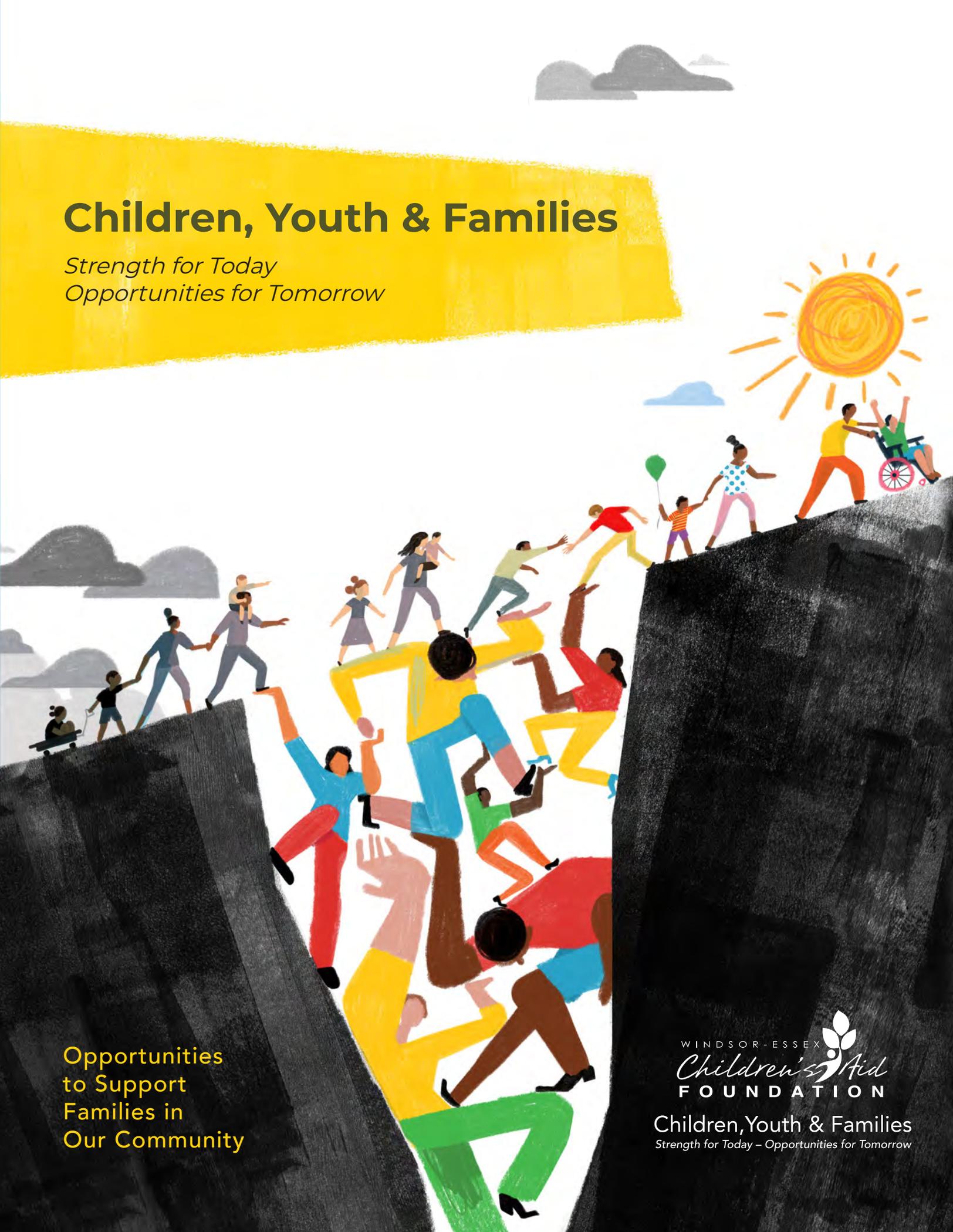


Children, Youth & Families

*Strength for Today
Opportunities for Tomorrow*



**Opportunities
to Support
Families in
Our Community**

WINDSOR-ESSEX
Children's Aid
FOUNDATION

Children, Youth & Families
Strength for Today – Opportunities for Tomorrow

Mission Statement

The Windsor-Essex Children's Aid Foundation is dedicated to providing financial support that contributes to the safety and well-being of the children and families of the Windsor-Essex Children's Aid Society through fundraising initiatives and public education.

Offering You Opportunities To Make A Difference

Over the last two years, the Windsor-Essex Children's Aid Society and the Windsor-Essex Children's Aid Foundation have finalized new strategic plans. Both recognize the importance of strengthening families and supporting youth, particularly those who live independently. Both strategic plans also recognize the uniqueness of every individual that we serve by embracing diversity, equity and inclusion.

The Windsor-Essex Children's Aid Foundation has launched a three-year, \$1.5 million community fundraising campaign that is aimed

at creating programs and allocating resources that will confront the challenges that face families and youth head on.

This booklet provides opportunities for individuals, organizations and businesses to join us in making a difference in the lives of those that in many cases are our Windsor-Essex neighbours. It is meant to be a guide to choose how and where you can help. The Anchor Programs are multi-faceted and include components that can be tailored based on the interests and desired gift of a donor. The Kits listed provide aid to immediate needs. A menu of options exists providing

suggested donation amounts that are nominal. Finally, the traditional programs of the Windsor-Essex Children's Aid Foundation continue to touch the lives of many. Again, there are many opportunities in terms of how you can give. There is a wide array of recognition and benefits to donors based on each program and the amount of a gift.

For more information on any of the initiatives listed in this booklet, and to discuss how you can make a difference, please contact:

Mike Clark, Manager of Public Relations & Fund Development
Phone: 519-252-1171, ext. 3210
Email: mclark@wecas.on.ca

Statistics

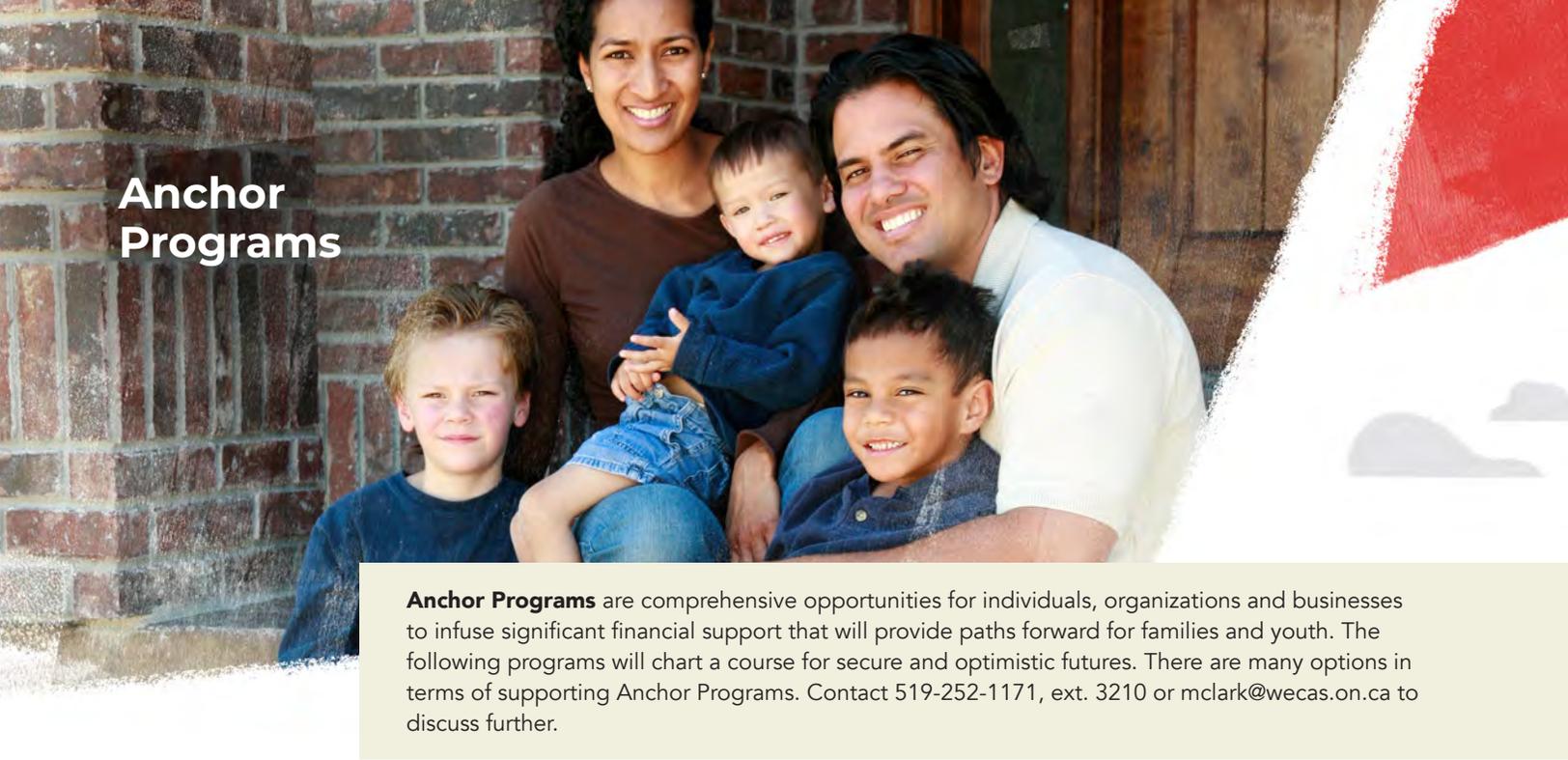
Youth

- 57.8% of homeless youth have had experience with child protection services (*Gaetz, O'Grady, Kidd & Schwan*)
- 57% of young adults formerly in care of a Children's Aid Society will rely on government income support in adulthood (*OPACY*)
- While over 85% of youth graduate secondary school in Windsor-Essex County within 5 years, less than half of youth in care complete their secondary school education (*Ontario Ministry of Education*)
- Almost two-thirds of youth on the verge of aging out of care have diagnosed mental health needs (*Scully & Finlay*)

Families

- 22.6% of children and youth ages 17 and under are living in low income families in Windsor-Essex County (*Stats Canada*)
- In 43.9% of Windsor-Essex County schools, more than 10% of the student population comes to school hungry (*City of Windsor Healthy Kids Community Challenge Community Needs Assessment*)
- The median household income in Windsor-Essex is lower than in Ontario (*Stats Canada*)
- Rates of substance misuse are higher in Windsor-Essex County, compared to other regions in Ontario (*Windsor-Essex Health Unit*)





Anchor Programs

Anchor Programs are comprehensive opportunities for individuals, organizations and businesses to infuse significant financial support that will provide paths forward for families and youth. The following programs will chart a course for secure and optimistic futures. There are many options in terms of supporting Anchor Programs. Contact 519-252-1171, ext. 3210 or mclark@wecas.on.ca to discuss further.

Families

Providing resources to families to promote enriching, safe and nurturing relationships by minimizing financial & emotional burden.

Children and their parents develop their sense of belonging and identity through their interactions and relationship building. Creating that sense of belonging and conveying their importance to one another is a significant part of building a supportive family network.

A Parent's Perspective –

“It would be helpful if I could access services and even fun family activities to improve the relationship I have with my kids, but I have to focus on keeping a roof over our heads and food on the table. There is nothing left to help with the extras we need.”

The hope through this campaign is to assist with a greater understanding of the realities of the families supported by WECAS. Increasing access to food and financial resources, childcare and respite services, family bonding activities, as well as educational and employment supports are all ways that you can assist families on their individual journeys.

ANCHOR PROGRAMS

• Supporting Families to Build Strength from Within (Counselling & Mental Health Supports for Families)

– Many of our families need intervention that will address matters that are impacting mental health. Individual and couples' therapy can help with a re-set in terms of clear, positive thinking and relationship building. Specialized counselling, such as behaviour consulting, and autism services are also necessary for certain situations. Counselling will be tailored to the specific needs of the individual including cultural background and gender identity. Financial support will be provided. A comprehensive outline of categories and options is available. The ultimate goal is to address underlying conditions that are causing deterioration of relationships and provide children, youth and families with the tools to move forward.

• Embracing Families Fund

– The goal is to reduce barriers for families so they can strengthen relationships amongst themselves resulting in a stable thriving home for their children.

The following are some examples;

– A grandparent, living alone on a fixed income takes her grandchild into her home temporarily while the child's parents work to build their relationship with the child.

The grandmother has no resources to cover the cost of a bed and related furniture for the child.

– An aunt and uncle offer to open up their home to their niece and nephew while their mother is not able to care for them. There is no funding to continue gymnastics and hockey lessons for their niece and nephew.

The Embracing Families Fund can open so many doors for families, and enables children the ability to enjoy childhood as their peers may. It puts the focus on bringing families together in a strong home environment.

• Early Intervention, Lighting the Path to a Bright Future (Supports for New Parents)

– This program will address the needs of new parents and growing families. Support services will focus on helping the new parents through the physical and emotional journey of pregnancy, child birth and post partum. Essential items such as equipment and furniture for a new baby will alleviate the financial stress that a young family with many socio-economic challenges faces. An investment in this program will also impact the entire family by addressing the many changes that a new baby brings to the family dynamic. Partnerships with other community providers will centre on providing resources that will enrich the family unit during this time of significant change.

Youth

Supporting youth, particularly those who have aged out of care and live independently. Most struggle financially, emotionally and socially. Factors such as lack of employment, skill training, poverty, inadequate housing and mental health issues.

Youth who have aged out of the Children's Aid Society's care face many challenges as they abruptly confront independent living. There are little financial incentives or support systems in place to guide youth who have faced this reality.

A Youth's Perspective –

"I am not sure where I am going to end up. After paying rent, I have little left for the month. I cannot even think of a job, as I wouldn't be able to afford the bus fare to get there. I feel so alone, and helpless."

This campaign attempts to address head-on the obstacles that youth face by providing them with financial and emotional supports that will enable them to capture who they are and set a path for a successful future. You can help make a difference that will last a lifetime.

ANCHOR PROGRAMS

• Employment Skills Training

– Many of the youth that WECAS works with have not been offered the opportunities to pursue traditional post-secondary programs such as university or community college. With the expertise of a community partner, selected youth participate in a multi-week training module that provides

practical training in everything from resume writing to how to speak to an employer, to determining where they would like to see themselves in terms of a career path. This is followed up by an on-site employment placement at a job site that is associated with an occupation that is of interest to them. A mentor is often matched up with the youth. In many cases, this is a prelude towards future success for youth.

• Homelessness Prevention & Home Equity Supports Program

– Youth aging out of care are at a greater risk of experiencing homelessness due to their limited budget and difficulty securing affordable housing. There are many costs associated with moving into independent living and with limited supports, these can present financial challenges and stress for a youth. This program would provide youth with financial planning skills and resources prior to them living on their own. Once living independently, youth would be provided with financial assistance for rent and related housing costs for a limited time so they can focus on obtaining education and/or employment that will enable them to become financially independent.

• The Talk It Out Project for Youth (Mental Health Supports)

– This program will strive to provide mental health supports to some of the most vulnerable youth, those who have aged out of the Society's care and live independently. Youth with a history of trauma will have the opportunity to connect with counselling services and support for their mental health as they transition to adulthood. Opportunities will be made available for youth to connect with specialized mental health supports based on their needs.

Connect therapy, counselling, psychological assessments, culturally responsive holistic therapies, art therapy, pet therapy, yoga and gym memberships are some examples. To remove barriers, such as transportation and technology, youth would be provided with supports such as Uber cards to attend in-person counselling, as well as cellular phones and minutes and internet and technology resources to access virtual mental health programs.

• Diversity Matters! (Supports for BACC, Indigenous and LGBTQ2S+)

– WECAS & WECAF celebrate the culture and diversity of the youth we support. Black, African, Caribbean & Canadian (BACC) youth, Indigenous and LGBTQ2S+ youth will be provided with a variety of supports that respect and reinforce the cultural background of a particular youth. Every effort will be made to provide items from local or Canadian owned culturally diverse and LGBTQ2S+ business owners. This may include clothing, personal care items, gift cards to enjoy a meal at a local restaurant to celebrate their cultural heritage and holidays, and articles that embrace a youth's cultural traditions.



The following are a wide variety of kits that can provide support to families and youth in any number of ways. All of these alleviate financial stress and provide opportunities for looking ahead. Each kit will be tailored to the individual needs of a family or a youth. It will be delivered to a family or youth by their WECAS worker.

FOR \$250

Laundry Kit – Laundry baskets, towels, detergent, fabric softener, hangers, iron, ironing board

Hygiene Kit – Toothbrushes & toothpastes, dental floss, towels & washcloths, shampoos & conditioners, razor & shaving supplies, liquid soaps, hand sanitizer, feminine hygiene products, bath soaps, textured hair products, gift cards for culturally appropriate stores (Arabic, Black) in Windsor-Essex, gift cards for haircuts & hygiene items

Family Fun Night – Pizza making kit, Movies (Disney Plus or Netflix subscription), educational board games, popcorn & treats, puzzles, cookie decorating package

Summer Family Fun – Ice cream gift card, beach towels, picnic basket & gift card for food items to fill basket, beach blanket, cooler & ice pack

Birthday Party Kit – Cake mix & tins, candles, party decorations, paper plates & napkins, cost of a birthday party package at a local family restaurant



ANYBODY CAN HELP!



FOR \$500

Cleaning Kit – Vacuum, cleaning supplies & products, cloths, garbage pails, cans & bags, mops & brooms

Home Safety Kit – Smoke alarms, carbon monoxide detectors, door alarm, child proofing kits, plug covers, baby gates, thermometers, lock boxes for medications

Storage/Organizational Kit – Tote bins, toy shelves & containers, space saving items, under-bed storage, magnetic fridge routine calendars & white board markers, tool kits

FOR \$1000

Creating a Bedroom – Bed/bunk bed, dresser, bedding, pillows, waterproof mattress protector, desk & chair

New Baby (Supports for baby) – Crib sheets, towels, baby bottles & formula, pediatric Ensure, diapers, change pad & cover, gift cards for food, supplies and accessories, diaper wipes, diaper bag, clothing

OVER 40 YEARS OF MAKING A DIFFERENCE

The Windsor-Essex Children's Aid Foundation through the generosity of our community has made positive changes in the lives of children, youth and families for over forty years. Thousands have benefitted from the following programs that are still mainstays of our current mandate. There are many ways you can help by supporting these initiatives.

"Fresh Air" Summer Camp – Over 350 children participate in a variety of day, overnight, and recreational camps based on their interests. Camp is an enriching experience providing opportunities, enabling them to develop friendships and capture memories that will last a lifetime. There are various ways to financially assist these camp experiences.

Holiday Program – Each year as the winter holidays near, over 750 families receive support in terms of clothing, food, toys and personal items. Every effort is made to fulfil the specific needs of a family or a youth. Opportunities exist to sponsor a family/youth or to make a monetary donation.

Academic/Holiday Celebrations – Annual events are planned to recognize the achievements of our youth academically as well as to provide them with an evening during the winter holidays where they can come together with their peers to enjoy good food, receive some special surprises and take comfort in each other's company. As well, Kinship families also partake in a fun holiday party which includes a meal, fun

activities and gifts for all children. There are sponsorship opportunities available for all of these celebrations.

Back to School Backpack Program – Enabling over 800 children and youth the opportunity to start a new school year on a positive note. With your support, each child/youth receives a new backpack fully equipped with school supplies.

Creative Expression – The arts are used as an opportunity for healing, building self-esteem and encouraging expression. Programs built on music, tactical art and photography reach for the inner soul. There are a number of ways that you can keep these programs viable.

Family Well-Being Program – Delivering a number of groups and workshops ranging from maintaining a house to positive parenting to financial management, Family Well-Being provides parents and youth living independently with essential skills and resources designed to provide a strong and enriching home environment. There are opportunities to sponsor these presentations.



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