



MEDIA RELEASE



City of Welland Officially Recognized as a “Youth Friendly Community.”

For Immediate Release – May 30, 2008

Welland – The City of Welland will be honoured next week at Queen’s Park as one of the five recipients of the Play Works Youth Friendly Community Recognition Program for its outstanding commitment to providing adolescent youth with opportunities to play, to participate in, and contribute to their community. The Honourable Margaret Best, Minister of Health Promotion, will be in attendance to present the awards.

“The Mayors Youth Advisory Council has worked with various youth groups throughout the City and the City’s Community Recreation Coordinator, Janice Makepeace, to put together programs for youth in our community,” said Welland Mayor Damian Goulbourne. “I am honoured to have such an enthusiastic group of dedicated young citizens in our community working together with a view to making Welland a place that will attract and retain youth.”

The Play Works Youth Friendly Community Recognition Program celebrates communities that are taking steps to open their doors to youth by reinvesting in youth play. The rigorous selection process required communities to meet at least ten of sixteen youth friendly criteria, including providing opportunities for play, youth engagement, accessible programs, and opportunities for youth activism. In Welland’s case, eleven of the sixteen criteria were met. This is the third year for the Play Works Recognition Program and Welland is one of the twenty-five communities across the province that have been honoured with this award.

Ms. Makepeace collected newspaper articles about youth accomplishments and activities for two years in support of the application to Play Works. “The YMCA was invaluable in providing assistance and the local high schools helped by providing information on programs that they were running,” said Makepeace.

The application also included information from the various youth groups in our community – baseball, hockey, skating, guides and scouts, cadets. Also included in the application was information regarding youth programs offered through the United Way. The Tribune Youth Editorial columns were cited as ways that youth were encouraged to speak out about opportunities in their community. The Rotary Club of Welland and the Optimist Club both recognize Excellence in Youth Through Leadership programs and scholarships.

“The application was a massive binder outlining the activities offered in Welland for youth by many different partners,” Makepeace stated. “Basically, if it happened for youth in Welland, and I could find a newspaper article or a flyer about it, I included it in the application.”

The Mayor, Ms. Makepeace, and members of the Mayor’s Youth Advisory Council will be traveling to Queens Park June 2, 2008, for the official awards ceremony.

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Play Works consists of Partners from the following organizations: 4-H Ontario, Arts Network for Children and Youth, Boys and Girls Clubs of Ontario, Educational Research, Laidlaw Foundation, Ontario Physical and Health Education Association, Ontario Young People’s Alliance, SportAlliance of Ontario, Parks and Recreation Ontario, YMCA Ontario and Youth.

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