

Shortage felt by many CAS agencies

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them the best way you can and they also become part of the family. They come into care and you want to give them a better life and the kids appreciate it, they really do.”

Balaz said being a foster parent is one of the fulfilling things he's done in his life.

York's CAS has a serious shortage of foster parents.

“I would certainly call it critical. We have just over 300 children in care and a third of those children in care are living outside the region because we don't have homes in the region,” said supervisor of residential development, Karen Wright.

“I think the other piece in terms of our crisis is we are at capacity, such that if we had a call today where a sibling group had to be placed, we can't keep them together. We're splitting them up...We have no infant homes

in York Region and no teen homes.”

York has 111 foster homes, down from about 130 homes 10 years ago, despite the ballooning population.

“Also, I think for us, what we feel is, we almost have this generation of foster parents who are aging out and are beginning to plan their own retirement from fostering,” Wright said.

While some children placed outside the region land in foster homes in the Greater Toronto Area, others are sent to homes hundreds of kilometres away, meaning youngsters in an already troubling situation find themselves distanced from family, friends, school and activities, Wright said.

The urgent shortage of foster parents is being felt by many Children's Aid Societies, she said.

For more information, visit yorkcas.org/fostercare.asp or call 1-800-718-3850, ext. 6132.



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