



Media Release

To: Simcoe County Media Outlets
From: Simcoe Community Services Foundation
Date: March 10, 2014
Subject: **March Break Youth Retreat is Possible Thanks to Community Support**

Honda Canada, Optimist Club of Barrie, the Retired Teachers of District 17, Members of the National Bank Financial Fixed Income Group, City of Orillia, Rotary Club of Orillia, Orillia Lions Club and the Knights of Columbus Orillia, along with support from many other individuals and in-kind supporters are making the fourth March Break Youth Retreat possible for local youth. This support is in addition to the ongoing funding Simcoe Community Services Youth In Action program receives from the United Way of Greater Simcoe as well as the Ministry of Children and Youth Services to cover operational costs

For many local families, March Break poses the perfect time for a memorable family getaway. For others, it makes for a challenging week away from routine and the need to find activities for their kids. It can be an even more difficult week for families with a teenager with special needs, with limited options available to them.

Simcoe Community Services (SCS) recognizes that quality recreational programming plays an essential role in the healthy development for youth with and without intellectual disabilities. In 2009, SCS's Youth In Action Program offered its first March Break Youth Retreat to high-school aged youth of all abilities from across Simcoe County to come together for 3 days and 2 nights hosted at YMCA Geneva Park.

They developed a program that fosters inclusivity and specifically designed it to meet the needs of youth with intellectual challenges including autism spectrum disorder. They engaged Key Note Speakers with disabilities to serve as role models for the youth and local partners to lead workshops that are fun, motivational and help youth develop the skills they need to successfully transition into adulthood.

" Our donors are investing in young people so they have the opportunity to expand their communication, social, leisure, work and life skills in an inclusive environment. Donors are ensuring that our most vulnerable youth have the resources they need available to them and our future generations are more accepting and tolerant ." said Laurie Straughan, Family Services Manager

This year we are pleased to welcome Luca "Lazylegz" Patuelli back after an amazing response from the youth participants (Luca recently wowed the audience on Ellen with his break dance moves!) ; No Regrets Live speaker Jake Lawless will focus on injury prevention and safe work/play; Georgian College Therapeutic Recreation students will have a leisure education workshop; and many other partners will lead activities to help the participants learn new and valuable skills to make them a better leader, friend and student.

Simcoe Community Services Foundation depends on the generosity of donors and partners to provide support that enable programming that significantly improves the lives of people with intellectual disabilities. For information on how you can help, please contact Lisa Spinks-Smith, Fund Developer for Simcoe Community Services Foundation at lspinks-smith@simcoecommunityservices.ca.

- 30 -

Media Contact:

Lisa Spinks-Smith

Fund Developer, Simcoe Community Services Foundation

T: 705.797.5276

E: lspinks-smith@simcoecommunityservices.ca

About Simcoe Community Services Foundation

The Simcoe Community Services Foundation partners directly with Simcoe Community Services in providing supports and services to children, teens and adults who have an intellectual disability. Funds raised by the Foundation go towards significantly improving the quality of life for people with intellectual disabilities. Simcoe Community Services was recently reaccredited by the Council of Quality and Leadership, an international person-centered accreditation body and had the distinction of being the first organization in Canada to be awarded the accreditation designation of Person Centered Excellence.

Simcoe Community Services Foundation
Barrie Office - 39 Fraser Court, Barrie ON L4N 5J5
Orillia Office – 35 West Street N, Orillia ON L3V 5B8

705-726-9082 ext. 5276

705-726-6875 (fax)

www.simcoecommunityservicesfoundation.ca