



## Media Release

**To:** Simcoe County Media Outlets

**From:** Simcoe Community Services Foundation

**Date:** April 16<sup>th</sup> 2014

**Subject:** **March Break Youth Retreat receives community support**

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It was an exciting and memorable experience for over 60 local youth of different abilities at the Simcoe Community Services (SCS) March Break Youth Retreat hosted at YMCA Geneva Park held on March 12<sup>th</sup> - 14<sup>th</sup> 2014.

This retreat was a great opportunity for high-school aged youth of all abilities from across Simcoe County to come together for 3 days and 2 nights in a program that fostered inclusivity and was specifically designed to meet the needs of youth with intellectual challenges including those with autism spectrum disorder. It was a valuable opportunity for the youth to learn new and valuable skills to promote being a better leader, friend and student.

The participants learned a lot about themselves through the Key Note Speakers with disabilities who served as role models to fun and motivational workshops which were designed to help the youth develop the skills they need to successfully transition into adulthood. "It was a truly wonderful experience, to be able to share these memorable moments with the youth and a great feeling to being welcomed with open arms by everyone." was the response from Georgian College Community Project Initiative (CPI) students.

Simcoe Community Services recognizes the importance of quality recreational programming in the healthy development for youth with and without intellectual disabilities and is grateful for the support of the local community. The March Break Youth Retreat was made possible due to support from 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. This support is in addition to the ongoing funding Simcoe Community Services Youth In Action program receives from the Ministry of Community and Social Services as well as the United Way of Greater Simcoe to cover operational costs.

Laurie Straughan, Family Services Manager, noted that the Ministry of Youth and Child Services was able to partially subsidize registration for 50 participants of the March Break Youth Retreat this year, making the event even more accessible for local families. Thank you once again to all of our donors for investing in young people, so they have the opportunity to expand their communication, social, leisure, work and life skills in an inclusive environment.

Simcoe Community Services Foundation depends on the generosity of donors and partners to provide support 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](mailto: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.*

- 30 -

39 Fraser Court, Barrie ON L4N 5J5  
705-726-9082 ext. 5276  
705-726-6875 (fax)  
[www.simcoecommunityservicesfoundation.ca](http://www.simcoecommunityservicesfoundation.ca)

**Media Contact:**

**Lisa Spinks-Smith**

Fund Developer, Simcoe Community Services Foundation

T: 705.797.5276

E: [lspinks-smith@simcoecommunityservices.ca](mailto:lspinks-smith@simcoecommunityservices.ca)