



News Release

November 5, 2014

Finding Permanent Connections for Children and Youth is our Focus

Children's Aid Societies continue to focus on finding long-term connections for children and youth who have come into their care on a permanent basis. In the majority of instances CASs work with families while their children remain with them. However, if a child comes into the permanent care of the Society the goal is to find a safe and stable environment that will nurture that child into the future. A permanent home may be found either with kin through legal custody, via customary care, or through adoption.

During Adoption Awareness Month, which takes place in November and is marked by an orange ribbon, Children's Aid Societies try to increase the public's awareness of the importance that a sense of belonging can provide to a child or youth.

Today the reality of the situation is that Children's Aid Societies often struggle to find adoptive homes for teens, sibling groups or children with complex needs. Children waiting to find their forever home may also be of diverse religious or cultural backgrounds. Once a permanent home is found for a young person an effort is made to continue to allow that child or youth to have contact with someone who has played a significant role in their life in order to help maintain past connections.

During the month of November, an information night is planned to take place at both Societies for families who have recently applied to adopt. At these events families will learn about the different permanency options available for children and youth and how the two agencies are looking to make those connections earlier in a child's life.

The Adoption Resource Exchange, a conference held at the Toronto Convention Centre, will take place on November 15th. The Conference is a semi-annual event hosted by the Ministry of Children and Youth Services that helps locate and match adoptive families with Ontario children needing adoption. The conference is open to anyone interested in adopting a child from Ontario and there is no fee to attend. However, it is primarily for those who have completed a homestudy assessment through a Children's Aid Society or an approved private adoption practitioner.

Families can also find information about children or youth in need of permanent homes on the Adopt Ontario website, www.adoptontario.ca.

In 2013-14 in the province of Ontario, 977 adoptions were finalized. Approximately 5% of those adoptions were children aged 13 and older. Currently in the province, 60% of the children and youth available for adoption are aged 13 or over.

In 2013-14, a total of 28 adoptions at Highland Shores Children's Aid (includes children and youth from HSCA and other Societies) were finalized. At Kawartha-Haliburton CAS,

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26 adoptions were finalized in 2013-14 (includes children and youth from KHCAS and other societies). “Our hope for this campaign is to raise awareness so families will consider providing that all important permanent nurturing environment to an older child or teen, sibling group or child with special needs. All of these young people deserve that opportunity”, said Heather Owens, Regional Adoption Supervisor for HSCA and KHCAS.

Adoptive families receive support and training which includes a standardized provincial training program (PRIDE) and a standardized provincial home study process (SAFE). In June of 2012, the Ontario government also announced subsidies for families who adopt, or become legal custodians to sibling groups and/or youth aged ten or older. Families must qualify based on income.

If you are interested in learning if adoption is right for you, contact Highland Shores Children’s Aid or the Kawartha-Haliburton Children’s Aid Society.

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For additional information contact: Bonnie Perrigard, Communications, Community and Stakeholder Relations Coordinator, 613-962-9291, ext. 2202 or 800-267-0570, ext. 2202.