



## In the November Issue

- OACAS welcomes unanimous decision to support equitable child welfare services on First Nations reserves
- Thousands of Ontarians turn out for Go Purple Day on October 19
- Resources You Can Use
- Upcoming Events
- Send Us Your News & Events

## Adoption Awareness Month Features

- Nobody knows better than Violet-Rose Pharaoh that the road to belonging can be long and challenging.
- The role that adoption plays in public adoption is often misunderstood
- It's Adoption Awareness Month: Let's explore the various paths to permanency in child welfare
- Adoption recruitment changes in Ontario

## Nobody knows better than Violet-Rose Pharaoh that the road to belonging can be long and challenging.

In this personal essay, a former child in care describes her journey to a forever family.

Someone once told me that the people who are meant to love you, will always find their way to you. As someone who spent over 15 years in foster care and who has been adopted twice, those words have become a tattoo of truth on my life. My life experiences have made me a firm believer that the people who in our life are meant to be there for a reason - sometimes to help us grow, to teach us something, or to love us until we can learn to love ourselves.

“  
Love is not  
only what  
brings us  
home – but  
what makes  
us family.”

Violet Rose Pharaoh  
Former child in care

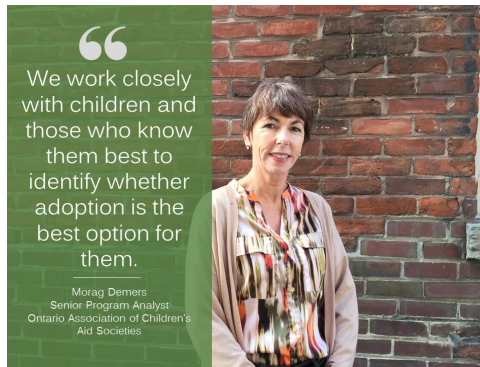


I was three years old the first time I was adopted, too young to remember, but I have tiny mementos that share the story with me.

Read Violet-Rose's full story [here](#).

## The role that Children's Aid plays in public adoption is often misunderstood

Senior Program Analyst Morag Demers talks about what public adoption looks like today.



**Many people don't realize that Children's Aid is responsible for public adoption in Ontario. Can you clarify the role that Children's Aid plays in finding forever families for kids?**

Under the Child and Family Services Act it's our legislative responsibility to find permanent families for children who for a variety of reasons are not able to grow up with their biological families of origin. Our primary goal is to help support children and youth to live safely with their

families of origin - 97% of the work we do is supporting kids in their homes. But in a small number of cases it is not safe for children to remain with their families and that's when we start considering alternative arrangements, including adoption.

#### **What are some of the key services that CASs provide around adoption?**

Perhaps most importantly we work closely with children and those who know them best to identify whether adoption is the best option for them. Specific adoption services are not initiated until it becomes clear that returning home is not an option for them and that living with kith or kin is also not an option. Workers start by introducing the word adoption, and what it means using resources like books and stories with the goal of helping kids to become more familiar, open and comfortable to the possibility of living with another family. The concept or even the use of the word adoption is usually unknown to them and so they feel apprehensive. For older children the realization that they are not returning to their family of origin is painful and they often struggle with divided loyalties.

**[Read more](#) of our interview with Morag exploring the role of Children's Aid Societies in adoption services.**

## **It's Adoption Awareness Month: Let's explore the various paths to permanency in child welfare**

## PATHS TO PERMANENCY

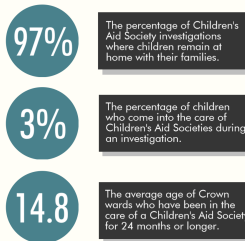
in child welfare

Every child and youth in care needs and deserves permanent, long-term relationships.

### Defining permanency

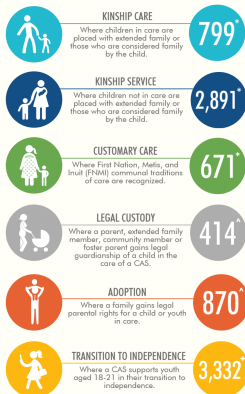
An enduring family relationship that is safe and meant to last a lifetime; offers the legal rights and social status of full family membership; the child or youth has sense of belonging and affiliation to a family/extended family with significant community connections and provides for physical, emotional, social, cognitive, and spiritual well-being.

### Did you know?



"There are many paths to lifelong connections. There is no one answer for every child."

MARY BALLANTYNE, CEO  
ONTARIO ASSOCIATION OF CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETIES



\* Monthly average number of children and youth in these placements.  
+ Total legal custody agreements or adoptions completed.  
+ Monthly average number of youth receiving Customary Care and Support for Youth (CCS), a policy providing youth who have left care with ongoing financial, emotional, and other supports until the age of 21.

Data Sources: 1. The Ontario Ministry of Children, Youth and Families (MCYF); 2. The 2015-2016 CAS Crown Ward Review Report; 3. The 2014-2015 Ministry of Children and Youth Services Quarterly Report.

Every child and youth needs and deserves permanent, long-term relationships; there is no one answer for every child.

The primary goal of Children's Aid Societies (CAS) is to support children to live safely with their family of origin. When that is not possible, CASs look for an alternate family, preferably known to the family, who can provide a safe, nurturing, and loving environment in which the child can grow up and flourish. Our goal is to keep the child, and the child's best interests, at the centre of the process. Adoption is one of a number of options of that Children's Aid Societies consider when looking for life-long connections for children in care. Kinship service, kinship care, customary care, legal custody, and transitioning to adulthood are other permanency options considered when making decisions about what is the best setting for a child or youth.

The infographic below details some key numbers related to CASs work to achieving safe, long-lasting relationships for children and youth in care. Learn more Adoption Awareness Month and paths to permanency [here](#).

View the [Paths to Permanency infographic](#) in more detail.

## Adoption recruitment changes in Ontario

Adoption recruitment continues to grow in Ontario, in large part because of the new partnership between Ontario Ministry of Children and Youth Services and the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption's Wendy Wonderful Kids program.

The province is funding 15 targeted adoption recruiters, and Wendy's Wonderful Kids is funding an additional four recruiters. These 19 Wendy Wonderful Kids recruiters will increase the number of recruiters to 23. This is part of a \$24-million investment that Ontario is making in enhancing adoption services.

Learn more [here](#).



## OACAS welcomes unanimous decision to support equitable child welfare services on First Nations reserves

On November 1, 2016 members of the House of Commons voted unanimously in favour of a motion to act immediately to improve child welfare services for First Nations children and families on reserves. The motion, introduced by NDP indigenous affairs critic Charlie Angus, called on the Liberal government to comply with a January ruling by the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal (CHRT) which said that the Canadian government has discriminated against First Nations children and families by failing to provide the same level of child welfare services on reserves as provided elsewhere in Canada.

[Read our full statement.](#)

## Thousands of Ontarians turn out for Go Purple Day on October 19

On October 19<sup>th</sup>, the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies (OACAS), Children's Aid Societies (CAS), and key partners marked Child Abuse Prevention Month (CAPM) with a provincial **GO PURPLE DAY** to raise awareness about how it takes a community working together to prevent child abuse. Click on the campaign twitter hashtags [#IBREAKthesilence](#) and [#SpeakUpforKids](#) to see the enthusiasm with which this day was embraced across the province.

Learn more about the success of **GO PURPLE DAY** [here](#).



## Resources You Can Use

**Kinship Video from Family and Children's Services Lanark, Leeds and Grenville**



### Adoption Council of Ontario Advocacy Package

ACO has put together an Adoption Awareness Month advocacy package for families to raise awareness about the need for kids to have a family and families to have support. Learn more and download the package [here](#).

### Statement Against the Immigration Detention of Children

A Human Rights group in Toronto has been exploring the concern for the well being of children being placed in detention related to Immigration. OACAS as a Member Association was invited to participate in the finalization of the letter to Government and to support that children should not be held in detention. The letter has now been released and we are pleased to be sharing this work with our Members and the larger community. Click [here](#) to read summary of the concerns. For more information please visit, [endchildimmigrationdetention.wordpress.com](http://endchildimmigrationdetention.wordpress.com).

## Upcoming Events

[Adoption Resource Exchange Conference](#), Toronto, Ontario, November 19.

[2016 CMHO Conference - FOCUS ON QUALITY: The path to better outcomes for children, youth and families](#), Toronto, Ontario, November 21-22.

[International Social Work Congress 2016](#), Ankara, Turkey, November 21-23.

[Canadian Conference on Promoting Healthy Relationships for Youth: Breaking Down the Silos in Addressing Mental Health & Violence](#), London, Ontario, February 15-17, 2017.



*The 7th International Conference on Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder*, Vancouver, British Columbia, March 1-4, 2017.

*Gathering Our Voices: National Aboriginal Youth Conference*, Kelowna, British Columbia, March 21-24, 2017.

## Send Us Your News and Events!

*The Voice* has an extensive readership in Ontario and across Canada.

Please forward any child-welfare related news, events, or announcements to [webadmin@oacas.org](mailto:webadmin@oacas.org) for possible inclusion in our monthly newsletter.



**Ontario Association of  
Children's Aid Societies**  
The voice of child welfare in Ontario



**L'Association ontarienne des  
sociétés de l'aide à l'enfance**  
Unis pour le bien-être des enfants de l'Ontario

STAY CONNECTED

