

Annual General Report | 2015-2016

ANIMIKII OZOSON

Child and Family Services Inc.



CONTACT US

Animikii Ozoson Child and Family Services
3rd Floor - 313 Pacific Avenue
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3A 0M2

T: (204) 944-0040
F: (204) 944-0500
Toll Free 1 (877) 300-5111
reception.animikii@animikii.org

Celebrating

TRADITIONAL
COMMITMENTS
TO CHILDREN
AND FAMILIES



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Message from the Board of Directors

The Board of Directors of Animikii Ozoson Child and Family Services Inc. is pleased to report on our many activities and accomplishments this past year. Our agency has been moving forward implementing more culturally-based methods to understand and address family issues within the context of de-colonization and address the inter-generational issues facing our Indigenous families and communities. The Board continues to work at strengthening our integrity and transparency in solidifying our by-laws, policies, procedures. Our sacred bundle includes the name of our agency, a drum, and a pipe, all of which serve to guide our agency in operating in a manner that is inclusive, positive and sets us a strong direction.

The board continues under the governing leadership of Dr. Marlyn Bennett, Sherry Copenace, and Sue Hudson. The board accepted three resignations over the year. We wish the following members all the best in their journeys in the community: Lori Mainville, Lisa Lacosse and Ryan Gorrie. These individuals will be sadly missed and we thank them for their commitment and dedication to the agency and the families touched by Animikii. We welcome two new members who recently joined the board: Wesley A. Nelson and Maria Morrison. Together, all these exceptional individuals bring a vast set of skills, knowledge, and experience to Animikii Ozoson.

We acknowledge that the success experienced by the agency would not be possible without the talented, dedicated and hard work of the staff personnel. Their collective engagement and commitment to excellence

continues to drive the innovations that make Animikii Ozoson Child and Family Services a strong agency within Manitoba and Ontario. In particular, the Board would like to acknowledge the crucial role and direction of the Executive Director, Bonnie Kocsis, in maintaining the agency and providing ongoing leadership and dedication to the board, staff, vendors, foster parents and to the children and families of Animikii Ozoson Child & Family Services. The Board also acknowledges and appreciates the continued support of our legal counsel, D'Arcy and Deacon, including the support of the Southern First Nations Network of Care, and the Province of Manitoba. We continue to be humbled by their ongoing efforts on our behalf. With the help and mentorship of our sister agencies both here in Manitoba and in Ontario, our board continues to reclaim and incorporate Indigenous customs and traditions through governance as we move forward in solidifying the relationships built with families and communities served through our mandate.

In closing the Board would like to thank all staff, foster parents, our sister agencies in Ontario, for their continued commitment to the agency and our families. We are proud of the agency accomplishments and dedication. We are pleased to present the 11th Annual Report for 2015-2016. It outlines the remarkable activities that our agency has implemented over the past year. As in previous years, this report continues to evidence the agency's commitment to service delivery and relationship building as we walk with our families.

All our relations,
The Board of Directors
2015-2016



DR. MARLYN BENNETT (President/Chair): Marlyn hails from the First Nation community of Sandy Bay, Manitoba and is a founding board member. She has been involved with the agency since she was asked to help develop the agency 12 years ago. She recently accepted the role of Assistant Professor in the new Masters of Social Work based in Indigenous Knowledges Program with the Faculty of Social Work at the University of Manitoba. She is also an instructor at Yellowquill College. Dr. Bennett has published extensively on matters related to First Nations Child Welfare. Marlyn and her life partner, Mike, together have four children and live in Winnipeg with their furry four-legged, Rexi.



SHERRY COPENACE (Vice President/Co-Chair): Born and raised on the Ojibway of Onigaming Anishinaabe Nation, Sherry's late parents and paternal grandparents, Shawon and Mensinoiwshkung provided guidance and passed on teachings to her. Sherry is a firm believer in the Anishinaabe way of life, speaks the Anishinaabe language and has a great love and care of the Waters. Sherry has a Master of Social Work, and is a Elder/Indigenous Knowledge Holder in the new Masters of Social Work based in Indigenous Knowledge Program with the Faculty of Social Work at the University of Manitoba. Sherry has two beautiful daughters, Gwen and Kara and four grandchildren.



SUE HUDSON (Director): Sue began her career in social services in Northern BC over fifty years ago, subsequently working in Toronto for two years, and living in Ikhaluit for a year before returning to BC and finally settling in Winnipeg. After completing an MSW, she was employed for many years as an adult educator and program manager for New Careers. She was fortunate to teach many Aboriginal people as they gained skills as Native Alcohol and Drug Abuse Counsellors, Juvenile Counsellors and Child and Family Services workers. Later in her career she was a member of the Winnipeg Circle of Courage. She managed the Northwest Child and Family Services Resource Center and finally was program manager of Community Based Early Intervention Programs for Winnipeg Child and Family Services. Now retired, Sue keeps out of trouble as an Agency Liaison Volunteer at the United Way, and a mentor for SPARK. Her personal passions are quilting and her family of husband, three sons and daughters in law and her grandson.



CLARENCE WHITE (Elder): Elder Clarence White is from Naotkamegwanning Ontario (White Fish Bay) and represents our Agency's voice on the Elder's Council for the Southern First Nations Network of Care. The Council provides spiritual guidance and direction on behalf of children and families. We are honored to have Clarence as our representative and to have him share his wisdom and teachings with us.



Best Wishes to

the following members who have completed their terms on the board of Directors of the Agency:



Lori Mainville



Lisa Lacosse



Ryan Gorrie



Message from the Executive Director



Boozhoo/Greetings

I am honored to present the Annual Report for the 2015-2016 fiscal year on behalf of the Board and staff of Animikii Child & Family Services Inc.

This year has seen increasing challenges for the child welfare system as a whole. There have been numerous reports outlining the issues and challenges children and youth face while in care; especially for our indigenous youth. With these challenges in mind we continued on our path to “indigenize” our practices and programs that we hope over time will have a lasting and positive effect on those families we serve. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission proposed 94 “Calls to Action” with the initial calls focusing on the Child Welfare system and what the Commission feels needs to be addressed. These range from providing equitable resources and addressing jurisdictional disputes to more support for education and adequate housing. These are the first of 94 “Calls to Action”

that will, if implemented, begin to address the historical wrongs that have been perpetrated on the indigenous peoples of Canada. These historical wrongs have left those of us working in social services with large caseloads of (sometimes) intergenerational wounds to heal.

Our challenge as a social service Agency is how to stretch our current funding to provide real and concrete supports to parents who desperately want to parent but as survivors of the residential schools and 60’s scoop may not know how to parent. Being raised without the comforting and nurturing love of parents has left surviving generations without knowledge of how to comfort or care for their children. Many are still caught in the cycle of addictions as a result of their own time in care or the repeated trauma they have suffered. It may be generations more before we see healing and a return to the good life.

Animikii Ozoson, like it’s sister agencies is attempting to change how we conduct



the “business” of child welfare” by moving more to an indigenous way of practice that relies heavily on relationship building that we hope will support the healing process for the parents and children we serve. We have already seen some successes (see Carrie’s story highlighted within this report) as a result of worker’s efforts to maintain respectful and positive working relationships.

From our board of directors whose goal it is to indigenize their governance through use of the clan system and more indigenous policies that support traditional ways of governance to our more traditional “gifting of children” as a response to guardianship requests by foster parents, we have begun to examine and focus on changing our own lenses by which we see our role. We continue to see an increase in our kinship homes and eagerly await with hope, the implementation of customary care in Manitoba.

We also changed our service continuum this year, moving from a specialist model of service to a generic model. This will ensure children who have to remain in our care, and their families, will be served by the same worker from the time they are brought to our attention until children can be safely returned to the care of family or with alternative care givers. We have committed to ensuring children who are in permanent care do not lose connections with their biological families or their communities.

We implemented our own in house training for foster parents, families and youth in care to allow us to specifically target our family’s needs in a timely manner in an effort to cut down on the time children have to remain in out of home care.

Wherever possible we initiated a more traditional perspective through the use of training materials, the inclusion of elders and/or knowledge keepers.

We have continued training our staff in the traditional or cultural ways by ensuring they are oriented to our agency and the way we practice and ensuring they have access to cultural training and elders. We continue to provide opportunities to take part in sharing circles, ceremonies, and teachings both onsite and at the Network or in community.

This year we served over 600 children and families representing 41 communities primarily from North West Ontario. We continued to develop our working relationships with 10 child and family service agencies operating in Ontario.

Forty children were safely returned to their families this year and three families are currently in the assessment phase to determine if they can begin the process of reunifying with their children who are permanent wards.

Perhaps the most significant change for our agency has been the change in spirit. A building of our understanding of what it truly means to work from the spirit and honor those teachings given to us by our grandmothers and grandfathers.

In closing I want to thank our sister agency staff and their communities for sharing their teachings with us especially in the traditional ways of gifting children. I want to acknowledge Adolphus Cameron of Wabaseemong First Nation and Martha Rae of Sandy Lake for their support and patience and for trusting us to do what is right for their children.

I also want to thank our staff, supervisors and leadership teams for your faith and openness to trying to do the work just a bit differently.

To our Board of Directors I want to say Miigwetch/Thank you for strong voices, fearlessness and leadership.

Miigwetch/Thank-you.

Bonnie Kocsis, BSW/RSW

Traditional Gifting of Children

In 2014 the agency was approached by two foster parents who wanted to apply for guardianship of 3 permanent wards who had been placed in their home earlier that year. Agency staff informed the foster parents that we felt it was too soon to consider given that many children have a “honeymoon” stage that could last for some time before showing any concerning behaviors that might affect placement. Furthermore, given the historical ramifications of residential schools and the sixties scoop, most First Nation communities we work with did not want to lose their children and saw adoption and or guardianship by non-indigenous people as a continuation of the “stealing” of their children.

Animikii Ozoson has historically supported the position taken by the communities we serve. However, the Child and Family Services Act allows for any foster parent to petition for guardianship of any child placed in their home even if this child is an indigenous child, and whether or not the petitioners are indigenous. Typically foster parents are granted guardianship if there is no protection concerns with the home. Shortly after this we received another request from foster parents wanting guardianship of their foster son.

These requests resulted in many discussions as we struggled with what is in the best interests of the child, and how best to ensure they have permanency in their time in care. Given the challenges Animikii faces in recruiting First Nation foster parents, how best do we ensure homes for our children that are culturally appropriate or even sensitive? We asked ourselves if there was a way for us to honor our communities and children in care by bringing the traditional beliefs and practices to the process. We felt that we could, at the very least push for our community's voices to be heard. This was the starting point of what would become a very different way of working for our agency in responding to requests for guardianship of permanent wards.

First we had to address a number of questions. Are the children treaty to a specific community? All four of the children were treaty; three to Wabaseemoong FN (White Dog) and one to Sandy Lake FN. We then looked

at the foster parents. Are the foster parents Aboriginal and/or treaty to a specific community? In the first request one of the parents was an American Indian from a community in the USA. The other family was not Aboriginal nor had ties to a community. How long have the children been in the home? In our first request the children had only been in the home for a short period and we felt that should the foster parents remain interested in another year we would reconsider their request. In the second request the child had been in the home since birth. In the first request the three children were also old enough to have an opinion on the request for guardianship. In the second request the child was too young to voice an opinion but was securely attached to his foster parents.

We approached the communities involved for guidance; Wabaseemoong FN and Sandy Lake FN. Each community has its own unique traditions and beliefs and spirituality so we needed to allow ourselves to be led by the elders and knowledge keepers of each community. We also relied on the agency staff in each community to advise us of their protocols.

The final and perhaps biggest challenge was engaging the foster parents in this process which would be quite foreign to them. Would they be open to meeting with the community and taking part in a more traditional gifting of children by the family/community prior to the court process being completed.

In spring of 2015 we began with the first request for guardianship of three children. The following is a report of the process by one of the supervisors who took part in the gathering and ceremony.

The Agency requested that the foster parents come to meet with the community and family. The meeting took place at an annual agency picnic in Kenora to provide a more casual initial meeting. The biological family, community members, foster parents and children had a chance to meet and develop connections. Following this meeting the foster parents began emailing and setting up visits. This was important to the Agency and community to ensure that lasting familial connections would be maintained. In the fall 2015

the Agency set up another gathering to take place in White Dog, FN, Ontario. The foster family, community members / elders, the maternal grandfather and AOCFS were all in attendance. AOCFS also extended an invitation to the elders of the foster family communities but they were unable to attend.

This was a wonderful opportunity for community elders to meet explain to the family what adopting versus gifting means. And through this understanding a commitment to children, their family and their community. Rather than coming from a perspective of taking away, the elders from the foster father's tribal community provided a traditional gift of “joining of the communities” to the elders of White Dog FN joining the two communities together through the children. “A truly beautiful and spiritual event took place as it was agreed that the elders of White Dog, who were in the ceremony would smudge the medicine boxes that AOCFS would be gifting to the children. As well, an elder from White Dog also spoke on why the community is opposed to Western model of adoption leading to a better understanding for all who took part”.

“Please know that it is very difficult to explain the intent / meaning as these are the words and stories of someone else, but the message was understood be all those there. The room was full of emotion, kindness and respect and as a visitor I want to convey that this is one of the most compelling and significant experiences that I have been involved in my career. When decisions are made in a good way like this it deeply and profoundly has made me proud of the work that we get to do. I am so humbled and thankful of this experience.

Misty Bousquet, BSW
Supervisor

Our second request for guardianship/ gifting took place in Sandy Lake Ontario a fly in community. This report is from the staff who took part in this gifting.

“The agency was notified of the death of the mother of one of our permanent wards. Mom was a beautiful, young woman from the community of Sandy Lake, Ontario and had been in regular contact with her child while he was in care”.

After the funeral there was discussion with Tikinagan CFS and the extended family from Sandy Lake about the possibility of having the child return to the community to live with family.

Although there was family identified they would not be able to care for a young child. During this time foster mom asked if she could adopt him. The agency explained that it is our philosophy that we do not adopt out our children. That family and community connections are very important in preserving our children's identities and sense of belonging. There were no protection concerns barring contact with family or community. The foster parents advised us that rather than apply for adoption they would be applying for guardianship of the child.

Although this child has been in the foster home most of his life we felt that it was crucial they know of our commitment to the family and community and asked that court process be slowed to allow us to see if we could engage the community and family for support. We hoped for a meeting with extended family, community members and elders. We met at length with the foster family who, despite their initial fears cared enough about this little boy to engage in a process that would respect and honor his family and community.

Agency supervisors and staff worked closely with the agency in the community (Tikinagan) to try and set up a gathering of extended family and community members. The staff of Tikinagan were clear that they would not support the application unless they could meet with the foster parents in their own community and see the relationship between the little boy and his foster parents and to assure themselves that he was loved and cared for. Furthermore it was important to them that family and community ties would remain. The family wanted to be able to meet with the foster parents and speak with them about the child's connection to his family and community.

The agency arranged to have the child, foster parents and our agency representatives fly to the community of Sandy Lake. The family was able to meet with the child and foster parents and see that the child was well cared for and very attached to his foster family. He met numerous cousins who were very happy to see him. The day included a feast with the child, foster family, his late mom's extended family, chief and council, Tikinagan staff and Animikii staff. Anyone wanting to attend from the community were also welcomed.

The following day the child visited with his great grandfather at his home and spent the rest of the day visiting his family. The family and community shared

that they were happy to see the child and stated that they were in support of the guardianship as long as the child would continue to visit his family and community. The foster parents agreed to have the child visit at least once a year and that they would communicate through email, internet and phone calls in between.

Since that visit the foster parents returned to Sandy Lake for the late mother's memorial. The foster parents continue to communicate with their 'new' extended family via email and Facebook and have plans to return to the community for vacation.

In both applications for guardianship the process involved was quite different from each other as the community's themselves is very different. However, both communities had one primary goal; each wanted the very best for their child/children and wanted to be assured that they would be loved and cared for. Both experiences were very humbling experiences and our

staff who were involved left with new knowledge and teachings and a deep respect for the strength of the families involved and the communities.

We owe a great debt of gratitude to the leadership and members of the communities of Wabaseemong FN (White Dog) and Sandy Lake FN for welcoming us to their territory and sharing their knowledge with us.

We want to thank Adolphus Cameron of Wabaseemoong and his staff and Martha Rae and the Tikinagan staff for their guidance and teachings.

We also want to say Gitchi Miigwetch to the foster families involved who took a leap of faith and joined us in this process. They could have refused but came to the process with openness and respect.



Tracy and Family

Youth Recognition

Our youth continue to work hard to achieve their dreams. Some will be continuing on to post secondary education and we want to congratulate **Kyle kakegumick** and **Ariel Presma** for being awarded the tuition waivers for University.

We are thrilled to acknowledge the following youth who completed high school this year:

Joseph (Joey) Spade

Kevin Esquega

Maggie McDonald

Joby Kakegumick

Blaine Oshawee

And congratulations to the 15 youth who successfully completed the Independent Living program offered at Animikii this year.

Fe and Mel Leddo



Foster Parent Recognition

Fe and Melanio (Mel) Ledda have been members of the Animikii Ozoson family since 2007. Since then they have been valuable members of the circle of care. They are skilled at providing care for medically fragile children. Among many other abilities Fe and Mel are adept at administering needles, using feeding tubes, and caring for children who have seizures, congenital heart defects, limited lung capacity and cerebral palsy.

Fe and Mel have demonstrated to embody each of the Seven Teachings which guide Animikii Ozoson Child and Family Services. They have shown Love toward each of the children they have welcomed into their home. Over the

years, Fe and Mel have cared for many children; some short-term until they were well enough to return to their home community and others long term such as their three current foster sons who have been in their home for 3, 8 and 10 years. Regardless of the length of the time in their home, Fe and Mel treat each child as a valued member of their family. Fe and Mel's adult children have also embraced each of the foster children into their lives and they have been trained to provide the medical attention required for the children's day to day care.

Respect is shown to each and every person who enters the Ledda home. Fe and Mel view their foster children through a strengths-based lens. When speaking about their foster children, they focus on their strengths and abilities and not their medical diagnosis or physical limitations. Fe and Mel recognize the importance of children maintaining connections with their families and communities of origin. When one of the infants placed with them required specialized care, Fe volunteered to teach his mother how to feed the baby and administer his medication so that she may enjoy her visits with her child.

Fe and Mel have shown great Wisdom as foster parents. They have spent countless hours at Children's Hospital receiving training for the children who are being entrusted to their care. When asked, Fe and Mel have shown a willingness to take any training recommended by the agency and have also requested additional training when they have identified an area which they would like to learn more about. Fe and Mel have a deep understanding of the needs

of their foster children and show patience, often having to reteach concepts over and over when working with children who have cognitive delays.

Throughout their years of fostering children with high needs, Fe and Mel have shown great Courage. A few years ago when Fe and Mel were asked to care for a child whose life expectancy was unknown, they bravely accepted stating it is their belief that the child deserved to be loved for however long he was with them. During this time, Fe and Mel tirelessly spent time at his bedside in the hospital and they both travelled to Edmonton when he required heart surgery. After the surgery Mel returned home to care for the other children and Fe stayed with the child during his two week recovery time.

Fe and Mel maintain open communication with the agency exemplifying Truth and Honesty. They always act in the children's best interest and ensure they consult with their case managers prior to making decisions for the children. After one of the children in their care passed away due to a medical condition, Fe and Mel were honest about the grief they were feeling and were able to articulate their need for some time to properly mourn their loss. To this day, the child remains in the hearts of the Leddas and they keep a picture of him in their home as a reminder of how he touched their lives. Understanding the true nature of their eldest foster son's needs, they have made many modifications to their home to accommodate his wheelchair and medical equipment. They have given up their own space to convert their formal dining room to a bedroom for their foster son to allow him to have his own space on the main level of their home.

Fe and Mel show Humility by working collaboratively with everyone involved in the lives of the children in their home. They are able to share their feelings with the children's case managers and do not hesitate to seek support when needed. In order to provide their foster children with many experiences such as camping and fishing the Leddas have purchased a special van that can accommodate their foster son's wheelchair so they can all travel together. Mel works the evening shift at his job so that he is able to transport the children to family visits and specialist appointments. Mel has shared that he is looking forward to retiring from his job so that he is available to be at home with Fe and the children full-time.

We are humbled and honored to have the privilege to work alongside this family in the circle of care at Animikii Ozoson Child and Family Services. We offer thanks to Fe and Mel. Miigwetch



Gloria Anderson

Gloria and her late husband Garry Anderson have four foster sons that they have been fostering since 2007. Gloria and Garry are passionate and caring individuals with a genuine desire to help others. Gloria and Garry have always demonstrated consistency, structure, patience and unconditional love for their foster sons. They are family oriented and enjoy spending family time with the children, playing board games, card games, fishing, cooking, etc. Gloria and Garry have always demonstrated support for family visits and for many years drove 3 hours (one way) into Winnipeg for the boys to visit with their family. When the boys were initially placed with Gloria and Gary all of their family welcomed the boys into their family and from then on, have always included the boys in all family activities and vacations. One of the many talents and passions of Garry was building and fixing things in and

around the house. Garry made a point of sharing this talent with the boys, teaching them how to build things, repair things and generally learn how to be self-reliant. Gloria and Garry believe in the ideal that children deserve to be treated equally and provided the same opportunities as all children. So when her eldest foster son's graduation class was presented with an opportunity to go to Greece, Gloria supported and advocated for her foster son to have this special experience the same as his peers.

In January of 2014 Garry suddenly and sadly passed away. During this difficult time, Gloria knew more than ever that her boys needed her as much as she needed them. Through many sad and challenging days Gloria's main focus and concern remained the boys; her dedication

and love for them remained unwavering. With the assistance of extended family, the boys continue to participate in extra-curricular activities, have adult male role models and friendships and overall an abundance of male love and nurturance.

Gloria is a shining example of an extraordinary foster parent. Gloria is strong in her beliefs and convictions when it comes to advocating and supporting the needs and rights of her fosterer sons and is not afraid to express her love for her foster sons, no matter what challenges or barriers they may face. She is always strengths based when describing her sons and promoting positive self-esteem in her boys.

We honor Gloria and her late Garry's dedication and commitment to the children and the agency. We thank Gloria for all that she has done and will continue to do for the children in her care.



Carrie and her children

Path to Wellness

Carrie's Journey

I grew up in an extremely unhealthy home, raised by my mother which whom struggled with many addictions of her own. As a child I've experienced physical, mental, and sexual abuse. I had no choice but to grow up fast, which lead me down the wrong path in life, and led me to struggle with addictions at an early age. Between 1998 and 2006 I had four beautiful children and all I wanted was to break the cycle that I faced as a child, I wanted to give them more, I wanted to always be there for them, as I knew what abandonment felt like for myself, I never wanted them to experience any pain. Within this time I was always able to maintain my home even though I struggled in and out of addictions, and an abusive relationship. The relationship with my children's father got worse and so did the drugs. My journey with Animikii started in 2007, my children were taken into care, and I lost it! Losing my children was the most traumatizing pain I've ever experienced. I didn't want to feel so I turned to the only thing that would take away the pain, but only for a little while. In 2009 after going to a reunification home in Pedro Lake and staying there for a year I was able to get custody back of my children. As soon as I came back to the city I was back at it, it was like nothing had changed I was still using and my using and the chaos got worse, I was lying to everyone to cover my own ass, justifying my drug use every way possible,

thinking I was doing no harm to anyone. September 24/12 my children were taken again and the vicious cycle continued, I was homeless; I exploited myself on the streets, I let the drugs and streets take over, I was hooked and I was hooked bad.

I wasn't always an easy person to deal with and I hated authority and someone else having control over my life made my skin crawl. I know I've had my ups and downs with some of my workers and we haven't always seen eye to eye, but I have great gratitude today for them all; Maria, Melissa, Kristi, Lea and Matthew. I have great gratitude for you all not giving up on me even on my worse days, always standing beside me when I had no one else. Today I recognize you all had a job to do and that was keeping my

children safe at times when I was not able to. From the bottom of my heart I thank you all for your unconditional love and support.

June 2014 I made my fifth attempt into residential treatment, at this time Animikii had no choice but to take me to court for a permanent order, but I would not sign my children over and I decided to fight. Fight for my life, fight for my children and fight for my family. Fighting was the hardest thing I had to do or face. I had to feel again, I had to remember things going back to my childhood, I had to forgive and that alone took a lot of courage. Today I walk the red road with twenty five months of sobriety; my children are home with me, I got my high school diploma and I'm starting college in the fall. My children and I are dedicated to our traditional teachings and ceremonies, which I believe, saved my life; we have just finished our second year of sun dance together. I am very proud of my achievements and I know this is only the beginning.

To the demon who dwells within me...

I'm writing you this letter to let you know how sick you make me and how much I hate you for coming into my life and taking over everything I do, or did. You pretended to be my friend and acted like you'd always be there for me when I was down and needed you. In the beginning I liked the way you made me feel, you made all the bad thoughts and feelings go away, I thought you were there to help. Then you sunk your teeth into me and poisoned me with your venom, you took control over me in every way possible, you made me do things I'd never do if you hadn't taken my sanity, as you begged me for more and More and MORE.

Now I know it was never about me or what I needed, it was always about you and what you wanted. You wanted my life and almost got it, I F***ING HATE YOU you're nothing but a greedy piece of s*** that won't stop till you get what you want. Well not this time, I beat you at your own game and finally got the courage to get the help I needed all along.

So now it's time to tell you stop hunting me, F*** off, leave me alone and go back to hell where you belong.

I'm a survivor.

Vision Statement

We have a vision of a strong community circle of care where healthy empowered families provide a nurturing place for children and where everyone (Elders, leaders, helpers, grandmothers, grandfathers, mothers, fathers, aunts, uncles, sisters, brothers, husbands and wives) work together to build a better place for all children.

Mission Statement:

Building Circles of Care, Protection of Children, Empowering Families, Strengthening Community Networks

Animikii Ozoson Child and Family Services is the fruition of an idea, around which caring people have organized. It is an idea about helping Aboriginal families and children by empowering them to care for themselves and one another. It is an idea rooted in aboriginal family values, beliefs and cultural traditions. It requires commitment and faith in the strength of families and their ability to change; to improve their lives and provide a nurturing place for children.

The overall purpose of the agency is to protect children from child maltreatment and support families so they can maintain their children

at home. When necessary, the agency will provide children in need of protection with temporary out-of-home care within their extended family if at all possible or within a network of culturally appropriate/ culturally sensitive alternate caregivers. In all cases, the agency will take a comprehensive and culturally sensitive approach that emphasizes family preservation and family reunification. When family reunification is not possible, the agency will provide long term alternate care for children who become permanent wards, while maintaining a strong connection to their extended family and community of origin.

Core Values: Goals of Service

- to deliver culturally appropriate services to families and children
- to take a “least disruptive measures” approach to intervention, delivering services from an orientation and philosophy of prevention and support
- to provide family support services with a view to keeping families together
- to provide alternate care for children requiring out-of-home care, with an emphasis on using extended family and aboriginal caregivers whenever possible, while still ensuring that the child’s best interests are being met
- to keep sibling groups together when children require out-of-home care, whenever possible and appropriate
- to develop and maintain a placement resource program, incorporating a regular and ongoing training program for foster parents, homemakers, parent aides, and volunteers
- to repatriate children in care to extended family and/or home community, whenever possible and appropriate
- to reach out to the Ontario Aboriginal Child and Family Services agencies for their assistance in providing services to client families and children affiliated with the First Nations served by their agencies
- to work cooperatively with other First Nations CFS agencies in the development of comprehensive supports for cases being transferred to/from each other

Service

Wheel

Alternative Care Highlights

- New kinship licensing standard provides caregivers with a culturally safe and less intrusive licensing process.
- 23 new Foster/Kinship resources and two specialized medical resources were opened this past fiscal year.
- The number of children in Emergency Placement Resources significantly decreased over the past fiscal year.
- The unit successfully completed all recommendations from the Auditor General's Report.
- To support our placement resources the unit offered quarterly orientation sessions to foster parents.
- This past fiscal year recruitment strategies included a referral finder's fee, postings in rural and urban communities; including Ontario communities.

Alternative Care

Alternative Care is responsible for securing placement resources for children in care. The unit manages the recruitment, development, licensing, and support of all agency placement resources.

Services to Children and Families

We provide mandated protective services to children and families. The primary focus is to protect children, preserve families, reunify families and repatriate children to their community.

Services to Children and Families Highlights

- The agency has committed to the development of an Intensive Family Reunification program.
- We have successfully worked with Voluntary Placement Agreements, Temporary Orders, Apprehensions, and Voluntary Surrender of Guardianships to return children in care to their parents, extended family, kinship, and community. A total of 40 children have returned home to their biological parents. Six children went to family through Guardianship Agreements. Eleven children were repatriated to their Ontario communities.
 - Four children were part of a traditional gifting of children ceremony prior to guardianship being granted.
 - Three families are being assessed for reunification of seven Permanent Wards back to their care.
 - The agency is pleased to acknowledge an increase in fathers working towards reunification.

Family Enhancement Highlights

- We provide direct prevention services to families by connecting them to the appropriate resources and advocacy to meet their needs.
- We engage our families by creating cultural opportunities such as medicine picking.
- We offer in house programs such as Red Road to Healing, a Family Violence program and a Traditional Parenting program.
- Families were provided with clothing, school supplies, and basic necessity items.
- This past fiscal year a number of agency families received a Christmas hamper thanks to generations donations and team fund raising.

Family Enhancement

We provide short terms intensive support to families thus mitigating risk factors that may lead to protective interventions.

Children in Care

We provide wraparound, holistic services to children in care who are involved with the agency which includes cultural and therapeutic supports. Services are provided to permanent wards, temporary wards, extensions of care, voluntary placement, agreements, and voluntary surrender of guardianship.

Children in Care Highlights

- Fifteen youth successfully completed the Agency Living program.
- We supported 22 young adults on extensions of care to attend university, post-secondary, trades programs or to enhance their independent capacity.
- This year we had five high school graduates and two are planning to explore post-secondary programs.

Family Service Cases and Children in Care Statistics

as of March 31, 2016

Case Category



174
Protection Services



14
Family Enhancement Services



2
Voluntary Family Services



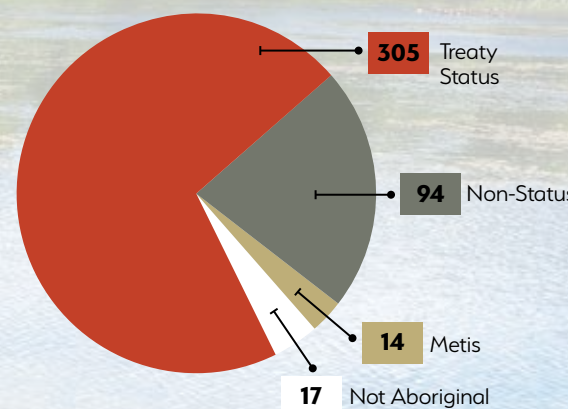
4
Expectant Parent Services



430*
Children in Care

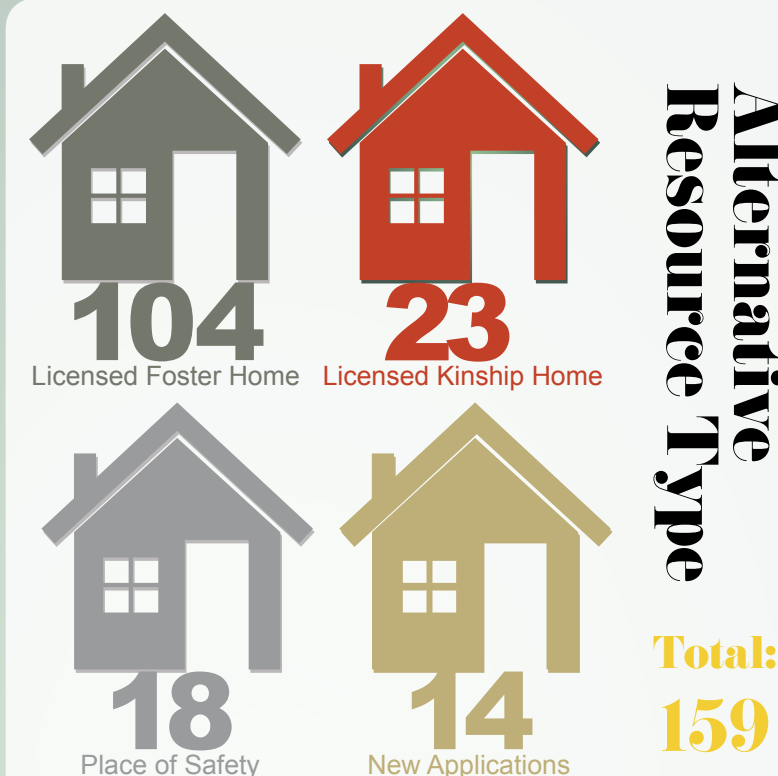
Total: 624

Aboriginal Status of the 430 Children in Care:

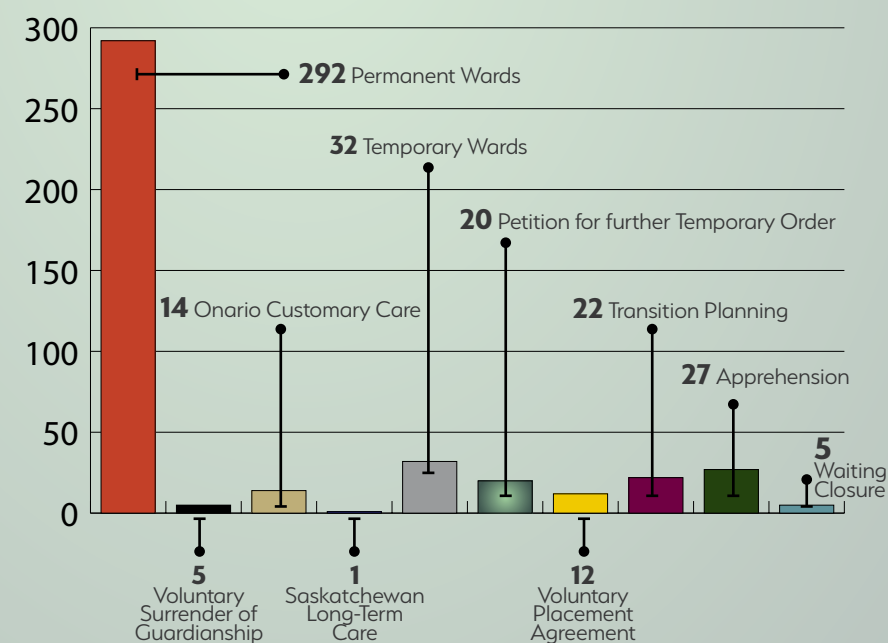


Placement of the 430 Children

Foster Home	327
Specialized Foster Home	15
Independent Living	16
Residential/Group Home	28
Own Home/Relative	4
Place of Safety	21
Correctional Facility	3
Out of Province	12
Health Facilities	2
Other	2
TOTAL	430



Legal Status of the 430 Children in Care:



Community Affiliations of the Children in Care:

ONTARIO First Nation Communities	
Algonquins of Pikwakanagan FN (Golden Lake)	2
Animakee Wa Zhing #37 (Northwest Angle 37 FN)	4
Anishnaabeg of Naongashiing FN (Big Island FN)	9
Asubpeeschoseewagong FN (Grassy Narrows FN)	23
Bearskin Lake FN	1
Biinjitiwaabik Zaaging Anishinaabek (Rocky Bay FN)	1
Couchiching FN	2
Deer Lake FN	8
Eabametoong FN (Fort Hope)	11
Eagle Lake FN	7
Flying Post FN	2
Fort Severn FN	5
Iskatewizaagegan 39 Independent FN (Shoal Lake #39 FN)	6
Keewaywin FN	13
Kiashe Zaaging Anishinaabeck (Gull Bay FN)	2
Kingfisher FN	7
Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug (Big Trout Lake)	2
Lac La Croix FN	3
Lac Seul FN	11
Long Lake No. 58 FN	6
Marten Falls FN	7
Mishkeegogamang FN (Onasburgh)	17
Mishkosiminiziibiing (Big Grassy River FN)	1
Muskrat Dam FN	1
Naotkamegwanning FN (Whitefish Bay FN)	6
Negaw-zaaga'igani Nitam-Anishinaabe (Sandy Lake FN)	58
North Spirit Lake FN	8
Northwest Angle #33 FN	10
Obashkaandagaang Bay FN (Washagamis Bay FN)	4
Ojibways of Onigaming FN (Onigaming FN)	3
Pikangikum FN	2
Poplar Hill FN	1
Rainy River FN	8
Sachigo Lake FN	3
Seine River FN (Rivière la Seine Band)	4
Shoal Lake FN #40	11
Temagami FN	2
Wabaseemoong Independent FN (White Dog)	27
Wabigoon Lake Ojibway FN	6
Whitesand FN	4
Wikwemikong FN	4
TOTAL	292



Ontario CFS Agencies working with these Children:

Ontario Based CFS Agencies	Number of children with Animikii Ozoson CFS	Number of communities served referring to previous table
Anishinaabe Abinoojii Family Services	47	11
Anishinaabek Gamik Pikwakanagan Child and Family Services	2	1
Dilico Child and Family Services	11	2
Kitapinoonjiiminaanik Family Services	23	1
Kina-Gbezhgomi Child and Family Services	4	1
Nipissing/Parry Sound Child and Family Services	2	1
Shawendaasowin Family Services	16	2
Tikinagan Child and Family Services	153	15
Wabaseemoong Child Welfare Authority	27	1
Weechi-it-te-win Family Services	26	6
Total	311	41



Organizational Chart

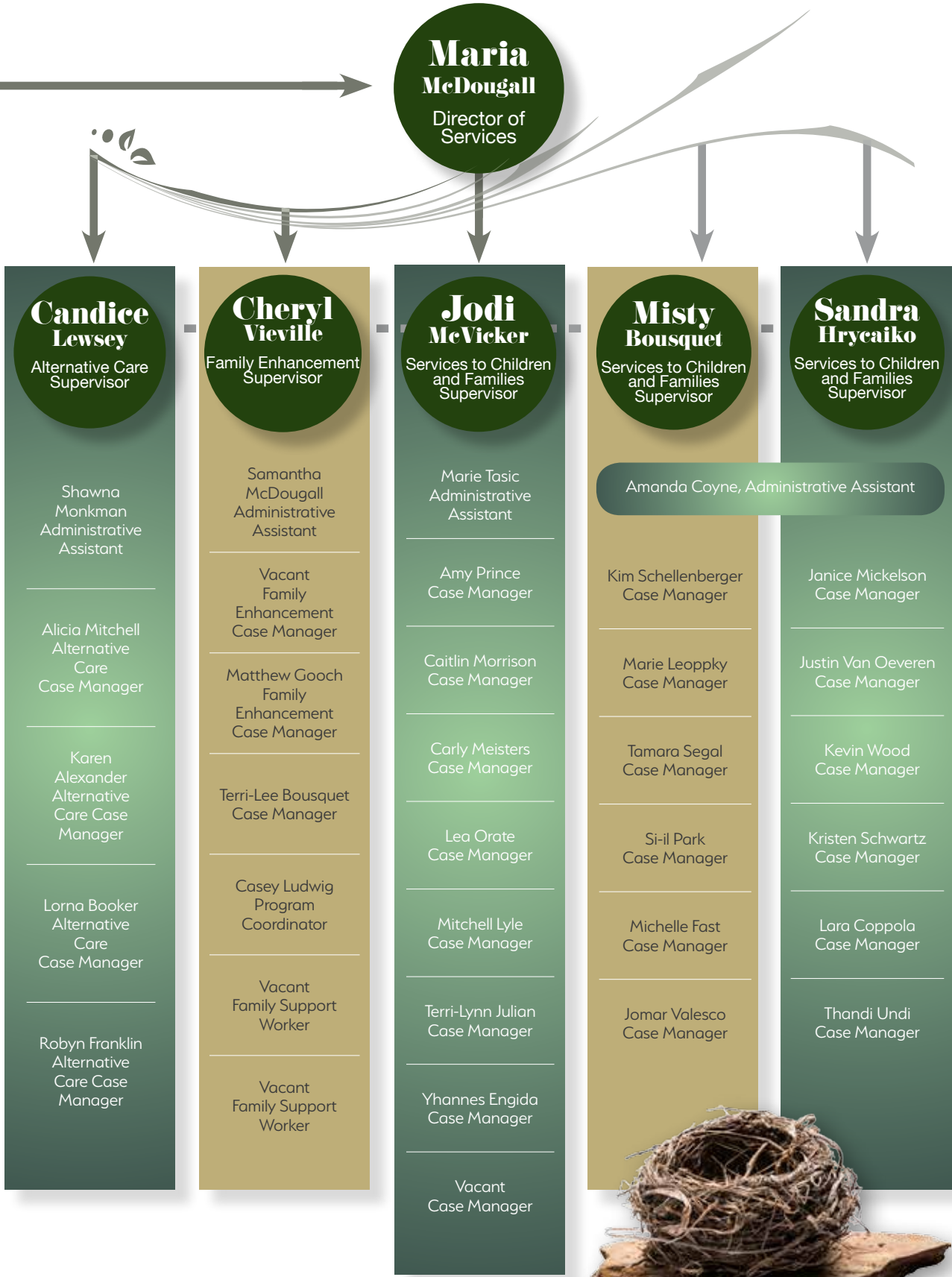
as of March 31, 2016



Despite Animikii Ozoson being a newer agency having been mandated in 2005, we are pleased to announce the following staff have been with Animikii for more than five years:

- Candice Lewsey**
Cheryl Vieville
Daniel Jordaan
Holly Twoheart
Jodi McVicker
Mandy Coyne
Terri Lee Bousquet
Thandi Undi

*Of those listed above, six employees will have been with Animikii Ozoson for 10 years within the next fiscal year.



Quality Assurance

My name is Ryan Woychuk and I am the Quality Assurance Specialist (QAS) for Animikii Ozoson Child and Family Services. My team includes Alexander (AJ) Lantin my QA assistant and file clerks Holly Twoheart and Karen Colby. I also provide support and supervision to receptionist Jennifer Moar and Kyle Kakegumic.

Overall, Quality Assurance is responsible for reviewing and supportively enhancing the transparency, accountability and measurability of an Agency's day-to-day service delivery based on Manitoba Child Welfare Legislation (and associated legislation), regulations, Provincial Child Welfare Practice Standards while incorporating a 'best practice' approach to service provision for families and children. On a day-to-day level the Quality Assurance is responsible for, but not limited to:

- Conducts reviews on agency Child Welfare practices to ensure Provincial legislative practices and standards are adhered to from a 'best practices approach' and provides recommendations to improve, and enhance existing service provision;
- Monitors and conducts CFSIS reviews to report on the Agency's compliance with usage and quality of work per legislation and practice standards; Provides timely statistical reports on the Agency's overall case count and CFSIS compliance;
- Identifies service delivery trends and areas of growth based on statistical analysis of Agency case counts and service delivery strengths and needs;
- Reviews and develops policies and procedures on other Agency operations as instructed by the Executive Director to ensure standards are being adhered to;
- Analyzes internal Agency processes and provides feedback and recommendations on how to improve processes to enhance the quality of service;
- Develops and implements the use of reporting formats to review and track Agency compliance and follow-through with previously implemented external/internal service recommendations, internal practice policies, external recommendations and directives

from the Southern First Nations Network of Care and the Province;

- Tracks and reports on the Agency's progress with their strategic service plan;
- Liaise between the Southern First Nations Network of Care and the Agency in regards Quality Assurance work plans, and CFSIS and practice standards implementation review and compliance.
- Represents the agency on a number of external committees including the ANCR Steering Committee and the Phoenix Sinclair Working Group Committee.
- Coordinates, implements, reviews, updates and generates reports on the Agency's follow through with recommendations and inquiries from external governing bodies such as the Province, Office of the Auditor General and recommendations from the Office of the Children's Advocate.
- Provides in-house training to direct service staff on Manitoba Child Welfare legislation, regulations and practice standards.

During the past year Quality Assurance has been very with the following;

- Coordinated, reviewed, updated and generated reports on the Agency's follow through with recommendations from external governing bodies such as the Office of the Auditor General and the Office of the Children's Advocate following the death of a child in care. As of March 31, 2016, I'm pleased to announce that they agency has no outstanding external recommendations.
- Completed 12 statistical and 18 unit/worker specific CFSIS compliance and quality reviews with follow-up emails and meetings to communicate results and strategize improve/maintain compliance.
- Provided monthly statistical analysis reports on Agency case counts and Agency CFSIS compliance; providing recommendations on how to improve service delivery and accountability for families and children.

- Completed a total of 5 internal reviews that looked at the quality of direct service practice per Provincial standards. Out of these reviews came a total of 11 internal recommendations. Thus far, the agency has implemented 2 of 11 recommendations.
- Conducted a total of 40 random 'spot checks' on CFSIS to review compliance and quality of work; including, compliance with agency policy on completion of case transfers and closing.
- Continued to implement, track, update and report on ongoing compliance with external recommendations, ongoing strategic service plan initiatives, internal reviews and alternative dispute resolution processes.
- Worked with the Director of Human Resources on redeveloping department specific staff evaluations.
- Regularly attended Quality Assurance meetings at the Southern First Nations Network of Care to gather information on upcoming Quality Assurance reviews and changes and compliance requirements to practice standards.
- Regularly attended advisory committee meetings hosted by Winnipeg's designated intake agency, All Nations Coordinated Response Network (ANCR), to collaborate and provide feedback on how to strengthen

the working relationship between Animikii Ozoson, ANCR, and other sister southern First Nations agencies so that services to families and children go uninterrupted.

- Attended Phoenix Sinclair Working Group Committee meetings to provide agency feedback on Inquiry recommendations and proposed service delivery model.
- Developed and facilitated in house training on case documentation, critical incident reporting and interprovincial protocol and agreements for children in care
- Developed several new policies and procedures including an external and internal transfer process along, external/ Internal complaint and inquiry policy and procedures for services provided and an agency specific Interprovincial Agreement and addendums.
- Developed information brochures for families and foster families on services based on current legislative timelines and practice standards.

It has been another great year and I look forward to providing support to the Agency through ongoing reviews and recommendations that will continue to enhance the Agency and the service we provide to our families and children.

Ryan Woychuk
Quality Assurance Specialist

Administrative Support Unit

Our administrative team are the backbone of the work we do and we cannot say Thank-you/Miigwetch enough for all their hard work and support.

Jenn Moar is our receptionist and is kept very busy as Animikii continues to see a large number of youth and families dropping by or coming in for visits. This year we were able to add casual/term workers Caitlin McVicker and Amanda Bembenek to help manage the administrative requirements of our hard working admin team. Kyle Kakegumick continues to work in the file room to provide assistance to Holly Twoheart our senior file clerk, but also provides reception back up for Jenn Moar our receptionist as needed. Karen Colby also does back up on reception in addition to her duties in the file room and her sunny disposition is much appreciated by children families and staff.

Holly Twoheart continued her work on archiving this year and is making a substantial dent in our closed files section. Holly also took on the task of tracking and securing our cic passports and birth certificates.

Our Services to Children and Family Admin have been on a bit of a learning curve as we moved from specialized

workers and moved to generic caseload service model. This meant having to learn other duties that may have been specific to Permanent wards or family service only teams. Mandy Coyne one of our long term admin stepped in to carry much of the work load for two teams with the assistance of Caitlin McVicker who has been assisting part time. Thank you Mandy for always stepping in to help whenever needed. Marie Tasic continued to provide excellent service to her team of workers in family service.

The alternative care position was filled just prior to year end in March and we welcomed Shawna Monkman to that team.

Samantha McDougall remains as administrative assistant to the Family Enhancement team and her creative skills are greatly appreciated by all the agency committees who utilize her for invitations or posters.

We also welcomed Cyndi Menke as the Executive Administrative assistant to our Executive Director and the Board of Directors. Her friendly and welcoming personality and ability to multi-task is greatly appreciated by all.

We want to say thank you to all for your hard work and dedication to Animikii.

Acknowledgements

Gitchi Miigwetch/Thank you to the following organizations/donors that have supported our children and families this year:

D'arcy and Deacon LLB
All Nations Print
Issues Ink
Corpus Christi Parish

Human Resources

During the past fiscal year the Human Resource department has continued to enhance recruitment and retention strategies for the Agency, as well as, support Agency staff. AOCFS continues to explore additional opportunities to broaden the geographical scope for advertising Agency postings and attending University/College job fairs. AOCFS Leadership team has discussed our recruitment needs with Leadership teams from our Ontario FN communities and this has led to a modest increase in Ontario applicants.

Some exciting changes that will be implemented over the next year to the HR department are with the introduction of the Human Resource Management System (HRMS) program. One of the goals of the HRMS program is to further support staff by allowing them immediate access to their service records such as vacation and sick time, as well as be able to review any attendance records first hand. Retention strategies have continued and include HR and Management team assisting and organizing staff appreciation activities such as long term service recognition awards. The Agency monitors its turnover rate on a yearly basis and is pleased to be below average industrial standard.

The Agency continues to place emphasis on staff training and professional development offering more opportunities for such training and development, as we believe positive reinforcement for all staff will in return create even more effective working relationships. Over the past year, a variety of training opportunities have been made available to staff and more recently the use of the Agency's in-house training facility to further support staff in their professional development.

The Agency strives to meet workforce qualifications with skilled staff to provide effective service delivery for all the communities we serve. The policy on educational support and leaves was formalized, adding to the retention of staff. Currently the Agency has two staff members that are enrolled in the BSW or MSW program. Other than those currently in universities, all our social staff are registered or, have applied to become registered with the Manitoba College of Social Workers to ensure full compliance of our trained staff and services we provide.

As of March 31, 2016, the Agency had 46 permanent staff and 1 term employee. Out of the 47 staff, 12 are from First Nations, 11 identify as other Aboriginal (Metis) and 24 are non-Aboriginal. As part of the strategy to broaden our scope and increase our Ontario based workforce, thus providing culturally appropriate services to our primarily Ontario client base, advertising continues to include the Province of Ontario, with a focus on the North Western region. The Agency hopes to continue to increase the number of Aboriginal staff; however, the Agency remains hampered by the lack of tax free status for FN staff.

Animikii Ozoson Child and Family Services continues to make great strides in strengthening its office culture and family relationships by incorporating sharing circles and cultural practices such as smudging and prayer. We have monthly staff meetings where we invite Elders and/or Advisors to provide support to our staff, and to increase sensitivity and training for non-Aboriginal staff.

Miigwetch,,
Daniel Jordaan
Director of Human Resources

Finance

The past year has been very busy for our Finance department. We have strived to enhance the productivity and efficiency of our staff by examining many of our processes and looking at the potential for change. Out of this exercise came a software package that will dramatically increase our productivity while at the same time eliminating the potential our current system has for human error when dealing with our maintenance billings to the Provincial government. We are currently in the final implementation of the first of three phases for this project. The balance of the implementation will take place during the next fiscal year. Another big project that was completed this year was the development of our training centre which is now being actively used on a regular basis.

We have experienced yet another year of steadfastness in our department. There has been zero staff turnover. Our dedicated Finance Team includes:

Mike Peters – Mike is responsible for Provincial billings for children in care, voucher requests, travel reimbursements, and children special allowances and rates.

Cathy Herrera – Cathy is responsible for our Agency payroll, bank reconciliations, deposits, travel bookings and medical cards.

Ruby Manalac – Ruby is responsible for maintaining children in care financial records, foster care payments, and general accounts payable.

Our Finance Team was able to complete a number of set goals this fiscal year including:

- Regular attendance at monthly Agency Relations meetings.
- Ongoing professional development courses for Finance staff.
- Ongoing internal maintenance of our website.
- Successful rollout of our staff intranet.
- Completion of Phase II renovations to the 4th floor of our building including office space, training facilities, and child-care space.
- Initial review work on our current Finance Policy Handbook to identify areas requiring updates and upgrades.

- Ongoing monitoring of CRA guidelines for tax-free status requirements/opportunities.
- Ongoing participation in implementation of our HR software.
- Negotiations to secure funding for our maintenance billing software
- Initial work towards implementation of phase 1 of our maintenance billing software.

Summary of Audited Financial Results:

Our annual audit was completed in record time this year and resulted in a “clean” unqualified report and no weaknesses in our internal control systems were noted by our external auditors, MNP LLP.

Revenues – Operational funding totalled \$4.47 million for the year ended March 31, 2016. This is an increase of 4.1% from the prior year (\$4.30 million for 2015). Primarily this increase was due to funding model changes from the prior year. Provincial maintenance funding totalled \$13.31 million for the fiscal year compared to \$11.70 million for the prior year, an increase of 13.76%.

Expenses – Operational expenses Increased 6.9% from \$3.98 million for 2015 to \$4.25 million for 2016. Cost increases were primarily the result of increases in salaries and benefits, general operating expenses, and purchased services and contracted resource costs.

Our children in care numbers increased to 415 (net of supervision cases) compared to 414 in the prior year. Total maintenance costs increased by 13.37% to \$13,279,061. The average daily cost per child in care at March 2016 was \$87.67 compared to \$79.10 in the prior year, an overall increase of 10.83%.

The agency provided 156,034 days of care for the year. This is an increase of 12,197 days of care from the previous fiscal year (an increase of 8.48%).

Looking ahead our goals for the new fiscal year include:

- Completion of the update and rewrite of our Finance Policy and Procedures Manual.
- Completion of the Implementation of new software for HR and payroll functions.

- Ongoing professional development for each of our Finance staff.
- The rollout of our intranet site for our Board of Directors.
- Ongoing attendance at Agency Relations meetings.
- Active participation in potential new committees relating to ongoing changes in our Provincial maintenance system.
- Implementation of software for vendor electronic fund transfers.
- Completion of the final phases for the implementation of our Provincial billing software.

Miigwetch,
Steven Bembenek B.Sc., CPA, CGA
Director of Finance

Independent Auditors' Report

To the Members of Animikii-Ozoseon Inc.:

We have audited the accompanying financial statements of Animikii-Ozoseon Inc., which comprise the statements of financial position as at March 31, 2016 and the statements of operations, changes in net assets and cash flows for the year then ended, and a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information.

Management's Responsibility for the Financial Statements
Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of these financial statements in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations, and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Auditors' Responsibility
Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audit. We conducted our audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards. Those standards require that we comply with ethical requirements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. The procedures selected depend on the auditors' judgment, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the entity's preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial statements.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

Opinion
In our opinion, the financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of Animikii-Ozoseon Inc. as at March 31, 2016 and the results of its operations, changes in net assets and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations.

Winnipeg, Manitoba
June 22, 2016

MNP LLP
Chartered Professional Accountants

2500 - 201 Portage Ave., Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3B 3K6, Phone: (204) 775-4531, 1 (877) 500-0795

MNP



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