



## News Release

October 13, 2016

### **RECOGNIZING NATIONAL FOSTER FAMILY WEEK AT A TIME WHEN NEED IS URGENT**

Can you picture a scenario where a child or youth comes into the care of a Children's Aid Society for their own protection and that Society has no foster family who can look after them? Each and every day, CASs across the province rely on foster and kin families to be there for kids in need. Over the past several years, those families have been dwindling in numbers resulting in an urgent situation for many societies.

Both Kawartha-Haliburton CAS and Highland Shores Children's Aid need additional foster parents who will be the best possible match for teens, sibling groups and children or youth with special needs. The two agencies must continually seek additional foster parents of all types so that every child or youth who comes into care can experience the benefits of a family environment.

While a Society's first preference is always for a young person to remain with their biological family, this is not always possible in situations where the safety or well-being of a child or youth is at risk. National Foster Family Week, which this year runs from October 16<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>th</sup>, highlights the fact that without the dedication, love and commitment shown by these families, CASs are not able to do their work.

"Even though National Foster Family Week is recognized only once a year, we salute our 133 foster, kin and customary care families who provide a safe, nurturing environment for children in our care, 365 days a year. These are individuals just like you and I, who come from all walks of life and represent a wide range of religions, cultures and lifestyles. What they have in common is a desire to help children and youth who are in need. We encourage the public to take that first step and call the Society to find out what is involved in becoming a foster parent. You might be the one who makes all the difference in the life of a young person", said Jennifer Wilson, Executive Director of the Kawartha-Haliburton Children's Aid Society.

Mark Kartusch, Executive Director for Highland Shores Children's Aid recognized that some common misconceptions may be holding people back from calling to inquire about becoming a foster parent. "The face of fostering has changed over the years given that our definition of family has also evolved. Whether you are a professional couple with no children, a family with your own biological children, a single person or a retiree, fostering may be right for you. All we ask is that you make that call to the Society to explore if it might be an option. During National Foster Family Week we thank our 139 dedicated foster and kin families who did make that call."

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