

Annual Report



NEW BEGINNINGS

Where Opportunity Meets Potential

**2020-2021
Annual Report**

OUR VISION

Maximizing potential through opportunities

OUR MISSION

Holistic programs for individuals, families and communities providing opportunities for growth and development

OUR VALUES

New Beginnings values every person as unique while promoting growth through individualized, flexible, and collaborative service provision





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Board Chair's Report

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I want to express our appreciation to the staff and management of New Beginnings. You have provided valuable services to the families and communities in Windsor and Essex County since 1971. New Beginnings has continually demonstrated a respect and professionalism to the families we serve and our Community partners.

Over the years, New Beginnings has undergone many transformations however I suspect none as difficult as the loss of the Butch Collins Open Custody & Open Detention Program earlier this year. The Board of Directors acknowledges how difficult this was, for not only did you lose an important program for the youth and families in our community, but you experienced the challenges of reorganization within your agency including the loss of friends and co-workers to other programs and employment. The Board of Directors acknowledges how stressful this has been to each and every one of you. We would like to thank you for your support and commitment to ensuring New Beginnings continues to be an invaluable resource in our Community.

The Board of Directors would like to acknowledge our ministries, and some of the key service partners whose collaborative work enable New Beginnings to celebrate success and overcome challenges.

Thank you to:

- The Ministry of Training and Skills Development, Employment and Training Division;
- The Ministry of the Attorney General;
- The Ministry of Children, Community, and Social Services, Youth Justice Service Division
- The Greater Essex County District School Board
- The Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board
- The Windsor-Essex Children's Aid Society

There have been changes to the Board membership. Zoja Holman, Ben Rhyno, and myself were welcomed warmly into the Board in 2020. Zoja comes with great expertise in organizational strategy implementation, governance, and strategic planning. Ben Rhyno is a seasoned Children's Services Worker at the Windsor Essex Children's Aid Society. Ben brings a unique perspective, as he was a former New Beginnings staff before joining WECAS, and he has years of experience with the youth and families we serve. As for myself, I am honoured for the opportunity to be your Board Chair. Many of the frontline staff know me from my years of service at Youth Probation, Good Shepherd Centre, and the Regional Children's Centre. Through the years my focus has always remained the same, and that is to provide the best possible support to our community's vulnerable children, youth and families.

In closing, on behalf of the Board, I'd like to express to the Executive Director, the Management team, and all of the Staff, our recognition of your good work and dedication. You have our continuing support, and it is our privilege to assist you.

Sincerely,

Donna Vickers
Board Chair

Executive Director's Report

New Beginnings believes that all children, youth, and families deserve the opportunity to maximize their potential through opportunities. 2020/21 was a year to reflect on the Agency's history and to look ahead as we continue to deliver services that are inclusive, collaborative, responsive, and respectful of children, youth, and families in our community. In reflecting back on the year, and that fact that we were faced with many challenges pertaining to the closure of the Butch Collins Open Custody & Open Detention program, as well as uncertainties related to the Covid-19 pandemic, this year's report highlights our hope as we move forward together.

Change occurs for all of us and happens for several reasons. New Beginnings is not immune to change, and has made shifts to service delivery in the past year. We have been navigating through the Covid-19 pandemic, and it is a remarkable story of resilience that showcased New Beginnings at its very best. I want to thank and acknowledge the people we serve, and our stellar employees for their patience, kindness, creativity, adaptability, and support during this challenging time. As you might have guessed, this has been an exceptionally difficult time for everyone, but the unwavering dedication of everyone at New Beginnings to continue to meet the needs of the vulnerable populations we serve has given me unending amounts of hope and gratitude.

Despite the pandemic, this year has brought some significant changes and successes. Our organization moved to a new Agency and Case Management Software system in the virtual world. Although we had hoped to have onsite education and support prior to and during go live, the pandemic made this impossible. New Beginnings staff and management completed all our preparation, education, training, and succeeded in our "go live" virtually. Staff have also worked to increase all areas of our social media and virtual capacities to better meet the needs of clients virtually, which is something that will remain with us for years to come.

Select staff and management members have been trained through the Ministry of Children, Community, and Social Services, Youth Justice Service Division in Suicide Intervention and Prevention as training facilitators, which is a professional training opportunity we look forward to offering agency-wide in 2021. New Beginnings was also a recipient of this year's MCCSS Impact Award, for involvement in the Critical Incident Stress Management Team.

The management team has designed and implemented a workplace wellness program, designed to establish a work environment that promotes holistic well-being, hosting quarterly events geared at improving the health and wellness of employees. Staff participation has been great, and important topics such as physical health, mental health, diversity, and self-care have been covered, allowing staff teams the opportunity to socialize with each other and promote healthy living.

This past year has come with many needs from Covid-19, and New Beginnings has worked closely with our partners and with the Windsor-Essex County Health Unit throughout the pandemic providing a variety of services including a psychoeducational group to youth called Covid Nine-Teen, as well as through providing vaccinations for our clients by hosting vaccination clinics on site and in collaboration with community partners at our satellite locations.

This work and ongoing delivery of service would not be possible without the contributions of Board members who share their experience, knowledge, expertise, and understanding of

our community to support the delivery of New Beginnings' programs and services. I would like to take this opportunity to extend a very sincere thank you to Ryan Ouellette and Alisen Markham for their many years of service on our Board. Ryan and Alisen, you will

both be missed and we thank you for all of your years of hard work and dedication. I would also like to welcome our new Board members, Donna Vickers, Ben Rhyno, and Zoja Holman.

I would like to extend my appreciation and gratitude to the full staff team at New Beginnings for their dedication to the Agency and the clients we serve. Finally, I would like to extend my thanks to the funders for their support and direction, and to the Windsor-Essex community for their partnerships and collaborations. The Agency remains committed to providing service leadership and excellence to our clients and community at large. I look forward to a successful and ever changing 2021/22 year.

With sincere appreciation,

Stacey Yannacopoulos

Executive Director

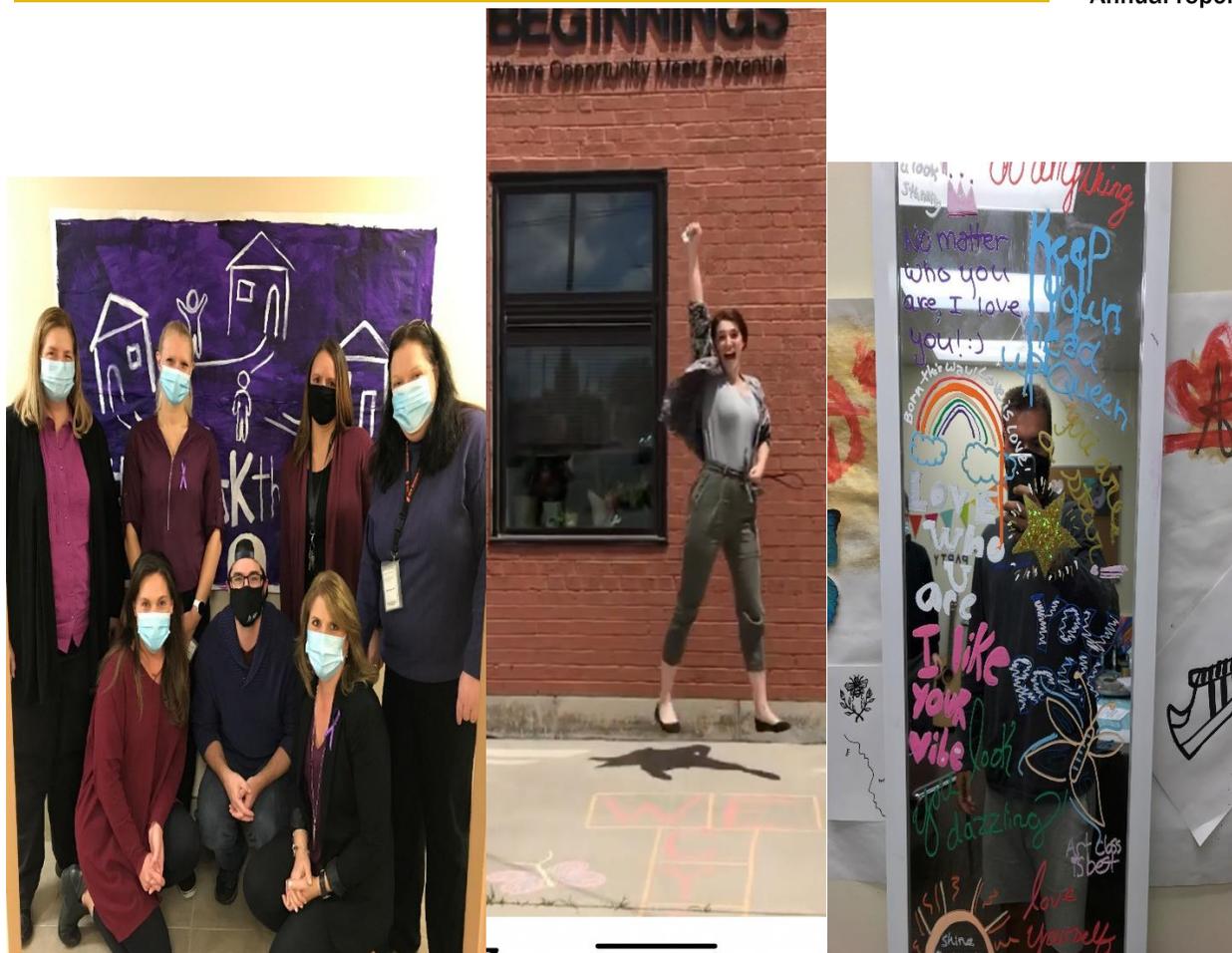


Non-Residential Attendance Centre

The Non-Residential Attendance Centre offers evidence-based programs that are strength-based and youth-focused, designed specifically to meet the needs of youth. Direct referral to our specialized classrooms and to individual or group outpatient counselling comes from our partnerships with youth probation, child welfare, and local school boards. We have expanded access to satellite locations to the Bridge Youth Centre in Leamington and The House Youth Centre in Amherstburg, ensuring that staff are able to meet the needs of youth, their families, and the referral source by eliminating barriers to access.



In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, staff quickly and creatively adapted their methods of program delivery to offer a range of virtual services ranging from online school support, virtual counselling, and weekly skill building classes. Supplies for art therapy sessions were delivered to youth in advance so they could continue to participate in art therapy sessions. Thank you to the staff team for continuing to offer this wide range of serves, and for working so hard to maintain youth engagement and ensure they are supported through this challenging time.



Updated evidence-based programming resources and new Smart Board programs have contributed to the continued interest, engagement, and success of clients attending programs such as anger management, substance abuse counselling, and healthy relationships. The new volunteer program offers the opportunity for youth in the local school board to complete their volunteer hours in a variety of formats. Staff have worked diligently to identify service gaps and develop program material to meet the changing needs of the community, including a psychoeducational group called Covid Nine-Teen and a program called Embracing Differences which combines art, music, and skill building education sessions to expand consciousness and expose youth to celebrating diversity. Our substance abuse staff continue to stay current and remain active in the community, participating in events that collaborate with multiple community partners such as the Windsor-Essex Community Opioid & Substance Strategy and their youth-engagement sub-committee. In an effort to reduce risk and increase education to make informed choices, staff partnered with the Greater Essex County District School Board and Youth Diversions to film a presentation on vaping and cannabis use that will be used in elementary and high schools across the Windsor-Essex region for years to come. Our Specialized classrooms, such as The Transitions, Compass, and Connections classrooms, have been enhanced to ensure access to academic and non-academic programming both in-person and virtually to meet youth's unique educational and therapeutic needs.

Windsor Essex Child and Parent Place

The Windsor-Essex Child & Parent Place (WECAPP) at New Beginnings helps to ease the tension of access arrangements for children whose families are in transition, offering a neutral, safe, and child-focused environment where access visits and exchanges can take place under the supervision of trained staff in both Windsor and Leamington.

This year, staff worked diligently to implement virtual services that would ensure visits could still occur during the pandemic. This was a challenging process but staff rose to the test and worked creatively and efficiently to meet the needs of the families we serve, and New Beginnings will continue to offer virtual services moving forward for families who require that accommodation. Implementation of this service has strengthened the program and expanded what we are able to offer in regards to service and delivery. Staff have also been utilizing the gym space at the Highland location which has allowed families an engaging and fun way to visit with each other.

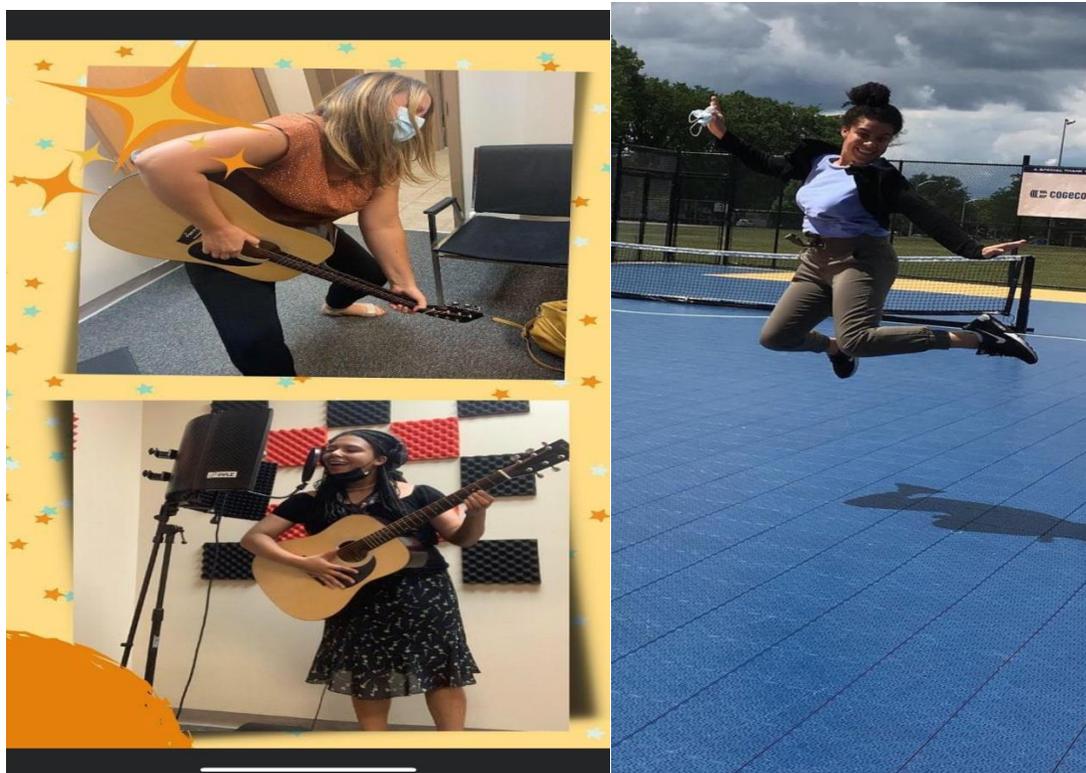
We continue to work closely with the WECAPP Advisory Committee representing community agencies, public services, Children's Aid Society and the family law community to ensure that the program is accessible to families experiencing conflict with custody and access to their children.

WECAPP has had to limit the number of visits we offer in-person to allow for Covid-19 safety protocols to be followed, and we currently have approximately 45 families being serviced monthly. WECAPP consistently receives enquiry calls for both exchange and visit supervision services. Front-line staff continue to work on professional development and training opportunities that explore foundational concepts of supervised visitation, focusing on keys for best practice, neutrality, ethics, safety, trauma, intervention, collaboration and documentation.



Youth Opportunities Strategy

The Youth Opportunities Strategy (YOS) assists youth to realize and reach their full potential by providing supports through a number of programs. These programs all work alongside each other to provide a holistic, wraparound approach to youth and families. The Provincial Youth Outreach Worker team continues to work with youth in identified priority neighbourhoods, but this year, the program was restructured into key roles including a team lead, a priority populations worker, a youth and family engagement worker, an Events and Activities worker, Education and Skills Development Worker, and Youth and Family Engagement worker. This approach allows us to ensure youth in all vulnerable areas have access to support and the staff are working to meet their needs and advocate on their behalf. As the pandemic forced a rapid transition to virtual care, staff set to work to develop and compile resources and activities to support the delivery of virtual services. The PYOW team has offered numerous virtual activities to keep youth engaged in positive activities ranging from life skills classes, art lessons, dance class, and cooking classes. Key events such as the annual Say Yes to the Prom Dress event were held in a Covid-19 friendly fashion. Neighbourhood clean ups and participation in community gardens offer youth an opportunity to participate in volunteer and learning activities in an effort to develop their skill sets and introduce community agencies and areas.



The Youth in Transition worker supports youth in their successful transition out of the child welfare system into adulthood. Working closely with the Children's Aid Society ensures that youth leaving care have access to our program and receive help in navigating the referral process. Helping youth to develop and pursue their goals has contributed to many successes seen through positive transitions into adulthood.

The youth Job Connection (YJC), the YJC Summer program, and the Youth Experience Employment Program (YEEP) serve youth who experience multiple complex barriers to employment by providing intensive supports beyond traditional job search and placement

opportunities. These programs were run with a great deal of success this year and we are proud to say that we have expanded our partnerships with employers immensely, from Windsor to the surrounding county areas, allowing us to offer a broad range of opportunities to youth in the program. Our employers continue to be positive partners in this program and work alongside program staff to ensure youth are achieving their goals in their placements.



The Risk Intervention and Prevention Project (RIPP) has witnessed an increasing need for youth and family supports during the Covid-19 pandemic. They are working to ensure that they provide service to youth that demonstrate a variety of risk factors and challenges including substance abuse issues, mental health concerns, family conflict, housing and homelessness, unemployment, poverty and education barriers. They are working closely with community partners such as Windsor Police Services to provide a collaborative approach to prevention strategies, striving to achieve success through a wraparound approach to service coordination.





Staff at YOS have worked hard to continue to provide services both in-person and virtually in the face of unprecedented challenges, evolving needs, and increasing demand. Services are offered at our Janette location, as well as in the community at our satellite locations at the Sandwich Teen Action Group and Gino A. Marcus. Our community partnerships continue to grow, as does our reach within the community. We continue to add new partners and renew existing relationships to better serve our clients.



Board of Directors & Management Team

Board of Directors

Donna Vickers	Chair
Frank Miller	Director
Dr. Gregory Zvric	Director
Jason Crowley	Director
Ben Rhyno	Vice-Chair
Zoja Holman	Director

Management Team

Stacey Yannacopoulos	Executive Director
Betty Green	Director of Agency Services
Carolyn Binder	Coordinator-Windsor Essex Child and Parent Place
Kristin Durham	Coordinator- Non-Residential Attendance Centre/Program Evaluation
Mary Jane LeClair	Coordinator- Community Programs and Agency Compliance



Staff Recognition

In the summer of 2011, Stefan was selected through our Summer Student placement program to work at New Beginnings for a 6-week placement. Stef attended with the support of his worker and quickly settled in to some light housekeeping responsibilities that included sweeping and dusting table tops. Stef was a bit shy when he first started his placement, but it wasn't long until he settled into a routine that was positive and productive both for Stef and for New Beginnings. He really enjoyed playing basketball when his tasks were completed. Because Stef's placement was highly successful, it was agreed that he would stay on and work a couple of mornings a week. We could all see that Stef's confidence was growing and his charming personality began to emerge. Not only was the list of tasks that he was able to accomplish independently growing, but his social skills began to flourish. He now sweeps, dusts, cleans windows, waters plants, cleans bathrooms, vacuums and takes out garbage and recycles at both the Highland and Janette buildings. One of his favorite activities is to help set tables for any larger staff events. He is a delight to have in our workplace and he interacts with the staff by telling us about his family and the art and music classes that he participates in. He demonstrates eagerness to work and shows effort to make sure his tasks are completed well whenever he comes to work.

Stef has been with us now for 10 years and we are so pleased that he has made many friends over the years that he has been with us. Stef is a gift to New Beginnings and is without a doubt, a very important part of our team.

Congratulations Stefan on this great accomplishment of working at New Beginnings for 10 years!!! We are so very proud of you!!



Mission Moments-Youth Impact Stories

Before New Beginnings I really had no idea how to get my life back on track. I wasn't in school, I didn't have a job, I didn't know how to handle my anger and I didn't even have the proper ID to get a job. Now I am in school everyday, got a job and am able to handle my anger.

Before I didn't like therapy and hated talking about my feelings and emotions. I hated school and never had the help I needed in a regular classroom, but now my two teachers make coming to school motivating and take the extra time to help me.

Its hard to put it into words, but since starting here I feel a sense of warmness and feel very welcomed in the building with all the awesome staff. From them asking if I need anything to eat and cooking me an awesome grilled cheese to all the other staff asking how my weekend was. I feel like the staff here care a lot about me.

Since doing the substance abuse program with my substance abuse counsellor I have quit vaping and smoking weed. I am now on week 3 and have been doing good with my urges. She taught me how to control the urges and gave me coping tools to help manage my addictions.

Taking Anger Management with my youth worker really helped to not be so hot headed and control not just my anger but also other emotions that lead up to anger. She also gave me coping skills that I still use to help handle not only anger but my other emotions.

Taking Job Readiness and Life skills with my classroom therapist has helped a lot! She helped me get my birth certificate and SIN number so that I could get a job and showed me how to budget and save money to hopefully one day start up my own business. She always checks in on me throughout the week even in the summer when I only had 2 meetings a week to make sure I was doing good. She even offered transportation to get to my appointments.

Before I came to New Beginnings I was dealing with 3 major charges and now since taking anger management, substance abuse and attending school regularly all 3 charges were dropped and I am able to transition back to Herman High School in January to experience graduating with my friends.

I am so thankful for getting all the support in such a tough time in my life.

Thank-you is not even big enough to say how grateful I am.

Aiden B.



Mission Moments-Youth Impact Stories



I learned about New Beginnings many years ago when my brother started attending there for counselling. I knew it was a safe place that had helped him many times so when I was approached by a friend of mine this year asking if I wanted to apply to the Youth Job Connection Program I said yes right away!

Together we encouraged our other friends to join as well, and now all of us are doing the program together which made it a better experience because we are all each other's motivation and support network. I'm really happy that I joined the program because it taught me and always reminded me that I can accomplish anything if I just keep pushing. The training and support I received taught me skills that I can use in all areas of my life, such as conflict resolution, and using healthy coping strategies.

Being connected to New Beginnings has helped me deal with my depression after the death of my younger brother almost two years ago now, which has allowed me to become the man and father that I needed to be. I felt like I was in a bad space because there was so much weight on my shoulders to take care of my family that I couldn't have time to even mourn and take care of myself the way I needed to. Many of the staff here knew my brother and I can share stories with them about how amazing he was and talk about my feelings and struggles that came as a result of his death.

I'm thankful for everyone at New Beginnings for the genuine work and dedication they all put into helping my friends and I.

Tuocolin D.

Mission Moments-Youth Impact Stories

I was struggling this year with finding work, and I knew about New Beginnings and all of the programs that they offer from being incarcerated in their open custody program a few years ago. During my incarceration I made the best out of my time and accomplished a lot of great things. I graduated high school while in custody and the staff brought in a cake so that we could have a celebration. I also took a lead role in teaching the peer-led counselling program, Moral Reconaton Therapy, helping other youth who came in learn about how they can change the way they are thinking and make better choices when they got released. After being released I attended New Beginnings every week for my counselling programs to get help with anger management, parenting, and developing healthy relationships. I was successful in these programs and they even helped me find employment which was my main goal at the time. I'll be honest, the first time in the Youth Job Connection Program didn't go so well because I wasn't ready to put the work in, but a few months ago, a good friend of mine reminded me about the program again and it motivated me to enroll back into the Youth Job Connection Program. I then told my two good friends about it as well and they also enrolled. We all decided to do the program together and were each other's motivation. My employment workers at New Beginnings are great, and I don't know what or where I would be without meeting these amazing people. I'm proud to say that I now have a job I enjoy and am able to support my family and be a positive role model to my children.

No matter how much time passes, I always know that I can come to New Beginnings and the staff there will do everything they can to help me and my family. I'm so thankful for all the hard work and love that they all put into helping me learn about staying motivated and pushing forward. Being connected to New Beginnings has helped me become a better man and father.

Phillip E.

