

Message From the President

We know that the early years of our lives are vital to our future well-being. How we care for children has a lasting impact on how productive, resilient, compassionate and confident they will be as adults. The Hope for Children Foundation works with the Catholic Children's Aid Society to provide programs and services that protect children and enrich their lives. By committing ourselves to serving those less fortunate, we're investing in the sound development of children and youth, helping them build prosperous futures.

Over the past year, the Foundation continued to build its fundraising capacity by reorganizing its staff and recruiting skilled professionals to assist the Board of Directors in its development efforts. The Foundation also focused on increasing its endowment funds and introduced an investment strategy to better preserve its assets. Other initiatives included re-launching a fund-raising campaign involving Toronto's Catholic Schools, increasing the quality and frequency of donor communication and actively involving the youth we serve in volunteer opportunities with the Foundation.

As a result, in 2005, the Foundation provided an additional \$305,000 to the Catholic Children's Aid Society and invested an additional \$122,716 in the Hope for Children Foundation Scholarship Program. This was made possible through the generous support of funders, donors and community partners.

In 2005, the Hope For Children Foundation directly supported:

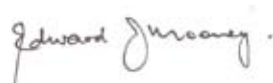
- 128 families through Emergency and Enhancement grants

- 36 children through Sacramental Preparation & Spiritual Development grants
- 100 children attended summer camp
- 440 families benefited from the Adopt-a-Family program
- 400 families received Christmas food vouchers
- 68 youth received post-secondary scholarship grants
- More than 400 youth who transitioned from foster care to independent living received financial support.

Raising funds is never easy but when you see the joy on children's faces and hear their stories of success, you can't help but become involved in enriching their lives. During the past year, I had an opportunity to share in the success of one of our scholarship recipients who has now graduated and is working full-time. Edel was abused prior to coming into the care of CCAS and felt that everything, including her self-confidence had been taken away. Thanks to the support of the Society and a scholarship grant from the Foundation, Edel is now a self-confident young woman who is embarking on a new career and a bright future.

There are no simple solutions to the systemic issues of poverty, violence, homelessness, substance abuse and mental illness, however through the continued support of so many committed donors, volunteers and staff, we are having an important positive influence on the lives of children. On their behalf, thank you.

Sincerely,



Edward J. Mooney, President

Our Mission

Our mission at the Hope for Children Foundation is to reach out to our community in the spirit of giving and of hope.

We will help create public awareness of our children's needs, and help our families overcome the hurtful cycle of poverty and abuse, so that they can realize a strong and healthy future for themselves and their children.



Our Programs

Education Advocacy on Behalf of Children and Youth in Care

The Hope for Children Foundation recognizes the unique educational challenges faced by children in care. Many of them attend special classes because of behavioral or learning problems, and face suspensions or expulsion if they continue to act out their frustrations. Children in care are often transferred from one foster home to another, with each change in schools resulting in significant educational delays. Statistics show that at age ten, 8% of children in care fall below their grade level. At age 18, the failure rate could be as high as 86%. The majority of social workers and foster parents, though concerned and caring, have not been trained to work with teachers and schools to achieve the best educational results. Teachers often lack the training to develop effective classroom strategies for children in care. Such negative experiences can lead children and youth in care to drop out of school, perpetuating a cycle of under-employment and poverty.

The Foundation underwrites CCAS' education advocacy program to support

children in care and assist caregivers and teachers in meeting these children's educational needs. The Society's highly trained education advocate mediates directly with school boards and teachers, develops policy, counsels students, and provides training and support so that caregivers work collaboratively with local schools to ensure the needs of their foster children are better understood. Last year, more than 600 students received guidance and counseling under the education advocate program.

With tangible outcomes, we are seeing the difference education advocacy is making. Youth in care are setting educational goals and achieving them. The number of Crown Wards who have attended college or university and received scholarship support from the Hope for Children Foundation has more than doubled in the last two years from 31 recipients in 2003-04 to 68 in 2005-06.

"I encourage the kids who live with us to go to college or university. Education is really important, but these kids need a little extra help. You don't want them to get discouraged -- these kids are our future. By helping them to get an education, we're giving them the tools to become contributing adults."

Rosa, a foster parent for 27 years



Pape Adolescent Resource Centre (PARC)

In Ontario, children who are admitted into foster care can remain in care until age 18. On their 18th birthday, unless they have a disability, they are no longer eligible to remain in a foster home and have to move out. Though most bear the scars of physical and emotional trauma, these youth are expected to function independently with little financial, family, or social support.

A recently published briefing paper prepared for the Modernizing Income Security for Working Age Adults (MISWAA) Project on youth leaving care and authored by Anne Tweddle, reveals that "once on their own, they [youth leaving care] are at much greater risk of becoming homeless, engaging in substance abuse, becoming single parents, relying on social assistance, and coming into contact with the criminal justice system." The same paper includes statistics from Canadian sources (2002) indicating 45% of homeless youth had been in care.

In light of such challenges, the Foundation provides funding to PARC whose mission is to help youth who have been in care to accept their life experiences, draw strength and wisdom from them, and use that understanding to create a plan for themselves that offers hope for a better life. A joint project of the Children's Aid Society of Toronto (CAST), the Catholic Children's Aid Society (CCAS) and the Jewish Family and Children's Services (JF&CS), annually, PARC offers a supportive environment to more than 400 former Crown Wards between the ages of 14 and 24, who are making the transition to independent living. PARC provides young people with a sense of community and belonging that is stable and long term – a place where they are welcomed, valued and supported to do their best.

Youth receive one-on-one counseling including therapy and clinical consultations with professionals who partner

with PARC—many on a volunteer basis. PARC partners with other community agencies to provide permanent housing solutions to youth. Older PARC youth provide leadership in employment counseling and skills development workshops and employment support in partnership with community youth employment centres. Through its Ambassador School program, PARC helps youth re-enter the secondary school system to finish high school. PARC partners with the Learning Disabilities Research Department of the Hospital for Sick Children for literacy training to youth. Other partnerships with York University and the University of Toronto encourage PARC youth to consider post-secondary studies.

PARC is an innovative program, and has received Canadian and international awards for its unique model of engaging disenfranchised youth and turning their lives around.

Scholarship Awards

Our youth struggle to fit into an educational system that often fails to respond to their special needs. And when they succeed against these odds, they often encounter major financial barriers to post-secondary education—a virtual necessity in today's knowledge-based economy.

Through its Scholarship Program, the Hope for Children Foundation provides wards of CCAS with financial assistance for post-secondary education or job training. The Foundation places a high priority on building relationships with scholarship donors to ensure bursary support for virtually every CCAS ward that is accepted into, and committed to attending college or university. We are

proud to report that the retention rate of CCAS youth in care has been rising steadily during the past several years.

Successful graduates serve as role models to other youth in care, providing both hope and encouragement. The demand for scholarship support has been steadily growing. In 2003, the Foundation disbursed 31 scholarships, more than doubling that number in 2005-06 with 68 scholarships provided. We believe there will continue to be a high demand for scholarships over the next 3-5 years, given that 64% of CCAS Crown Wards are between the ages of 13-17.

Chetwynd

The Chetwynd Community Development Program is a three-year program for people living in Toronto Community Housing neighbourhoods. The initiative began in 1990 and has completed work in six communities: Blake Boulton, Mornelle Court, Alexandra Park Thistleton I & II, Falstaff and Swansea Mews.

Chetwynd is a unique and effective program that works to improve the lives of families in some of the most vulnerable communities in Toronto. By providing holistic support to strengthen relationships among residents, and between residents and local organizations, the program helps residents build skills, capacity, infrastructure and community programs. Under the Chetwynd philosophy, in order for healthy families to provide warm, secure and nurturing care for children, they must first have a healthy community environment. Stronger communities are built through the development of the assets of community members.

Currently, the Foundation is funding the Chetwynd program in the Willowtree community in North York. Willowtree consists of 198 subsidized townhouse and apartment units, home to 614 tenants. It is a multicultural and multiracial neighbourhood in which nine languages are spoken.

Willowtree residents and staff from community agencies invited the Chetwynd to initiate a three-year community development program to address neighbourhood issues and challenges such as community safety, lack of programs for youth and seniors, unemployment, and support for single parent families. The goal of the Chetwynd Program is to assist Willowtree community residents in accomplishing the following:

- Fostering a stronger sense of community
- Improved tenant integration
- A reduction in drug use and vandalism
- Involving youth in building a healthier community
- Identifying new concerns.



Emergency and Enhancement Grants

Instead of affluence and luxury, many of our clients experience grinding poverty. Instead of prosperous, happy families, their families are beset by sexual and domestic abuse, violence, loss, and depression. Instead of children starting life with limitless potential, they see children already repeating dangerous patterns.

The Catholic Children's Aid Society serves nearly 20,000 children and youth annually, representing more than 7,000 families with multi-ethnic and cultural backgrounds. The major languages spoken are English, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, French, Polish, Vietnamese, Tagalog and others.

The majority of CCAS clients are the working poor or unemployed with 80% earning less than \$16,000 a year. A single parent heads most of these families. Nearly 70% of CCAS clients do not have a high school diploma, with 34% not having finished grade 8. Most families are unable to meet basic needs, let alone special needs, such as unusual medical bills, dental care, or providing organized activities for their children.

The Hope For Children Foundation's Emergency and Enhancement Grants program attempts to meet urgent needs and pay for extras that most families take for granted. At the right moment in time, a small grant can turn a life around, stop a downward spiral, give hope, and build self-esteem.

