



# UNITY

FACS NIAGARA  
**ANNUAL REPORT**  
2021-2022

[facsniagara.on.ca](https://facsniagara.on.ca)



# UNITE

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# FACS NIAGARA BOARD OF DIRECTORS, 2021-22

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Coming together in purpose and action. >>

# BETTER TOGETHER



## A Message from Board President and Executive Director

As an agency that exists to strengthen the health, well-being, and safety of children, youth, and families in Niagara, we understand the critical need of having positive relationships with those we serve.

The teachings of Indigenous peoples in Canada remind us that all things are connected in some way. Chief Dr. Robert Joseph of the Gwawaenuk First Nation in British Columbia crystalizes the need for us to relate to one another in a good way by saying “let us find a way to belong to this time and place together. Our future, and the well-being of all our children, rests with the kind of relationships we build today.”

As we work towards our future, we have been on a journey towards unity, which is a coming together in both purpose and action. Through our work, we continually seek unity with those we serve, our partners, and our community.

Through the pages of this report, you will see how FACS has taken action to advance our commitment to unity.



Board President, Brian Minard and Executive Director, Anna Bozza.

## Coming together to weather wave after wave of the pandemic

COVID has been with us for more than two long years. While we have learned to effectively adapt to the changing conditions, the pandemic continues to present significant challenges.

In December, the Omicron variant emerged, which proved to be the most virulent strain of COVID to date. By January 2022, additional safety measures were implemented to reduce the spread of the virus. The impact of the pandemic on our agency during this time placed a great strain on our operations.

However, the FACS team demonstrated tremendous resilience. Teammates assumed larger workloads and engaged in creative problem-solving. In one example of how they cared for one another, some team members offered to support their teammates remotely while also battling the virus. It is difficult to imagine a more powerful example of team unity.



Our gratitude for this level of commitment to Niagara's most vulnerable is immeasurable. Supporting the well-being of this incredible team of professionals remains a priority into the new fiscal year and we will look to expand the supports we offer through our Joint Wellness Committee in partnership with our CUPE Local.

## The Niagara Indigenous Partnership Service Initiative

There is a need for a change in child welfare practices. The harms inflicted upon Indigenous communities and the current overrepresentation of Indigenous children in Ontario's foster care system propelled FACS to enhance our commitment to honoring the Indigenous right to self determination.

The roots of this work can be traced back more than a decade to the development a partnership between FACS Niagara and the Niagara Chapter of Native Women. It began with a vision of working collaboratively to see Indigenous children thrive, which expanded and evolved over time to become a model of child welfare service delivery.

The model brings together FACS Niagara staff and Indigenous Advocates from our partner organizations, who named themselves the Unity Team. The team works through a collaborative, solution focused decision-making process that provides support to families through admission prevention strategies.

In the year since its inception, Indigenous children and youth in Niagara have benefitted greatly from this unique collaboration. Please see pages 11-12 for more information.

Supporting Indigenous communities in Niagara is an important aspect of the agency's equity work, which continues through our Joint Equity, Diversity, and Honouring Identity Committee. This dedicated committee helps ensure a more equitable and welcoming agency for everyone.

## Extending our Gratitude

We would like to express our most heartfelt thanks to the following groups for helping to advance our ongoing journey to unity:

- Our Niagara community for their ongoing support and partnership.
- Our community partners. Particularly the Niagara Chapter of Native Women, the Fort Erie Native Friendship Centre, and the Niagara Regional Native Centre. Thank you for placing your trust in us.
- Our partners in education, who have continued to provide innovative ways to keep children and youth engaged in their learning.
- Our foster families. Your work is so inspiring that all FACS Niagara foster families were nominated for a 2022 Community Impact Award, and received a special certificate of recognition for everything you do to make Niagara a better place.
- Our volunteers who have endured many stops and starts due to the pandemic. Your support means the world to our families.
- Our union partners at CUPE Local 2328. Partnering together on our joint committees ensures we are serving the needs of our entire organization.
- Our generous donors. The financial support you provide supports the mental, social, and physical wellbeing of children and youth in Niagara – allowing them to pursue their dreams unhindered.
- The dedicated team at FACS. Everyone at our agency plays a critical role in supporting our community. Your expertise, compassion, and care lifts our entire community up.

We look forward to our continued journey together, unified as we support and strengthen our community.

Sincerely,

*Brian Minard*  
President of the Board

*Anna Bozza*  
Executive Director

# 'FORGET ME NOT'

**CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN CARE DAY**  
**SATURDAY, MAY 14**  
**FACS ST. CATHARINES OFFICE**



Debi Anderson (above) and Megan Breton (right).







# FACS NIAGARA

Our Mission, Our Vision and Our Values. >>



# WHO WE ARE

## OUR MISSION

To protect, support and strengthen the lives of children, youth, adults and families.

## OUR VISION

A community where children, youth, adults and families achieve their full potential in a safe environment.

## OUR VALUES

- We are Caring
- We are Respectful
- We are Collaborative
- We act with Integrity
- We are Accountable

# WHAT WE DO

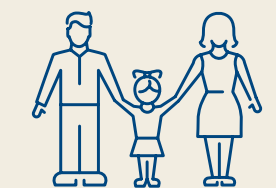
## FACS NIAGARA PROVIDES:



**CHILD PROTECTION SERVICES**



**FAMILY AND INDIVIDUAL COUNSELLING**



**FOSTERING**



**ADOPTION AND KINSHIP SERVICES**



**DAYCARE**





# HERE TO HELP

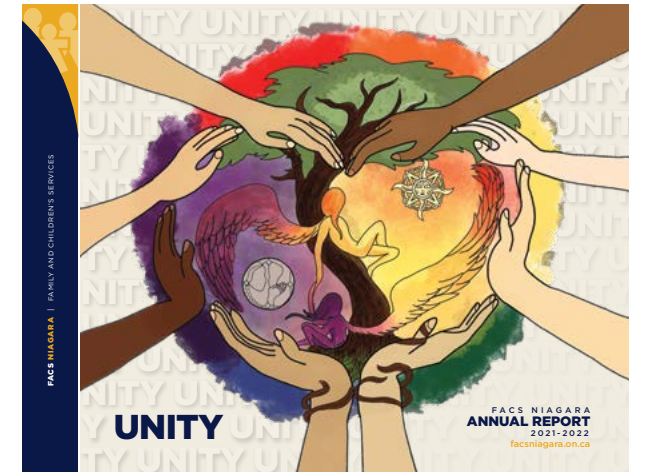
Our team is committed to serving children, youth, and families in Niagara. >>



## On the Cover

This year's annual report cover was designed by Carol, a young Indigenous woman receiving service from FACS Niagara. One of her passions is creating digital art and the agency is deeply appreciative of her considerable talent.

This layered design is meant to symbolize unity. It is evocative of the yin-yang symbol, showing how seemingly opposite forces are in fact complementary, interconnected, and interdependent. The two figures in the design cross boundaries and hold hands to emphasize the connection and symbolize peace and unity. Finally, Carol notes that the hands surrounding the design form a heart, "holding the world together as one."



## Providing Child Welfare Services to Strengthen Families



**6,116**

REFERRALS RELATED TO CHILDREN IN NEED OF PROTECTION



**2,701**

CHILD PROTECTION INVESTIGATIONS COMPLETED



**3,597**

FAMILIES RECEIVING ONGOING CHILD PROTECTION SERVICES



**5,156**

CHILDREN AND YOUTH SERVED



**700+**

FAMILIES RECEIVING ONGOING SERVICES AND SUPPORTS AT ANY ONE TIME



**398**

CHILDREN IN CARE (MONTHLY AVERAGE)



**29**

TOTAL NUMBER OF YOUTH SERVED 18 YEARS AND OLDER WHO RETURNED TO FACS FOR SERVICES



# THE UNITY TEAM



FACS Niagara Members of the Unity Team.

FACS Niagara has partnered with Indigenous communities in the peninsula for more than a decade to provide culturally appropriate supports to Indigenous families and reduce the number of Indigenous children in care.

In Ontario and Niagara, there continues to be an overrepresentation of Indigenous children in the foster care system. With this work, FACS is taking action to effect change.

Through collaborations with Indigenous partners, FACS identified an opportunity to enhance this work and embed it into a service model to create lasting change in the way the agency serves Indigenous communities in Niagara.

Following an application by FACS, the Ministry of Children, Community, and Social Services funded this initiative through a \$230,000 grant for the 2021-22 fiscal year.

This model brings together a team of FACS Niagara staff along with Indigenous Advocates from the Niagara Chapter of Native Women, the Fort Erie Native Friendship Centre, and the Niagara Regional Native Centre. The model advances Indigenous self-determination through collaborative decision making between FACS and its partners, who work together on admission prevention initiatives and providing culturally appropriate supports to strengthen families.

Given its focus on coming together to support families, all partners determined the name of this initiative would be the Unity Team.



## Early Successes

In the year since its inception, the Unity Team has created a profound and positive difference by working to keep Indigenous families together and addressing the issue of overrepresentation.

- 128 Indigenous families were served by the Unity Team
- 56 children receiving service were prevented from being admitted into care
- There are 40 fewer Indigenous children in care since January 2020
- The Unity Team engaged in 78 alternative to court interventions, representing over 2,400 hours of work
- There have been no readmissions of children being served by the Unity Team

## Next Steps

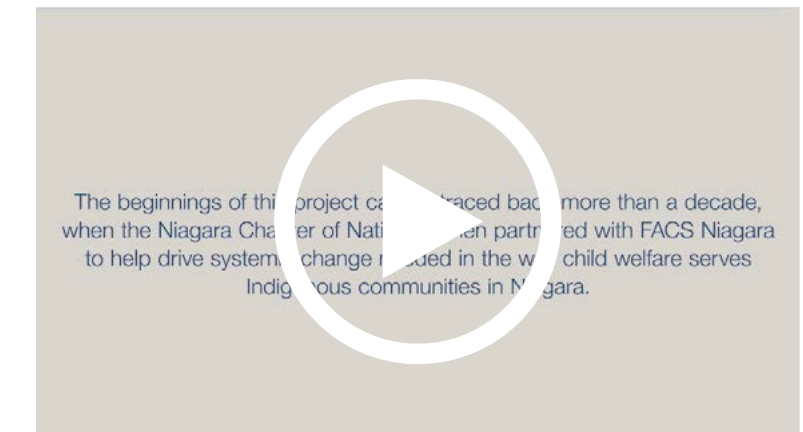
In April, FACS and the Indigenous partners were invited to present the results of the Unity Team Prototype to representatives from the Ministry.

Broadcast to the Ministry from the Niagara Regional Native Centre in Niagara-on-the-Lake, all partners shared their experiences working together. Reflecting on the impact of preventing Indigenous children from coming into care, Wendy Sturgeon, Executive Director of the Niagara Chapter of Native Women said, "the savings in human dignity and respect, in doing the morally right thing, are far reaching."

## Watch

We invite you to watch the following video to see how the FACS Members of the Unity Team share their thoughts on working together in a good way.

**PLEASE CLICK ON THE IMAGE BELOW** to view the video, or paste the following link into your browser: <https://vimeo.com/704172603>







How the FACS Team came together for the Niagara community. >>

# STORIES OF UNITY

## >> Foster Parents

The caring and compassion of FACS' foster parents has never been more evident than during the COVID pandemic.

In one particularly moving story, an infant in care tested positive for the COVID virus just before the holidays in December. With medically vulnerable people in the household, the infant was unable to remain at the home she was placed in.

To prevent the spread of the virus, a hotel room was arranged for the required isolation period, but someone was needed to provide care. Immediately, foster parent Julie Johns volunteered to help.

"Even while she wasn't well, she was still such a sweet baby," said Julie. "Every time she would look at you with that smile, you couldn't help but feel that you would do anything for her."

Julie and the baby spent the holidays in isolation, with supportive visits from her husband and FACS Resource Worker Tracy Nickel who brought toys and other fun items for the baby.

Thanks to the loving care she received, the infant fully recovered and is a happy, healthy little girl.

**PLEASE CLICK ON THE IMAGE BELOW** to watch Julie's story, or paste the following link into your browser: <https://vimeo.com/670733640>



## Going Above and Beyond

Sometimes people refer to the support they receive from social services agencies as a 'lifesaver.' For one adult client of the agency, that is literally true!

Jane Bryan is an Adult Protective Services Worker with FACS, and she supports individuals with developmental disabilities living independently in the community, and those who are progressing towards independent living.

On a visit with a client, she discovered the woman unresponsive with little signs of life. Jane immediately sprang into action and began performing CPR until paramedics could arrive. Jane performed CPR for nearly 10 minutes.

"The adrenaline really kicked in. It almost became an out-of-body experience, because you just know that you're there to do what you need to do," said Jane.

The situation was precarious. According to the Emergency Medical Journal, the survival rate of CPR for out-of-hospital cardiac events is just 12%. However, the client was fortunate to be among the percentage of those who survive and fully recovered in hospital.

**PLEASE CLICK ON THE IMAGE BELOW** to watch Jane's story, or paste the following link into your browser: <https://vimeo.com/690958567>





## The Family Counselling Centre

As a multiservice agency, FACS offers a variety of programs and services to strengthen the lives of people living in Niagara. Located within FACS' St. Catharines office, the Family Counselling Centre (FCC) provides therapy services to individuals, couples, and families.

For many, counselling can be life-changing, helping people to process past trauma, overcome barriers, and move forward in a positive way.

Meet Sylvana. She hopes her story can inspire others to take that first step towards healing.

Sylvana was receiving traditional talk therapy, but her therapist noticed that she had a real passion for music which she began to incorporate into her sessions.

Through this therapy, Sylvana has noticed a marked improvement in her mental health and her life. "I'm so grateful to the FCC for helping me to get to this point in my journey," said Sylvana. "Be patient, be gentle and you'll see the flowers blooming in your life, just like I'm starting to see, so I'm so excited."

Special thanks go to the United Way, which supports the FCC's fee subsidy program, helping to make counselling affordable to all.

### PLEASE CLICK ON THE IMAGE BELOW

to watch Sylvana's story, or paste the following link into your browser: <https://vimeo.com/712933027/048e9a8e7a>



## Children in Extended Society Care (CESC) Review

The care and well-being of our children and youth is our most important priority. The Ministry's Annual CESC review shows how far the FACS team is willing to go to support the young people in our care.

The agency's average score on the review was 97.7%, with adoption probation scores at 100% across the board.

One reviewer noted that it was the best report she had ever seen and that FACS could not have done any better. Another noted that FACS Niagara gets a gold star most years, but this was our best review ever.

The agency's success on this review was the result of a true team effort. Every single person at FACS owns a piece of this achievement. Their work changes lives – and evidenced by this review, they have made an incredibly positive difference in the lives of the families, children, and youth we serve.







# BY THE NUMBERS

## FACS NIAGARA



**93%**

CHILDREN SERVED  
IN THEIR HOMES



**25**

COMPLETED  
ADOPTIONS



**175**

NEW OUTLOOKS  
& BEGINNINGS  
(YOUTH UNDER 18)



CHILDCARE PROGRAMS  
SUPPORTED

**34** CHILDREN AT  
BUNTING AND  
**56** CHILDREN AT  
WESTERN HILL



RESOURCE CONSULTANTS  
PROVIDED SUPPORT TO

**54** CHILDREN

## FAMILY COUNSELLING CENTRE



**6,033**

SCHEDULED  
COUNSELLING SESSIONS



CARING DADS

**23**

FAMILIES



FAMILY GROUP  
COUNSELLING

**52**

CONFERENCES

CHILD  
WITNESS

**53**

UNIQUE CLIENTS

VIOLENCE  
AGAINST WOMEN

**625**

SESSIONS

FOSTER KIN  
SUPPORT SERVICES

**23**

FAMILIES

**478**

UNIQUE YOUTH  
(UP TO 17 YEARS)

**1,581**

UNIQUE  
CLIENTS

## UNITED WAY FUNDED PROGRAMS



WALK-IN

**163**

SESSIONS



FEE SUBSIDY

**727**

SESSIONS



CHILD ADVOCACY

**541**

SESSIONS



# FACS NIAGARA FOUNDATION

Niagara is a caring community. Throughout this second pandemic year, they have stood together with the children, youth, and families being served by FACS through their generous donations. >>



This support has provided stability for families and enriching experiences for children and youth.

The Foundation's volunteer Board of Directors is grateful for this outstanding show of support.

This past year, donors helped provide:

- 598 children with toys and gifts during the holiday season
- 300 vulnerable families with emergency COVID supports, including food, basic needs, and PPE
- 241 children with COVID-safe weeklong summer day camps
- 200 children with "Summer Smiles at Home" activity baskets
- 150 youth with transitional support as they moved from foster care to living independently

## Education Grants

FACS Niagara places a high priority on encouraging and supporting current and former youth in care to complete their education. Research indicates that education is the single most important factor in helping youth in care lead productive and successful lives.

FACS and the Foundation are pleased to support these efforts by providing grants and other assistance to help these dedicated young people reach their full potential. In 2021-22, FACS and the Foundation expect to provide as many as 40 young people with grants to pursue their postsecondary dreams.

## Let's Talk

Surviving trauma can have significant lasting impacts on mental health and wellbeing. With a generous \$20,000 grant from Bell Let's Talk, FACS Niagara will be building its capacity to care for and support children and youth who have experienced trauma.

Supplemented with funds from the FACS Niagara Foundation, FACS staff, volunteers, kinship caregivers, foster and adoptive parents are being trained in the practice of Trauma Informed Care. Training is taking place throughout the 2022-23 year.

## FOUNDATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS, 2021

Darlene McDowell (President)  
Caroline Polgrabia (Vice-President)  
Chris Accursi (Secretary)  
Yar Diduch (Treasurer)  
Anna Bozza (FACS Niagara Executive Director)  
Rhianon Burkholder  
Richard Madume

Sheryl Matthews  
Sean Worthington (FACS Niagara Board Representative)

Dave Augustyn (Development Director)  
Catherine Barkwell (Foundation Assistant)  
Brett Sweeney (FACS Niagara Director of Communications and Community Engagement)



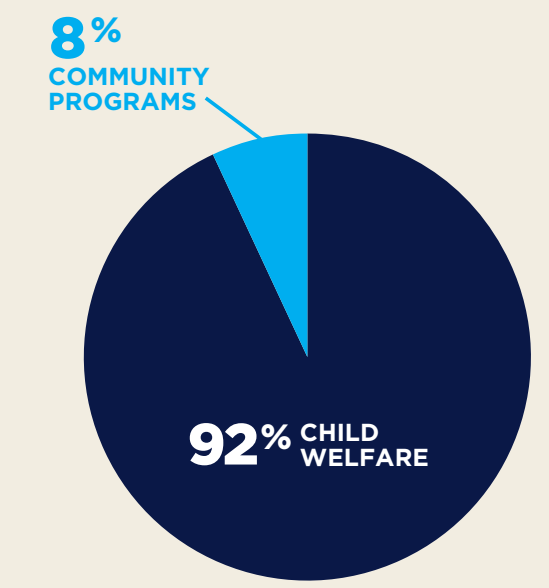


# FINANCIAL REPORT 2021-2022

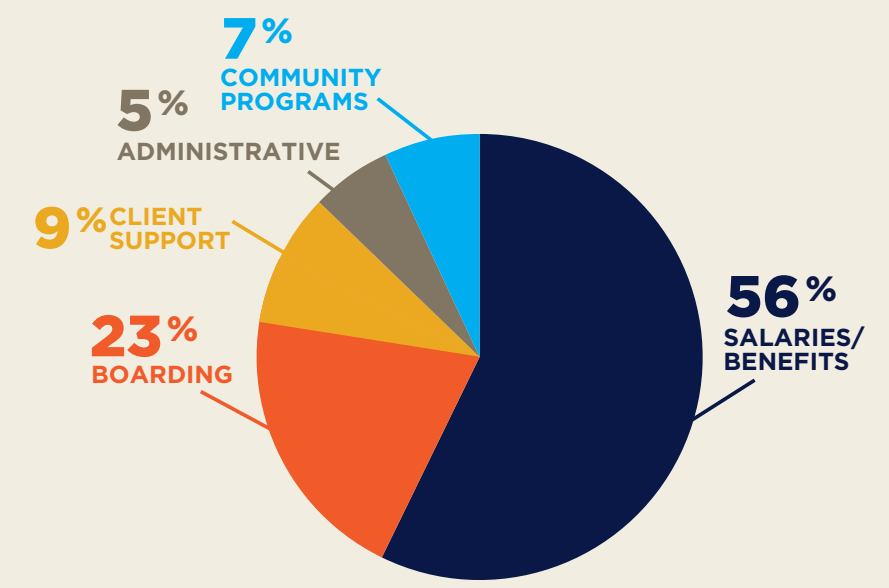
## Summary of Details

This summary of details of 2021-2022.  
Financial Statements audited by Durward Jones Barkwell & Company LLP.

**Revenues 2021-2022  
% Breakdown by Program**



**Expenses 2021-2022  
% Breakdown by Category**



**SUMMARY \$000s**

	Child Welfare	Community Programs	Total
Revenues	\$ 49,274	\$ 4,119	<b>\$ 53,393</b>
Expenditures	\$ 46,784	\$ 3,767	<b>\$ 50,551</b>
Surplus/(Deficit)	\$ 2,489	\$ 352	<b>\$ 2,842</b>

### Thank You to Our Funders

- The Ministry of Children, Community & Social Services
- The Ministry of the Attorney General
- The Niagara Region
- The United Way Niagara (Family Counselling Centre)
- FACS Niagara Foundation
- Our Generous Donors





Family and Children's  
Services Niagara

Les Services à la famille  
et à l'enfance de Niagara

Phone: All locations: 905.937.7731 • Toll Free: 1.888.937.7731 • TTY: 905.937.8105 • All Faxes : 905.646.7085

All Mail: P.O. Box 24028, St. Catharines ON L2R 7P7 • Email: [info@facsnigara.on.ca](mailto:info@facsnigara.on.ca)

[facsnigara.on.ca](http://facsnigara.on.ca)