

It takes a community to keep kids safe from fear, harm and violence October is Child Abuse Prevention Month

TORONTO – During Child Abuse Prevention Month in October, the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies (OACAS) and Children's Aid Societies are calling on the community to help protect children from fear, harm and violence and support families in crisis.

Children are society's most vulnerable and need to be protected. The Association and Children's Aid Societies are spreading the message that child safety and family welfare begin in the community. Everyone has a role to play in their well-being and a duty to report any suspicion that a child may be in need of protection.

Children's Aid Societies work hard to protect the children and youth of their local communities and to support families that need help. Last year, Children's Aid received more than 165,673¹ referrals about possible abuse and neglect of children and youth. Children's Aid Societies completed over 84,219¹ investigations and 47,925¹ families received ongoing protection services from a Children's Aid after investigation.

With an increased focus on working with families earlier, in the vast majority of cases children were able to remain at home while Children's Aid Societies worked with families to strengthen their parenting capacity and create a more stable future for their children.

Louise*, a mother struggling to care for her son with emotional and behavioural issues, didn't know where to turn for help after his father walked out on her. Children's Aid stepped in and provided Louise with the support she needed to get back on track. "I was able to finally get the services and help that we needed as a family to change the direction my son was going in."

"They came into my son's school and worked with him one-on-one. I thank all Children's Aid workers for the tremendous help I have been given and I thank all the powers that be, everyday, that they came into my life".

For Maura*, her turmoil of abuse and neglect at the hands of her parents came to an end when Children's Aid intervened and placed her in safety with a foster family. "I was not taken – but rescued – from my abusive home at the age of ten...it was terrifying, but I had the support of experienced foster parents who taught me that no one had the right to harm me."

As a Crown ward, Children's Aid continued to provide Maura with the support she needed to reach her full potential. "My social worker became my mentor and I worked hard to live up to the potential that she saw in me...I developed a sense of worth that motivated me to establish goals and gave me the confidence to believe I could achieve them." Maura went on to obtain her Master's degree and become the role model she had once admired.

¹ As at September 2013

The community members who called out of concern for the needs of Louise and the safety of Maura made a difference in their lives that will never be forgotten. Everyone in Ontario can help protect children in their community from fear, harm and violence and support families in crisis. Learn more, visit <http://www.oacas.org/newsroom/publicawarenesskit/index.htm>, www.useyourvoice.ca, or contact your [local Children's Aid Society](#).

**Names have been changed to protect identity*

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About the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies: Since 1912, OACAS has represented Ontario's Children's Aid Societies in Ontario and provided service in the areas of government relations, communications, information management, education and training to advocate for the protection and well-being of children.

For more information:

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