



THE UNIVERSITY OF WINNIPEG

# UWINNIPEG FIRST TO OFFER YOUTH IN CARE TUITION WAIVERS

*Removing hurdles to help Manitoba children and youth in care  
achieve their full potential*

UW RELEASE – 2012/047

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – THURSDAY, MARCH 15, 2012

**WINNIPEG, MB** – When she was 14-years-old, **Shirley Delorme Russell** and her four siblings were placed in foster care. She would change homes three times in the next several years. Although she was a bright student, Shirley stopped going to school after graduating from Kelvin High School.

"I had no money. I always knew I wanted to be a teacher, but I was not really sure what student loans were and the thought of them and getting into debt terrified me," said Shirley, "It is awkward for a child in care because you can feel you are not really anyone's kid. So at 18 I went out to work."

Young people like Shirley will now be able to achieve their full potential. **The University of Winnipeg** today launched the **Youth In Care Tuition Waiver** program to ensure that youth who have grown up in care can dream about and plan for their academic future at UWinnipeg regardless of socio-economic background. This is the first program of its kind in Manitoba and believed to be unique for a University in Canada.

"We have a very deep commitment to addressing the needs of youth who are underrepresented in University classrooms, and we know that children and youth in care face multiple barriers that keep them from pursuing post-secondary learning, including financial hurdles," said **Dr. Lloyd Axworthy, President and Vice-Chancellor, UWinnipeg**. "Removing the tuition hurdle dissolves an important barrier, but more importantly, it says to this group of young people who have faced so many challenges that their dreams matter, that they are welcome and they belong here."

UWinnipeg expects to support 10 students per year through its Youth In Care Tuition Waiver program in the initial pilot project stage, beginning September 2012. The Province of Manitoba Authorities will cover all additional living expenses for youth on extensions of care, including housing, textbooks and meal plans, up until age 21 and while they are attending The University of Winnipeg. There are more than 9,500 children and youth in care in Manitoba, the majority are First Nations and Métis, and it is estimated that less than 5% ever pursue a post-secondary education.

"Children in care often face hardships growing-up that don't end when they turn 18," said **Children and Youth Opportunities Minister Kevin Chief**. "I want all our children to be able to look forward to a future full of opportunities. With this initiative The University of Winnipeg is setting an important example of looking past hardship to the potential in each young person."