

**[YOUR ORGANIZATION] celebrates Ontario's very first Young Carers Awareness Day!**

**YOUR CITY, ON, January 25, 2018** – **YOUR ORGANIZATION** and community organizations across Ontario are marking the first ever Ontario Young Carers Awareness Day today to recognize the important, and often under-acknowledged role young carers play in our health care system. The organizations are calling on the Province to formally recognize January 25<sup>th</sup> as Ontario Young Carers Awareness Day every year.

Caring for an ailing loved one at home is often considered the purview of a spouse or adult family member, however there are many children and youth who play an active role in caring for family members with chronic disease, disability or illness. These invisible carers have a profound impact, not only on the quality of care their loved ones receive, but also on the health care system as a whole through their unpaid work.

One of Hana's first caregiving memories is attending medical appointments at the age of 9 to translate between English and Arabic for her father who lost his legs to diabetes when she was 3. Now 20, Hana does the same for her mother who had a heart attack. Along with translation, Hana also puts on her dad's prostheses, monitors medication for her parents, and ensures household chores are done. Hana balances her caregiving with studying environmental technology at Niagara College, working, planning for her future and just trying to be a young adult. Hana is one of 4 children who have all contributed to their family as young carers over the years.

Hana is just one of almost 500,000 young carers in Ontario who are between the ages of 15 and 24 years old. Young carers also include children and youth who fall below the age of 15 and are not reported in this figure (Stamatopolous, 2015; Stats Canada, 2006). These individuals contribute greatly towards the care of their friends and loved ones, often providing an average of 14 hours of care per week. They commonly do the following home care activities:

- **Domestic Care:** cooking, cleaning, or sibling care
- **Emotional Support:** companionship and social support
- **Personal Care:** administering medication, bathing and dressing, assistance with feeding
- **General Care:** translation, transportation, and assistance with financial paperwork (Frank et al., 1999; Warren, 2017.)

**[INSERT QUOTE FROM ONE OF YOUR ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERS]**

With the launch of Young Carers Awareness Day, organizations like **YOUR ORGANIZATION** hope to not only give long-overdue recognition to the important contributions of young carers across Ontario, but to also encourage the provincial government to officially recognize every January 25<sup>th</sup> as Ontario's Young Carers Awareness Day.

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**[add boilerplate information about your organization]**