

Mark Your Calendar

Corporate Golf Tournament

Tuesday, June 4, 2002

The Greystone Golf and Country Club in Milton is the venue for a fun-filled and relaxing day of golf. Outstanding golf services, delicious meals and a silent auction are planned. A don't-miss event.

CCAS Annual General Meeting

Tuesday, June 18, 2002

5:00 p.m., St. Lawrence Hall
157 King Street East, Toronto

Camp for Kids Golf

Wednesday, June 12, 2002

Plan to enjoy a day at the Glen Eagle Golf Club and help us send children to camp. Registration includes golf fees, lunch and dinner and a chance to win one of many prizes, including a hole-in-one car.

Hope for Children Foundation Annual General Meeting

Thursday Sept. 19, 2002

5 p.m., 26 Maitland Street, Toronto

For more information about our events call 416-395-1634 or go to www.ccas.toronto.on.ca

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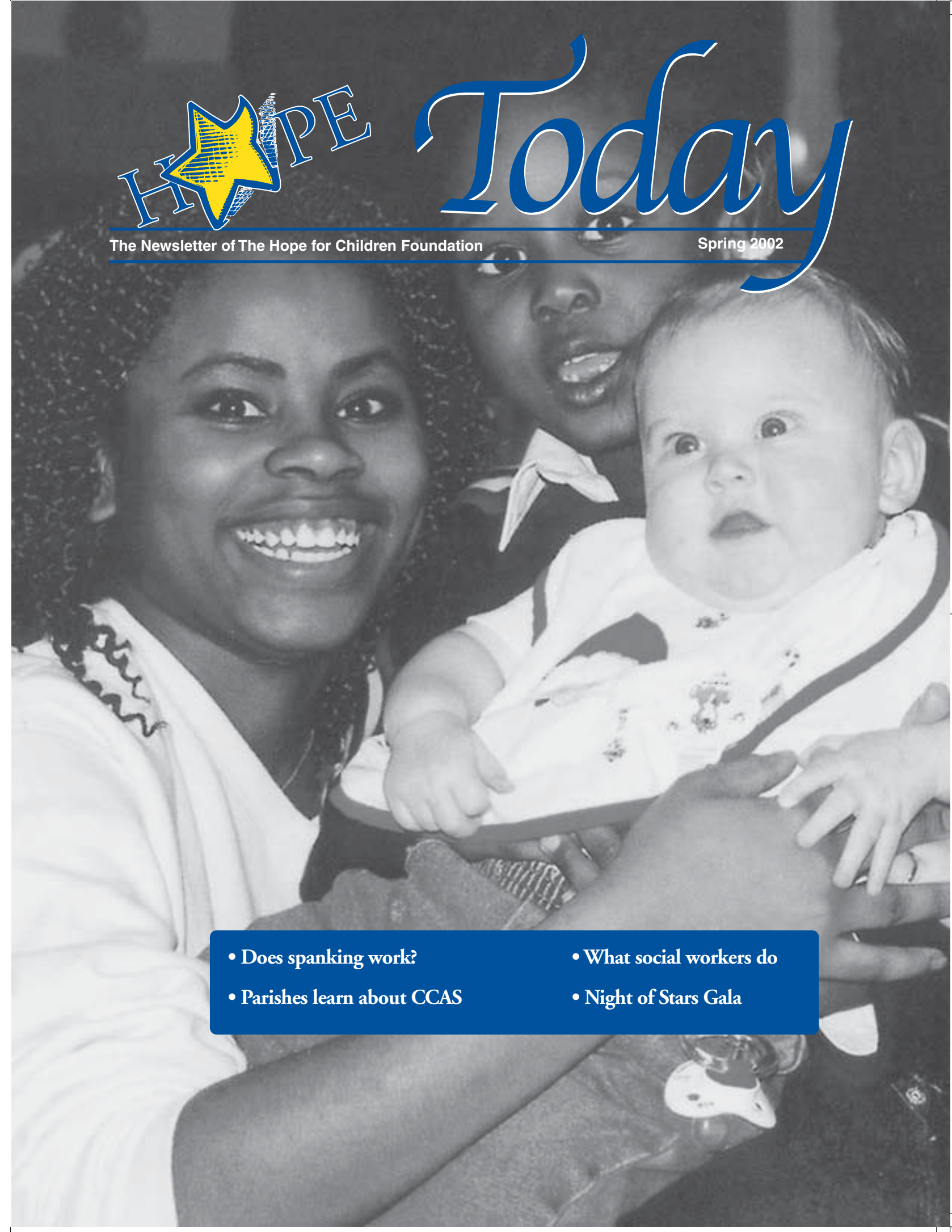
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Today

The Newsletter of The Hope for Children Foundation

Spring 2002



• Does spanking work?

• What social workers do

• Parishes learn about CCAS

• Night of Stars Gala

Board members' efforts critical to Foundation success

The work of the Hope for Children Foundation is an integral and critical part of the relationship between children and families and the CCAS. The funding provided by the Foundation makes a very important difference in the lives of children and CCAS care givers, according to Foundation board member, Bill Sullivan.

"The reason I serve on the Board is because I care about what the Foundation does, and the programs we fund," Sullivan says. "The scholarship fund provides many educational opportunities for our CCAS children who might otherwise not have a chance. The enhancement and emergency grants allow our CCAS workers to provide for special needs at critical times for families and children, things that aren't funded by any one else."

Government funding already has and continues to shrink, Sullivan points out. There is no longer a budget for some preventative measures or programs. "Would a child benefit from having a week at summer camp? It may be their only opportunity to be in such an environment. For some it is the only break they will get. But it's only available if the Foundation raises the money to pay for it.

"Another example is our education advocate who keeps our children in school. This is work that should be funded by the government."

Sullivan would like the Foundation to be able to support a whole host of programs that support and prevent families in crises. Drop-in centres for CCAS children where they could get a meal or meet a friend, drop-in centres for parents and young parent support groups, funding to support CCAS youth after they reach 18 and are cut off from support—these are just some of the things he sees as possibilities if the money were available.

Sullivan says, "These are the kinds of resources that can help prevent tragedy because when things go wrong they can go very, very wrong. Bad things can happen if nothing is done."

What many Catholics don't realize, he adds, is that the CCAS does not receive regular funding from Share Life or



Bill Sullivan, left, is Managing Director and Corporate Secretary of CIBC World Markets Inc., the Canadian Investment dealer of the CIBC organization. He has been a member of the Hope for Children Foundation Board for 4 years. With him are Subana Meharchand co-host of the Night of Stars Gala, and at right, Stella Skurlec, Foundation board vice-president.

the Cardinal's Dinner, two of the major funding sources for Catholic charities in Toronto. Nor is the CCAS a magnet for corporate giving.

"Corporations tend to avoid denominational charities," he says. "There are many corporations that have strong Catholic connections in their background." He wants these corporations and their corporate executives to fully participate in helping with the needs of the CCAS children and the work of the Foundation.

CCAS has been an important Toronto institution since 1894, Sullivan points out. It serves one in three of the families and children requiring the involvement of a child welfare agency. He hopes to awaken an interest among Catholics in the value of working with the Foundation on the needs of the CCAS children and their families. ■

"The reason I serve on the Board is because I care about what the Foundation does and the programs we fund."

From the front desk



In recent years, child welfare agencies across the province have come to rely on their volunteers to assist with fund-raising activities.

At CCAS, as in an increasing number of agencies, the Board of Directors is turning to the community for help to cover the costs of desirable programs that are not funded by the

Ministry of Community and Social Services.

The Hope for Children Foundation was started twenty years ago with the mandate of serving the CCAS. That mandate remains clearly in place. The Foundation believes that community action to support children, youth, and families in crisis will help to make a positive difference in lives affected by other, more negative influences.

We have reached a point where fund-raising must become the focus of more intense action than ever. From one golf tournament a year we have gone to two: one on June 4 at Greystone Golf and Country Club, and one at Glen Eagle

Golf and Country Club on June 12. There will be two mail campaigns: one at Christmas, as usual, and one now, in the spring, to ensure funds for summertime needs. The gala concert will continue, with a drive to sell out every seat in the auditorium. While events raise awareness of CCAS work, we must reach out in other ways to seek donations from individuals, corporations, and charitable foundations.

The format of this newsletter will change in future editions to reflect this emphasis. Dedication to better futures for children, youth and families remains our focus. The newsletter stories will continue to describe the heroic efforts of CCAS staff to protect children from harm. What you will see more and more will be the recognition of gifts such as scholarships, capital funds, and fund-raising campaign results. Our community partners are invited to join us in our renewed efforts to make childhood and adolescence safe, joyful, and suffused with hope, for all children.

Caroline Di Giovanni

Caroline Di Giovanni
Executive Director,
The Hope for Children Foundation

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Spare the rod

“Husbands are no longer allowed to strike their wives. Employers can't use physical punishment. Why should it be okay to use corporal punishment on children?”



Marvin Bernstein, director of Policy Development, OACAS

Is it ever okay to use physical punishment to discipline a child?

Most experts and child welfare authorities say “No.” And they add that corporal punishment doesn’t work in the long run and can hurt a child’s emotional development.

The Ontario Court of Appeal, however, disagrees. In January the Court ruled that corporal punishment could be used on children. It also put forward guidelines that place restrictions on adults who use this kind of discipline.

The ruling came as a result of a legal challenge by the Canadian Foundation for Children, Youth and the Law, which wanted the court to make it illegal to strike a child for any reason.

The Foundation challenged the constitutionality of Section 43 of the Criminal Code that allows the physical punishment of children by parents, parent substitutes and teachers, provided it is “by way of correction ...if the force does not exceed what is reasonable under the circumstances.”

“The ruling is an improvement on what was there before,” said Marvin Bernstein, Director of Policy Development at the Ontario Association of Children’s Aid Societies. The OACAS was an intervener in the case.

“What the appeal court tried to do is

to limit meaning of the phrase ‘reasonable force.’ But it means children still do not have the same protection against assault that adults have,” he said. “In addition, the appeal court endorsed an untenable approach to justifiable child assault that is based on a combination ‘body mapping’ and ‘age delineation.’”

“Children are still the only class of Canadian citizens subject to lawful assault. If you are an adult and someone strikes you without your consent, then that is assault. If you are an adult no one can say ‘It’s my right. He was not behaving properly so I went over and struck him.’ Children should be entitled to the same kind of protection.”

Bernstein says that Section 43 of the Criminal Code is a “throwback” to English Common Law and to Roman law, which allowed corporal punishment by husbands against their wives, by masters against their apprentices, and employers against their servants. The provision in the Criminal Code justifying the corporal punishment of apprentices by masters remained in force until 1955. Punishing criminals by whipping was outlawed in 1972.

“Over time our thinking has evolved,” Bernstein said. “Husbands are no longer allowed to strike their wives. Employers can’t use physical punishment. Why should it be okay to use corporal punishment on children? We have also learned much more about child development and the risk of harm to children in the same way that we now understand the harmful effects of second hand smoke and not properly using seat belts for young children”

He noted that many European countries and a number of American states have banned the use of physical pun-

ishment on children. “This ruling is out of step with what many other countries are doing.”

Bernstein commented that “the ruling creates difficulties for social workers because of the inconsistencies between the criminal law and child welfare law. The Child and Family Services Act says that “no service provider or foster parent shall inflict corporal punishment on a child or permit corporal punishment to be inflicted on a child in the course of the provision of a service to the child.”

“Under these provisions, a CAS social worker has a legal duty both to prevent foster parents from using corporal punishment on children in CAS care and to prevent parents in the community from using corporal punishment on their children, where such families are receiving CAS services. However, Section 43 of the Criminal Code can still be used as a defence to the assault of children in these circumstances, as the criminal law would take precedence over and ‘trump’ the child protection provisions.”

“How does a social worker speak to parents and talk about what is permissible conduct? If the parent says ‘It is my God-given right to smack my child when I think it’s appropriate,’ how do they talk about other more effective ways of disciplining children?”

“Parents will say it didn’t harm them. But they sometimes don’t recognize the emotional scars that have been left and the way they react to people with power.”

The Court of Appeal did recognize that perhaps the only benefit of corporal punishment is short-term compliance, Bernstein said. “The problem, however, is that once the child adapts to a level of punishment the parents have to increase it to get the same message across. There’s a danger that at some point they will cross the line and it becomes physical abuse. In the recent Canadian Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect (Health Canada, 2001), 69% of the substantiated investigations of physical abuse involved some form of inappropriate punishment.”

The Foundation for Children and Youth is asking for the right to appeal the decision to the Supreme Court of Canada. If there is an appeal, the OACAS Board has agreed that the agency will once again ask to intervene in the case. ■

For more information visit these websites: www.oacas.org and www.jfcy.org

Who's Who at CCAS



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Second Annual Night of Stars Gala

The second annual *Night of Stars Gala Concert* on February 2, brought a lively audience out for an evening of music and dance performances with a special focus on youth.

The George Weston Recital Hall with its fabulous acoustics was a classy setting for a "g r r r eat" show hosted by **Suhana Meharchand** of **CBC Newsworld**, and **Donina Lombardi-Hartig** of **CHIN Radio/TV**.

From the opening chords of the **St. Michael's Choir School** tenor and bass ensemble, the audience experienced beautiful music delivered with heart. Baritone **Alexander Hajek** flew in from New York where he is studying at the Juilliard School of Music. The prize-winning **Barvinok**

Ukrainian School of Dance with their gorgeous costumes and their skilful steps drew hearty applause. **Lorraine Reid**, lead vocalist for the popular band **Temperance**, sang three soulful, urban contemporary selections. She also had a moment to express her admiration for the special guest of the night, jazz legend **Oscar Peterson**.

A draw for prizes donated by **Pizza Pizza**, one of the many sponsors, added excitement to the evening. After the intermission, dancer **Kafi**

Pierre performed an original modern dance she choreographed especially to honour the young people cared for by the CCAS. The 30-member **Palestina Chamber Chorus** sang a selection of classic and modern songs. The grand finale brought all the performers together to sing "A Hymn to Freedom" in tribute to special guest **Oscar Peterson**, and to celebrate **Black History Month**.

The Hope for Children Foundation Events Committee worked hard to prepare for this gala concert.



Co-hosts **Donina Lombardi-Hartig** of **CHIN Radio** and **Suhana Meharchand** of **CBC Newsworld** are seen here with the **Barvinok Ukrainian Dancers**.



Bob Rae, former Premier of Ontario, and his wife **Arlene Perly Rae** accompanied renowned Canadian jazz artist **Oscar Peterson** and his wife, **Kelly Peterson**.

Committee members included: Board member **Bill Sullivan**; Chair, **Joan Pierre**, **Rita McParland**, **Barry and Joanne Deimert**, **Tamla Matthews**, **Irwin Elman**; and staff members **Suset Silva**, **Susan Marcinkowski**, and **Caroline Di Giovanni**. The **Knights of Columbus** organized a table display in the lobby, and provided a distinguished cohort of four Fourth Degree Knights. Youth from **Pape Adolescent Resource Centre** volunteered all day long decorating the lobby and the reception area.

The Hope for Children Foundation looks forward to continuing this event as a major annual fundraiser. Next year's gala will be held on February 8, 2003. Order your tickets early, and join in the excitement.



Joan Pierre, chair of the Hope for Children Foundation events committee, and stage manager for the show; and her daughter, dancer Kafi Pierre, who is currently performing in the Lion King.



For information on ticket prices and sponsorship opportunities, contact the Foundation Office at (416) 395-1507.

E-mail: hopeforchildren@ccas.toronto.on.ca



Paula Tassone, **Barb Ptashynski** and their husbands, **Sam Tassone** and **Larry Ptashynski**, who are members of the Hope for Children Foundation **Knights of Columbus Committee**.



James Carey, chair of the board of **CCAS**, and his wife, **Mary Ellen Carey**.



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CCAS website gets a new look

www.ccas.toronto.on.ca, the CCAS website, will soon have a new look and new features that will make it more useful and accessible.

"There will be more to engage the website visitor. The site will be more interactive," says Andrea Prussky, coordinator in the public relations department.

New links will allow web visitors to provide information directly to various CCAS departments. For example a prospective volunteer can download a form



Andrea Prussky coordinated the creation of the new CCAS website.

on the Volunteer link and e-mail it directly to the volunteer supervisor. Similarly, those seeking information about fostering, adoption or adoption disclosure can send their requests directly to the departments involved.

A youth link will direct young people to information about such issues as child abuse—how to recognize it and what do about it. The Rights and Responsibility document that is provided to every child in care can also be downloaded from the site.

The new look and structure of the site is a result of collaboration between Andrea Prussky and Digital Eve, a network of women web professionals. Community On Line Design (CODE) is a subcommittee of Digital Eve volunteers, who offer free website design and consultation services to eligible non-profit organizations. Digital Eve volunteers include professionals who want to give something back to the community and new graduates eager for experience in managing a web project.

"I was impressed with their proposal and how organized and thorough they were," Prussky said. There has been on-going collaboration to bring the site on stream.

To develop the information about child welfare services, Andrea Prussky worked with a committee of CCAS staff representing various departments: Joanne Ambridge, human resource consultant; Liz Pardal, foster care recruiter; Elaine Leiba, manager of foster care services; Marion Audy, volunteer supervisor; Sonia Cymbaluk, adoption worker; Ouy Nachareun, network administration; Caroline Di Giovanni, director of public relations and Josie Cornacchia, special projects assistant.

With the design finished the group is now focusing on the pictures and written material for the site. They expect that the new site will be up and running in June. ■

**Eva Elizabeth Smith: a generous bequest**

In the fall of 2001, the Foundation received the first of several cheques from the estate of Eva Elizabeth Smith who died in Toronto on Feb. 26, 2001. Her will distributed bequests to eight different organizations, including The Catholic Children's Aid Society of Toronto.

The Hope for Children Foundation administers bequests on behalf of the CCAS. As of March, 2002, the gift from Eva Elizabeth Smith has amounted to more than \$250,000.

Such a generous bequest calls for appropriate recognition. The Foundation Board of Directors is considering naming a scholarship in her honour. However, we know very little about her life. The estate executor has told us that Ms. Smith was born in North Bay, Ontario, the daughter of a medical doctor prominent in the community in the 1930s. World War II affected the family with tragedy. At one point in her teenage years Eva went to live in Toronto. She was in her senior years when she passed away.

Charitable giving comes about in many different ways. Sometimes the preparation of a will evokes reflection on some important aspects of a life which can be turned into benefits for others when you are gone. The Catholic Children's Aid Society of Toronto has provided foster care, adoption services, and intervention in periods of family crisis since 1894. Thousands of children and youth have received assistance from the staff, volunteers, and foster homes of the CCAS. Including the agency in a will or through planned giving recognizes the dedication of the CCAS to the youngest members of the Catholic community.

If you would like more information about leaving a bequest or other options for planned giving, contact the Hope for Children Foundation office at (416) 395-1505, or write to us.

CCAS reaches out to parishes

On any given day, the Catholic Children's Aid Society provides homes for 1800 Catholic children and youth who are unable to live at home. And foster parents, volunteers and adoptive parents from the Catholic community and beyond, who work with these children and youth find an exciting sense of vocation.

Over the next few months the Catholic Community Outreach Committee at CCAS hopes to tell parishioners about opportunities for service with the CCAS. Committee members have written to 15 Toronto parishes and will visit in person to speak to them about CCAS and its families and children.

"By visiting parishes we can give people a sense of the needs of clients, and the work the agency does that they wouldn't otherwise be aware of," says Ann Keating, CCAS pastoral consultant. "The Catholic community is not fully aware of how much the agency and its clients could use their help and involvement."

Keating described a visit to Our Lady of Sorrows Parish where she spoke to the congregation briefly during the Mass. After the service she answered questions about adoption, and foster parenting, and about the kinds of volunteer roles people can take on with the agency.

"I met a woman who was a retired foster parent who told me how rewarding that experience had been, that it helped to make her and her husband more compassionate people." It's these kinds of experiences Keating and her committee members want to tell Catholic parishioners about.

There has been a decline in the number of foster homes and in the number of people willing to do volunteer work for the agency over the past several years. "People are always surprised to learn about the many children in care that we have to place in Barrie or in Guelph because there are not enough foster homes in Toronto."

"The rewards of helping families in crisis are unfamiliar to many of our

parishioners. While it is not always easy, there can be nothing more satisfying than knowing you have helped a child or young person to grow and become the person they want to be."

Personal contact from the Catholic Community Outreach Committee lets parishioners know about the rewards of service with CCAS, either as foster families, as volunteers or adoptive parents. The committee hopes that the visits and talks in parishes will put a more human face on the CCAS and let the Catholic community know that the agency needs their help.

Currently the committee is made up of staff from a cross section of CCAS departments—a unique collaboration, Keating says. It is open to community members who are able to attend meetings during the day.

For more information contact: Ann Keating at 416-395-1500 or e-mail at akeating@ccas.toronto.on.ca

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Thanks to our Christmas Angels

Community partners, individual volunteers and staff go out of their way to make Christmas a special time for CCAS families and their children. Below are some of the special donors who helped make Christmas 2001 a memorable one. We sincerely thank you for your generosity.



Cheryl Roberts of CCAS with Janaya Miller, daughter of Susan Dick.

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| Terry Fox | Debbie Nigro |
| Fabrizio & Grazieta Gallucci | North York Women's Shelter |
| Mike Gallucci Jr. | Edmundo Nunes |
| | Office Specialty |
| | Jose Manuel Oliveira |

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|--|---|
| Nadia & Mike Pallozi | Giuseppe & Arminda Sorgentone |
| Perrier Group | Ann Sorrenti |
| Delores Pitcher | Dina Stratos |
| Project "A" Breakfast with Santa Charity Event | TD Waterhouse-Investment Services Inc. |
| Regal Constalation Hotel | Rosa Schirripa-Holiday Wishes Volunteer Cttee., TD Securities Employees |
| Francesco Riccui | Johanna Thackuray |
| Ryerson University School of Nursing | Nadia & Eric Theiner |
| Scotia Bank-Sheppard & Midland Branch | toronto.com |
| Scotia Bank-Markham & McNicoll Branch | Toronto Rehab--University Centre |
| Scotia Cassels | Bobbie Turcotte |
| John Sehovic | Unit Empower |
| Service Centre OP-5 Committee | Viva Dolan Communications |
| St. Elizabeth Catholic High School | Karen Warren |
| St. Gabriel's Church | Scott & Lisa Weingust & grandchildren |
| St. Luke's Catholic School | William M. Mercer Ltd. |
| St. Pius X Catholic School | |
| Sun Life-Unit Empower | |



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Friends of the CCAS

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Knights of Columbus work recognized

The Knights of Columbus Councils in the Archdiocese of Toronto have a truly inspiring commitment to the children, youth, and families served by the CCAS.

Every month the members of the Foundation's K. of C. Committee run several bingos to keep up a steady flow of revenue towards meeting their annual goal. They also contribute a sense of fun and good humour to the Foundation as they carry out their activities.

Other K. of C. Councils also run bingos or other events to raise money for a variety of good causes. The Hope for Children Foundation receives cheques year round from various K of C Councils, all contributing to the scholarship funds and the child abuse prevention fund set up by the Knights during the first decade of the Foundation. This participation has brought in nearly \$400,000 since 1989.

On March 22, the Hope for Children Foundation hosted the annual Recognition Night for all the Councils who have contributed to the Foundation in the past year. Plaques were handed out by K. of C. Committee Chairman, Larry Ptashynski. Larry is also a member of the Foundation Board of Directors, and a member of the Knights of Columbus 3387, Kingsway Council.

The recognition event allows everyone in attendance



Sister Mary McDevitt, left, receives her gift from K. of C. members Rocco Micelli and Larry Ptashynski.

to enjoy their success, knowing that their efforts are very much needed and very much appreciated.

The guest of honour this year was Sister Mary McDevitt, IHM, who retired last year from the CCAS staff. The Knights remember her with great affection. They thanked her for her work with CCAS, and presented her with a chalice engraved with her name. ■

Seeing abuse from a child's point of view

A review

by

**Kaushala Mahesan,
Adoption, CAST**

(Reprinted with permission from
Communicate, Spring 2001)

One challenge faced by child welfare workers is trying to understand the unique perspective of the children who need protection. Whether they live with their families or in foster homes, whether at an access visit, or out in the community, staff must try to see as the children see, feel as they feel. In evaluating their own perceptions, child protection workers may ask themselves: Was this child harmed? What happened? Is this normal? Is he okay? It is not easy to assume another person's point of view, particularly that of a child.

In her book, *Getting To Normal*, first time novelist Sandra Campbell makes a truly remarkable achievement. She reflects the inner workings of a child's mind, heart and soul.

Through the novel's protagonist, Alice Redfern, readers are drawn into the world of a troubled seven-year-old. At times the writing is so vivid and poignant that the readers may feel as though they are in this child's skin. It is both disturbing and exhilarating.

As the story opens, Alice has been hospitalized for a mysterious ailment, suspected to be a virus, which leaves her with blinding headaches and extreme social withdrawal. It is plain to see though, that Alice's emotional distance pre-dates any physical malady. She is an acutely sensitive little girl whose interactions with the outside world are painful at best.

Blaming the child's illness for her own distress and fatigue, Alice's mother, an embittered and desperately unhappy woman, flees to New York leaving Alice in the care of her distracted father and her teenage sister Sarah. Sarah seesaws between a fierce love and raging contempt for her younger sibling.

Fortunately, there is also Irma, a refugee from Sarajevo, who cares for the convalescing Alice. Ironically, it is this individual, displaced from her country and without family of her own, who becomes Alice's refuge. Through lavish nurturing, unconditional acceptance, and a sense of fun and play qualities lacking in Alice's own family Irma guides her young charge into the light.

To the satisfaction of Sarah, who throughout keeps a critical eye on her sibling's progress, Alice finally appears to be 'getting to normal'. As we soon learn, however, Alice's new-

found confidence is fragile and easily shattered.

This is a beautifully written and entirely believable depiction of a lost child struggling for love and acceptance, and a family in quiet crisis. It contains many truths that are highly relevant to child protection work, touching on themes of separation, loss and despair, and conflicted loyalties. Its portrayal of emotional abuse is especially striking, as reflected in the mother's constant criticism and undermining of Alice who will always fall short of her expectations.

Yet it is through this young girl deemed a 'halfwit' by her mother that we realize some disturbing truths about this outwardly 'normal' family. Within its confines are the unfulfilled ambitions of a mother who chafes against her homemaker existence, the bewilderment of a father who tries to hold the family together, and the desperate anger of an adolescent daughter yearning to have a 'normal' family life. ■

Getting To Normal,
by Sandra Campbell,
Stoddart, 244 pages, \$29.95

Front-line workers: the backbone of the child welfare system

This is the second in a series looking at the work of the front-line social work staff at CCAS and the challenges and rewards they face. In the last issue we profiled youth workers. In this issue we look at the demanding job of intake workers. (Details that might identify clients have been changed to protect their privacy.)

Ann Marie Devon and Martine Edwards are intake workers at the Scarborough branch office of the CCAS. From time to time their day at work is routine. But it's not something either of them ever could, or would, count on.

Intake workers are the first responders—the firefighters or paramedics—of the child welfare system. Even if their day begins quietly, they never know how it will end.

The 10 members of the Scarborough intake team, like their colleagues in other branches, work on a rotation schedule. On certain days they are first or second in line to respond to child welfare emergencies.

When calls come in from the public they are screened by trained CCAS workers who ask a specific set of questions to determine the nature of the case and its severity. This information goes to the branch offices.

It's the job of the intake worker to assess the immediate risk of harm to the child. That assessment will shape the rest of the worker's actions that day.

On this Friday Ann Marie Devon's day started fairly routinely. There was an interview with a father accused of child abuse, slightly unusual because he insisted on having his lawyer present. She then moved on to two other cases she had been assigned. There are guidelines that govern how quickly cases are to be dealt with and they indicated that one of the cases had to be investigated that day.

Ann Marie had made an appointment to interview a girl and her sibling at their school just after lunch. The child had told her principal she didn't feel safe going home but the reason she gave didn't seem, on the surface, to warrant such fear.

"You don't always have time to see if there is a file but this time I did and I discovered that this family has a history with the agency," Devon said. "So I don't know what I will find when I get there. If the child discloses abuse then it will be a long day."

In addition to interviewing the child, her siblings, and her mother, Devon thought she would speak to the principal at least once. "In this case, because of the history, I will do more."

For Ann Marie, who has been with the agency for 14 years, this "isn't a bad day." The fast-paced, unpredictable nature of intake work suits her more than on going casework, which she has also done.

Her colleague Martine Edwards isn't yet sure that intake is where she wants to stay. Edwards has been a social worker at CCAS for just two-and-a-half years. "It takes 2 years just to learn the job," she says. "I think I have a love-hate relationship with this work."

She offers as an example a Monday in late February, a day that began with paperwork. "Eighty-five per cent of the job is paperwork," she says, a common complaint among workers. She made some phone calls and then received a rapid response call.

The allegation was that the mother's boyfriend had sexually assaulted an eight-year-old girl, one of five children in that family. Martine contacted the police and consulted with her supervisor. It was after lunch when she and a co-worker arrived at the child's school.

"In most cases I would be handling this myself in consultation with my supervisor. But in this case I asked another worker to come, because there were other children involved and they had to be seen to as well."

She and a police officer interviewed the child for more than two hours. The child disclosed that she had been abused. There followed interviews with the child's mother and with other family members, and a visit to Sick Children's Hospital to have the child assessed. Practical



Martine Edwards (left) and Ann Marie Devon discuss a case.

issues had to be resolved, such as where the children would stay while the allegations were being investigated. Meanwhile, the alleged abuser was brought into the police station.

That day ended for Martine Edwards just before midnight. During the next week and a half she conducted interviews and did the paperwork required to pass the case on to on-going care.

"It was a difficult case. The seriousness of what was told to me and how the mother reacted, her coldness to this child and the fact that she had been aware of the abuse but refused to believe it—all of that had an impact on me. But I couldn't think about that until all the pieces were in place for the children."

Not every day is that demanding but Martine says lately there have been a lot of significant cases coming in to all of the 10 members of the intake team. "It's rare that nothing comes in. Some days there will be three or four cases requiring a rapid response."

In the meantime other cases are pushed to the back burner. "You can never catch up," Martine says. "You can work nights and weekends and still not be done with the paperwork. You tend to neglect your family and friends because you're dealing with people and their issues all day."

On the other hand, she finds satisfaction in doing "an important job, in learning important skills and in being given the freedom and responsibility to make decisions. It's not like any other area of social work." ■

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