

Chair's Message

Contact Niagara exists to make a positive difference to individuals, families and the Niagara community by providing coordinated information, community planning and access to MCSS / MCYS funded services and supports. As a Governance Board, we are charged with the responsibility of making sure that the organization functions at the highest level of effectiveness and efficiency within the context of these core values, while at the same time supporting the Executive Director in the implementation of various Ministry directives that occasionally appear to fall outside of our current local mandate. For example, when Contact Niagara was asked to pilot the Developmental Services Application Package, the Board of Directors was interested in and supported our involvement in this project as it allowed us to become familiar with the new tool and gave us a first-hand look at how Contact Niagara may be expected to operate in the future. Since our staff played a lead role in this Ministry initiated pilot, our team was also asked to provide productive and detailed feedback to the Ministry at the end of the project.

In our efforts to provide coordinated information to the Niagara Community and the Ministry, we have also engaged in many projects to collect and report data, including the Passport Accountability Review, the Child and Youth Mental Health Community Service Mapping exercise, and the establishment of the Residential Vacancy reporting process. Again, although these exercises are Ministry initiated, we believe that our direct involvement in the gathering and analyzing of the data can only increase the Niagara Region's needs profile at the Ministry level.

Involvement in and support of various community committees is also a vital part of Contact Niagara's role. This year, in particular, board members from several local agencies met to look at the social services funding model for children's services in the Niagara Region. Although we have decided not to take a lead role in this process, we have committed to providing any data that we have gathered, to support a campaign for increasing the funding needs profile within our community and to support future requests for increased funding from our social service Ministries.

Over the course of the year, attention was diverted away from our own Strategic Planning process as we were required to deal with many organizational and staffing issues while striving to meet Ministry funding cuts. Careful analysis of the situation, some naturally occurring staffing changes and a last minute financial adjustment from the Ministry allowed us to move forward through this process with little visible operational change for the '08 / '09 year.

It is important, however, for our service provider partners to recognize that it may be challenging for Contact Niagara to maintain all of our current business practices while absorbing significant decreases in staff. Although we are still unsure of the Ministry's plan regarding the future organizational structure of the Developmental Services Application Centres, we the Board of Directors continue to commit to supporting Niagara's individuals and families in need of service by maintaining our role as leaders and innovators in the service system.

In conclusion, I wish to thank Kaarina, our new Executive Director, for the role that she has played in the work of this organization over the past year. Kaarina has guided us through many staffing changes, some organizational restructuring and through the complex deficit reduction process mandated by the Ministry.

Kaarina, we thank you for your dedication, your attention to detail and for your insistence that we as Directors, remember our role of governance.

To the staff of Contact Niagara, we again extend our appreciation and thank you for the excellent work that you do in support of our families and our service agencies as well as for your support of your new Executive Director.

To the members of the Board of Directors, I offer my personal thank you for volunteering your time and critical thinking skills to this agency. We have worked together as a team to make the tough decisions and I feel confident that we have met the expectations of our positions.

We are what we create and support together. If our clients are to depend on our services then we must work as a united front to take the Niagara social needs agenda forward. Respectfully Submitted,

Marlene DeRose, Contact Niagara Board Chair

Executive Director Report

The 2007/08 fiscal year has been a busy year with many changes for Contact Niagara. Uppermost on the list was the change in the Executive Director seat as Steve moved on to new opportunities in Ottawa, followed closely by the introduction of Fred Steinhaus as the new Manager of Client Services. I would like to take this opportunity to briefly thank all of the staff and the Board of Directors here at Contact, as well as the staff and leadership within our service partner agencies, for your help and support through the change.

Contact Niagara continues to move forward in an ever changing service environment. At the system level, Contact Niagara continued throughout the 2007/08 fiscal year to take part in the Developmental Services Transformation Application Pilot Project, introducing many families and service provider partners to the Supports Intensity Scale and the draft Provincial Application tool. Contact Niagara, along with many service provider agencies, remained involved with the Project as Resource Utilization information was gathered to assist the Ministry of Community and Social Services with exploring resource allocation. The DS Transformation process continues to unfold with the introduction of Bill 77, heralding ongoing change into 2008/09.

As we move forward through this year and into 2008/09, Contact Niagara will also be continuing to work with the Children's service system, focusing on gathering and disseminating information on the service utilization patterns of children and youth in Niagara, with a view to continuing to facilitate service coordination for those most in need.

In an increasingly challenging financial environment, Contact Niagara will remain focused on making a positive difference to individuals, families and the Niagara community. Yours respectfully,

Kaarina Vogin, Executive Director

Board of Directors (September 2007 – September 2008)

Chair Marlene DeRose

Vice-Chair Ruth Daigle

Treasurer Kristine Douglas

Board Members

Nancy Bufalino
Marg Davison
Trudie Hill
Sally Hooper
Selvum Pillay
Mike Riordon

Secretary Kaarina Vogin, Executive Director

Contact Niagara Staff (As at September 2008)

Executive Director Kaarina Vogin
Manager of Client Services Fred Steinhaus
Office Manager Carol Lukasik

Resource Coordinators

Tom Archer
Karen Colavecchia
Marcia Cramp
Julie Davison
Beth Foster
Heather Fowler
Margaret Griffiths (Part Time)
Kristen Hendry (Part Time)
Susan Kowalski (Part Time)
Heather Ranger (Student)

Administrative Supports

Mary Beattie (Part Time)
Jackie Frans (Part Time)
Anita Klemmensen
Janet Pfeifer (Part Time)



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Mission

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

Vision

Contact Niagara will be valued as an essential member of the service system and recognized by the community for its leadership, innovation, and commitment to individuals and families.

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

Financial Report

Fiscal Year Ended March 31

	2008	2007
Revenue		
MCSS/MCYS	\$1,079,330	\$1,099,324
Flow through Revenues	736,853	848,534
Interest and Other	14,614	14,084
TOTAL:	\$1,830,797	\$1,961,942
Expenses		
Salaries & Benefits	857,309	880,365
Flow through Expenses	730,526	835,668
Other	262,762	220,197
TOTAL:	\$1,850,597	\$1,936,230
Excess (deficiency) of Revenue over Expenses	(\$19,800)	\$25,712