



United Way and Peel Region invest in youth leadership

MISSISSAUGA (August 19, 2010) — “Thanks to our *Youth In Action* grant, youth in our neighbourhood will have an opportunity to learn a skill and have fun at the same time,” says Sherrise Gordon, 15. Sherrise is team leader of **Out of the Fire and into the Kitchen**, one of 11 youth-led projects receiving a *Youth in Action* grant, jointly funded by United Way of Peel Region and the Region of Peel. The grants, totalling \$20,000, will fund projects including sports camps, workshops and mentoring sessions that aim to build confidence in youth aged 14 to 24, and help develop future leaders while improving neighbourhood life.

Out of the Fire and into the Kitchen (Mississauga) will receive a grant of \$2,000, distributed through YMCA Peel Youth Village. The program aims to deter youth violence while teaching youth the essential life skill of cooking. During weekly sessions youth will prepare and share various dishes, and discuss the justice system with guest speakers from the community.

Youth in Action grants were developed in 2009 by United Way’s Young Leaders Council, a group of volunteers aged 20 to 35 who are committed to creating a legacy of volunteerism and spirited giving within Peel Region. The grants will be distributed through several local registered charities that will provide financial oversight to the youth developing and implementing projects.

“Youth in Peel Region are restless for change,” said Vanessa Mui, Co-Chair of the Youth in Action Review Panel and Executive Member of United Way’s Young Leaders Council. “They are eager to tackle issues within their communities and act as agents of social change. We are excited to facilitate youth leadership and activism and empower youth to maximize their potential.”

In addition to **Out of the Fire and into the Kitchen**, the following projects will receive *Youth in Action* grants:

Journey to OUR Mother (Brampton): A \$2,000 grant, distributed through Dufferin Peel Catholic District School Board, will create awareness of First Nations culture and bring both aboriginal youth and non-aboriginal youth together in celebration. They will learn about the environment and working together to grow traditional medicines used by Aboriginal peoples.

Peel Environment Youth Alliance (PEYA) - EcoBuzz Conference (Brampton): A grant of \$2,000, distributed through EcoSource, will fund a conference for 350 students from across Peel to connect, collaborate and exchange ideas about social justice and environmental advocacy.

United Camp (Brampton): A grant of \$1,900 will help build self-esteem in youth by providing sports camps for newcomer and/or underprivileged youth.

Get out! Get Active! (Caledon): A grant of \$1,196, distributed through the Rotary Club of Palgrave, will promote youth leadership, healthy living and bring the community together socially by running an organized sports camp. The camp will take place once a week for four consecutive weeks in the summer of 2011.

Girls in Action (Caledon): A grant of \$1,196, distributed through the Rotary Club of Palgrave, will fund a mentorship program where positive role models help instill confidence and self-esteem in young girls. The program will partner with local Girl Guides and Brownies.

Newcomer Youth Media Project: (Mississauga): A \$2,000 grant, distributed through the Dixie Bloor Neighbourhood Centre, will assist with the successful integration of newcomer youth by having them document their integration through film, photography and journalism. The project also promotes youth leadership and civic engagement while the final products will create awareness of the challenges faced during the integration process.

Project One: Operation Inspire 2 (Mississauga): A grant of \$1,838, distributed through Gateway Centre for New Canadians, will continue to support dance workshops that encourage self-expression while mentoring youth on relevant teen issues. This is the second year this program has received a Youth in Action grant.

RHYTHM (Mississauga): A grant of \$1,870, distributed through Rapport Youth and Family Services, aims to promote self-esteem, confidence and a positive self-image in youth by providing free dance classes. In addition to providing a safe environment where youth can explore their creativity, sessions will also include workshops on issues impacting youth.

The NUSAYbah Project (Mississauga): A grant of \$2,000, distributed through The Social Planning Council of Peel, aims to provide female South Asian youth with a safe and creative place free from Islamophobia, racism and sexism. The youth will also have the opportunity to express themselves through art, specifically through a Digital Storytelling initiative.

Youth Productions (Mississauga): A \$2,000 grant distributed, through the Gateway Centre for New Canadians, will allow youth to explore serious and sensitive issues in a safe environment while expressing their creativity through dramatic arts. Youth will create and perform plays that address youth related issues.

About United Way of Peel Region

United Way of Peel Region was established in 1967 and serves the communities of Brampton, Caledon and Mississauga. Through its Community Fund, United Way invests in services, programs and initiatives that develop resilient people, grow strong families, and build vibrant neighborhoods and communities. The mission of United Way of Peel Region is to engage with our community, through partnerships, to ensure people are cared for, connected and included.

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