



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
October 1, 2012

Who is responsible for protecting children? Everyone! October is Child Abuse Prevention Month

TORONTO – During October's Child Abuse Prevention Month, the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies (OACAS) and Children's Aid Societies across Ontario are spreading the message that it takes a community to keep children and youth safe. From people who call Children's Aid out of concern for a child's well-being to community partners who work alongside Children's Aid to help keep children safe, we all have a role to play in protecting the most vulnerable members of our society.

Children's Aid Societies work tirelessly to protect the children and youth in their local communities. Last year, Children's Aid received more than 167,900 referrals about possible abuse and neglect of children and youth. Children's Aid Societies completed over 85,000 investigations and 47,078 families received ongoing protection services from a Children's Aid after investigation.

With an increased focus on working with families earlier, in 90% of cases children were able to remain at home while Children's Aid Societies worked with families to strengthen their parenting capacity and create a more stable future for their children.

Denise*, a young single mother of four who was working two jobs to provide for her family, was weakened with a double ear infection. She didn't have anyone to turn to – her eldest child was helping her look after the children while she was confined to the sofa in sickness. "Then as if it was a miracle, there was a knock on my door [...]. When the woman at the door told me she was from Children's Aid, tears of relief flowed down my face."

With the help and support of her local Children's Aid, Denise was able to get back on track. "I don't know where my children and I would be today without the help that was given to my family both that day and many months later. I will be eternally grateful for the help we were given that allowed me to both heal and care for my children, while keeping my pride."

For Natalie*, the light at the end of the tunnel came when she spoke to her school's guidance counselor about her situation. "My mother passed away just after I turned 14 and my father turned to alcohol and started physically abusing me. My school guidance counselor contacted the Children's Aid Society."

"Initially I wanted to go back home but I soon realized how safe, secure and respected I was as a child in care; nothing could convince me to go back to a home of sadness and turmoil," recalls Natalie. "Children's Aid gave me the necessary tools to become the independent, knowledgeable, and successful woman I am today."

Both the community member who called out of concern for Denise and the school counselor who called to protect Natalie made a difference in their lives that will never be forgotten. Everyone in Ontario can help protect children in their community. Learn more, visit

<http://www.oacas.org/newsroom/publicawarenesskit/index.htm>, www.useyourvoice.ca, or contact your local Children's Aid Society.

**Names have been changed to protect identity*

- 30 -

About the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies: OACAS is the trusted voice in child welfare in Ontario. 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:

Emily Strowger, Communications Advisor
(416) 987-9854 or estrowger@oacas.org