



Media Release

June 26, 2008

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HCAS Board of Directors' 101st Annual General Meeting: a recap of the past year and a glance into the future...

Hastings Children's Aid Societies' Board of Directors marked 101 years of service to the children and families of Hastings County at its Annual General Meeting (AGM) Tuesday, June 25, at the Fairfield Inn, Belleville.

Candice Pilgrim, a former youth in care of the Hastings CAS, was the guest speaker for the evening. Ms. Pilgrim, who has a joint Honours Degree in Criminology and Women's Studies from the University of Ottawa and plans to enter law school this fall, spoke on "Support and Access: An Educational Journey," focusing on the educational aspect of her time in care.

In his introduction of Candice, Len Kennedy, HCAS Executive Director spoke very highly of the young woman and her many achievements.

"Candice has achieved tremendous success and her accomplishments are truly phenomenal, however, even more amazing is who Candice is. She is kind, compassionate, caring, thoughtful and generous. She possesses a positive outlook and is always optimistic about the future. She believes very strongly in ensuring equality for all and utilizes every opportunity to express this through words and actions. Candice exhibits incredible drive and motivation and is energetic, focused and determined. Candice is a leader."

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In her remarks, Ms. Pilgrim thanked the Society and her foster parents for their tremendous encouragement and financial support in helping her realize her educational goals and stressed the importance of encouraging all youth in care to reach their full potential through post-secondary education and affording them the financial resources to make further education possible.

Other highlights of the evening included the presentation of a 2008 Clark Grant Award to Kattie Hill; the Dr. Clare Brant Award to Ryan Hennessey; Wilma McKnight Scholarships to Ryan Coull, Crystal Matheson and Mitch Mitchell; and the Evelyn Payton Memorial Achievement Award to Kristy Boomhower.

In his report, HCAS Executive Director Len Kennedy commented on the construction project the Society is now undergoing to link 363 and 375 Dundas Street West in Belleville into a single complex.

"The building is quickly taking shape and completion is hoped for by December," said Kennedy. "It is designed to accommodate children and families more comfortably and in greater numbers, with four family visiting suites to create home like environments where children and families can meet for visits."

Also in his report, Kennedy extended the Society's deep appreciation to its Board of Directors for their unwavering commitment in overseeing the governance of the Society including, Reverend Doctor William Smith, Rick Helman and Peter Knudsen (Quinte Children's Foundation), new Directors, who joined the HCAS Board in June 2007. Leaving the Society's Board at the end of their terms are Scott Chamberlain, Treasurer, Kim Egan and Jeanne Hebert, representative of the Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory.

As well as reflecting on the many achievements of the past year, the evening also outlined a vision for the future as the HCAS Board of Directors released the Society's Strategic Plan for 2008-2012 entitled ***Strong Families, Safe Children***.