

August 4, 2009

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c/o Ms. XXXXXXXXXXX XXXXXX
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North York, Ontario
M3M 1K2

York Region Children's Aid Society
P.O. Box 358
Newmarket, Ontario
L3Y 4X7
Tel: (905) 895-2318
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Attn: Mr. Patrick Lake, Executive Director

Dear Mr. Lake

RE: Termination of my status as Crown Ward with the York Region Children's Aid Society after years of abuse while in care

This letter is to advise the York Region Children's Aid Society that as of Tuesday July 28, 2009, I no longer consider myself as living as a Crown Ward under the care or control of the York Region Children's Aid Society. I have voluntarily left the care and control of the York Region Children's Aid Society and I no longer wish to live under the control of your agency. I am writing this letter to you, the director of the York Region CAS, as I have been mistreated for years by workers and simply do not have any faith in the workers with your agency.

I am now 16 years of age and fully capable of making decisions about my care for myself. If I need any additional support, I can get it from my mother and other people in the community who support me in my efforts to live independently and to break free of the destructive influences of the children's aid society.

I came to this decision as my life has been nothing but a living hell as a Crown Ward of your agency for the past eight years of my life. The latest incident which finally pushed me to break free from your agency was when I was physically assaulted yet again by a worker with Youthdale Treatment Centre in Magnetawan just prior to my leaving that facility. I suffered physical injuries as a result of being assaulted by the worker.

While workers have always told me that as a CAS ward I must remain under the control of the CAS until I was 18 years of age, I also have been informed that under the Substitute Decision Act of Ontario that I can make my own decisions as to my care. Nobody with the CAS has every informed my of my rights and have always kept me in the dark. Under the Act it states:

Presumption of capacity

(2) A person who is sixteen years of age or more is presumed to be capable of giving or refusing consent in connection with his or her own personal care. 1992, c. 30, s. 2 (2).

On your website your agency makes a number of claims some of which include:

Respect and Dignity:

All persons have an inherent right to have their needs and challenges met in a manner that treats them as individuals worthy of consideration, and having value simply based upon their being human beings.

Based on my experience and how I saw other kids in care being treated, none of the kids I have seen over the past several years have been treated with any respect or dignity. This claim on your website is nothing more than a meaningless statement intended to deceive the public.

Do Onto Others ... :

We treat each other in the manner in which we would wish to be treated. In the words of Mahatma Gandhi "You must be the change you wish to see in the world."

Based on my experience and how I saw other kids in care being treated, kids in care were seriously mistreated. This claim on your website is nothing more than a meaningless statement intended to deceive the public.

TREAT CHILDREN AS IF THEY WERE OUR OWN:

Children in the care of the agency have the same rights as all other children, and the standard of care we strive for is what we would do for our own children.

Based on my experience and how I saw other kids in care being treated, I doubt very much that workers treat their children the same as the kids in care. This claim on your website is nothing more than a meaningless statement intended to deceive the public.

NOTHING ABOUT THEM WITHOUT THEM:

We involve clients and staff in every discussion and decision that affects their lives. We talk to people, not about people.

Based on my experience and how I saw other kids in care being treated, kids in care are seldom asked about anything. I was kept in the dark. My questions to the CAS doctor went unanswered. I was never told my rights. I was beaten and robbed in care. I was never asked for my input on anything involving my care. This is just more lies to make your agency look good on its website.

I have wanted to terminate my crown wardship with your agency for a long time now, but with such tight controls in place such as workers locking kid's shoes up at night it has always been next to an impossible task to escape. Being isolated in a remote and desolate Ontario location also is another barrier. It also seems that while in care nobody wanted to help me, including the child advocate's office who kept saying that they would address my concerns but never did.

I believe that living as a Crown Ward of the York Region CAS has caused significant harm to me physically and emotionally and greatly impeded my education. Just some of things that I have been subjected to while in the care of the York Region CAS include the following:

- I have been physically assaulted and abused by workers on numerous occasions but unable to report such assaults as access to communication is tightly controlled by staff.
- I have been lied to by workers and given misinformation.
- I was denied calling my mother on the phone.

- Children in care, including myself, were not allowed to speak to each other unless all of our conversation could be over heard by workers. Workers were stationed outside of the bedrooms at night to ensure that children did not speak to each other.
- I was allowed only two phone calls per week were allowed with those being cut off if staff felt like it. All phone calls were monitored and timed with someone either listening in on the phone line or a worker sitting next to me while I spoke on the phone.
- All children in care, including myself could not keep money. All of our money had to be turned over to staff at the facility. Often our money would go missing and we would never see it again. Half of our weekly \$10 allowance was forcefully taken by workers at Youthdale Treatment Centre which was used by staff on general activities of their choosing. We were forced to give our personal money with no say as to how it was to be spent.
- Many of my personal possessions disappeared after forcefully being taken by staff. Many of the other children in care had the same happen to them.
- I was forced to sign legal documents which I did not understand and nobody would explain to me. I was told to sign documents or be punished. I was refused to be provided a copy of any of the documents which I was forced to sign under duress by workers.
- I have been forced to the floor and sat on by workers and have had powerful medication forced in my mouth and down my throat. The medications were forced upon me by a doctor from the CAS who would not listen to me but basically told me to just comply with the wishes of CAS workers and to agree to take the medications like the other kids in care and to shut up.
- I have been forced to sit at a student desk all night and not allowed to go to my bedroom unless I agreed to do or say things which workers told me I had to do or say.
- I have been the victim of false allegations by workers which they commonly use as an excuse to punish children and to make the kids in care look like problem kids. It seems that workers use this tactic against other kids as well as a post on a blog from another kid under the control of Youthdale stated the same in his post. (blog posting attached)
- I have been subjected to threats, intimidation and bullying by staff as were most of the other kids in care at Youthdale.
- One of your agency's former supervisors, Ms. Donna Lennin stole money which my mother had sent to me. She was arrested by York Regional Police and pleaded guilty to this crime in Newmarket court.
- I have been denied access to the phone to call the child advocate's office in spite of my legal right to do so.
- Attempts to reach me by the child advocate's office have been thwarted by workers.
- At 16 years of age I am computer illiterate, not because I do not possess the ability to learn, but because I was kept from learning about the computer and the internet because of what I believe was the need by workers to ensure that children in care of CAS would not be able to communicate with the outside world and to get their stories of abuse while in care to those on the outside.

- I have been forced to take a cocktail of powerful drugs while in care which have only made me feel sick. I believe that the years of forced medication of powerful drugs has stunted my growth. I believe I am shorter in stature than I should be and I believe it was the powerful drugs which have stunted my normal growth. Below is a photo of the bag of medications which were forced upon me by workers. One of the pill bottles in the bag (see photo below) does not even have a proper prescription label and has been labelled using a crayon.



Photo of the pills that I was physically restrained by staff and forced to take against my will if I did not agree to take them myself.

The above is only a partial list of some of the things I have been experienced to while being a Crown Ward of the York Region CAS. While being declared a ward, I have been held in what I would consider nothing less than a prison. In the last few days I have been given information by others which certainly supports that my experience of abuse is not isolated. Attached to my letter is a page containing comments from other persons who have been victimized at Youthdale Treatment Centres just as I was abused. It seems that many of the abusive tactics used against me while in care have been used against other children in the same way. It would seem that Youthdale have got the art of child abuse down to a science where they can abuse kids and keep the evidence and their wrongdoing hidden from the public.

Now that I am 16 years of age, I want out of the CAS. I don't want to have anything to do with your agency, your workers or with any of the agencies which the York Region CAS uses to abuse children such as Youthdale Treatment Centres. As far as I am concerned, the Youthdale Treatment Centre that I was held prisoner in should not be referred to as a treatment centre but instead referred to as a torture and abuse centre for children. Kids are being abused inside of that facility and the only reason why this is not generally known is because Youthdale keeps the children under such repressive conditions, with many being forced to take drugs that it is impossible for the children in care to get their stories out into the open and to be believed.

As I don't trust the workers with your agency anymore, if you would like to hear what I have to say, then I would be willing to meet with you in person at your office along with a support person of my choosing. I would think that you, as the head of the York Region CAS, would be most interested in

being made fully aware of what your agency is doing to the kids that are being taken into the care of your agency.

Because I have had so many bad experiences with workers lying and twisting around what I have said over the years, I will insist that my meeting with you be recorded electronically with my own recording device for accuracy purposes. I have no problem with having anything I say in our meeting accurately recorded. If you are an honest person, then you should have nothing to fear about recording our meeting as well.

If you are willing to meet with me under the condition that our meeting be recorded, then please contact my mother, Ms. XXXXXXXXXXX XXXXXX at (416) XXX-XXXX who will be more than glad to arrange a meeting.

If you are not willing to meet with me in person, then tell your workers to leave me alone and to get out of my life. I would ask that your agency file a motion with the court to remove me from being a Crown Ward of your agency as I don't want your agency to have any control over me whatsoever.

At this time, I would request that a complete copy of all my child protection files since the day I was first taken into the York Region CAS be provided to me including any files in the possession of the agencies which my care was contracted out to by the York Region CAS such as Youthdale Treatment Centres. Please contact my mother and she will arrange to have my files picked up from your offices.

In regards to my future, I am planning to get a part time job and to go back to school to get the education and other life experiences that I was deprived of while living in prison-like conditions as a Crown Ward of the York Region CAS. I have missed out on so much on life while being a Crown Ward and now find myself at a significant disadvantage to other children who have lived outside of the control of the CAS. For years, I have been the subject to the control of workers who did not care for one minute about the kids. In fact, several of the workers said that they were there only for a job to make money and for nothing else. How can your agency claim to be protecting and caring for children, when your agency gives the responsibility of raising children into the control of mindless and uncaring workers? Children cannot thrive or grow up to be normal in the sort of environment that your agency is putting children into.

Tragically, I know that I am not alone and that other kids in the care of your agency are suffering as well. Children in care are unable to speak out because of the almost prison-like conditions as well as the daily threats and intimidation which strikes fear in the children and silences their cries for help. If your agency really cares about kids, then start by getting your workers to respect the rights of children in care. One suggestion I would make to help protect children from abuse is that workers be required to record all of their conversations with children using video or audio equipment. This will help put an end to the lies by workers. I believe that the installation of video surveillance equipment inside of Youthdale Treatment Centres may also help reduce the number of incidents of bullying and abuse of children by the staff members who, based on my own experience, seem to take enjoyment in taunting and bullying the kids in care, knowing that there is nothing to make them accountable for their abuse of power over the kids.

In just the short period of time since I have been out of the control of your agency, I have learned so much about my rights and freedoms. By isolating me and controlling my ability to obtain

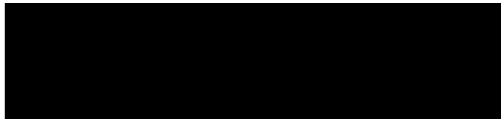
information, workers have kept from me from learning about my rights for all of these years. Based on my experience, I can see how workers do everything they can to keep kids in the dark about their rights and freedoms and to keep them feeling frightened and isolated. I wish that I had known more about my rights sooner and had been able to speak up and take action earlier.

I hope that this letter will serve as a wakeup call to your agency to review the way it does business and which other agencies it does business with. I intend to speak to others about my experience. Hopefully, by getting my story out, I might be able to make a difference to other children. I am sure that other children will be coming forth in the months and years with more stories about how they have been abused by various workers while under the care and control of CAS.

In closing, all I can say is that the York Region Children's Aid Society should be absolutely ashamed of the abuse what it has subjected my family and I too. While my letter may seem not very polite, I have suffered years of abuse which gives me reason to be angry. If a resident spoke like this in care, they would be punished and in most cases forced on to medications. I suspect that other children in care are being affected just like I was. It is my hope that your agency will help me to make contact with my own little brother who is 12 years of age. I have been constantly refused permission to contact him. It seems however, from comments made on the Youthdale blog, that breaking up siblings is something that CAS agencies do to other kids as well.

I would appreciate your personal response in writing sent to my mother's mailing address which is listed at the top of this letter. I only hope that your agency will do what is right and to put things right for the future and to take steps which will stop the abuse of children who are in care.

Yours truly

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the signature area.

Xxxxxxx Xxxxxt

Former Crown Ward of the York Region Children's Aid Society

Attachment: Comments posted in a public forum about Youthdale Treatment Centre (1 page)

Comments posted on the internet about Youthdale Treatment Centre

Sherri

NO!! THEY MEDICATE WITH DANGEROUS DRUGS THAT CAUSE BRAIN DAMAGE...**I do not recommend this place.**

Blackwidow1PP

Believe me I have a lot to tell you. You need to get stories from all over because some of us are out there and we consider ourselves Youthdale Survivors so, let me know if you want a story. Youthdale tried to rip me and my family apart. They sent me to a doctor for no reason. When they screw up they try to find a escape goat to blame it on, and that is the kids. They try bribe me to staying, they let a guy walk into my room at night I won't get into details, but it was humiliating. So do not send your kids there? **I do not recommend this place.**

Mom69

My experience with Youthdale is very poor they love to try to twist your words and they will try to put all the blame on your child cause they are "professionals" they will say they are there for the family but will try every which way to pull the family away I honestly feel its no place for a child or anyone to be at. never let out your true feelings to them cause they will use it in the long run on you. **I do not recommend this place.**

scarsrundeep

This place is the absolute worst; they drug you if you over react to something, they embarrass you in front of everyone, OMG! I'll never forget when Kevin did that to me. It had to be the worst day out of all the days i was there. I really don't recommend this place to send your kids, send them anywhere else but here. **I do not recommend this place.**

Scar

I was in treatment and was restrained by staff while going through flash backs of when I was raped then I was charged by Youthdale for assault on a staff member. Is this how they help?? From 13y/o to 16 1/2 all my life was about was Youthdale and some things I will never forget. It's amazing how the mind can be moulded to what they want. The crisis center was like a jail, no windows to open, sleeping in beds that felt like boards with hospital sheets, Grup as they call it. They pick your brain and analyze every word finishing with how does that make you feel. If you act out they send you in a padded room with a pillow but be prepared to take a pill or a needle to calm you down before you get sent in the room. Believe me, I was there twice then sent to a foster home. If you want to have a connection with your child don't send them here as I was now at 25 I am like a stranger to my family. At 17 I got reunited back with my brother I didn't even recognize him. It's easy to read this but believe me just sharing this little bitit hearts, I cry, nothing can ever give back what i have missed or wished I had. **I do not recommend this place.**

Meandmyself

This place is evil. 18 months of hell I spent in that place. Do NOT send your kids there. **I do not recommend this place.**

John8

Keep your kids out of their grasp! They abused my child with heavy drugs whenever something was done wrong. The psychs here need to take a trip to the Clarke (and NOT as a psych, but rather as a PATIENT). Heard they're getting exposed soon, so hopefully they'll get shut down! **I do not recommend this place.**