



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

Agency's efforts to promote equity and better reflect clientele receives national award

March 28, 2017 (Toronto, ON) - The Children's Aid Society of Toronto (CAST), for the second consecutive year 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).

"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.

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.

"We recognize the importance of this award at the Children's Aid Society of Toronto and celebrate this accomplishment, said Nicole Bonnie, Director, Diversity and Inclusion at CAST. "However, we are just at the beginning of this journey and will continue to examine and change where necessary, our practice in order to get better outcomes for the families, youth and children we serve."

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 over 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, 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.

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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