

# "I Am Your Children's Aid."



## Jean's Story

After retiring from a very full and rewarding career in nursing, I began to feel I had more to give to my community. I was approached by a neighbour who wanted help with one of her projects for Children's Aid. Her enthusiasm was contagious. I began to assist her in sorting donated snow suits for mending, washing and zipper repairs, as part of the process in the annual Snow Suit Campaign in my area.

Every year I say to myself that this is the last year I will have the time and strength to participate and every year I see a greater need to continue. I get so much satisfaction from my small part in helping a child stay warm on cold wintry days, knowing that it may be the only warmth both physically and emotionally that that child may get over a very long time, if at all.

It is because of the stable background that I had that I want to care for these children, in a way that my own parents cared for me and my siblings. It's not so much to do! Fix up a snow suit for an unknown child! But to the newly widowed father of three girls who lost his job because he had to stay home and be everything to his family, who came reluctantly to pick up his requested snow suits without his daughters the first year, returned the second year with his family proudly in tow, and again the third year, family in front of him to donate new snow suits and announce that he was finally able to take care of things by himself, thanked us profoundly and left proudly with his head held high and his daughters draped around him, it means so much. I am so proud of him. I love a happy ending - I keep coming back for more!

I hope more people can experience the same sense of completeness that I have felt over the past several years from being a volunteer in such a challenging and supportive organization. It's hard work, some of the toughest I have had to do - but the rewards are personal and priceless to those involved. The whole experience has helped me develop so many strengths that I never knew I had. I am a better person for the experience and I hope I encourage the same in people around me.

**Ontario Association of  
Children's Aid Societies**