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Connections

The Quarterly Newsletter of The Catholic Children's Aid Society of Toronto, Spring 2012



Connections

This newsletter is published by the CCAS Communications Department.

We welcome your comments and story ideas!

E-mail: a.rappe@torontocas.org

Editors & Writers: Anne Rappé, Krista Lamb & Donna Harris

Design & Layout: Donna Harris

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 concern about a child, call 416-395-1500, 24-hours-a-day, seven-days-a-week.

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**SCHEVANA
Child Protection Worker**

CCAS Volunteer Supports Our Staff

Jacqueline gives back through volunteering, despite her health challenges

By Krista Lamb, Communications Specialist

At CCAS we are truly blessed to have some amazing volunteers. Without these generous people who donate their time and energy, we could not provide the array of supports and services that we currently do.

Jacqueline is one such volunteer at our Scarborough office – she helps with administrative duties, taking on additional tasks to help out our staff. Her spirit and enthusiasm also brighten the day of everyone she deals with.

Life has not always been easy for Jacqueline. She suffers from Fibromyalgia and Rheumatoid Arthritis – conditions that make it impossible for her to hold down a full-time job and which cause considerable pain. Doing volunteer work allows her to feel productive and to make a difference in her community with the sort of flexibility that her health issues require.

Jacqueline's Volunteer Supervisor, Nicola Harris, is glad that she is part of her team. Each volunteer has a Supervisor to guide them through the training and orientation process and to assign them volunteer duties. Nicola feels lucky to be working with Jacqueline, who is always a positive presence in the office. "Despite her health concerns she never lets us down and she makes a point to attend on her scheduled days, even when she does not feel one hundred per cent," says Nicola. "Jacqueline has spoken to me numerous times about how fulfilling her volunteer position is and how it

has provided her with a sense of purpose."

"I was inspired to volunteer for Catholic Children's Aid because of a deep desire to give back to society what society has given me," Jacqueline explains. "I want to be a positive role model for young people and children and to interact with people from different backgrounds and cultures."

She admits that volunteering was overwhelming at first and that she was tempted to give in to her health challenges, but Nicola's support and reassurance helped to motivate her. "When I first met Nicola, she was so warm – I felt like I had known her my whole life when I'd only just met her. That feeling motivated me to travel all the way downtown on two occasions for training. Sometimes you meet a person who has a huge impact on you – for me, Nicola is that person. She inspires me and motivates me. She doesn't know the impact she's made on my life."

Jacqueline has spoken to me numerous times about how fulfilling her volunteer position is and how it has provided her with a sense of purpose."

— Nicola Harris,
Volunteer Supervisor,
CCAS

of the house on days when she might not feel up to it. She is also inspired by being able to help in so many ways. As part of our Adopt-a-Family Christmas program, for example, she helped our staff with assembling the donor thank-you gifts and with other tasks. She particularly loved working on that program because she says, "it was a lesson in humility as it demonstrated to me how much we take for granted."

As a volunteer, Jacqueline has flexibility in creating her own schedule. Nicola always supports her if she does not feel up to coming in, but knowing that Nicola is there helps Jacqueline get up and out



Jacqueline, CCAS Volunteer and Nicola Harris,
Volunteer Supervisor

For Team Administrative Assistant, Doris Vessaoker, having Jacqueline's help during the busy Adopt-a-Family program, provided a pair of extra hands and positive energy. "Jacqueline is an extremely dedicated and committed volunteer; she is always smiling, willing to help and diligently works to complete her assigned tasks. It's always a pleasure to see her in the office and is a definite asset to our Agency. We need more people like her," says Doris.

Jacqueline hopes that her story will inspire others to consider volunteering. "I would strongly encourage anyone to spend time helping those who are in any form of need, no matter what. We all need help from time to time. Let us all participate in helping those who are in need."

CCAS Commits to Educational Excellence

By Anne Rappé, Communications Manager

If you're a CCAS child or youth in care with Ruth Lima as your caseworker, you know she's got your back when it comes to schooling. As a child protection worker, Ruth is a passionate believer in the importance of education and she will advocate tirelessly so that the kids on her caseload receive an education that meets their fullest potential.

"When challenges arise in the classroom, kids in care really need workers and caregivers to go to bat for them," says Ruth. "Sometimes the problems they encounter are incredibly complex. This can often require extensive navigation and planning."

Ruth recalls the case of one young girl with possible special needs. Provincial education legislation requires that special education programs be made available for students identified as exceptional. In order to be classified as "exceptional" each case is examined by an Identification, Placement, and Review Committee from a given school board.

"To prepare for the meeting, I followed a very detailed process so that I could provide as much useful information to make my case as possible," says Ruth. Once the Committee approved the "exceptional" designation the school developed an Individual Education Plan. "I was able to make use of some

helpful resource material which helped me navigate through the process and at the end of the day, the child benefitted through a detailed education plan and funding to cover assistive technology," she says. "After that, it was my job to hold the system accountable on a go-forward basis."

The helpful resource material which Ruth referenced is a recently updated CCAS Education Guide designed specifically for caregivers and workers to leverage the best of what the education system has to offer.

Workers and caregivers can rely on the guide for comprehensive information about elementary and secondary schools, the Education Act, special education, rights of students and parents/caregivers and information about suspensions and expulsions, to name a few.

"The guide acts as the basis of clinical conversations with families and serves as a reference tool for workers and caregivers," says Bernie Finnegan, Manager of CCAS Child and Youth Services. "It's invaluable for understanding and navigating the education system, promoting the best outcomes for children and youth, and encouraging strong working relationships with our education partners through open communication and shared decision-making."

Education is one of the key indicators of wellness under the province's annual Crown Ward Review – an accountability measure for evaluating the wellbeing of children and youth in care. Bernie says the reviewers will ask questions such as, "Is the student at the appropriate grade level? If not, then how does the child's Plan of Care address his/her education? Or, do we need to reset our priorities?"

Thanks in part to education advocacy by workers such as Ruth Lima, CCAS children and youth in care rank better in educational outcomes than the provincial average in all age ranges.

By working more closely together and relying on resources such as the recently updated CCAS Education Guide, workers and caregivers will continue to make positive education outcomes a primary priority for our children and youth in care.

"I recall a foster parent who thought that the child was taking courses in preparation for a college education but unfortunately that wasn't the case," says Ruth. "The foster parent needed some help deciphering the report card. Workers can help with these sorts of things and our Education Guide is there as a reference too."

CCAS Worker Nurtures Children and Youth

By Donna Harris, Communications Specialist

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f you ask Child and Youth Worker, Schevana Baksh, what she does for a living, she would tell you that she helps "raise children."

Schevana fondly remembers helping sisters who were grieving the loss of their mother and struggling with their own debilitating health condition and learning issues. She became their worker when the girls were in Grade 8. They loved sports and were very talented and active and on their way to becoming professional athletes but were diagnosed with a heart condition which prohibited them from playing sports. The girls were devastated because they used sports partly to help them cope with the loss of their mother. Schevana counselled and encouraged the girls. They are now working towards a career in the health/fitness field and although they can no longer play sports, they coach and mentor other athletes. "They are two of the sweetest girls that I've ever known and it was tough to see them go through that. They have very strong faith and have had great foster parents that really helped them," says Schevana.

As a child protection worker in Child and Youth Services, Schevana and her colleagues provide support to two groups of people – Crown Wards under the age of 18 and youth over the age of 18 who receive Extended Care and Maintenance from the Society. Extended Care and Maintenance is an important tool that bridges a youth's transition to independence by providing them with additional supports such as budget and life skills counselling, referrals to job search and training programs, financial support and referrals to other community support services related to each youth's circumstances. "My job is about helping youth develop the skills they'll need so they can successfully live on their own and about getting the supports they need in place," says Schevana.

When CCAS youth turn 18, CCAS is no longer their guardian because they are legally considered adults. A mutually agreed upon contract is created which identifies the ongoing support the youth will receive from CCAS. The contract also gives youth the opportunity to connect with their worker on an ongoing basis and continue receiving guidance and support as required until they turn 21.

Schevana says that youth are often still in need of help beyond that age. "You may be the person that a youth calls even though you are no longer responsible for them. They rely on you," says Schevana.

Child and Youth Workers are very involved in the growth and



Schevana Baksh - Child Protection Worker

development of each child and youth they work with. They attend Plan of Care meetings for each child where they, along with a team of other professionals and the other significant people in a child's life, discuss his or her progress and set goals.

For example; foster parents, group home staff, therapists and family members may be present at a meeting depending on the child's circumstances. Youth over 12 years of age are encouraged to attend as the Society believes that a youth's personal goals should be incorporated into their Plan of Care and that they should have a say in planning.

"Plans of Care allow workers to look at the child's needs and proactively turn them into developmental goals," says Schevana.

These meetings focus on seven aspects of development: Health, Education, Identity, Social Presentation, Social and Family Relationships, Emotional and Behavioral Development and Self-Care. "We take a holistic planning approach, meeting their needs, basically growing them up and helping them develop into successful young men and women who are doing the best that they can," says Schevana.

During a Plan of Care meeting the group will discuss if the child has been in good health. They will determine if the child

is eating and sleeping well; how the child is progressing at school; if the child needs a tutor; if the child is learning about his or her cultural identity, among many other things. If there are causes for concern, the team will work together to identify solutions.

As a Child and Youth Worker, Schevana's role also includes keeping track of the progress that children and youth make in between plans of care meetings. She is also responsible for updating their social history, which could include being in contact with family members. The job can involve meeting with teachers and other school personnel to ensure that learning goals are met and meeting with other professionals to ensure that emotional and psychological assessments are completed and these needs are followed through on.

"It's about holding people responsible – schools, therapists, foster parents," says Schevana. "It's our responsibility to ensure that everyone is doing their job. Each child is unique and has to be parented with an individualized approach and basis. There is a teaching component to our work," she adds. "We teach foster parents and teachers and other people how to support our children. We are also responsible for facilitating and helping to develop good working relationships with others in order to get the work done."

Schevana finds fulfillment in being able to help these children and youth. She recalls working with a teenage girl who tried to commit suicide. "One young lady was about 13 or 14 when I met her and at the time she had tried to end her life. Now she's a university student who is very focused on her education and is also a leader helping other youth in care. It has been so great to watch her grow up," explains Schevana.

Schevana has worked at CCAS since 1999 and says that she receives a lot of support from other members of her department. "I have learned so much from my colleagues. They are very happy to share the knowledge they have gathered over the years," says Schevana. "I am so struck when I listen to stories about the work that people do here. The level of care and compassion that people bring to their work is inspiring."

For Child and Youth Workers like Schevana, being able to help children overcome obstacles and achieve their goals makes their job worthwhile. "Honestly, child protection is a tough job and it's not for everyone, but it's a very rewarding one. The ability to be part of a change process is incredible. The ability to change lives, to be a part of these children's lives and bear witness to their strength and resilience is amazing."

“

Child protection is a tough job and it's not for everyone, but it's a very rewarding job. The ability to be part of a change process is incredible. The ability to change lives, to be a part of these children's lives and bear witness to their strength and resilience is amazing.

— Schevana Baksh,
Child Protection Worker, CCAS

The CCAS Face of the “I Am Your Children’s Aid Society” Provincial Awareness Campaign

By Anne Rappé, Manager, Communications

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Meet Mira, Wayne, Tracey, Lucy, Jennifer and Shevana, the latest participants in the CCAS, “I Am Your Children’s Aid” public engagement and recruitment campaign. You may have seen some of them in the last couple of issues of Connections. As child protection workers, health specialists and adoptive parents, the stories of these remarkable individuals illustrate how their lives have been touched by our work. Their experiences embody the heart, hope, vision and mission of our agency. We are pleased to celebrate these remarkable individuals and share their stories through our new campaign posters.

Sponsored by the Ontario Association of Children’s Aid Societies, the “I Am Your Children’s Aid” campaign is designed to promote the role of Children’s Aid in the community, how Children’s Aid can transform lives and the passion and dedication of our work.

Now in its third year, the goal of the campaign is to engage more people to foster, adopt, volunteer and be voices advocating for the well-being of children and youth.

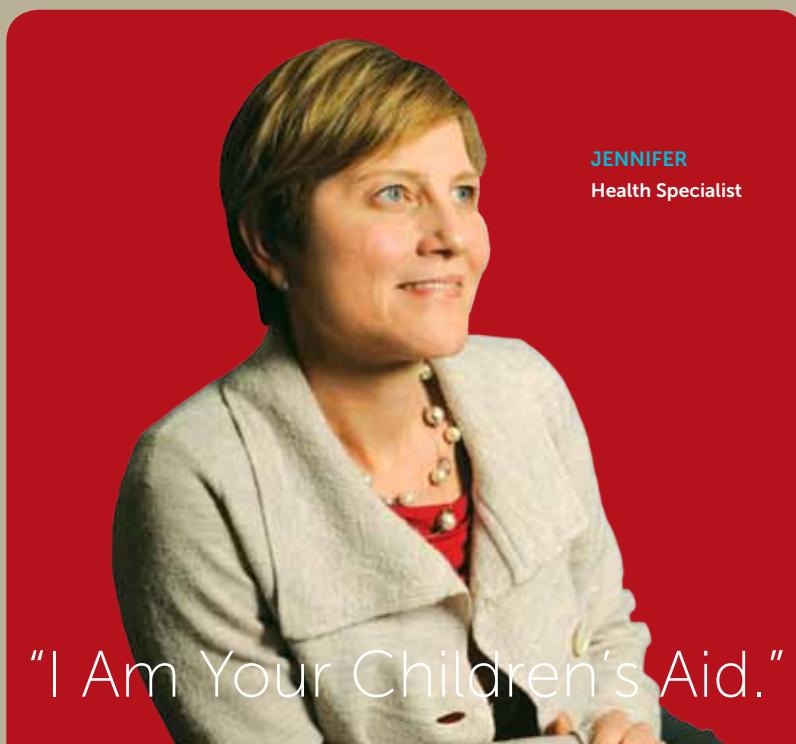
CCAS wants to say thank you to all of you who saw the campaign and were inspired to support CCAS in its special mission.

Do you want to get involved with your Catholic Children’s Aid Society?

- » Foster a child in need
- » Adopt a child
- » Volunteer with CCAS for the experience of a lifetime
- » Donate to support vulnerable children and families in need

Please Visit: www.torontocas.org/campaign

We are all caretakers of Ontario's children and part of a growing culture of people who support the well being of all of Ontario's children.



JENNIFER
Health Specialist

“I Am Your Children’s Aid.”



www.torontocas.org

I deal primarily with infants and young children, providing health assessments. When you see a little baby that has had all these health challenges in her life, it's amazing to see her surpass what anyone thought she could accomplish. Caring for a baby can be stressful, but with the right support it can be a transformative experience for the mother. Working with moms and their babies, I also get to experience a new mom falling in love with her baby. I've been here for 20 years and I've grown up here. This job has given me the confidence to take a stand and advocate for the most vulnerable people. Someone has to speak for these children. I feel like I'm doing something that's making a difference for families.

GET INVOLVED WITH YOUR CHILDREN'S AID. GO TO USEYOURVOICE.CA



MIRA
Child Protection Worker - Foster Care

“I Am Your Children’s Aid.”



www.torontocas.org

This kind of work really gets into your blood – people here really, really care about kids and we make sure that foster families are equipped with the skills, knowledge, resources and support to meet each child's needs. Sometimes really magical things happen. I remember one foster mom had a child from birth to age two, while the mom had visitation. When the child was returned to the birth family, the mother wrapped up a framed photo of the child as a thank-you for all the work that the foster mother had done. It was a wonderful thing.

GET INVOLVED WITH YOUR CHILDREN'S AID. GO TO USEYOURVOICE.CA



SCHEVANA
Child Protection Worker -
Child and Youth Services

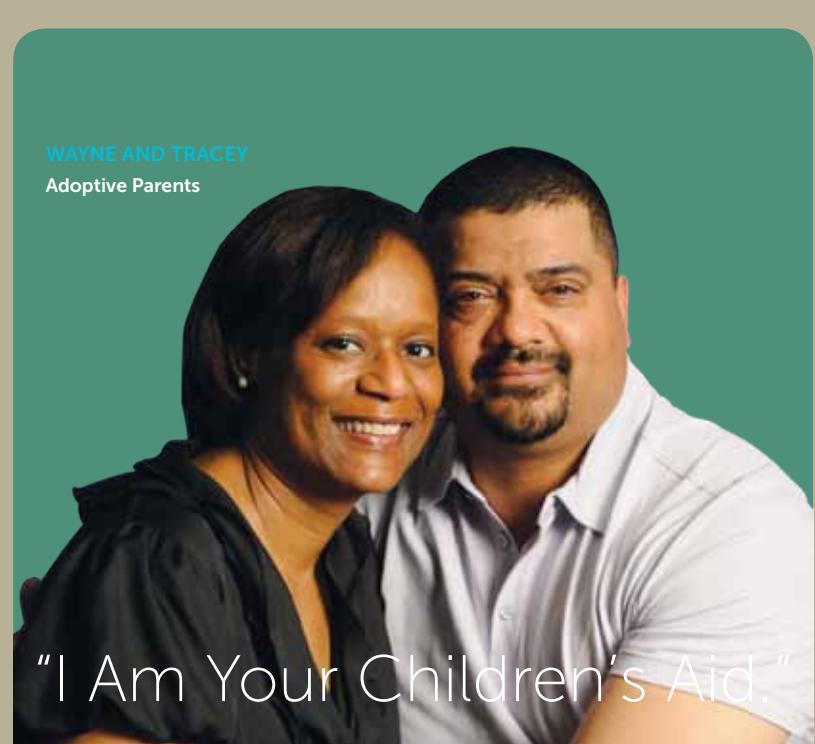
“I Am Your Children’s Aid.”



www.torontocas.org

Child protection can be tough, but it's such a rewarding job. It's amazing to play a part in helping these kids grow up, seeing where they come from and where they can go. Shaping these children's lives, and bearing witness to their strength and resilience is incredible. It's about the compassion, the love and the commitment that we feel towards these kids. I've been able to work with some amazing youth, especially female youth, and knowing everything that they have been through and that they continue to strive to achieve their goals is simply amazing.

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WAYNE AND TRACEY
Adoptive Parents

“I Am Your Children’s Aid.”



www.torontocas.org

Wayne and I tried for a long time to have a baby before we decided to adopt. We were shocked when the week our daughter, Bella, was adopted, we found out that we were pregnant – everything fell into place so nicely. Adoption is a long process and you need to be patient, but it's so worth it. Bella and her sister are the best things that have ever happened to us. Bella makes our lives so complete and I don't know what I would do without her.

GET INVOLVED WITH YOUR CHILDREN'S AID. GO TO USEYOURVOICE.CA

Family Ties: Ode to Gail

At CCAS, our dedicated Kinship Care team works tirelessly to determine if extended family (kin) or members of the child's community can provide a safe living alternative for our children and youth at risk of abuse. Kinship care is based on family attachments and if desirable, can result in the child having more frequent contact with birth parents. When the admission of a child

is likely or imminent, our Kinship Care Team puts a top priority on ensuring a safe alternate living arrangement for the child with a relative or community member. In cases where children or youth are already in our care, finding a forever home with a Kinship caregiver produces a speedier permanency solution.

A letter of appreciation written by a CCAS youth in Kinship Care

I t is through a set of arbitrary circumstances that life leaves us in the hands of our individual biological parents. Whether it be a finely designed divine plan or just pure random choice, our own 'free will' appears to have been opted out of the equation. Some of us get lucky, but that all depends on how you look at 'Lady Luck'; our circumstances are often simply a matter of perspective. However, we do tend to accept a universal truth that a desirable family is one with loving, committed biological parents who through all adversities remain a constant in a child's life. Well, in the words of Tina Turner slightly altered by Simone de Beauvoir, 'What's Biology got to do with it?'. In the book I call "My Life" I was handed what you would call a biological raw deal. Growing up in foster care and having parents who for their own reasons could not be dependable, biological nurturing just never rang true for me. It was when I was introduced to my Aunt Gail, who is married to my biological uncle, that I realized family is not in your genes but in your heart. At the age of seven after living in foster care on and off from the age of six months my aunt and uncle came to my rescue, in every sense of the word. It was after they made the substantial decision to raise a child, that was not their own, that my life would change irrevocably for the better. Gail became the mother I never had, and through her guidance I have learned some of the most essential lessons in my life.

I do not mean to sugar coat my familial existence with my aunt as one out of fairy tales. Just like most families there are arguments and disagreements, but that is truly the beauty of it. It took me a while to become accustomed to it at first, but my aunt Gail finally taught me that every good argument deserves a warm 'cuppa' tea afterwards. It may sound simple, but after years as a child feeling like any wrong move on my part would mean an imminent move to a new house, this concept was earth shattering. I could actually speak my mind, get cranky even downright obstinate and my Aunt was always there in the end; she was not leaving, even when I occasionally drove her mad. This was the beginnings of my ability to trust.

Another invaluable lesson my Aunt Gail taught me was during one of the most emotionally tumultuous times in my life; after my five year relationship ended with my ex-boyfriend. Yes, I know I am not alone in this plight. Heartache is something the whole world has experienced in one form or another, but that does not make the pain any less tangible. I felt lost, hurt, confused, undesired and my sense of trust had been fragmented. My Aunt Gail, however, was my rock. One day sitting outside on the patio after living through another one of my cry fests with me she said one thing that will affect my being till the day I die. She said 'We need you Morgan'. That's it. I stopped crying. The idea that someone needed me and did not just want me momentarily, well, that is what family is. She turned a time of loss into a time of self-discovery.

Another lesson I continue to struggle with which she leads with by example is living in the present moment. This will take a lifetime of meditative discipline for me to master, but she does it with such envy-inducing ease that I cannot help but admire her. Gail is not wrapped up in what could have been done yesterday or obsessed with what needs to be done tomorrow, she takes advantage of the time she has at hand. She just is. Whether she is cooking and decorating for a Christmas party, running around at work or simply watching her favourite television show, she is fully immersed in the moment. I want to live like my aunt. Not in the past tense, not in the future tense but instead in the present.

Sometimes she may be a little tough around the edges but she is undeniably all heart. I could quite easily list a resume full of wonderful things my Aunt Gail has done in her lifetime, but sometimes it is the simple, less obvious actions that move us most deeply. My Aunt is living, breathing proof that home is where the heart is, and mine is with her.

Celebrating Long Service and Bidding Farewell

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In November 23, 2011 we celebrated the long service of more than 100 dedicated CCAS staff and bid a fond farewell to seven of our fabulous retirees. Our staff is deeply committed to the wellbeing of our children and families. Many love the work so much they choose to stay at the agency for their entire careers. Our thanks to the delegates from the Ministry of Children and Youth Services and Members of the Board of Directors of the Quarter Century Club who also attended the event. Congratulations to all of our long service honourees. Best wishes for good health and happiness to our retirees as they pursue new personal interests and activities.



Law Clerk, Shyrose Hasham, Child Protection Manager, Nyron Sookraj and Child Protection Worker, Isi Gojani



Retiree, Cathie Robertson and Director of Finance, Administration and IT, Louis To



Associate Manager - Resource Services, Dionne Martin, Legal Assistant, Janine Smith and Manager - Information Technology, Kenneth Chan



The Human Resource Services Team



Executive Director, Mary A. McConville, Retiree, Lucia Norica and Board President, Joseph Fanutti



Executive Assistant Andrea Mills and Manager - Communications, Anne Rappé



Child Protection Worker, Vincent Taylor, Legal Counsel, Helen Murphy, Child Protection Worker, Nadia Theiner and Child and Youth Services Manager, Bernie Finnigan



Child Protection Manager, Louise Galego, Health Specialist, Jennifer Miles and Domenic Gratta, Manager - Resource Services.



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

Girls Giving Back

The Bishop Strachan School Helps our Children and Families

By Krista Lamb, Communications Specialist

If you happened to stop by The Bishop Strachan School (BSS) last December, you might have seen a group of students, parents and staff hefting boxes of gifts into a waiting cube van. The students, part of the school's Service Learning program, were participating in Holiday Love – an extension of Hope for Children's Adopt-a-Family Program, which matches our CCAS families in need with donors who provide them with Christmas gifts.

This is the fifth year that BSS has supported Hope for Children and, as always, they went above and beyond – donating gifts, wrapping presents, making cards for 27 families and youth and even helping pack the truck that came to pick everything up. And they did it all with the enthusiasm and passion for helping others that we have come to expect from BSS students.

Along with families and children, the girls at BSS adopted 12 of our youth leaving care – 18-year-olds who are transitioning from foster or group homes to living on their own. The girls were particularly touched by these stories, as ten of the youth they helped were female too. "Some girls got so into helping," says 18-year-old Carlin Domi, the Service Learning Prefect and a participant in the program. "They really connected with the youth in need. We had never met them (the youth), but we were touched by their stories and wanted to show these girls that we were there to support them."

For Charlotte Fleming, Director of Service Learning at the school, this part of the program was a remarkable learning opportunity. "We thought it would be a meaningful connection for the Grade 12 groups to support someone closer to their own age, especially since many of our students will be living away from home next year on their own for the first time (albeit a very different experience than CCAS youth). It makes it very easy for our students to relate to these individuals since they are so close in age, and although they may have very different lives, they also share many similarities. We designed a lesson based on the Child and Youth Overview and the family profile given to us to gain a better understanding of the individual and what a day in their life might look like."

As part of these lessons, the students were asked to consider what it would be like to live on the amount of money that a youth leaving care receives as support. They had to think about the challenges that that youth would face and what might be different about how they celebrate the holidays. The lessons add another layer to the student's participation in the program. "We hope that through [the Holiday Love] initiative, our girls will

develop an increased awareness about some of the issues which members of our community face, hopefully increasing their understanding of and compassion towards others. We want our girls to give without expectation, but because they want to," says Charlotte.

The desire to help and support people in need is a part of the girls' education that goes beyond book learning and which is a hallmark of working with BSS's Service Learning Students. Patricia Ward, Hope for Children's Community Development Officer, coordinates HFC's work with the schools and she loves working with BSS. "These girls are so passionate about helping others and helping the community. When we ask BSS about supporting one of our events or programs we know that they will come through and that they will do a fantastic job. We are so lucky to have them as volunteers with our agency."

BSS not only helps as part of Adopt-a-Family, but they also assist our team at the Scotiabank Toronto Waterfront Marathon (this year they hosted a water station), help out at our Foster Family Christmas party and lend a hand at other events, including the Golf Tournament and Scholarship Event.

For 17-year-old Emily Papsin, volunteering with Hope for Children has been a great experience, "I enjoy working with Hope for Children programs because of the direct impact I feel I have, and the incredible people I get to work with. What we do as volunteers is generally very hands-on, and we can see the direct result of what we're doing as we do it."

For Emily, the Adopt-a-Family program is one of the most rewarding programs the school works on. "The entire senior school is split into small groups which are responsible for the fulfillment of one family member's holiday gift wishes. Through this project, the students know that what they are giving is really going to someone in need. It's a very different feeling from the one you get while dropping donations off en masse. We are given a name, a story, and a wish list, which is far more motivating than the cardboard boxes and massive metal donation bins we see on a regular basis. HFC gives us a real



Students at Bishop Strachan School pose after helping load a truck full of gifts for the Adopt-a-Family Program

connection to the things we wish to change, and that's not something I've ever experienced with another charity."

The BSS program is an incredible model for incorporating volunteering into the school program. The program builds partnerships between young people and the broader community and allows students to learn and develop through participation in organized service experiences that meet community needs. As Charlotte explains, "Service Learning is embedded in our school culture. It is my hope that through service work our students will create positive social change in our local community and beyond and that these reciprocal connections with community organizations create awareness and an understanding that will hopefully fuel the girls to be socially informed and responsible."

For Carlin, Service Learning has been incredibly inspiring. She says that the program has helped her develop a love for helping others and she thinks that the BSS program pushes girls to excel. "BSS is amazing because you're not just one girl here – you're so many different things," she says, describing how the school encourages them to be well-rounded and to try different things – including fostering a love of volunteering and helping the community.

Hope for Children and the Catholic Children's Aid Society thank BSS for their on-going commitment to supporting our families and children and hopes that their story will inspire other schools to get involved with amazing volunteer initiatives like these.

Help Hope for Children Send Kids to Camp

Supporting a child's week-long camp stay is a small investment that can have a life-changing impact. It can provide hope, and build self-esteem. Last year, with your support 189 children enjoyed a fun-filled experience at one of Ontario's summer camps!

Our summer camp program is effective, as it is implemented along with other services CCAS delivers to high-risk families, thus amplifying its impact. Without your support, our children will not have the opportunity to experience camp. Every direct service we provide to our children impacts their quality of life and advances us in our mission.

- A \$100 donation will pay for one week of day camp.
- A \$250 donation will pay for one week of residential camp.
- A \$500 donation will pay for one week at a camp for children with special needs.

And remember, any amount helps towards the cost of sending a child to camp.

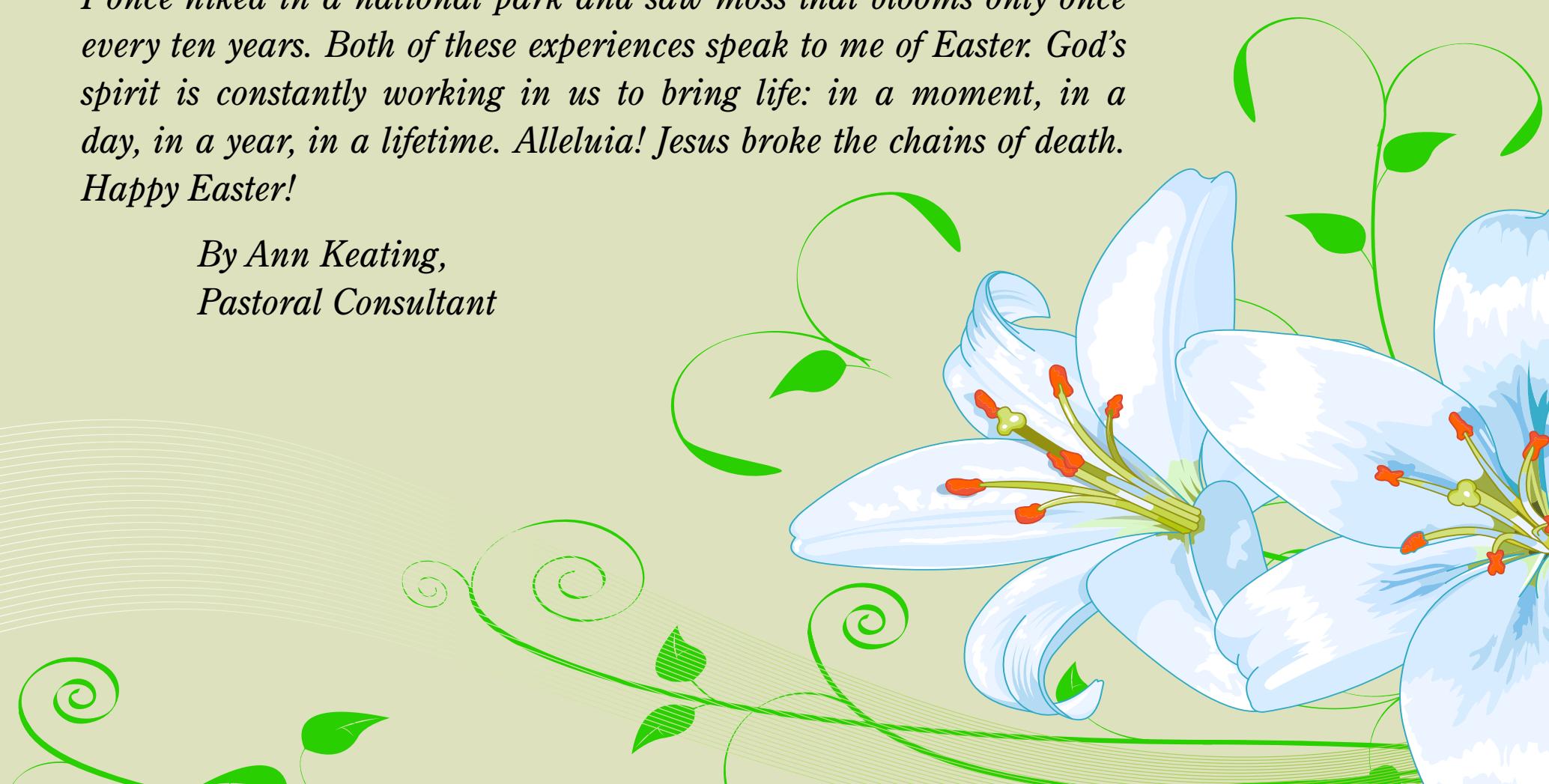
Visit www.hopeforchildren.ca to donate!



Early one morning during our vacation in Trinidad, I was sitting outside with my husband having coffee when I noticed something move in the garden. I turned to see the lovely white petals of a flower bursting open. That flower bloomed and died overnight. As a northerner, I am far more accustomed to a long, slow growing season.

I once hiked in a national park and saw moss that blooms only once every ten years. Both of these experiences speak to me of Easter. God's spirit is constantly working in us to bring life: in a moment, in a day, in a year, in a lifetime. Alleluia! Jesus broke the chains of death. Happy Easter!

*By Ann Keating,
Pastoral Consultant*



Thank you Adopt-a-Family Donors



On behalf of the Board of Directors and staff of the Catholic Children's Aid Society of Toronto and Hope for Children Fund we would like to thank everyone who supported the 2011 Adopt-a-Family Program. You have lifted the spirits of many families, youth and children, given them hope and created moments of joy and happiness. This year, our Adopt-a-Family Program served more than 1,000 families through the generosity of more than 800 donors. Since many of our donors are groups of employees, families and friends, we estimate close to 2,000 individuals supported the program.

CCAS Staff Provide Gifts of Food for Valentine's Day



A Daily Bread Food Bank Truck being loaded with CCAS staff donations outside of the Maitland Office.

CCAS Staff collected more than 1,500 pounds of food for the Daily Bread Food Bank as part of our Valentine's Day Food Drive.

The Daily Bread Food Bank supports approximately 170 member agencies by running different types of food relief programs. It serves an average of 66,000 clients per month throughout the GTA. Last year, more than 36 per cent of the food bank's clients were children.

Thank you to those of you who donated grocery items. Special thanks to the staff who assisted with the collection.