

# Bright Futures Bursary

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## YOUTH IN LONDON NEED SUPPORT FOR EDUCATION

Youth who are or have been in the care of the Children's Aid Society face different challenges than most youth entering adulthood. Many of these youth live independently on limited financial resources. They do not have a stable family to turn to for support. For some youth, the opportunity to attend post-secondary school is not a viable option for them.

*The Children's Aid Society of London and Middlesex Bright Futures Bursary Program* provides bursaries to marginalized youth between the ages of 18 and 21 who are or who have been in the care of the Children's Aid Society. The existence of this fund helps to highlight the value of post-secondary education and encourage youth to aspire to such a goal.

Research indicates that a youth in care who is able to worry less about their debts and financial challenges has a better chance of achieving their educational dreams. We have seen an increase in confidence and optimism in our bursary recipients that have enabled them to complete their education and give back to their community.

The distinguishing difference of the Children's Aid Society of London and Middlesex Bright Futures Bursary Program from other bursary programs in the community is that bursaries are awarded only to youth who are, or were part of the child welfare system (living in foster care, with no or limited biological family contact or support).

Bursaries are provided to youth enrolled in community college, university, or an accredited trades/apprenticeship program. Bursaries are provided annually in two installments up to a maximum of four years or until our youth achieve their diploma/degree. Recipients of the award are required to complete an annual progress report and provide confirmation of enrollment in each term they are enrolled in prior to receiving funding. The value of bursaries vary year to year depending on the amount of funds available. Recipients attending school part-time will receive a pro-rated award based on the number of courses they are taking.

Since the programs' inception in 2002, the Bursary Program has assisted 155 youth pursue post-secondary education. Their stories of determination and their ability to overcome adversities in pursuit of a better future are truly commendable.