

CHILDREN'S AID NEWS of NIAGARA

October 16 –22 2011

Unregistered CAS/FACS workers unlawfully working in Ontario

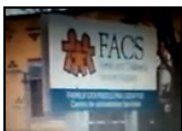
Vol. 1



Pat Niagara On October 16, 2011 members of Canada Court Watch joined members of In Memory of Marissa Whalen to help search for the body of this little 2 year old girl who has been missing since July. This week saw the arrest of her mother, Roseanne Whalen, her mother's girlfriend, Rainbow Hill and Amanda Dipota, sister of Rainbow Hill. In driving rain the group searched wooded and off the beaten track areas in hopes of finding Marissa so that her remains could be laid to rest. After a very long, very wet day the group of searchers returned to hear the news that Marissa's body had been found by police on the Six Nations Reserve.



Pat Niagara A candlelight vigil was held for Marissa Whalen on October 17, 2011 at the Leisureplex in Fort Erie. It was very well attended with friends and strangers coming together to say hello to one of God's newest Angels. Many tears were shed along with moments of silence. Poems and messages were said and pink balloons released in Marissa's name. Thank you to all who attended.



Pat Niagara The Family and Children's Services of Niagara admit that they obtained a child's attendance records from his school on an audio recording obtained on October 19th. Both a worker and supervisor from FACS admit to Canada Court Watch advocates that these records were in their office. The mother of the child was asked by Canada Court Watch advocates if she had signed a release form for FACS to obtain these records. The mother replies "No I did not sign any type of release form." The principle of this school violated the families rights under the Privacy Act by handing out private information to a private agency namely FACS. The mother of the child has filed a complaint with the Privacy Commissioner regarding this unlawful act by both Family and Children's Services of Niagara and Parnell Public School in St. Catharines.



Protesters Rally outside St. Catharine's Courthouse

Pat Niagara Photo

On October 17, 2011 members of Canada Court Watch held a rally at the St. Catharines court house to promote accountability and transparency of the CAS. Numerous people showed up to rally with us including members of "In Memory of Marissa Whalen" to show their support and assist in getting this cause out there. Many petition signatures were accumulated as well as achieving a lot of media attention. Thanks to all who showed up and offered their support.

Mom charged in murder of her toddler

FORT ERIE, O.N. (WIVB) - A mother sits behind bars, charged in the murder of her own baby. The child disappeared in July, but no one reported her missing until months later.

The remains of 2-year-old Marissa Whalen of Fort Erie were found Sunday in a wooded area of Indian reservation land about two hours north of the Niagara region in Ontario. The murder has struck a deep chord in the community.

Court observer Christine Enns said, "It is a tragedy. A huge tragedy. This child was failed. It's awful."

A woman named Rainbow Hill has been charged with second degree murder. The child's mother, Roseanne Whalen, who is said to have a relationship with Hill, has also been charged with accessory to murder, as was a third woman, Amanda DiPota. Demonstrators in St. Catharines believe more could have been done to protect Marissa when the warning signs became apparent.

Court observer Cherie Clark said, "There's been numerous reports, period. 50 reports at least, and the child should have been removed from the home."

Marissa had been missing since July, but authorities say they were not notified until this month.

Former family friend Caroline Day said, "How did not anyone notice that a child had gone missing for the last four months? How didn't a grandparent not report it? How did a neighbor, you know, not simply see a child not coming in and out on a mother's hip?"

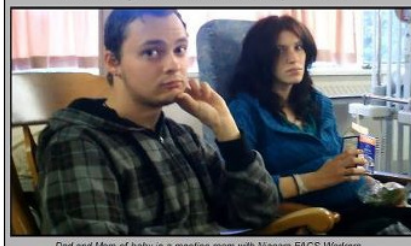
The group called Canada Court Watch is working to create an Ombudsman program for people in Ontario's Children's Aid Society. People like Marissa, they say, need someone to intervene if a case is mishandled.

Bobbie-Jo Gellner of Canada Court Watch questioned, "There is a need for child protective services. If they're not going to follow through with complaints, what are they doing?"

Authorities have not said how or why Marissa was killed, but her death has led to a rallying cry for better oversight in the handling of children's cases in Ontario



Two FACS Niagara workers at GNGH desk in Niagara Falls, Canada



Dad and Mom of baby in a meeting room with Niagara FACS Workers

MOM TO TAKE BABY HOME THIS WEEKEND

On October 21, 2011 answering a call for support at the Greater Niagara General Hospital advocates came together in order to support a young couple whose child was at risk of apprehension. After a long anxiety ridden day FACS workers made their appearance and after a long meeting with the parents and supporters the news to report is great, baby girl gets to go home with mom and dad. New friendships were formed and many stories shared and at the end of the day everyone went home happy.



Children's Army

Pat Niagara: On October 20, 2011 members of various groups came together as the Children's Army to discuss issues plaguing the Child Protection System. After decades of dishonourable and deafening silence on the part of our government, we, the people, must take action to protect our children from these "big agencies" that have forgotten the "best interests of the children" in favour of the "best interest of the shareholders". Our children are under siege and we are now at a face-off between bad corporations and good parents.