

**\$571,800 OTF Grant Gives Halton Youth a Voice in the Community**

**Burlington** – In 2018, The Children's Aid Society of the Regional Municipality of Halton, the Secretariat for Our Kids Network received a \$571,800 Grow Grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation, OTF to elevate youth voice and empower volunteers aged 12-17 to have a positive impact in the communities of North Oakville, Acton, Aldershot and Milton through the Halton Youth Initiative. The project will be completed in December of 2021 and will reach over 57,420 young people with a legacy that will be felt in Halton for years to come.

*“Congratulations to the Children's Aid Society of Halton for receiving the \$571,800 Grow Grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation, an agency of the Government of Ontario. This funding has allowed young people in our community to come together to make a positive impact through projects and special events and has taught them valuable skills about the importance of teamwork. Its empowering initiatives like these that allow youth to gain experiences that will make them the leaders of the future. This grant has truly made a difference in our community.”* said Effie Triantafilopoulos, MPP for Oakville North—Burlington

The project was youth-led, with young volunteers identifying local issues and implementing strategies leading to possible solutions. An evidence-based approach focused on relationship building was taken in all interactions and activities. And thanks to the \$571,800 grant from the OTF, more than 300 young people contributed over 5,000 volunteer hours to host or participate in more than 30 projects and host over 30 special events in the community.

*“The impact of this Ontario Trillium Foundation grant cannot be underestimated,”* said Lily Viggiano, Project Coordinator of the Halton Youth Initiative. *“This grant created an empowering space full of opportunity for young people in our community to learn, volunteer and lead. Youth aged 12-17 came together to design events and campaigns on serious causes such as equity and reconciliation. Positive relationships were developed among youth, their peers, and adults in the community. When we invest in our youth, we invest in our community and our future.”*

The Halton Youth Initiative is committed to elevating youth voice and empowering volunteers aged 12-17 to have a positive impact in their community. If you wish to learn more about the work of the Halton Youth Initiative, please visit the website at: [www.haltonyouth.com](http://www.haltonyouth.com)

The Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF) is an agency of the Government of Ontario, and one of Canada's leading granting foundations. Last year, nearly \$112M was invested into 1,384 community projects and partnerships to build healthy and vibrant communities and strengthen the impact of Ontario's non-profit sector. In 2020/21, OTF supported Ontario's economic recovery by helping non-profit organizations rebuild and recover from the impacts of COVID-19. Visit [otf.ca](http://otf.ca) to learn more.

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