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WARDS OF THE CROWN

Tuesday March 7, 2006 at 10pm ET/PT
repeating Saturday March 11 at 10pm ET/PT



At age 13, Andrée Cazabon was briefly placed in a group home. Marked by this experience, the filmmaker decided to track four young people for 10 months as they prepared to leave foster care. The result is *Wards of the Crown*, a stirring documentary about a little-known reality.

Leaha, Andrew, Emily and Chantal are among the 66,000 youngsters in foster care in Canada. These four young people, all between 16 and 20 years old, give us a candid look at their lives. Beyond their personal stories, all four speak disdainfully about an inept, overburdened foster-care system. "Nobody has time for a depressed, suicidal thirteen-year-old," adds Emily. In addition to their sad revelations, *Wards of the Crown* spotlights a system that isn't working, as Claudette Mayheux, a director at the Children's Aid Society, readily admits. "Foster care must become a temporary, short-term solution," she advises.



Though the comments are frank and heartbreaking, the documentary never adopts a sensationalist tone. The shocking disclosures have the ring of truth. With great empathy and a real gift for listening, the filmmaker skilfully blends the four stories.



"When kids become wards of the Crown, does their mother become Queen Elizabeth?" the filmmaker quips. Black humour is one weapon these young people have used to survive (and youngsters who are abandoned, rejected and unloved need their weapons). Beneath their protective shells is a lucidity these walking wounded were forced to learn at an early age, too early in fact. They are courageous souls, and with *Wards of the Crown*, Andrée Cazabon pays tribute to their incredible strength, generosity and resilience.

Wards of the Crown was directed by Andrée Cazabon and produced by Robert Charbonneau & Marie-Pierre Garipey of Les Productions Robert Charbonneau (Ottawa) in association with CBC Newsworld and in co-production with the National Film Board of Canada (Claudette Jaiko, producer).

Find out more about the film at the [NFB website](#).

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