

For Immediate Release
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MANY CHILDREN AND YOUTH AWAITING ADOPTIVE PARENTS IN ONTARIO *November is Adoption Awareness Month*

TORONTO – During Adoption Awareness Month in November, the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies (OACAS) and its member agencies remind Ontarians that many children and youth in care need adoptive families.

“All children and youth need loving families to flourish. Many children in the care of Ontario's Children's Aid Societies dream of being adopted into their ‘forever family’,” said Jeanette Lewis, Executive Director, OACAS. “We know children develop better in the stable setting that an adoptive family offers and that's why more families are needed for adoption of older children and youth, sibling groups and children of diverse culture and heritage.”

People from diverse cultural backgrounds, single people or same-sex couples are encouraged to consider adoption. As well, people with the capacity to adopt children with special needs, sibling groups or older children are needed.

At March 31, 2008, there were approximately 9,200 children in care who could be adopted in Ontario. Of them:

- 12 per cent were children aged 0 to 5
- 32 per cent were children aged 6 to 12
- 56 per cent were teenagers 13 years and over

Last year, Ontario's Children's Aid Societies finalized 822 adoptions; but there are many more children and youth who can still be adopted.

Children's Aid Societies provide a free, public adoption system in Ontario and are always looking for permanent homes for children and youth of all ages. “A strong and free public adoption system, available and easily accessible to Ontarians, is important and necessary to ensure parents looking to adopt can give children in care, who dream of being adopted, their forever family,” added Lewis.

Ontario's Children's Aid Societies provide adoptive parents and children with ongoing support, training and education. Financial supports and subsidies may also be available to adoptive parents to help them meet the needs of their adopted children.

In addition to adoption, Children's Aid Societies provide services and supports to families to help them become better parents and build stable families. Working with community social agencies and the government, agencies help create and sustain safe, nurturing environments for children.

OACAS encourages full and continued support for all services for children in need to ensure they are not adversely impacted by the current economic situation. Especially during times of economic uncertainty, child welfare agencies act as safety net for children and their families. More services, supports, temporary and long term care such as foster and adoptive families, are needed to protect children and assist families.

If you are considering adoption, please contact your local Children's Aid Society for more information or visit www.oacas.org.

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