

# Standing up for Children

At Peel Children's Aid we believe passionately that every child has the right to grow up in an environment where they are loved, nurtured and cherished. As a community, we share an obligation to ensure that our children are in supportive environments. As a children's aid society, we have a responsibility to ensure the rights of children are protected and their needs are met.

There are many changes occurring and we are enthusiastic about how child welfare is evolving. We are engaging families to find effective solutions to the issues that they are facing. By building on families' strengths, involving them in the planning and decision making process and focusing on permanency we are helping to create stability and keep children safe.

Our front-line workers and the families we are involved with tell us that they appreciate the new approaches we are using. Families share in decision making, services are customized depending on their needs and families have a higher level of satisfaction with the services the agency is providing.

Some of the highlights from the past year include:

- Doing our work differently to achieve the best outcomes for children and families
- Successful collaborations with community partners
- Directly involving families in the work we do to keep children safe
- Further creating stability for our children and youth
- Supporting our youth as they make the transition to self reliance and responsible adulthood in the community.

The successes we are achieving are made possible through the work of our committed staff, volunteers and foster parents and the work they do every day to make a difference in the lives of children.

Peel Children's Aid remains committed to providing our services in an effective and efficient manner and has made a commitment to becoming an excellent organization. We have adopted the National Quality Institute's Progressive Excellence Program and we are proud to share that we have achieved NQI's Organizational Quality and Healthy Workplace® Level II Award which recognizes our focus on excellence through quality, a healthy workplace, and continuous improvement.

We would like to acknowledge the accomplishments of the Peel Children's Aid Foundation as they continue to support the

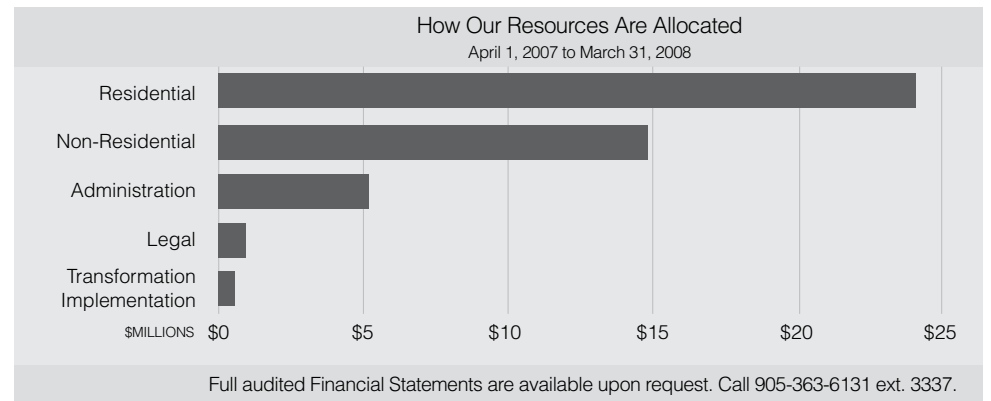
work of Peel Children's Aid by providing services and programs not funded by the government. Thanks to the generosity of its donors, the Foundation is able to provide educational awards and bursaries to children

and youth under the care of the agency and helps children and families turn dreams, big and small, into reality.

Together, we share a united vision of every child being cherished and we believe that all children need to grow up in safe and supportive environments.

Paul Moran, *Board President*

Paul Zarnke, *Executive Director*



## ADVOCATING for Youth

To give children and youth in the care of Peel Children's Aid the best chance to achieve their potential, we are committed to providing the services needed to help them succeed. Currently, the agency provides transition support and services through our Long Term Care and Independence programs. However, we believe that improving educational outcomes, helping youth transition successfully to independence, providing employment support and offering financial assistance for post-secondary education through the work of Peel Children's Aid Foundation will lead to better outcomes for youth such as higher graduation rates, more post secondary enrollments and better employment readiness.

### Improving educational outcomes

Peel Children's Aid is working collaboratively with the Peel District and Peel Dufferin Catholic School Boards to improve educational outcomes for children who are in the care of our agency. We have hired two educational consultants to identify children and youth who may be at academic risk as early as possible to get them the help they need, such as a tutor, to ensure they don't fall behind. In

addition to liaising with the school boards, these consultants help to develop plans of care for children and youth working with case workers, foster parents and group home staff and teachers to meet the educational needs of our children and youth.

### Youth in Transition program

This new program will assist youth by providing access to the resources they need to become independent and transition out of the care of Peel Children's Aid. Some of the highlights of this program include:

Providing services and support for youth which embrace their culture, race, ethnicity, religion, spiritual beliefs, sexual orientation and gender. These services are currently offered to youth between 13 and 21 years of age, but plans are underway to support our youth until age 24.

Creating leadership opportunities for youth through peer mentoring, volunteering and involvement in community programs.

Pursuing relationships with community partners to help with issues such as housing so that our youth have the best chances possible to succeed.

### Youth in Care Internship Program

Peel Children's Aid has created an internship program to provide two youth with the opportunity to gain valuable employment skills while working at the agency. Applying for, and gaining employment, are necessary life skills for youth to develop and this program helps prepare youth to become independent and contributing members of our community.

### Bursary and Achievement Awards

Peel Children's Aid Foundation's Bursary Awards, made possible by the generosity of community supporters, help young people in the care of Peel Children's Aid create brighter futures for themselves. All of the recipients are highly talented, enthusiastic individuals who have overcome great obstacles to get where they are today. In 2008, 22 bursaries totaling more than \$25,000 were provided thanks to the generosity of Peel Children's Aid Foundation donors.

The Achievement Awards program is aimed at students in Grades 7 to 11 and is designed to give youth confidence in their ability to succeed, an incentive to stay in school, and a chance to start saving for the education or training they will need in the future. This year, 48 youth received Achievement Awards thanks to the generosity of ING Canada.

### Did you know?

In 2007/08, Peel Children's Aid

- Received 11,734 calls from concerned citizens, doctors, teachers, and the police about children who might be in need of protection.
- Investigated 4,371 reports of child abuse and neglect.
- Has one of the lowest numbers of children in care for our population in the province.
- Cared for 739 children in our foster homes and group homes throughout the year.
- Has 158 foster families providing caring, loving homes for children in need in Peel Region.
- Served 5,745 families in Peel Region last year.
- Found caring, loving adoptive families for 40 children last year.
- Has more than 200 volunteers who gave more than 25,000 hours of support during the past year.

### Help keep children safe

If you suspect child abuse or neglect call

**905-363-6131**