

Celebrating the role of foster families in the lives of children and youth in care October 19-25, 2014 is Foster Family Week

TORONTO – October 19-25, 2014 is Foster Family Week and the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies (OACAS), along with Children's Aid Societies (CASs), are celebrating the vital role of foster families in the lives of children and youth in care.

Mary Ballantyne, Executive Director of the OACAS today said: "Foster parents provide stability to children during a difficult time in their life and a caring home that encourages growth and development. Foster Family Week reminds us of the dedication, love and commitment of foster families to the children and youth in CAS care, while serving as a reminder of the need for suitable families to come forward and foster teens and sibling groups."

Foster and kin parents work closely with CASs, opening both their hearts and homes to provide care for children and youth who are going through an immensely difficult time in their life and often have complex needs. When children cannot remain at home due to safety concerns, the preferred option is to place the child with their immediate or extended family, or a member of their community. However if that is not possible, foster care may be the best alternative. Foster families provide a nurturing and supportive home for children in care for a few days, weeks, months or possibly years. Foster Family Week offers a chance to celebrate and promote the important role of foster families and to share inspirational stories and personal experiences.

"Foster parents may have a variety of cultural and/or lifestyle and religious backgrounds, but they all share the desire to provide a loving, nurturing family environment for a child or youth in need. Children's Aid could not do its work without foster families and their continued commitment to the children and youth in care is greatly valued," said Ms. Ballantyne.

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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. <http://www.oacas.org>

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