

## BRIGHTENING UP THE LIVES OF CHILDREN, WHAT FOSTER FAMILIES ARE DOING EVERYDAY

**Baie-Comeau, June 18<sup>th</sup>, 2019** – The Direction de la protection de la jeunesse of the Centre intégré de santé et de services sociaux (CISSS) de la Côte-Nord unveils its 2019-2020 regional campaign to recruit foster families under the theme “Brightening up the lives of children”. It is not the first time that the CISSS promotes the recruitment of foster families, but the needs are still there.

Brightening up the lives of children means giving them love, safety and education within a stable and affectionate environment. We must give them back hope for life, rekindle their joy of life. “Being a foster family is a gift of self. It is not always easy, but it is extremely gratifying. These children have gone through difficult times, and foster parents give them a chance to fulfil themselves”, explains Marlene Gallagher, Director of youth protection and Provincial Director for the North Shore region.

### Critical needs

Nearly 200 children are lodged outside their family environment, including 114 in our regular foster families. Our places in foster families are currently occupied at 97 %. In order to allow us to appropriately meet the demand, but especially in order to ensure each child is placed in the best foster environment meeting their particular needs, the CISSS would need 20 new places in foster families. Recruitment needs are critical on all the North Shore territory, especially in the sectors of Forestville, Baie-Comeau, Sept-Îles and Havre-Saint-Pierre. All age groups are targeted (0 to 17 years old), but teenagers have more difficulty finding places in foster families, as well as children with an intellectual disability, an autism spectrum disorder or a physical disability.

Here are the main eligibility criteria to become a foster family:

- Be of legal age;
- Have the physical space to foster a child and a living environment meeting certain safety, hygiene and comfort standards;
- Demonstrate the absence of a criminal record;
- Be ready to work in collaboration with the intervenors and the natural family of the child entrusted to you.

Intervenors from youth protection and other clinical directions of the CISSS support the children and their foster family throughout the care. Trainings are provided to foster families who want it in order to improve their approach in this new universe. These families are also supported by the Fédération des familles d'accueil et ressources intermédiaires du Québec (<http://ffariq.org/en>). Their rights and advantages are included in a collective agreement. For more information, visit our website: <http://www.ciass-cotenord.gouv.qc.ca/soins-et-services/direction-de-la-protection-de-la-jeunesse/devenir-famille-daccueil/>.

Learn more on the possibility to become a 0-17-year-old foster family: **1 800 463-8547**.

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