



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, January 25, 2022

Northern College & The Child Welfare Political Action Committee Canada to offer Educational opportunities to those in Need

TIMMINS, ON: Northern College is pleased to announce its partnership with the Child Welfare Political Action Committee (PAC) to create a tuition bursary specifically designed to aid students that are either currently or formerly in extended society care (former Crown Wards).

"Access to education is incredibly important to all of us at Northern College," stated **Northern College President & CEO Dr. Audrey J. Penner**. "It is firmly rooted in our strategic directions, but more than that it is a reflection of our commitment to education for everyone, regardless of their story and their circumstances. We view education as a great equalizer at Northern, as it creates opportunity not only in the job market, but in building the confidence of our students to best prepare them to tackle life and the world at large."

The creation of these bursaries will allow students who have lived through or are currently living in care additional funding to support their academic goals, housing and food costs. We hope to make a positive impact on their lives by making every support offered by Northern College available to them during their time studying with us.

"Many people who are part of the foster care system have had their lives impacted by the effects of intergenerational trauma," stated **Susan Hunter, Northern College's Chief Cultural Officer (CCO)**. "Besides the terror of this, the message that they do not matter and will never amount to anything have oftentimes convinced these learners that success is not meant to be had. As Canada's Kindest College, we are seeking to replace those disempowering messages with ones of care, can-do-it-less and support."

As no government statistics exist, some sources estimate that there are approximately 12,000 current and 100,000 former youth in care in Ontario, according to the Child Welfare PAC, a federal not-for-profit promoting better outcomes for youth from care. 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.

"Thank you, Northern College, for supporting pathways to a better future for youth who have experienced the Child Welfare system," stated **Ingrid Palmer, Board Chair of Child Welfare PAC Canada**. "The Child Welfare Political Action Committee is dedicated to working with post secondary institutions across Canada to mitigate barriers to higher education for former foster kids. The action taken by Northern College will provide youth in extended care much needed support to realize success."

Northern College will be taking on two students who have experienced life in care, providing room and board to them, along with the necessary supplies and tuition coverage to help set them on the path to success in life, along with all the student supports that are synonymous with an education at Northern College. This is the start of a concerted effort to facilitate more students who have gone through the government care system, to access postsecondary education in northeastern Ontario.

“To make it to college, so many things would have had to go right in a world that did not convince these children that they mattered,” stated Dr. Penner. “It is our hope and intention to be there for them, welcome them and surround them with the support needed to further their education and career paths. Opportunity is the key to ending this cycle, and we’re proud to play a role in providing accessible education to those in need, for the betterment of themselves and for the better of Northeastern Ontario.”

To apply or learn more about the tuition bursary, contact **Christine Bender** at benderc@northern.on.ca.

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MEDIA CONTACTS:

Child Welfare PAC | Sue Christensen | info@childwelfarepac.com

Northern College | Kyle Gennings | genningsk@northern.on.ca

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.

About [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 committee 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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