



October 13, 2009

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Environment Conference Spurs Youth to Action

Event Scheduled for October 15, Mohawk College STARRT Institute – Stoney Creek Campus

HAMILTON – Hamilton high school students will take a hands-on approach to shrinking their carbon footprints at an environmental conference to be held Thursday at Mohawk College's STARRT Institute in Stoney Creek.

Living the Environment 5 is being hosted by Hamilton Community Foundation (HCF) and its Youth Advisory Council in partnership with Mohawk College and McMaster University's Ontario Public Interest Research Group.

The goal of the conference is to engage teens in addressing environmental and other community issues. A highlight of this year's conference is *Cradle to Grave*, a performance by The Otesha Project. Otesha is a youth-run charity that uses multi-media theatre to mobilize youth in considering "alternatives to our culture of over-consumption". Members of The Otesha Project are biking into Hamilton tomorrow as part of a two-month Great Lakes cycling and performance tour.

Living the Environment will feature workshops on urban gardening, solar power, eating local, using your bike on the HSR and the importance of energy in eliminating poverty. Hamilton Community Foundation will also announce its call for proposals for 2009-2010 *Protecting Our Environment Together* (POET) grants. Grants of up to \$700 each are available to area high schools for youth-led environmental initiatives. Last year the Foundation gave out close to \$18,000 in grants to the city's 26 high schools for projects ranging from school gardens and environmental awareness raising campaigns, to recycling, vermiculture and an environmental film festival.

"Virtually every high school in Hamilton is participating in this conference," says Linda Hughes, HCF's adult advisor to its Youth Advisory Committee. "It's proof of the importance of the environment to youth, and their readiness to do whatever they can to protect it. Through these workshops, speakers and the grants, the kids can match their enthusiasm with action."

-30-

Agenda and List of workshops attached

CONTACT:

Linda Hughes, Adult Advisor, Youth Advisory Council, 905-523-5600 x 264

Grace Diffey, Vice-President, Community Relations, 905-523-5600 x 260; cell: 905-518-4641

Hamilton Community Foundation was founded in 1954 as Ontario's first community foundation. Like all community foundations, HCF has three main roles: working with donors to build funds for the future of Hamilton, granting to the widest possible range of organizations and initiatives, and fostering community leadership. Since it was founded, Hamilton

Community Foundation has made grants to our community totalling more than \$55 million, including approximately \$4.1 million last year. HCF's Youth Advisory Council (YAC) provides young people age 13 to 21 with an opportunity to work together with HCF as they raise funds and make grants in our community to benefit other youth. YAC members learn about Hamilton's strengths and needs, get involved in the community, gain leadership and provide a youth perspective to HCF's work.