

## ChangeTheWorld 2016 skyrockets youth volunteer engagement in Peel

Volunteer MBC has announced that more than 8,000 young volunteers participated in its ChangeTheWorld (CTW) campaign organized in the Region of Peel by Volunteer MBC in partnership with the Ontario Volunteer Centre Network (OVCN) and funded by the Province.

The six week long annual ChangeTheWorld ? Ontario Youth Volunteer Challenge campaign that started April 10 finished its ninth run May 23. The campaign is designed to encourage and inspire high school youth from all across Ontario to volunteer, develop new skills and broaden their awareness of community service organizations by participating in a wide variety of exciting local events and initiatives. Expressing her happiness with the call to action from the youth, Volunteer MBC Executive Director Carine Strong indicated that the agency's role in bringing the community together to build a sustainable and prospering environment is profound. ?Campaigns like ChangeTheWorld prove the growing role of Volunteer MBC in building a caring community together and how instilling a culture of civic engagement in youth plays such a key role for the future development of our communities,? she commented.

The success of the campaign continues to soar year over year, from engaging a mere 650 youth eight years ago to more than 8,000 this year, who collectively contributed over 34,000 hours of their time to make their respective communities better places to live. One of the events, Crossing the Poverty Line, organized by Volunteer MBC's Step Up Youth Volunteer Ambassadors (SUYVA) was a huge success.

?Youth come with a fresh perspective and we should nurture that when they proactively take the lead in shaping their future,? Shaminda Perera, manage of community engagement with Volunteer MBC. ?It is inspiring to see how the youth came together to find solutions to different issues in the community and it's a privilege to support them with these projects as well as to witness their camaraderie break barriers of all sorts.?

The events organized during the CTW campaign ranged from adopting causes to address the environment, personal wellbeing, care-giving, multiculturalism, community safety and security among others. Some of the events like Lit for Literacy and REBEL 2016 generated a lot of interest among the youth. Lit for literacy was an awareness campaign that leveraged the game of Scrabble to engage youth volunteers to create awareness about the importance of literacy and the benefits of utilizing the vast resources available at the libraries across Peel, while REBEL 2016 in Mississauga was more focused on engaging large numbers of youth volunteers and aspiring artists to organize a youth-led festival of creative expression and community involvement via city-wide events of music, film, the arts, culture and sports. These events were supported and delivered in partnership with all three municipalities from across Peel, their library systems, a number of Volunteer MBC's member organizations, high schools and via a Youth in Action grant from the United Way of Peel.



Kelly Mgbatogu, Keisha Campbell, Gurveen Gill, Devonie Ramson, students at Mayfield Secondary School, with their ChangeTheWorld certificates, after participating in a food drive they organized for the Caledon Exchange.