



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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LARGEST COMMITMENT TO HIGHER EDUCATION FOR CURRENT & FORMER FOSTER KIDS YET

LONDON, ON: Today, the Child Welfare Political Action Committee (Child Welfare PAC) is pleased to announce an additional four post-secondary institutions in London, Ontario have committed to financial support for up to 35 students who have “aged-out” of child protection system. These institutions comprise the wider Western University community including the three affiliate university colleges of Western University.

The Child Welfare PAC helped facilitate this initiative, with up to five students to receive financial assistance at each of Huron, Brescia, King’s, and a further 20 at Western, for the 2021-22 school year. It is an important step towards our goal to have all 45 of Ontario’s post-secondary schools join the movement to ensure those raised in care have bright futures. Over the last year, we have helped secure similar initiatives at Laurentian University, Georgian College, and Loyalist College.

Foster kids are typically evicted from care at age 18 making hardship all too common. It can take years to achieve stability. As such, financial support without arbitrary age limits reduces barriers allowing former foster kids the opportunity to improve their lives. All schools have committed to providing current and former foster kids with financial support, regardless of the age they are ready to attend.

Next week, these latest universities will host virtual open houses for prospective students.

- Brescia’s Fall Preview Day: November 7, 2020 from 10 a.m. - 1 p.m.
https://brescia.uwo.ca/admissions/visit_campus/fall_preview_day.php
- King’s University College Open House: November 7, 2020 from noon – 4 p.m.
<https://www.kings.uwo.ca/open-house/>
- Huron’s Fall Virtual Open House: November 15, 2020 from 10a.m. - 1p.m.
<https://huron.radiusbycampusgmt.com/ssc/eform/zBOT5nG0700kx6700rExl.ssc> or
<https://huronatwestern.ca/events/virtual-fall-open-house/>
- Western’s Virtual Fall Preview Day: November 15, 2020 from 11 a.m. - 4 p.m.
<https://welcome.uwo.ca/november/>

QUOTES:

“Education levels the playing field for people like me. I am grateful that financial access to university education will no longer be a barrier to social mobility for even more people who were raised in Ontario’s foster care system,” **said Jane Kovarikova, founder of the Child Welfare PAC, former Crown Ward, and current doctoral candidate at Western.** “If you were or are in foster care, know that Huron, Brescia, King’s, and Western, believe in you.”

“Overcoming adverse childhood experiences is all too often a monumental climb for youth,” **said Chris Steven, Executive Director and CEO, Children’s Aid Society of London and Middlesex.** “Now their incredible resilience and perseverance are matched by this gamechanger – top calibre university education from caring and premier schools. Kudos to Western, King’s, Brescia and Huron.”

“At Huron, we believe everyone, no matter background or socio-economic status, deserve access to education,” said **Dr. Barry Craig, President of Huron**. “It’s what defines Huron’s mission of delivering elite, yet accessible education, while challenging our students to be Leaders with Heart. Having this partnership will ensure a clearer path to education for those Crown Wards. Now more than ever, our hearts need to be in everything we do, and we must always enable success and opportunities for those in less than ideal situations.”

Brescia’s Interim Principal, Cheryl Jensen, is pleased to partner with the Child Welfare PAC, Western University and the affiliate university colleges to help launch this significant new student support initiative. She remarks, “The Ursuline Sisters, who founded Brescia in 1919, believed that every student should be provided with access to education – regardless of their circumstances. They acted on this belief by consistently finding new and innovative ways to financially support Brescia students.” She goes on to say, “Today, we are proud to continue the Ursuline’s tradition by forming this new partnership, which will not only help to remove financial barriers for Crown Ward students, but will also help enrich our community of leaders by adding new and diverse voices to our campus.”

“A basic moral test is how our most vulnerable members are faring,” said **Dr. David Malloy, Principal of King’s University College**. “All of us at King’s are dedicated to improving the lives of the poor by breaking down barriers to education. We are humbled to help enable former Crown Wards to be fully part of society by aiding them with a King’s education rooted in social justice, equality and the education of the whole person.”

“Jane’s success and leadership are inspiring—we want to encourage others to follow in her footsteps,” said **Alan Shepard, President of Western University**. “We’re proud to join the growing number of schools committed to helping crown wards achieve their academic goals.”

“Education opens doors, inspires, and brightens futures,” said **Terence Kernaghan, MPP for London North Centre**. “I am incredibly thankful to Huron, Brescia, King’s, and Western for their commitment to our community. This historic leadership illustrates how Londoners care about one another and promote a kinder, more just, and brighter community. My heartfelt thanks to the community-building vision and compassion of the institution heads, Craig, Jensen, Malloy, and Shepard, as well as a true leader whose desire to reach backwards brings others forward, PhD candidate Jane Kovarikova. This is life-changing work.”

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Ontario Foster Care Quick Facts:

- There are 12,000 children in state care in Ontario.
- About 60% of foster youth drop-out of high school.
- Each year, about 1,000 exit the system or rather “age-out” – typically at age 18.
- From age 18 to 21, youth receive an allowance of approximately \$875/month.
- At age 21, foster youth are expected to be fully independent, credentialed, and career-ready for life as contributing members of society - unrealistic expectations.
- If studies bear out, only 80 of 400 qualified foster youth pursue higher education each year.
- Age restricted tuition support is unlikely to be effective.
- An estimated 100,000+ former Crown wards are in Ontario.

About [Huron](#)

For more than 155 years, Huron has challenged students to be Leaders with Heart. With a focus on providing a well-rounded Liberal Arts education, Huron strives to be the best strategically small institution in Canada. The Huron experience equips students with the tools to be agents of change who receive faculty mentorship and unparalleled research opportunities from day one.

About [Brescia](#)

Brescia University College, Canada’s women’s university college, is affiliated with Western University. The 1,600 women registered as either full- or part-time students at Brescia study a wide variety of subjects in the Schools of Behavioural & Social Sciences, Food & Nutritional Sciences, Humanities and Leadership & Social Change in an empowering, compassionate, student-centred and invigorating environment. Degrees are granted by Western. The Catholic University College welcomes students from all backgrounds and values diversity.

About [King’s](#)

King’s is a public Catholic University College which provides general and honors degree programs in the liberal arts, social sciences, management, and a master's degree in social work. It is positioned in the top rank of institutions of higher learning in Canada for the high quality of its teaching faculty and student experience. Institutionally autonomous, King’s is academically affiliated with Western University, and King’s graduates receive a Western University degree. King’s is open to students of all faith backgrounds, with its community centred on the values of social justice, equality and the education of the whole person.

About [Western](#)

Western University delivers an academic experience second to none. Since 1878, The Western Experience has combined academic excellence with life-long opportunities for intellectual, social and cultural growth in order to better serve our communities. Our research excellence expands knowledge and drives discovery with real-world application. Western attracts individuals with a broad worldview, seeking to study, influence and lead in the international community.

About [Child Welfare PAC](#)

The Child Welfare PAC is a federal not-for-profit that represents the interests of children raised by the government. The advisory committee consists of professionals from academia, law, business, advocacy & public service who have lived experience in child protection systems. The complete advocacy agenda may be reviewed here: www.childwelfarepac.com