



the children's aid society
OF HAMILTON

For immediate release

Hamilton CAS launches holiday family sponsorship program

HAMILTON, November 12, 2003 – Today, The Children's Aid Society of Hamilton launched its annual appeal to individuals, families, service clubs, school communities and local businesses to join the agency in its efforts to bring a bit of holiday comfort to families who are struggling to get by.

"Twenty-two per cent of Hamilton residents live in poverty," said Dominic Verticchio, Executive Director of the Children's Aid Society of Hamilton. "Imagine, if you will, each day of the holiday season being just like the other. The depth of despair only becomes greater for many of the families on our caseload."

In 2002, thanks to the collective efforts of many, the Society was able to provide food, gifts and vouchers to one hundred and twenty-eight families. In 2003, there is a need to reach out to many more.

Last year, when Glen Echo School principal Sandra Peters put out the call to students and staff at the school to consider donating their pocket change to help a needy family, the response was overwhelming.

Daniella, a Grade One student, who wanted to "make other kids' Christmas happy", was one of the first to come forward. Knowing only a need and wishing to fulfill it, Daniella donated her entire savings of \$54.85 in pennies to the fund. Other followed and soon the school community had collected enough to purchase gifts and ingredients for a holiday meal for a family of three.

Employees at Hamilton Utilities Corporation rallied together to support five families last year.

"Hamilton Utilities employees were delighted and engaged at the opportunity to help others during the holiday season – a time when people often lose sight of the fact that many in our community are in need of help," said Marjorie Richards, Vice-President of Corporate Services, Hamilton Utilities Corporation.

CAS Child Protection Workers who are familiar with their families' needs recommend families for the program. Sponsors are provided with a non-identifying profile of the family, which includes the ages and interests of family members. Those who are unable to sponsor a family but would like to donate new toys or clothing may drop off items at the Children's Aid Society office located at 143 Wentworth Street South.

To register or for more information on the holiday family sponsorship program, please contact Letha Burden at 905-522-1121 ext. 3239.

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