

Mira



Jennifer



Shevana



Gerald



Wayne & Tracey



“We are your Catholic Children’s Aid.”

ANNUAL REPORT 2010-2011

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Mission

The Catholic Children's Aid Society of Toronto, on behalf of the Catholic Community, is committed to providing social services that protect children and strengthen family life.

We Value

- Human dignity.
- The courage and integrity to take a stand.
- Partnership and teamwork.
- Cultural, racial and individual differences.
- Professional excellence.

CCAS would like to specially thank:

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Principles of Service

Paramount Principle

The safety, well-being and best interests of the child are paramount.

The Child and Family Services Act identifies that the paramount purpose of the Act is to promote the best interests, protection and well-being of children.

As the paramount principle, the focus on a child's safety, well-being and best interests is primary and over-arching. All of the other service principles are directed by and secondary to the paramount principle.

Secondary Principles

Engage Families

We actively engage with families in helpful, welcoming and supportive ways.

Respect

We respect human dignity and diversity.

Teamwork and Collaboration

We value and practise teamwork, collaboration and partnership.

Balanced Service Approach

We ensure that our service emphasizes child safety and well-being by utilizing a comprehensive assessment and intervention model that addresses the risk to children and acknowledges family strengths and needs.

Permanence

All children need and are entitled to enduring family and/or significant relationships, that provide a sense of stability and belonging.

Accountability through Professional Excellence

We are all responsible for performance excellence. We will measure performance, participate in research and use evidence-informed practice, provide feedback and engage in continuous reflection and learning in order to provide the best service to children and families.

Working Together For You:

Message from the President and Executive Director

Recent reforms to child welfare standards and practices have made it possible for The Society to work more closely with families in keeping their children safe. When children are admitted to care and where unification is not possible, our goal is to connect children to safe, nurturing relationships that last a lifetime.

Flowing from our legislative mandate and Ministry transformation policies, CCAS has introduced a set of service principles that define how we work together and partner with families, service providers and stakeholders in delivering services. The paramount principle of service is the safety, well-being and best interests of the child.

Another principle – that “all children need and are entitled to enduring family and/or significant relationships, that provide a sense of stability and belonging” – is also a focus of our advocacy. Many families are willing to provide permanent homes for sibling groups, older youth and children with complex life challenges. But the lack of adequate support for subsidies and services – often prevents them from making the commitment. CCAS encourages the Province to provide subsidies and access to specialized services to those families who want to adopt, provide care by relatives or gain legal custody to children with complex needs.

The service principle of accountability through professional excellence is reflected in our commitment to continuous learning and improvement and building a learning organization. A new coaching and mentoring program for our supervisors supports these objectives through quality supervision, which builds excellent service teams that strive to achieve the best possible outcomes for our children and youth.

The annual Crown Ward review, a key tool for measuring the well-being of our children and youth, revealed a steady improvement in outcomes again this year. CCAS scored nearly 10% above the provincial average overall. The Crown Ward reviewers commented on a number of service indicators where our results were well above provincial averages, including the continuity of the child’s worker and placements; meeting children’s and youth’s emotional and educational needs, along with the acknowledgement that the agency was a champion for educational support for our children. This is a testament to the commitment and caring of all our staff who work with children in care through our Protection Services, our Child and Youth Services and our Adoption Services.

Our community partners play an important role in helping us to protect children. Based on the needs of our families and youth, community organizations may provide advice and expertise at high risk planning conferences while others share information and support, consultation, treatment services and counselling. Our thanks to the many children’s mental health organizations, youth organizations, family support organizations, community centres, schools, teachers, hospitals and

doctors, as well as other professionals who work closely with us.

Funding constraints continued to be a challenge this year as the Society struggled to deliver high quality mandated child protection services while balancing operational efficiencies with improvements to services. Last year, CCAS made the difficult decision to reduce the number of direct service staff by 9.5 positions and in February the Society re-aligned its service boundaries and closed its Etobicoke Branch at Six Points Plaza, reducing our protection branch offices from four to three. As a result of these and other constraints, the Society finished the year with a balanced budget.

CCAS provided support for the Province’s Commission to Promote Sustainable Child Welfare by providing feedback on a proposed new funding model and other strategies to support the service system.

Hope for Children made the dream of a post-secondary school education a reality for 200 CCAS youth in our care, providing financial support valued at more than \$200,000. Through its Christmas and Adopt-a-Family Programs, the Foundation supported nearly 1,000 families, with the participation of more than 600 donors who supported these programs individually or with their colleagues, community groups, schools and congregations.

Thank you to our foster parents, kinship families and volunteers for partnering with us for the well-being of our children and youth. We also appreciate the support of Catholic Charities, Hope for Children donors and other individuals who participated in our special mission.

Finally, we also wish to acknowledge the energy and commitment of our volunteer members of the Board of Directors and the dedication of our staff in all that they have accomplished for the love of children.



Joseph Fanutti

The Hon. Joseph Fanutti,
Board President



Mary A. McConville

Mary A. McConville, MSW, RSW
Executive Director

“I am Schevana.”

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.

**Child Protection
Worker - Child and
Youth Services**



Show You Care, Toronto! Creating a Groundswell About Child Abuse Prevention

In a week-long campaign, thousands of Torontonians encountered scores of cuddly stuffed toys mounted on downtown light posts and benches, wearing tags beckoning them to show how much they care about child abuse prevention by texting or calling a number provided to have a toy donated to a child in need.

In mounting the Show You Care, Toronto campaign, Toronto CAS's raised awareness about the public's responsibility to report suspected and known cases of child abuse to a local CAS, and that reporting child abuse can be as simple as making a phone call.

CCAS relies on citizens to be our eyes and ears in the community to help protect children from abuse and neglect because neighbours, families and friends are often in a position to take action long before children come to the attention of a professional. Even still, too many cases of child abuse go unreported every year.

Research tells us that while 80-90% of the public believe they should report abuse, nearly half of those surveyed say they are reluctant to report suspected child abuse or neglect. Some are fearful of retribution. Others lack understanding of what constitutes abuse and, sadly, some don't know where to call. For more information on the signs of child abuse and how to report suspected abuse visit our website at www.torontoccas.org. If you suspect a child is being abused or neglected, call CCAS at 416-395-1500.

**SHOW YOU CARE,
TORONTO**



When you see me throughout the downtown, remember the abused children in our community.

**TEXT CARE to 82442 or
CALL 416-960-2327
to have a toy donated to
a child in need.**



“I am Natasha.”

I was a heavy drinker and when my son was six months old I went on a binge. I put a pot on the stove and left it. It started burning and the fire department arrived. I was reported to CCAS. At first I was really ashamed to be involved with CCAS. I tried to rebel at every single opportunity. After going to treatment I got my son back. But a month later, I started drinking and CCAS apprehended my son again. I went back to rehab twice. I was sure I would never have my son again. Then everything changed. A worker said to me, “I know your case, but you’re an awesome mother with a great bond. Don’t give up.” The worker gave me hope. I started praying, going to AA meetings and working towards getting my son back. I started to understand that CCAS had the best interest of my child in mind and wanted to work with me. All I needed was someone to believe in me – that was a miracle to me after so many times.

Streamlining our Services – New Centralized Support Teams

In January of this year, our Social Service Assistance and Parent Support Workers’ teams began a transformation that will lead to consistent support for all the children and families we work with, no matter where they live in the city.

Parent Support and Social Services Assistants will work together to incorporate our new Service Principles into the work they do. Our support workers help parents understand their children, assist children in expressing themselves, suggest ways to improve relationships, resolve conflict and help connect families within their community. Our Social Service Assistants provide a range of social service support functions. These include monitoring court ordered access visits and providing assistance to child welfare families and child in care clients that is supportive, educative, and empowering.

Changing Lives Through Immigration Support

CCAS Immigration Services was formed in February 2007 to help the high number of children and youth in care with an uncertain immigration status. The purpose of this service is to secure a positive immigration status and a safe future for these children and youth. This includes applications for citizenship or permanent residence on humanitarian and compassionate grounds.

This service is highly valued by staff and clients alike. In the past year Immigration Services has handled 158 cases. A key factor in our success can be credited to partnerships with government agencies such as the Provincial Advocacy Office, Canadian Border Agency, Citizenship and Immigration Canada and other CAS’s.

Ronal Ibarra, Child Protection and Immigration Specialist, says that he is faced with many challenges such as the slow pace of the immigration process. Other challenges include not being able to obtain original identification documents from the country of origin, the absence of parents to provide pertinent information, and delays due to legal issues. Despite these difficulties, Ronal believes that positive outcomes for our children and youth are critical to their future well-being.

“I am Mira.”

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.



**Child Protection
Worker - Foster
Care**

Supporting our Caregivers

Resource Family Support Team

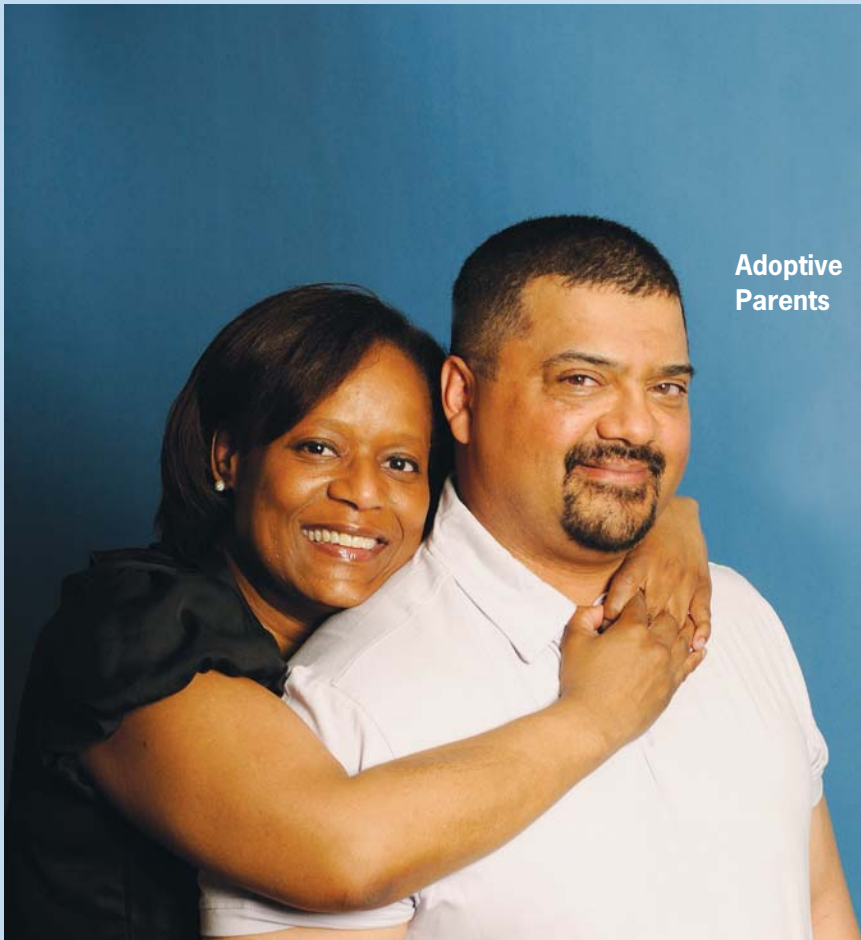
In September, 2010 the Society launched the Resource Family Support Team (RFS). This team consists of five frontline staff and one supervisor who provide services to Foster, Kin and Adoptive caregivers. Our staff introduce the program to all new foster and kin caregivers in the first month of welcoming a child into their homes. The objective is to work with the child and caregivers to provide an assessment, and to help develop skills and knowledge to reduce the chance of placement breakdowns. Future interventions may be provided and all caregivers are encouraged to contact their worker whenever they feel the need.

The RFS staff have already made recommendations for new training in areas such as, working with teens, and issues that arise when caring for sibling groups.

Better Understanding Kinship Caregivers

In 2010-2011, our Kinship Team began a partnership with Professor Jim Gladstone, Ph.D, from the School of Social Work at McMaster University. Dr. Gladstone has been doing research in the area of kinship, particularly with grandparents, for over 15 years. The purpose of this partnership is to examine CCAS’s program, then develop a best practice approach in our service and supports to children and kin caregivers. With the assistance of Dr. Gladstone, the team held focus groups and developed a survey to receive feedback from kin caregivers about their experience working with the agency.

Dr. Gladstone also presented his research findings to the Kinship Advisory Committee and our staff. The study examined the working relationship between six CASs and 119 kin caregivers (who were grandparents) over a 10 year period and the impact of the use of authority on this working relationship. CCAS will be implementing some of the subsequent suggestions made by the Advisory Committee through training with total agency staff and kin caregivers.



Adoptive
Parents

“We are Wayne and Tracey.”

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.

Creating Forever Families

At CCAS we recognize that all children need and are entitled to enduring family and/or significant relationships that provide a sense of stability and belonging.

When children are no longer able to safely live at home, and are admitted into our care, we immediately begin to plan to establish a new forever family for the child, collaborating to create a safe alternative living arrangement with a relative or community member. While some children will remain in foster care, wherever possible, we will pursue a forever family through adoption.

For many children adoption is the best way to achieve a forever family. A child who is adopted has a family for the rest of his or her life. In some situations, foster parents may adopt or become the legal guardians of a child who has been in their home, when this plan is in the child’s best interest. Recent changes to the Child and Family Services Act mean that more children are able to maintain important connections with birth relatives after adoption.

This year, CCAS adoption staff continued their campaign to increase the number of black and bi-racial adoptive applicants to meet the needs of our children and youth. They worked with staff in Child and Youth Services to identify older youth for adoption and encouraged prospective adoptive parents to consider adopting older children. Our staff is helping realize the dream of a forever family for a number of children who are on adoption placements. Thirty-three adoptions were finalized in 2010-2011.

Once a child is placed for adoption, CCAS staff will continue to work closely with new adoptive families to ensure they are successful. We offer professional support and guidance, groups and training and financial assistance for children with special needs. This year, our adoption staff improved support to adoptive families by increasing the number of training opportunities for adoptive parents and expanding the financial assistance for children who require specialized services after adoption.

“I am Jennifer.”

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.



Health Specialist

Safeguarding Health and Well-Being

Our team of health specialists provides health and safety assessments, teaching, consultation and professional nursing services to families and children being served by CCAS. The health specialists saw over 500 babies and more than 300 children during the last year, providing a range of health support.

Safe Sleep: Ensuring the Safety of the Most Precious in our Community

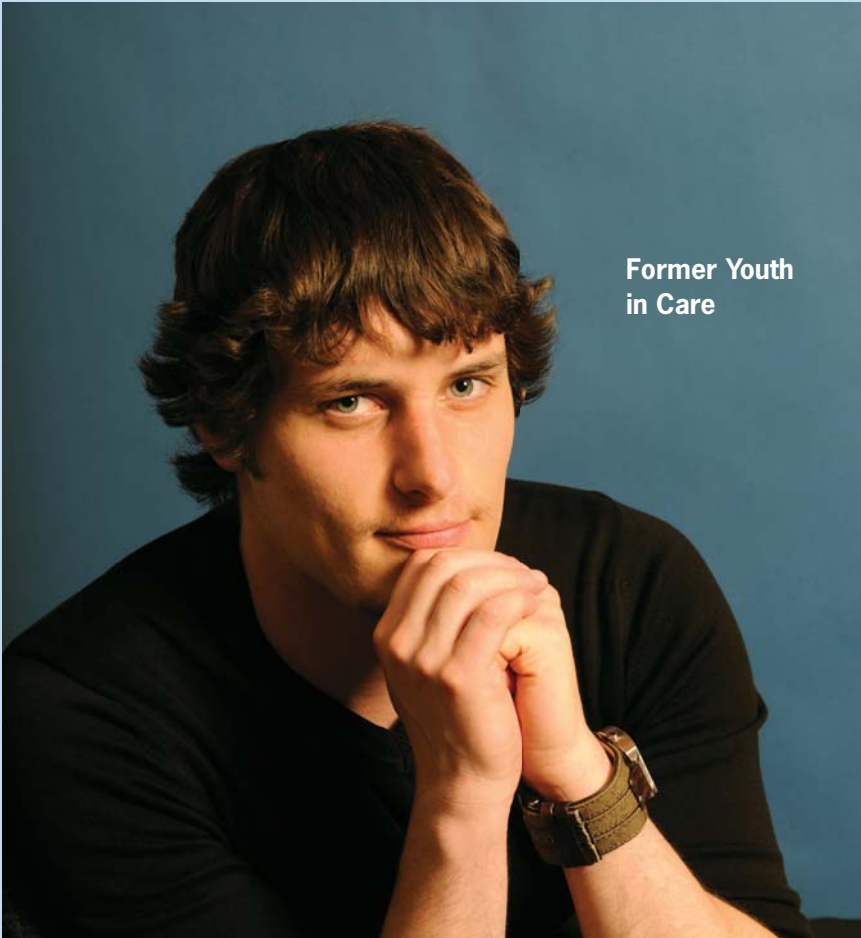
Sleep safety has always been a priority for CCAS, and with our new Sleep Safety for Infants campaign CCAS wanted to provide families, caregivers and staff with more consistent information surrounding safe sleep methods and practices.

Unsafe sleep practices have contributed to Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) and Sudden Unexpected Deaths in Infancy (SUDI). Safe sleep practices include placing an infant in a crib instead of bed-sharing, and ensuring that the crib is free of items that may create a risk of suffocation. Some of the campaign's highlights included the purchase of cribs and mattresses for some families and holding training for staff and caregivers at various branches.

Building Partnerships to Spread Awareness of FASD

Many of the children we work with at CCAS have special needs, including Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD). FASD is a term used to describe the behavioural and physical developmental effects in infants who have received prenatal exposure to alcohol. This disorder is permanent, irreversible and one hundred percent preventable. CCAS has three FASD Consultants on staff and an FASD Committee to help our workers provide the support needed to families dealing with this challenge.

Last year, FASD Consultant Erin Scilizzi, and a colleague from the Children's Aid Society of Toronto met with Ministry of Education representatives to make a presentation about how FASD impacts brain function and how we can best support students with FASD. The meeting gave CCAS the opportunity to share information with those who make decisions affecting Ontario classrooms. CCAS's FASD Committee also promoted an awareness campaign at schools across Toronto to present the facts about FASD to staff, teachers and students. The team continues to be active in education and awareness initiatives within the agency and the community.



**Former Youth
in Care**

“I am Gerald.”

I was in foster care from the time I was seven years old and I moved around a lot because of that. I dropped out of high school and spent time living on the streets. I didn't utilize the resources available to me from CCAS until I turned 22 and a post-secondary education became important to me. My worker helped me move forward with my life. She helped me develop financial and life skills, to access peer support and counselling and to build independence. She also helped me get a CCAS Hope for Children scholarship. Now I'm in my third year of university studying Diaspora Studies and Equity. I have volunteered and now work for Hope for Children – giving back is my way of saying thank you for all of the help I received from CCAS.

Supporting Programs That Help Children, Youth and Families

Scholarships Open Road for Success

The Hope for Children Scholarship Program has made a world of difference to youth like Gerald. Donor supported post-secondary scholarships valued at more \$200,000 helped more than 200 youth overcome the challenges and barriers they face as they strive toward a better future. Youth in care are less likely to pursue post-secondary education as a result of financial pressures. Under provincial legislation, youth must leave their foster or group home at the age of 18, and must move into independent living with the very limited financial support of extended care and maintainance. CCAS is advocating for the province to allow youth to stay in care until the age of 21 to ease the transition into adulthood.

Help for Families at Christmas and Year-Round

Recipient families know first-hand the relief that Hope for Children's Adopt-a-Family program can bring to their lives. Our thanks to the more than 600 donors who generously provided groceries, clothing, diapers, baby formula, toys, gift certificates and other items to nearly 1,000 families served by the Society.

Hope for Children's donor-funded emergency grants program also supported CCAS families who are struggling with poverty by assisting them with critical needs, as well as funding for educational and extra-curricular programs.

Volunteer Department

CCAS's more than 300 volunteers play a vital role in supporting our mission to provide social services that protect children and support family life. Our volunteers act as special friends and mentors for our children, drive our children to access visits, help to create lifebooks, provide respite to parents, assist in our offices and so very much more.

In 2010-2011 our Volunteer Supervisors participated in a review of the program, which will help in streamlining support to children and families to better provide services to our clients.

CCAS Service Statistics

Referral Source	Number for 10/11	% of Referrals
Police	1,347	18.2%
School/Principal/Teacher/School Social Worker	1,058	14.3%
Other CAS	1,097	14.8%
CAS Worker/Supervisor/Care Provider	444	6.0%
Social Agency	646	8.7%
Birth Parent	521	7.1%
Other	926	12.5%
Medical	309	4.2%
Anonymous	206	2.8%
Relative	194	2.6%
Legal/Court/Lawyer	171	2.3%
Neighbour/Friend	97	1.3%
Child/Self	108	1.5%
Daycare	79	1.1%
Unknown	187	2.5%
Agency Total	7390	100.00%

Children & Families Served

Total Children Served: 24,663

In Their Own Home: 23,288

In Care: 1,375

On Extended Care & Maintenance: 308

Total Days of Children in Care: 378,484

Total Families Served: 9,703

Adoption & Foster Care Services

Adoptions Completed: 33

Adoption Disclosures Completed: 163

Other Disclosure Services: 1,304

CCAS Foster Homes: 173

CCAS Group Homes: 11

Investigations

Non-Protection Investigations: 9,838

Protection Investigations: 13,450

CCAS Financial Statement*

(in thousands of dollars)

Revenue	Year Ended March 31, 2011	Year Ended March 31, 2010
Province of Ontario	\$99,177	\$98,555
Government of Canada	2,636	2,661
Hope for Children Foundation	303	411
Other	2,040	1,077
Total	104,156	\$102,704
Child and Family Services		
Boarding Rate Payments	\$38,805	\$37,866
Salaries and Benefits	43,541	43,231
Travel	2,812	2,767
Children's Personal Needs	2,835	2,242
Health and Related Services	1,119	1,217
Purchased Services	751	648
Financial Assistance and Special Programs	648	629
Total	\$90,511	\$88,600
Administrative Expenses		
Salaries and Benefits	\$6,637	\$6,706
Building Occupancy	3,188	3,656
Office Administration and other	2,116	2,024
Technology and Purchased Goods and Services	1,493	1,558
Training and Recruitment	231	206
Total	\$13,665	\$14,150
Total Costs	\$104,176	\$102,750
Deficiency of revenue over expenses for the year	(20)	(46)
Accumulated deficit, beginning of year	(524)	(826)
Funding for prior year deficit	-	348
Accumulated deficit, end of year	(544)	(524)

* This is a condensed statement. Full financial statements, audited by Ernst and Young LLP, are available from the Society upon request.

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MISSION

Hope for Children raises funds to support programs that strive to create strong and healthy futures for children, youth and families served by the Catholic Children's Aid Society of Toronto.

Hope for Children provides funding for:

- » Enhancing children's lives through funding summer camp, sports and arts
- » Emergency assistance to families in crisis
- » Christmas Adopt-a-Family
- » Education advocacy and counselling to school-aged children and youth
- » Post-secondary scholarships
- » Special recognition for academic achievement
- » Sacramental preparation and spiritual development
- » Job training, employment support, and housing solutions for youth leaving foster care to independent living

Get involved

Find out how your participation benefits
our children and youth

Donate on-line

Get your tax receipt instantly through our quick,
secure and easy online tools

www.hopeforchildren.ca

Catholic Children's Aid Society of Toronto Head Office

Communications Department

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Foster Care, Adoption & Kinship Services

Child & Youth Services

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Child Protection Services - South

Intake Services

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