

## Children's aid scholarships offer hope for children

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Written by Sara Loftson, The Catholic Register

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TORONTO - Lucy Anacleto was abused by her parents as a child. To escape the abuse, her two older sisters left home, leaving the then seven-year-old alone with her parents.

"I became the only outlet for anger my parents had," said Anacleto, 22. "I always wanted to go university... but during the hardest times I lost sight of that."

Anacleto shared her story with 82 [Hope for Children Foundation](#) scholarship recipients at an awards dinner Aug. 29 at the [University of Toronto's](#) Hart House.

Every ward or former ward of the Catholic Children's Aid Society who has been accepted into a college, university or training program is eligible for a scholarship based on need. The privately raised funds range from \$1,000 to a \$20,000 scholarship awarded to a student attending the [University of St. Michael's College](#).



"An education is the key to a successful future," said Mary Bowyer, Hope for Children Foundation director. "It stops the cycle of poverty and abuse. It's one of the best investments we can make in our youths' future."

This fall, Anacleto will begin her third year in politics and women's studies at Concordia University. The \$2,300 scholarship she received two years ago from the Hope for Children Foundation has helped fund her education.

"It's meant the ability to pursue a possibility," she said.

Lucas Lawrence struggled through school with dyslexia and ADHD, never imagining he'd go to university. Last year he successfully completed the academic bridging program between George Brown College and the University of Toronto.

During the award dinner Lawrence was honoured with a \$5,000 scholarship to pursue an architecture degree at the University of Toronto.



"I would be really worried about how I would afford my education. It was really a big stress. Now I can study full time and focus on my education," said Lawrence, 26.

At eight years of age he was placed into foster care with his older sister. After one move, he said he was lucky to stay with his foster family for the next 10 years. He was baptized and the family enrolled him at Northmount School, Toronto's [Opus Dei](#)-connected all boys elementary school.

As a teenager he shared his insight as a foster child with his parents as they built White Rabbit Treatment Homes in Barrie, Ont., a fostering agency for kids with severe behavioural and psychological disabilities. At 19, he worked for the agency.

But out of the 500 children who've gone through the treatment home Lawrence is the first to go to university.

"Now that I'm out of the system, it's great there's still some support."

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About the author:

Sara Loftson is the youth editor and reporter for the Catholic Register. She holds a bachelor of arts from the [University of Winnipeg](#) and a bachelor of journalism from the [University of King's College](#) in Halifax. She has worked for [CBC Radio](#) and her writing has been featured in Catholic publications across North America.

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