



FAMILY CONNEXIONS AIMS TO FIND 40 NEW FOSTER FAMILIES
Summer Campaign Highlights Importance of keeping our kids #CloseToHome

BARRIE (JUNE 22, 2016) Simcoe Muskoka Family Connexions (SMFC) is putting out a call to help find 40 new foster homes for children right here in our Simcoe County and Muskoka communities. Their aim is to find a diverse pool of placement families that can open their doors in a difficult time and that are close to home.

“It’s about building a bigger roster of diverse foster homes across the region so that when a child needs to be protected, there is a healthy, safe place to go that will best suit them,” said Nicole Middleton, Manager of Foster Care Recruitment & Development. Currently, their greatest need are homes that will take infants, toddlers, teens and siblings.

246 children came into the care of the agency last year when abuse or difficulties in their home made it unsafe for them to stay. **With only 146 approved foster homes in all of Simcoe County and Muskoka**, it means many times these children had to be transferred and weren’t able to remain in their home community or their school.

“It’s very important that these children are surrounded by friends and adults that can support them,” said Middleton.

The newly amalgamated SMFC is encouraging the members of Simcoe and Muskoka regions to recognize their shared responsibility as a community - and ensure that children in crisis are able to be placed in supportive and safe environments, if and when needed.

The campaign, called **#CloseToHome** highlights how the lack of available homes causes some fostered children to have to be placed away from their home community. “Having more foster families across the region will help provide stability to them in a very unstable period of their life,” says Middleton. “It’s key for our kids to be able to stay connected to relatives, friends, their culture, schools, and recreational activities.”

Middleton emphasizes that diversity is another core goal for SMFC, having homes available that are both in the child’s community and culture, including Aboriginal and French speaking homes. Foster families are as unique and diverse as the children who need them. Singles, couples and families – they come from all ages, life stages, cultures and sexual orientations.

“We know there are more families in our community that would help, if they understood the need,” she said. Those interested in fostering or adoption should fill out the simple inquiry form on www.familyconnexions.ca or contact foster and adoption workers Deb or Sam 705-726-6587 x2259.

The next Information Session will be held on **Monday July 25th from 6:30 to 8:30 at 60 Bell Farm Road.**

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On April 1, 2015, Simcoe Muskoka Family Connexions (SMFC) became a union of the Simcoe Children's Aid Society and Family, Youth and Child Services of Muskoka. The independent non-profit agency provides culturally appropriate, efficient and effective services in the areas of child protection and children's mental health. SMFC works collaboratively to enhance the safety and wellbeing of children, youth and families. We provide services out of 9 locations throughout the 8,800 km² regions of Simcoe County and the District of Muskoka. Offices include the head office of Barrie, Ontario and 8 additional branch offices – Alliston, Bracebridge, Bradford, Collingwood, Gravenhurst, Huntsville, Midland, and Orillia.

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