

Reaching Ontario's children and youth, Franco-Ontarian Day, and more in our September newsletter.

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- How we helped - Successful case resolutions

REACHING ONTARIO'S CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Ombudsman Paul Dubé and staff participated in several outreach events this past month to connect with young people and stakeholders in the child welfare sector to inform them about how our Office's Children and Youth Unit works, and how we can help ensure young people's rights are respected.

At the annual conference of the Foster Parents Society of Ontario, our staff [answered questions](#) about changes to our mandate – such as how we can handle complaints from both adults and young people. We discussed how we resolve concerns about children's aid



societies, residential licensees, secure treatment facilities and youth justice facilities, and shared our [informational resources](#).

On September 26, Ombudsman Dubé addressed Youth Justice Ontario's annual conference, giving staff from youth custody facilities operated by transfer payment agencies a glimpse of the most common complaints we handle and how we resolve them.

And Children and Youth Unit Director Diana Cooke represented our Office at the recent meeting of the Canadian Council of Child and Youth Advocates (CCCYA) in Winnipeg, where the CCCYA released its *National Paper on Youth Suicide*. The paper notes that suicide is the second leading cause of death among 10-to-24-year-olds in Canada, and warns that too many (Indigenous, LGBTQ2S+ and racialized youth in particular) have unaddressed mental health needs. [Read the paper here](#).

Contact us here if you have a question or complaint

**HIGHLIGHTING THE CONTRIBUTIONS
OF FRANCOPHONES IN ONTARIO**



On September 25, the francophone and francophile community gathered around the green and white flag to celebrate Franco-Ontarian Day in communities all across the province.

“Today and every day, we recognize the cultural, social, economic and political contributions of Ontario’s French-speaking population,” said Ombudsman Paul Dubé. “I’m proud that my Office continues to promote French language rights to preserve that heritage for future generations.”

The Ombudsman attended two ceremonies to raise the Franco-Ontarian flag: The first, at Queen’s Park, was organized by the Assemblée de la francophonie de l’Ontario and attended by Francophone Affairs Minister Caroline Mulroney, and MPPs from all parties. The second, at Toronto City Hall, was hosted by the Association des communautés francophones de l’Ontario à Toronto, where speakers included Mayor John Tory and Councillor Jennifer McKelvie, Chair of the City of Toronto Francophone Affairs Committee. Students from MonAvenir and Viamonde school boards were also at both events.

Ombudsman Dubé, who is the interim French Language Services Commissioner at present, noted that recruitment for a permanent commissioner within our Office is ongoing, and that the successful candidate will be announced in late fall. He will choose the new commissioner with the assistance of experts Michel A. Carrier (Interim Commissioner of Official Languages for New Brunswick), and Linda Cardinal (University of Ottawa professor and internationally recognized authority on language rights).

"I am pleased with the number and quality of prospective candidates so far," he said. "The new commissioner will be someone who has strong knowledge of and credibility within the Franco-Ontarian community, as well as a keen sense of equity and fairness."

HERE, THERE AND EVERYWHERE

OMBUDSMAN WELCOMES THIS YEAR'S LEGISLATURE INTERNS



In late September, Ombudsman Paul Dubé met with interns from the 2019-2020 Ontario Legislature Internship Programme. They discussed our Office's role in resolving thousands of individual cases each year, and how the Ombudsman makes recommendations to improve public sector governance. The [Ontario Legislature Internship Programme](#) is a 10-month, non-partisan programme that allows recent university graduates to work with Members of Provincial Parliament (MPPs).

BUILDING STRONG RELATIONSHIPS

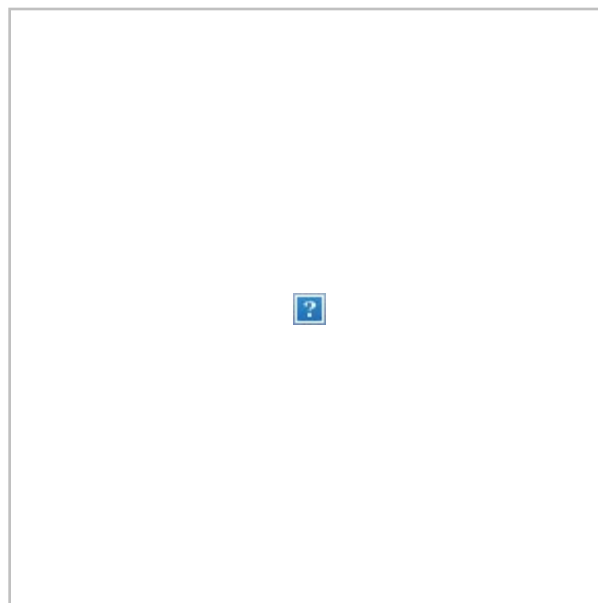
Over the past few weeks, Ombudsman Dubé has had informative and constructive meetings with several French language services stakeholders – including discussions with Susan Fitzpatrick, Interim CEO of Ontario Health, on the importance of consultation in planning for French language services in health care, and Marie-Lison Fougère, Deputy Minister of Francophone Affairs. These meetings will lay the groundwork for regular consultations and effective collaboration for the

implementation of policies, programs and French language services across the province.

MUNICIPAL MOMENTS

You may have seen us at the Ontario East Municipal Conference in Cornwall in September. Our staff spoke to representatives from dozens of municipalities, showed them how to navigate our [Open Meetings Digest](#), and gave out copies of our [handy tip cards](#).

We also attended the annual conference for the Association française des municipalités de l'Ontario, held in Sudbury in late September. Our staff met with council members and staff, sharing our municipal resources and discussing issues affecting rural and urban francophone municipalities.



PROTECTING CHILDREN AND YOUTH



October is Child Abuse Prevention Month – an opportunity to discuss young people's rights to safety and well-being, and ways we can identify and prevent child abuse in our communities. Throughout the month, the Ombudsman's social media channels will share important

[resources and classroom activities from the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies](#) to raise awareness among young people about their rights and how to ask for help. Join us on October 24, 2019 – **Dress Purple Day** – by using the hashtag #IBREAKthesilence to affirm your commitment to protecting young people from harm.

The Ontario government recently launched its **Child Welfare Modernization Survey**, which seeks input and feedback from those with lived experience or involvement with the child welfare system and residential services. This includes young people, families, caregivers, service providers and front-line workers. The survey is available in English and French, is anonymous and takes approximately 20 minutes to complete. [Complete the survey here](#).

HOW WE CAN HELP - CASE SUMMARIES

Lacking language

A man reached out to the Ombudsman's French Language Services Unit after trying to get service in French at Legal Aid Ontario on several occasions. In particular, one of his concerns was that he had asked for a specific Legal Aid document, related to complaints policies and procedures, but was only given an English copy.

After he turned to us, our Office contacted Legal Aid Ontario. Our interventions led to Legal Aid translating the document fully into French and making it available not only to the complainant, but to all its clients.

Technical difficulty

A Grade 10 student was disappointed to receive a failing grade on the writing component of the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test. She had been permitted to submit the essay portion of the test via computer as an accommodation for her dyslexia, but due to a technical problem, the essay was never received by the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO).

The student's mother complained to us that EQAO officials insisted that the girl's only option was to contact her school and arrange to redo the entire test. After Ombudsman staff spoke with EQAO officials, they agreed to review the rest of the student's test results, which they pro-rated, giving her a passing grade.

That's the place

Unhappy with his placement at a foster home, a 17-year-old asked his children's aid society caseworker for a placement change, only to be told the home he was staying in was best for him.

Feeling unheard, the young person contacted the Ombudsman's Children and Youth Unit. Our staff explained that all young people have the right to request a review of their placement, under the Residential Placement Advisory Committee (RPAC) process. The youth took this to his worker, who wasn't aware of this process. After we also spoke with the worker about the youth's right to a review, she said she would consider moving him.

The youth has since moved into a new home, and told our staff he is happy with the new placement and is still in contact with his children's aid society for transition planning.

[Read about other cases we've resolved](#)

The Ombudsman is an independent officer of the Ontario legislature who conducts oversight of provincial government agencies and municipalities, universities and school boards, as well as child protection services and French language services. Ombudsman Paul Dubé began his five-year term on April 1, 2016.

[File a complaint or contact us here](#)

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