they feel may be more helpful to them.

FIT will allow us to track a family or youth's progress as we are providing them with services, to ensure that we continue to provide the help that the family needs. We will be able to see statistics on how our families are doing and what improvements or adjustments need to be made, as we cannot know if we are helpful with any particular family if we do not measure.

We are confident that our success in using *FIT* will be shown by a lower number of families returning for service. ■

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We've always known that the key to success is to be sincerely connected with those around us. With true connection one has mutual respect, engagement, and commitment to a common interest.

With every decision we make at our agency each day, we strive to connect to our kids/youth, connect to our families, connect to our staff, connect to our community service partners, connect to our community business partners, and connect to the average citizen in general.

Over the past year, the public relations department has worked conscientiously to strengthen and solidify the connections established in the community from our work in prior years. Our goal, now that the seeds have been planted, was to nourish these foundations in order to develop growing and long lasting relationships and create new ties through these contacts. We did this in the following ways:

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1. COMMUNITY PRESENCE

★ CAS was well represented as an active participant at larger community events like Cornwall Lift Off and Cornwall Winterfest/Family Day. At both of these events, CAS offered community families a FREE Family Fun Zone in which they could engage in activities geared to kids/youth, encouraging families to get out and strengthen their family bonds. In addition, we were well represented over the year at many smaller events throughout the community sponsored by Max Keeping, the Children's Treatment Centre, Team Cornwall, and the Chamber of Commerce. The connections made during these occasions were noteworthy in helping us acquire new partnerships and support that we needed for our CAS events, like our golf tournament and our signature event - October's Child Abuse Prevention Campaign.



EMPLOYÉS RECONNUS POUR LEURS ANNÉES DE SERVICES (DE GAUCHE À DROITE)
Dean Stanley – 30 ans de services, Helen Dawkes-Brown,
Danielle Quesnel et Sue Charlebois – 25 ans de services.

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2. COMMUNITY AWARENESS

★ The Child Abuse Prevention Campaign in 2012 had its most successful year ever. As a result of our ever increasing visibility and connections to the community, many new partnerships have emerged bringing with them a higher level of success to our agency's goals. This is the first year we added a fundraising component to our campaign and developed a sponsorship package to engage our partners in a mutual relationship of give and take. From this, over 100 well-known community businesses and service partners stepped up to support our cause, either as sponsors or as partners. Lasting partnerships like Dependable Property Maintenance, Max Keeping of the Max Keeping Foundation and Mix96.1, just to name a few, are imperative to our success in staying connected to the community. These partnerships allowed us to give away a Disney Trip to a family of four, a Big Screen TV, as well as many other wonderful gifts/prizes throughout the month. More importantly though, we were able to provide many wonderful activities throughout the month to raise awareness and unite the community. The main attractions included our launch, the Community Dress Purple Day and the finale event. All extra funds were donated directly to the CAS Kids Camp Fund, helping to increase the number of children who went to camp.

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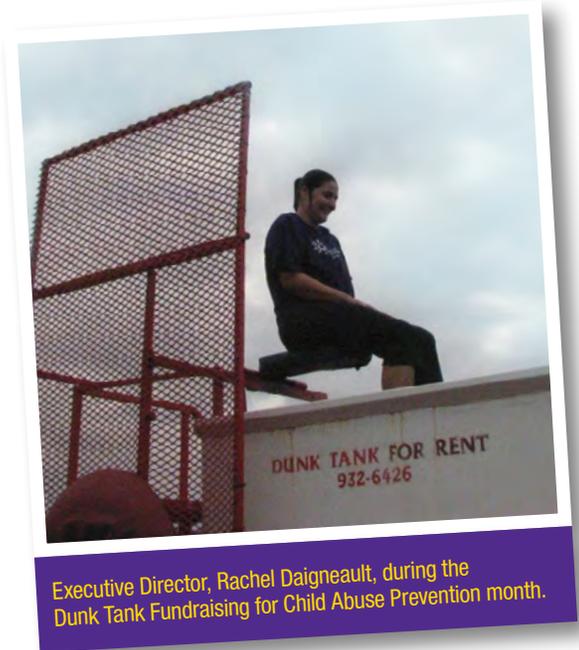
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★ Launching the Child Abuse Prevention Campaign event brought over 1000 people from the community to Lamoureux Park over the course of a few hours for an incredible day of fun. To really sky-rocket community awareness and unity, we organized a record setting event on this day where people would come together and each pop a paper bag to literally **“Break the Silence”** on child abuse/neglect. Wow, the numbers surpassed our expectations! 433 people came together to set this record and take a stand against child abuse/neglect. We plan to break this record in October 2013.



Executive Director, Rachel Daigneault, during the Dunk Tank Fundraising for Child Abuse Prevention month.

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★ ***Our Community Dress Purple Day*** is now a staple event in our community. People have come to expect it each year and more and more are excited to participate. Public engagement across Cornwall and SDG was at an all-time high, with 47 out of 52 schools and over 51 businesses and service organizations dressing in purple to unite against child abuse/neglect. Many in the community purchased and wore our CAS Dress Purple t-shirts which sported the caption ***“Break the Silence, Use your Voice”*** on the front and ***“United Against Child Abuse”*** on the back. The increase in partnerships and general public participation is a tribute to the work we’ve done to improve our image and bring awareness to our mantra that ***“We are Here to Help”***. In addition, we worked closely with the Cornwall Community Police, Ontario Provincial Police and Akwesasne Police Services to deliver an in-school presentation on abuse prevention to our kids/youth, in order to increase awareness at all levels.

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★ Lastly, our finale event featured a Grand Scale Illusionist who has made TV appearances all over the world. He was a child who was once in the care of the Children's Aid Society and he inspired our community with his story of courage and triumph, which he attributed to the love and connection he had with his foster parents. We understood the need to make this event affordable for all families, so tickets were only \$2 each with the donation of a non-perishable food item. This was part of a food drive that we organized throughout the month as a "give-back" for one of our community partners, AGAPE. Thanks to strong connections developed, we

convinced three major food vendors to jump on board and together we collected over 10,000 pounds of non-perishable food items to help end child hunger in our area.



Kids from Travel Your Dreams 2012 working on a fundraising car wash.

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3. SOCIAL MEDIA

★ This was the year we entered the world of social media. We all know that social media is a great way to be connected and stay connected with our community. More and more people are joining social media for news updates, events, and social connections. We opened with a Twitter account to get us started, and quickly found the benefits of being a user. We used this venue to message our events, to increase awareness on issues of abuse prevention and fostering, and to connect with our followers on a daily basis. To date we have 190 followers, we are following 175, and we have sent out 604 tweets. Soon after, we opened a CAS Facebook account where we are less limited by word count and can post pictures and much more. This has been very successful and slowly we are gaining momentum on this page. To date we have 162 likes and this is growing every day. Some posts have reached over 1,700 users. This helps us increase our visibility, raise awareness and bring success to our community events. ■

Follow us!



@CornwallCAS



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Members of the 2012 golf tournament organizing team, (left to right) Jensen Stanley, Robert Wright & Robert Ladouceur.



CAS staff on Dress Purple Day 2012.

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The Developmental Assets

The developmental assets are defined as positive experiences and qualities that every individual has the power to bring into the lives of children and young people.

Research has consistently shown that there is a strong relationship between assets and better outcomes for young people on a wide range of variables, such as educational outcomes, physical and mental health, and positive behaviours, to name a few. Young people with high assets tend to do better at home, in school, and in the community. Investing in asset building with our children provides them with a solid foundation as they transition into adulthood, and gives them the tools they need to become successful adults.

We at the Children's Aid Society understand the importance of the developmental assets, and have taken great strides in the past year to bring asset building to the forefront of our planning for our children. We have provided formal training for all of our resource parents and residential staff, as well as more informal "coffee and chat" meetings to discuss assets. We have initiated an assets newsletter, and have discussed the assets through various media. More importantly, we have asked our residential staff and resource parents to have regular discussions about assets, and to talk about the different ways we can help build assets.



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We have asked our residential staff to assess and document our children's assets on a regular basis, and to chart their progress. Our goal is to ensure that every one of our children has a specific plan designed to build on that child's assets, leading to better outcomes.

We all have a role in asset building. Not only parents, but teachers, coaches, caring neighbours, and aunts and uncles all have the potential to make a positive difference in a child's life. It's about taking the time to engage and to mentor, and about helping the young person find the spark that will inspire him. The more support a young person has at home, in school, and in the community, the more assets we are gifting that young person with. At very little cost today, the investment in our children's future is immeasurable. ■

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My Trip to Pond Inlet

I applied for Travel Your Dreams and in the interview question they asked me where I wanted to go in the world. I answered truthfully and said that I wanted to go to Pond Inlet, Nunavut, to meet my family on my father's side and to acquaint myself with my culture. To my great surprise, I was given that chance and I left on May 6th, 2013 to go to Nunavut for the first time.

I experienced my first memorable plane ride, it was both nerve-wracking and exhilarating. We, my foster mom and I, landed in Iqaluit and my Aunt Theresa was there to meet us. She brought me quickly to see my grandma's sister Rita. Rita was so happy to see me, she is in her 80s. Then we continued on our way and landed in Pond Inlet at 6:00 p.m. My uncle and cousin Bradley were waiting for us.

During these two weeks up in Pond Inlet I've met many family members, I've seen pictures, graves, and learned about my culture. I've learned about my namesake, Ulayu, she was my great-great-grandma.

I've had caribou stew and seal, I've seen dog teams, been to a community dance, went to brunch and drove around Pond Inlet. I went ice fishing and learned how to make an igloo. Most memorable of all, I've heard many stories and every day I take in the beautiful mountain scenery.

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It's been hard adjusting to the 24-hour daylight, the language barrier, the high prices of food, the diet, and my foster mom's departure. But I've managed to deal with all these challenges and even made a new friend up here, her name is Alex.

On May 20th, I left to go back to Cornwall. My two weeks, that seemed like forever, but felt like nothing, are up. And I am so grateful to many people for this opportunity. The Children's Aid with this trip awakened a sense of giving back in me, so I became a member of the Algonquin Residence Council this past year, my first year at college. From the bottom of my heart I thank you for making my dream a reality.

Tara

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Connecting children, youth and families through numbers...

Our numbers show our strong connections in so many ways... connecting our families and our children, our community, our services, our people, our histories and our futures. In 2012-13, the Children's Aid Society of SD&G received over 3300 calls from people in our community about and for our children, including those inquiring into helping by fostering, adopting or becoming kin parents. Of the 3300 calls received, we completed more than 1300 child welfare assessments with families, delivering family centred services to over 650 families in 2012-13. From these calls we also connected another 400 families through our community links to relevant service providers in SD&G. About 275 families continue to receive ongoing family centred services including parenting programs such as Triple P delivered under our Signs of Safety strength based approach. This year we have connected families and people with their own history, completing almost 500 requests for records disclosure, providing important information to people about their history, how the CAS of SDG was involved with them and other related information.

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This past year has shown a dramatic decrease of almost 50% in the number of children being admitted to the care of the CAS of SDG, from 114 children admitted in 2011-12 to 66 children admitted this past year. This speaks to the true meaning of “connecting” when we explore the full range of possibilities that exist in supporting families and children.

Also contributing to the fewer number of children being admitted to care is our use of Alternate Dispute Resolution, including Family Group Conferencing, where matters heading to or before family court are addressed by and with the family to find alternate solutions to Children’s Aid Society care for these children. This past year saw 21 matters addressed through Alternate Dispute Resolution. Following this same rationale, our number of family court matters has also decreased significantly to about 50% of what has existed in the past year.

Further, we note that of the 200 children under 18 years of age this past year who were in CAS care, about 75 or 38% were discharged with a permanent plan in place to return to either their biological family or move to their forever adoptive families. This rate of permanency shows tremendous success in achieving positive connections and relationships for a lifetime. ■

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FAMILIES HELPED IN OUR COMMUNITY THIS YEAR

Total calls received (Protection/Community Links/Foster/Kin/Adoption/AHS)	3,327
Family Assessments or Investigations opened or reopened	1,336
Community Links provided to families	417
Assessments/Investigations closed	1,020
Assessments/Investigations transferred to ongoing family service	277
Total Assessments/Investigations completed this year	1,297
Number of files opened in Ongoing (as of March 31, 2013)	263
Number of requests for record disclosure completed	491
Number of children admitted to care this year	66
Number of children admitted to care more than once	6

OUR CHILDREN IN CARE

Total Children in care (as of March 31, 2013)	298
Total number of child admitted to CAS care this year	66
Children admitted more than once during the year	6
Total number of children discharged this year	113
Children under 18 discharged to permanent family (biological or adoptive)	(38%) 75

ÂGE DES ENFANTS SOUS NOS SOINS

0-5 years	37	12 %	
6-9 years	20	7 %	
10-14 years	62	21 %	
15-17 years	95	32 %	
Over 18 years	84	28 %	

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TYPES OF PLACEMENT FOR CHILDREN IN CARE

Foster care	138	46 %	
Kinship care	27	9 %	
Outside paid resource	26	9 %	
Medical Foster	4	2 %	
Independent Living	67	22 %	
Adoption Probation	11	5 %	
Extended access with family	16	5 %	
Other (alternate resource)	6	2 %	

STATUS OF OUR CHILDREN IN CARE

Crown Ward	144	48 %	
Society Ward	23	8 %	
Temporary Care Agreement	11	4 %	
Temporary Care and Custody	22	7 %	
Extended Care	84	28 %	
Other (OPW and OSW)	14	5 %	

CHILDREN ADOPTED THIS YEAR

19

CHILDREN ACHIEVED PERMANENCY

(RETURNING TO BIO FAMILY OR THROUGH ADOPTION) IN 2012-13

Of the 200 children and youth under the age of 18 years living in foster care, group care or with kin families, 75 of these children or 38% achieved permanency through a return to biological family or to adoptive families this year.

NOS RESSOURCES

Foster Homes	112
Kin homes	24

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It has been another very successful year for the Society from a financial perspective. As a result of our ongoing efforts to look for efficiencies in case management and client services in order to reduce costs without disrupting service delivery, we ended the fiscal year in a favourable financial position.

However, we are not without some ongoing challenges. Due to the nature of our business, we have a high cost of travel and increasing fuel prices is one challenge that we continue to monitor.

The Commission to Promote Sustainable Child Welfare delivered its final report during the year and we have begun the process of implementing a new funding model. Along with the change in funding model comes an increased emphasis on accountability, transparency and outcomes.

Our audited statements are available by contacting our Administrative Office.

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	2012-2013	2011-2012
REVENUES		
MCSS Transfers	22 784 331	23 934 051
Child Welfare Recoveries	788 396	922 459
Investment Income	34 556	29 797
Amortization of deferred contributions	233 031	207 431
Other	603 521	323 877
Total Revenues	24 443 835	25 417 615
EXPENDITURES		
Salaries and Wages	8 703 781	8 094 516
Benefits	2 835 105	1 967 840
Building Occupancy	540 514	495 639
Office Administration	414,939	491,154
Training & Recruitment	328,546	353,806
Promotion & Publicity	145,053	195,471
Professional Services Non-Client	91,461	119,542
Travel	1,081,598	1,103,239
Boarding Rate Payments	7,354,029	9,321,802
Professional Services Client	208,015	391,576
Health & Related	589,045	785,524
Client's Personal Needs	1,083,863	895,911
Camp/Program Fees	2,586	14,373
Miscellaneous	161,352	154,786
Technology	681,581	809,099
Total Expenditures	24 221 468	25 194 278
NET REVENUES OVER EXPENDITURES	222 367	223 337

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As of December 31, 2012, the Agency had 150 employees, up two from the previous year. This number includes 102 union employees, 7 contract employees and 41 non-union and management employees. Our demographics still show a majority of females (131) compared to males (19). With these demographics, it is no surprise that eight of our employees made additions to their families!

We had nine employees leave the Agency in 2012. There were 41 job postings throughout the year; 32 of which were filled – 21 by internal applicants and 11 by external candidates. We continue to value the support and excitement that our summer students bring to the Agency. We had 11 summer students in 2012 – all of whom are youths attending college or university and our employees' kids.

The HR Department continues to work with a committee on developing a new Orientation program. Progress has been made in order to streamline our program and offer new employees a consistent Orientation. As items are finalized through this committee they are being implemented into our current process.

We are happy to report that the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) Customer Service Standard has been fully implemented at the Agency and all requirements under this standard have been met. The HR Department continues to work on the implementation of AODA, as new standards and requirements are introduced. A timeline has been created in order to ensure our compliance going forward.

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By celebrating success, we create a culture of success!

Recognition is key to creating an environment of care in our Agency. In 2012, based on valuable feedback from our employees, we launched our formal recognition program and held our first annual Employee Recognition Dinner early in 2013. We had an amazing turnout with 130 employees and Board members attending this event.



"I like the people and the challenges here. I don't mind change as it keeps me growing in skills, more valued and moving forward. I like to be active in my work and not bored - and this Agency gives me that."

Kathy Maquire (right), Behind the Scenes Award of the Year with Rachel Daigneault, Executive Director

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Our formal recognition at this event included years of service/milestone awards, retiree recognition and the Partners in Excellence Award. In addition to these Organizational Recognition Awards, formal Peer Recognition Awards were introduced and the response was astonishing: 43 peer nominations were received in the five categories – ***Heart & Spirit Award, Service Award of the Year, Behind the Scenes Award, Management Award of the Year and Rookie of the Year Award.***

This event was very successful and we are very proud to celebrate our employees' success. Thank you to all of our employees for making a difference! ■

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For many years, we invested our time and energy in correcting the things that were not right in the lives of our children and youth.

With great intentions, we tried to make up for their losses and their unhealthy childhood experiences. In the end, we saw numerous children and youth growing up and leaving care and returning to their families.

The one common thread that holds families together is connections. Our children and youth, more than most, desire a sense of connection and belonging. Our focus this year has been to help our children and youth gain a sense of connection to their families, their friends, their schools, and their communities; to all of their networks who bring meaning and value to their lives.

Our residential model is designed to help children and youth be raised in healthy and positive environments. Maintaining the connections to the significant people and places they knew prior to entering care, establishing new connections while in care, and maintaining all of these connections long term is key to their future success.

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The guiding principles which are at the core of our residential model include placing children in a resource home (either with kin family or in foster care) within the child/youth's existing community when s/he cannot live at home anymore and placing sibling groups together whenever possible. These principles are reflective of the importance of maintaining children and youth with who/what they already know, all while continuing to develop and grow many more supports and connections for them.

More intense work this year has gone into establishing lifelong connections and supports for our older youth to help them through different experiences and struggles as they move to adulthood. Research findings suggest that youth entering young adulthood do far better and have greater outcomes when they have supports and connections to important people and places. We strive to help our children and youth build these supports from a young age and maintain these long lasting relationships.

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"I wholeheartedly believe in our Mission, Vision and Philosophy. Every day I work to integrate them into practice. I am thrilled and honored to be given the privilege to work with our families and children. They are amazing!"

(left to right) Frangoise Crosby, Management Award of the Year, Kim Ward, Partner(s) in Excellence Award, Angela Azeuri, Service Director



We ourselves can look back upon our own lives and with certainty know who we can lean on for guidance, support and help. We want no less for our children and youth to be able to count on those around them in good times as well as in bad times. We, as a Society, have promised to do a better job of serving our older youth in care who need enduring permanent connections to sustain and support them and in so doing, improve the lives of these young people every year.

Our guiding principle for our older youth transitioning to young adulthood is: "We are invested in raising youth as successful and autonomous members of our community. We will launch youth to adulthood with lifelong connections and established life goals." ■

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Family Finding: Creating Life-Long Connections

One year ago we launched a new program called Family Finding. The purpose of the program is to identify and engage family members and other adults who care about a child or youth in foster care and to develop and carry out a plan for helping children achieve emotional and legal permanency. The model we are using was conceived in 1999 by Kevin Campbell and his colleagues in Tacoma, Washington.

They were inspired by family-tracing techniques used by international aid agencies to find and reunite family members who are separated by war, civil unrest or natural disaster. To date, our Family Finder has worked on discovering, engaging, healing and strengthening the families of 16 children in care who were soon to enter adulthood without connections to family. We embarked on this journey not knowing where it would lead us or how incredibly challenging it would be. Along the way, we heard some very heart-warming and heart-wrenching stories of family members longing for children "lost" to the government system and then reconnected after some time. As a result, restoring dignity to youth and their families who long for each other, always, is now our mission.



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Thomas' Story

Thomas was about to leave foster care without a solid plan for his future and knowing very little about his father and his father's family. The Family Finder found and connected with Thomas' family in New York, North Carolina and Maine. The searcher found 54 family members from his mother's side and 52 members from his father's side - all of whom he had never met. His father and his father's family had never known that Thomas was in foster care and had always assumed that his mother was raising him. Thomas' father had held onto the hope for years that his son would seek him out once he was an adult. The entire family longed for a connection with Thomas and wished to have him with them for the rest of his life. Today, Thomas is living with his paternal family and is discovering other relatives and learning about his roots and identity. Thomas' family is crazy about him and continuously laughs at how much he is like his father!



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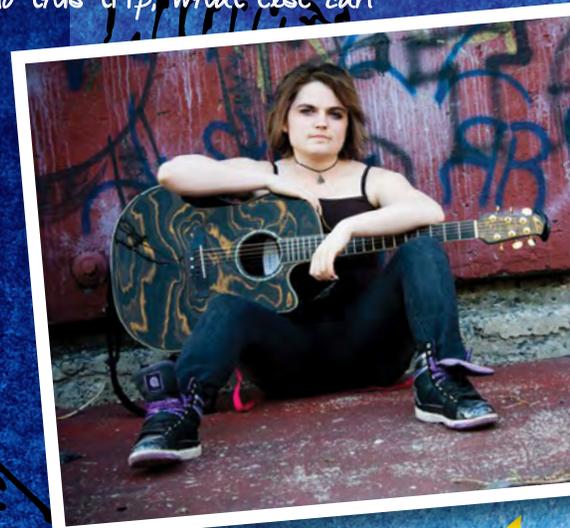
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Travel Your Dreams

Hello, My name is Serah. I am one of the 8 ECM wards who will be attending the Travel Your Dreams trip to Europe this summer. We will be visiting a variety of places throughout Italy and we will be in Paris, France for two days at the beginning of the trip. I am extremely excited due to the fact that I have family members who lived in France and Italy years and years ago.

In the last few years I have had a pretty bad downfall and things were rough in my life. When my Child and Family Worker had offered me the chance to apply in January, I thought "Sure, why not?" I did my interview and thought, "Hey, I really hit things off. I think that I really actually got the chance." When I got the phone call, things changed in a good way.

Even though the trip is still just over a month away, I have been looking really positively on my life. I tell my friends that if I got the chance to do this trip, what else can I do? This trip has inspired me to achieve things in my life. I am now attending school and considering going to college right after.



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"To me it means that Family Finding won a victory in raising awareness that families can and will show up for their children when we invite them to."

Kim Ward, Partner in Excellence Award

This trip is to help us to realize that there is more to this world than meets the eye. I think it's not that there is more than just Canada, I think it's more about everything to do with life. Whether it's a job, school, friends, etc... it's everything! It's to help you not be so quick to judge and actually take the chances you get in life. Seeing another culture and how they live and walking in the footsteps of well-known artists, musicians, warriors, etc... this is a life changing experience and it's something that I look forward to.

All in all, I am beyond excited for this chance. I am also very thankful for the chance to experience this and when I come back I will have so many stories to tell, pictures to share, and a new life to live.

Thank you CAS for this opportunity Serah, 18 years of age

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Repatriation

By dictionary definition, repatriation means to return a person to their country of origin. For CAS, this means to return children to their communities of origin; where they are from and where their kin are still living. Repatriation represents one element of our residential philosophy, which is that every child deserves to live in a family setting and have all opportunities to make lifelong connections.

The concept is nothing new and is presented in more depth in this report under the title of Permanency. Achieving the goals of a safe, stable, and secure parenting relationship, love, unconditional commitment and lifelong supports can take many paths. Some of these paths are reunification with birth families and adoption. In order to achieve these outcomes and other permanent lifelong supports for youth, we have committed to repatriating our youth to a family setting, be it kin, kith or with a foster family. Whether this is the ultimate destination for a youth or a necessary preparatory step along their journey, it receives our full commitment.

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"Our work environment is great, people are friendly and I see a lot of friendship between employees. When I wake up in the morning I am happy to come to work."

Carole Chénier-Lavigne (left), receptionist and Heart & Spirit Award recipient with Julie Clément, Manager of Human Resources

We are proud to say that we have repatriated 12 youth from group home settings outside our jurisdiction back into family settings in the SD&G area this year. Some of these children have been able to move onto their goals of reunification with their birth families, independence with supports from their family or other community members, or developing their understanding of true "family" life by being part of a loving foster family environment.

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Here are a few comments from a youth, his biological parents and his current foster parents about their journey this past year which involved getting this young man out of a group home setting after many years and eventually moving him along to his permanent plan of living full-time with his birth family by this summer.

The youth told us; "I was glad I moved to a foster family. I had more freedom, privacy and space. I get a lot more attention here but I did like certain staff at the group home. I can build meaningful and long lasting relationships now because people aren't always coming and going. My foster parents care about me and are open to working with my parents and never judge my past or my family."

His biological parents offered; "His foster home is the best place for him because he is happy and calm now. He was always tense and on guard when he lived in the group home. Our son sees he is loved and respected in the foster home and he is now calm and respectful. He is also safer now; we don't worry all the time about the influence of other youth on our son."

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Finally the foster parents shared this with us when asked for their thoughts on the process of repatriating a teen from a group home into their home as new foster parents. ***“We understand that is probably easier to handle younger children because teenagers can be less open to learning new things but we saw hope in this youth. His smile said it all. He is loving and caring and displays a great sense of humour which works well with our family. We feel that older children tend to be forgotten, even though they probably suffered the most. We think that some youth have probably given up hope that they will someday live in a nice foster home. Older youth need someone to love them as well. We want to make a difference in a child’s life, young or old... we just want to make a difference and touch someone’s heart!”***

There are many reports worldwide as well as the recent final report and recommendations by the Commission to Promote Sustainable Child Welfare in Ontario that support these efforts and we, The Children’s Aid Society of Stormont, Dundas & Glengarry, are “all in”! We will achieve our goal of having 0% of our children placed in outside paid resources (group settings) by 2015. ■

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Tommy's Story

Hi, my name is Tommy. I am 21 years old and I have been in care for almost 16 years.

Sixteen years ago, I was taken into foster care. I was very scared and wasn't sure what to expect. I was told to pack my bags and that I was leaving. I remember getting to the foster home and I sat in a pink Mickey Mouse chair. I remember sitting there quietly meeting my foster parents. They showed me around the house and where I was going to sleep. I was introduced to the rest of the family. I was offered food, which I found odd as I was never offered food, but I liked it. I started to build trust for the foster parents. I was not treated any differently from the rest of the children. I was teased at school quite a bit because I was in care, but I learned how to let it in one ear and out the other. I graduated from high school and then found my way to college.

I am currently attending St. Lawrence College in the Business Administration Program. In my first semester, I succeeded quite well. I also applied to go to Travel your Dreams this year and was accepted. My second semester was not as easy. as I got distracted with friends and partying. I ended up not doing so well in my classes, but I smartened up at the end of the semester and did my best.

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My foster family has been a huge help for me as they continue to help and welcome me home when I need them. They consider me as their son and not some foster child. My workers have helped me over the years due to their continuous encouragement, consistency, and supportive role of helping me with school. Their care and love made me feel like I belonged and was wanted.

I plan to finish my college diploma. I want to start my own family. I want to open and run my own business, be a manager, own my own home, be successful and a leader. I want to show people that it's not impossible to overcome hard situations, look at me. I want to tell my story and show people that nothing is impossible when you have support behind you.

Tommy

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Darcy's Story

This past year I was able to have the adventure of a lifetime. I graduated from college in June, from the Child and Youth Worker program at St. Lawrence College. At the end of June I left for Serbia, which is in Eastern Europe. I was given the opportunity to coach, teach and play hockey in Subotica, Serbia, through Hockey Sans Frontières. Hockey Sans Frontières (HSF) is a non-profit organization that has Canadians with hockey influence or knowledge of the sport in countries throughout Europe. Not only do the coaches teach kids but they are given the ability to be mentors to the children and youth in Subotica or in other countries. The children there were being taught how to speak English and they were given the chance to find out about Canada and our different cultures.

When I first arrived in Subotica, I stayed with my mentor and head coach as well as the head of the program Hockey Sans Frontières, Uros Brestovac. I stayed with him for a week while I was getting to know Subotica and the kids and learning what I would be doing. Because I arrived during the summer season, there was no hockey being played on the ice. But that didn't stop us from coaching the kids - we coached the kids during the off-season by giving them inline skates and teaching them hockey drills on inline skates.

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On top of coaching, I also helped Uras create the first Serbian inline championship, where our team finished second. I was also given the awesome opportunity of participating in the International Inline Hockey Tournament held in Croatia. We finished fifth, playing teams from Slovakia, Croatia, Bosnia, Slovenia and Serbia. By the time winter came, we had to start preparing the ice as the arena was an outdoor rink. Because of it being an outdoor rink, we often had to cancel practices because it had been raining or was too warm. But it was a great experience to see how dedicated the children and youth are to playing this sport.

My job was to coach the children and youth about hockey, from Monday to Friday, from 8:00 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. On top of hockey practices, throughout and in between we also had classes and schools that came during the day where we taught them how to skate. After all that, every night at 9:45 p.m. the senior hockey team would practice till 11:00 p.m. I also practiced and played for the seniors.



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When I was able to, I did as much travelling as I could. I went to Slovakia where I participated in a hockey training camp for a week. I went to Croatia for the Inline Tournament. I also went to Czech Republic, where I spent four days in Prague celebrating St. Patrick's Day.

Overall my experience in Serbia was one that I wish everybody could experience. I was able to move half way around the world and live by myself and teach and coach hockey, and gain knowledge of a culture different from my own. I would never have been able to have this experience without the help and support of my Children's Aid Society. I owe the greatest nine months of my life so far to all my workers and the supervisors that helped me achieve a dream come true.

Darcy



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This year in SDG we completed 19 adoptions. Adoptions are always very special for the families and children on their finalization day because it means that family connections are permanently established! Older children can often be heard saying "we are a family forever!" which always bring tears to the eyes of everyone present at the adoption finalization. This year, we had one very special family who became a "family forever" and we wanted to share their story with you.

The moment we met this couple, there was something about them that was special, right from the first visit. They just got adoption, they were not afraid, they had realistic expectations and they wanted to have a family.

Two children were presented to the couple just shortly after we met the couple for the first time. There was just something about the couple and the children... we knew they were meant to be a family. The physical and non-physical challenges the children were facing did not deter this couple and in fact, they did not hesitate in their decision and wanted to know when they would meet their children.

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When they met their children for the first time, it's like no one else existed, not for any of them. For some reason, despite the foster parents, residential worker and I all being there, the boys were drawn to their parents from the start... words cannot even explain it...

The adoptive parents wanted to share this with you:

"Our biggest comments are surrounding how resilient our two children are. To have come so far in such a short time speaks volumes about their ability to bounce back from what they lived. We also want to remind people that while a child's situation may sound troubling on paper, to just keep in mind that they're children, and in the right family with lots of love and consistency they'll turn into everything you ever hoped for.

Like most adoptive parents, once you told us about them, we were hooked! Their past did not scare us off at all, in fact, it only made us more in love with these little people and more secure with the idea that they belonged with us, and that we could turn things around in their young lives. Now that we've seen the massive improvements they have made, it's an even better feeling. To know we are directly responsible for helping them is an amazing feeling, and we'd like to thank you all for making that possible". ■

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With our philosophy at the Children's Aid Society of the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry being "We are Here to Help", and in keeping with our agency commitment to empowerment, early permanency, and keeping our families and children engaged, we continue to be invested in improving our services to families and to increasing positive outcomes for our children.

To do so, we continue to focus on strengths and educational success for our children and youth, providing targeted and personalized supports to meet their particular learning needs. Our ultimate goal is to improve educational outcomes for our children and provide them with equal or greater opportunities than their peers as they enter adulthood and leave our care. As the famous Walt Disney said, "If you can dream it, you can do it" – and we certainly believe this!

With an ongoing focus on connecting with our children, youth, families and communities, we have committed to such initiatives as the Crown Ward Education Championship Team and the Bookworm Club.

The Crown Ward Education Championship Team's goal is improve students' outcomes by providing opportunities to youth with Crown Wardship status to increase their awareness of, participation in and success at all levels of the educational pathway, including post-secondary education, training and employment. This is done by bringing community groups together to work in collaboration and in a coordinated fashion to better understand and meet the needs of the children and youth with Crown Wardship status.

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The **Bookworm Club** is a province-wide initiative whose purpose is to improve educational outcomes for children in care as well as to create a sense of permanency, excitement about reading, and to support literacy environments in residential homes!

Finally, through continued partnerships with the school boards, ongoing collaboration with our Educational Consultant, and connections with natural families, the goal is to engage our children and youth in learning and enable better education, training and employment opportunities for all our children.

We wish for all of our children to reach their full potential, and with 19 of our youth having graduated high school and four having graduated from post-secondary studies this past year, they are well on their way! ■

Clark Bursary Award

Hi, I'm Ashley and I have been accepted as a recipient of the provincial Clark Bursary Award. I am currently taking the Child and Youth Worker program at Algonquin College. I have been blessed with a wide range of support and I can't imagine where I would be without these people in my life.

I am always eager to learn and cannot wait to see what the next few years have in store for me! But one thing is for sure - when I finish my schooling, I cannot wait to start supporting and helping young people the way I have been supported and guided.

Sincere thanks!

Ashley



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This year, our focus has been on helping all children in the care of the Children's Aid Society of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry achieve permanency.

We want all of our children and youth to have family connections by way of a legal custody order, adoption, a secure long-term connection with their foster family, or a re-integration home with family. Too many of our older youth have left care without a connection to one or many significant people in their lives, and this is when we realized that we needed to do our work differently.

Part of how we do our work is through weekly permanency planning meetings. These meetings help us establish a permanent plan for all of our children and youth. In these meetings, the youth themselves have an opportunity to help establish their plans and identify the significant connections in their lives. Our work is then to help these connections blossom so that when our agency is no longer involved in the youth's life, we know that they will be surrounded by people who care and will help them out in good times and in bad.

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This year we reviewed 185 permanency plans and we expect the number to be no less next year. We are working hard to ensure that all plans are solid, connections are made and that no child or youth is left wondering what their plan for permanence is. We have seen an increase in older youth who are permanently in our care re-connecting with their biological families. Some youth have been separated from their families for many years and have recently re-established a relationship.

We have seen an increase in these connections over the last year and it is nice to see families being able to reunite. This is something that we completely support and we have worked to help the youth and their families re-establish the connection so that it is healthy, strong and everlasting.

This year, we helped 19 children achieve permanency through adoption. We achieved adoption for five sibling groups: a sibling group of four, a sibling group of three, and three sibling groups of two children. We continue to see great success with our ADOPT event that is held semi-annually in collaboration with the Children's Aid Society of Ottawa and Valoris for Children and Adults of Prescott-Russell.

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Permanency is built into our foundation here in SDG. It is something we do daily and we are always thinking about. In August 2013, our Residential Team who prepares children for adoption and completes all adoptions will be presenting our adoption preparation program at the **North American Council on Adoptable Children Annual Conference** which is being held in Toronto. This is a significant opportunity to put our agency on the map as leaders in the area of permanency and adoption work! ■

"Family... where life begins and love never ends..."

- Author Unknown -