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to prepare a paper for a presentation, but aren't clear what citation method to use? Then join the Toronto CAS group to develop and hone these writing skills in a collaborative and supportive forum! The goal of this group is to support Agency staff as they develop professionally and produce papers for presentation, articles for publication and other professional writing requirements.

If you are interested in joining the group or just want to know more about this idea, call Deborah Goodman ext. 3663.

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Communicate

New CAS of Toronto Child Welfare Centre!



Shelter Canadian Properties Limited, Bird Design-Build Inc., Cresford Rosedale Development Inc. and the CAS of Toronto are the development partners of the new CAS of Toronto Child Welfare Centre. The Children's Aid Foundation is one of the funders.

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Message from the Executive Director, Bruce Rivers

"Walk through the worn corridors, the drab offices and the bare, lonely waiting room. You will see desperate, unmarried, deserted mothers who are searching for understanding and help, sitting out in the open, under the scrutiny of those present – a mother and a father discussing their most intimate problems before their own children and within earshot of people all around. Walk upstairs and watch some of the hampered caseworkers, 12 in one room, 17 in another, trying to talk on telephones about the delicate problems of those

in their care. See the social worker dictating in what was once a linen closet in this old house." CAS Fund-raising Brochure 1952.

Some things never change. Throughout its history the Toronto CAS has always been challenged by a lack of funding and a lack of space. When 33 Charles Street was built in 1952, it was a state-of-the-art Child Welfare Centre housing the Agency's professional and administrative staff as well as its medical and dental clinics.

cont. ... pg.3

Communicate ONLINE
www.TorontoCAS.ca

One Hundred and Eighty Degrees and Loving It

By Catherine Clanfield, Family Support Worker

Meet the Mahoneys – Terry and Terry Ann and their four children aged eight to 14 years: Lindsay, Jessica, Eric and Matthew. One and a half years ago this family was homeless, their main income was from criminal activity, the parents were abusing alcohol and street drugs and the children were running wild and seldom attended school – but that was all about to change.

A determined CAS of Toronto family service worker spent months trying to find the family. Eventually they were located and the children were brought into foster care in the fall of 2001. “I was so angry,” says Terry. “It came out at the CAS, but I was really angry at myself.” His wife Terry Ann adds, “I couldn’t understand why the CAS was so tough on us. We lied in the beginning. It took a while before we realized that the CAS really wanted to give our kids back. We had to be told what to do.”

If the family was to be reunited, putting an end to alcohol and drug abuse was the first step for Terry and Terry Ann. “The time I spent at the Jean Tweed Centre was the best thing that ever happened to me,” says Terry Ann. Terry agrees, “The kids have seen too much. People drinking and passed out, and then the kids would steal hundreds of dollars out of our pockets. We have severed all ties with our old friends. I can’t stand the look or the smell of beer anymore.” He adds, “In the past year and a half six of our old circle of friends have died of overdoses.”

Both parents are proud of their new lifestyle. “We became homeless because of wild spending,” says Terry. Today the family lives in social-assisted housing. Terry Ann says, “We have now paid our rent on time every month for a year. We’ve actually learned to budget and it has kept us away from crime.”

Terry Ann and Terry agree that their family means more than anything else to them and that they would not risk anything to jeopardize their new life. Terry Ann says, “I’m so proud of myself and Terry and the kids. I want to grow old with Terry. I want to live to see my grandchildren growing up – the way I wasn’t able to with my own kids. I am there physically,

emotionally and intellectually 100 per cent when I never was before.”

Today when the Mahoneys look back on their old life they are glad that the CAS of Toronto became involved with their family. “If not we wouldn’t have gotten onto the right path. We have made a 180-degree turn from chaos to stability,” says Terry.



The Mahoneys – a success story!

The Mahoneys wanted to share their story with others because, as Terry puts it, “I want to help other people. We’re not scared of CAS anymore. In fact we look forward to our workers coming to visit.”

Heroes for Hope

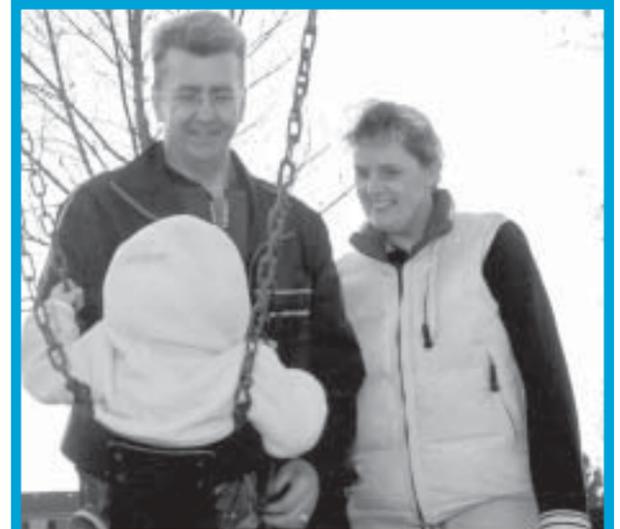
By Daryl Smith, Volunteer, Communications

Children and youth who come into the care of the Toronto CAS by way of an emergency placement usually arrive with absolutely nothing of their own – but thanks to the generosity of Rev. John Niles – they are now leaving with their hands full. Niles’ **Kits for Kids** program, organized with his wife Liane, provides each new arrival with a bag full of gifts.

“The program started a few years ago at our after-hours emergency home,” says Niles. “Most of the children who came didn’t have anything, and I thought it would make their stay more pleasant if we had some gifts to give them.”

Niles, a minister at Victoria Park United Church, started collecting goods donated from local organizations and businesses to create

these bags for youth of all ages: teddy bears for young children, toys and candy for older ones and personal health products for teenagers. According to Niles, “Many of the children who arrive are with their siblings, and we felt it was important to have separate gifts for each of them.” As a result of this work, he and Liane



Rev. John Niles and Liane Niles with foster child.

received the 2001-2002 Humanitarian Award from the Empire Club of Canada.

Last year, Niles decided to expand the program so it would encompass all the emergency homes in the city. He got in touch with a number of contacts, including Steven Ledrew, president of the federal Liberal party, and associates within the church, and planned a fund-raising campaign that would make this goal possible. His first drive, launched during the Christmas season, allowed Niles to fill 600 gift bags. “Everything fell into place,” he says. “Zellers donated the bags and gifts, and we received a 50 per cent discount from Loblaws, in addition to many other contributions.”

The drive was only the beginning. “Our goal for this year is 2,200 bags, which is roughly the number of children who come to Toronto emergency homes every year,” says Niles. His next big campaign will be on Mother’s Day, when he hopes to receive enough gifts to fill 300 bags.

If you are interested in making a contribution to the **Kits for Kids** program, phone Rev. John Niles at Victoria Park United Church, 416-755-0772.



Trunk full of gifts for the Kit for Kids program.

Corporations Care

By Daryl Smith, Volunteer, Communications

Richard Cory's association with the CAS of Toronto began 11 years ago. A real estate agent for Re/Max Hallmark Realty Ltd., he was selling a house owned by a single mother who had found herself in an increasingly desperate situation. "Her husband had left her, and she didn't have enough money to care for her child," explains Cory. "When I was working there, Children's Aid came by and helped by giving money and food. That's when I got the idea for the annual fund-raiser"

From that first dinner at The Ploughman restaurant, Richard's idea has ballooned into a 200-person affair at La Rosa banquet hall, complete with live DJs and a six-course meal. "This year was the best year yet," he says. "The dinner raised over \$20,000 in cash, and we received around 150 gifts."

those unable to make it generally leave a gift at the company offices instead. According to Meg Follett, who organizes Winter Fest, "We at KPMG live in relative prosperity, and this is an opportunity to give to people in real need."

Janine Tremblay asked staff attending the party to bring gifts for children between 11 and 17, and received everything from make-up to gift certificates for compact discs.



Rosa Shirripa, organizer of TD Securities' Christmas fund-raising drive, poses at the reception area.

Another special donor is TD Securities. Their annual drive, began seven years ago on the firm's trading floors. Over the years, donations have grown from a few boxes of toys to a December 2002 donation of 973 gifts that filled 98 garbage bags. "During this time of the year, it's more important than ever that we

give what we can," explains Rosa Shirripa, who organizes the event each year. "This drive is a combination of two different desires: the desire to give and the desire to receive." Donations come from the 1600 employees firm wide, and are collected with the help of 30 volunteers.



Evelyn Jenah at KPMG's North York office.

A number of companies ask for CAS of Toronto donations as part of their annual holiday festivities. This is the case for KPMG, which requests contributions during Winter Fest, a

Christmas event attended every year by staff at the downtown and North York offices. Employees who come are asked to bring a toy;



Party organizers Pearl Taylor and Wendy Wilson of Rothman, Benson and Hedges.

Rothman Benson and Hedges also asks for donations at their annual Christmas party, and last year managed to raise \$465 in cash and cheques, as well as over 15 bags of gifts from its 350 staff members.



Lorraine Leck, marketing co-ordinator at Kroll Lindquist Avey, with party organizer Janine Tremblay.

Contributing to Toronto CAS is part of a "children's theme" at Kroll Lindquist Avey's annual staff party. According to marketing director Lorraine Leck, "It's been a tradition at Kroll that instead of a corporate Christmas card, we have a card-drawing contest for staff children, in addition to making donations to children's charities." This year, organizer



Heather Mondesir in front of Gymboree Fairview Mall, one of the outlets that donates excess inventory to the CAS of Toronto.

For Gymboree, the donations are part of a program that operates year round. Every six to eight weeks, Canadian branches of the children's clothing company take excess inventory, and donate it to the CAS of Toronto. According to Heather Mondesir of the California-based chain's Fairview Mall store, "It's a program that has been operating since Gymboree moved into Canada. Many of these underprivileged children have nothing, and this is a chance to give them good quality stuff that they can really use."

And finally, because of the efforts of a dedicated group of family court judges, court staff and lawyers, the Society receives a Christmas donation of children's footwear every year. These shoes, generally unsold inventory from major shoe distributors, are first donated to the Two/Ten Footwear Foundation, and then given by members of the family law community to a number of Toronto charities.

Due to the large number of shoes donated – last year it amounted to \$100,000 worth – it was a struggle for members of the family law community to find adequate storage space. However, this year the donations have found a permanent living space in a warehouse owned by Friends For Poverty Relief.

cont. ... pg.12



Richard Cory poses with cheque and gifts from his annual fund-raiser.

A Message from the Executive Director, Bruce Rivers

cover story cont. ...



Now our beloved Charles Street is in need of some help. We are literally bursting at the seams, and some of the things mentioned in the excerpt from the 1952 fund-raising brochure ring remarkably true today. It is a matter of great importance to

those who serve our children and families, and to those families themselves, that the Toronto CAS have a new Child Welfare Centre – one that says children and families are important, one that can accommodate our growing service and administrative requirements, and one that is accessible.

At the heart of making that dream a reality is a detailed plan. Over two years ago, we engaged with consultants to perform a short- and long-term needs analysis, complete a real estate strategy for the entire Society and complete a search for the best development option for our Charles Street complex. This analysis helps to ensure our new headquarters will be right for our clients, staff, foster parents and volunteers not only today, but for many years to come. With Board guidance through a joint Society-Foundation real estate committee, these consultants along with staff in our finance and administrative departments have helped to bring this massive project to reality. An agreement has been completed with a developer and we are seeking support for the project from City Councillor Kyle Rae.

Once completed, our proposed seven-floor Child Welfare Centre will front on Isabella Street and will accommodate all staff currently working at 33 and 45 Charles Street, 625 Church Street, as well as those working at our Toronto East and Toronto West branch locations. The costs of this redevelopment will be substantial and we expect to meet them through a combination of land sale at Charles Street as well as funding support through provincial government sources and the Children's Aid Foundation. Upon completion, we anticipate that our operating and rental cost savings will be in the neighbourhood of \$1 million annually. The new complex will provide us with up-to-date office space and functionality, accommodate all of our large and small meeting requirements and incorporate a day care centre as a service to the children in our community.

Depending upon when we acquire the desired zoning, and barring the unforeseen with the economy, construction is expected to begin as early as the spring of 2004. Construction will include a multi-level underground parking capacity and is expected to take at least 18 months. Anyone who has lived through a home renovation knows the potential frustrations and complexities with a project of this magnitude. I have no doubt that there will be some short-term pains, but in the long-term the pay-off for the organization, our clients and our people will be considerable. We look to the start of this massive undertaking with great expectations for a Child Welfare Centre that will serve our needs well into the next century. Stay tuned and watch for progress as the year progresses!

Bruce Rivers

Medal in Honour of Queen's Jubilee Awarded to Lewis and Rivers

Stephen Lewis, an educational consultant and Society Board member, and Bruce Rivers, executive director of the CAS of Toronto, were both recognized with a Commemorative Medal in honour of the Queen's Jubilee for their outstanding commitment and devotion to the advancement and well-being of children.

The Commemorative Medal was created on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee of Her Majesty's accession to the Throne as Queen of England and Canada, and has been granted to individuals as a lasting way to pay tribute to those whose achievements have benefited their fellow citizens, community and country.

Lewis is recognized for his work as Director of Oxford Learning Centres and as an active volunteer for the Children's Aid Foundation, the

CAS of Toronto and the Temple Sinai School Board.

Rivers was acknowledged for his work over the past decade with the Child Welfare League of Canada (CWLC). During 2000-2003, Rivers was president of the CWLC.



Lewis (right) receives Commemorative Medal in honour of the Queen's Jubilee on February 5, 2003 at the Columbus Centre in Toronto, which was hosted by Mike Colle (left), MPP Eglinton-Lawrence.

Rivers Named to International Forum for Child Welfare Board

Bruce Rivers has been appointed to the International Forum for Child Welfare (IFCW) board as the representative for North, Central and South America. The IFCW's mission is to work for children world-wide to improve the quality of their lives and to enhance opportunities for the development of their full potential.

The IFCW was created in 1989, the year of the proclamation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. It believes that the Convention and its Protocols should be the guiding light of all those who devote their time and resources for the benefit of all the world's children. Today, more than 100 organizations in 44 countries are IFCW members.

The IFCW is the only international organization dedicated exclusively to fostering co-operation and information exchange in the field of child welfare. It is dedicated to capacity building and leadership development of child welfare non-governmental organizations (NGOs). ICFW aims to strengthen the capacity of its member NGOs so that they can improve the delivery of services to children and families.

Key areas of focus for IFCW members include education, child labour, displaced children, child

health, combating child abuse and neglect, and fighting discrimination and poverty.

"I'm honoured to be a part of the IFCW board. Toronto's diverse community represents children and families from around the globe. I believe the Agency stands to learn much about how we may better serve our diverse population here in Toronto from international experiences and expertise offered through IFCW membership," says Bruce Rivers, executive director of the Toronto CAS.



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A True Miracle

The Toronto community was stunned to learn that on January 25th a newborn baby girl was abandoned in sub-zero temperatures in a Nathan Phillips Square stairwell. The baby girl, nicknamed Mira for miracle by Toronto CAS executive director Bruce Rivers, has amazed and touched everyone with her remarkable resilience. Today she is continuing to thrive in a loving foster home.

The Society is deeply grateful to the 911 caller, paramedics, police and medical staff at St. Michael's Hospital and the Hospital for Sick Children for saving baby Mira.

The Children's Aid Foundation has received \$6,000 in donations towards Mira's future education. If you are interested in contributing to the Baby Mira Fund, please contact the Children's Aid Foundation at 416-923-0924 or visit www.cafdn.org.

The Society also received more than 100 calls from people interested in adopting Mira. The Society has at any one time 50 children who need permanent homes.

Considering adoption?

Susanna's first impression of public adoptions was not very encouraging. "Friends told me that it takes forever to adopt, seven years at least if you want a baby, and if you're over 40, forget it," remembers Susanna. After this initial discouragement Susanna and her husband looked into international and private adoptions.

"We had our name on a waiting list for babies in China when someone told me that the CAS of Toronto didn't

have a waiting list and that families have been able to adopt a child within a year or so," says Susanna.

With new-found hope Susanna and her husband started the adoption process with the CAS of Toronto. When they contacted the CAS of Toronto about adopting a child, they were given an information package and invited to attend a meeting to learn more about the adoption process.

Once they decided they'd like to adopt, they took part in a series of education groups designed to help them understand the needs of children who are awaiting adoption. Following these sessions, the CAS conducted a home study that involved five interviews and a visit to the couple's home.

"During the home study we told our worker that we were on a waiting list for a baby in China, and that maybe if we were able to adopt from the CAS it would be our second child. Our worker told us not to rush because she knew of an available baby that might make a great match," says Susanna. "We were so surprised to learn that we might have a baby so quickly."

Just a couple of months after the home study was completed, Susanna and her husband adopted a healthy six-month-old baby girl from the CAS of Toronto.

"We are very lucky, she was an easy baby and she is so happy and smart. Adopting Kaitlyn is the best thing that's ever happened to us," says Susanna.

Did you know?

Adoption – the legal process that gives a new family to a child whose birth family can't care for him or her

– is a life-long commitment that benefits children and families

There are no standard waiting periods for adoption; everything depends on the right match. It takes approximately one year for applicants to complete all of the requirements for adoption.

Contrary to the provincial trend of reducing staff resources to support adoption services, we increased our staff 10 per cent to manage anticipated growth in demand.

In 2001/2002 there were 123 adoption placements.

Twenty per cent of children adopted through the CAS of Toronto last year were adopted by their foster parents.

Adoption must be in the child's best interests. Sometimes children do not want to try adoption, or sometimes access granted to biological families prevents a child from being adopted. This happens when it's thought that visits with relatives are more important to the child's well-being than breaking ties and starting a new life with an adoptive family.

Since CAS workers have the opportunity to really know and understand the children in their care, they help determine if adoption or long-term foster care is best for the child. If a child is old enough, he or she also takes part in this decision.

For more information about adoption, contact us at 416-924-4646 or adoption@TorontoCAS.ca

Speaking Out (October 1, 2002 to mid-January 2003)

Topic	Outlet	Spokesperson
Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Month	Toronto Star	Bruce Rivers, Executive Director
Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Month	Metro Today	Melanie Persaud, Communications Manager
Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Month	Ryerson University Television	Bruce Rivers, Executive Director
Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Month	City Parent	Bruce Rivers, Executive Director
Animatronic Robot Project	CTV	Bruce Rivers, Executive Director
Animatronic Robot Project	CBC TV	Bruce Rivers, Executive Director
Animatronic Robot Project	Canada AM	Corrie Tuyl, Assistant Branch Director
Animatronic Robot Project	Global TV	Bruce Rivers, Executive Director
Animatronic Robot Project	Toronto Sun	Corrie Tuyl, Assistant Branch Director and Bruce Rivers, Executive Director
Balcony Safety	CFTO TV	David Fleming, Assistant Branch Director
Balcony Safety	680 News	David Fleming, Assistant Branch Director
Role of the CAS of Toronto	EZ Rock Radio	Bruce Rivers, Executive Director
Child Poverty	EZ Rock Radio	Colin Hughes, Community Worker
Impact of Housing Crisis on Kids	EZ Rock Radio	Ann Fitzpatrick, Community Worker
Diversity, Newcomers, Adjusting to Life in Canada	EZ Rock Radio	Sharron Richards, Prevention Team Supervisor
Adoption	Toronto Sun	Nancy Dale, Director, Adoption & Foster Care
Child Welfare in the 1930s	Toronto Star	John McCullagh, Alumnus/Author of A Legacy of Caring
Holiday Stress Busters for Busy Families	CBC Radio	Corrie Tuyl, Assistant Branch Director
Home Alone	CFRB Radio	Melanie Persaud, Communications Manager
Role of CAS	Muuqaalka Soomalida-Omni 2	Bruce Rivers, Executive Director
Duty to Report Child Abuse and Neglect to a CAS	Omni 2 TV	Melanie Persaud, Communications Manager
Testing for Fetal Alcohol Syndrome	Cross Currents – Publication of the Centre for Addictions and Mental Health	Patsy Hamilton-Diabo, Manager Service Administration
Child Welfare Funding	Globe and Mail	Bruce Rivers, Executive Director
Baby Mira	89 requests for information from local, national and international print and electronic media	Bruce Rivers, Executive Director Nancy Dale, Director, Adoption & Foster Care Corrie Tuyl, Assistant Branch Director Melanie Persaud, Communications Manager
Housing	CBC TV	Ann Fitzpatrick, Community Worker
Federal Budget-Child Poverty	CBC National Radio	Colin Hughes, Community Worker
Federal Budget-Child Poverty	CTV National TV	Colin Hughes, Community Worker

All it Takes is Faith and Trust

By Ute Wright, Co-ordinator of Volunteer Services

For volunteer co-ordinators in this Agency,

holiday planning starts in August. You can imagine, when I found out at the end of October that the anticipated space I would need to hold the toys for distribution and the volunteers who would need to assemble the gifts was non-existent, that I felt a little uncomfortable. Earlier on, at the suggestion of

Geraldine Stringer who is a volunteer and resident of North York, I had gone to several high schools in the neighbourhood and recruited 70 students who were ever so keen to get started on making parcels for the anticipated 650 children who would be receiving gifts. The students were going to get hours credited towards the 40-hour community service, which is required of them, and they could see that this would be a fun way of doing it.

As a way of introducing them to the requirements of the task, I held a Student Orientation on November 4, 2002 after school. I added a little educational component so that they would know what the mandate and work of the CAS of Toronto was all about, and why it was important for children to have toys (with the help of Gisela Bednarsky, a long-time volunteer and early childhood educator). At the end of the day, we had recruited 34 student volunteers who were committed to coming in every evening from 4 PM to 7 PM for three weeks in November.

In the meantime, I was still racking my brain for a place to put all of the toys. It was clear that the space at North Branch so kindly offered by Jim Thompson of the foster care department was not large enough to function as a toy room. What we needed was a large hall, a basement, a church basement? There was after all an Evangel Temple right across from North Branch on Yonge Street- I wondered if they could possibly help? With a timid voice I explained our predicament, first to the Secretary, then to the Rev. Barry Lee, only I didn't know he was a "Reverend"- he simply identified himself as "Barry". He was very sympathetic, the only problem was that their large space, a gym, was being used for other programs in the evenings. Oh well, my heart sank, but he said (hope was rekindling in me) there was space in the office building right next door at 4141 Yonge Street. He suggested I talk with George Chow, the manager, and say that Barry had recommended him.

Off I trotted next door to ask for the manager. My initial enquiry about subletting space was met with a negative response, but once I said Barry had suggested the idea things started to turn around. Yes, if Barry would give permission there was an entire suite vacant on the main floor. After a few formalities like a letter of permission, time lines and some liability issues were worked out, my



Toy room volunteer Sybil Mosley (second from left) and students from St. Joseph's Morrow Park High School enjoy playing Santa.

prayers were finally answered! I felt a miracle had happened. We now had the ideal space to work- free of charge! On November 11, 2002 and for the next three weeks, the students came promptly every evening to work in the toy room. They started by hauling bags of donated toys from one building to the next. Then they sorted baby clothes and toys according to age category and stacked everything in various rooms according to the age groups of the children. Once the sorting was complete they filled gift requests submitted by family service workers. Selecting toys for the various children in a family was the fun part, a little bit like playing Santa. It was a pleasure to see the volunteers so enthusiastic. In the end, when I asked about their volunteering experience, they said, "It was hard work," "It was a lot of fun" and "It was good to know that I was doing something that was helping families and children."

This was my Christmas miracle this year, thanks to the Rev. Barry Lee and the Evangel Temple ...
AND A LITTLE BIT OF FAIRY DUST!

Housing for Youth Leaving Care: Trying to make a dream a reality

By Germaine Fraser, Former Youth in Care Toronto Catholic CAS and Youth Housing Committee Member

In 1996, Pape Adolescent Resource Centre (PARC) received recognition from the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) for its housing model at their annual award ceremony. PARC continues to house 20

youth in four houses (owned by the City of Toronto and run by PARC under the Single Housing Opportunity Program). At the time of the CMHC awards, PARC had also negotiated "Reserved Access" agreements with three subsidized housing providers. These agreements ensured access to about 30 rent-gated-to-income apartments for youth. PARC has been responsible for screening and referring youth from the child welfare system. Unfortunately, due to new provincial legislation (Social Housing Reform Act), one agreement has already been lost and another will be lost in April 2003.

The lack of access to affordable, stable and safe housing continues to be a growing problem for youth leaving care. Access to housing that fits with a specific youth's needs can make a huge difference in the healthy and stable transition from care to independence. Lack of housing can pose barriers for youth trying to finish school or meet other life goals.

Youth at PARC have continued to be motivated and focused on finding ways to develop affordable housing options for youth in the transition from the child welfare system. However, without staff expertise on hand, the idea lay dormant for a period of time. This all changed during a visit between PARC youth and Claudette Bradshaw, Federal Minister of Homelessness in 2001. With the Minister's encouragement, PARC submitted a successful application for Supporting Community Partnerships Initiative funding to develop an action plan and feasibility plan for the development of a housing project for youth leaving Toronto CAS and Toronto Catholic CAS care. Toronto CAS, Toronto Catholic CAS, the Children's Aid Foundation and the Hope for Children Foundation supported the application. To implement the project, a Housing Committee was formed with youth and staff from both agencies in April 2002. In the summer and fall, the committee hired Levitt-Goodman Architects to hold focus groups with youth and CAS/CCAS/PARC staff to hammer out a vision for a possible project. The committee has also hired a consultant, Jon Harstone, with expertise and a good track record in building affordable housing in Ontario's current housing climate. Harstone has been successful in working with other groups in the past two years and getting new affordable housing on-stream, including the St. Clare's Multifaith housing project, Margaret Laurence Housing Co-op, the conversion of an empty elevator shaft into 16 units of housing.

The Housing Committee will be meeting with senior managers of the Toronto CAS and Toronto Catholic CAS and their respective Foundations as the project moves forward to provide updates and get directions on the next steps. Also, we will continue to meet with staff and youth again at various points along the way as the committee works to meet its deliverables for the project. If you wish to contact the committee or to get involved in the project, contact Irwin Elman at PARC 416-462-1010 or Ann Fitzpatrick ext. 3482 at Toronto CAS. Please visit www.parcyouth.com for more information.

The Feedback Is In — Long-Range Plan Update

By Dr. Deborah Goodman, Quality Systems and Support, and Melanie Persaud, Communications

The CAS of Toronto is in the process of preparing its 2003-2006 long-range strategic plan - a systematic way to approach and manage change, while offering the opportunity to re-examine and define goals in light of the previous plan's accomplishments. Each long-range plan tends to span a three- to four-year period. The process is Board-led and takes approximately one year to plan, execute and arrive at final goals that set CAS of Toronto's direction and focus over the next several years.

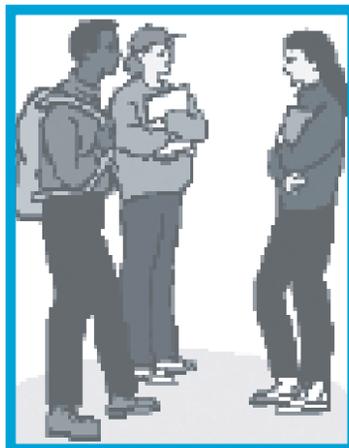
The first stage in creating the Society's long-range plan is the completion of a comprehensive environmental scan and executive summary. These documents were completed in fall 2002 and pulled together important societal and internal trends, insights and predictions about a range of possible futures the CAS of Toronto may encounter.

The second stage uses the scan and key questions to engage stakeholders in consultations about current services and what directions the Society should take that will ensure continuing success in fulfilling its mandate. For the 2003-2006 long-range plan, extensive consultations with stakeholders were held over a five-month period from September 2002 to January 2003. Gathering stakeholder views involved in excess of 100 consultations with nearly 150 Toronto CAS children and families, more than 800 staff, foster parents, volunteers and almost 200 representatives from various community and funding groups. The consultation activity produced important secondary outcomes, such as re-affirming community relationships, building connections with new partners and opportunities to clarify the Society's mandate with the community. However, the principal benefit from this endeavour has been the receipt of rich and informed responses from the Society's stakeholders.

The third stage of the planning process involves analyzing the responses by putting them through a number of levels of analysis to identify themes. The first task was to divide them into two groups, based on the commonality of questions posed. Group A: clients (children and families served by the Toronto CAS); Group B: community partners, funders, Society staff, foster parents and volunteers. Responses were read and then aggregated and synthesized into overall key themes for discussion by the Board, Senior Advisory Team and the Long-Range Plan Steering Committee.

The final stage will see the establishment of new long-range goals, an implementation plan and steps for monitoring and adjustment. Selection of these goals will occur over the next month through

a process of sustained debate and examination of the stakeholder themes, clarification of strategic issues and a review of the Society's mission and values. From these discussions, the 2003-2006 long-range goals will emerge. The last step in this stage involves formal Board approval of the plan. In advance of the final publication of the long-range plan, the following is a glimpse at some of the feedback from the consultation sessions.



The following comments are from approximately 40 young people:

Question #1 - With respect to working with you and your family, what were three things that you feel the CAS of Toronto did that were most helpful

to you during your time in care or while being served by the Society?

"CAS taught parents and children to get along by teaching them how to express themselves."
 "Made sure visits with my mom took place."
 "You made me believe that I could achieve anything."
 "You gave me food, shelter and clothing."
 "You kept me safe."

Question #2 - Are there areas where we need to improve?

"Workers need to be there more than once per week."
 Young people in care want to have more fun! There should be more games and field trips. [There should be] more visitation time with their family. [There should be] more people to supervise visits.
 "The kids feel it when the system doesn't work."

Question #3 - Are there services that we need to offer that we aren't offering?

More activities in the winter
 "Nope, they do everything."
 Respondent would like a male figure roughly his father's age who he could talk to.
 More family work and counselling to help facilitate a return home.
 Career counselling for mother and a program to help dad with drinking.



The following responses are from groups of parents:

Question #1 - With respect to working with you and your family, what

were three things that you feel the CAS of Toronto did that were most helpful to you during your time in care or while being served by the Society?

"The worker asked questions of the school that I was afraid to ask."

The worker helped the client with groceries and basic needs.

The worker was very helpful, kept the family informed, reminded them of their responsibilities to change the situation.

The family had confidence in the worker and the worker had a good balance between being professional and being human.

The workers' capacity to keep the whole case in perspective was helpful (and not overreact to a one-time incident).

CAS can be trusted.

Question #2 - Are there areas where we need to improve?

Counselling should be provided to parents following an apprehension and also in assisting with reunification issues when children are returned to their parents.

The Society needs to access housing for clients and should perhaps have its own housing resources.

"The CAS needs to create support groups for mothers who have mental health problems or advocate for other agencies to provide this service — there are none out there."

Staff need more knowledge about domestic violence.

"It would be good if the family had access to respite service after their children come home."

Question #3 - Are there services that we need to offer that we aren't offering?

CAS should improve its image — use posters like the United Way to demonstrate positive outcomes.

There should be groups for parents including clients and former clients who have had positive experiences.

Would be helpful to have faster access to services.

"Someone should be hired whose job it would be to research what services are available for any kind of problem across the city. The workers could use this person as a resource."

The Agency should be more open to client requests for a change of worker; sometimes, it's just not a good fit.

There should be more outreach to immigrant groups regarding expectations in this culture.

"We need more foster homes that can take sibling groups."

"We need to consider extended family placements more often."

"We need better arrangements for access visits — it is too impersonal to visit with your children in the CAS office."

Staff, Foster Parent and Volunteer Recognition 2002



Recognition night acknowledges long service by staff, foster parents and volunteers. When you do the math, the honourees have contributed **2,855** years of service to the Society!

Special thanks to the recognition committee for organizing a wonderful evening:

- Kim Dorion
- Sandy Lo
- Liane Niles
- Selina Tse
- Patricia Malcolm
- Mary Ward
- Melanie Persaud
- Mary Greco
- Doug Smith
- Jackie Dell

Additional thanks to the evening's volunteers:

- Denise Stahl
- Erica King
- Wilma Canon
- Edie Houle
- Carol Niven



The Mighty Bread got everyone dancing.



Joan & John Barker are recognized for 30 Years of Fostering!



Dr. Peggy Robertson honours Margaret Ann Pattison for 40 years of volunteer service.



Shirley James gives the goods on Richard Phillips' 45 Years of Service!



All Hail the Queen, Liang Ma (left) Valarie Hartling and Sharron Richards celebrate Queen Mary Hutchings' 30 years of service.



Linda Hofbauer shares the gossip on Sandy Lovell's 35 Years of Service!



Some of the crew from Long Term Care Services stop driving long enough to celebrate.



The CAS of Toronto "Supremes": Claire Burns, Joanne Quinn & Melody Wilson.



What a singer! Tina Turner double Karen Edwards and her backup singers.



Toronto CAS Celebrates Heart and Spirit Award Winners

By Melanie Persaud, Communications

On November 7th, at the Society's annual recognition party, this year's Heart and Spirit winners were celebrated.

The field of child welfare is a challenging place where you will regularly meet people who go above and beyond the call of duty. It's a field where we always seem to put the needs of others ahead of our own. The Heart and Spirit Award is intended to recognize those individuals who manage to make our CAS of Toronto community a special place despite the challenges of their individual role. Their activities make working, fostering or volunteering more enjoyable. They put our needs ahead of their own.



Andrew Levine

For the past seven years our volunteer recipient, **Andrew Levine**, has been a special friend to two brothers. He has been instrumental in advocating for both boys to receive the educational and psychosocial

supports they desperately need. Their caregiver has many challenges, and without Andrew these young brothers would have a considerably bleaker outlook. Through some staff turnover he has been the most consistent person in this family's life. He also finds time to participate in every volunteer event possible and every training opportunity so that he can lend his expertise to others. When we call, he answers, and his experience and mentoring have made a difference for many volunteers.



Betty Luff

For years our foster parent recipient, **Betty Luff**, has been quietly listening, supporting, encouraging and educating foster parents. She is easy to approach and easy to talk with. Foster parents know she will be there when they

need someone. She spends hours and hours each week supporting the Foster Parent Association communications group — a task she has done for more than 15 years while still managing to foster full time. She is dependable and loyal, and treats everyone with respect and dignity even through the most challenging times. If it has to be done and you need someone to do it, you can always count on Betty.



Angela Leishman

Our staff recipient, **Angela Leishman**, is well known despite the fact that her career has been spent at one branch. She is a major organizer of branch activities from parties to lottery pools to soccer matches. She is an ardent fund-raiser for many causes,

especially the Children's Aid Foundation. She has also taken on a supportive role with volunteers and our clients. Many of our clients, particularly the children, think that she is their worker, as she provides support and helps resolve many of their day-to-day problems. Her activities draw others together, making a better team, branch and Agency. Her generosity, enthusiasm, wit and humour positively impact everyone.

A special thanks to last year's recipients, Joy Hills, Stephen McCracken and Joan Berndt for selecting this year's recipients.

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual and Transgendered Services at Toronto CAS

By Sherri McMullen, Prevention Team

Are you working with a child or youth who may be questioning their sexual orientation or gender identity? Not sure what services are available? Maybe it's time to check out what is available at the **Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual and Transgendered Youth (LGBT) Program at the CAS of Toronto. This program is made possible in part through the generous funding of the Children's Aid Foundation.**



DID YOU KNOW?

Former LGBT youth in care tell us they did not feel safe to "come out" to staff and caregivers.

A disproportionately high number of LGBT youth who live on the street report having

previous involvement with child welfare. Toronto CAS has a residence through the **Life House Program**, specifically for young LGBT youth who are moving from foster care to independence.

The Toronto District School Board runs the **Triangle Program**, an off-site classroom for LGBT youth who do not feel safe and/or supported in mainstream classrooms. Toronto CAS has **38 policies** regarding LGBT youth which staff and foster parents are required to practise.

What is done at the LGBT youth program? Healthy Sexuality Training

This one-day training is mandatory for all new

direct service staff; we do the second half of the training on sexual orientation. Don't miss out!

The Stop, T.E.A.C.H. and Speak-OUT Project is designed to conduct anti-homophobia training in residential settings for staff and youth. The project works in partnership with Planned Parenthood of Toronto's T.E.A.C.H. program and receives generous funding from the Trillium Foundation as well as the Gay and Lesbian Appeal. The project is based on the concept of youth educating youth. Youth talk about homophobia and transphobia, as well as what it means to be a lesbian, gay, bi or trans youth. If you want to request a Speak-OUT workshop in a group home or program, or if you are a social worker and would like to make sure a workshop happens in the residence your youth is living in, call Stephanie Goudie at ext. 3059.

Life House Program

The Society has a group of residences for youth who are moving from foster care to independence. One of these homes has been designated for LGBT youth. Contact: Kim Dorion ext. 3258.

Consultations, Referrals, Resources and Youth Events

If you have any youth who are "out" or are questioning their sexual orientation, or you suspect they may be dealing with LGBT issues, let us know. We can provide consultations and information to staff care providers. As well, we can invite them to our events and help link them up with resources in the Agency and the community. Contact: Sherri McMullen ext. 3055.

Practice Guidelines

We are currently developing more specific guidelines for each area of the Agency about how to create a safe and supportive environment for LGB youth.

Evaluation Initiative

We are currently completing an evaluation to examine how well the Society has done in providing service for LGB youth since the Board policy "We Are Your Children Too" was approved in June 1995.

Transsexual/Transgendered (TS/TG) Youth Initiative

An advisory committee has been working to develop policy and practice guidelines for working with TS/TG youth and gender-variant children. This initiative is funded through the generous support of the Change Foundation.

LGBT visibility at Toronto CAS

- ▶ PRIDE BBQ took place in June 2002, with awards presented to youth who had made a contribution to the LGBT program
- ▶ Posters and stickers are available to staff and volunteers to display on their agendas or in their work area
- ▶ PRIDE week activities and community partnerships

Volunteer Opportunities

Opportunities are available for all age groups. The Speak-OUT Project is currently looking for youth volunteers to facilitate workshops, as well as adult volunteers to accompany and support the youth.

Research Highlights

By Dr. Deborah Goodman, Quality and Systems Support

As you may know, the Quality and Systems Support Department (QSS) is a relatively new department at Toronto CAS. This six-person unit was formed in 2000 and is headed up by Brian O'Connor.



The “Quality” element of QSS refers to the unit’s duties in monitoring, evaluating and providing feedback on Toronto CAS performance, and promoting improvement and planning in a number of areas.

Illustrations of some QSS “Quality” responsibilities include:

- ▶ providing lead co-ordination and support to internal and external service audits, including implementing any corrective actions identified with the audits
- ▶ analyzing service activity for funding submissions and forecasting future service volumes
- ▶ developing and integrating an Agency-wide quality assurance framework
- ▶ organizing and providing support for the Agency’s Long-Range Plans
- ▶ co-ordinating all the research and evaluation projects the Society is involved in, past present and future!

The “Systems Support” function of QSS includes identifying and addressing system needs; providing ongoing training, consultation and user support to front-line staff; and developing plans to implement new systems and improvements.

It is not that these tasks are new to the Agency; it is just that instead of being dispersed throughout a number of departments, they are now housed under one unit — QSS.

The research the Agency is involved in is key to answering the important questions about the

work we do. For example, *are we doing the right things?* These are the outcome measures that look at what impact we are having. *Are we doing things right?* These are the process measures that look at how well we do things. Listed below are just a few of the many research projects the Agency is working on. Some studies are within the Society and others are collaborative efforts that may span regional, provincial and national arenas.

ONGOING RESEARCH

Family Group Conferencing (2000 – ongoing)

Sandra Goranson (Toronto CAS), along with representatives from fellow agency partners Toronto Catholic CAS, George Hull and Etobicoke Children’s Centre, continues to evaluate this five-year old intervention to improve service outcomes with clients. The Family Group Conferencing study commenced in 1999 and was first evaluated through the Centre for Evaluation in the Human Services, Ryerson University. Presently, Sandra Cuning, George Hull Centre, is the lead researcher for the project.

NEW RESEARCH

Youth Relationship Project (2002 - 2003)

Robert Ferguson is the Toronto CAS lead in this Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) pilot study. Principal Investigators Drs. David Wolfe (University of Western Ontario) and Christine Wekerle (CAMH) are attempting to understand the change and treatment components in the Youth Relationships Project (YRP), which is a prevention program that shows youths’ violent behaviour can be unlearned. Although YRP has been run with teens for the past ten years (CAS of Toronto’s involvement goes back five years), this study is hoping to find out what makes the YRP an effective prevention and health promotion programme for at-risk youth.

RECENTLY COMPLETED

The LGBTT Evaluation (2000-2002)

Sharron Richards oversees this CAS of Toronto study by Dr. Francis Hare (School of Child and Youth Care, Ryerson University). The two-year study evaluated the implementation and impact of the Society’s LGBTT policies on provision of services for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual and transgendered youth in care. The final report is pending.

PROPOSED

Evaluation of the Reliability, Predictive Validity and Impact of the Ontario Risk Assessment Tool (2003 – 2006)

Drs. James Barber and Nico Trocme (University of Toronto, Faculty of Social Work) and Dr. Deborah Goodman (Toronto CAS) applied for a 2003 Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) Grant. If approved, the \$150,000 three-year grant will examine the psychometric properties and impact on child welfare practice of Ontario’s mandated risk tool.

Research Profile

By Dr. Deborah Goodman, Quality and Systems Support

In every *Communicate*, one Toronto CAS staff member’s research efforts, interests and initiatives are profiled. This month our research profile is of Ann Fitzpatrick, member of the community development and prevention team, North Branch.



Ann has worked at the Society since 1986 and has been a community worker with the community development prevention program since 1987. Through her job, Ann has striven to improve the housing

conditions of the families, children and youth the Society serves. Her work involves advocating for policy reform, representing CAS of Toronto on community housing coalitions and some research. Most recently, Ann participated in a Toronto CAS research team that included Bruce Leslie (Toronto Catholic CAS), Debbie Schatia (CAS of Toronto), Dr. David Hulchanski and student Shirley Chau (both from the University of Toronto, Faculty of Social Work). The research involved a 1992 study, which was replicated in 2000, to examine the impact of housing issues on Toronto CAS children entering care. The findings underscored the reality that “housing is a children’s issue”, as housing is a factor in one of five cases where a child has come into the care of the Society and is often a reason for delaying a child’s reunification with parents.

Ann’s research and advocacy work is fuelled by the housing issues that social workers call her about on a daily basis, in their efforts to find a casework solution. However, all too often the problems require systemic reforms. The housing study results help make the case for these reforms at the municipal, provincial or federal level. “I use research in my work regularly. I support action research that doesn’t sit on a shelf. The child welfare role is so unique; workers visit families in their homes and do risk assessments including the condition of the environment. I support research as a way to tell the real story about the conditions that families, children and youth face in order to push for changes that will make a difference,” says Fitzpatrick. The Child Welfare League of Canada published a book of Canadian social work research in 1995, including the 1992 housing study. Congratulations Ann on not only completing the research, but also using the research to make a difference!

If you know someone who you think should be profiled about the research they are doing, please contact Deborah Goodman at ext. 3663.

Health and Safety Matters

By Corrine McDonald, Human Resources and Jason Walker, Intake

Greetings from the Society's Central Joint Health and Safety Committee. We are the management and union co-chairs from the local Joint Health & Safety Committees (JHSC) in the Society. Our job is to act as a coordinating body for the local JHSCs and develop and recommend health and safety policies, procedures and standards for the Society.

Within each publication of *Communicate*, you will find information regarding workplace health and safety issues from helpful tips to information about new health and safety protocols.

Worker safety and emergency protocols

In the month of January, the Worker Safety and Emergency Protocols that outline standardized responses for all staff across the Society were rolled out. Highlights include an Emergency Code System to alert staff of emergencies in their respective workplaces and formal protocols for dealing with problems ranging from violent clients to fire evacuations. This information is available in easy-to-use handbooks. By now, supervisors will have distributed them to you. Ongoing discussions, both in team meetings and individual supervisions, will assist you to incorporate these safety requirements into current practice. Please review these policies and procedures to become familiar and comfortable with Society expectations before an incident occurs.

Accident and incident report and investigation

Another new and exciting change is the online Accident and Incident Report and Investigation Program (AIRIP), replacing the Safety and Security Incident Reports. Any staff member involved in an accident or a near-accident (an incident) that affects their health and safety is required to report the incident to their supervisor who will submit an Employee Incident Form found in Lotus Notes. Incidents may include such things as violence, threats or injury to you, motor vehicle accidents and office mishaps. It is your obligation under the Occupational Health & Safety Act to report all such incidents or hazards. It is important to report incidents for your protection and to provide statistics and information so that workplace hazards can be corrected to prevent further occurrences. Also included in this database is the new Community

Alert System, which allows us to identify addresses within the areas we serve that are of safety concern to workers. This can provide you with additional information to make appropriate safety plans such as partnering with a colleague and/or including police assistance when attending areas of concern.

Joint responsibility

Health and safety need to be a priority for all of us within the Society. The local Health and Safety Committees in your workplace and the Central Committee are committed, but we can't do it without you. Please feel free to contact your local branch committee co-chairs listed below with questions, comments or concerns

Joint Central Health & Safety Committees:

Management	Union	Location
Corinne McDonald (Co-Chair)	Jason Walker (Co-Chair)	Central
Melody Wilson	Noeleen Peterson	North
Ron Smith	Kelly Rose-Hurst	Toronto West
Kathy Taunton	Anna Maria Giordano	Scarborough
Heidi Kiang	Arati Nair	Etobicoke
David Fleming	Robert Ferguson	Charles St. Complex
Marc MacDonald	Erica King	Internal Resources
Noel Clarke	Pina DiRuscio	Toronto East
Richard Kwan	Martha Turcaloro	625 Church St.
Christina Otchere	Julie Sturge	45 Charles St.

Health and safety incident statistics

Using our "old" system, we collected the following information about workplace accidents and incidents in 2002. We think this is important information for you to have so that you can take necessary precautions.

In the past year, we made 39 reports to the Worker's Safety and Insurance Board. Most of these injuries requiring attention by a health care practitioner and/or time off work were the result of motor vehicle accidents and falls.

In the same period, we recorded 43 incidents or near misses. The majority of these were the result of client actions.

The committee believes Health and Safety incidents are underreported. So please help us help you by reporting every workplace (which is everywhere you do your job) incident that affects or may affect your safety and/or your health.

TIP OF THE MONTH

Drive carefully... you may be preoccupied or in a hurry... and that could be dangerous for your safety when behind the wheel.

CUPE Local 2316 Update

By Alan Choi, Children's Service

The Local had its Annual General Meeting (AGM) at Whistler's Restaurant on November 13. The members met as a whole for the first time since coming to an agreement with the Society after summer negotiations. Following a delicious dinner, the members celebrated this achievement and thanked the negotiations team for their hard work and dedication. Everyone was very proud of how well the team worked with management to come to an agreement that both the union and management are pleased with. Many of the members even took to the floor to speak individually and to thank the team and recognize how much effort went into this round of negotiations

The membership also had its yearly elections for the members of the union executive. Returning this year is: Valarie Hartling (President), Eileen Laffey (Service Delivery Chair), Paula Dixon (Recording Secretary) and Alan Choi (Education and Communication Chair).

The new members of the executive, who bring some great energy and enthusiasm, are: Aubrey Gonsalves (Vice-President), John Ricciuti (Chief-Steward), Molly Barnes (Special Projects Co-ordinator), Jason Walker (Health and Safety Chair), Sean Martin (Social Issues Chair) and Tracy Ford (Chief Steward, Part-time workers).

There were also bittersweet goodbyes and thank yous to outgoing executives Tamara Yearwood, Suzanne LeRoy, Ron Balazsi, Dave Lewis and Ian Somerville. Special thanks to Ian Somerville who worked with great diligence and care for many, many years as the Health and Safety Chair. A short time after the AGM, Chantal Lee received a social work supervisor position, so she has resigned her position as Secretary-Treasurer. In her place, Bev Newman has stepped up to the plate — welcome Bev!



Front row: Aubrey Gonsalves (Vice-President), Molly Barnes (Special Projects Co-ordinator), Valarie Hartling (President), Tracy Ford (Chief Steward, Part-time workers), Chantal Lee (Former Secretary-Treasurer).
Back Row: Paula Dixon (Recording Secretary), Jason Walker (Health and Safety Chair), Sean Martin (Social Issues Chair), Eileen Laffey (Service Delivery Chair), Alan Choi (Education and Communication Chair).

Christmas at Etobicoke Branch

By Angela Leishman, Administrative Assistant, Etobicoke

December was a very busy month for Etobicoke Branch. The annual Etobicoke Branch Staff Christmas Party took place on December 4 at the Mandarin Restaurant on the Queensway, in Etobicoke. What a success! With a 95 per cent turn-out by staff, it was a full house. The staff at the restaurant said everyone was very well behaved, and in fact some of the other patrons at the restaurant complimented us on our singing and infectious laughter (especially Wendy Gordon-Steenburgh). It was the best party yet. Everyone had a fabulous meal and ate until they dropped. There were lovely wrapped gifts for everyone, plus while having your photo taken by Santa (aka David Laird) you were given a lottery ticket. Sandra Goranson won the 50/50 draw. To top off the festivities, a generous donation by Christine Vasquelin's husband meant everyone won a door prize/game prize. The Christmas party committee, headed by the trusty leader elf Mary Greco, was comprised of Christine Vasquelin, Edie Houle, Meeta Baines, Laura Chabot, Heather Periard-King, Mike Dineen and Angela Leishman. Only one question remains, how are we going to top this one next year?

Still staying on the theme of the Christmas/holiday season, Etobicoke branch had a "Decorate a Door for Christmas" contest. The preparations for door decorating started in early December with Dianne Ternan's team leading the way. By judgement day, December 20, 2002, His Honour Judge Phil Howe and Her Honour Judge Peggy Robertson were walking about the halls with clipboard in hand, seriously taking notes and talking in hushed voices...not even the mice could hear their comments!

Everyone was called to reception, where Her Honour Judge Robertson made some very interesting comments about all the doors (from reindeer droppings to turtle toes) before she and Judge Howe announced the winner – Sandra Goranson's team door!



Judges Howe and Robertson honour the winners of the Decorate a Door contest. This door was a parody of the song, "The Twelve Days of Christmas" ... only it was the Twelve Days of Christmas the Society Gave to Me! From left to right: Phil Howe, George Asare, Angela Leishman, Lynsey Dale, Sandra Goranson and Peggy Robertson.

February is Black History Month

By Ken Sosa, Community Worker

For ten years the CAS of Toronto has celebrated Black History Month (BHM) in February. The Society recognizes that African-Canadian youth, like young persons of other backgrounds, need to understand the social forces that have shaped their community and, by extension, their identities. They need to be aware of the accomplishments of their ancestors and to have appropriate role models.

For the past nine years, the prime focus of Society activity for BHM was the staging of a cultural evening that featured singers, dancers, poets and food. This event was open to all sectors of the Society including the children/youth/families we serve, foster parents and staff.

On Friday, February 7th, a Black History cultural event for youth took place at the Ralph Thornton Community Centre. It focused on Black History and Inventions and on "Growing up Black at the CAS of Toronto". The presentations and responses from former Agency wards (businesswoman, lawyer, teacher) on their lives and experiences were definitely the highlight of the evening. As well, we learned from Terence Jackson (self-taught historian and collector of black artifacts) through his extensive displays and passionate presentation about neglected pieces of black history, including bits and pieces on black inventions and inventors.

Seventy-five people, the majority of whom are youth served by the Society and their foster parents, were in attendance at the event organized by the Society's Black Education Awareness Committee. It was emceed by the entertaining stand-up comic Jean Paul.

Notable Black Inventors

Elijah McCoy, born in Colchester, Ontario, whose inventions for oiling train and factory engines were so good people refused to buy imitations of his work in 1872. Instead they insisted on having "The Real McCoy".

Sarah Goode was the first African-American woman to receive a U.S. patent. Patent #322,177 was issued on July 14, 1885 for a cabinet bed. Sarah Goode was the owner of a Chicago furniture store.

Charles Drew researched blood plasma and transfusions in New York City. It was during his work at Columbia University that he made his discoveries relating to the preservation of blood. Charles Drew's system for the storing of blood plasma (blood bank) revolutionized the medical profession. Dr. Drew also established the American Red Cross blood bank.

Why a Black History Month?

In the 1950s, the Canadian Negro Women's association brought the celebration of BMH to Toronto. By 1978, the Ontario Black History Society, whose mandate includes the promotion of Black history and education, successfully petitioned the City of Toronto to have the celebration formally recognized.

The reason for this recognition is for the *affirmation* and the *expansion of the awareness* of the contributions made by Blacks in Canada.

African-Canadian children and youth need to be aware of the accomplishments of their ancestors. They need to have role models and they need to understand the social forces that have shaped and influenced their community and their identities as a means of feeling connected to their education and life experiences.

Non-African Canadians need to have a balanced sense of Black historical contributions. There is a need to know the history of Canada that includes *all* the founding/pioneering experiences in order to

work from an actual reality rather than a virtual reality.

All North Americans benefit from being exposed to Black History and Culture.

As a group that has roots dating back to 1603, as a group that has defended, cleared, built and farmed this country, the presence of Black people in Canada is well established but not well known. It is not well known because the involvement and contributions of Blacks in our society have not been well recorded in our history books.

The celebration of BHM is an attempt to *include* the achievement of people of African descent in history – it is the attempt to make the teachings of history complete.

All histories need to be known and *all* voices need to be expressed in Canada. This is particularly significant for a nation that expresses pride in its diversity. Once this expression is translated into reality there will be no need for BHM.

Reprinted with the permission of the Ontario Black History Society.

Congratulations Allan!



Bruce Rivers praises Allan Brand on his 22 years of service and dedication to the Society at his retirement party held on September 12, 2002.

Toronto CAS Gets New Resource System

By Melanie Persaud, Communications

In yet another example of technology assisting service, the CAS of Toronto is about to launch its new Resource System. This new programming application places all the “need to know” information about every children’s residence and foster home the Society uses at the fingertips of the user. “Now users have the power to search for placements by name, access the placement history and the current details of the program,” says Samuel Lee, director of information services. Placement resources can be identified through a single point of entry at the touch of a button, instead of having to access the updated information through a variety of different workers.

The system will also yield benefits for the placement team, who will be able to identify vacancies among our foster homes more easily by

age group, gender and other factors like homes that can accommodate sibling groups, specific cultures and language. “Teamwork will be easier because current information will be more readily available,” says Mary Ward, supervisor, foster care resource services, who is also part of the new resource system development team.

Workers will be able to search for a specific resource and to call up a map and directions on how to get there. All the workers with children in the home, or who support the foster parents associated with the home, can be identified. The system will also allow online input by foster care resource workers about current placement specifications; it will allow for easy integration into other CAS of Toronto systems and hold information necessary for resource payment.

This version of the resource system has been in development since the mid-90s, but was not implemented because of its complexity and pre-existing workload issues. “All in all, the new system will make things easier for the workers and ultimately that’s better for the kids,” says Ward.

CAS of Toronto Computer Systems Work Gains International Recognition

By Brian O’Connor, Quality Systems and Support and Kara Campbell, Communications

In December of 2002, Stephanie Leung, systems and quality assurance specialist in the quality and systems support department, shared details of the Agency’s computer systems work with two groups of service and academic professionals in Hong Kong. Leung initially presented *How Computerized Recording Systems Work: A Case Study on Systems Developed by the CAS of Toronto* to 30 social workers and administrators at the Chinese University during a full-day seminar. The main focus here was to explain how the CAS of Toronto’s client information system works from a user’s

perspective. Topics for discussion included how computerization of client information supports best practice in service, helps standardize assessment and service planning, and strengthens accountability efforts and public policy development, to name just a few.

In speaking about her invitation to present at the Chinese University, Leung says, “It demonstrates how the use of information technology is quickly spreading throughout the public sector globally, and that its use is becoming more and more an important part of every service professional’s work.”

Leung’s presentation at the University was so well received that she was immediately invited to repeat the workshop for the Information Services branch of the Chinese government in Hong Kong, which is similar to our Ontario Ministry of Community, Family and Children’s Services. Thirty government officials, who are currently involved in their own process to develop a client information systems, attended this presentation. The feedback from this session was extremely positive also, and spokespersons expressed the opinion that the CAS of Toronto’s service systems appear to be “very sophisticated” and “particularly well conceptualized”.

“This experience has suggested to me that our computer development efforts in recent years, for example with recording systems in Family Service, have moved us ahead of many others in the public sector and I think this is something we can be very proud of,” adds Leung.



Stephanie Leung presents “How Computerized Recording Systems Work” in Hong Kong.

Corporations Care

cont. from pg.2



William Sullivan opens boxes of donated shoes.

According to William Sullivan, one of the family law volunteers, who along with Karin Rinas and Kim Wilmot organized the drive, this space means “the distribution of shoes can take place throughout the year. Whenever a company comes with boxes of shoes, we can take that donation and give it to a charity.”

A whopping \$190,156 worth of gifts were received by the Society for Holiday 2002. On behalf of the thousands of children and youth who have received gifts through generous donations the CAS of Toronto says THANK YOU!

The CAS of Toronto is always looking for gift donations year-round. The following are popular items that are always requested by children and youth:

- ▶ Stuffed animals
- ▶ Small appliances for youth who are moving towards independence
- ▶ Sports equipment
- ▶ Gift certificates for books, music and stores like Zellers or Wal-Mart
- ▶ Movie passes
- ▶ Food vouchers
- ▶ Clothes for children aged 8-21 years

The Society accepts only new items. If you would like more information about making a gift donation, please call 416-924-4646 and ask for Volunteer Services. Monetary donations can be made to the Children’s Aid Foundation at 416-923-0924.

Children's Aid Foundation

IOF Foresters Support the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect

By Pat Kemp, Children's Aid Foundation

The Foundation was delighted to receive a generous donation of \$5,000 from the IOF Foresters Prevention of Child Abuse fund. These funds were designated to support the Family Resource Centre program at the Children's Aid Society of Toronto.

We are very grateful to Eleanor Van Evans, Past Chief Ranger of IOF Court Trillium (pictured below with Andrea Orr of the Foundation), who facilitated this grant.

Eleanor has a long history of association with the Children's Aid Society of Toronto as one of its most loyal volunteers for more than 40 years! Over the years, Eleanor has done everything from infant stimulation, driving children to camp and delivering parcels at Christmas to organizing a group of knitters at the IOF Court Trillium who produce everything from toques and scarves to baby outfits (in great quantities) for children every Christmas. Eleanor is also actively involved each October with the Purple Ribbon Campaign, which raises awareness of child abuse and neglect.

She sounds like someone we could use at the Foundation - but then we wouldn't want to steal her away from the Society. Thank you, Eleanor!



Andrea Orr, Manager of Grants and Fund Development at the Foundation, accepting a cheque from Eleanor Van Evans, Past Chief Ranger, IOF Court Trillium.

A Holiday Miracle

By Kelly Elliot, Children's Aid Foundation



Mike and Christine of 97.3 EZ Rock chat it up on air!

On November 22nd and 23rd 2002, 97.3 EZ Rock, in partnership with the Manulife Centre, broadcasted live for 24 hours to raise money for the Children's Aid Foundation's "Give a Child a Future" fund. The response from the Toronto community was incredible. In just 24 hours the radio-a-thon raised a whopping \$103,588 for children and youth.

All proceeds from the "Give a Child a Future" fund go directly to providing special opportunities for high-risk children that will have a lasting effect on their well-being, such as camp, tutoring, educational support, art, music and sport lessons.

This special fund is based on the premise that all children – including those touched by violence, neglect and poverty – deserve the right to be treated equally and to have

every opportunity to achieve their full potential.

Highlights from the day included a holiday tree-lighting ceremony, Victorian carolling and the Toronto Mass Gospel Choir. The day was particularly magical thanks to the many individuals who told their personal, heart-warming stories of adoption, foster care, volunteerism and much more.

Special thanks to everyone at the Children's Aid Society of Toronto and the Children's Aid Foundation who helped make this event a huge success.



From left to right: Philip R. Evans, Children's Aid Foundation Board Chairman; Brenda Elliot, Ontario's Minister of Community, Family and Children's Services; Sheilagh Johnson, Children's Aid Foundation Executive Director; and Bruce Rivers, CAS of Toronto Executive Director enjoy the Foundation's Annual Recognition Dinner on October 2,