

### **Chair's Message**

On behalf of the Board of Directors of Contact Niagara for Children's and Developmental Services, I am pleased to welcome you to our 19<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting.

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

This year was one of exciting opportunities. *Youth Wellness Hubs Ontario*, a provincially supported initiative, released a call for proposals expanding the number of Hubs from 4 to 9. Niagara's mental health, addictions, youth justice, public health and other social service organizations, with youth and family members, submitted a proposal, with Contact Niagara acting as the administrative lead on behalf of Niagara's submission. After a rigorous review process, Niagara received word that we had been chosen as one of the successful expansion sites! Niagara's decision to select Contact Niagara to provide this important function, as we begin to implement this initiative, is further evidence that the accomplishments of this organization have been noticed and that *we continue to hold true to our mission and vision to make a positive difference in people's lives.*

above yourself and also one who always has Contact's bigger picture in mind. Thank you.

To the Board of Directors, volunteering time to serve one's community in my mind is top notch. It certainly speaks to the type of person each member is, and with that I am lucky and proud to sit alongside such talented and generous colleagues. It is your commitment to the vision and mission of the organization, providing insightful governance, that continues to move Contact Niagara forward. I can't thank you enough for your time, hard work and friendship during the past year.

We will miss our departing members Louise Veres and Kailash Manohar. Thank you so much for giving of your time. Your contribution to Contact and the community will be sorely missed.

In closing, as my term as Chairperson comes to a close, thank you to everyone who helped to strengthen and develop our organization. I look forward to continuing to support the efforts of the board, our executive director, and the rest of the Contact Niagara staff in the coming year.

Respectfully submitted,  
**Kelly Majka, Board Chair**

### **Consumer Satisfaction Comments...**

*"All conversations were pleasant, calming and reassuring. \* Community - people caring about people.\* Thank you."*

To quote Sonia Johnson, "We must remember that one determined person can make a significant difference, and that a small group of determined people can change the course of history." Hands down the staff of Contact Niagara, a small group of determined people, day in and day out, work tirelessly to ensure the needs of the community are being met, while also making certain to keep building upon the relationships with the many community partners with whom they work. This team of individuals always amazes with what they accomplish with the so little that they have. Contact staff: Your ongoing professionalism, compassion and continued commitment to delivering quality, and timely services, is second to none and is so greatly appreciated. Thank you.

To our Executive Director, Nadine; the citizens of Niagara, the Board, and Contact staff are incredibly well served by your leadership, guidance and vision. You are the consummate leader; one who always puts others

#### **Mission:**

To make a positive difference for individuals, families and the communities we serve, by providing coordinated information and processes, participating in collaborative community planning, and facilitating access to services.

#### **Vision:**

A community where everyone feels respected, valued and supported and every child and youth is able to reach their full potential.

#### **Values:**

At Contact Niagara, to guide our decisions and actions, we have a belief in and a commitment to the following core values:

**Client and Family Centred:** Individuals and families are central to our work

### 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

### Integrity, Accountability, Trust and Transparency:

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

- engage children, youth and families
- be open, honest, respectful and objective
- seek input and welcome advice
- make decisions fairly and responsibly
- be guided by what we learn through innovation and creativity

### 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

## Executive Director's Report

As a member of our staff team, I once again feel very privileged to be able to share some comments on behalf of Contact Niagara.

Contact Niagara feels incredibly fortunate to play the role that we do within our child and youth system of services. Our primary roles are to support access and service co-ordination for funded mental health, developmental and autism services, and conduct independent reviews as part of the Ontario Autism Program. However, we feel incredibly fortunate to be seen as an agency and group of people that can and do support children, youth and families in Niagara, and our systems of services, far more broadly than those functions. *It is our privilege to speak with and support clients and their families who contact us.*

### ... more Consumer Comments...

*"Excellent listening and communication skills.*

*Tone was **caring, non-judgmental, understanding.**"*

*"Your people are incredibly kind and **compassionate** and helpful."*

*"I was nervous about a phone interview, but was immediately put at ease. I felt like I was having a conversation in my living room and could just say how it was."*

We acknowledge how difficult it can be to speak with someone you don't know, and *we thank you for putting your trust in us* and sharing your personal stories and journeys with us. As part of honouring that trust, we recognize that our "responsibilities" above all else, is to ensure we treat those who contact us with respect, compassion and understanding, and that we honour your diversity, including your culture, language and

experiences. We continue to learn from each of you, to understand where we can do better and to embrace our opportunities for growth.

To all the generous individuals who volunteer their time, both in Niagara and across the province, thank you for your continued dedication to our communities, and specifically, thank you to our very committed Board of Directors. It is your commitment to our community, to us as an agency, and to our staff, that allows us to continue to strengthen and improve.

And finally, none of this could happen without our staff. It is you who strive everyday to embody the above principles and take the time, and make the space, for them to become realities. Without you, Contact Niagara would not be able to fulfill any role. It is your heart, passion, and dedication to our mission, vision and values that support our work, and it is through you that we continually strive to make a difference. It is my absolute privilege to work with each of you.

I was once told that "change moves at the speed of trust, and trust takes time". Although I can't give credit to the author of those words, I believe truer words have never been spoken. Whether it is our clients, our staff, our Board, or our broader stakeholders, thank you for walking with us. Malala Yousafzai has said "Let us make our future now, and let us make our dreams tomorrow's reality". Everyday, we are reminded of the power we have individually and collectively to make change. This year has reminded us of the power of young people, when hundreds of thousands of young people marched around the world. They were marching for issues of justice and equity. They were passionate, they were energetic, they showed courage and marched to have their voices heard. They embodied the words of Malala Yousafzai. Everyday, these examples of engagement remind me we are far bigger than one act, or even several acts. It is all of the acts of humanity, dedication, compassion, courage, and love that happen every day, that truly reflect our world and who we are as a community.

Sincerely,

**Nadine Wallace, Executive Director**

### 2017-2018

#### Highlights:

We started 2017-2018 understanding that it might be one of tremendous change. Niagara

was continuing to move forward as part of a provincial strategy on transforming the child and youth mental health system, the new Provincial Autism Program was being launched, the Ontario Special Needs Strategy was continuing, the Province was calling for an expansion of Youth Hubs, and internally we were preparing to move to a new client database. The ultimate goal of any change is always to make services more responsive to individual

needs. In order to achieve this end, our goal is to always be mindful of how youth and families are included in this process.

2017-2018 once again provided us with many exciting opportunities. We continued putting processes in place to embed meaningful family and youth engagement into everything we do. In particular, I would like to thank Sarah Cannon for always reminding us that engagement for us must be a verb, and not a noun. Your voice and work to further strengthen our supports and services with a continued eye on engagement, has been invaluable. Our highlights for this year included:

- The naming of our *Lead Agency* as part of the changes within our child and youth mental health system, and we would like to once again congratulate Pathstone Mental Health on this achievement;
- The launch of the new Ontario Autism Program (OAP) and our continued partnership with Bethesda Services;
- The launch of the new Independent Clinical Review (ICR) Process [previously known as the Independent Review Mechanism (IRM)] as part of the OAP;
- Niagara's continued work as a community to improve our Transitional Age Youth Process for those youths transitioning into adulthood who may be eligible for adult developmental services;
- Our continued partnership with Brock University, including research opportunities;
- Niagara's successful Youth Wellness Hub proposal, to become one of six of the Province's new Youth Wellness Hubs. This proposal saw over 30 community agencies and over 100 youth contribute to the development of a local plan. Although our three site model will serve all youth (12-25 years), our local plan has particularly identified the importance of serving our local Indigenous and Francophone youth with easily accessible, culturally competent and safe care.

One of the strengths of Niagara has always been, and continues to be, our commitment to partnerships. To working toward ensuring that children, youth, and families are at the centre of our work, and are now also meaningfully involved in the development of that "work". This has been a focus of the two new Anchor Tables that have formed under the Local Health Integration Network and the *Patients First Act*, and Contact Niagara is thrilled to be a part of this commitment. We have learned that we can continue to expand our partnerships with families and youth beyond the treatment level and engage with them at all levels of service delivery. In addition, we remain committed to our continued partnerships with Parents for Children's Mental Health (PCMH) and the Ontario Provincial Centre of Excellence. We recognize the privilege we have in being involved in these exciting initiatives, and with the many dedicated individuals who are always working to ensure children, youth and families are meaningfully engaged in all aspects of our work. As our systems of service continue to transform to best meet the needs of those we are here for, we recognize that, although always intended to improve services, these

changes can result in uncertainty and sometimes fear, and we understand that part of our role is to ensure families remain well informed and connected.

Finally, this fall marks our third Family BBQ. This year's event has been a broad partnership with many community partners, including, youth and families, our local Community Living Organizations, C/L Grimsby- Lincoln and West Lincoln, C/L Welland-Pelham, C/L Fort Erie, C/L St. Catharines and C/L Port Colborne, Niagara Support Services/N-TEC, Bethesda Services, Centre de santé and Pathstone Mental Health. I would like to recognize the youth, family members, volunteers and all the staff involved, for their shared commitment to co-develop, and co-plan what we hope will continue to be an expanded annual event. We are excited for the coming year!

... "The staff member I spoke with made me recognize that as a mother, **I was not alone**. Help was available and I have such a strong feeling that things will be "okay". For the first time in a long time I feel hopeful for my family's future."

### Statistics on Intakes:

Contact Niagara **completed 5,011 intakes** on behalf of 3,293 children and youth:

# of Intakes Completed and Referred for Services	# Unique Children/ Youth	Case notes Completed
2017/18	5,011	27,699
2016/17	4,054	19,021
2015/16	3,471	17,553
2014/15	2,671	12,274

# All Children/Youth (non-unique)	Over the Period of
4,238	2017/18
3,839	2016/17
3,451	2015/16
2,860	2014/15

### Stats: Who Called to make a referral:

2017/18	Caller / Requestor	
Parent	792	17%
Doctors	1,233	27%
Other professionals	583	13%
School	86	2%
Police	40	1%
Family / friend	111	3%
FACS	54	1%
Anonymous / other	1,654	36%
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,553</b>	<b>100%</b>

<b>Financial Report:</b>			
<b>Fiscal Year End March 31</b>		<b>2018</b>	<b>2017</b>
<b>Revenue</b>			
MCSS / MCYS		1,364,051	1,598,981
Flow Through Revenues		965,976	1,349,049
Rental and Other Income		46,475	49,253
<b>TOTAL:</b>		<b>\$2,367,502</b>	<b>\$2,997,283</b>
<b>Expenses</b>			
MCSS / MCYS		255,323	379,553
Flow through Expenses		857,856	1,349,049
Other Expenses		46,433	49,253
Salaries & Benefits		1,106,315	1,139,549
<b>TOTAL:</b>		<b>\$2,265,927</b>	<b>\$2,917,404</b>
<b>Excess (deficiency) of Revenue over Expenses</b>			
Children's Services		707	17
ICR Process		100,868	79,862
<b>TOTAL:</b>		<b>\$101,575</b>	<b>\$79,879</b>



Profound changes to the structure and delivery of autism services took place across the province throughout the 2017-2018 fiscal year, as the Autism Intervention Program (AIP) transitioned to become what is now the Ontario Autism Program (OAP). Building on changes announced by the former Ministry of Children and Youth Services (MCYS) in April of 2016, regional service providers worked to amalgamate several separate autism treatment programs into one less age-specific, more child/family-centered program offering a broader range of services and treatment intervention models. The previous Independent Review Mechanism (IRM) for the AIP, which evaluated only eligibility and discharge decisions for children under the age of 5 receiving Intensive Behavioural Intervention (IBI) treatment across the province, similarly transitioned to become the new Independent Clinical Review (ICR) Process for the OAP.

Still at the request of families or youth, when in disagreement with their autism service provider regarding some aspect of the planned intervention, the new ICR will review behaviour plans of children aged 0-18 receiving any service within the OAP. New official program Guidelines were developed by the MCYS (January 2018) to steer implementation and process development by Contact Niagara, which required extensive modification to all components involved in the administration of the process provincially.

This year Contact Niagara was engaged in large-scale projects to revamp various elements of the previous IRM process since June of 2017 (e.g., print material, electronic database, website, internal processes, hiring and training, research and professional development, and quality assurance) in preparation for implementation of the ICR, which went live on January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2018.

### **Board of Directors** (2017- 2018)

**Chair:** Kelly Majka  
**Vice Chair:** Marc Blouin  
**Treasurer:** Conrad Scala  
**Board Members:**

Justin Creamer  
 Joyce Engel  
 George Kurzawa  
 Jordan Clark  
 Louise Veres  
 Kailash Manohar

**Secretary:** Nadine Wallace

### **Contact Niagara Staff** (2017 - 2018)

**Executive Director:** Nadine Wallace

**Office Manager:** Carol Lukasik

#### **Administrative Supports:**

Anita Engelage (Reception/Admin Support)  
 Jackie Frans (IT/Admin Support)  
 Liliane Guertin (Bilingual Admin Support)  
 Janet Pfeifer (Bookkeeper)

#### **Resource Coordinators:**

Eva Berswick  
 Joanne Bovine (Bilingual)  
 Liana Danyliuk  
 Beth Foster  
 Heather Fowler  
 Cathy Gales  
 Margaret Griffiths  
 Kristen Hendry  
 Susan Kowalski  
 Katie McKay  
 Julie Nichols  
 Fred Steinhaus

#### **ICR Process:**

Ashley Hardman (Lead)  
 Angela Lynch (File Coordinator)



**905-684-3407**  
**1-800-933-3617**

Also, Coordinator for the:



**289-273-4627**  
**1-866-416-1023**

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