

A Message from the Board of Directors

"Contact Hamilton exists so that children, youth and people with developmental disabilities and their families access appropriate and coordinated services."

Our job as a board is to ensure that this happens. Our role is threefold: to represent the community we serve, to think strategically, and to monitor the operations.

In a year when Contact Hamilton served more people than ever before in its six-year history, we renewed our efforts to ensure that we provide the best possible access to information and services. We launched a new on-line information service that made it even easier for families and professionals in the community to find out about community services. Working in partnership with provincial government ministries and with the Hamilton community, Contact Hamilton facilitated planning processes and participated in reviews designed to strengthen the system of children's and developmental services. While the board maintained its vigilance in monitoring Contact Hamilton's day-to-day operations, it also paid close attention to current changes and future directions in children's and developmental services. Considerable time was also spent on strengthening working relationships and improving mutual understanding with other community agencies.

2005-06 Board of Directors

Beverley Wasmund - Chair	Peter Szota
Bob Thompon - Vice-Chair	Dirk VanderBent
Jackie Bajus*	Madina Wasuge
Dr. Lindsey George**	*Commenced April 2006
Lynne Godbout	**Resigned November 2005
Jacinthe Lejeune	

Executive Director - Oksana Plawiuk Fisher

In 2005-06, as in previous years, Contact Hamilton received very positive feedback from the families and individuals it serves. Much of this success is due to the talents and dedication of the agency's staff members. All are exceptional in their commitment to the mission and values of the organization and to the individuals, families and service providers we work with.

Contact Hamilton has been fortunate in being able to benefit from the wisdom and experience of the community volunteers who devote their time and energy to sitting on the board. We would like to thank two retiring board members: Rick Helm, a former chair who has been with the board since the agency was formed in 2000, and Lynn Godbout, who has served on the board since 2003. We would also thank Dr. Lindsey George who resigned after completing two years on the board. At the same time, we welcomed two new members to the board Jackie Bajus, superintendent, special education, Hamilton Wentworth Catholic District School Board and Jacinthe Lejeune, a business person and a parent of two sons who are developmentally disabled.

Improving Access to Information: A New On-Line Service

Families and individuals now have up-to-date information about community services and supports at the tip of their fingers, whenever they click onto the new community programs database on Contact Hamilton's website – www.contacthamilton.ca.



Launched in February 2006, this online service was developed through an innovative partnership between Contact Hamilton and Inform Hamilton. The database was designed to specifically respond to the unique information needs of individuals and professionals accessing the children's and developmental services systems. This enhanced information service has been well received. During the first two months of operation, a total of 18,364 records were viewed by people who visited the website.

Anyone can use the database to search for specific organizations or for links to a wide range of resources on almost any subject related to children's and

"I was relieved and impressed with the professionalism, friendliness, and compassion I experienced while trying to solve a difficult situation."

developmental services, simply by connecting to a link or typing a word into a text box on a very clear user-friendly web page. Users can narrow down their search by specifying the location or age-range they are interested in. They can also browse through lists of hundreds of organizations and subjects.

While providing information to individuals, families, professionals and the general public, the database is also invaluable for Contact Hamilton staff, as well as staff members at other community agencies. It gives them easy access to current information they can use in making recommendations and providing families with descriptions of the recommended services. As a manager at another agency told her staff, *"It will be an excellent method of finding out what is available, as well as printing off information to provide to families."*

It's a service that enhances Contact Hamilton's role in providing the community with coordinated information about available resources. It also reinforces the agency's role as a single point of access to services by providing an online gateway to information about services and by helping staff gather information more efficiently in making their referrals. The value of the service is reflected in the comments of one its many satisfied users, who told staff at Contact Hamilton, *"I found all the information given in regards to programs and services very helpful. I didn't know they were available to me."*

"Help was given immediately with the first phone call I made. A very helpful book was recommended. I will gladly recommend this service to the families I work with if they are looking for support."

2005-06 Statistics

Individuals Served	6,459 • 4,876 Children's Services • 1,583 Developmental Services
Completed Requests (New Callers)	3280
Completed Intakes	2,251
Referrals / Registrations	2,482
Resource Planning Meetings	45
Resolution Meetings	18
Residential Placement Advisory Committee Meetings	162

2005-06 Performance Measurement

Families and individuals using Contact Hamilton's access services are asked to complete a Performance Measurement Survey, a standardized province-wide tool, designed to receive and record feedback from consumers on access mechanisms.

The survey measures the consumer's perception of responsiveness, timeliness, ease of access and overall satisfaction. Contact Hamilton's results for 2005-06 are presented in the following table.

Indicator	Maximum Possible Score	Children's Services	Developmental Services
# Responses		177/536	28/99
% Satisfied		96%	97%
Timely Response	5	4.6	4.7
Ease of Access	10	9.3	9.3
Responsiveness	22	19.9	19.6

Responding to Children and Youth with Complex Needs

In March 2005, it was estimated that there were approximately 100 children and youth being served in the children's and developmental services systems identified as having multiple, complex mental health and/or developmental needs. These children and their families typically need a high level of support, often requiring several kinds of highly specialized services and programs from different agencies and sometimes from different sectors. As an access mechanism, Contact Hamilton plays a key role in accessing and coordinating supports for families of children and youth with multiple and complex needs. On a day-to-day basis, Contact Hamilton supports these families with information about services and referrals to agencies. Contact also brings various agencies together with families at Resource Planning and Resolution meetings to find ways of responding to these complex needs.

"I found the whole intake process very satisfactory. I am very pleased with the recommendations that were given to me."

2005-06 Highlights

- Launched an on-line community programs database, in partnership with Inform Hamilton
- Community Service Plan (Children's and Developmental Services) – submitted the Year One Progress report to the Regional Office
- Published the 2nd edition of Stats and Facts
- Led planning initiatives related to Children and Youth with Complex Needs
- Developmental Services Five Year Plan -- led a planning process focusing on new provincial investments in various areas of developmental services.
- Developmental Services Innovations Project – participated on the Steering committee that conducted innovations projects in the following areas
 - citizenship
 - individuals with developmental disabilities who are aging
 - individuals with autism between the ages of 14 and 25
 - individuals with a dual diagnosis
- Co-sponsored a community presentation by Dr. John Lyons of Northwestern University on children's mental health systems
- Partnered with McMaster University on two research projects: "Bringing Children's Mental Health Research Home", and "Early Social Anxiety"

"I have been bounced around the system for 2 months- it was great to have an immediate response from CONTACT."



"The resource coordinator listened carefully and took the time to ensure clarity. She was most helpful in taking a step-by-step approach to understanding fully my daughter's behaviour and fears."

In 2005-06 Contact Hamilton also played a key role in community planning initiatives designed to address the system challenges and gaps in responding to this group of children and youth. In seeking community-wide solutions to these challenges, the Ministry of Children and Youth Services asked Contact Hamilton to facilitate two complementary community planning processes. One was the Working Group on Systems and Supports for Children and Youth with Complex Needs, which reviewed existing services and made detailed recommendations about ways of strengthening the system as a whole. The other was an initiative that brought together families and representatives from school boards and various children's and developmental service agencies to develop a Community Plan for Children/Youth with Complex Needs. The reports of both these initiatives, which were completed in 2005, are available on the Contact Hamilton website: www.contacthamilton.ca.

Provincial Reviews

Highlight Best Practices

Helping families and individuals access the right services has always been the top priority for Contact Hamilton, as well as for the Ministry of Community and Social Services and the Ministry of Children and Youth Services. To this end, the two Ministries conducted a Joint Access Mechanism review of access mechanisms across the province. The review included a literature review, an inventory of existing access mechanisms, and an in-depth analysis of selected sites. Executive Director Oksana Fisher was a member of the Provincial Reference Group for this study and Contact Hamilton was also one of the agencies selected for on-site

review. The report identified several success factors and best practices for access mechanisms. A review of these findings found that Contact's current processes are consistent with many of the best practices identified in the study.

A separate provincial review was also conducted on Children's Services Assessment Tools and Case Resolution Mechanisms. Contact Hamilton once again participated as a review site during the survey component, and it was again found that the agency's processes are consistent with best practices identified in the review.

"I was very pleased with the individual attention and understanding of my situation that our support person provided. He also gave helpful suggestions for what to do while waiting for our particular service to become available."