



Children's Aid Society of Toronto Recognized as a Top Diversity employer

Agency's efforts to better reflect the city receives national attention

February 24, 2016 (Toronto, ON) - The Children's Aid Society of Toronto (CAST) has for the first time been named one of the country's top diversity employers. The Society stood out for creating an inclusive workplace for employees from five different categories: women; visible minorities; persons with disabilities; Indigenous peoples; and individuals identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT).

"This is an extremely proud and important day for the Society", said CAS of Toronto Board Chair Anthony Fralick. "From a governance perspective, we have worked hard for years to develop the frameworks and policies that would actively foster an environment of inclusion, diversity and anti-oppression. Having that work acknowledged on a national level is very gratifying."

Of the agency's current workforce, 33 % are racialized persons, 8 % are LGBTQ individuals, 6.5% are persons with disabilities and 2 per cent are Indigenous. Women make up 83 per cent of the organizations employees and 80 percent of its managers. Among managers, 24 per cent are racialized persons, 10 per cent are LGBTQ individuals, 7 % are persons with disabilities, and 2 per cent are Indigenous.

"There are few organizations anywhere in the country that have the kind of inclusiveness and diversity that we do", said David Rivard, Chief Executive Officer of CAST. "Our staff understand the importance of diversity in the work that we do, and are committed to serving all children and families with equity. As an organization, we are committed to being a leader within our field in all aspects of diversity, equity and inclusion", he added.

Initiatives that the CAST has undertaken which supported their Diversity award application, included:

- A governance philosophy that includes a commitment to active engagement of our community and building partnerships with our stakeholders
- A commitment to reflect the diversity of the communities and stakeholders we serve in all levels of the organization
- Client service and relationship improvement initiatives with Muslim and African/Caribbean communities
- Initiatives for youth in care including cultural educational and historic travel opportunities, partnerships with community groups to support Black fathers
- Led the sector 20 years ago by permitting same sex couples to become foster and adoptive parents
- Celebration and recognition of significant cultural events including Black History Month, Kwanzaa, Pride Day, LGBTIQ Awards, Chinese Lunar New Year.
- Numerous training sessions on anti-oppression topics including; Anti-Oppressive Practice, Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, Harassment, the Ontario Human Rights Code, Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity, Recruitment and Selection
- Proactively encouraging diverse candidates to apply to CAST employment opportunities through partnerships with Equitek, NationTalk, Pride at Work, Job Opportunity Information Network, Spinal Cord Injury Ontario, CNIB and Ryerson University's Internationally Educated Social Work Program

To determine this year's winners of the *Canada's Best Diversity Employers* competition, Mediacorp editors reviewed the applications of employers that applied for the Canada's Top 100 Employers project. Over 3,500 employers across Canada started the application process for this year's competition, which was reduced to a short-listed group of employers with noteworthy and unique diversity initiatives. Each short-listed candidate's programs were reviewed to determine how they compared to those of other employers in the same field.

The Children's Aid Society of Toronto works with children and their families when children have been or are at risk of being emotionally, physically, or sexually abused or neglected. The Society is one of 47 children's aid societies in Ontario, and is the largest Board governed child welfare organization in North America.

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