

*We would like to send our appreciation to our  
Service Partners  
Ministry of Community and Social Services  
Ministry of Children and Youth Services  
for the collaborative work accomplished over the past year.  
May the New Year be blessed with peace, good health  
and happiness to all !!*

## Niagara Community Service Plan Update

### Children's Mental Health Services and Developmental Services

As many of you are aware, over the course of the past calendar year the service communities for both the children's mental health and developmental systems were involved in the development of a community service plan. This process and its results were facilitated by Contact Niagara as part of its community planning mandate. The completed **Developmental Services Plan** and the **Children's Services Plan** were forwarded to the Ministry of Community and Social Services / Ministry of Children and Youth Services in September 2004. In keeping with their commitment to this important project, the two Ministries are currently reviewing the plans and have indicated that a formal response will be provided to our community early in the New Year.

I wish to extend my many thanks to every individual and organization who participated throughout this process. Because of the level of involvement demonstrated and the expertise contributed, I am confident that the directions and goals established will serve to enhance our capability to provide needed services and supports for individuals and families across the Niagara Region.

Steve Novosedlik, Executive Director

To receive a copy of either or both of the Community Service Plans, they can be found on our website at [www.contactniagara.org](http://www.contactniagara.org) under publications. Limited hard copies are available at the office.

### Contact Niagara on Line: [www.contactniagara.org](http://www.contactniagara.org)

Individuals interested in starting the intake process for Ministry funded programs or requiring assistance in identifying local resources now have the option of submitting an "On-Line Service Request Form" through Contact Niagara's website. A Resource Coordinator will attempt to contact the requester within one business day of receiving the request.

Identifying information will be electronically stored and protected by Contact Niagara until contact is made with the requester. If contact is not made, the information will be destroyed. The website also offers other publications: Newsletters, AGM Reports, Community Service Plans, and the brochure for Child and Adolescent Counselling & Mental Health Services.



## Children and Youth Mental Health Fund

In the early Autumn of 2004, the Ministry of Children and Youth Services announced that additional resources were being made available to Ontario communities to enhance their local children's mental health system. Funding decisions would be made on the basis of proposals submitted from each community in keeping with guidelines developed by the Ministry.

Contact Niagara was asked to facilitate the community process and directly involved the Children's Mental Health Network (CMHN). The CMHN, which comprises a number of children's service providers across multiple sectors along with consumer representation, accepted the task of preparing a formal submission. The dedication of the CMHN led to the completion of this project well within the short timelines required.

The service proposals contained in the final document if approved, will provide much needed enhancements to the overall children's mental health system in the Niagara Region and are reflective of several of the directions identified in the recently completed Community Service Plan. A formal response from the Ministry is expected in the New Year.

The CMHN is to be commended for a job well done!



### Welcome and Farewell catch-up:

Welcome to Scott Johnson, who joined the Contact Team as a Resource Coordinator in August, 2003. He is a tremendous asset to the Team and a lot of fun to work with!

Contact Niagara said farewell to Pat Robinson in August 2003. She left to pursue her teaching career and has since completed her Teacher Certification. Good Luck with your dream!

### Mailing List Information:

To keep our mail list and contact information current, please contact Carol with any updates at 905-684-5214 ext 223 or [carol@contactniagara.org](mailto:carol@contactniagara.org), Thanks



### Student Placements:

Contact Niagara was fortunate enough to have two excellent student placements in 2004: Omoaruni Ibhawoh and Margaret Griffiths.

Omo joined our team in August, 2004 to fulfill her internship requirements for the BSW education program through the University of Victoria. Omo originates from Nigeria and has lived in Canada for 6 years. Having now obtained her BSW degree, Omo intends to pursue an MSW degree through Dalhousie University. We are grateful to have Omo remain with the agency as a volunteer.

Margaret has returned to the team on a part-time contract. Margaret offered to comment on her experience at Contact Niagara, and writes: "I am enrolled in the BSW program at Niagara University in Lewiston, N.Y. and was placed at Contact Niagara to fulfill my internship requirements.

From January to July 2004, I trained as and eventually worked as a Resource Coordinator.

I expected to expand my knowledge of children's health and developmental issues. However, being 'mature' (and old) and having worked for several years in social services in the Niagara Region, I thought my 'professional' learning curve had peaked. I have never been happier to be wrong.

At Contact Niagara I found an effective, innovative and compassionate organization. I met skilled professionals who are also top notch individuals. They are committed to their work and involved in their communities. I had the privilege of working alongside a team of caring, generous and hard working professionals who made every day a rich learning experience for me."

Margaret



For those of you who did not attend our AGM in Sept/04, and who did not request a copy of our Annual Report for the fiscal year ending 2004, please find a copy enclosed. Additional copies are available at the office.

We would like to thank our Grade 9 Student, Bianca Turcotte, who came to work with us on the "Take Your Kid to Work Day" this past fall. She did a great job helping to re-design this newsletter, and learning about our service system. We wish her success in her studies and interests in graphic arts.

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