



CHILDREN'S  
AID FOUNDATION  
OF CANADA

# PAGES OF POSSIBILITY

The Yearbook  
*You* Make  
Possible

2025



# A FEW WORDS FROM OUR *President and CEO*

On behalf of the team at Children's Aid Foundation of Canada (CAFC), thank you for your continued support. Your generosity—no matter the size—makes a meaningful difference in the lives of young people who have experienced government care. With your help, they're overcoming challenges, pursuing their education, and working toward brighter futures.

**Since 1995**, our Post-Secondary Education (PSE) Program has granted more than **\$26.5 million** to **8,170 students**. This legacy of support has empowered these young individuals to pursue their dreams and build brighter futures. We're also proud to offer other educational supports to youth from care at all levels of education—from school backpacks for elementary students and tutoring supports for high schoolers to Graduate Awards to those celebrating the end of their post-secondary education.

Building on the success of our flagship PSE program, CAFC is expanding its comprehensive strategy to ensure that no youth from care in Canada is held back by financial barriers in pursuing higher education. As someone who cares deeply about education for youth, we wanted to share this exciting news with you. We are evolving the program around three key priorities designed to transform access to post-secondary education for these youth. This program model is grounded in evidence and shaped by insights from individuals with lived expertise and experts in child welfare and post-secondary funding, ensuring more equitable opportunities for youth to succeed.

1. **Enhance the PSE program to meet the increasing need by reaching more youth**, improving accessibility, user experience, and funding,
2. **Make it easier for youth to access other existing financial resources and supports**, and
3. **Engage in advocacy efforts to increase the total dollars and other supports** available for youth from care pursuing post-secondary education, including building coalitions with other leaders in the sector.

Education is the great equalizer, unlocking potential and prosperity for youth in care, helping level the playing field to achieve their dreams. Your support is breaking the cycle of poverty and making a lasting impact on generations of youth from care in Canada. Thank you for helping to drive transformative change and shaping a brighter future. We are deeply grateful for your compassion and dedication every step of the way.

With gratitude,

Valerie McMurtry  
President & CEO

**Children's Aid Foundation of Canada**



# TRANSFORMING LIVES THROUGH *Education*



For **over 25 years**, Children's Aid Foundation of Canada has been empowering young people to achieve their academic goals. Each year, the Foundation conducts a comprehensive evaluation of our education programs to ensure that it remains effective in supporting young people. Through our Post-Secondary Education Program, in **2024-25**, we awarded over **\$2 million** to **690 individual students** across Canada. This funding makes a significant difference in the lives of young people, helping them achieve their dreams and reach their full potential.

## 87 Bursaries

were awarded based on financial need to both full and part-time post-secondary students (up to \$2,000 per year).

## 318 Scholarships

were awarded based on academic achievement and community engagement (\$5,000 per year).

## 111 Grad Awards

were awarded to provide incentive and debt relief for students who have received Foundation scholarships or bursaries and completed their programs (\$500 per year of full-time studies).

## 174 Support Funds

were awarded to meet immediate needs that may hinder students' ability to achieve their educational goals including tutoring, assessments, career counselling, equipment, certifications, courses, apprenticeships or academic bridging/transitional year programs, etc.



# POST-SECONDARY

# Education Strategy



CAFC is building on the Post-Secondary Education Program with a comprehensive strategy to ensure no youth from care in Canada is limited by financial barriers in pursuit of postsecondary education. To achieve this goal, we are evolving the program to focus on three key priorities to transform the landscape of post-secondary funding and access for youth from care. Rooted in evidence and informed and guided by extensive engagement with people with lived expertise, as well as subject matter experts in child welfare and post-secondary education funding, our new program model will:

## #1

### ENHANCE OUR EXISTING POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION PROGRAM

Reach more young people through a better user experience, improved accessibility for students who are under represented in post-secondary education and a larger pool of funding. In addition to providing direct awards to youth, donor support helps cover the cost of administering the program and fund recipients' access to additional education-related resources.

## #2

### MAKE IT EASIER FOR YOUTH TO ACCESS FINANCIAL RESOURCES AND SUPPORTS

Strengthen and build on connections within our existing network of navigators and frontline experts available to help youth from care access financial assistance, coaching and other support throughout their journey. Better understand the current information landscape around available awards to aggregate information into a central resource and help youth connect with them.

## #3

### ENGAGE IN ADVOCACY EFFORTS TO INCREASE THE TOTAL DOLLARS AND OTHER SUPPORTS AVAILABLE

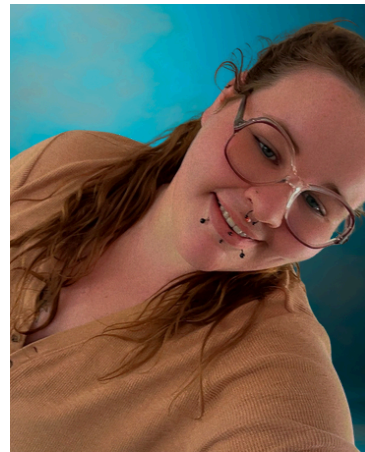
Increase support for youth from care pursuing post-secondary education by collecting jurisdictional data on educational outcomes and policies to establish baseline data. Data will measure and evaluate CAFC's impact on educational outcomes and policies for youth from care to support ongoing advocacy initiatives and program design. CAFC will facilitate increasing the sector's capacity to make recommendations and convene nationally on promising practices. Advocacy for tuition waivers, increased grants and other key policy and funding changes are also a priority.



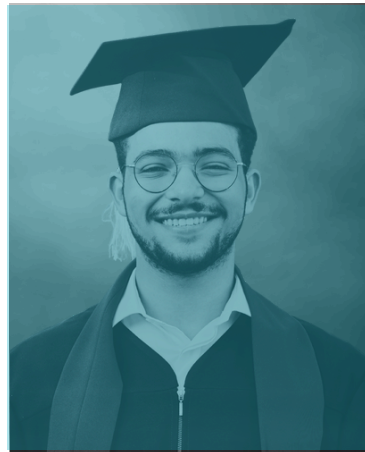
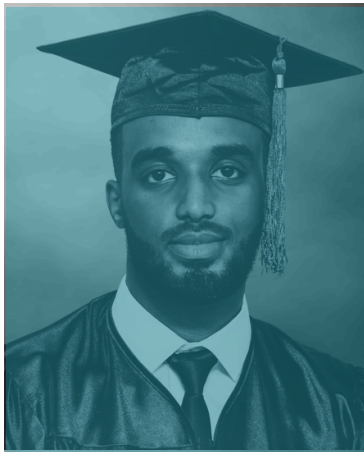
# “CLASS” OF 2025



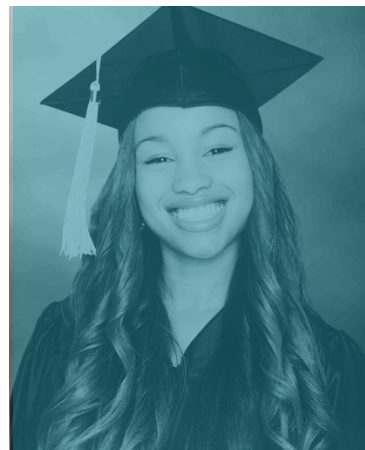
Jessie  
Jenn  
Kim



Sebastian  
Tatyana  
Lucifer



In the 2024-25 fiscal year the Foundation supported graduates across Canada who had received Foundation scholarships, bursaries or a combination of the two throughout their programs.



# STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

## Jessie



**Veterinary  
Assistant  
program at  
Robertson  
College**

### **WHAT DOES RECEIVING A SCHOLARSHIP FROM CAFC MEAN TO YOU?**

Receiving a scholarship from CAFC means the world to me, as it encourages me to go through the hardest courses. I'm currently pursuing additional studies in Business Administration to deepen my understanding of the business side of veterinary medicine. This support helps me grow not just as a student, but as a future professional in my field.

### **WHAT ARE YOUR GOALS, DREAMS AND ASPIRATIONS AFTER YOU GRADUATE?**

My goal is to open a veterinary medicine business and to work alongside experienced professionals, as well as being able to share my knowledge to my younger generations.



# STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Jenn



## Communication Studies program at Concordia University

### WHAT DOES RECEIVING A SCHOLARSHIP FROM CAFC MEAN TO YOU?

It means a lot to receive the scholarship from CAFC because this takes a lot of pressure off having to spend time searching for funding and/or working to support my academic career and living expenses. This allows me to better focus on my studies and not have to worry as much about the futurity of whether I will be able to financially support the completion of my degree. I have deep appreciation for receiving this scholarship because it is a reminder that someone beyond my own circle believes me and that motivates me to continue doing what I am doing.

### IS THERE ANYTHING YOU'D LIKE DONORS TO KNOW ABOUT THE IMPACT THEIR GIFT MAY HAVE?

I am grateful to know that there are people out there who want to see young people succeed and see us as more than just (former) foster children. It allows me to be more than just a statistic and that despite having been in the system. Additionally, as a disabled student, I can access supports that I need with this funding and do not have to constantly wait to see if my requests for services will be approved.

### WHAT ARE YOUR GOALS, DREAMS AND ASPIRATIONS AFTER YOU GRADUATE?

Although this is a daunting question and still am figuring everything out, my dream is to pursue a PhD degree. Having been told in high school that I would never get into university as a disabled student, I have made it my mission to become a doctor. Not only do I prove the doubters wrong, but to prove my capabilities to myself.



# STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Kim



**Human Relations  
and Spirituality/  
Psychotherapy  
program at Saint  
Paul University**

## **IS THERE ANYTHING YOU'D LIKE DONORS TO KNOW ABOUT THE IMPACT THEIR GIFT MAY HAVE?**

No one in my family has ever been to university. The impact is not only on me, but my family, those around me, and those who I will serve and help in the future. It's a gamechanger. The ripple effect will affect so many, you have no idea!

## **WHAT ARE YOU MOST PROUD OF ACCOMPLISHING AT SCHOOL THIS YEAR?**

Having completed my bachelor's degree and getting accepted into the master's program of psychotherapy and spirituality.

## **WHY IS GOING TO SCHOOL IMPORTANT TO YOU? WHAT MOTIVATES YOU?**

I have always loved helping people. Having a degree in what I have always wanted to do, to be able to do this through psychotherapy is what motivates me. In addition to this, having come from a background of someone who has lived experience living in foster care, I know what it is like to not only have had trauma, but to overcome it, and it is my hope that I will be able to give back in areas where I have been.



## STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

# Sebastian



## Bachelor of Science in Bioinformatics

“

This scholarship has given me the opportunity to set my life on the right path.

### WHAT DOES RECEIVING A SCHOLARSHIP FROM CAFC MEAN TO YOU?

Receiving the CAFC scholarship means reduced financial stress, allowing me to fully focus on my studies and excel academically. With less financial pressure, I can dedicate more energy and attention to achieving my educational goals.

### WHY IS GOING TO SCHOOL IMPORTANT TO YOU? WHAT MOTIVATES YOU?

School is important to me because it opens the door to better opportunities, such as stable employment and personal growth. What truly motivates me is the joy and excitement of learning!

### WHAT ARE YOU MOST PROUD OF ACCOMPLISHING AT SCHOOL THIS YEAR?

This school year, I am proud to be graduating with my Certificate in Engineering and transferring to a university.

### IS THERE ANYTHING YOU'D LIKE DONORS TO KNOW ABOUT THE IMPACT THEIR GIFT MAY HAVE?

The pandemic created significant financial challenges for me. This generous gift provides an opportunity to gain financial stability while pursuing an education.

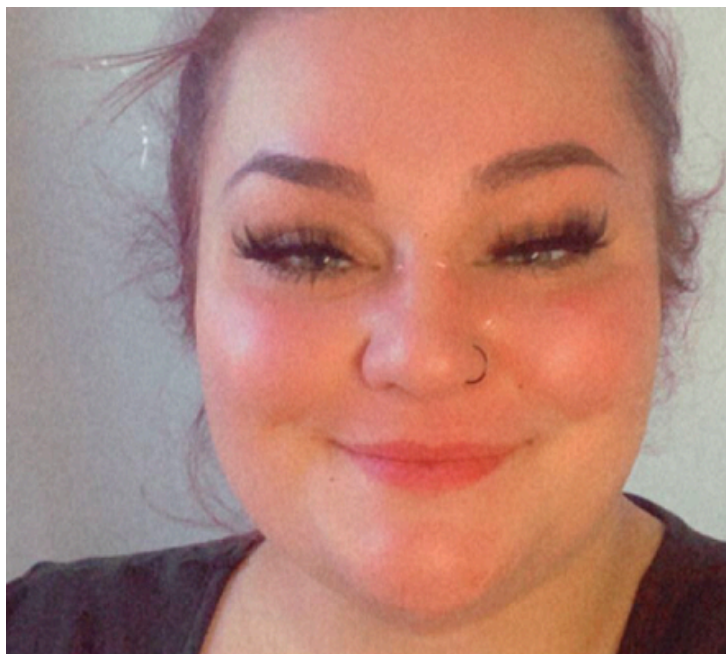
Education empowers Indigenous peoples to reclaim their voices, preserve their knowledge, and create new opportunities. By supporting Indigenous students, we take meaningful steps toward reconciliation and building an inclusive future.

### WHAT ARE YOUR GOALS, DREAMS AND ASPIRATIONS AFTER YOU GRADUATE?

My goal is to earn a bachelor's degree in biomedical engineering and eventually work in the medical field, contributing to the advancement of medicine.

## STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

# Tatiana



## Criminology program at Douglas College

“

I will be able to help other youth who were in my position if I continue and accomplish my degree and that's really what motivates me.

### WHAT DOES RECEIVING A SCHOLARSHIP FROM CAFC MEAN TO YOU?

Receiving this scholarship means I'm able to attend school without having to worry how my textbooks are going to be paid, how I'm going to eat my next meal, it provides me security while I attend school and get my degree. I wouldn't be able to go to post-secondary if it wasn't for having received this.

### IS THERE ANYTHING YOU'D LIKE DONORS TO KNOW ABOUT THE IMPACT THEIR GIFT MAY HAVE?

I just want to thank donors, from a youth in care who wouldn't be able to attend post secondary without people like you, its hugely appreciated. I have flourished in my classes and really dug deep into my love for criminology and helping others and it just wouldn't be possible without the generous gifts from the donors, so thank you so so much!

### WHY IS GOING TO SCHOOL IMPORTANT TO YOU? WHAT MOTIVATES YOU?

School is so important to me. It will provide me with the education I need to secure a career and be a success story from a youth from care. I will be able to help other youth who were in my position if I continue and accomplish my degree and that's really what motivates me. I want to be the person I wish I had to turn to when I was younger.

### WHAT ARE YOU MOST PROUD OF ACCOMPLISHING AT SCHOOL THIS YEAR?

I am super proud of getting 90% on my final exam, I have struggled with exams but with the funding from CAFC I was able to get a tutor that was able to support me over exam season and raise my previous marks of 70% to 90% in less than a month!



## STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

# Lucifer



### Honours Bachelor of Social Work at Algoma University

#### WHAT DOES RECEIVING A SCHOLARSHIP FROM CAFC MEAN TO YOU?

CAFC scholarship is what made it possible to continue going to school as a new mom. While being disabled and going to school full time is already difficult enough, being a new mom on top of that meant there was no time left for work. CAFC helped cover the cost of my schooling and helped relieve the financial burden after becoming a full-time mom and student.

#### IS THERE ANYTHING YOU'D LIKE DONORS TO KNOW ABOUT THE IMPACT THEIR GIFT MAY HAVE?

Many people who were in care full time were not given the opportunities to create the life skills needed to be out on our own. Most of us will not have savings or any help towards education, for a lot of us scholarships are the only possibility of us being able to achieve secondary education.

#### WHAT ARE YOUR GOALS, DREAMS AND ASPIRATIONS AFTER YOU GRADUATE?

The end goal is to own my own building similar to a semi-independent living or supportive living style for people with complex mental health and teen parents. I want each resident to have their own apartment, so they can learn to care for their own space. I want to teach them how to pay bills, care for their space, give cooking classes, parenting classes and have live in staff. But immediately after graduation I would like to work in a setting such as a group home, inpatient mental health, residential treatment or children's aid. I would also like to go back after getting my SSW for my BSW while working the field to build experience.

# YOUR GENEROSITY CLOSES THE EDUCATION GAP

## *For Kids In Care*



Just 46% of kids raised in the child welfare system graduate high school, compared to 83% of the general population. And just 27% of youth from care participate in post-secondary education — approximately half the rate of the general population. The cost of higher education is one of the biggest barriers they face. According to Statistics Canada, the cost of postsecondary education in Canada is currently an estimated \$35,000 per year, with 77% of that cost made up of rent, food, transit and phone fees.

Without a family to help them pay for their education or navigate funding opportunities, far too many young people raised in government care are missing out on the opportunity to pursue a post-secondary education and realize their greatest potential.

Kids raised in care are 200 times more likely to experience homelessness, and they earn \$326,000 less income over the course of their lifetime. They are also at significantly higher risk of long-term mental and physical health challenges.



## 66%

of this year's scholarship and bursary recipients attended university while **33%** attended college!

## 93%

of scholarship recipients and **88%** of bursary recipients said the support helped decrease their stress levels.

## 88%

of scholarship recipients and **82%** of bursary recipients said the funding helped them plan or prepare for their future.





# Senior SUPERLATIVES



**Most Likely to Turn  
Passion into Purpose**

Jesse



**Most Determined to  
Defy Expectations**

Jenn



**Most Likely to Heal  
Hearts and Minds**

Kim



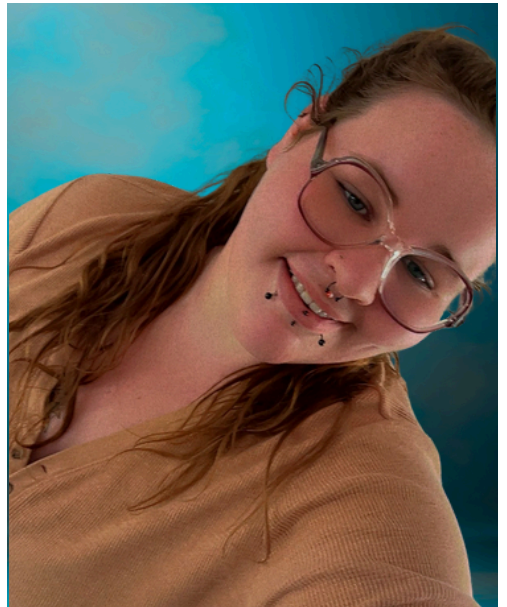
**Most Likely to Engineer  
a Brighter Future**

Sebastian



**Most Likely to Be the  
Mentor Youth Need**

Tatyana



**Most Likely to  
Inspire Change**

Lucifer



# THE IMPACT *Of Your Support*

When asked "Is there anything you'd like donors to know about the impact their support has had on students like you?", funding recipients responded with the following...

After I finish the degrees, I would like to work in the theatre industry as an accessibility consultant or producer. Having done an internship with a theatre company as a theatre producer with a focus on accessibility, I realized how much I enjoyed doing the work. My biggest dream and aspiration would be to share my music beyond my social circle and for it to impact other people. -Jenn

*One thing that surprised me about postsecondary life is that life continues to move forward, regardless of what's happening, and you have to learn how to be independent and find balance in order to manage everything effectively.*  
-Sebastian

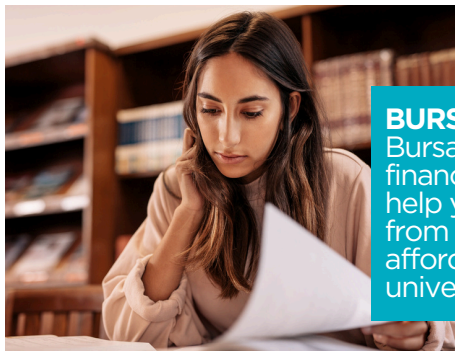


*Many people who were in care full time were not given the opportunities to create the life skills needed to be out on our own. Most of us will not have savings or any help towards education, for a lot of us scholarships are the only possibility of us being able to achieve secondary education.*  
-Lucifer



# COURSE CATALOGUE

*Other ways we support youth*



## BURSARIES

Bursaries provide financial support to help young people from government care afford college, university, or training



## GRADUATION AWARDS

Graduation Awards are given to students who are completing or have completed their post-secondary program.

## YOUTH OPPORTUNITY FUND

This fund supports youth by covering costs related to education and employment.



## IGNITE THE SPARK

Helps children who have no access to, or can't afford to have new experiences in sports, arts and recreation.



## YOUTH WORKS

A pre-employment development program that aims to help youth in and from care in their transition to independence.

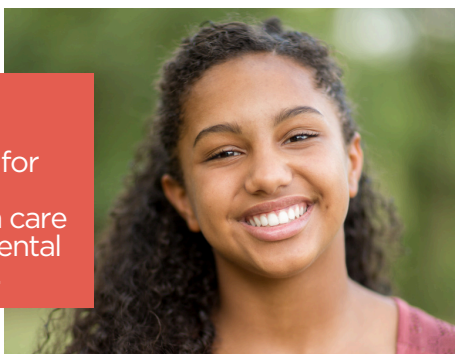


## STAY IN SCHOOL PROGRAM

Supports youth in and from care with personalized tutoring and mentoring.

## YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH FUND

Provides support for young people transitioning from care who are facing mental health challenges.



## BIG STEPS TO SUCCESS

A mentorship program for children offering support and guidance to help them thrive in school and life.



**LEARN MORE ABOUT HOW WE HELP AT [CAFDN.ORG](https://www.cafdn.org)**