

Youth-led Community Change Summaries

A4L Youth Nexus

A4L Youth Nexus is a group of young people with lived experiences of the child welfare system and adoption system in Ontario that is working to improve these systems through research, education and peer supports. Unlike other young people in the child welfare system, adoptees do not have the access to the resources and opportunities that foster youth and other youth in care have. Adoptee Voice is vital to improving the child welfare system, and research conducted by A4L will engage adoptees and help put their experiences on the map. Key activities include the development of a monitored online platform for adoptees to network and support one another; research and networking with other adoptee groups across the province, the development of an online newsletter, research to help illustrate what 'family means' to adopters, and a conference.

Autism Teenage Partnership

Autism Teenage Partnership is dedicated to providing accessible, free and safe places for teens with Autism Spectrum Disorder to express themselves through social activities. Started by young people with siblings with ASD, ATP provides young people and their families with safe social spaces and reduces stigma associated with ASD. This project supports ATP to implement its programs, and develop a tool kit to promote more peer and social programs for young people with ASD. Key Activities include running weekly programming for teens with ASD that involve social and interactive activities, field trips etc; developing a toolkit to help advocate for increased programs for ASD youth; speaking engagements and partnership development to increase autism awareness and the need for programs/supports.

Bad Subject

Bad Subject is a survivor-led group of young women who have designed and run workshops on Consent and Rape Culture in schools, community centres and community events across the Greater Toronto Area. This project supports ongoing workshops in high schools as well as an online youth forum and downloadable toolkits which enable youth, educators and others to continue the conversation beyond the workshops. Through its work, Bad Subject is working to make communities and schools a safer place for young people, by changing rape culture into Consent Culture. Key Activities include running workshops in high schools and community centres; Volunteer training, creating an online forum with resources for youth and youth survivors, developing a workshop toolkits based on the workshops including a facilitation guide and videos; developing an educators toolkit with tools that enable educators to integrate consent and rape culture into their teaching curriculum.

Canadian University Press

Canadian University Press is a membership-based organization comprised of campus newspapers at Canadian post-secondary institutions. The Youth Vote will produce original coverage and analysis of the 2015 federal election written by young people. Six reporters will be hired and trained to produce 30 articles about the campaign period, election day and to follow-up on campaign promises and report on government programs and policies that significant to youth. This project aims to steer the election and post-election coverage toward topics that matter to youth. Key Activities include hiring and training 6 political reporters, host webinars about youth issues relevant in federal electoral coverage or youth reporting on federal politics, host a regional conference series and an annual national conference.

McQuesten Youth Opportunity Creators

The McQuesten Youth Opportunity Creators is a group of young people with a network of adult supporters that focuses on creating recreational, job and volunteer opportunities for young people in the McQuesten neighborhood of Hamilton. McQuesten is a priority neighborhood in Hamilton that faces higher child poverty rates and high school non-completion rates than the rest of the city. This project supports peer-to-peer needs assessment about barriers and supports to employment and meaningful volunteer opportunities for young people living in McQuesten neighborhood of Hamilton through an interactive ‘Conversation Couch Campaign’ that takes conversations about youth jobs to the streets to collect insights from other young people.

Future of Government

Future of Government is developing a candidate-focused intervention to address youth participation in elections. This project supports young people to co-create and deliver boot camps educating political candidates and their teams on how to run a youth-friendly political campaign. This project will support the pilot of this model in local communities in Ontario during the upcoming federal election, the creation of an online report card that tracks the participation of candidates in such boot camps and the development of a toolkit/boot camp in a box that other young people can use in their local communities. Key Activities include delivering 4-5 boot camps, evaluating the workshops; developing a toolkit/digital document to enable others to deliver boot camps; monitoring campaigns to gauge boot camp impact; developing a report on the project.

Itchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwig Youth Leadership Council

itchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwig Youth Leadership Council is working towards a Canada where all children, no matter where they live, have the ability to easily access a high school education and is working towards making it possible for First Nation’s children to be educated in the communities they grow up in, by members of their community, in ways that support their indigenous traditions. This project supports young people of Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwig (K.I.) and Wapekeka to have their voices heard on their dream of a High School in KI. Currently students can only access a grade 10 in KI and in Wapekeka all students must reside outside the community after grade 8. Under these circumstances very few obtain their grade 12 diploma or complete their education away from home. All it would take is four new classrooms to change the face of education for both communities. This project will support youth-to-youth workshops and visioning sessions on meeting the education needs of their peers, the development of multi-media presentations where the summary of these findings will be shared with community leadership and decision-makers. Key Activities include workshops on education experiences, media creation, cultural learning, presentation preparation; presentations to visiting Canadians during reconciliation trip; recording presentations and creation of multimedia resource package; dissemination of youth-produced materials through 8-12 partners.

KWIC Seeds For Justice

The youth facilitator's collective is a youth-led initiative branch of Seeds for Justice that works to develop and deliver social and environmental workshops to youth in the Peterborough Region. After doing research in their community, the collective has identified an issue of inclusion among youth due to issues such as ageism which they believe has impacted youth participation in the community and at the polls. The group will develop an inclusive youth engagement training workshop for teachers, youth workers, etc. to provide best practices in fostering a democratic, inclusive space. The activities will include Democratic spaces training, focus groups and workshops before and after the federal elections.

Mindful Movement for Millenials

Mindful Movement for Millenials is a youth-led group that is working to address mental health concerns and other stressors experienced by elementary aged children today. Through incorporating mindfulness, body-awareness and social-emotional learning into select elementary school curricula in Toronto, this project strives to improve overall student health and well-being.

Montfort Renaissance

Montfort Renaissance has been developed by francophone youth in Ottawa who feel silenced as there is no French only, mental health program that exist in their community. This project addresses the absence of resources for Francophone youth experiencing mental health issues in the Ottawa region and has been founded by youth with personal experiences with mental health. The project seeks to create a youth committee where young people can safely express their concerns and brainstorm solutions about the inefficient mental healthcare system. Key activities include: Monthly youth committee meetings discussing the social barriers experiences by Francophone youth, teaching participants about their rights and tools to practice self-advocacy.

Reclaim Honour

Reclaim Honour was founded by a group of 22 young Muslim women challenging "honour-related" violence and empowering community members. It now includes 10 young men. Through a bottom-up approach, the project seeks to foster a more complex understanding of honour-based violence and develop more culturally appropriate supports and service. It is a youth participatory action initiative of the Muslim Resource Centre of Social Support and Integration in London. It works to address the issue of gender-based violence within Muslim communities using a community development approach. This project is a forum theatre project co-created and facilitated by Muslim youth that promotes awareness and action on the issue of gender-based violence within the community. In addition, this project includes a photography project that will create a space for Muslim youth to create visual narratives that challenge stereotypes.

NGen Youth Centre

Emerging as an answer to the closing of Hamilton's newcomer youth centre in 2011, NGEN arose as a youth led space in the city of Hamilton which has been pivotal in providing the platform for youth in the city to develop leaders, advocate, and create change in their community. After launching their "Increase the Peace" campaign as a response to youth violence in Hamilton, NGEN has identified a need for more young people to have a space to make sure their voices continue to be heard at this time of increased violence and decreased opportunities for youth. Learning from its youth leadership initiative over the past year, the organization would like to maintain accessible youth-led opportunities, while developing a self-sustainable capacity.

Regional Youth Roundtable

The Regional Youth Roundtable is a network that facilitates increased collaboration among youth-led groups in the Peel and York Region. With this project, the RYR will organize bi-monthly meetings, where member organizations can share best practices in person, an online database called Torch to host collaborative resources and calendars for member organizations, professional development workshops for and a joint symposium on youth organizations between the Peel and York region.

Together We Flourish

Together We Flourish grew out of a participatory action research project that explored social barrier for young women engagement in their community and has since expanded into a youth-driven community-based group. This project provides an avenue for young people and local residents in Windsor to express their concerns and views of social barriers they face through a series of collaborative murals and artistic elements incorporated into a community garden. The project creates an intergenerational forum that engages socially excluded residents including youth facing socio-economic barriers, newcomers and the elderly. Key activities include the creation of collaborative art projects including collaborative murals, bird feeders and benches; video blog series and photos that document the project to be shared with the broader community.

TYRMC

This project is a culture-based initiative that supports youth in strengthening their Metis identity and sense of community and connection within urban spaces. It includes a series of 4 weekends of activities held over the year that align with the seasons that connect young people to cultural heritage, metis senators/elders/knowledge keepers, and promotes the importance of culture-based programming for Metis youth. Key activities include hosting 4 weekends of culture-based activities, sharing project results with Aboriginal agencies within Toronto and York region; TDSB etc.