

The Fraser Institute



Children First: School Choice Trust



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The Fraser Institute: Children First Grants Help Make Private Schools Affordable for Low Income Families

TORONTO, ONTARIO--(Marketwire - Jan. 2, 2008) - Children First: School Choice Trust is once again offering grants to low income families in Calgary who feel their children would benefit by attending a private school.

Children First grants are awarded based solely on financial need. The program provides grants that cover half the cost of tuition at any Calgary private school, up to a maximum of \$2,500.

"Our sons were enrolled in an independent school in Calgary that my husband and I felt was in line with our beliefs, values, and philosophy on education," says Kristen Walker of Calgary. "But then our financial situation changed and we had to consider withdrawing our children from the school. Thankfully, we were able to keep our sons in the school with the help of the Children First grants."

Founded in 2003 in Ontario and now in its third year in Alberta, Children First: School Choice Trust supports 100 economically disadvantaged students attending 18 private schools across Calgary. The grants are available as early as kindergarten and are renewable until the students complete Grade 6, subject to funding availability.

Tuition at Calgary private schools participating in the Children First program ranges from \$400 to \$11,500 per year. The average tuition at schools chosen by Children First families is \$3,456 and the average grant just over \$1,491.

Once a family is awarded a grant, they can choose which private school their child will attend, including, Montessori, Waldorf, arts, academic, and special needs schools.

"Private school education offers families many choices and our program helps make those choices available to parents who may not otherwise be able to afford it," said Michael Thomas, Children First Program Director.

"Children First helps families who have different needs, whether it's a desire for smaller class sizes to help their kids catch up, developing artistic talents, or just wanting a safe school that teaches values important to the family."

Parents can apply online for a Children First: School Choice Trust grant at www.childrenfirstgrants.ca.

Applications can also be submitted by mail or parents can apply over the phone at 1-866-924-8881. The application deadline is March 31, 2008.

All new grants will be awarded in April via a random lottery once the applicant's financial need has been determined.

The Calgary Sun is the official media sponsor of Children First: School Choice Trust in Calgary.

Children First: School Choice Trust is a program of The Fraser Institute, a registered Canadian charity. Complete program details are available at www.childrenfirstgrants.ca.

For more information, please contact

Children First: School Choice Trust

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