



May 13, 2021

MEDIA RELEASE

Seneca Launches Tuition Bursary for Current and Former Youth in Care

TORONTO - Seneca is partnering with the [Child Welfare Political Action Committee \(PAC\)](#) to introduce a tuition bursary that will support 30 current and former youth in care. Seneca is the first GTA postsecondary institution to implement this kind of bursary program.

This announcement comes ahead of Children and Youth Care Day in Ontario, which is held every year on May 14 to raise awareness about children and youth in the care of the provincial government.

Starting in September 2021, the Seneca bursary for Ontario youth in care will be available to eligible students of all ages pursuing their first postsecondary credential at Seneca. The bursary is being fully funded by Seneca.

“Seneca is delighted to work with the Child Welfare PAC to help current and former youth in care reach their postsecondary and career goals,” said David Agnew, Seneca President. “Tuition support like this helps individuals imagine what could be possible with a new credential or skillset.”

According to the Child Welfare PAC, a federal not-for-profit representing the rights of children in government care, there are approximately 12,000 current and 100,000 former youth in care in Ontario. From age 18 to 21, those in care receive an allowance of approximately \$875 a month. When this support ends, pursuing a postsecondary education becomes more difficult.

“Postsecondary studies gave me hope and a future after foster care,” said Jane Kovarikova, founder of the Child Welfare PAC, a former Crown Ward and doctoral candidate at Western University. “Thank you to Seneca for being the first postsecondary institution in the GTA to stand up for our future.”

Prospective students can learn more about Seneca’s available scholarships and bursaries [online](#).

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Child Welfare PAC Canada

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Quick Facts:

- Child Welfare PAC Canada is working with any post-secondary partners in Canada who wish to increase social mobility for people raised in foster care
 - This work was inspired by the [Vancouver Island University tuition waiver program](#) (no age limits) for people who were raised in care in B.C.
 - Finances are a significant, but not only, barrier to post-secondary studies faced by people raised in care
 - Post-secondary studies level the playing field for this group
 - So far, Child Welfare PAC has worked with 15 institutions in 5 provinces to create 210+ places that address financial barriers to post-secondary education
 - [Click here for participating schools](#)
 - **The end goal is similar opportunities at all post-secondary schools coast-to-coast**
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[About Seneca](#)

Seneca is taking on the great challenges of our time – rebuilding the economy, equity and sustainability – while navigating through the pandemic safely. We're delivering great polytechnic education that combines rigorous academics with practical training. From health care to technology, business to creative arts, community services to arts and sciences, we help students get ready to make their mark in the world. We're #SenecaProud of our expert faculty, excellent staff and outstanding facilities. We have deep connections with industry and offer thousands of co-op and work placements to get our graduates job-ready. Full-time or part-time, in-person or online, students choose the option that suits them. Learn more: senecacollege.ca

[About Child Welfare PAC Canada](#)

The Child Welfare PAC is a federal not-for-profit that represents the interests of children raised by the government. The advisory committee consists of professionals from academia, law, business, advocacy & public service who have lived experience in child protection systems. See complete advocacy agenda here: childwelfarepac.com.



Child rights advocate, Jane Kovarikova, grew up in foster care since the age of six and began living on her own at age 16. She graduated with a BA (Hon) in Psychology at Laurentian University and a MSc in Human Rights from the London School of Economics. As a political staffer at the Ontario Legislative Assembly, she was instrumental in developing legislation that is reducing youth homelessness today. Influenced by these earlier experiences, Kovarikova founded the Child Welfare PAC Canada in 2017. This not-for-profit focuses on systemic changes that support youth success after being raised in state care. Currently, Kovarikova serves as the Board Chair of Simcoe-Muskoka Family Connexions, a regional child protection agency, and on the Ontario Premier's Council for Equality of Opportunity. She is also a PhD Candidate and Lecturer at Western University in the Department of Political Science.

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