



For Immediate Release
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LOYALIST TO WAIVE TUITION FOR FORMER FOSTER KIDS

Toronto, Ontario – Today, the Child Welfare Political Action Committee Canada (Child Welfare PAC) is proud to announce that Loyalist College will waive tuition for those raised in the Ontario foster care system regardless of their age.

The College's \$80,000 investment will support up to 16 current or former Crown Wards for the 2020-21 school year.

"This is amazing news for current and former Crown Wards across Ontario and paves the way for even more post-secondary schools to follow suit," said Jane Kovarikova, Founder of the Child Welfare PAC, which advocates for improving post-secondary access for former foster kids. "Especially during these difficult times, thank you to Loyalist and Hon Todd Smith for seeking to level the playing field for those raised in foster care."

Foster kids are typically evicted from care at age 18 making hardship all too common. It can take years to achieve stability, so tuition waivers without arbitrary age limits further reduces barriers allowing former foster kids the opportunity to improve their lives.

"Post-secondary education paves pathways to better lives, especially for those who are most vulnerable and who will truly benefit from its transformative power. As a catalyst for socioeconomic development, education must be equitable, which means removing barriers to program access and attainment," said Dr. Ann Marie Vaughan, Loyalist College President & CEO. "Loyalist College is working closely with Children's Aid Societies and Child Welfare PAC to empower current and former youth in extended society care to achieve successful personal and professional outcomes. We want these amazing individuals to know we care and we are here to help them advance, regardless of their age or stage in life."

The Child Welfare PAC advocates for barrier-free post-secondary access for those raised in care. Loyalist is the latest post-secondary school to launch this initiative. Over the last year, Child Welfare PAC has helped facilitate similar initiatives at Laurentian University and Georgian College. The goal is that all of Ontario's 45 post-secondary schools join the movement to ensure those raised in care have bright futures.

"It's great to see colleges and universities from across the province stepping up, including my alma mater, Loyalist College," said Hon. Todd Smith, Minister of Children, Community and Social Services. "The Child Welfare PAC has worked tirelessly to give individuals who are aging out of care or those who already have, an opportunity to attend

post secondary. This partnership will be life changing for children and youth in care, across Ontario”

“Education is the one certain evidence-based pathway to success after foster care,” said Kovarikova, a former foster child and PhD Candidate at Western.

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Ontario Foster Care Quick Facts:

- There are 12,000 children in state care in Ontario.
- Each year, about 1,000 exit the system or rather “age-out” at 18 years old.
- About 60% of foster youth drop-out of high school.
- If studies bear out, only 80 of 400 qualified foster youth pursue higher education each year.
- From age 18 to 21, youth receive an allowance of approximately \$875/month.
- At age 21, foster youth are expected to be fully independent, credentialed, and career-ready for life as contributing members of society - unrealistic expectations.
- Restrictive tuition waivers are unlikely to be effective.
- An estimated 100,000+ former Crown wards are in Ontario.

What is the Child Welfare PAC:

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



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