

# New Beginnings 2021-2022 Annual Report

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## 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



## Board President's Report

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I once again would like to convey our appreciation to the highly skilled and dedicated staff and management of New Beginnings. You have continued to provide valuable services to the families in our community with a professionalism that is recognized and highly regarded by our community.

This year brought about many exciting developments including increased efficiencies, new program and service opportunities, exciting collaborations with new community partners, and enterprises within our space in the form of tenancies. We welcome our new tenants, Essex County Diversion Program Inc., and B.E.A.D.S., and look forward to their success in their new spaces.

The Board of Directors would like to acknowledge our Ministries and some of the key service partners whose collaborative work enables 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 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
- Windsor Police Services
- Youth Probation

Our board has experienced many changes over the year. With mixed emotions, I announce Frank Miller's resignation from our Board of Directors. Frank served with New Beginnings since November 2004, and his contributions over the years were invaluable. Frank brought a wealth of experience and expertise as a criminal lawyer that assisted us, particularly with our youth justice programs and clients and our Open Custody & Detention program. Though he will be truly missed, we wish him the best of luck with his journey forward!

We would also like to welcome our two newest Directors, Laure Khalil and Silvana Slavik. Laure comes to us with many years of experience addressing the needs of Windsor's diverse populations, particularly in settlement services as a Supervisor at the YMCA. Laure is passionate about diversity, equity, and inclusion, and she devotes that passion to educating the community on how to best support the unique needs of newcomers in their transition to Canada.

As a manager of chartered professional accountants, Silvana has accepted the role of Treasurer within our board. Her wealth of experience in accounting, and her impressive financial

background bring a component to the Board that will assist in budgeting, governance, and accounting.

The Board of Directors has every confidence in our strategic planning for this fiscal year in that it will continue to position us at the forefront for the delivery of sound, innovative, evidence-based programming.

In closing, on behalf of the Board of Directors, I would like to convey to the Executive Director, the Management team, and all of the staff members, our recognition of your hard work and commitment. You have our unwavering support, and it is our privilege to assist you.

Sincerely,

Donna Vickers  
Board President

## Executive Director's Report

While the challenges we have faced over the past few years have been great, so too have the opportunities. We have continued to navigate through unprecedented obstacles brought forward by the COVID-19 pandemic, using this as fuel for creative efforts and initiatives.

This past year has been an exciting time of growth for New Beginnings on many levels. We have worked tirelessly to repurpose space at the Highland location by developing an exciting and innovative new residential program, Sober Living Residences for youth in post-secondary school. This creative endeavour will fill a gap in the community and provide us with the opportunity to support many at-risk students throughout their academic journeys. I cannot thank the management and staff teams enough for their adaptability, time, labour, and commitment, often at a moment's notice, to assisting us in this project, and I am so excited to see the outcomes of our hard work!

New Beginnings is also pleased to announce that with the Ministry of Children, Community, and Social Service's support and funding, we have created a new 4-part media program called Embracing Differences, designed to meet the needs of assisting youth in valuing diversity, equity, inclusion, and allyship. This new program allows for a seamless continuum of services under our umbrella of programs and in partnership with key service providers across multiple sectors in our community.

Our collaboration with community partners continues to strengthen and grow year after year. Our partnership with the Windsor-Essex Children's Aid Society continues with our employment programs, education support, outreach activities, and our Youth in Transition program. This year I was honoured to accompany our YIT worker on WECAS' new podcast, Everyday Family Matters, where we had the opportunity to showcase the great work done by New Beginnings for youth in the child welfare system.

Our New Beginning's education partners have continued to support the holistic and strength-based approach we have to serve youth in our classrooms and outpatient services. We are excited to announce the launch of a new incentive program and tuck shop to promote the academic and social success of our students, made possible by a generous grant by the May Court Club of Windsor.

Our justice partners continue to support our work with at-risk and high-risk youth. This year we were able to collaborate with the Ontario Provincial Police and the Windsor Police Services to implement a fast-track referral system to the Risk Intervention and Prevention Program to ensure timely, efficient connection to services for the highest needs youth and families. WPS has partnered with New Beginnings in many exciting outreach activities and the relationships between youth and the justice system continue to strengthen and evolve as a direct result.

New Beginnings has strengthened our social media presence exponentially over the past year, and we are seeing new partnerships, interests, and opportunities as a direct result. For example, New Beginnings is proud to be one of the local charities chosen to receive donations by the online ordering platform, Jubzi Inc. New Beginnings is also extremely fortunate to have been selected as the successful recipient of Lowe's Canada Heroes Campaign for September of 2022. This exciting opportunity will enable us to make much-needed upgrades and renovations to ensure our clients and staff teams have environments conducive to inclusion, comfort, safety, and function.

Our many successes this year would not be possible without the dedication and support from our highly skilled team. Special acknowledgment to the managers and supervisors of our programs who, on a daily basis, set the tone for positive workplace culture, and demonstrate an unwavering commitment to the services we provide. To the frontline staff, I cannot stress enough my gratitude for your adaptability, tenacity, and passion that I witness from you each and every day. To the Board of Directors, our shared vision, philosophy, values, and mission continue to guide us through any challenge, allowing us to experience growth, development, and strength as a team. I am truly excited to see what the upcoming year has in store for us.

With sincere thanks for our work together, and for another great year,

Stacey Yannacopoulos  
Executive Director

## Board of Directors

Donna Vickers	Chair
Ben Rhyno	Vice-Chair
Jason Crowley	Director
Silvana Slavik	Treasurer
Zoja Holman	Director
Laure Khalil	Director
Greg Zvrik	Director
Tristan Miller	Director

## Management Team

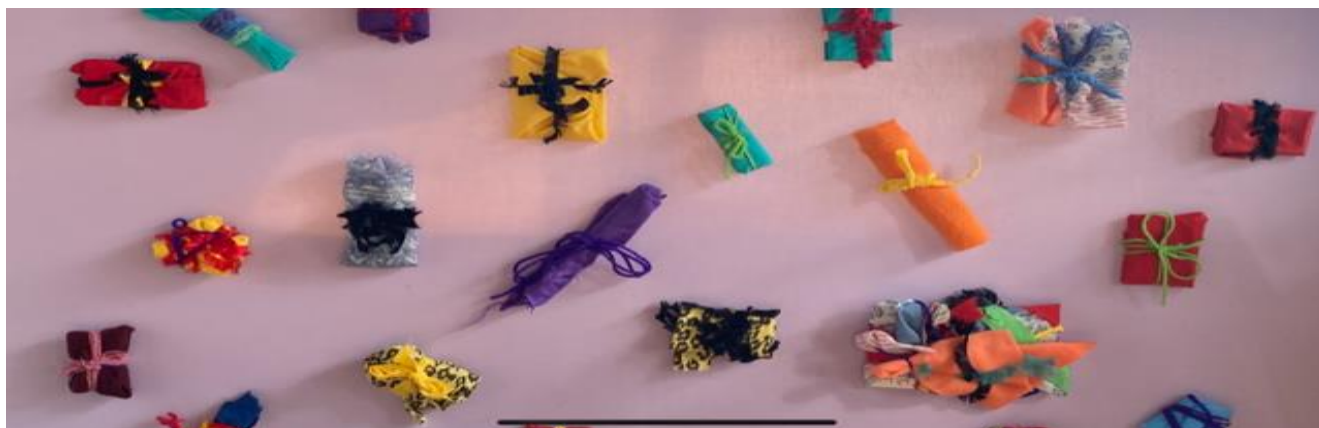
Stacey Yannacopoulos	Executive Director
Betty Green	Director of Agency Services
Kristin Durham	Coordinator, Non-Residential Attendance Centre/Staff Training
Carolyn Binder	Coordinator, Windsor-Essex Child & Parent Place
Mary Jane LeClair	Coordinator, Community Programs/Agency Compliance
Christian Morneau	Supervisor, Youth Justice Programs and Clinical Oversight



## 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 continue utilization of our satellite locations in both Leamington and Amherstburg and will explore other areas of the county that would benefit from access to services.

With the launch of the new Youth Wellness Hub in Windsor, the Education Lead and the Substance Use Counsellor attend weekly and provide office hours, information sessions, and workshops, that meet the identified needs of the youth in the community, including study groups, homework help and one on one substance use counselling. In collaboration with the City of Windsor, the Art Therapist facilitated a Celebration of Life event at the Homelessness Hub for people that had recently experienced the loss of a friend/peer in the community. The art piece was placed on display to provide Memoriam to the members of the community.



The staff team continues to identify gaps and develop innovative and evidence-based programming to engage and educate youth. This year, that includes an Online Safety program and the 4-part media program, Embracing Differences. The Preventure Program is a CAMH initiative for mental wellness and early intervention for the Prevention of Substance Abuse and Promotion of Positive Mental Health. Select members of the staff team have been certified in Preventure training and will begin facilitating workshops, in group and one-to-one settings in collaboration with the staff team at YOS.

The staff continues to provide services that are unique and individualized while offering both in-person and virtual services to eliminate barriers to service. The newest addition to the Attendance Centre is a “Tuck Shop” that will be accessible to any youth that accesses services through therapeutic programming and/or specialized classrooms. The youth will earn New Beginnings Dollars for their attendance, effort, and attainment of individualized goals, which

can then be used to purchase items of their choice including snacks, wellness items, gift cards, clothing, etc.



Our specialized classrooms including the Transitions, Compass, and Connections program, in collaboration with local school boards, continue to provide individualized, flexible, and adaptable services to meet each youth's educational and therapeutic needs. Thank you to the staff team for their continued dedication and hard work to ensure youth are supported and provided with opportunities to foster positive growth and access to a wide range of services.



## Windsor-Essex Child and Parent Place

We started this year continuing to come out of the challenges that the Covid-19 pandemic brought. Throughout this time, the Windsor-Essex Child & Parent Place (WECAPP) continued to embrace the changes necessary to unite child and parent relationships that may not have otherwise happened in a safe and child-focused way. The program offers parenting-time visits, exchanges, and virtual parenting-time services to families who are separated and in need of a neutral, safe, and child-focused space to help parenting time occur. We do this under the supervision of skilled, trained staff, in Windsor and Leamington.

Throughout the year, staff worked with families to adapt their parenting-time visits back to in-person services as the program could offer it and as the families were comfortable doing so. This collaborative effort has meant that we have strived to provide families with the frequency of parenting time their agreements and court orders stated, even when the length of parenting time was lessened due to the nature of group service and the safety precautions necessary because of the pandemic. With these challenges, the program has increased our capacity to serve families month-over-month for this 2021-2022 year and continues to strive to meet the needs of our diverse Windsor-Essex community.

This year ends the long-standing 30-year relationship WECAPP had under the Ministry of the Attorney General as the program shifts to the Ministry of Children, Community & Social Services (MCCSS)-Victim Services Branch, effective April 1, 2022. Though we are grateful for the strong support received from MAG, we have no doubt this transition will be seamless and successful, and we look forward to new opportunities that come with this shift.





## Youth Opportunities Strategy

The Youth Opportunity Strategy (YOS) hosts a number of programs to assist youth clients in maximizing their full potential by providing a wide array of supports that can assist in removing barriers to success. All programs at YOS work collaboratively with internal and external referrals to promote holistic and all-encompassing service provision.



The Youth in Transition worker supports youth in their successful transition out of the child welfare system into adulthood and independent living. 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. This past year, this program has seen a positive shift, as we can once again assist clients with many of the practical supports and referrals to the community, as well as take part in the Children's Aid Society's in-person Life Skills Program, providing support and mentorship to clients transitioning out of care.



The Provincial Youth Outreach team (PYOW) continues to work with youth participants in the 5 identified priority neighborhoods within the city of Windsor: City Centre (Downtown), University, Drouillard Road, Forest Glade, and Sandwich Town. They continue to work within their specialized roles to ensure that wrap-around supports are provided to the participants and their families where necessary. The team has seen a positive upturn with the return to pre-pandemic conditions of normal in-house capacity limits and eased restrictions that were in place during the pandemic, resuming all indoor and drop-in groups and activities. In addition to these, the team has added many collaborative group components such as the Mitchell Park activities, Bruce Park Potlucks, and presence at the Youth Wellness Hub cooking meals with the youths. With the return of in-person services, the PYOW team was also able to hold their first full *Say Yes to the Prom Dress* Event in 3 years, enabling over a hundred youth attendees to say yes to their dress!





The Youth Job Connection (YJC), the YJC Summer program (YJCS), and the Youth Employment Experience Program (YEPP) provide youth with a wide variety of supports that assist them in overcoming a multitude of intense and complex barriers to success in achieving employment. These programs have seen significant success in the past year, and the teams have worked tirelessly to improve and expand the variety of employers that work with their clients. Throughout the pandemic, we provided booklet-style training that was successful in sustaining the programs through uncertain times, however, clients enthusiastically returned to in-person training, benefiting from face-to-face assistance, socialization time, and less isolation.



The Risk Intervention and Prevention Program (RIPP) continues to see a steady influx of referrals to this extremely valuable program. In recent months collaboration, with LaSalle Police and the HDGH Youth Crisis Response Team lead to a new fast-track referral system for youth in immediate crisis or need. The team continues to ensure that they provide service to youth exhibiting a variety of risk factors and challenges including substance use issues, gang involvement, mental health concerns, family conflict, housing and homelessness, unemployment, poverty, and education barriers. The RIPP Team collaborates closely with service providers in law enforcement to work towards strengthening relationships between youth and the justice system. Most recently, our team held a “Pizza with the Police” event which was a huge success. This was their first in-person and large-scale event since the pandemic has eased and it was attended by over a hundred youth participants.



The staff at YOS continually strives to implement effective and innovative ideas and programming, working diligently to maintain our commitment to provide holistic programming for individuals, families, and communities, delivered in an individualized, flexible, and collaborative manner. We look forward to another successful year of connecting with children, youth, families, and community partners across Windsor-Essex county.



## Service Recognition

### Carolyn Binder

Carolyn Binder has been a valuable and dedicated member of New Beginnings since the inception of the Windsor Essex Child and Parent Place (WECAPP) at the agency, and I am so pleased to acknowledge this important milestone in her career. The WECAPP program offers a neutral, safe, and child-focused environment where access visits and exchanges can take place. Carolyn's kind and gentle demeanor, coupled with strong clinical skills, allow her to deliver a level of competence in service delivery that is truly admirable. Carolyn's personal mission is to provide the best client-centered care that she can, and she emulates this philosophy to her staff team every day. Through the years, her talents and efforts have helped build WECAPP into a thriving, successful program that services many children and families across Windsor-Essex county. In collaboration and through consultation with the ministry and our advisory committee, Carolyn is consistently evaluating the program's effectiveness, ensuring that WECAPP is following best practices and evidence-based service delivery methods. She goes above and beyond every day to ensure that clients feel supported, validated, and respected. Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, Carolyn displayed an ability to adapt the WECAPP program delivery quickly and creatively, ensuring that families in need continued to receive the important services they require. Carolyn also remained diligent in supporting her staff team, always displaying genuine care and support to those around her. Carolyn, we are so proud of your accomplishments and your continued commitment to excellence. Thank you for your ten years of service!





## Service Recognition

### Nicole Stach

Nicole Stach has been a valuable member of the New Beginnings team since 2002, and I am excited to acknowledge her attainment of 20 years of service! Over the past two decades, Nicole has held several roles at the agency in our residential programs, in the Non-Residential Attendance Centre, in our specialized classrooms, and most recently, as the team leader of the provincial youth outreach worker program. Nicole's knowledge of New Beginnings' history, programs, services, and clients enables her with the unique ability to provide ongoing support and mentorship to those around her. Nicole prides herself on being a strong advocate and supporter for the youth clients she serves, and her strength and determination have been the backbone of many youth success stories at the agency. She uses that same passion to support her co-workers, consistently working to ensure safe and equitable workplace standards. Nicole, we are so excited to see what the future holds for you, and we congratulate you on the exciting milestone of 20 years of service!

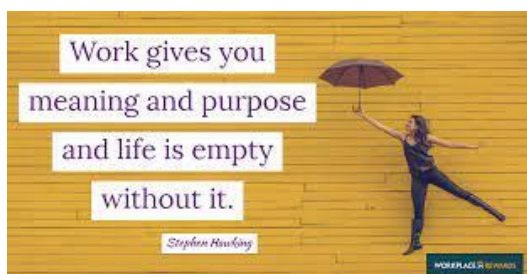


## Staff Quotes

“Witnessing the first visit between a visiting parent and child, and seeing the child run to their parent and hug them as soon as they entered the room. The joy on both the child’s and parent’s faces reminded me why what we do at WECAPP is so important.” Cassandra A.- Visit Monitor

“To be given the privilege to walk with youth for years and monitor their progress is so cool, especially when they are later accepted into the University of Windsor’s Social Work program, and want to support youth in the same way!” Jeff K.- Youth in Transition Worker

“Delivering food to a youth who completed the anger management program with me 3 years prior, and discovering that he now has a stable full-time job and is living in a nice home. I learned he only needed food because he was trying hard to support more people than just himself because he believes he should help others because he was helped in the past.” RJ M.- Education Lead City/County Worker



“I happened to come across a quote the other day that resonated with me; it made me think about the work that we do and the impact we have on our youth. We all have such a passion for helping others; it’s so rewarding to see our youth make positive changes, grow and recognize their accomplishment, big or small. So, I searched for the quote again and luckily found it...just a reminder of why we do what we do- Every child deserves a Champion, an adult who will never give up on them, who understands the power of connection, and insists that they become the best that they can possibly be”. Kerry K- Provincial Youth Outreach Worker

“Several months ago, I had a client tell me that they felt as though they were going to end up dead or in jail because of the lifestyle they were living at the time. Recently, this same youth told me that they’ve nearly quit smoking and using drugs, and they also just got a job interview. Hearing updates like these remind me why RIPP is such an instrumental program for the youth in our community!” Chase S.- Bilingual Risk Intervention and Prevention Project (RIPP) Worker



"When I see youth in Art Therapy begin to let go of the voice in their head that tells them nothing is good enough. I love when students start noticing the connections between art-making and how they experience everyday life. They learn that it's okay to make mistakes, that they have a lot to offer, and that their story matters." Katie C.- Art Specialist

"In the Youth Job Connection Program, there is nothing more rewarding than when our harder-to-place clients meet success in the program. Recently, the employer of a client deemed 'unplaceable' due to stigmas and severe mental health reported that he was a true joy to have around - not just because of his amazing work ethic but also his strong morals. His success has been truly uplifting to see as his Employment Worker." Cassandra S.V- Youth Employment Worker



"When I see a parent re-unite with their child/ren after a period of time and the parent is anxiously awaiting their child to come into the room. Parent and child stare at each other, the parent sobbing, and the child goes to the parent, they hug and the child cries also. As a staff I watch, the emotions are high, I get goosebumps, tears and the overwhelming feeling of... this is why I'm here!!" Sue L.- Visit Monitor

## Mission Moment-Youth Impact Story

I was first introduced to New Beginnings when I was 17 years old when I signed up for the Summer Jobs program. Finding employment as a youth is not easy, and because I enjoyed the program and found it so helpful, I participated in the Youth Job Connection program two additional times since then. The staff always goes above and beyond to help eliminate barriers I am facing and make sure that I have a placement that I enjoy and am supported in.

New Beginnings has helped me with much more than just employment though. I was also referred to the Youth in Transition Worker program, and for the past nine years have worked side-by-side with my YITW worker through so many challenges. He has helped me find housing, food, recreation opportunities, cultural support, and helped me through some legal issues. I have been diagnosed with a rare condition called Machado Joseph Disease, which over time will limit my mobility, vision, and speech. This diagnosis was scary because my father also has this and I have seen how it has affected him. My worker has supported me through my journey with this diagnosis, helping me locate devices to help with my walking such as canes and a wheelchair.

The staff at New Beginnings have also been helping me find inclusive employment opportunities because I want to continue working. I am going to be transitioning to adult services soon and applying for ODSP, and my workers at New Beginnings have helped me through all of this, making me feel like I will be successful. I have had nothing but positive experiences through these programs and I am leaving with better insight and knowledge.

Treyvon D., Age 25





## Mission Moment- Youth Impact Story

Before New Beginnings I struggled a lot with anxiety, depression, and anger, and held everything in. At my old school, I struggled a lot with the teachers and did not get enough help with schoolwork. I also had a very hard time with bullies at my old schools, but still tried my best to attend school.

When I started at New Beginnings in April of 2022 I began receiving a lot of help from the staff.

The teachers I met were very helpful, they were always there when I needed them and gave me the one-on-one support I needed. My math teacher taught me different measurement skills and my English teacher helped me work through my feelings, by having me complete a journal every morning. I had a very smooth school schedule that helped me get a lot of work done.

During my anger management therapeutic program, my youth worker taught me different strategies for how to work through my anger and frustration. During my relationships and communication therapeutic program sessions, my youth worker helped me process my past with bullying and how to overcome it. I also took art therapy and the Therapeutic Art Specialist helped me see images differently and positively.

At New Beginnings everyone was very kind and we had a lot of fun. They allowed me to listen to my music while I worked, which helped me get a lot of work done. I got to beat my classroom therapist in a few games of ping-pong and she taught me how to cook a grilled-cheese sandwich. My classroom therapist and I went outside to talk and go on walks. They helped me with anything that I needed while I was there!

New Beginnings helped me have a more positive outlook on myself and my future and helped me have a more positive view of transitioning to my community school. They helped me get back into school, which will help me get a job in the future. I am very thankful to all of the staff members, I couldn't have done it without them!

Alexander D., Age 16

