

A Child's Hope Journal

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Welcome to *A Child's Hope*

A Child's Hope is a movement that will transform the lives of thousands of children who are in care in our region. The program takes a grassroots approach to empower and enable ordinary people to transform the lives of children and youth in need through fostering, adoption or mentoring.

The children who are part of *A Child's Hope* need nothing more than a family to love and care for them; a family they will belong to forever. *A Child's Hope* will inform and inspire Albertans to step up and give those children a hopeful future.



Help to spread the word!

A Child's Hope consists of an Ambassador Team, which uses the voices of current foster and adoptive parents, and former kids in care. Working with Child and Family Services, and our nine local foster care agencies, the Ambassador Team will speak to groups in our community about fostering and adoption. It is their real-life experiences which will touch people, and influence them to become part of *A Child's Hope*, as adoptive or foster parents.

Join the movement and become *A Child's Hope* by helping to spread the word about kids needing homes. If you know of any speaking opportunities for the Ambassador Team, please let us know by phoning 780-422-3333 or emailing region6.caregiver@gov.ab.ca.

For more information, visit our new website, www.achildshope.alberta.ca.



A Child's Hope is Launched

On Monday, October 19, adopted sisters Jade (12) and Amelia (18) launched the Child's Hope movement at a special awareness and media event at the Transalta Arts Barns. They launched the program by sharing their story of adoption, and how their hopes for finding a forever home together were transformed into a reality.

Jade and Amelia's Story

Six years ago, after spending years in foster care, Amelia had to make the difficult decision to have her sister Jade adopted without her because of the challenges of finding a family that would adopt siblings together. This selfless act allowed Jade to find her forever home with the Gregresh family. When the Gregresh family learned of Amelia's sacrifice, they eventually adopted her too.

"Many kids and families take for granted the fact that they get to be together every day and that they are a family. For me, this was like a dream come true" said Amelia at the program's launch on October 19.

The Need

Their story, unfortunately, is not unique; there are thousands of youth and children across the province who are in need of a home and a loving family. Edmonton and Area Child and Family Services developed *A Child's Hope* to help people understand the needs of children and youth in care. The program's Ambassador Team, made up of foster and adoptive families and former kids in care, like Jade and Amelia, will go out into communities to share their stories and help communicate how ordinary people can come together as a community to help these children and youth reach their fullest potential.



Adopted sisters Jade and Amelia with sister Samantha, Region 6 CEO Rick Semel and Deputy Minister Fay Orr.



The Launch

The launch of *A Child's Hope* was a huge success. Along with Jade and Amelia, CEO of Edmonton and Area Child and Family Services Rick Semel and Deputy Minister, Children and Youth Services, Fay Orr were on-hand to explain how people can give children a hopeful future through fostering, adoption, or mentoring.

During the launch, dozens of supporters symbolically pledged to help spread the stories of Alberta's children and youth in need, by placing their handprint on a canvas.

Did You Know?

Telus World of Science has an observatory, where you can view the sun, moon, stars and planets through high quality telescopes. Explore the sky with the assistance of volunteers from the Edmonton Chapter of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada (RASC).

The Observatory is located in Coronation Park, just southeast of TELUS World of Science. There is no charge for admission.

More information: www.edmontonscience.com

Mark Your Calendars

A few upcoming family-friendly events:

Festival of Trees

What: Hundreds of decorated trees and festive decorations for visitors of all ages. Family entertainment.

When: November 26 – 29

Time: Thursday to Saturday, 9:00 am – 9:00 pm;
Sunday, 9:00 am – 5:00 pm

Where: Shaw Conference Centre

Cost: Tickets sold at door ONLY. Adult \$6, Seniors/Youth (13 – 17) \$3, Children (2–12) \$1, Children under 2 are free

Website: www.festivaloftrees.ab.ca

Read More: <http://edmontonkids.com/family.htm#ixzz0Wm41baJY>

The 9th Annual 2010 Edmonton Pet Expo

What: Slither down and enjoy a weekend full of furry, feathered and creepy critter friends!

When: January 23 & 24

Times: Saturday 10:00 am – 6:00 pm,
Sunday 10:00 am – 5:00 pm

Where: Northlands AgriCom Hall B, Edmonton

Cost: General admission \$8, Children (5-11) \$6, Children under 5 are free, Family pass (2 adults, 2 children) \$20

Website: www.petexpo.ca

More Family Friendly Online Resources

<http://edmontonkids.com/family.htm>

<http://mpt.edmontonshows.com>

<http://edmontonkids.com/family.htm#ixzz0SWGWkoLv>

<http://familyedmonton.com>

Fall Recipe Ideas

Chicken Noodle Soup

Ingredients:

- 1 recipe Fast Chicken soup base
- 3 cups egg noodles
- 1 cup frozen green peas
- 1/2 cup chopped fresh parsley
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper

Directions:

1. Prepare Fast Chicken soup base. Bring to a simmer.
2. Add egg noodles, then simmer until tender. 10 – 20 minutes.
3. Before removing from heat, stir in 1 cup (5 ounces) frozen green peas and 1/2 cup chopped fresh parsley.
4. Add salt and pepper, to taste.

Pecan Pie

Ingredients:

- Homemade or frozen crust for single-crust pie
- 4 eggs, lightly beaten
- 3/4 cup dark brown sugar, packed
- 1/2 cup dark corn syrup
- 1/2 cup maple syrup or 4 tbsp. molasses
- 6 tbsp. butter, melted
- 2 tsps. vanilla extract
- 2-1/2 cups coarsely chopped pecans
- 1/2 cup pecan halves

Directions:

1. Line a 12-inch tart pan or a 10-inch pie pan with crust; weigh it down and prebake it. Meanwhile, prepare the filling in a large mixing bowl.
2. In a large bowl, blend the eggs, brown sugar, corn syrup, maple syrup or molasses, butter and vanilla extract. Stir in the chopped nuts. Pour the filling into the cooled tart shell. Sprinkle with the pecan halves. Bake at 325 degrees for thirty minutes or until the center has set and doesn't jiggle when you shake the pan. Makes 10 servings.



Adoptive Profile: A Forever Home Needed for Two



Jaden (7) and Devin (5) are delightful brothers who require a forever home where they can remain together. These active boys play well with their peers and with each other. They are happy and sociable children who are a pleasure to be around.

Jaden, born in 2002, is a handsome child with blonde hair, blue eyes and a lean build. He is shy when first meeting someone but he becomes animated once his comfort level increases. Jaden smiles easily and likes to talk. He does well in a school program that helps him to meet his individual needs. This patient little boy enjoys playing with toys and games requiring focus, and loves outdoor activities such as camping and bar-b-cues.

Devin, born in 2004, has blonde hair, blue eyes and a lean build like his brother. Although shy at first, he is very likeable and sometimes mischievous! Devin benefits from the extra support of a specialized school program. He enjoys playing with toys and games and participating in music activities at school.

This sweet duo would benefit from energetic, patient and loving adoptive parents who are able to provide them with extra support and guidance in order to help them to meet their maximum potential. They would thrive in a home with or without other children.



Celebrating Our Foster Parents

The week of October 19 – 23 was Foster Parent Appreciation week and in Edmonton, the Child and Family Services Authority (CFSA) hosted its second annual Foster Parent Appreciation event at the West Edmonton Mall World Water Park, honoured foster parents for their hard work and years of service and took time to celebrate the most vulnerable of the children in care.

Held the Friday before foster parent appreciation week, the CFSA and the nine local foster care Agencies hosted 1335 foster parents, biological family and foster children who had a great time riding the water slides and waves in the giant wave pool. About 50 caseworkers, foster care workers as well several managers and senior managers volunteered to keep the event well organized, fun and safe for all.

The following Monday, *A Child's Hope* (a program to help raise the awareness of the need for adoptive and foster parents) was highlighted to the media. Region 6 CEO Rick Semel, Deputy Minister Fay Orr, Jade, Amelia and Sharon Gregresh and dozens of foster, adoption and permanency workers were on hand to lend their support for the program.

On Thursday, the Edmonton and District Family Support Association (EDFSA and Child and Family Services) hosted a breakfast specifically for foster parents of medically fragile children. This incredibly heartwarming event was an exceptional opportunity for children who have so many challenges to just be kids for a few hours.

On the Friday of Foster Parent Appreciation week, the CFSA was very pleased to honor long-time foster parents for their many, many years of services to children and youth. 134 families were recognized for a combined 1500 years of service.

Many of the nine foster parent agencies operating in the Edmonton region also celebrated and honoured their foster families with events and activities.



What's In It For You?

If you know or meet someone who could give a Child Hope, you can get a nice, \$250 thank you in your pocket if he or she ends up becoming a foster or adoptive parent.

We're always looking for people to join us and help children and youth in need and we need you to keep an eye out for the perfect people. When you find them, share your story, give them the website so they can find out more, and encourage them to call us.

Tell them to mention that you spoke to them and, if it all works out, you will qualify for our \$250 referral bonus. Call 780-422-3333 to find out more!

Ambassador Feature: Sherri Godby

As a foster parent, I think the words I hear the most from people inquiring about foster care is "I don't think I could ever do that. It would be too painful for me to give the child up."

I am a single mom of two biological children and honestly, I know exactly how that feels. My first placement was a two and half month old baby boy. After ten months of falling in love with this little guy and nurturing him into great health, I was expected to hand him back to his natural mother. How does one do that? For myself, I did it with great pride. I feel that my first most important goal to accomplish with each placement as a foster parent is to fall in love with and bond with every foster child that graces my home. When a child leaves my home and my heart is broken, then I know I did my job. I know that I accomplished that goal.

During the time we had this little baby boy our care, my 4 year old son asked me if we were going to keep him. I told him no, that we were just a "pit stop" along his journey in life, and we were here to help him get strong enough to continue on that path. I also explained to him that he came to us so that we could love him and teach him how to love, and ultimately he could in return teach his mommy how to love him. On the final day of his stay with us, we took the baby to the church to return him to his biological mother, who was having him baptized. During the time we spent with his mother, she and I passed the baby back and

forth. My son watched as she held her baby in her arms, smiling into his face and having strong eye contact. Then he turned to me and said "Look mommy, he taught his mommy how to love him!". This is why I love my role as a foster parent.

That was about seven years ago. I have since adopted one child and will be adopting another child that is in my care. I am also in the process of transitioning another foster child home to his new adoptive family. He has been in my care since he was one month old, and is now twenty two months old. I do love him very much as if he were my own. As heartbreaking as it is to say good-bye, I am very excited for my little guy. He has been welcomed into a wonderful "forever" family. Soon I will have an opening for another foster child, and I can't wait for my next adventure...

Sherri Godby
Foster Parent
Catholic Social Services



Have A Story Idea for *A Child's Hope Journal?*

Feel free to send your comments and story ideas to region6caregiver@gov.ab.ca.