

## **Bursary Presentation**

The VOCM Cares/ Newfoundland and Labrador Foster Families Association Bursary is awarded on an annual basis to a foster parent's biological or adopted child who is completing post-secondary education. The role of these young people is extremely important because fostering is a family affair. In recognition of their support and contribution to the children/youth who are placed in their homes, the Newfoundland and Labrador Foster Families Association in conjunction with VOCM Cares has established a bursary to assist with their educational expenses.

On behalf of the Newfoundland and Labrador Foster Families Association, I am pleased to announce that the bursary winner for 2016 is Brittany Walsh from Conception Bay South. Brittany is the daughter of foster parents Beverly and Ron Walsh. She is currently attending Memorial University and plans to pursue a degree in Nursing.

Brittany was 12 years old when her parents made the decision to become a foster family. In her application she talked about how she has been impacted by fostering and ways she has supported children placed in her home. The following quote from Brittany's application demonstrates why she is so deserving of this bursary, "Being the youngest in my family I had to move over and make room for younger children in our home, It was a challenge at times but certainly a rewarding one... Fostering is something that is a part of me and that I am very proud of. I feel I have helped children in ways I never thought I could. So when people ask me 'how do you do it', I say I treat them as if they are my own brother or sister."

One of Brittany's high school teachers described her as a very kind and thoughtful young woman. She said, "Brittany has always been very loving and patient with the children placed in her home. She is ready to help them and, along with her family, shows much guidance to them."

Social worker, Colleen Pinsent-Gogos had this to say about Brittany, "Brittany has supported all the children placed in her home first and foremost by accepting them into her home and... treating them as a member of the family". Colleen further elaborated on the ways Brittany has supported the children such as spending individual time with a child, reading a book or watching a favorite movie or television show, giving a child a cuddle, taking a child for ice cream, attending their extracurricular activities to cheer them on, supporting them in their development such as speech therapy routines and behaviour modification programming, and babysitting so her parents could have some time together and the children would have someone familiar caring for them.

This is the kind of support we want all children in care to find in their homes, their schools and their community.

Congratulations Brittany!