



HAMILTON
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Neighbourhood Projects Give Reason to Celebrate
Community Party to be Held at Cathedral High School

HAMILTON – From north-end teenagers who formed a marching band to a group of Somali women who planted a community garden, projects underway through the “Growing Roots...Strengthening Neighbourhoods” program of Hamilton Community Foundation (HCF) are making a difference. The Foundation will recognize the program’s most recent projects in its four target neighbourhoods at a celebration on Thursday, September 28, 2006.

The event, which brings together neighbourhood residents, HCF donors, and community leaders, takes place from 5 to 7 p.m. at Cathedral High School, 30 Wentworth St. N. A total of 22 projects carried out within the past 12 months will be in the spotlight.

The “Growing Roots...Strengthening Neighbourhoods” program engages residents of the Beasley, Landsdale, McQuesten East and McQuesten West neighbourhoods and helps them plan to improve their communities. Grants are provided by HCF to help residents implement projects they identify as most potentially beneficial to their neighbourhoods.

“We often hear of negative events and aspects of these Hamilton neighbourhoods, but these projects highlight the positive things that are happening,” says Sheree Meredith, Vice-President, Grants & Community Initiatives for HCF. “People are the heart and soul of their neighbourhoods. With these projects, people have put into action things that they believe will enhance their neighbourhoods.”

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The 22 projects to be recognized range from a marching band, a \$1,508 venture that provided music lessons and instruments to a group of downtown youth; to the Beasley/Somali Community Garden, a \$1,100 initiative that allowed immigrant Somali women to share their skills and feed their community by planting a vegetable and herb garden beside McLaren Park. A total of \$20,451 in grants were made from Hamilton Community Foundation over the past 12 months.

Among the other projects are: a breakfast club, a reading workshop and a mural painted in McLaren Park by an artist who incorporated drawings done by north-end children.

Since 1954, Hamilton Community Foundation has received donated funds from generous citizens, invested those funds to generate income, and made grants to support a wide range of local charities, including arts and heritage, education, health and social services, and the environment.

The Foundation also brings people together to convene solutions to some of Hamilton's most pressing challenges, such as racism, bullying and poverty. It has total assets of more than \$110 million and, since 1954, has made grants to our community totaling \$39 million.

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Backgrounder attached with complete list of projects.

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BACKGROUND

Hamilton Community Foundation: “Growing Roots...Strengthening Neighbourhoods”

WHAT IT IS: “Growing Roots...Strengthening Neighbourhoods” is an innovative grant program of Hamilton Community Foundation (HCF). The program provides grants for resident-initiated neighbourhood enhancement projects within the Beasley, Landsdale, McQuesten East and McQuesten West neighbourhoods of Hamilton. HCF has made a five-year commitment to work with the residents of these neighbourhoods, which not only offer assets and potential for success, but also present concentrated risks, issues and special challenges.

PROJECTS TO BE RECOGNIZED ON SEPT. 28, 2006*:

1. **Drop your M.O.P.S. (Mothers of Pre-Schoolers):** This is a social and recreational program for mothers and their pre-school children. Grant amount: \$1,000.
2. **Dragon Zone 2005:** A weekly evening of arts, crafts and sports, this program helps to unite parents, teens and children in the Beasley and Landsdale neighbourhoods. Grant amount: \$1,062.
3. **Snuggle Up and Read (Working to Improve Literacy):** The Roxborough School and Roxborough Park Parent Council worked together to improve literacy for children. Students and parents shared techniques and strategies to make family reading fun. Grant amount: \$450.
4. **James Street Band:** This grant allowed downtown youth to start a marching band. They received instruments and music lessons. The project brought together students and staff from Sir John A. Macdonald School, neighbourhood parents and people at James Street Armouries. Grant amount: \$1,508.
5. **Cooking for a Crowd:** A team of parents from Sanford Avenue Community School planned and prepared low cost, highly nutritious meals, while building teamwork, organizational and cooking skills. Grant amount: \$1,500.
6. **Parkdale Elementary Club:** A homework club has been developed for elementary students by the Parkdale School Parent Council and a team of volunteer students from Sir Winston Churchill High School. Grant amount: \$1,495.
7. **The David Hillen Memorial Garden and Tool Lending Shed:** This project is now in its fourth year and celebrates David Hillen and the Cannon Street beautification project that he started. A “tool lending shed” is shared between community members to maintain Cannon’s streetscape. Grant amount: \$1,600.
8. **Jamesville Breakfast Club:** An after-breakfast activity club for youth is provided by parents of St. Mary’s School students and is held at Christ Church Cathedral. Grant amount: \$1,025.

*Some projects are complete and others are in progress.

9. **“Let’s Connect”**: This grant allowed the Parent Council of Sir Winston Churchill High School to integrate parent involvement into their children’s in-school activities. Grant amount: \$1,400.
10. **Seniors Picnic at Bayfront Park**: A picnic was organized at Bayfront Park for 65 seniors who were supported by a group of 30 Cathedral High School volunteers. Grant amount: \$1,255.
11. **Beasley/Somali Community Garden**: This grant allowed Somali women to use their skills and build a vegetable and herb garden beside McLaren Park. The garden is one of several activities available to help the women enhance their contribution to their community. Grant amount: \$1,100.
12. **Mural in McLaren**: This mural was one of the first steps taken to renovate McLaren Park. Children of the Beasley and Landsdale neighbourhoods submitted drawings to a local artist who integrated their ideas into a mural on one of the park’s sheds. Grant amount: \$1,201.
13. **Beasley Resource Listings**: A “Neighbourhood Business Info Sheet” has been developed for members of the Beasley community. It includes contact information for the most-commonly used businesses in the community. Grant amount: \$800.
14. **24 Hours, My Life, My Experience, My Neighbourhood**: A group of teens told a photo story to their community about their perspective of the neighbourhood. They used photographs and video footage to present their story. Grant amount: \$1,150.
15. **Community Crossroads**: Fun social activities such as dinners, movies and coffee houses are held for the Beasley and Landsdale neighbourhoods to bond together. Grant amount: \$600.
16. **GAAT Zone 2 Sky Dragon**: In the Sudanese Nuer dialect, “gaat” means “children.” GAAT Zone 2 Sky Dragon is a social club for Sudanese and Somali families living in the downtown core. It offers a safe place for families to share their culture and customs with each other and with other Beasley residents. Grant amount: \$1,500.
17. **Cathedral Cares 2005**: Science students at Cathedral High School raised plants from seeds for use in various neighbourhood beautification projects. Grant amount: \$655.
18. **Beasley Legal Evening**: The Beasley neighbourhood held an information session to inform recent immigrants about their legal rights and responsibilities. Grant amount: \$150.
19. **Smith Avenue Beautification 2**: Smith Avenue residents worked with students and staff of St. Brigid School to improve the aesthetics of their neighbourhood. Grant amount: \$500.
20. **A Day at the Mall ... An Evening in the Park 3**: This project was held for the third year, helping seniors to overcome the feeling of isolation during the Christmas season. Grant amount: \$500.

- 21. Martha Movers Block Party 4:** Residents of the McQuesten neighbourhood gathered to introduce themselves and unite as a community. The project was made possible by the generous donations of local businesses and residents.
- 22. Martha Zone 2:** This after-school program for seven to 11-year-olds is held at St. Helen Catholic Elementary School. The project was made possible by the generous donations of local businesses and residents.

For more information, please contact Sheree Meredith, Vice-President, Grants & Community Initiatives, Hamilton Community Foundation, 905-523-5600.