

Recognizing the strength, bravery and resilience of children and youth in and from care

May 14 is the first Children and Youth in Care Day in Ontario

TORONTO – To mark the first Children and Youth in Care Day in Ontario on May 14, the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies (OACAS), YouthCAN and Children's Aid Societies across the province are celebrating the strength and determination that children and youth in and from care demonstrate in the face of adversity, and recommitting to support them.

Children come into the care of Ontario's Children's Aid Societies when it is unsafe for them to remain at home due to neglect or abuse. Children who come into care face unique challenges. While many find forever homes with extended family, members of their community or through adoption, others grow up in foster or group homes where, in accordance with government regulation, they are required to leave before they turn 18. Without a family to turn to for support and faced with the hardship and costs of living on their own, many fall behind in school, often struggling with poverty or even homelessness. Youth in care have a high school graduation rate of just 44%¹, compared to their peers who have an 81% graduation rate.

Mary Ballantyne, Executive Director of OACAS shared: "The safety and well-being of children and youth are at the heart of what we do. We are appreciative that the people of Ontario are standing up in recognition of the remarkable courage and strength of children and youth in and leaving care."

Strides have been made, but there is more work to do. Recent [supports](#) announced by the government include increased financial support for older youth pursuing post-secondary education, the provision of 100% of tuition for Crown wards by participating colleges and universities, funding for 50 new community transition workers and enhanced training for caregivers. OACAS continues to [advocate](#) for Children's Aid youth to have the chance to stay in their foster or group homes until they have completed their education or training and gained full-time employment, or until age 21. OACAS also asks the provincial government that supports for housing, health, dental and education be extended to the age of 25.

Adam Diamond, OACAS Policy Analyst and former youth in care, stated: "Declaring a day for children and youth in care is an important step to promote that these young people are valued. Through awareness, we continue to reduce the stigma of being a 'foster kid'. Youth will now have a day they can call their own, a day to be proud of and a day to feel united across Ontario."

¹ Gateway to Success, Cycle Two, June 2010, OACAS

About the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies: OACAS is the trusted voice of child welfare in Ontario. Since 1912, OACAS has represented 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.

About YouthCAN (Communication, Advocacy and Networking): YouthCAN is a multi-component program for youth in care of Children's Aid Societies across Ontario, and the staff who work with them. The functions of YouthCAN are facilitated by OACAS.

For more information:

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