

A message from the 2002/03 Board of Directors

The Board of Directors is pleased to present CONTACT Hamilton's 2002/2003 Annual Report. The theme of this year's report is CONTACT In Action.

It has been a year of steady progress with Board and staff moving ahead on several fronts to expand access services, develop new partnerships, improve internal operations, and establish an approach for the community planning process. Meanwhile, we have continued to provide our core services, offering a single point of access and coordinated information to more families and individuals than ever before, while facilitating a resolution process for people with urgent and complex needs.

This report is full of information about CONTACT's numerous activities. Comments from people who responded to satisfaction surveys about the access process have also been included in order to reflect the perspectives and priorities of families and individuals who depend upon our services.

Put all this information together and you have a picture of an organization intent upon fulfilling the promise of continuous action that has always been implicit in the name CONTACT.

Rick Helm, Chair	Shirley Mitchell
Dirk VanderBent, Vice-Chair	Leila Ryan
Patrick Fernando, Past-Chair	Beverley Wasmund
Brian Guest	Madina Wasuge
Leslea Peirson	Oksana Plawiuk Fisher, Executive Director

CONTACT Hamilton in Action

Single Point of Access

"It is a great method of accessing a wide range of services without hundreds of calls and waiting lists at numerous services"

"Mary Anne is very helpful and caring. I think CONTACT does an excellent job, however getting connected is taking way too long. I am not sure how one rectifies this, but children are suffering because of long wait lists"

"Sylvia was very articulate and specific when asking questions and she helped me to remain focused on the most important aspects...She did everything she could and CONTACTed the necessary people."

Feedback from people who use CONTACT Hamilton's services underlines the value of providing people with one point of access to services. Instead of going from one agency to another, telling the same story over and over again, they are now able to discuss their situation in detail with CONTACT staff members, who then take responsibility for finding the most appropriate services and making the right connections. For service provider agencies and the community as a whole this means a more coordinated approach that eliminates duplication and inappropriate referrals.

Unfortunately, lengthy waiting lists continue to exist for many services in the community, causing many individuals and families additional stress. Over the

past year there has been an increase in wait times as agencies struggle with increasing numbers and complexity of needs. CONTACT coordinates centralized waiting lists, and reviews these regularly with the service provider agencies. This process maintains a fair and equitable approach for all individuals and families waiting for service and ensures that those with the most urgent needs are considered first.

2002/03 Highlights

- Assumed centralized access for behavioural and emotional programs at McMaster Children's Hospital, Child and Family Centre
- Became the single access point for all respite programs for children and adults with developmental disabilities

Number of Registered clients (as of March 31, 2003)

Children's Mental Health Services	3,720
Developmental Services	750
Total	4,470

Number of Residential Placement Advisory Committee (RPAC) meetings:	104
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Coordinated Information

"It was great to be able to obtain the needed information and recommendations all in one day. I spent five months trying to see if there were any programs available. Gary gave us great ideas, programs and more great referrals. We would still be trying to locate the help if we did not have access to CONTACT."

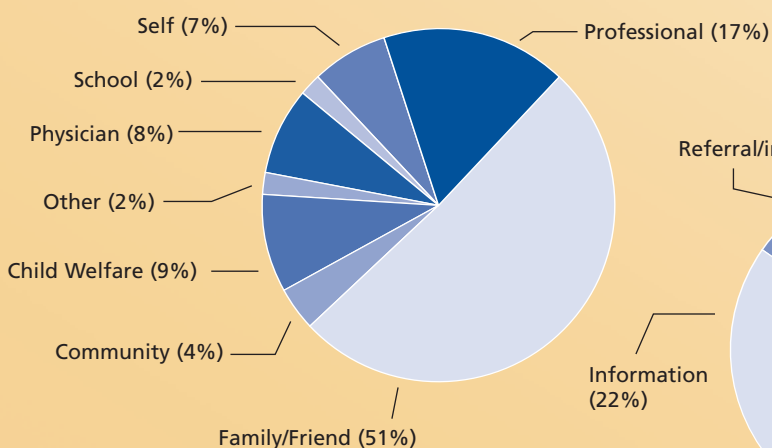
Getting accurate information about all relevant services from a single source can be a huge benefit to families and individuals. CONTACT also provides community agencies and professionals with information about local services.

2002/03 Highlights

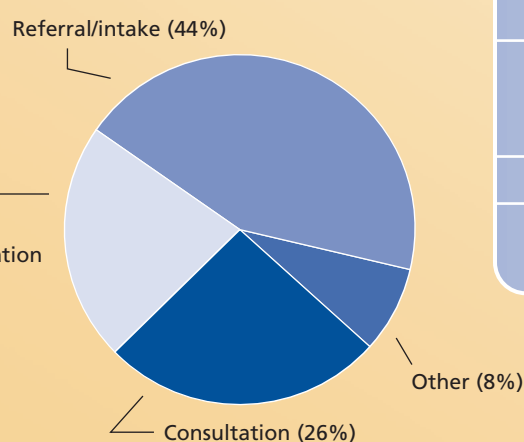
- Responded to 3,480 new callers. Requests for information and consultation accounted for 48% of all new calls
- Implemented a new information system, WebTracker. This system will improve the data and reports sent to agencies, while giving the community a better way of tracking referral patterns, wait lists and system pressures
- Partnered with the Glenwood School parent council to host an information session for families regarding transition into the adult developmental services system
- Provided numerous community presentations about community services and CONTACT Hamilton

Total number of Inquiries (new callers): 3,480

Profile of Callers



Reason for call



Resolution Process

"When you sit in constant powerlessness and then someone tells you there is other help out there, you begin to find hope again, because I refuse to believe there isn't a way to help my child."

The resolution processes facilitated by CONTACT Hamilton gives service providers, families and individuals a way of getting together to look for appropriate solutions for those with complex or urgent needs who are having difficulty getting the support they require. An increase in the number of resolution meetings in the past year, and an increase in the complexity of the situations presented, suggests that the system as a whole has been under great pressure and that many families have reached a crisis point.

2002/03 Highlights

- Facilitated 14 Resolution Meetings
- Partnered with the children's and developmental service agencies and the two Children's Aid Societies, to develop a community protocol for responding to situations involving children with exceptional needs

Resolution Statistics (April 2002- March 2003)

Sector	Resolution Meetings (#)	Needs/ # of individuals
Children's Mental Health	4	• residential treatment-3 • residential placement-1
Children's Mental Health and Developmental (Dual)	3	• residential treatment-1 • residential placement-1 • respite-1
Children's Developmental	2	• residential placement-2
Adult Developmental	5	• residential accommodation-3 • day support-2

Building a Foundation for Future Action

Over the past year, CONTACT Hamilton has directed considerable energy towards important activities that will lay the foundation for improving our ability to provide our access and information services, as well as support community planning activities. Here are some of the key changes that took place inside the organization and with our community partners over the past year.

The Board in Action

Strategic Planning

In the summer of 2001, the Board engaged in a strategic planning process. Through this process the Board revised our mission statement (Ends policy) and established the following strategic priorities for the next three years.

- Increase outreach
- Establish a planning and capacity-building function
- Increase advocacy
- Undertake organizational development

A Broader Approach to Community Involvement

Linked to our strategic priority of increasing outreach, the Board reviewed various issues related to membership in the corporation and community involvement. As a result, the Board will be implementing changes to CONTACT Hamilton's membership policies to develop a broader approach to involving individuals and families. The plan is to create an informal network of people who would like to be involved with CONTACT and its initiatives, with a view to encouraging a more broad-based connection with the organization. The Board is also inviting anyone in observing its meetings, to attend during the coming year. Information can be obtained by calling our office. We welcome your ideas about how you would like to be involved and informed.

Board Comings and Goings

Two of CONTACT Hamilton's longest-serving Board members are ending their term at this year's annual meeting. Leila Ryan, the founding Chair of the Board and Patrick Fernando, Board Chair in 2001/2002, both demonstrated vision and commitment as they helped steer the organization through its early stages. While their contribution will be greatly missed, CONTACT Hamilton is fortunate to be able to take advantage of the talents of two outstanding new Board members Beverley Wasmund and Madina Wasuge, who both have a strong commitment to improving the system for families, children and people with developmental disabilities.

Partnerships in Action

Over the past year, CONTACT Hamilton strengthened and created new partnerships in several areas. Through these kinds of partnerships, Contact Hamilton is able to improve services for the individuals and families we work with, coordinate access with other systems, contribute to community development initiatives and support research. Some of this work has been described elsewhere in this report. Other key partnerships include:

- Supported the Early Years initiative through participation on the Early Years Centre Steering Committee and the Community Advisory Committee on Early Years
- Partnered in a multi-agency protocol hosted by Banyan Community Services for children under 12 in conflict with the law
- Participated with McMaster University researchers in a study of the Brief Child and Family Phone Interview
- Participated on the Developmental Services Transportation Committee, a group advocating for improved public transportation for people with developmental disabilities in Hamilton
- Developed a protocol with the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board to support transitional planning for students with developmental disabilities leaving the school system. A similar protocol with the Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board was developed earlier
- Implemented a protocol with the two local Children's Aid Societies to coordinate linkages with CONTACT

Statement of Revenue and Expenses Contact Hamilton for Children's and Developmental Services

Revenue	Period ended March 31 2003	Period ended March 31, 2002
Grants		
Ministry of Community, Family and Children's Services	\$1,059,983	\$921,104
Interest Income	218	554
	1,060,201	921,658
Expenses		
Salaries and Benefits	733,377	693,260
Other	357,915	213,994
	1,091,292	907,254
NET EXCESS OF REVENUE OVER EXPENSES (EXPENSES OVER REVENUE)	(\$31,091)	\$14,404

A copy of the audited financial statement is available upon request.

Community Planning

"Solutions or alternatives need to be provided quicker."

"Please tell teachers, doctors and other professionals to let parents know that there is help in the community for our disabled children."

Service providers, the families and individuals they serve, the Ministry and community members at large all recognize that there is much to be done to enhance the children's and developmental services systems in our community. CONTACT Hamilton has begun to play a vital role in helping the community realize these goals through planning and community partnerships.

A Framework for the Community Service Plan

In 2001, the Regional Office of the Ministry of Community, Family and Children's Services (MCFCS) asked the CONTACT agencies in Brant, Haldimand and Norfolk, Hamilton and Niagara to design an approach to developing annual community service plans for the Ministry's children's and developmental services systems. The purpose of this plan is to identify overall utilization of resources and services, service gaps, current and emerging trends, and community priorities.

To this end, the four CONTACT agencies consulted with consumers, service providers and related service sectors, then developed a framework and process for the community service plan. A report and recommendations were submitted to the Regional Office, which in turn advised the CONTACT agencies to proceed with the first planning process in 2003/2004. This process is now underway and will be completed in March 2004.

Planning for New Developmental Services

In 2002/3 the Hamilton community received new funding from the Ministry of Community, Family and Children's Services Multi-Year Plan for Developmental Services. The Regional Office requested that CONTACT Hamilton facilitate the planning process for the allocation of funding for two initiatives;

- \$311,400 in new funding for the community to provide new respite, day and accommodation support
- \$180,000 in new funding for Foundations; an initiative focused on 18-28 year olds to assist with developing skills to transition from school to community participation

CONTACT Hamilton Ends Policy

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

a) We serve children and youth who are experiencing behavioural, emotional or developmental concerns, and adults with developmental disabilities.

The above-noted children, youth, adults and their families can:

- Easily get accurate, timely and relevant information about appropriate services
- Be referred to the MCFCS services that they need
- Be directed to other appropriate community services

Physicians and other professionals in the community will:

- Easily get accurate, timely and relevant information about appropriate services

b) Stakeholders are aware of the need for services in the community to help those with behavioural or emotional concerns or those with developmental disabilities.

To this end we provide stakeholders with credible data, information, knowledge regarding:

- service needs (what people need),
- demands (how many people need this),
- system pressures (wait lists),
- gaps (what is not available), and
- priorities

c) The system of children's and developmental services and supports is influenced by CONTACT Hamilton to be: responsive, coordinated and effective.

d) Public policy with respect to children's and developmental services is influenced by CONTACT Hamilton to reflect current and emerging needs and trends.