

NEWS RELEASE and MEDIA INVITATION

October 29th, 2021

Every Child and Youth Deserves Permanency and Lifelong Connections

Adoption Awareness Month takes place in November and is an opportunity for Children's Aid Societies to work towards increasing public awareness about the role they can play in helping young people achieve permanency through adoption. We believe every child deserves to experience permanency and lifelong connections.

Adoption is one of a number of permanency options that Children's Aid Societies consider when looking for life-long connections for children in care. Kinship service, kinship care, customary care, legal custody, and adoption are all options that are considered when making decisions about what is the best placement for a child or youth.

Every child deserves to be with their family of origin. Keeping children with their families, in their culture and in their communities is our priority. However, we also realize that that's not always possible. When it is not, the child deserves a family that is a good fit for them.

Finding the right adoption match for children and youth who have come through a Children's Aid Society requires finding adoptive parents who share the diverse cultural and religious backgrounds of our children and youth and finding families that also have the strengths and skills to deal with children who may have complex needs, siblings and open adoption relationships with their family of origin. It continues to be challenging to find families who are ready, willing and able to meet the needs of older children, large sibling groups or those with complex medical, developmental and behavioral needs. Sometimes the search for the right match for a child can take time.

Last year, the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS) announced the [government's strategy to redesign the child welfare system](#) by focusing directly on the needs of children and youth and by creating solid foundations to support strong families. The redesigned system will support the development of lifelong connections and supports for children and youth through stable, permanent homes wherever possible in family-based placements such as customary care, kinship service, kinship care and adoption. "Strengthening the public adoption system means connecting more families and children together and providing equitable supports to those families when they need it", says Karen Kartusch, Manager of the Regional Adoption Program for Highland Shores Children's Aid, Kawartha-Haliburton Children's Aid Society and Durham CAS.

"All children have the right to be part of a permanent, loving family. The benefits of maintaining lasting family connections are numerous and all young people, including those in care, need to benefit from them. A strong public adoption system is essential to ensure that our children and youth have the opportunity to find a forever family. These changes will offer a more consistent and responsive adoption experience for children, youth and families", says Kartusch.

"Much of the child welfare redesign of adoption work is well underway. This work will bring new standards of practice to adoption work across the province and will aim to provide more clarity about available children and clarity about the adoption process for families considering adoption. In the end, the goal is to find the right families for children and connect them as quickly as possible", says Kartusch.

The number of children and youth in extended society care and available to be adopted has decreased over the last five years because the primary goal of children's aid societies is focused on supporting children to live safely in their own homes. "This is a good news story for our children and youth" says Kartusch. "This means that fewer children are coming into our care in the first place and for those that cannot return home to their family of origin, we are able to find permanent lifetime connections out of foster care for these children and youth to flourish".

If you are interested in learning if adoption is right for you, contact Highland Shores Children's Aid, www.highlandshorescas.com, Kawartha-Haliburton Children's Aid Society, www.khcas.on.ca or Durham Children's Aid Society, www.durhamcas.ca. Families can also learn more about adoption on the Adoption Council of Ontario website, www.adoption.on.ca.

-30-

Media: For additional information, contact Colleen Thompson, Executive Assistant - Highland Shores CAS
T (613) 962-9291 or (800) 267-0570 ext. 2336, Colleen.Thompson@HighlandShoresCAS.com, or

Jai Sahak, Director of Communications - Durham CAS
T (905) 433-1551 ext. 2264, jai.sahak@durhamcas.ca, or

Amy O'Connell, Executive Assistant – Kawartha-Haliburton Children's Aid Society
T (705) 743-9751 or (800) 661-2843 ext. 1341, amy.oconnell@khcas.on.ca