

ADOPTION IS AN OPTION

November is Adoption Awareness Month

No matter what age, all children and youth need to be part of a committed and loving family. November is Adoption Awareness Month and Peel Children's Aid continues to look for families who may be interested in adopting older children and youth.

"We truly believe it takes a village to raise a child," says Linda Bezemer, permanency worker, Peel Children's Aid. "We all have a role and a contribution to make to take care of the children in our community. We know that children flourish within their cultural heritage and we are always looking for loving adoptive families for our children who come from various cultural, racial, ethnic and religious backgrounds."

Recent changes in Ontario's adoption legislation will help improve the lives of children and youth in care. By removing barriers more children in care will now be able to be placed for adoption. "With the changes comes a need for more families," adds Tammy Budge, permanency worker, Peel Children's Aid. "Peel Children's Aid is looking for families who may be interested in adopting older children and youth. We all need to help build a future for children in our community."

Adoption is a legal process that gives a child a new family when the birth family is unable to care for him or her. In Ontario, adoption can be arranged through Children's Aid Societies (public adoption), private adoption agencies and international adoption agencies. Last year, supportive, loving adoptive families cared for 45 children from Peel. To learn more about adoption please visit our website at www.peelcas.org.

Fast facts

- In 2010-11, supportive, loving adoptive families from Peel cared for 45 children
- Peel Children's Aid provided caring, loving homes for children in need with 96 kinship families and 130 foster families
- Our agency had one of the lowest numbers of children in care in the province, based on our population
- In Ontario, there were 971 adoptions finalized in 2010-11
- Children placed for adoption in 2010-11 in Ontario:
 - 71% were under 5
 - 20% aged 6-12
 - 3% aged 13-18
- Children in Ontario still needing families:
 - 12% are aged 0-5
 - 27% are 6-12
 - 61% are 13-18



Fairon and Tracey

Adoptive parents share their personal experience of adopting older children

Although we are grateful to have each other, somehow we felt that something was missing from our lives. Like a puzzle that isn't quite complete without the last piece. That is until we met Katie and Barry. When our worker told us that she had two siblings, ages 8 and 11, who might be a match for us, we said "show us our children."

It takes time, patience and work to build a family, but we knew that when we decided to adopt. We did the homestudy, completed the training and were ready to welcome these children into our lives. Although it felt like such a long time once we were approved to be adoptive parents to when we were "matched" with Katie and Barry, it was actually only six months before we became a family.

We were given tons of information from Peel Children's Aid and our adoption worker was with us through everything. She made it easy for us to take advantage of the many supports available to adoptive parents. And when the adoption was finalized Katie summed it up when she said "now we can really be a family."

Having these children to share our lives with is such a great gift. Little things like working together in the garage, singing karaoke or walking the dog make us pause and take a breath and realize how far we've come and how lucky we are. At the end of the day we want our children to know that they will always have a place where they feel safe and loved. We've found the piece that was missing from our puzzle.

Have you thought about building your family through adoption? Peel Children's Aid is committed to finding permanent homes for older children and youth. All children and youth need a permanent home. For more information visit www.peelcas.org or call 905-363-6131.

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www.peelcas.org

