

Celebrating the 10th Anniversary of the Centre of Research, Policy & Program Development

Director's Note

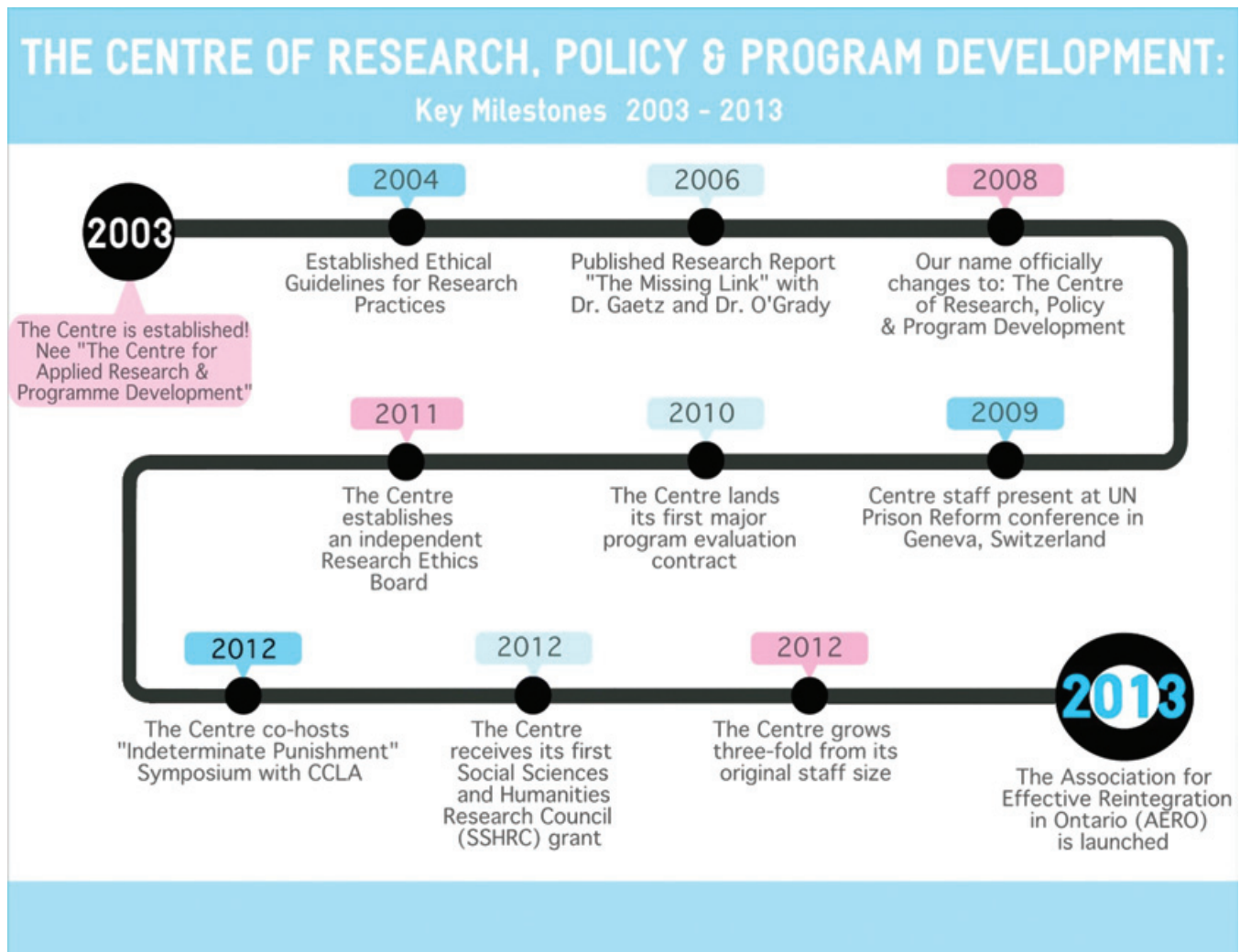
Ten years ago, the Society saw the need to be on the cutting edge of program development; a decade later we are innovators and leaders in evidence-based programming, policy and research in the social/criminal justice sector. I am honoured to be celebrating the 10 year anniversary of the Centre of Research, Policy & Program Development. It has been a very rewarding experience, for me personally, to have witnessed the Centre grow from several part-time staff to a team of full-time employees and a number of talented volunteers. The Centre has also expanded the range of services we effectively provide to our Affiliates in Ontario and has gained recognition both within our organization and externally for the quality of our work and the professionalism of Centre staff. The Centre's accomplishments are the result of a hard working and dedicated staff team; it is

through their drive and passion that we will continue to move forward as leaders in our field. We have tracked some of our most memorable milestones on the timeline below to map out how far we have come in a decade, and I sincerely look forward to the next rewarding 10 years of excellence in research, policy and program development here at JHS Ontario.

Sincerely,



Michelle Keast



Year at a Glance

Research

In January 2013, the Centre was delighted to facilitate the launch of the **Association for Effective Reintegration in Ontario (AERO)**. AERO is a joint project between the University of Guelph, York University and the John Howard Society of Ontario. Funded through a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) Partnership Development Grant, AERO is a component of the Centre's larger project *Navigating the Road to Reintegration*. AERO is one vehicle through which this larger project achieves its primary goals of multi-sectoral collaboration, knowledge mobilization and the development of streamlined programs and services to aid successful reintegration in Ontario. AERO means many things: collaboration, forward thinking, action oriented, and multi-sectoral. AERO is a group of individuals and organizations committed to translating research into practice and practice into change for more effective outcomes. AERO breaks down the silos between research and practice, allowing collaboration at all levels of program development, academia and front line service.

Policy

On November 8, 2012 the John Howard Society of Ontario, in partnership with Canadian Civil Liberties Association, hosted a symposium entitled, *Indeterminate Punishment: The Disclosure of Non-Conviction Information on Police Record Checks in Ontario*, which was funded in part by the Law Foundation of Ontario. The symposium was intended to be a day of learning and engagement on the topic of non-conviction police record retention and disclosure policies and practices in Ontario among professionals from various sectors affected by the issue.

We are pleased to report that the event was broadly attended by a diverse range of key stakeholders – a diversity that was also reflected in the speakers throughout the day. There was a general consensus that disclosing non-conviction records can have a very serious impact on Ontarians' lives. All speakers also recognized that police services are faced with making complicated decisions about what information to include on record checks amidst unprecedented demand for background check products from a growing number of industries. The symposium was an excellent opportunity to begin discussions of best practices and solutions to this growing issue. Centre staff will continue to engage with our partners and the diverse sectors with a stake in this issue in order to build on the work started at the symposium and to keep this issue at the forefront of the agenda in Ontario.



Program Development

This year, the Centre was contracted to undertake a research project on the Bail Verification and Supervision Programs in Ontario. As a result of this research, the Centre was able to prepare a number of program recommendations for the service providers, and policy recommendations aimed at the province. Program evaluation is a crucial component of successful and effective service provision, which helps us tell a story about the program/service by demonstrating its effectiveness on a variety of levels. For the John Howard Society, program evaluation is seen as an important part of our continuous improvement model – to examine what worked, what did not and why, so that the necessary changes can be made to ensure effective and efficient programming and service delivery. The Centre has a number of multi-year program evaluation contracts underway, on behalf of our local Affiliates, which produce results that our Affiliates utilize to effectively monitor, improve their programs and share success stories.

