

Message from the Advocate

Spring is here and as we head into another fiscal year it is a good time to reflect on all the work we have accomplished. Once again it has been a busy and productive year. We released our investigative report, “A Tragedy Waiting to Happen” and continued work on five other investigations. We prepared to release *The Advocate’s Report on the Status of Recommendations 2015*, and intensive work continued on the proposed amendments to the *Child and Youth Advocate Act*.



Carol A. Chafe

This past Fall, our office had the pleasure of hosting the 2015 Canadian Council of Child and Youth Advocates Biennial Conference. In addition to this wonderful networking opportunity, staff from our office travelled across the province doing provincial outreach, and participated in education sessions, including a session for Memorial University’s Interprofessional Education group which focused on the importance of collaboration and communication in teams.

I hope you enjoy reading our newsletter and take the challenge of completing “The Rights Stuff” word puzzle where you will learn more about the UNCRC and the rights of the child! As we move into the 2016-2017 fiscal year, we continue to be dedicated to further enhancing our advocacy work.



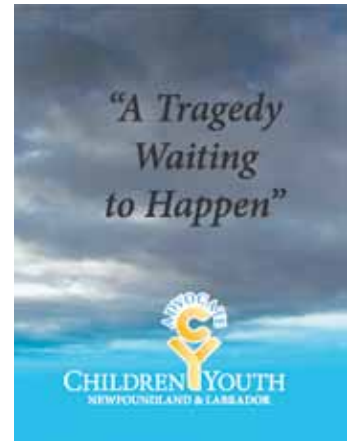
A Year In Review

2015-2016 was another busy year for the Advocate’s office.

In January 2016, the Advocate released an investigative report titled, “A Tragedy Waiting to Happen”. This report tells the story of three vulnerable children and how government services did not meet their needs. In January 2013, the Advocate initiated an investigation into the circumstances surrounding a family who had been receiving government services when a fire claimed the lives of two of the three children and one adult.

As with other reports released by the Advocate’s office in recent years, the prominent themes uncovered throughout this investigation were lack of documentation, non-adherence to documentation policies, lack of comprehensive assessment and lack of collaboration among all service providers involved. The investigation produced ten recommendations made to departments and agencies. The Advocate will follow up on these recommendations until they are all appropriately addressed. The goal of this investigative report is to help significantly diminish the likelihood of any similar situation in the future.

In addition to the completion of “A Tragedy Waiting to Happen”, work continued on five other very significant investigations. The office continued to provide advocacy services for children and youth; this included the handling of 546 individual advocacy files to date. Work continued on *The Advocate’s Report on the Status of Recommendations 2015*, which will be released publicly on an annual basis and involves monitoring all recommendations made in reviews and investigations and followup with the applicable departments and agencies to ensure completion. In addition, intensive work took place from January to June 2015 on the proposed amendments to the *Child and Youth Advocate Act* that would require mandatory notification from government departments and agencies when a child or youth receiving services is involved in a critical incident or when the death of a child or youth occurs.



Out and About

In February 2016, the Advocate and Director of Investigations participated in Memorial University's Interprofessional Education Session. The theme of this course is "Transition to Practice, When Teams Fail". Students come from multidisciplinary backgrounds, including medicine, nursing, social work, pharmacy and psychology. This course focuses on the importance of collaboration across a team of professionals. The investigations completed by our office clearly illustrate how lack of collaboration and communication can result in dire consequences for children and youth receiving various government services. During this presentation we discussed two investigations completed by our office, "A Tragedy Waiting to Happen" and *Turning a Blind Eye*, in order to demonstrate what can go wrong with service provision and the resulting poor outcomes for children and youth. This was the second year that we were invited to present at this session, and on both occasions the presentation has resonated with students.

Over the past year, our office has been engaged in several outreach and educational opportunities. We had the pleasure of hosting the 2015 Canadian Council of Child and Youth Advocates Biennial Conference, which was described in our October 2015 newsletter. We have travelled throughout the province and have met with the public, professionals, and children and youth, providing information on what we do and how we can assist in advocating for children and youth.

We are always looking for ways to learn more about other agencies in the province, and to connect with professionals working with children and youth. We would like to thank everyone who took the opportunity to meet with us over the past year and we look forward to connecting again in the future!

We Need Your Help!

To ensure we reach children and youth and the public, please contact us to add your name to our distribution list and we will send copies as requested.

Contact the Advocate for Children & Youth

if you or someone you know is in need of help:

Phone: (709) 753-3888 • Toll Free: 1-877-753-3888

TTY: (709) 753-4366 • Fax: (709) 753-3988 • Email: office@ocya.nl.ca

WebSite: www.childandouthadvocate.nl.ca

Or drop by and speak with someone in our office:

193 LeMarchant Road, St. John's, NL • A1C 2H5 • Mon-Fri 8:30 am - 4:30 pm



The "Rights" Stuff

Article 4 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child:

The government has a responsibility to make sure your rights are protected. They must help your family to protect your rights and create an environment where you can grow and reach your potential.

Children's Rights

All children and youth have rights. Unscramble the clues to reveal some of the rights guaranteed under the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*. Copy the letters in the numbered cells to the corresponding numbered cells below the clue words to reveal the hidden message.

ATCOEDUIN

HALETH

DEEFOMR

NIOCINLUS

EINYDTIT

MAIDE

LAENUGGA

LAYP

LEWYRA

IOTOCPETRN

MEAN

ARNOIMOFTIN

PAVRYCI

CEPTESR

RILNOIGE

LEITYUQA

YAFIML

RCULEUT

Advocate for Children and Youth

The mandate of the Advocate for Children and Youth (ACY) is to ensure that the rights and interests of children and youth are protected and advanced and that their voices are heard and considered. In all work conducted by the ACY, whether it be individual advocacy, systemic advocacy, reviews, or investigations; the role of the ACY is to examine existing provincial government programs throughout Newfoundland and Labrador to confirm they are in-keeping with those rights guaranteed to everyone under the age of eighteen. The standards and principles articulated in the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* can only become a reality when they are respected by everyone who provides services for children and youth.

"Children are the living messages we send to a time we will not see."

~ John F. Kennedy

ANSWER KEY: EDUCATION, FREEDOM, IDENTITY, LANGUAGE, LAWYER, NAME, PRIVACY, RELIGION, FAMILY, HEALTH, INCLUSION, MEDIA, PLAY, PROTECTION, INFORMATION, RESPECT, EQUALITY, CULTURE, MESSAGE: ALL CHILDREN HAVE RIGHTS