



COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

SUMMER 2015

ENHANCING SERVICES FOR OUR INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

In 2011 we introduced a dedicated Indigenous Team. Recently we expanded the team due to both increased demand, and to a growing recognition and understanding of the need to provide customized and dedicated services for the Indigenous families we serve.

The team now consists of three Family Service Workers, two Children's Service Workers and a Kinship worker. We also have one lawyer who manages most of the related legal matters. This multi-disciplinary team is unique at Durham CAS; it is the only team where the staff members in the different positions work side-by-side every day on the same cases.

Another unique aspect of the team is that one of the Family Service Workers is also assuming some intake duties. This means that once we receive a referral involving an Indigenous family, the matter may be referred directly to this team, rather than our Intake department. Unlike our other referrals, a case may stay with this team throughout the duration of our involvement.

Family Service Worker, Susan Scherbak is one of the new members of the team. Susan moved to the team from the Family Support Team. It is instantly obvious that Susan is very passionate about her work. While she enjoyed her former roles immensely, she says "All of my experiences have prepared me for and led me to this position. I feel like I have come home."

While Susan has worked at Durham CAS for several years, the multi-disciplinary nature of this team



and the different approaches make the dynamics of the team and the work quite different.

"I really enjoy being with a team that aligns with and honours my heritage," says Susan, referring to her Algonquin heritage, of the Maliseet First Nation. All of the team members, including the supervisor and lawyer, are of Indigenous heritage.

This is a crucial component of the team, providing a critical cultural connection and deep understanding of the traumatic historical burdens carried by families served.

While we strive to work collaboratively with extended family members and community partners for all the families we serve, it is a greater focus when working with Indigenous families.

ENHANCING SERVICES FOR OUR INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES ...CONTINUED

Seeking out and including extended family, band members and any ongoing connections with other service providers is a key component of our work. This results in a much more holistic and culturally sensitive approach.

There is an increased demand for this service partly because we have increased awareness and are more effective in ensuring that all Indigenous families are recognized. There is also a greater awareness in the community that we now have this team, and families and local bands specifically request to work with this team.

Another important focus on our work is prevention: reducing the need for children to come into care and lessening the time before the courts. We are approaching this work in a very different way in collaboration with elders and Indigenous healers that recognizes multi-generational trauma, and is culturally based.

The work is more complex and comprehensive; more time is spent in consultation with all family members, community partners and band members where appropriate. As a result we have increased our awareness greatly and expanded our partnerships with many more service partners from across Ontario.

On working with community, Susan says "I've always worked in a really holistic way but with this team it is a core principle.



We work with everyone in circles, we work together to unravel the story of the family. There is a multitude of wisdom and passion there, and we figure out together how to move forward."

We have also developed a new partnership with a Medicine Healer, Arrole Lawrence. Arrole works regularly with our staff and provides counselling for children, youth and families. Arrole helps families connect with their ancestry and address historical oppression and abuse; he also helps us on our journey to further understand the impact of this history on families.

Arrole works with families in our new dedicated Indigenous visiting room.

This new room located in our Family Access Centre has become a great source of inspiration and healing. The room allows us to perform smudging; a cleansing ceremony that is a fundamental part of any gathering for Indigenous peoples.

We have also designed the room to be a safe, inviting and healing place. The most striking feature of the room is a rug depicting the Seven Grandfathers, a set of traditional Anishinaabe teachings on human conduct toward others: Wisdom, Love, Respect, Bravery, Honesty, Humility and Truth. This room and rug serve to remind us of these values and encourage us to honour them in all of our work with families.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3



DURHAM
Children's Aid Society

1320 Airport Blvd.,
Oshawa, Ontario L1H 7K4

Tel: 905.433.1551

Fax: 905.433.0603

www.durhamcas.ca

VISION
BUILDING HOPE AND OPPORTUNITIES WITH
CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES.

MISSION
WORKING WITH FAMILIES AND THE COMMUNITY TO KEEP
CHILDREN AND YOUTH SAFE FROM HARM AND CREATE
STABILITY AND PERMANENCE IN THEIR LIVES.

ENHANCING SERVICES FOR OUR INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES ...CONTINUED

“The room embraces you,” says Susan. “It’s open, caring, soothing, and non-judgmental. It’s a place to share, celebrate and come together in a circle surrounded by culture and the rich legacy and history of the First Nations people. We can reconnect with our culture.”

Both the families we serve and our community partners have been very pleased that we have enhanced our services both with the physical space in our building as well as the new approaches. These are all steps along the way of reconciliation between the child welfare system and Indigenous families.

The Indigenous Team, like Durham Region, is representative of the significant diversity within the First Nations, Metis and Inuit communities and people in Canada, and we strive to be inclusive of the vast amount of knowledge and teachings.



This year we hosted a Summer Solstice celebration in June, which we have been doing for many years.

We welcomed Nimkii Osawamick along with a guest dancer and drummers for an afternoon of music, dancing, history and culture that was educational, healing and entertaining for our staff and for the children, youth and families we serve.



FOSTERING POSITIVE CULTURAL IDENTITIES

Recently, two workers from the Indigenous Team, Danielle Glass and Colleen McCulloch, accompanied five youth to the Annual Aboriginal Youth-In-Care Gathering at Bark Lake Leadership Centre.

The gathering is for Indigenous youth-in-care from across Ontario, age 9 to 21, to foster positive cultural identities, participate in cultural and recreational programming and connect with each other.

Many Indigenous youth struggle with challenges related to their personal and cultural identities, and the legacy of the impact of colonialism. It is critical that we offer support to help strengthen cultural ways of knowing, and enrich their experiences of being in care. This event was a unique opportunity for these youth to connect with one another and face these challenges.

This event provided Indigenous youth-in-care with valuable opportunities to develop leadership skills, resilience and a stronger cultural identity. It was an opportunity not only to bridge culture but for the youth to meet others just like themselves and to bond in a way that is not possible in other experiences.

They laughed, sang, danced, drummed, had naming ceremonies, they learned about their culture, hiked, canoed, relaxed and grew. One of the youth said that he has never felt so at home; he was with other youth who are just like him in every way.

The joy they had during the three days will have lasting effects on them and will leave them and the workers forever changed. It provided hope and belonging for youth who often don't feel either.

We have wonderful youth in our care and they have so much to offer and so much to look forward to in life. They have gifts they don't even realize. They met elders and positive Indigenous role models to look up to and be proud of. They had a strong sense of pride by the end of the three days that didn't exist on the drive up. Bonds have been formed that will not be broken.

Miigwetch



HELPING FAMILIES: JENNIFER'S STORY

"She's an awesome human being." That is how Jennifer describes Silvana, her former CAS worker whom she credits with saving her family, and maybe even her life. Silvana Maclellan, now an Ongoing Family Service Supervisor, was Jennifer's worker years ago.

It has been many years since her involvement with Durham CAS, and Jennifer's daughter is now an adult, and they are both doing very well. But it didn't always look so promising.

When she was a child, Jennifer herself suffered abuse and neglect. As an adult she became addicted to drugs, she was in an abusive relationship and had repeated contact with the police. She eventually ended up in jail.

When Jennifer became pregnant, she was shocked and scared. She tried caring for the baby, but after several months someone made the call to CAS. Her daughter was brought into care, and Jennifer was devastated.

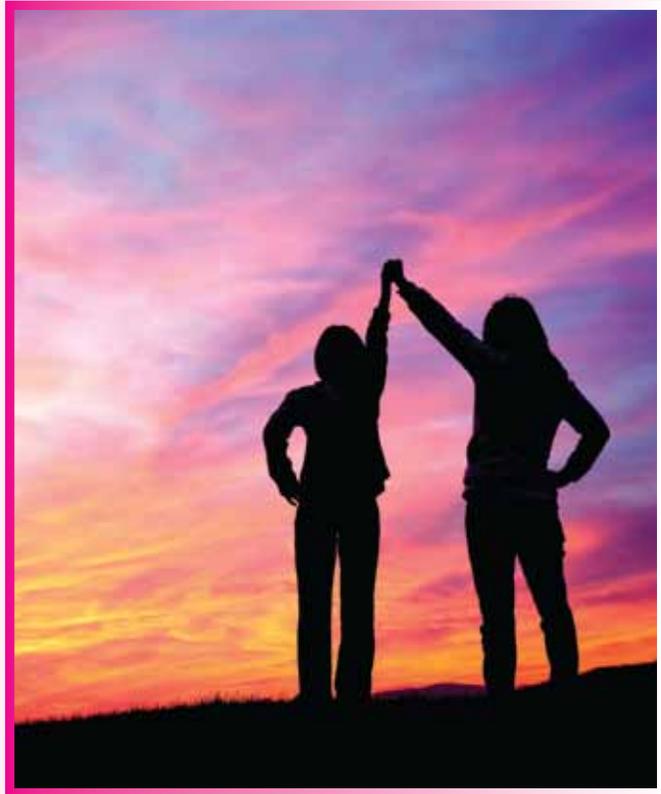
"I was really angry. I was a handful, I was making threats. It was awful,"

Jennifer now says.

Jennifer's daughter was placed in the home of foster parents Kathy and Bud Ross. Jennifer speaks as highly of the Rosses as she does of Silvana. She maintained regular contact with her daughter and built a good relationship with the foster family.

Jennifer admits "I was a mess. I almost lost my daughter." Jennifer was physically very weak and thin. She lied, faked drug tests, and threatened those who tried to help. But Silvana and the Rosses persevered.

"Because of Silvana, I made it," says Jennifer. "She got me to be honest about myself. Others tried, but it was Silvana who really told me she cared and taught me I could trust her. Because of her, I met all the right people."



Jennifer reluctantly agreed to go to rehab. She was terrified that it would be like jail, but it wasn't.

Silvana then helped Jennifer connect with Narcotics Anonymous and get into a shelter at the YWCA, which gave her the stability she needed to get her daughter back. Jennifer eventually got a job as a cleaner and cook at the Y, where she stayed for 14 years.

Jennifer is also thankful that Silvana spoke on her behalf, bought her a new dress and took her out to dinner when she celebrated her one year medallion at NA. "I owe everything to Silvana."

Jennifer and her daughter still maintain a relationship with the Rosses, even years after her daughter lived there; both are thankful for everything the Rosses did for them.

We often speak of families needing strong family and social networks to be successful. Silvana and the Rosses were able to help Jennifer and her daughter build exactly that.

DRIVEN

EXPANDING SERVICES TO MEET THE NEED

Durham CAS is one of the partners of **DRIVEN**, a coalition that supports women experiencing any form of violence. In addition to providing services for women through the program, we are also honoured to have the **DRIVEN** clinic housed in our Children's Clinic. The clinic is open Mondays, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., and can be reached by phone throughout the week.

DRIVEN recently expanded its reach to include not only women experiencing domestic or relationship violence but to women experiencing abuse and all forms of violence, including sexual violence. **DRIVEN** provides access to multiple supports at one location. The services are provided by 24 on-site and off-site partner agencies. The off-site agencies are connected to the **DRIVEN** clinic by telephone and video chat.

The services on-site include:

- abuse/violence counselling
- sexual violence counselling
- parenting support in regards to children who are witnessing/have experienced abuse in their homes
- connection to government financial assistance
- help identifying housing options
- support in the completion of subsidized housing paperwork
- admission to a shelter
- advice and support of the Durham CAS
- safety planning
- injury documentation
- quarterly hygiene bags for those in financial need
- clothing vouchers
- referrals to other needed supports

The services accessed off-site include:

- family and criminal law support
- Legal Aid Ontario certificates and summary legal advice (if eligible)
- admission to a shelter and access to second stage housing
- culturally specific services
- Settlement Services for newcomers to Canada
- Young Parent Support Services
- employment support
- monthly food boxes for those in financial need
- financial assistance to address immediate safety concerns (if eligible)
- police support
- specialized addictions counselling
- Outreach Services, a service of the Student Association at Durham College/UOIT



New on-site partners:

- Durham Rape Crisis Centre - available on Mondays from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
- Herizon House - available on Mondays from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

New off-site partners (access over the phone):

- The Denise House
- YWCA Y's WISH Shelter
- New Life Neighbourhood Centre
- Durham Region Unemployed Help Centre
- Rose of Durham

DRIVEN supports women across Durham Region. In addition to the clinic at Durham CAS, support is also available via video chat from the New Life Neighbourhood Centre in Oshawa, and the Welcome Centre in both Ajax and Pickering. Call for details or to book a video chat appointment.

DRIVEN is open on Mondays, excluding statutory holidays, from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. We are located in the Durham Children's Aid Society building in Oshawa. Services are free, and childcare is available. Both walk-ins and appointments are welcome.

Please call or visit the website
for more information.

1-877-723-3905
durhamdriven.com

OUR COMMITMENT TO ANTI-OPPRESSIVE PRACTICE

On June 2, we launched our Anti-Oppressive (AO) Practice journey with our community. Anti-oppressive practice is a social work practice that addresses issues of power and oppression.

In child welfare, integrating anti-oppression means addressing institutional power and systemic oppression. This includes the prevention of overrepresentation of minoritized and Indigenous communities.

Durham CAS has chosen to be one of the leaders in our field in Ontario and has declared an AO Directional Statement, "We are committed to anti-oppressive practice in which we challenge the impacts of power and privilege, eliminate barriers and are inclusive of the broad range of diversity in our community."

Over the last few years, the Society has been diligently working to roll-out this initiative internally and develop staff capacity. This included every staff person attending a two-day training, commissioning an anti-oppressive practice needs assessment, and hiring an Anti-Oppressive Practice Integration Leader to support the organization.

The launch evening featured a band of diverse individuals, keynote speaker Dr. Wanda Thomas Bernard, and youth-in-care who shared their personal experiences of oppression. To learn more about anti-oppressive practice, please visit our website.



VOLUNTEER PROFILE: CECIL PERRYMAN

Cecil has been a volunteer driver for more than ten years, with progressively more time spent driving since he has retired. Last year, Cecil was appointed an Honourary Society Member at our Annual General Meeting.

Cecil usually drives babies, because, as he says “they’re babies!”, as if stating the obvious. He loves to interact with babies, see their faces and expressions, and he likes to see them grow and change over time.

“Cecil always goes the extra mile for a child or family in need,” according to Coordinator of Volunteer Services, Dawn Ashford. “You can see his heart in his smile, and in everything he does.”

Cecil has been driving some children over a long period, and he likes to get to know their personalities and see them flourish over the years. He tells the story of one little girl who was very shy and cautious. She took a long time to really feel comfortable with him, and wouldn’t look at him in the face. But with his calmness and patience, she eventually warmed up to him and after several months they connected.

Cecil really has a friendly and calm demeanor and is able to build a deep sincere trust with the children in his care. Their faces always light up when they see him. He is a really positive influence on the children and youth.

There was a teenage girl that had been having some difficulty with some other kids. He was able to be a safe, easy going listener who helped her feel better about herself and come to see that she is really a good person. He was able to listen and help her work through her feelings.



“He has a joyful spirit that lifts up everyone around him,” says Dawn. “He also loves to cook, so if I could give Cecil any gift of thanks, I would build him a gourmet kitchen so that he could cook for everyone!”

Cecil exemplifies that our drivers are really far more than ‘just drivers.’ Cecil proves the point that our drivers nurture caring relationships and are an essential part of our service to children, youth and families.

Thank you, Dawn Ashford

We would like to say thank you and farewell to our Coordinator of Volunteer Services, Dawn Ashford. Over the last few years, Dawn has introduced several innovative programs to our Volunteer Services Department which have greatly enhanced support for the children, youth and families we serve.

New programs have included group mentorship for children and youth, which provide opportunities to learn new skills, develop new friendships and have fun. We have also expanded support for children, youth and families with homework groups and tutoring, child minding, youth tax assistance, moving services for youth living independently, and mentorship (for children, youth and parents).

Dawn also guided the growth of our clothing program; *The Clothes Basket*, which provides clothing for hundreds of children and youth each year. All this was done while also managing the ever-growing drive program. Thank you, Dawn.

We are always looking for volunteers for all of our programs -- but please be patient. We look forward to bringing on new volunteers when a new coordinator is in place. Please contact us to learn more.

SUPPORTING YOUTH-IN-CARE AT THE DARC ROOM

Over the last few years we have increased supports for youth leaving care, including providing a range of life skills workshops, such as cooking, budgeting, healthy relationships and job searching. Recently, we got the opportunity to establish a youth resource centre within our office, and realize the vision of our staff who advocate passionately for supports for the youth we serve.

The DARC Room (Durham Adolescent Resource Centre) officially opened in May; it is a perfect complement to our Life Skills Kitchen, which is used frequently for workshops. This little hub within our building is proving to be a well-used and extremely popular resource for youth.

“This is an amazing opportunity; I wish this was here before, when I was starting college,” says Jennifer, placement student and former youth-in-care. “It offers so much for youth to learn about budgeting, OSAP, college and more.”

As a student working at Durham CAS for the summer, Jennifer has been helping in several departments, including in the DARC Room. She has recently finished the Child and Youth Worker program at Durham College, and hopes one day to work full-time at Durham CAS. Jennifer also emphasizes the less tangible benefits of the resource centre.

“It’s a safe, fun, comfortable space for youth to gather and connect. Being in care can be really lonely. Here you can hang out with other kids who are like you, who understand you,” says Jennifer.

The DARC Room is a multi-purpose resource centre with computers for job searching, researching post-secondary education, resume writing and applying for financial assistance for school. There is always a staff member on hand to help with all of their needs.



Jennifer, former youth-in-care and placement student with DCAS staff Jacqueline Garrett and Amy Smith.

But the room isn’t only for such serious endeavors; it’s also a comfortable space for youth to come and hang out safely, and bond with one another. There are video games, board games and a foosball table. We also recently introduced a hygiene bank where youth have access to personal hygiene products.

While the room serves primarily as a drop-in centre, it is also available for other groups. We envision using the centre as a comfortable place for other groups of youth-in-care, such as a safe space for LGBTQ youth to gather.

As with all of our services, with the DARC Room we are striving to be innovative, helpful, creative and responsive to the needs of the youth we serve... along with letting kids be kids.



10TH ANNUAL FORE THE FUTURE GOLF TOURNAMENT

Despite a tornado warning and torrential rains, the 10th Annual Fore the Future golf classic was a tremendous success raising \$50,000 in support of the Durham Children's Aid Foundation signature programs; Summer Camp and Post-Secondary Bursaries.

The sold out tournament took place on Wednesday, June 10th at the beautiful Wooden Sticks golf course. Golfers not only experienced a beautiful course but also enjoyed on-site sampling from Panera Bakery, Cupcake Junkie and Old Flame Brewery. A special thank you to Terry Johnston, Morning Host at CKDO for being our Master of Ceremonies in the evening, and to our youth ambassador Bryant for sharing his story of how receiving a DCAF bursary impacted his life.

Thank you to all those who came out to support the Fore the Future Golf Tournament and a very special thank you to our sponsors:



Scholarship Sponsors



Apprentice Sponsors



Printing Sponsor



Dinner Sponsor



Contest Sponsors



Hole Sponsors





LOCAL CHILDREN'S AUTHOR LAUNCHES NEW BOOK IN SUPPORT OF THE DURHAM CHILDREN'S AID FOUNDATION

Recently, local author Carmela Lanzillotti held a book signing event to officially launch her first book "Mischievous Molly" at the Oshawa Italian Recreation Club. This is Lanzillotti's first published book and written primarily for children from 4 to 9 years of age. The book is about a mischievous cat who gets into everything.

For Lanzillotti, the focus of the book and its target audience is deeply aligned with her roots. Lanzillotti's parents always emphasized the importance of education and supported her love of reading and creative writing. Lanzillotti currently works as a Training Supervisor for the Durham Children's Aid Society.

When she began preparing for the book launch, Lanzillotti chose to donate a portion of the sales to the Foundation. "I am blessed with a large family who shower me with love and laughter. By giving back to the Durham Children's Aid Foundation I know that I'm going to help make a small difference in at least one local child's life."

"The Foundation is honoured to be working with Lanzillotti. The proceeds raised through the sale of this book will go a long way in helping the children who have the greatest needs in our community" says Sian Gibson, Executive Director of Durham Children's Aid Foundation.



OSHAWA RESTAURANT DONATES 40 BIKES TO THE DURHAM CHILDREN'S AID FOUNDATION

On June 14th, restaurant Shrimp Cocktail held its first Bike Rally in their parking lot at 843 King Street West, Oshawa. Shrimp Cocktail customers and staff, John Henry, Mayor of Oshawa and members from the Oshawa City council were on hand for the event to prepare the bikes and enjoy a barbeque.

Shrimp Cocktail owner, Wanda Nippard said "I've been blessed to work and meet some very special people in our community; people who want to make a difference. I approached my long time customers and asked them to each donate \$100 towards buying a bike. The feedback was overwhelming. I had enough donations to buy 40 bikes, and each customer came back to help match the bikes with a helmet and lock for a very special child in our community."

"When Wanda called me and told me she would like to donate 40 bikes, we were amazed by the generous offer. There will be forty very happy kids around our region this summer," said Sian Gibson, Executive Director of Durham Children's Aid Foundation.

Shrimp Cocktail worked closely with Canadian Tire on Gibb Street to facilitate the Bike Rally. The bikes were provided at a discount for the event, and Canadian Tire provided staff to assemble the bikes at no charge. Along with a donated bike, each child received a safety helmet and bike lock.



100 WOMEN WHO CARE - SCUGOG

In May, 72 women met at the 100 Women Who Care Scugog chapter in Port Perry and listened to representatives from local charities talk about their mandate and vision. The ladies then voted on which charity they would support for their second 2015 meeting, and Durham Children's Aid Foundation was chosen as their charity of choice.

Each lady wrote a \$100 cheque in support of DCAF, and a total of \$7,200 was presented to Foundation staff on June 25 at a media event in Palmer Park in Port Perry. The money raised will support post-secondary bursaries for youth who are from or currently reside in the Scugog area.

5TH ANNUAL CHRISTMAS IN JULY MOTORCYCLE RIDE RAISES \$1,300 IN SUPPORT OF THE DURHAM CHILDREN'S AID FOUNDATION

On July 11th, the Aces & Eights held its Fifth Annual "Christmas in July Toy Ride" in support of the Durham Children's Aid Foundation.

This annual third party event, engaged a number of local businesses as sponsors and over 100 bikers who each contributed a toy, gift card or cash donation in support of the Foundation's annual Holiday Hope program.

"This is our fifth season hosting this ride and every year we've not only accomplished our fundraising goals, we have increased participation year over year." said Ken Newman, Aces & Eights event organizer.

Each year, the DCAF Holiday Hope program raises funds and collects toys to build Holiday hampers and distributes them to almost 2,000 children and families across Durham from November to the end of December.

DURHAM SUPERHERO WALK

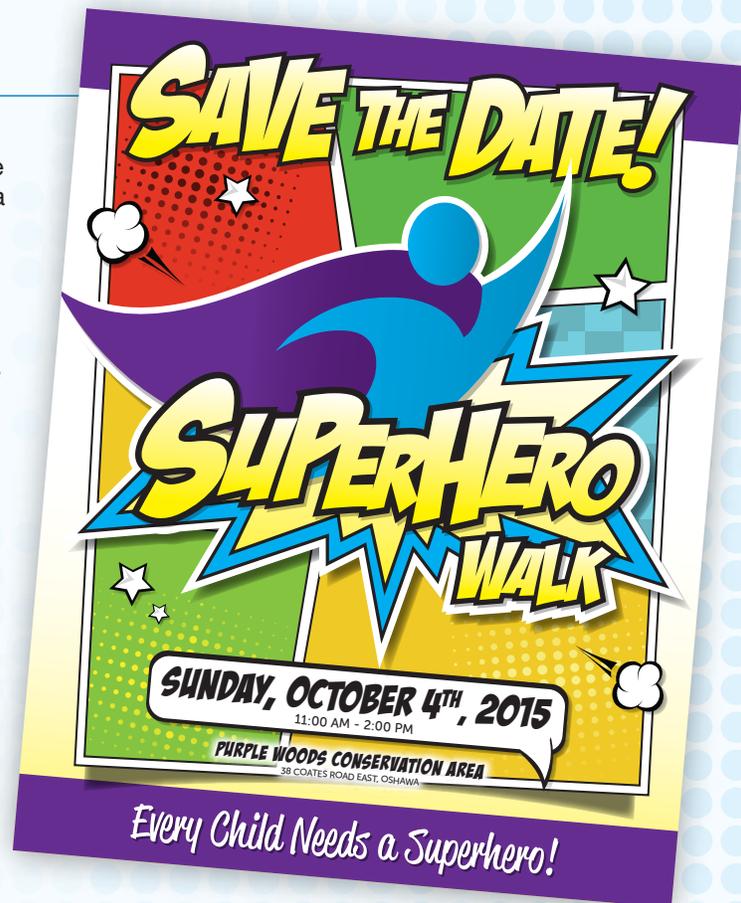
The Durham Children's Aid Foundation will be facilitating its first annual Superhero walk on Sunday, October 4th. We are putting the call out to all Superheroes like yourself to come and help us make a huge impact!

The Durham Superhero walk is a 5k fun walk that is open to all residents of Durham and for all ages. Our superheroes come in many shapes and sizes but they all follow Wonder Woman's "Amazon" code- govern yourselves with love, kindness and service to others.

The Durham Superhero walk supports our most vulnerable children in Durham region, those affiliated with the Durham Children's Aid Society. Held in the month of October to commemorate Child Abuse Prevention month, the Durham community is invited to come and participate in this annual event. Every child needs a superhero- from social workers, teachers, police officers, firefighters, paramedics to community champions!

The monies raised at this event will have a superhero impact:

- For \$50 we can put together a 24 hour emergency care backpack for children in crisis
- For \$100 we can put together a gift hamper for a child/youth to help put hope back into their Holiday season (each hamper consists of new clothing, a toy and a grocery gift card)
- For \$170 we can send one child to a week of summer camp and give them the "gift of play"
- For \$1500 we can provide a bursary for a youth in care in support of their post-secondary journey.



MIX
Paper from
responsible sources
FSC® C103406