

Children & Youth in Care Day

2024 | 10th Anniversary #ForgetMeNot



Ontario Association of
Children's Aid Societies



CHILDREN'S
AID FOUNDATION
OF CANADA

Toolkit: Children and Youth in Care Day 2024

May 14, 2024

About

Each year, on May 14, the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies (OACAS) and the Children's Aid Foundation of Canada (CAFC) recognize Children and Youth in Care Day alongside children's aid societies and Indigenous Child and Family Well-Being Agencies (child welfare agencies). Proclaimed into law through the *Children and Youth in Care Day Act, 2014*, it is a day to recognize the valuable contributions of current and former youth in care to communities across Ontario. It is also a time to acknowledge the strength and resilience shown by these young people in the face of adversity.

May 14, 2024, marks the 10th anniversary of Children and Youth in Care Day. The day was created because of the stories, experiences, and recommendations youth in and from care shared through the [My Real Life Book](#) report. The report centred the voices and stories of children and youth in and from care and highlighted their distinct needs.

This year, OACAS and CAFC are continuing the #ForgetMeNot campaign and amplifying the stories of six young people with experience in the Ontario child welfare system, as well as the influential people in their lives who contributed to their well-being and success.

We all have a role to play in supporting children and youth in and from care. To remind organizations, service providers, and communities across the province, as well as the Ontario government, OACAS is again asking "*Are you there for kids in care?*"

Young people in and from care cannot be forgotten. This toolkit is intended to help you recognize Children and Youth in Care Day on May 14, 2024. Join us in acknowledging this important day and this year's special 10-year milestone by sharing our campaign visuals and messages of support!



This Toolkit Includes:

- [Goals of Children and Youth in Care Day and #ForgetMeNot 2023](#)
- [Key Messages](#)
- [How to Be There for Kids in Care](#)
- [Join the Campaign](#)
- [“Forget Me Not” Poem](#)

Goals of Children and Youth in Care Day and #ForgetMeNot Campaign

1. To acknowledge children and youth in and from care for their strengths and unique identities.
2. To advocate for better supports for children and youth in care.
3. To build better networks of support by increasing participation of community members and partners so that children and youth in and from care feel supported and thrive.
4. To destigmatize views about children and youth in and from care by increasing awareness and understanding with the public.

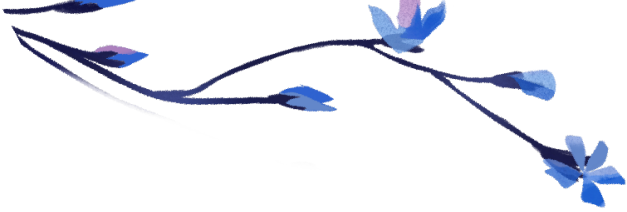
Key Messages

Children and Youth in Care Day

- May 14, 2024, marks the 10th anniversary of Children and Youth in Care Day. The Ontario government proclaimed the day into law to raise awareness about children and youth in and from care and their unique needs and strengths.
- Young people in care do not live with their immediate families because of challenges or concerns at home. Children and youth in care live with extended family, friends, or in a foster or group home.
- Child welfare agencies prioritize keeping children and youth connected to their families and communities by working closely with kin and alternate caregivers.
- In Ontario, there are approximately 12,000 children and youth in care served by non-Indigenous child welfare agencies.
- This important day was created because of the tireless efforts of young people in and from care and the stories and experiences they shared through the [My Real Life Book](#) report.
- Children and Youth in Care Day is an opportunity to recognize the contributions of current and former youth in care to communities across the province, as well as acknowledge their strength and resilience in the face of adversity. The day also seeks to reduce stigma.
- The day is an important reminder that children and youth in care have distinct needs and face unique challenges. Allyship, advocacy, and collaboration are essential to ensure they receive the support they need to thrive and succeed.

#ForgetMeNot

- The #ForgetMeNot campaign aims to bring renewed attention to the accomplishments and challenges of children and youth in the Ontario child welfare system.



- The poor outcomes of youth from child welfare are well documented. Without a sense of belonging, support, and strong relationships, youth in and from care continue to be at increased risk of:
 - dropping out of high school or post-secondary,
 - substance misuse,
 - human trafficking,
 - being underemployed, homeless, or living in poverty,
 - significant mental health challenges, and
 - involvement in other systems, such as the justice system.
- The #ForgetMeNot campaign is about sharing the stories of young people with experience in the Ontario child welfare system and demonstrating the role we can all play in supporting children and youth in and from care.
- Supportive adults and strong relationships can help children and youth in and from care to thrive. This year's campaign highlights the significance of strong networks and meaningful relationships in the lives of children and youth in and from care.
- By asking "Are you there for kids in care?", we are encouraging organizations, service providers, communities, and the Ontario government to remember young people in and from care have distinct needs and face unique challenges.
- There are many ways Ontarians can support children and youth in and from care, including volunteering as a mentor or tutor, learning about what it means to be in care, and advocating for positive change to the Ontario child welfare system.
- The forget-me-not flower affiliated with the campaign symbolizes love, respect, and the promise of remembrance. The flower is known for its resilience, similar to young people in and from care.
- Children and youth in and from care cannot be forgotten. They should receive high-quality, trauma-informed, culturally relevant care that is inclusive and identity-affirming so they can thrive and succeed.

How to Be There for Kids in Care

Like the forget-me-not flower, children and youth in and from care are resilient and adaptable. We all have a role to play when it comes to ensuring young people with experience with the Ontario child welfare system have access to the support they need to thrive and succeed. These are just some of the ways you can show up for children and youth in and from care in your community.

MENTOR

Kids in care are often missing strong, supportive adult relationships. Consider mentoring through [Big Brothers Big Sisters](#), [StepStones for Youth](#), or through your [local child welfare agency](#).



TUTOR

Kids in care graduate at much lower rates than their peers. Become a tutor for a child or youth in care and help raise their level of educational achievement. [Contact your local agency.](#)

VOLUNTEER

There are lots of other ways to donate your time and talents to benefit children and youth in care, including as a driver, board member, or helping with special events. [Contact your local agency.](#)

FOSTER

Kids across the province need foster caregivers to offer homes that support their identities, connections, and well-being. Be there to care. [Learn more here.](#)

LEARN

Most of us do not know what it means to be in care. Educate yourself and learn more so you can help support children and youth in your community. [Start learning more.](#)

ADVOCATE

Tell your local Member of Provincial Parliament that you want kids in care to have the supports and services they need. Learn more [here](#) about the unique needs of children and youth in care, as well as their caregivers and use our [template letter](#) to advocate to your local Member of Provincial Parliament for their needs.

SHARE

Join us on May 14 to celebrate the achievements and highlight the needs of kids in care. They need our voices. [Check out our social media resources.](#)

WORK

There are many opportunities to apply your skills and experiences in the child welfare sector. [Learn more about opportunities here.](#)

Join the Campaign

The 2024 #ForgetMeNot campaign features the stories of six inspiring young people and individuals who have influenced their well-being. Meet Van and Bryan, Samuel and Severn, Aidan and Kevin, Troy and Joycelyn, Rose and Jenn, and Kaygan and Elaine and Madil [here](#).

Share their stories and spread awareness about Children and Youth in Care Day and the 10th anniversary on social media on May 14. Follow us at [@ONT_youthCAN](#) and [@our_children](#) on X, [@ont_youthcan](#) on Instagram, and [@ontarioyouthcan.org](#) on Facebook. Don't forget to use the hashtags #ForgetMeNot and #ChildrenAndYouthInCareDay.

Here are potential social media messages to help you participate in the campaign and join the conversation online. Let's make sure children and youth in and from care know that they are not alone, that they belong, and that they are part of a community that cares on May 14.



Social Media Messages

X & Instagram

Today is the 10th anniversary of #ChildrenAndYouthInCareDay! Let's bring renewed attention to the accomplishments and challenges of children/youth in care. Learn more at oacas.org/forgetmenot. #ForgetMeNot

We all have a role to play in making sure children and youth in and from care thrive. Visit oacas.org/forgetmenot to learn about 6 incredible former youth in care and the people who contributed to their well-being. It could be you! #ForgetMeNot #ChildrenAndYouthInCareDay

Are you there for kids in care? Tell us how! Share how you support children and youth in the child welfare system. Learn more about the campaign at oacas.org/forgetmenot. #ForgetMeNot #ChildrenAndYouthInCareDay

Be there for kids in care! There are many ways to step up and support kids in care: volunteering, fostering, or advocating for the services and supports they need. Learn more at oacas.org/forgetmenot. #ForgetMeNot #ChildrenAndYouthInCareDay

#ChildrenAndYouthInCareDay was created 10 years ago because of the tireless efforts of young people in/from care. They wanted a day to be recognized for their contributions, strength, and resilience. On May 14 let's make sure they feel supported and know they are not forgotten. #ForgetMeNot

It only takes one person to make children and youth in care feel like they are not alone. On #ChildrenAndYouthInCareDay, be that person. Make sure they know they belong to, and have the support of, community. Learn more at oacas.org/forgetmenot. #ForgetMeNot

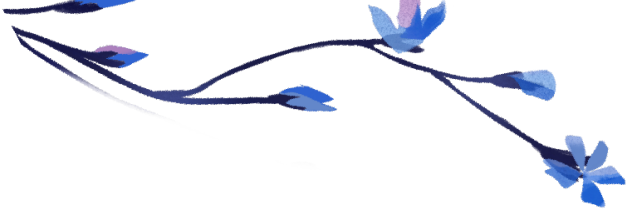
#ChildrenandYouthInCareDay is an opportunity to recognize the contributions of current and former youth in care, as well as reduce stigma and celebrate their strength, bravery, and resilience in the face of adversity. #ForgetMeNot oacas.org/forgetmenot

Forget-me-nots symbolize love and respect and represent a promise of remembrance. Like the flower, children and youth in and from care are resilient. But they need consistent care, attention, and support to thrive. #ForgetMeNot oacas.org/forgetmenot

Do you have experience in child welfare in Ontario? Join our #ForgetMeNot campaign! Read our campaign poem on video and share it with us at youthcan@oacas.org. Or tell us your story of beating the odds, blossoming, and who helped you get there. oacas.org/forgetmenot

Facebook/LinkedIn

Ten years ago, Children and Youth in Care Day was proclaimed by the government of Ontario to raise awareness about children and youth in the care of the province. This important day was created because of the tireless efforts of young people in and from care and the stories and experiences they shared through the [My Real Life Book](#) report. On the 10th anniversary of Children and Youth in Care Day, we want them to know that they are not alone, they belong, that they have the support of their community. They will not be forgotten. oacas.org/forgetmenot #ChildrenAndYouthInCareDay #ForgetMeNot



In honour of the 10th anniversary of Children and Youth in Care Day, OACAS is continuing the #ForgetMeNot campaign and sharing stories of young people with experience in the Ontario child welfare system and the influential people in their lives who contributed to their well-being. We are highlighting the significance of strong networks and meaningful relationships in the lives of children and youth in care to remind everyone that we have a role to play. We are asking the question: Are you there for kids in care? as a way to remind individuals, community-based organizations and service providers, and the Ontario government that these young people have distinct needs and face unique challenges. They cannot be forgotten. Learn more, including how you can participate, at oacas.org/forgetmenot.

Supportive adults and strong relationships can help children and youth in care to thrive. This year's campaign highlights the significance of strong networks and meaningful relationships in the lives of children and youth in care as a way to remind us all of the role we can play. Visit oacas.org/forgetmenot to hear the stories of six incredible former youth in care and the people who helped them get where they are today. It could be you! #ForgetMeNot #ChildrenAndYouthInCareDay

Be there for kids in care! There are many ways we can support children and youth in care, from volunteering as a mentor or tutor to fostering or advocating for the services and supports they need. Learn more about the ways you can support the safety, success, and well-being of children and youth in Ontario's child welfare system at oacas.org/forgetmenot. #ForgetMeNot #ChildrenAndYouthInCareDay

Children and Youth in Care Day is an important reminder that children and youth in care face many unique challenges. They require allies, advocacy, and collaboration to help them reach their full potential. Children and youth in care need to know they are not alone. They need to know they are not forgotten. Join us on May 14, 2024 and amplify the voices of children and youth in care and discover ways you can support their safety, well-being, and success. oacas.org/forgetmenot #ForgetMeNot #ChildrenAndYouthInCareDay

Campaign Assets

The visual elements of the campaign include photographs and stories of former youth in care and the adults who supported their well-being, a video reading of the "Forget Me Not" poem, and more.

- Watch and share [the video](#)
- View and download all six campaign stories at www.oacas.org/forgetmenot
- Download [the banners](#)
- Download the poem [here \(8 x 11\)](#) and [here \(11 x 17\)](#)

All campaign materials are available at oacas.org/forgetmenot.



Forget Me Not

Forget-me-nots symbolize love and respect and represent a promise of remembrance. These tiny blooms are known for their resilience and their ability to grow in difficult circumstances and across environments. This poem was written by former kid in care, David Lewis-Peart.

I've grown through some tough things,

No doubt,

Survived in spite of

Thrived and made light of heavy,

Lifted through concrete and kept steady going.

Paving my own way.

Laid roots. Bloomed.

Put feet to ground and planted in impossible odds.

But I didn't get there alone.

I was first shown that odds were meant to be beat.

I was believed in, poured into, and encouraged on by those who didn't count me out.

Those that took me in.

Those that took their time.

People who gave me space to define what blossoming meant for me.

Who reminded that success isn't determined by history, but by a commitment to not forgetting.

It's no mystery, the flowers that grow are the ones you remember to water.

Forget. Me. Not.