



Media Release

February 9, 2010

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Lynda and Al Norman are your Children's Aid...

Lynda remembers that both she and her husband, Al, were sobbing as they watched their infant foster daughter being wheeled away to have open heart by-pass surgery.

"This beautiful baby girl had come into our family just a few weeks before as a newborn and when we found out how seriously ill she was we were devastated. There were times we weren't sure she was going to make it. For four months we stayed at her side in hospital while she struggled to recover her health until, finally, we were able to bring her home with us – healthy, happy and very much loved

On Monday, February 15 - *Family Day* - Len Kennedy, Executive Director of Hastings Children's Aid Society, asks everyone to make children and families, particularly children and youth in need of a family, a priority in their thoughts and actions.

"Family Day is a celebration of families – all types of families – and it's a good time to bring to light the need for more foster families for children and youth in care of Hastings Children's Aid Society," said Kennedy. "Foster families are generous and giving members of our communities who step in to bridge the gap for children so they can stay in a family-based environment."

Kennedy explained that children come into foster care for protection from abuse or neglect. "Most often, they have been hurt by abuse, violence or neglect and need a stable, loving home and a caring family," he said. "Each child is unique. There is no such thing as a typical foster child."

Foster children range in age from infancy to 18 years of age and come from diverse cultural, religious and family backgrounds. Many are teenagers; some are brothers and sisters; and some have physical, emotional and mental challenges. Kennedy said that whatever their individual circumstance, each foster child is going through a troubled period in his or her family and needs the care offered by foster parents.

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Foster parents work closely with Hastings Children's Aid to provide temporary care to children for a few days, weeks, months or possibly years. They also prepare children for reunification with their biological families, adoption or long-term foster care. Hastings Children's Aid provides training and education, as well as ongoing assistance and financial supports, to foster families to aid them in caring for children and youth.

"One thing all our foster families share is a genuine interest in children and a sense of community responsibility," said Kennedy. "We're very fortunate to have over 220 wonderful foster homes currently in Hastings County; however, we still need more, particularly foster homes for children over two years of age, sibling groups and teens in both South and North Hastings

For more information about becoming a foster parent, contact Hastings Children's Aid Society or check out www.winningkids.ca, an eastern Ontario foster and adoption recruitment website.