



Helping all youth leaving care to achieve success is a priority for Peel CAS. Peel Children's Aid's youth strategy focuses on education and employment. Youth are encouraged to stay in school and are eligible to apply for bursaries to pursue post secondary education. In the following articles, Joshua, Christina and Nickay share their stories and how the generosity of donors has helped them to achieve their educational dreams.

Joshua I love running. I competed in track and field throughout high school, and am currently training with the team at Queen's University where I just finished my first year. I hope to eventually make the team and win a title for them. Want to hear something funny? Years ago I was encouraged to join the Peel CAS run group and didn't really like running at all. Now it is my passion. It's a sport where the amount of work and effort you put in directly impacts what you get out of it. I like to compete and it inspires me to work harder.

I try to maintain this same passion for my education. I'm doing an arts program at Queen's but eventually would like to pursue my masters in sports psychology. Another area I'm really interested in is urban planning – I think it is important to have a plan b!

One of the reasons I'm able to go to University is thanks to the generosity of donors who provide bursaries through the Peel Children's Aid Foundation. Receiving a bursary means I am able to focus on getting good grades instead of worrying about money, and this really helps me to achieve my goals.

I'd like to thank all of the donors who make these bursaries possible. You are making dreams a reality. Not all youth involved with children's aid have the same opportunities as other youth. Your support puts us on an equal playing field as our peers. Having a donor who doesn't even know me but wants me to succeed has inspired me to want to become a donor. This way I can give back and support other students like me in the future.

Christina I've been involved with CAS for a long time. When I was 15, my older sister, who was 19, became a foster parent to myself and my 13 year old brother. It is only now that I am turning 19 that I am starting to realize just how amazing and extremely challenging that must have been for her. She took care of us, went to University and worked three jobs. I can't imagine how quickly she had to grow up. She is a survivor I am forever grateful for the sacrifices she made. She is truly my inspiration and who I am today is largely owed to her.

Through my experiences in care, I have learned the importance of education and am pursuing a post secondary education. Receiving a bursary, or any form of financial aid, is critical to the progress and educational future of youth like me. My peers have parents and families who can financially support them and many youth in care don't really have this same type of support. I've learned important skills to become financially independent, however it is hard to focus on your education if you are constantly worried about money. A lot of this pressure is relieved when you receive a bursary.

I hope the donors who support the Foundation know that no matter how big or small, their contributions do wonders. This help is never taken for granted. Youth in care are passionate, resilient, smart and ready to do big things. You never know where we may end up. Your donations are a huge resource for us.

I have always wanted to pursue a career where I can help others. I used to think working as a lawyer or within policy was the way to go, but I am discovering that there are some amazing things that can be done with technology as well. I'm in the process of learning to code and even though I just finished my first year at University of Toronto I am going to go to summer school to study computer science.

I would like to tell all youth involved with children's aid to never stop dreaming. Find what makes you happy and believe that you have the power to achieve your goals. Everyone has different challenges and a different story to tell. I hope that by sharing mine I can inspire others.

Nickay When some people think of foster kids, they think of it as a disadvantage. I've never felt that way. I may have experienced some tragic events early on but they don't define me. Actually, these experiences make me stronger. They have developed my resilience and motivate me to be successful.

I completed my bachelor degree with honors and am excited to be attending graduate school in the fall to study International Development. I hope to eventually go to Latin America to help set up a relief and education program. The fact that I am receiving a bursary provides security and relieves so much stress which will help me to stay focused on my studies.

I was very lucky to also have an amazing CAS worker for support. I feel like he saved my life. He always listened to what I was saying and was there whenever I needed him. He truly cared and made me feel like a part of his family and for that I am grateful.

I have some advice for other youth involved with CAS who are becoming independent and starting a post-secondary education. Spend your money wisely – budgeting is really important. Also, good relationships are essential – choose who you spend your time with carefully. If you feel like you are struggling, ask for help and access all of the resources that are available to you. And never forget that it is okay to fail – every challenge we face helps build us into the person we will become.

May 14 is Child and Youth in Care Day! This day acknowledges the enormous contributions current and former Crown and Society wards make to the Province, as well as the strength, bravery and resilience shown by these children and youth in the face of adversity.



For more information, contact Peel CAS at 905.363.6131 or visit www.peelcas.org

In 2016/17 55 youth received bursaries totalling 202,000! A big thank you to our donors.