

## Thanks (continued)

situations where abuse or neglect is suspected is one many residents of Ontario struggle with. A recent survey commissioned by the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies (OACAS) found that 85% of Ontarians would report child abuse if they were certain it had occurred.

Alarming, only 46% of Ontario respondents indicated they would report *suspected* signs of child abuse. These disappointing results indicate that there is still much to be done to raise the public's consciousness of the seriousness of child abuse.

Starting this October, Children's Aid Societies across Ontario will launch a new public awareness campaign aptly named *Use Your Voice*. The goal of the campaign is to inform citizens of their responsibility to report both

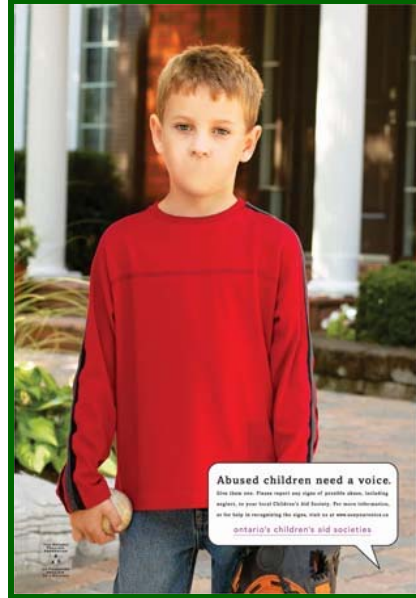
known *and* suspected signs of child abuse, including neglect. The campaign will mark the start of October's *Child Abuse Prevention Month*.

"Each of us has a responsibility to ensure that our children and youth are safe and secure," says Executive Director Peter Ringrose. "Abused children are often silent, powerless victims. We hope that by providing information we can help break down the barriers that are preventing people from coming forward while children needlessly suffer."

The *Use Your Voice* campaign has special significance for survivors of child abuse like Debbie. "If I could say one thing to a person who thinks a kid is being abused," advises Debbie, "I would say: report it. No matter if you are sure, or not. Better to report it and nothing happen, than not report it and risk

what *could* happen."

Today Debbie is married, attends post secondary education classes and works part-time. She is optimistic



about her future and credits this to the involvement of Family & Children's Services and her uncle's bravery.

"When my uncle reported the abuse, I really felt like I meant something. It meant a lot that someone stuck out their neck for me...that someone cared about me...that someone wanted me to be safe. I know it was hard for him but I am so grateful to him for giving me my life back."

"Ultimately, children will have more self-respect when they know that the people around them – their family, friends, and community – are willing to defend and protect them," adds Ringrose.

We can all help by being a voice for children who need us; children like Debbie.

For more information on the signs and indicators of physical, sexual, and emotional abuse including neglect visit [www.useyourvoice.ca](http://www.useyourvoice.ca).

### Our Mission...

*Finding the way forward with our community to protect children, to support all children and strengthen families, and to develop a caring environment for children.*

family & children's services  
of the waterloo region  
**FOUNDATION**  
established 1991

[www.facswaterloo.org](http://www.facswaterloo.org)

Voice of Hope is published twice a year by Family & Children's Service of the Waterloo Region Foundation. We welcome your letters, ideas and contributions. Please contact: Tracy Glidden at 576-1329 ext. 3943

If you wish to be removed from our mailing list please contact the above number.



# VOICE OF HOPE

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## Youth thanks uncle for saving her from abuse

"I didn't know that what was happening to me wasn't normal," says Debbie R., now 20 years old. "I thought all kids were going through what I was because when I told people what was happening, nobody did anything, so I thought it must be okay."

But what was happening to little Debbie was not okay.

From the time her parents brought Debbie home from the hospital, she suffered severe neglect as a result of her parents' alcoholism. Although she wasn't even old enough to attend school, Debbie's parents left her alone overnight. There was never enough food at home so when Debbie started to attend functions at other peoples' homes, and later at school, she began stealing food. As she got older, her parents' drinking binges manifested into violent rages. Debbie shamefully wore the bruises, telltale signs of the

physical violence she endured.

Debbie's uncle suspected something wasn't right when her mother would show up at family functions with dirty, ill-fitting clothing, and sometimes spoke about excessive physical punishments. Afraid of getting his brother in trouble, he, like the rest of the family, remained silent. It wasn't until a neighbor called to say Debbie's parents were fighting again and that they feared for six-year-old Debbie's safety that he decided to take action.

That evening, Debbie was brought to her uncle's home. When Debbie's aunt saw the bruising on her niece's frail body, she insisted Debbie stay with them. This time when Debbie spoke, they listened—closely.

After Debbie spent a week living in the safety of her aunt and



**"Only 46% of Ontarians say they would report suspected signs of child abuse."**

uncle's home, her father was scheduled to be released from jail and insisted Debbie come home. Without any other way to protect the little girl, her guardians knew they would have to contact Family & Children's Services. Debbie's uncle struggled with the knowledge that the family would not support his decision, but his wife was firm—Debbie needed help. She needed someone to care enough to *be her voice*.

The decision to contact Family & Children's Services in



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## THANK YOU

to Walker Exhaust, Sobey's, and Blair Road Public School for hosting book drives to support reading programs for our children.

special incentives used to celebrate his accomplishments like a McDonalds fry coupon or a toy car—Jamie has discovered a whole new world inside of books. He now selects books he is interested in and reads them on his own time. Jamie's foster parents have noticed a positive change in his attitude at home and towards his schoolwork in general. And they are looking forward to celebrating his next report card with him!

Without caring donors and corporate giving programs, this program would not be the success it is today. The incentives used as motivators for all the children registered in the program have helped three children achieve the highest level, "Reader for Life". **Way to go readers!**

Special thanks to:



## Reading Program Update

Due to the challenges they have already faced in their young lives, many children in foster care will receive some form of educational support through the F&CS Planned Support Program. This very special programming is run out of our little McQuarrie Public School building. One program close to the hearts of the staff at the school is the new Reading Incentive Program. Already this year, 55 children and youth enrolled—taking their first step in their journey towards life-long learning.

Liz Hedley, Foster Home Support Co-ord., beams when she tells Jamie's\* story. Reluctant to read and doing poorly academically, Jamie was enrolled in the program by his Planned Support Worker. With the assistance and gentle encouragement of his one-on-one worker—and

\* Name has been changed to protect confidentiality.

## SERVING HER COMMUNITY - Volunteer Profile

A core value of the Sobeys' chain of grocers is to *proudly serve their community* and Sue Manning, their Customer Experience Manager, is a shining example of this.

Sue has been a part of the Sobeys' team for 29 years—since the days of Dutch Boy. She is charged with the responsibility of organizing their community relations' efforts. As such, Sue organizes and motivates Sobeys team members to help improve the community they live and work in through fundraising initiatives, book and food drives, and volunteer opportunities. One of these activities is the annual **Deck the Walls activity** run in conjunction with the **CHYM FM Tree of Hope Campaign**.

Through **Deck the Walls**, the Sobeys' chain of stores (Commissos, Foodland, IGA, and Price Choppers) offer their customers a chance to help children at risk of harm by purchasing a festive paper tree created by local artist Sue Wicks, for only a tooney.

"There is a friendly competition created among staff," says Sue about the campaign.

"It's fun, and the staff feel good about making a difference in the lives of abused and neglected children."

Participating stores display the paper trees in their own way; one location filled a large wall with the trees, other stores created snowflakes, trees and stars. In 2004, these tooneys totalled over \$14,000!

"I am proud to be working for a company who values their community and provides opportunities for staff to make a real difference. More importantly, I am glad to have a chance to help children just be kids," says Sue.

Sue was recognized for her efforts at the **2005 Breakfast of Champions**. 🌈



## REACHING THEIR FULL POTENTIAL

Amy M. and Doug B., (seen here with former President, Virginia Mawer, and Foundation President, Rick Purdy) just two of the 15 youth who received scholarships for post-secondary education this past June. This is the second year Doug has received the Joseph B. LeClerc Memorial Scholarship. **Congratulations to all our youth!**

## CAN A WRISTBAND GIVE A CHILD A VOICE?

**No. But you can.**

By reporting suspected child abuse to your local F&CS or by purchasing a **Use Your Voice** wrist band.

Bands are available by calling 576-1329 x 3943 or visiting your local RONA store. Proceeds will benefit children at risk of harm. **Together we can give children a voice.**



Thanks to **Dawn Gibbons** (seen here with Smile Committee members, Tracy Glidden and Kendra Bender) winner of the Hamburger Helper Award. Dawn chose to designate her prize of \$500 to the **Smile Maker Fund**.



"When you're sad you think a lot", says this year recipient, Nick, "I express my feelings on paper with words and it makes people happy. This award helped me to do this."

Other plaques unveiled were: *the CitiFinancial Scholarship, Fostering Futures, Grand River Rotary Scholarship, Hope Scholarship, Joseph B. LeClerc Memorial Scholarship, and Kitchener-Westmount Rotary Scholarship.* 🌈

## Better Futures Memorial Plaque Unveiling Ceremony

Family & Children's Services Foundation unveiled the Better Futures Memorial Endowment Fund Plaque to mark the opening of the **Family & Children's Services Award and Scholarship - Wall of Honour** on Friday, August 26.

The Better Futures award was created in 2002 to allow children in the care of the Agency to enhance their skills and talents in areas of culture, the arts, and sports. The Fund was created in memory of three young women, Katinka Heine, Cornelia Rauter, and Martina Van Katwijk, who died as result of a tragic traffic accident in 1985.

Since it's creation, four youth in care of Family & Children's Services have benefited from this very special award

through opportunities to: travel to Scotland to perform with the Cambridge Girls' Choir, cultivate extraordinary talent in the area of acting, and to secure studio time to record songs based on one youth's misfortunes in childhood.

Special guests at the ceremony were Myra and Peter Van Katwijk (parents of Martina) and Karla and Ernst Rauter (parents of Cornelia). The Heine family moved back to Germany, but is making an additional donation of \$10,000 to the Fund.

All four Better Futures award recipients, Nick, Chante, Julyn, and Jennifer, were on hand to say thanks.

## Thank You! Thank You! THANK YOU!

Thanks to the **Wyss family** for their donation from their annual Easter Egg Hunt.

Many thanks to **Caroline Wilcox and her sons**, for collecting new toys on our behalf in lieu of birthday gifts.

Thanks to **Straight Street Events Services** for donating part of the entry fee to our **Education Fund** from their first annual Education Options held at Bingemans.

Thank you to **City of Kitchener** for hosting **Tooney Tuesday's** in July. This fun filled family event raised over \$2,000 in 2005!

Thank you to **The Natural Food Market** for hosting a vegetarian bbq with proceeds coming to the Foundation.

Thank you to all the businesses who gave to the **Foster Parent Picnic** (June) and the **Recognition Dinner**.

A big thanks goes out to **Ballet Jorgan** for donating 80 tickets for families to attend Cinderella at Centre in the Square.

A delicious thank you goes out to the **Waterloo Bulk Barn** for donating Hershey Kisses for our Smile-a-Gram Campaign. Through this generous donation F&CS staff raised over \$600 for the **Smile Maker Fund**.

Thanks to **Trillium Printing** for 10,000 book marks featuring positive messages which will be distributed to children across the region.

Thank you to those who donated in honour of **Kalem's** adoption, **Doris Huber's** 95<sup>th</sup> birthday, and **Sandy Moshenko's** retirement. Also, in memory of **Alfred Crichton**, and **Geroge Abwunza**. 🌈

## 2nd Annual Couch & Company Golf Tournament for Kids



It was the 90 enthusiastic golfers who showed up to play despite the rain, who made this year's **Couch & Company Golf Tournament for Kids** a success. When the game was called due to lightening, players quickly moved into the club house to enjoy the company of the their team-mates over cards and a drink (or two). It was still a full house by the time dinner was served and

everyone walked away with a prize. We would like to express our appreciation to everyone for making the best of a wet situation!

Thank you to Pizza Pizza for preparing such a terrific lunch. Thank you to all the prize donors—too many to list. And special thanks to Ted Couch, Couch & Company Electrical Design & Build, and all the golfers for making this year's event so much fun, and for helping to make the days a little brighter for vulnerable children in our community.

To view event photos, visit [www.couchandcompany.athletesvideo.com](http://www.couchandcompany.athletesvideo.com). 🌈



## Spring 2005 Foundation Grants

Provided necessary resources for families to participate in community-based parenting and children's groups.

Provided monthly bus passes to those families who are truly committed to making positive changes in their lives, but are hindered due to transportation challenges.

Made it possible to hire a co-facilitator to lead a group for couples who have been involved with either Family & Children's Services and/or the John Howard Society due to issues of domestic violence.

Provided a summer camp experience for as many children and youth in the care of the Agency as possible.

Cambridge children—living with their parents—were able to attend summer camp.

Provided food vouchers to families with low income and to provided bus tickets to adults and children to ensure that they are able to attend appointments.

Provided students of the Bridges School Program with holistic and therapeutic based activities that can be used as incentives, rewards and recreation options throughout the program.

Furthered the design, development and implementation of a kinship care program within the agency.

Provided resources for the foster families' picnic held in June 2005.

## GIVE A GIFT THIS CHRISTMAS THAT KEEPS ON GIVING

Holiday shopping at the Cambridge Mall? Have your gifts expertly wrapped by a Foster Family Association volunteer. All proceeds will go to support the **Fostering Futures Scholarship**.



## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

Volunteers are needed to gift-wrap at the Cambridge Mall. Gift wrapping skills helpful! Three shifts available. December 1 to 24. Call Shore at 620-3051 or [alpotma@canada.com](mailto:alpotma@canada.com)