

The Crown Ward News

Ontario Edition

Vol. 1, Iss. 1

THE TRUE VOICE OF FOSTER CARE IN ONTARIO
JULY 2005



Crown Ward Logo By Linda Prosh

“If you are going to be abused, it might as well be at home...”

2001 - John Dunn
Foster Care Survivor

“You may even figure out a use for the membership privileges that no one else has thought of yet”

The Editors Office

Welcome to **The Crown Ward News**, I'm John Dunn the Editor. **The Crown Ward News** is a publication which gives a voice to families and others affected by foster care. **The Crown Ward News** is here to give a voice to people affected by foster care and to increase public awareness of important child welfare issues. If you'd like to comment on something you read or make a submission please contact us at afterfostercare@hotmail.com. Maybe you would enjoy starting a **Crown Ward News** newsletter in your Province!

C.A.S. Membership

When you're involved with a Children's Aid Society one step you should take is to join as a member. Every one of the 53 Ontario Children's Aid Societies is a local charity, and any resident of the community over the age of majority can join. Simply go to your local Children's Aid office and tell them you want to be a member. There is usually a small annual fee of approximately five dollars. Once you have your membership card, ask for a copy of the bylaws. Most Children's Aid Societies will comply without the necessity to hire a lawyer. In the bylaws, you will find many other things that members are able to do.

These may include seeing the list of directors, attending board meetings, reading minutes of board meetings, getting a membership list, viewing financial statements, attending the annual meeting and voting in their elections. You may not as a member view the case file records.

If you are industrious enough to recruit enough members to outnumber the social workers, it may be possible to change policies, though that is more difficult now that many Children's Aid Societies have changed their bylaws to prevent members from nominating candidates for the board. Even with a smaller membership, you can benefit from seeing their internal corporate documents.

Depending on your direction, you may use the board actions to draw press or public attention to Children's Aid policies, or bring the kind of action at the annual meeting that will create interest in the press. You may even figure out a use for the membership privileges that no one else has thought of yet.

Submitted by Robert T McQuaid. Email: rtmq@stn.net
Internet:<http://www.fixcas.com>

Some clients have even reported being threatened by C.A.S. staff to cancel their meeting

Truth is, thousands of C.A.S. files contain evidence of abuse and neglect within the system and that's why they refuse to give copies

The Crown Ward News
503-1218 Meadowlands
Drive East, Ottawa, ON
K2E 6K1

Phone:
(613) 228-2178

E-mail:
afterfostercare@ncf.ca

We're on the Web!
www.afterfostercare.tk

Recording C.A.S. Meetings

Scores of C.A.S. clients have been faced with a situation where they felt they needed to record meetings with the C.A.S. and almost all of them have received various responses from their respective Society on this subject. Some clients have even reported being threatened by C.A.S. staff to cancel their meeting if they proceeded to record and others have had their meetings cancelled.

The Foster Care Council of Canada is currently sending a letter to all 53 of the Children's Aid Societies across the province asking for clarification on the rights of their clients regarding the recording of meetings with C.A.S. staff. The results of these inquiries will be published in a subsequent issue of Crown Ward News and on the Council's web site which is located at <http://www.afterfostercare.tk>

John Dunn - Editor

FIPPA & CAS

A concern I have about freedom of information requests deals with the classification of organizations that are "exempt" from the Freedom of Information and Privacy Protection Act (FIPPA). For example: A Children's Aid Society (C.A.S.) is exempt from FIPPA requests and health information requests.

Former Crown Wards can not obtain copies of our life records which are made during our time in care. As foster children we are often moved 10-15 times and once we turn 18, we're told they refuse to give copies of our life records to us including medical information.

C.A.S.'s claim they refuse to give copies of our life and medical records because they must maintain confidentiality. Truth is, thousands of C.A.S. files contain evidence of abuse and neglect within the system and that's why they refuse to give copies out. CAS's should be under FIPPA since personal information is protected by it as well.

I believe that personal information should be kept from the public just like any other organization, but the classification which exempts ALL of their records from FIPPA needs a public review! If you also believe this please contact the following people and let them know your feelings. If you write a letter or email, request that a copy be sent to all of the members of the committee since it is up to the membership to bring up a study topic.

Standing Committee on Government Agencies

Committee Clerk: susan_sourial@ontla.ola.org
Queens Park Toronto, Room 1405, Whitney Block
Tel: (416) 325-7352
Fax: (416) 325-3505

Standing Committee on Social Policy

Committee Clerk: anne_stokes@ontla.ola.org
Room 1405, Whitney Block
Tel: (416) 325-3515
Fax: (416) 325-3505