

For Immediate Release
March 24, 2014

WELLAND MAYOR'S YOUTH ADVISORY COMMITTEE IS RECOGNIZED

Welland ON - On March 26, 2014, Ontario's newest Youth Friendly Communities will be honoured at a ceremony held at the Parks and Recreation Ontario Educational Forum in Niagara Falls. This year's recipients, the Cities of Brampton and Welland, the Towns of Ajax and Halton Hills and the Municipality of Port Hope, are being recognized for outstanding commitment in providing youth with opportunities to play, to participate in, and contribute to their communities. The Honourable Michael Chan, Minister for Tourism, Culture and Sport is scheduled to attend and honour these communities. Mayor Jim Diodati, Mayor of Niagara Falls, will also bring greetings and congratulations. MPPs, mayors, councillors, youth and community partners from the Youth Friendly Communities will take part in this celebration of youth.

During the past year, the City of Welland's Mayor's Youth Advisory Committee (MYAC) has undertaken 22 separate initiatives. The dynamic group of young adults has spent a tremendous amount of hours volunteering, organizing events, and advocating community commitment. They will deliver a presentation during the event to Minister Michael Chan, along with an audience of 300 people. Barry Sharpe, Mayor of Welland is pleased that the MYAC were asked to present. "As Mayor, I'm proud that Welland is being recognized as a Youth Friendly Community, and even prouder of the exceptional team effort by our Mayor's Youth Advisory Committee engaging Welland's youth, and enthusiastically promoting the power of play across our community," said Mayor Sharpe.

Youth Friendly Communities work toward various levels of recognition - Bronze, Silver, Gold and Platinum - depending on the number of criteria they meet. Many communities have applied consecutively over the years in order to achieve Platinum Status.

Providing opportunities for youth to play is essential to the Youth Friendly Community principles. "Play isn't just playing," said Hallie Atter, Play Works Chair, "it's an essential and necessary aspect of development for youth. When communities make youth play a priority, they help youth reach their full potential. Youth Friendly Communities help to build a skilled and employable workforce, a creative cultural community, and healthier individuals. Many communities large and small, urban and rural are well on their way to being a youth friendly community. The time for putting Ontario's youth first is now."

Event Details: Youth Friendly Community Recognition Ceremony

Date: March 26, 2014

Time: 6 pm to 7 pm

Location: Great Room C, 3rd Level, Sheraton on the Falls, Niagara Falls, Ontario

Play Works is an independent group of organizations committed to encouraging and promoting a greater investment in youth play, established the Youth Friendly Community Recognition Program in 2005. It acknowledges the great work that is being done in communities across Ontario to ensure that youth (ages 13-19) have continuous access to opportunities for play, ranging from arts, to recreation, and civic leadership. The rigorous selection process requires communities to meet at least ten of sixteen youth-friendly criteria. Since 2005, 42 Ontario communities have been recognized as Youth Friendly, ranging from small rural locations, such as the Wikwemikong Unceded Indian Reserve No. 26, to urban centres, such as the City of Thunder Bay. A complete list of communities can be found at: playworkspartnership.ca/youth-friendly-communities.

The Play Works Partners are: 4-H Ontario, Arts Network for Children and Youth, Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada-Central Region, Laidlaw Foundation, Ophea, Sport Alliance Ontario, Parks and Recreation Ontario, YMCA Ontario

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