

Chair's Message

Contact Niagara's mission is to make a positive difference for individuals, families, and the Niagara community. During Contact Niagara's tenth year of providing coordinated information, access to ministry-funded services and supports, and community planning, the organization continues to grow in volume and scope under the auspices of the Ministry of Community and Social Services and the Ministry of Child and Youth Services, despite numerous and various challenges throughout the years. As a governance board, we are charged with the responsibility of making sure the organization functions at the highest level of effectiveness and efficiency within the context of its core values, while supporting the Executive Director during times of change.

This has been a particularly busy and interesting year for the organization with the looming changes related to Developmental Services Transformation. The passing of the *Services and Supports to Promote the Social Inclusion of Persons with Developmental Disabilities Act, 2008*, and the government's request for Expressions of Interest from organizations interested in serving as the regional Application Entity have entailed extra board meetings and an added workload for staff. In order to be prepared to make difficult decisions, the board met for a day of strategic planning early in 2010. Here, we re-examined our mission, vision and values to ensure that future decisions would be aligned to these. For months the board and staff were involved in many hours of meetings and focus groups related to changes in the developmental services sector. While we have believed in the process, progress was at times frustratingly slow. However, we have reached decisions as a board that reflect our mandate, presenting a united front to move the social needs of the Region of Niagara forward.

On behalf of Contact Niagara, I thank the Hamilton Niagara Regional Office of the Ministry of Community and Social Services and the Ministry of Children and Youth Services for their continuing support.

In conclusion, I wish to thank Kaarina Vogin, our most competent Executive Director, for her leadership during

this challenging year. Kaarina, thank you for your foresight and commitment to the organization, for meeting deadlines so efficiently, and for keeping the Board informed at all times.

During the year, the staff, under Kaarina's astute leadership, has responded commendably to the demands of new legislation and to future change. To the staff of Contact Niagara, we again extend our appreciation and thanks for the excellent work that you have done this year in support of this organization, as well as for individuals, families and service agencies in our community.

To the members of the Board of Directors, I thank you for your support and for contributing your expertise to this worthwhile agency. Thank you, especially, for attending so many extra meetings so willingly and often at short notice. We have worked as a team, and I am confident that in the year ahead we will continue to meet the expectations and challenges of our positions. Whatever the future holds for Contact Niagara, we, the Board of Directors, are committed to supporting Niagara's individuals and families by maintaining our role as leaders and innovators in the service system. If individuals and families are to depend on our services, then we need to present a united front to move the social needs of the Region of Niagara forward.

Respectfully Submitted, **Sally Hooper, Board Chair**

"I was treated with respect and dignity and received sympathy, comfort and direction."

Consumer Quote

Executive Director Report

"We are what we create together." That is how Sally Hooper closed her Message from the Board Chair in Contact Niagara's Annual Report last year. I cannot think of a better way to open my report this year. It is an echo through the years from Art Wing's first Chair's Message in 2000 – "The most exciting aspect of working with ... Contact Niagara... has been the sense that we are forever creating something new."

This is a milestone year for Contact Niagara as we celebrate our 10th operational year that prompts a look back at where we have come from, before turning back around to look forward at where we are heading. Contact Niagara's mandate has been repeated like a mantra over the years:

- Single point of access
- Common tool for intake
- Coordinated information
- Summary of Service Plan
- Most in Need
- Case resolution
- Community planning

That is what we started with – a mandate and a blank slate. The list of developments and changes within the organization and the community since that time could fill a book. Suffice it to say that the accomplishments have been impressive. Contact Niagara has moved from being a new organization, viewed with skepticism and resistance, to being an effective and valued system partner within the community. It has been a journey of discovery and continuous learning.

This journey had been lead by a succession of visionary Board Directors. Contact Niagara's Board has consistently recognized the value of a single point of access agency that can assist individuals and families to navigate the system to the most appropriate services and supports, and then provide valuable data to inform community planning. Thank you to all past and present Board members for your leadership, and my special thanks to the current Board for their support and direction through the accelerated change of the past year.

The success of the organization is also due in large measure to the very dedicated staff, many of whom have been with the organization for the full ten years. Our high-caliber staff have been described as professional, hard working, enthusiastic, creative, flexible, knowledgeable, supportive and compassionate. It is their day to day work on the ground with individuals, families, service provider partners and agency representatives from other sectors that has resulted in an organization that is valued and respected for its high quality, responsive service.

All of our work is done in partnership with the agencies we do intake for, and a variety of programs and services in other sectors. These partnerships have grown and evolved over the years, and continue to be a key element in the continuous improvement of the system of services for individuals and families. The commitment and dedication of service providers has resulted in

Niagara becoming known across the province as an innovative and collaborative community that continues to work towards integration of services and supports. And at the forefront of it all are the individuals and families we are here to serve. The continuous feedback from those who have made use of our services has helped us to build and improve the services we provide. Individuals and their families have clearly articulated through the years that having a single number to call, having to tell their story only once, having clear information about the services and supports that are available and how to access them, and having support through the process are invaluable in their individual journeys. While wait times and insufficient services to meet needs continue to cause frustration and concern, being pointed in the right direction and supported along the way provides hope to individuals and families who are struggling.

While looking back provides a perspective for measuring progress, looking back is not Contact Niagara's style. As articulated by Bill Matheson, the Board Chair in 2003, "It is the future that really matters – a future that provides challenges and opportunities." With the proclamation of the *Services and Supports to Promote the Social Inclusion of Persons with Developmental Disabilities Act, 2008* and the upcoming designation of Regional Application Entities across the province, those challenges and opportunities will be immense in the coming year. In our usual style, Contact Niagara will embrace the coming challenges as well as the opportunities in our ongoing journey of change, along with our agency partners, individuals and families.

The 10-year anniversary symbols include tin and aluminum, because they are both flexible and durable – long-lasting and stable while being adaptable and able to adjust readily to different conditions. That is Contact Niagara - continuous growth and change as we are forever creating and re-creating something new.

Yours respectfully, **Kaarina Vogin, Executive Director**

"You have helped me get everything set in place and explained things available for my daughter that I didn't even know about." Consumer Quote

What's in a name?

The name **Contact Niagara** was chosen to reflect our mandate as the local organization responsible for putting families in touch with MCSS and MCYS funded services, for ensuring continuity and consistency of care for children and adults with special needs, and for taking action on Children's and Developmental Service issues of interest to the people of Niagara. The first part of our name--*Contact*--not only denotes our provision of one-call access to information related to Children's and Developmental Services, but is meant to incorporate the concepts of **continuity**, **continuous improvement** and taking **action** to ensure that every Niagara resident has the opportunity to achieve his or her true potential.

"...with all of the frustration and stress we've felt...it was very refreshing to have one person say 'yes, I understand'..."

Consumer Quote

10 Years and Counting

A 10th anniversary is an important milestone for any organization and in particular those organizations that have had difficult births. Looking back 10 years later it is hard to imagine those early days, the startup and the challenges that came with it. And yet, 10 short years later Contact Niagara has already established its significant role in the community and demonstrated the highest quality services and supports to its growing numbers of clients. Building on that success, and encouraged by continuing support of clients, the community and its Board of Directors, Contact is responding to its newest challenges with the same optimism and confidence that the agency has shown in responding to the many challenges and opportunities it has met in the past. The foundation of success that has been established has positioned the agency to move forward in the service of its clients and its communities – demonstrated commitment, professional staff, dedicated volunteers, well established relationships with partners, satisfaction of its clients and recognition for the quality of its services and supports by its two

funding Ministries. Building on this success, and committed to its vision, Contact Niagara is preparing to redefine itself once again. Based on the past 10 years, the next 10 should be even more exciting.

Congratulations! **Jim Bryson, Guest Speaker**

Financial Report Fiscal Year Ended March 31	2010	2009
Revenue		
MCSS/MCYS	1,046,867	995,741
Flow through Revenues	702,527	699,003
Interest and Other	45,097	123,747
TOTAL:	1,794,491	\$1,818,491
Expenses		
Salaries & Benefits	854,579	814,787
Flow through Expenses	674,291	695,875
Other	245,885	325,555
TOTAL:	1,774,755	\$1,836,217
Excess (deficiency) of Revenue over Expenses	19,736	(\$17,726)

Stats in the last 10 years

Contact Niagara:

- responded to over 19,000 requests;
- created over 18,000 intakes;
- completed over 19,000 referrals;
- on behalf of 12, 514 individuals.

At March 31, 2010 there were 3,371 individuals in active service in children's and developmental services.

There were:

- 704 adults with developmental disabilities active in residential services within the developmental sector, and 365 individuals waiting – 92 of them on the priority list
- 610 adults with developmental disabilities active in community participation supports with the developmental sector, and 257 individuals waiting
- 466 children and youth waiting for children's mental health services

Board of Directors

(September 2009 – September 2010)

Chair Sally Hooper
Past Chair Marlene DeRose
Vice-Chair Selvum Pillay
Treasurer Laura Hills

Board Members

Judy Arnott
Marg Davison
Kristine Douglas
Brett Flynn

Secretary Kaarina Vogin, Executive Director

Contact Niagara Staff

(As at September 1, 2010)

Executive Director Kaarina Vogin
Manager of Children's Services Lynne Rousseau
Office Manager Carol Lukasik

Resource Coordinators

Tom Archer
Eva Berswick (Contract)
Karen Colavecchia
Marcia Cramp
Julie Davison
Beth Foster
Heather Fowler
Cathy Gales (Part Time)
Margaret Griffiths (Part Time)
Kristen Hendry (Part Time)
Susan Kowalski (Part Time)
Fred Steinhaus

Administrative Supports

Jackie Frans (I.S./Admin Support Part Time)
Anita Klemmensen (Reception/Admin Support)
Janet Pfeifer (Bookkeeper Part Time)

"Contact Niagara has been invaluable in connecting the agency and my client with local services" Consumer Quote

Mission

Access and Support:

Contact Niagara exists to make a positive difference for individuals, families and the Niagara community by providing coordinated information and community planning, and facilitating access to services.

Vision

Contact Niagara is recognized for its commitment to individuals and families, its connection to the broader community and its leadership and innovation in supporting continuous improvement.

Values

Individuals and families are central to our work at Contact Niagara. Our decisions and actions are guided by our commitment to the following core values:

Integrity, Accountability, Trust

Committed to service excellence, our values will be evident in all we do. We will:

Be open, honest and objective
Seek input and welcome advice
Make decisions fairly and responsibly
Be guided by what we learn through innovation and creativity

Personal Development

We believe people are individuals, each with unique strengths, needs, feelings and thoughts. We will:

Work with each person and family towards the achievement of individual and collective goals
Work and act in partnership with individuals and families, and our shared communities

Respect

Recognizing and valuing the importance of partnerships, alliances and collaborative effort, We will:
Ensure timely, flexible and appropriate responses
Value the diversity of our communities and individuals
Honour the privacy and dignity of others



23 Hannover Drive, Unit 8
St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A3
905-684-3407 or 1-800-933-3617
Fax: 905-684-2728 TTY: 905-684-6289
www.contactniagara.org