



## MEDIA RELEASE

### MSVU first Atlantic university to launch tuition waiver program for former youth in care

**November 16, 2020 (Halifax, NS)** – Mount Saint Vincent University is the first University in Atlantic Canada to launch a tuition waiver program specifically for former youth in care.

The MSVU Post-Care Tuition Waiver Program will cover 100% of participating students' tuition and compulsory fees. A pilot phase of the program will start in January 2021, with a full program launch planned for September 2021.

An MSVU navigator will be available to participating students to help them navigate their MSVU experience – from completing the tuition waiver program application to completing their degree. The navigator will ensure students are supported and connected with the resources they need.

"We could not be more thrilled to be launching this program at Mount Saint Vincent University. At MSVU, we embrace the diversity of our community and are committed to efforts that advance equity, inclusion and accessibility across all facets of our university and beyond," **said MSVU President and Vice-Chancellor Dr. Mary Bluehardt.** "MSVU was founded more than a century ago based on a commitment to removing barriers to education and this commitment still runs deep. We are home to a higher percentage of non-traditional students and we pride ourselves on providing the personalized, supportive environment they need to thrive."

"Education holds the power to transform lives. Through this program, we will provide a tuition- free opportunity for immeasurable personal, scholarly, and professional growth for eligible students. Whether they are coming to us from high school or have been out of school for many years, we look forward to welcoming these new students to the MSVU community and supporting them on their educational journey," **said Dr. Julie McMullin, Vice-President Academic and Provost at MSVU.**

"As a former youth-in-care, I am grateful to MSVU for making post-secondary more accessible for people like me. Their leadership in helping to bring these opportunities coast-to-coast is an inspiration," **said Jane Kovarikova, founder of the Child Welfare Political Action Committee Canada, and current doctoral candidate at Western University.** "One day it won't matter where in Canada you are born or where you wish to study, thanks to institutions like MSVU who care about your future."

To be eligible, a student must have been in the foster care system for at least one year as a child/youth and meet the admission criteria for their chosen program. Students straight from high school and mature students are eligible, appreciating that not everyone's journey to university is a linear one. Additionally, students must be in or entering their first degree and not currently part of the NS Department of Community Services' Educational Bursary Program for Children in Care.

"We are grateful to MSVU Child & Youth Study department's Drs. Fernando Nunes and Shane Theunissen for introducing us to the Child Welfare Political Action Committee and for their leadership in this area," **said Dr. McMullin.**

For more information about the MSVU Post-Care Tuition Waiver Program, please contact Gloria Johnston at MSVU at 902-457-6674 or [PCTWP@msvu.ca](mailto:PCTWP@msvu.ca).

MSVU will fund the program, though it will also benefit from the generous support of donors to the University. Those interested in supporting former youth-in-care on their MSVU journey can [make a contribution here](#).

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#### **Child Welfare PAC Contact:**

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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 Ontario institutions to create 76 places that address financial barriers to post-secondary education
  - Laurentian University (10+), Georgian College (15), Loyalist College (16), Western University (20), Brescia (5), King's (5) and Huron (5) have announced financial supports for students with in care experiences
  - Mount Saint Vincent University (10) is the first in Atlantic Canada to participate
  - **End goal is similar opportunities at all post-secondary schools coast-to-coast**
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#### **About Mount Saint Vincent University**

As a leader in online and experiential learning, and based on a strong tradition of social responsibility, Mount Saint Vincent University takes a personalized approach to education to nurture socially responsible global citizens. Founded in 1873, the Mount has been nationally recognized for having one of the lowest student-to-professor ratios, for providing students early access to valuable research opportunities, for its legacy in the advancement of women, and for facilitating critical advancements in food security, healthy aging, literacy, and childhood development. [msvu.ca](http://msvu.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](http://childwelfarepac.com).

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