



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

## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release  
November 1, 2013

### **Adoption is an option: Help children and youth create lifelong connections**

#### **November is Adoption Awareness Month**

TORONTO – In recognition of Adoption Awareness Month this November, the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies (OACAS) and Children's Aid Societies across the province are raising awareness that all children and youth need and deserve a family to love and nurture them always.

When parents or caregivers are unable to provide a safe living environment for their kids, Children's Aid makes every effort to provide them with support so that kids may remain safely in their family home, rather than coming into care. Supports may include parenting classes, counseling and referrals to community agencies such as mental health or addiction services.

If the safety of a child or youth cannot be ensured and they come into the permanent care of Children's Aid, a plan for their extended future is begun immediately. This plan relies on finding a lifelong, permanent connection for the child or youth – a family. All children and youth need at least one person to walk the journey of life with them. This person is someone who is on their side through all of life's ups and downs - someone who cares and loves them unconditionally.

There are almost 7,500 children and youth in the care of Children's Aid who may be available for adoption. Last year, 830 children and youth were connected to their families through adoption, while many others, over 2,200 children, are on paths to permanency through legal custody, kinship care and customary care.

Of the 830 children and youth adopted last year, 71% were ages 0-5, 25% were ages 6-12 and 4% were ages 13 and over. While 61% of the children and youth available for adoption are age 13 and up, this age group constituted only 4% of the 830 children and youth adopted last year. Older children and youth may have experienced challenges, but they too need families to care for them and help them transition successfully to adulthood. Every child wants a family, including sibling groups and children with disabilities. All of these children and youth have one thing in common – the need for a safe and loving home for a lifetime.

Lexi adopted her daughter, Aleisha, when she was 11 years old. "We always knew that we would be able to fall in love with an older child..." Lexi said. "I believe when parenting an adopted older child a family goes through a lot of the same stages as having a baby – but it is happening with someone who is able to tell you how they are feeling. And you don't have to do it alone. We have always taken advantage of

all the community supports and got connected with the services around us. In the end, you get it all back plus more. We are a family and as Aleisha likes to say, “through it all we stuck it out together like peanut butter and jam”.

All children and youth, including older youth, sibling groups and children or youth with disabilities deserve the lifelong connection that family brings. Adoptive parents can be individuals or couples, people unable to have children of their own, parents who already have children and want to add to their growing family, as well as adults whose first choice for building their family is through adoption. People from diverse cultural backgrounds, single people or same-sex couples are encouraged to consider adoption.

Melanie grew her family through adopting a pair of siblings. “We chose to adopt, to keep siblings together and create our family a different way. Our pregnancy was a CAS adventure and the only stretch marks we had grew on our hearts. We went from a quiet couple to a family of four overnight and we have never looked back”.

Children need to feel a sense of belonging, with a permanent family that will love and nurture them always. Adoption is an option: Help children and youth create lifelong connections. Visit [www.useyourvoice.ca](http://www.useyourvoice.ca) to find your local Children’s Aid and more information on adopting through Ontario’s public system.

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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:

Tanzeem Parkar, Communications Advisor  
(416) 987-9854 or [tparkar@oacas.org](mailto:tparkar@oacas.org)