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Connections

The Quarterly Newsletter of The Catholic Children's Aid Society of Toronto, Fall 2011



Connections

This newsletter is published by the CCAS Communications Department.
We welcome your comments and story ideas!

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Give Children A Voice

Report suspected child abuse and neglect. As stated in law, you do not have to be certain that a child is being abused. If you have any concerns about a child, call 416-395-1500, 24-hours-a-day, seven-days-a-week.

www.torontocas.org

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Please let us know if your address has changed.

Child Abuse Prevention Month - Why it's so important.

By Donna Harris, Communications Specialist

O

ctober is Child Abuse Prevention Month! Throughout the month, Children's Aid Societies in Ontario promote child abuse awareness, reminding the public that reporting child abuse is everyone's responsibility.

In Ontario, Children's Aid Societies receive nearly 200,000 calls about child protection concerns every year, but it is estimated that more than 90 per cent of child abuse still goes unreported. This results in children and youth not getting the help they need.

Christabelle Lietch knows how important Child Abuse Prevention Month is. She is a Child Protection Worker in the CCAS Intake Department. This is where child abuse reports are initially handled. "Intake workers are the first point of contact when it comes to investigating and assessing a child abuse or neglect situation. We determine if the concerns are valid and if the family requires further support," says Christabelle. "Child Abuse Prevention Month gives us an opportunity to educate the public about child abuse and neglect and alert them about the responsibility they have to protect children."

According to the Child and Family Services Act, everyone has a duty to report suspected child abuse and neglect. This responsibility is called the "Duty to Report."

The public is often hesitant to report child abuse for many reasons. "People reporting are concerned about the family and if there will be repercussions to reporting," says Christabelle, "It is important to help people understand that if they do not report child abuse, Children's Aid Societies cannot protect kids."

Most people don't know that the law protects individuals who report legitimate suspicions of child abuse. "It is so important to report your suspicions," says Christabelle. "Children are vulnerable and rely on other people for help. Without the public's support and assistance, Children's Aid Societies cannot assist, support and protect children. The public and professionals who are around children and work with them are the ones that make the observations and have information that we need."

For information on the signs of child abuse and what you should do if you suspect it please visit www.torontocas.org.



Child Abuse Prevention Month - Join the Campaign!

October is Child Abuse Prevention Month and Children's Aid Societies in Toronto are promoting awareness of child abuse and neglect through Facebook and Twitter. Catholic Children's Aid Society of Toronto along with the Children's Aid Society of Toronto, Native Family and Child Services of Toronto and Jewish Family and Child Services of Toronto have launched a joint awareness campaign aimed at reminding people to be vigilant about recognizing child abuse and neglect. This social media campaign is the first of its kind for Child Abuse Prevention Month and we hope that it will be even more successful than last year's "Show You Care, Toronto" campaign. That guerilla campaign saw stuffed toys mounted on light poles and park benches across Toronto. This year we hope to reach even more people through social media.



The premise of the campaign is simple. "Like" us on Facebook and "follow" us on Twitter and we'll donate 200 stuffed toys to children in need once we get 1,000 likes and followers. Last year we learned that Torontonians have big hearts, as hundreds texted to donate. This year we hope that even more people will, with the click of a mouse, make a small gesture and make a big difference.

Visit our Facebook and Twitter page to learn about the signs of child abuse and how you can help if you suspect child abuse or neglect.

When you Like or Follow us we'll donate a stuffed toy to a child in need!



Like us on Facebook

www.facebook.com/CAPM2011



Follow us on Twitter

www.twitter.com/CAPM_Toronto

For more information visit: www.torontocas.org/childabuseprevention

View Our NEW Duty to Report Video!



www.youtube.com/torontocas
or
www.torontocas.org

Remember - reporting child abuse and neglect is everybody's business.

CCAS Twins Find Loving Adoptive Family

By Krista Lamb, Communications Specialist

Dedicated readers may remember them from the Spring 2011 edition of Connections: Maya and Camille (not their real names) were profiled as children in need of families. These gorgeous twins faced special challenges because of their complex medical needs – including blindness and deafness, but their sweet faces and irresistible smiles were heartwarming.

Just a few months later, the twin's adoption worker, Dina MacPhail, is celebrating the fact that those girls not only have found a permanent home – but that the family who is adopting them is a perfect fit. "These are miracle kids," she says happily, "but this is also a miracle adoption – the right parents were there from the start."

Their new parents, Terri Ann and Mark, met with CCAS staff at the Adoption Resource Exchange (ARE) – a bi-annual event that brings together prospective parents and children available for adoption. The girls' workers, Skye Sweet and Katie Scatozza, attended that weekend because they felt it was critical to discuss the twin's complex medical needs with prospective parents.

Terri Ann and her husband came back several times to view a tape of the twins that was shown at ARE – then they announced that they were leaving the event because they had seen the children they wanted – it was the girls!

"Before going to the ARE, I had prayed that if our child was presented there, that the boundaries and obstacles to us becoming a family would be brought down, and that we would receive a clear understanding and feeling that this was our child or children," says Terri Ann. "When the girls were shown on the screen, we both looked at each other and said 'there are our girls.'"

The family went through extensive screening and interviews, but one of the biggest challenges was convincing the foster



Terri Ann and Mark holding babies Camille and Maya, pose with CCAS adoptive staff in their home.

parents that they were up to the challenge. "The foster parents were very protective of these kids," explains MacPhail. She and the other workers on the case decided to videotape the prospective parents talking about themselves and answering, the toughest questions about how they would handle the twins extensive needs. After watching the video the foster mother turned it off saying, "These are the ones. Call them and have them come over."

Since that initial meeting, the families have been intertwined. The foster parents invited the adoptive parents to stay overnight at their cottage to get an experience of what it was like to care for the girls. And during Terri Ann and Mark's first overnight visit on their own, one of the girls had a seizure and had to be rushed to the hospital. They called the foster parents, who came over immediately to help and support them through the process.

"We had many transition visits with the girls before their placement," explains Terri Ann, "They were placed in the most loving foster home. We couldn't have asked for more. We

were invited to many of their medical appointments before transitioning."

Support from the entire CCAS team helped make the adoption run smoothly. And finding a family so in love with the twins was the key. The family, who adopted their oldest child from South Africa, didn't think twice about taking on two children with complex needs. "There is a unique plan for each child. Oftentimes we use society's benchmarks for what defines success, for example getting married, having a career, being independent. That is not what all children have been sent to do. Those are not the gifts of every child," Terri Ann says.

"If you are considering adopting a child with special needs, you will be blessed in a way only few have the privilege of experiencing," she continues. "You get to experience true joy in the simplest of things. That is if you are willing to open yourself up to seeing this beauty. Making yourself vulnerable to the reality that the plan you thought should unfold may not be the plan meant to unfold. You must have community, and be an advocate, as the world doesn't always want to see how lucky the children are. This feels so wrong to us. We have been blessed beyond belief. God knows what we needed as a family. We have found our family in them."

For MacPhail, who has a number of children on her caseload still waiting for a family, she knows how important this adoption is for these girls. "There's a tremendous sense of inclusion that they get by being in this family," she explains. "There is something different about being a permanent member of the family."

The entire CCAS team is thrilled to have found a forever family for these children. "The adoptive parents see the girls as two little gifts from God. And we think we were given a little gift from God by having them find us," says MacPhail.

Happy 1st Anniversary Intake Services

On June 29, 2011 our amalgamated Intake Services celebrated its one year anniversary. Staff enjoyed breakfast refreshments and participated in various activities, including a contest in which teams competed to decorate their supervisors' doors.



Domenica DiNicolantonio, Manager, Intake Services, Mary A. McConville, Executive Director, Mary Juric, Director of Service



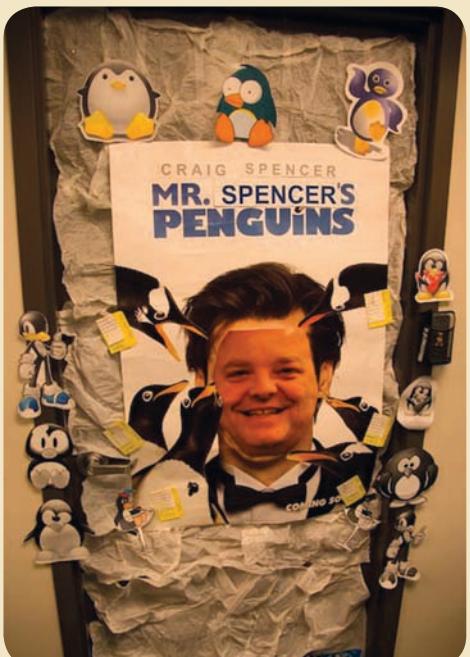
Child Protection Supervisor - Investigation and Assessment, Craig Spencer



Child Protection Workers, Yarla Rabelo, Sarah Hogg Silva and Aileen Calaguan-Waescheer



Child Protection Workers, Valentina Farrell, Melissa DeCastro and Karen Trench





CCAS Calls on Election Candidates to Act for Children and Youth in Care

By Claire Prime, Communications Assistant

W

hen Jemmy became independent at the age of 18, she had to leave the only family she had ever had that took care of her without abusing or neglecting her—her foster family.

She moved into a small room on her own but couldn't work or attend school because of her immigrant status. She says she felt lost, bored and depressed.

Jemmy recently spoke about the challenges of aging out of foster care to a group of Toronto-area politicians vying to represent their districts in the election on October 6th. The presentation, part of the Society's election strategy, began with remarks provided by Executive Director Mary A. McConvile. Candidates and representatives from the ridings of Toronto Centre, Toronto-Danforth, St. Paul's, Davenport and Trinity-Spadina were able to meet with speakers, as well as with CCAS staff members after the presentation.

Shannon, a youth speaker and Marlene, a foster mother to many youth, talked about the challenges faced by youth aging out of the system. Shannon spoke about her sister who, because of having to leave care so early, faced incredible difficulties.

Marlene watches with frustration as many youth in her care leave before they are ready. One young man, after turning 18, felt too overwhelmed to enroll in post-secondary education.

Taking out a loan and becoming independent with the complexity of his special needs was too much for him without the support of a family. Instead, he returned to live with his abusive father, whose home he had been taken out of years ago.

Many of the youth in her care had never had a family who cared for them. And even with emergency care and maintenance funds, moving out at 18 can be especially challenging for those youth in care with disabilities or developmental challenges. Some of these youth, "do not have the life skills nor the maturity compounded by whatever disabilities they are afflicted with to handle life on their own," she says. Most young people in Canada are not ready to become independent at 18, but many youth in the foster care system face even greater obstacles.

Irene, an adoptive mother, spoke about the benefits of adoption subsidies for families that have children with special needs. Without those supports, the two girls that she adopted, both siblings, would have been separated. She also would not have been able to afford the treatments and services that they require. She said she hopes that more subsidies continue to become available so that it will be easier to adopt older children with special needs.

Mary Juric, the Director of Service at CCAS, spoke about the need to raise the age of protection, the maximum age at which a child is eligible for the services of Children's Aid Societies.

"When we receive calls regarding youth between 16 and 18 who are at risk, we are not authorized to respond as we would for children under 16," she said. "We can refer—but this really is not at all adequate service to this group of youth who fall between the cracks of the child and adult systems. These youth need and can benefit from child welfare services."

Peter Tabuns, the NDP candidate for Toronto-Danforth said at the event that he couldn't imagine any candidate attending the event and not feeling moved to work for change.

On September 8th, 2011, the McGuinty government established legislation that allows youth who left care at ages 16 or 17 to return to their CAS and to access services and financial support from Children's Aid Societies until they reach the age of 21. New funding for adoption subsidies will make it easier for families to adopt Crown Wards and will provide funding to help those families manage the cost of living, with increased funding provided for children and youth with special needs.

CCAS is pleased with these new developments and we hope that they are part of many changes to come.

CCAS Youth is Advocate for Others

By Donna Harris, Communications Specialist

G

erald McBride is determined to prevent other youth from going through the same challenges he has faced and overcome. He was brought into foster care when he was just seven years old. He dropped out of high school when he was 17. He lived on the streets for two years but when he was 22 years old, he realized a post-secondary education would be the key to his success.

With the help of CCAS child protection worker, Louise Taylor, Gerald developed his life skills and gained access to peer support and counselling. He went back to school and entered a transitional program so he could start his post-secondary education at the University of Toronto.

Now in his third year, studying Diaspora Studies and Equity, Gerald has dedicated himself to providing the assistance to CCAS youth in care that he once needed. He understands first-hand, the struggles that youth in care face when pursuing a college or university career, while dealing with other personal and financial challenges.

Gerald volunteered at and now works for CCAS's Hope for Children helping youth. This year, he assisted more than 100 Hope for Children scholarship applicants. Gerald phoned and emailed each applicant, helped write each biography, and managed RSVPs for the Hope for Children Scholarship Event.

Gerald also played an active role at the event. He added a personal touch, bringing a lot of heart to his work. He could be seen welcoming the scholarship recipients and coaching the youth co-hosts on their speeches. "I was a public speaker as a kid and I knew how to help the youth co-hosts bring their speeches to life," says Gerald. "I wanted them to present to everyone in attendance so that they had a voice."

The youth speeches were the highlight of the night. Jemmy's story was particularly moving; she ended up in the care of



Gerald McBride - Former Youth in Care

CCAS after her mother physically abused her and her sisters. Gerald helped Jemmy prepare and build her confidence before her speech.

The Hope for Children Scholarship Program has made a huge difference for youth like Gerald and Jemmy. Statistics show that youth in care are less likely to pursue post-secondary education because of financial constraints. Forced to leave care at age 18, youth living on their own struggle to balance school, pay tuition, rent, and hold a job. "This scholarship has helped me tremendously. I use my scholarship money to buy books and groceries," says Gerald. "It's a good safety net to have."

Jemmy agrees with Gerald and greatly appreciates the financial assistance she received from the Hope for Children scholarship program. "Post-secondary education has become so expensive that financial assistance from Ontario student loans doesn't cover all of the costs of going to school. The scholarship I receive is not extra money. The funds we all receive have become a part of our survival in the post-secondary arena," says Jemmy. "We fight with our budgets everyday to make sure that we have another day, and another year of school. There is no Mommy and Daddy to call for a top-up."

Since Gerald started working at Hope for Children earlier this year, he has developed strong relationships with many of the youth that CCAS serves. "Giving back is my way of saying thank you for all of the help I received from CCAS," said Gerald. "Every time I pick up the phone and have a conversation with a kid, I get satisfaction knowing that I was able to be there."

Gerald's role is quite extensive. "I've done everything from coach a single mother about applying for OSAP, to organizing a moving truck for a kid that needed to move, to meeting someone for coffee because they were having a bad day," he says. He has also participated in CCAS's public engagement campaign, appearing in our annual report and other materials to help others by telling his story.

Many of the duties that Gerald performs are not in his job description, but fellow youth see him as a mentor and a friend. "These kids are like me. They call me because I am their friend. I am whatever that kid needs me to be," says Gerald. "I genuinely love what I do. It gives me a great sense of pride. I will continuously strive to help these youth."

Gerald doesn't want to see other youth on the streets. "I do this because I don't want kids to go through what I did. I was given an amazing opportunity and I was taught never to waste it," said Gerald.



A Big Thanks to our Dedicated Volunteers

By Krista Lamb, Communications Specialist

On June 9th, CCAS put on our annual Volunteer Appreciation Event – a night when we say thank you to some of our more than 300 volunteers for the important work that they do. This year's event was a huge success, with more than 100 volunteers and their guests filling the room at the Columbus Centre.

The night's MC, CCAS Executive Director, Mary A. McConville, started out the evening by talking to the assembled crowd about how much CCAS appreciates all the work they do – a

sentiment shared by all of our staff. Attendees then mixed and mingled, enjoyed dinner and heard heart-warming stories from three volunteer speakers, who told the crowd about their personal experiences with volunteering. The evening was capped off by the debut of CCAS's new video on volunteering – featuring volunteer testimonials - which was very well received. One of the volunteers commented that, "The video was very well done and a great addition to the night."

Many of the volunteers also commented on how helpful it was to meet and interact with other volunteers. This night allows

CCAS volunteers to interact and learn about other volunteering opportunities, as well as acting as a recruitment opportunity for new volunteers. But most importantly, it allows us to tell our volunteers how incredibly important their contribution is to the children, families and staff at CCAS.

Are you interested in volunteering? Visit our website, www.ccastoronto.org and click on Volunteer to learn more about the opportunities available to help our children and families.



Volunteer Services Supervisors, Marion Audy, Isabel Dutra, Martha Pollice and Mary-Ann Smith



Marion Audy, Supervisor, Volunteer Services with a group of volunteers



Jennie Fagan, CCAS volunteer driver speaks to other volunteers



CCAS volunteers



Mary-Ann Smith, Supervisor, Volunteer Services with a group of volunteers



CCAS Volunteers

Find Out Why Our Volunteers Love Helping Others!



www.youtube.com/torontocas or www.torontocas.org

Remember - We are always looking for talented volunteers!

Special Thanks!

Thank you Miguel Potenciano and the staff of Ramona G. Creative Production. Miguel is a CCAS volunteer who produces video presentations of children and youth who are free for adoption to prospective adoptive parents. Miguel and his staff produced our volunteer appreciation video.



CCAS Youth Lands Dream Job

By Claire Prime, Communications Assistant

When David Horvath's mom was sick with lung cancer, he would spend most of his time at the hospital. He missed class to be with her, he would translate for her at the hospital, and he would stay overnight, sleeping on a mattress on the floor, to be with her. When she died in 2000 and David's father was incapable of caring for him and his sisters, they were placed in foster homes. David never forgot his mom and the memories of the hospital, and it inspired him to work in medicine.

Since he was 14, David has wanted to be a paramedic. This spring, he graduated from the Paramedics program at Humber College. His sister, Monica and his worker, Anita Strauss, both attended the ceremony where he received his certificate. "I had been working towards being a paramedic for so long that it felt almost too good to be true," he says. He was hired after graduation and now works full-time for the region of Peel.

David says paramedicine suited his personality more than any other careers in health care. "I wanted something fast paced, where you have to think on your feet. I can't see myself behind a desk because I would always be wondering what's going on outside," he says, laughing. He hopes to one day work as a paramedic in a helicopter, preferably in a warmer climate—he says he's too thin for Canadian winters.

Before he started school, David volunteered for the Pape Adolescent Resource Centre (PARC), a program designed to help current and former youth in care transition to independence. He was particularly involved with the Young Men's Group; he travelled to New Zealand with the group for an international conference on the supports and services available for Crown Wards around the world and he helped start up BlueSky DJ Services, which provides training and employment for musical young men who are current and former youth in care.



David Horvath proudly holds his paramedic certificate

He also volunteered and continues to be involved with the Voyager program at Ryerson University, which has Crown Wards reach out to their peers to help them learn about post-secondary education, apply for programs and access the supports and services available to them. "It's basically youth in care helping youth in care," says David. "We come from the same place that they come from and have some of the same issues that they have."

He says there is a lot of stigma about being a foster child and he grew up thinking that attaining his goals would be next to impossible. So, when he was accepted into college, and granted a Hope for Children scholarship, he says it felt like he had won the lottery. He says that he succeeded because he stuck with his goals and didn't let anything stand in the way of reaching his dream. "A lot of foster kids need to realize that, you're a foster kid, true, but you can still have aspirations, you can still go to school, you can still learn," he says. "It all goes somewhere."

Anita Strauss, David's former child protection worker, says she is proud of his accomplishments. "Even when times were tough and he felt like giving up, he just pulled himself up," she says. Even though she is no longer his worker, she continues to visit him several times a year as she does with many of her



David Horvath and his former child protection worker Anita Strauss

former youth in care. "You grow to love these kids," she says.

David says his foster mom asked him what he would do if he didn't make it into the program, if he had a Plan B. He didn't. "I don't want to play the cops and robbers game—be the bad guy and sell drugs on the streets—that kind of life. I don't want to be in a minimum-wage paying job. I've done that, I don't want to be doing that for the rest of my life," he says. "This is what I really want to do and I don't want to do anything else."

Building Dreams in Africa

By Claire Prime, Communications Assistant

When the Free the Children jeep drives down the streets in Eor Ewuso, Kenya, the villagers come running, waving and shouting. The children are happy and smiling even though many of them are hungry, thin and wearing old, tattered clothes. "Everyone has this theory of Africa—that it's full of children with flies all over their faces and everyone is starving and full of disease," says Chantelle, who volunteered in Kenya this past summer. "It's not like that."

For Chantelle, a youth in the care of Toronto CCAS and a student in the Waterloo region, it is the memories of the children she met that stand out the most for her from the trip. Even though they had so little, she says, they were happy and grateful. Jobs were scarce in the community and poverty and hunger were prevalent. She says the trip opened her eyes and made her much more aware of the circumstances that others are experiencing.

Chantelle was part of a group of 50 teenagers in the Waterloo, Wellington and Guelph regions to receive the Build a Village award, which gives high school students the opportunity to travel to either Kenya or India. The award was offered through Free the Children and Me to We and was sponsored by Research in Motion in Waterloo.

The trip centered on building a school in the village for the children. Nearly every day, the students worked on the school,

first putting a foundation down and then cutting and piling rocks for the walls. The students also had a chance to visit the safari. They saw wild cheetahs, lions and giraffes, they were able to see a traditional Kenyan hut, made with mud and sticks, and try some traditional meals, including uji, which is a cornmeal-based porridge. They were able to meet with the "Mamas", the deeply respected mothers in the community, and take part in the water walk, a 1.5 km walk to fetch water for daily needs. Each student filled a 20 litre plastic bottle with water and carried it back to the town.

Chantelle heard about the program through We Day, an event held in Waterloo to inspire students and raise awareness about global issues like poverty and hunger. At the event, she heard from the former U.S. Vice President Al Gore, Liberia's President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and members of the cast of the TV show Degrassi. She was even able to meet her own personal hero, the co-founder of Free the Children, Craig Kielburger. Chantelle sent in an essay to apply for the Build a Village award after We Day, detailing her story and why she wanted to go, and she was accepted.

Chantelle's foster mom, Darlene, says that the trip has made a huge impact on her life. It has opened her eyes to the plight of others and has helped her appreciate what she has now. Chantelle's worker, Christine, says that Chantelle, now 17, has had so many ideas for what to do when school finishes, but has had difficulties deciding what to study after high school.



"Chantelle has a good imagination; she has lots of dreams," says Christine. "This trip has given her some dreams that she has never dreamt of."

Now Chantelle has a plan; she wants to study politics at university and become an outreach speaker for Me to We and continue to help those less fortunate!



Get involved: find out how your participation benefits our children and youth
Stay informed: sign-up for our E-newsletter
Donate on-line: get your tax receipt instantly through our quick, secure and easy tools

www.hopeforchildren.ca

CCAS Scholarship Supporter Shares His Story and Inspires Youth

By Claire Prime, Communications Assistant

On August 24th, 2011, Hope for Children held its annual scholarship event at Hart House at the University of Toronto. More than 100 current and former youth in the care of CCAS received scholarships valued at close to \$200,000. The event was a huge success and brought in more than 200 youth, donors, staff and guests. The scholarship event celebrates the accomplishments of our youth and the generosity of our wonderful donors.

Long time donors Rita and Rudy Koehler have been providing endowed scholarships for youth since 2000. The scholarships go to former youth in the care of CCAS to support them in their educational or job training pursuits. Rudy was invited to share his thoughts and experiences during the ceremony. He spoke at length about his own personal experiences living in foster care and he encouraged youth to work hard and follow their dreams. His words resonated with the audience and were met with a standing ovation.

This is what he said:

Ladies, Gentlemen and Honoured Students:

My wife Rita and I have been involved with Hope for Children for over 10 years. Each time we are at this annual event, we come

away with wonderful feelings that strengthen our commitment to keep supporting.

It gives us pleasure meeting many of you, listening to your dreams and aspirations, to which I can relate quite well. My father died when I was seven years old and then my mother when I was nine. Subsequently, I ended up with loving foster parents. Unfortunately, one year later, my foster father became ill. He died two years later.

It was then that I experienced feelings of hopelessness on many occasions, missing the love of a Mom and Dad very much.

I was 15 when I entered an apprenticeship program that would give me the opportunity to realize my dream: having a family where I can give and receive the love that I was missing then so much.

From my own experiences, I know this is a vulnerable age. It's critical which direction you take. I feel very confident that every one of you will realize your dreams, provided you are willing to make the right choices. You will be amazed at the results that studying hard, taking the right steps and making unavoidable sacrifices will bring you. I still remember the changes I made when I was 15. In less than one year, very positive results

encouraged me to work even harder.

I feel confident that later in life some of you will follow our example and help others, if only with time and love.

We both are grateful that we're being rewarded for our hard work, which allows us to financially support many worthy causes, such as Hope for Children.

Rita and I would like to congratulate every one of you who has been recognized this evening. We also encourage you to continue your hard work in achieving a fulfilling life.

We would also like to take this opportunity to thank all the other donors for their support in making such a difference in so many young lives.

Please join me with a big round of applause to recognize and thank all the foster parents and support staff for their important contribution.

To all the students: Make a pledge to yourself to give your best this coming year.

Good luck and God bless you all.

Thank you to Rudy and Rita Koehler and to all our generous donors for their support this year.



Scholarship recipients with Fiandaca-Bianchini Family donors



Knights of Columbus scholarship recipients with five Knights



Catholic Charities scholarship recipients with a representative from Catholic Charities



A Nelson Mandela Scholarship recipient with representatives of the Nelson Mandela Fund



Director of Service, Mary Juric with Dare to Dream scholarship recipients



Director of Service, Mary Juric with Cumba scholarship recipients

Giving When it Counts!

Share the joy of this festive season with children and families who need your help.

Team up with your colleagues, friends and family by engaging them in silent auctions, bake sales, group gift shopping, and more! Your donation will be matched with each family's wish list, and will make all the difference to their Christmas celebration!

Too busy to go shopping? You can also make an online donation to support a family this Christmas. It's quick, secure and easy, and you will be provided with a tax receipt instantly.

The Adopt-a-Family Program has been receiving support for more than ten years, and serves the most disadvantaged families in the CCAS community.

hopeforchildren.ca/adoptafamily

Tel: 416-395-1634 | Revenue Canada Business #87382 5426 RR0001





Illusionist Reminds Children to Hold Their Dreams Close

By Claire Prime, Communications Assistant

W

hen Claude Haggerty was in Grade 8, he made a list of his goals and dreams. He wrote them on his bedroom mirror and taped them in his locker. He wanted to make an elephant disappear and raise one million dollars for charity. At the time, Haggerty was living in foster care and was having difficulties fitting in at school; all through his childhood and youth, he struggled with a speech impediment.

Haggerty now has his own illusion show, he has travelled around the country and has had TV credits on the Jay Leno show and the Discovery Channel. He has performed at the Air Canada Centre, Casino Niagara and at the opening of the West Edmonton Mall. At one point, Haggerty did make elephants disappear—he also had tigers for his shows—though he has since stopped using animals in his shows. After 30 years in the business, he has raised over \$4.7 million for charities by performing mostly at small venues and for small audiences.

He has performed at over 1300 high schools and 7000 elementary schools.

While he's performing, he likes to tell his story to the audience. He encourages the crowd to dream big and to never lose sight of their goals.

Claude Haggerty (<http://www.claudehaggerty.com>) is performing at the Stephen Leacock Collegiate Institute, 2450 Birchmount Road in Scarborough on October 15th. Doors open at 1 p.m. The event is sponsored by the Catholic Children's Aid Society of Toronto and the Children's Aid Society of Toronto. Admission is free with a non-perishable food item and is open to foster families from Toronto CCAS and CAS.

To register, please visit www.torontocas.org/claudiehaggertyevent or call Carrie (CCAS) at 416-395-1720 or Diane (CAS) at 416-924-4640 Ext: 3510.



CCAS's FASD Awareness Committee Takes a Pregnant Pause

On September 9th, CCAS joined other Toronto organizations to recognize Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) Day by holding a Pregnant Pause at Union Station. Participants paused for ninety-nine seconds on the ninth day of the ninth month at 9:09 a.m. to bring awareness to Torontonians that no amount of alcohol is safe during pregnancy. Participants also distributed flyers to morning commuters.

In Canada, 1 in 100 children are born with FASD each year. The impact of alcohol during prenatal growth can cause irreversible brain damage, including intellectual deficits and learning disabilities, hyperactivity and damage to the central nervous system. There is no cure for FASD.



Carolyn Bennett, MP, Saint Paul's addresses commuters at Union Station



CCAS Staff pause at 9:09 a.m. for ninety-nine seconds



CCAS staff strike a pose with balloon bellies

We Still Need Your Help!

Join the Hope for Children team and participate in the Scotiabank Toronto Waterfront Marathon. On October 16, 2011 our team will take to the streets of Toronto to raise much-needed funds for families and children in need.

You can choose to run or walk 5K, a half or full marathon. If walking or running isn't for you, you can still donate to our team. Just visit www.hopeforchildren.ca.

Hope for Children supports programs for children and youth served by the Catholic Children's Aid Society by providing grants, scholarships and emergency aid.



2010 HFC team members

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Join the Hope for Children Team!