



Media Release

June 14, 2012

Highland Shores Children's Aid Holds Historic Annual General Meeting

June 14th, 2012 was a historic day for Highland Shores Children's Aid as it held its first Annual General Meeting and its members elected the Board of Directors that will help set the future course for the newly amalgamated Society.

At the meeting, the following individuals were elected to the Board for one, two or three year terms:

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| Three year terms: | Anya-Deane Best and Peter Knudsen (Hastings)
Phillip Peters and Jacqueline Pennington (Northumberland) |
| Two year terms: | Darcey French (Hastings)
Karyn Kennedy (Northumberland)
Darren Strongman (Member at Large) |
| One year term: | Jay Taugher and Mike McLeod (Hastings)
Mary Brown and Marilyn Curson (Northumberland) |

In addition, Sandra Lewis-den Otter is the appointee to the Board from the Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory and Melanie Flynn is the appointee from the Quinte Children's Foundation. An appointee to the Board for Alderville First Nation will be determined in the near future.

In his Executive Director's report provided at the meeting, Mark Kartusch commented, "Highland Shores is the joining of the legacies built by both the Children's Aid Society of Northumberland and Hastings Children's Aid Society. These legacies are strong. Each organization has had a long history of over 100 years of service within their respective communities. When we look back at the histories of these two organizations, we see many people who have devoted their entire careers not just to children, but also to the organization that served those children and families.

The vision for amalgamation was to build on the strengths and successes of our combined history to create a sustainable agency that is responsive to the needs of our children, youth, families and unique communities, and that establishes itself as a centre of leadership and excellence in child welfare services within Ontario.

The decision to move forward has not been without its complications, nor has the activity since been simple or straightforward. To get to the point of legal amalgamation on April 1st has taken countless hours of work by staff and the Board of Directors. Specific principles guided us through the process including:

- Ensuring local communities' services are maintained and enhanced
- Ensuring Aboriginal and First Nation communities and their cultural uniqueness are recognized
- Using the amalgamation to maintain or enhance relationships with these communities as well as other community relationships

These principles will continue to guide us as we make our way on the journey to becoming fully amalgamated.

Looking forward we have many challenges before us. Funding, already a challenge, will likely become more so in the years ahead as government feels the pressure of a weak economy, significant budget deficits and the requirement to service a large debt load. Even now, the province spends more each year on servicing the debt than is spent on Colleges and Universities. As well, we know that families experience this economic stress especially those already living in poverty. This often means that the number of families requiring our assistance goes up.

Working with our community is something that will be a key focal point for Highland Shores. As a community of service providers, we will need to collectively grow our ability to work with each other and build on the strengths that exist within each of our organizations.

Our foster parents are a core capacity that Highland Shores possesses. Our foster parents open their hearts, their homes and provide care and safety to children. We must never lose sight of the important role they play in the circle of care that is provided for the children in our community.

Highland Shores Children's Aid is just starting a journey as we build from our strong history a new organization that can be even better. Indeed, we are who we were; we will become what we envision."

In recognition of their distinguished service to their respective former Societies the following long standing Board members from the Children's Aid Society of Northumberland and Hastings Children's Aid Society were awarded an Honourary Membership to Highland Shores Children's Aid:

Hailey Buettner
Jack Dixon
Melanie Flynn
Sandra Lewis-den Otter

Susan MacDonald
Paul McMurter
Nadine Novak
Delores Peters

Dr. William Smith
Ian Stock (in absentia)
Kaye Torrie
Jacqueline Whittingham

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A highlight of the evening was the presentation by Virginia Rowden, Director of Social Policy from the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies (OACAS), of a certificate marking a \$1,000 Clark Award to Cody Gourd.

Additional presentations to several youth included: Wilma McKnight Scholarships to Patricia Dunne, Justine Chamberlain and Michael Parsons (in absentia); the Evelyn Payton Memorial Achievement Award to William Murray and the Dr. Clare Brant Award to Quentin Degenova.

Following the Annual General Meeting the Highland Shores Children's Aid Board of Directors appointed the Executive for 2012/13 as follows:

Chair: Darcey French
Vice-Chair: Karyn Kennedy
Treasurer: Phillip Peters
Secretary: Jay Taugher

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