

Peel youth volunteered greatly in ChangeTheWorld campaign

The ChangeTheWorld ? Ontario Youth Volunteer Challenge recently wrapped up.

This was a six-week provincial campaign which encouraged youth aged 14 to 18 to volunteer through a wide variety of exciting local initiatives.

Last year during ChangeTheWorld, Volunteer MBC engaged more than 7,264 youth, exceeding the target by almost 1,000. Youth put in an astounding 25,521 volunteer hours in 167 events across Peel. This year, youth in Peel volunteered beyond expectations, with 7,520 young people taking part, putting in more than 30,690 hours in 328 events. This represents a 96 per cent increase in youth-related volunteer events held during the campaign and a 20 per cent increase of youth volunteer hours.

?Peel youth have, once again, stepped up and demonstrated their on-going commitment to making a difference in our community while gaining valuable skillsets in the process,? said Volunteer MBC Executive Director Carine Strong. ?It is through their efforts that many causes are brought to the forefront, such as youth mental health, multiculturalism, literacy, bullying, environmental issues and more. We commend all of the youth in Peel for taking action to change their world.?

ChangeTheWorld is funded by the Provincial government, in partnership with the Ontario Volunteer Centre Network (OVCN). The goal is to inspire youth to volunteer, develop new skills and broaden their awareness of community service organizations.

This year, Volunteer MBC coordinated seven of the events and three were led by the centre's Step Up Youth Volunteer Ambassadors Committee, a program managed completely by a dynamic group of high school students. Events included a Multicultural Youth Festival and MADScatter, an interactive day of rediscovering mental health and specifically addressed the issues of stress experienced by high school students. Other youth-related volunteer events were coordinated by local community service organizations and partners including the Caledon Public Library Monster Book Sale.

Plans for next year's campaign are already in progress. It will be held from April 12 to May 24 and in September, at the start of the school year, the volunteer centre will be reaching out to all Peel area high schools (62 in total) to promote the campaign and how youth can get involved and be part of this provincial initiative. ChangeTheWorld is an excellent opportunity for youth to get their community service hours, which are required to graduate from high school.

Volunteer MBC is looking forward to the continuing support of the Peel District School Board and the Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board to help promote the campaign and youth volunteerism in Peel.

Volunteer MBC is a volunteer centre serving Caledon, as well as the Cities of Brampton and Mississauga. The centre offers a referral and matching service for volunteer placement within the community for all ages (youth, adults, seniors, and families). They also provide education and support for volunteers and community service agencies and organizations, and serve the corporate community with various programming services that engage individual and team volunteering. Additionally, the centre strives to be a strong voice to support and promote volunteerism.

For more information about Volunteer MBC, to access their on-line volunteer opportunities database, and to find more details on the centre's three locations, visit www.volunteermbc.org