



Dalhousie Place

Brantford & District Supervised Access Centre
Haldimand Norfolk Supervised Access Centre

ANNUAL REPORT 2019/20



HISTORY:

In 1991 Attorney General Howard Hampton and Women’s Issues Minister Marion Boyd announced funding would be made available for 10 Centres in Ontario to provide supervised access as part of a two year pilot project. Brantford & District Supervised Access (Dalhousie Place) was chosen for one of the pilot projects. Since 1992 Dalhousie Place has grown to now include 3 court districts (Brant, Haldimand & Norfolk) and has assisted the Ministry in the further development of access in Ontario by mentoring other Centres and being a part of the expansion program. In 2019/20 Dalhousie Place had 12 staff, and up to 10 volunteers. The Executive Director, Valya Roberts, has been in the position since 1998. Strategic Planning was completed in 2008, 2012 and March 2017.

MISSION STATEMENT:

The Brantford and District Supervised Access Centre offers safe, neutral, child-focused services including supervised visits, exchanges and support for families.

VISION STATEMENT:

To provide a safe, conflict-free visiting environment for children and their families while promoting healthier family relationships. Respect, fairness and compassion are essential as we interact with one another and our clients. Partnerships enhance our ability to serve families, enhance lives and maximize resources.



President's Message

This has certainly been a unique first year to serve as President on the Dalhousie Place board. Covid-19 has forced upon us many changes, and I believe we have stepped up with courage and perseverance. In future years, we will look back in awe at how much we accomplished under exceedingly trying, scary, and shifting circumstances.

Many thanks must be extended to Valya, staff and volunteers at DP for their swift adjustments to working in a remote work environment while balancing home and personal priorities. Client welfare and programming always remained a top priority, even as employees and volunteers adjusted to working with new delivery modalities, policies, processes and schedules.

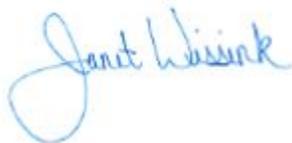
This year was not without its financial challenges - we saw revenue drop – as visitation and exchanges were put on hold. Fortunately, Valya's grant writing expertise attracted additional funding, allowing us to remain financially healthy.

Expenses in some areas also increased with the implementation of a new payment system, minor renovations to DP and purchases of new technology. These expenses have been a long time coming, and will certainly serve to help us in meeting key objectives as we move forward.

Some of our programming was also put on hold or modified as we adjusted to living and working during a pandemic. Other organizations may have been weakened by such circumstances, but our organization rallied and used these circumstances as an opportunity to learn, and grow stronger - TOGETHER.

I look forward to continuing our work as we begin a new year, and that would not be possible without our amazing staff, volunteers, board members, community supporters, and our dedicated Executive Director, Valya. Thank you to each and every one of you. Your dedication and commitment to DP have meant so much during this crazy year, and we could not have done it without you. Let's make this coming year one of continued innovation, resilience and supportive teamwork.

Stay well,





Executive Director's Report

2019/2020 will be for the memory books! We had a busy year and our 10th year without any funding increases from MAG. Fortunately, I was able to attain grants to deal with some of the gaps in services including our KATCH (Kids & the Changing Home) and our Parenting after Separation.

In addition, this year we were also successful in attaining a seed grant to explore a service based on the coaching model of Marty Beyer (of parent-child contact) which will complement other programs and services provided by Dalhousie Place. This program will be Strengths/Needs Based and Trauma Informed Support for Children and Families.

We have been very fortunate this past year to also work with Judy Newman, MSW to research and consult with partners as we created a coaching model of Supervised Access. We have always recognized that the Provincially Supervised Access Program (SAP) is a great program but is just part of a continuum of services. Often families need more intervention and support so we wanted to investigate the potential for a new type of Supervised Access using a coaching model. However, due to the pandemic, we put the coaching model program on hold once the evaluation is completed this summer as we had to quickly pivot in March 2020 and create virtual services for all of our existing programs. So currently, we are not in a position to deal with rolling out a new program as we focus on our Ministry funded access program and our United Way of Haldimand Norfolk funded support programs. We do hope though in 2021 we can offer this service and even apply for an additional Trillium grant.

We also continued to provide monthly parenting workshops in Haldimand Norfolk funded by the United Way of Haldimand Norfolk. This program continues to have great outcomes and evaluations from the parents who have taken it. We also continue to provide the workshops in Brant on a quarterly basis using our general account and fundraising dollars.

We continue to benefit from great collaborations within the communities of Brant and Haldimand Norfolk. The United Way in Haldimand Norfolk has been an amazing partner in helping our agency out during difficult times. We also continue our partnership with Haldimand Norfolk REACH who are always supportive of our agency. This year their emergency United Way funding (only Haldimand Norfolk) allowed us to purchase Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and hire an extra staff person for the new fiscal year. In addition, create virtual services for all of our support programs. This past year we have also become more involved in the Courts in both Brant and Haldimand Norfolk. In addition to working closely with the BRAVE committee and BRAVA.

Our amazing staff team continued. I am immensely proud of our staff who have now all graduated with their undergraduate degrees with financial support from Dalhousie Place. In addition, some are continuing on to their BSW and MSW. We also continued to provide RRSP matching for staff and hope to finalize a health care plan for the agency.

In closing, I would like to thank our supportive Board of Directors who have also quickly learned virtual programs so we could continue with monthly board meetings on zoom!

Valya Roberts M.Ed.,
Executive Director

Coordinator's Report - Brant, Haldimand Norfolk

During the fiscal year, 2019-2020, Dalhousie Place has been consistent with access visits. We generally have all seven access shifts full, plus exchanges, and on several occasions we have had a waitlist for access visits. There has been a steady decline in exchanges. This fiscal year was the lowest amount of exchange families.

We still have many long-term clients that will likely age out or decide, due to various reasons, to stop access. However, we are also expecting an influx of new families with the court backlog due to the pandemic and potential new families due to the increased incidents of domestic violence. So, we will potentially be getting more exchanges in the next fiscal year; however, due to Covid-19, our access schedule will look different as we are going through the phases of re-opening. Due to the pandemic, the access centre had to close mid March. However, staff worked hard to set up Emergency Virtual Access to the families interested in participating in virtual access.

During the fiscal year, 2019-2020, Haldimand Norfolk access centres have been consistent with access visits. The Hagersville site is booked for access when there is a family. The Simcoe access site has been consistently busy with 5-8 regular families that they are serving. The staff are going into the courts to make sure there is an access calendar and information for potential clients. The Simcoe and Hagersville sites both closed at the same time as Brantford due to the pandemic. Over the next fiscal year, we will have an additional staff member in Haldimand Norfolk from the United Way funding, which will allow us to work with the local community and the Reserve to help with the backlog of clients due to the pandemic.

Ashley Waters, B.A.,
Coordinator (Brant & Haldimand/Norfolk)

SERVICE STATISTICS FOR SUPERVISED ACCESS

SUMMARY April 1, 2019 - March 31, 2020

| SERVICE | BRANTFORD | HALDIMAND NORFOLK |
|---------------------------|-----------|-------------------|
| General Inquiries | 32 | 38 |
| Requests for Service | 133 | 24 |
| Families Served | 86 | 48 |
| Children Served | 76 | 27 |
| Total Exchanges Scheduled | 150 | 61 |
| Total Visits Scheduled | 790 | 254 |

WEBSITE STATISTICS

SUMMARY April 1, 2019 – March 31, 2020

Total Sessions 2653 – increase of 27% of previous fiscal year

Unique Visitors 1351 – increase of 18% of previous fiscal year

Average Session 14m 42s -- increase of 38% of previous fiscal year

Top referring sites: Direct #1081 Google.ca #580 Google.com #820

Brant Volunteer/Student Update

Dalhousie Place continues to enjoy a positive and collaborative relationship with Wilfred Laurier University's Bachelor of Social Work Program. The Centre has consistently welcomed practicum students from this program for the past 4 years. This has been a remarkably successful partnership which has provided opportunities for mentorship and has resulted in further volunteering and additional staffing.

Two separate groups from Laurier's Social Work program collaborated on Community Service-Learning projects for the Centre. They wrote a City of Brantford grant for the potential PATCH program as well as produced five short video clips to update our current orientation video. These videos will also help promote Dalhousie Place's program and services.

We have had a consistent number of volunteers including our dedicated Board of Directors. In total, we welcomed five additional volunteers during the 2019-20 fiscal years.

Due to COVID-19, all volunteering has been put on hold and we are currently developing virtual opportunities if we are unable to welcome volunteers and students on site in the fall.

Denise Andrews, our full time Family Supervisor, also supervised onsite our BSW students checking over their documentation and also discussed various family dynamics to gain a better understanding of Social Work theories such as Strength Based, Cognitive Behaviour, etc. and how they could be applied to different scenarios.

Beth Pearson B.A.,
Supervisor of Volunteers/Student & Administration

Haldimand Norfolk Volunteer/Student Update

The last year has been very busy at the Centre. Our volunteers have remained constant over the past six years. Simcoe Dalhousie has a very dedicated team of volunteers who can be called upon at any time to help with activities that require a helping hand.

The Centre continues to have a good working relationship with Fanshawe College in Simcoe. It has been the first year we accepted an International Student at the Centre. This was a very unique experience for staff, as we learned about the student's culture. Albeit at times very challenging. We also accepted a second student from the SSW program at Fanshawe. The Centre is having an increase in interest from Fanshawe students; during presentations at Fanshawe there has been a great deal of interest in the business.

Aline Dalby
Family Supervisor



Support Programs Update: Parenting Through Conflict Workshop

We enjoyed another successful year of offering our Parent Workshop for parenting through conflict. We were able to offer eleven groups between April 2019 and February 2020 as March was cancelled due to COVID-19. At that point we switched over to virtual services and started offering the group online with Zoom. We advertised through the community Our Guide, at court, Reach and the Simcoe/Haldimand newspapers as well as with local family lawyers.

The workshops are offered monthly and are free of charge. Participants register and are screened through Dalhousie Place.

The group consists of topics around coping through separation while co-parenting. We present topics around how to effectively parent together while apart. We discuss the effects of separation on children and youth, and the different developmental stages our kids go through during changes in their family's situation. We present a video of youth giving real life testimonies around their experiences during their parent's separation. We offer examples of parenting plans and coping tools as well as self care. Upon completion of the workshop participants are given a family resource package and a certificate of completion.

We had positive feedback in our client surveys as well as several referrals to our access and exchange programs and referrals to our children's KATCH program.

KATCH (Kids & the Changing Home)

Dalhousie Place offered the KATCH (Kids and the Changing Home) six-week program for youth ages six to twelve free of charge, who are or have gone through a separation or divorce. We advertised in the Brant Your Guide as well at family court and in local papers. We successfully ran five, six-week groups with the kids.

Each week the group focuses on a different topic looking at changes in the family, emotional responses to separation and coping skills. The group focuses on validating feelings and how to cope. Each week there is a hands-on activity. The children leave at the end of week six with a tool kit in a tote of what they have discussed and made during the six weeks. Each child also receives a certificate of completion. They celebrate the last week decorating cupcakes reviewing the topics that were discussed. Some of the activities include stress balls while discussing anger and anxiety, yoga, self care, family portraits and identifying emotions. The group uses a curriculum with topics every week on how to cope and adjust to their family's new situation.

The group received positive feedback in our client surveys from both parents and kids--even a few participants asked to take the group again as they had so much fun. We also received referrals from KATCH to our access program as well to our Parenting Workshop.

**Bree Jellis B.A.,
Program Supervisor**

Action Plan 2019 - 2021

1. **Pilot Coaching Model Supervised Access**

Dalhousie Place will use none MAG monies (Revenue account or Trillium Grant) to create a training program and pilot the service for one year to see if it can be financially viable.

Timeframe: April 2019 to March 2021

2. **Evaluation**

Dalhousie Place will ensure that staff completes client exit surveys for all file closures to investigate client satisfaction and to account for the client's next steps in custody and access. The data from these surveys will be analyzed to provide meaningful context. Staff will recruit a volunteer or placement student to take on this project along with the full time staff. The agency would be able to import this data into a standard computer program such as Microsoft Access to run queries and produce reports on client satisfaction upon exit. In addition, as part of the Program Evaluation, staff will research the community to see if there is any overlap or financial duplication of services with regards to Supervised Access. This report will be shared with the community and the Ministry.

3. **Safety**

Dalhousie Place does not currently have a risk management representative or committee. We need a small committee, composed of several staff and potentially one board member from which a long-term risk management strategy could be developed to complement the Centre's existing Strategic Plan. Risk management is a key consideration for all agencies and a potential liability of which to be mindful.

4. **Research**

Dalhousie Place needs to explore the potential of fee based programming due to the current financial climate. This will also include analyzing mechanisms for sustainability, partnerships, financial responsibility and research contribution.

5. **Capacity Building Families**

Dalhousie Place will continue to reach out to the community to build capacity for families, especially those who are Indigenous and those who are also new Canadians. This will also include public promotions including May Supervised Access Month.

2020 Updates for AGM: Agency Action Plan/Strategic Plan

- 1. Pilot Project updates:** We have just completed our one year Trillium Seed Grant to create the Coaching model of one-on-one supervised visitation. The purpose of the grant was to research creating a child focused trauma informed coaching model of supervised access. Supporting the positive development of children and youth, this initiative is helping parents, caregivers and adult allies to have the skills to support children and youth who are facing barriers. All of our objectives were completed and with the additional staffing and purchased services from Judy Newman, we completed community presentations, consultations (including focus groups) and created a training manual for staff. Next steps are to apply for a 'grow' grant in 2021 to see if we can get three years of funding to get the program going.
- 2. Evaluation:** Valya created questions for the surveys for both existing and current clients using the program. Summer students contacted clients and the quantitative and qualitative data from this survey and the Ministry exit forms were put into a report that is still being analyzed (COVID-19 happened). We also completed our audit with MAG with excellent feedback on our program.
- 3. Safety:** With COVID-19 we had to pivot quickly and create safety plans and options for families to continue their visits in a safe setting. Valya created a three phased plan starting with virtual visits. In addition, staff training was completed and PPE purchased. The Board of Directors met during April and May and in addition, Valya and Janet continued to meet in the summer. Virtual visitation is continuing in addition to face to face visitation which started in August in a modified manner with increased safety protocols in consultation with Public Health.
- 4. Research:** Over the summer Valya looked at sustainability for the Program without Ministry funding, the reality is without MAG funding Dalhousie Place will not be able to continue. However, we have continued to increase our source of income beyond just the Ministry and have created reserves in our finances so that we are prepared for any changes the current government makes after its yearlong review.
- 5. Capacity Building:** We continue to build capacity with our community involvement with PRIDE, Parenting Forums, United Way Haldimand Norfolk, BRAVE & BRAVA, Legal Community and the Indigenous Community.

FINANCIAL REPORT

April 1, 2019 – March 31, 2020 **

| Revenue | 2019 | 2020 |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Ministry Attorney General | 326,194 | 321,330 |
| Trillium Fund Grant | 54,644 | 35,575 |
| United Way Grants | 14,000 | 14,000 |
| HRDC | 6,720 | 8,322 |
| Report fees | 3,314 | 2,709 |
| User fees | 9,103 | 8,281 |
| Other income | 147 | 755 |
| Total | <u>\$414,122</u> | <u>\$411,039</u> |
| Expenses | | |
| Advertising | 1,492 | 1,048 |
| Amortization | 687 | 2,064 |
| General and Administrative | 16,557 | 24,069 |
| Insurance | 4,275 | 4,030 |
| Staff Training | 6,692 | 6,131 |
| Occupancy Costs | 26,699 | 25,818 |
| Professional Fees | 5,712 | 5,087 |
| Program Supplies and Equipment | 5,207 | 3,835 |
| Salaries and Benefits | 312,817 | 317,408 |
| Staff Travel | 7,396 | 5,421 |
| Volunteer Expenses | 3,035 | 2,840 |
| Volunteer Honorariums | 776 | 704 |
| Total \$ | <u>\$391,345</u> | <u>\$398,455</u> |
| Excess (Deficiency) of | | |
| Revenues | 22,777 | 12,584 |
| Over Expenditures | | |
| Net Assets – Beginning of Year \$ | 150,747 | 173,524 |
| Net Assets – End of Year \$ | <u>\$173,524</u> | <u>\$186,108</u> |

** Full audited financial statements completed by Millard & Rouse are available**

WEBSITE: www.dalhousieplace.com



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Further Information:

Registered Charity # 1117456-59

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