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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

New Funding Available to Spur Youth to Community Action
Hamilton Community Foundation announces grants for youth-led projects

HAMILTON – If you're a young person with a great idea for making a difference in your community, Hamilton Community Foundation wants to hear from you. The Foundation has announced grants of up to \$2,500 for youth-led projects that improve the local community, neighbourhood or school.

"Hamilton's youth have so many great ideas for community improvement, but they often lack the financial resources to make their ideas happen," says HCF's President & CEO Carolyn Milne. "Through these grants, the Foundation wants to help them realize the tangible impact they can have, and as a result, set the stage for lifelong engagement with their city."

The program is run by the Foundation's Youth Advisory Council (YAC), young volunteers who work with HCF's board and staff to secure donations and make grants to benefit other youth. "Young people are involved in every aspect of these grants – proposing the ideas, selecting the projects to be funded, and then carrying them out," says Linda Hughes, YAC's adult advisor. "Last year, the youth-led projects ranged from projects aimed at improving the environment, to others promoting healthy living, artistic expression and peer support," she says. "All had a common theme of encouraging kids – younger and older - to unleash their potential, gain self-confidence and see results from their work."

The grants are available to youth between the ages of 11 and 25 and youth must participate as volunteers. The Foundation will provide 50 percent of project costs up to a maximum of \$2,500, provided that the project team can find matching support in the community. Community support can be cash, or in-kind support. "In-kind support means what the community can give or donate to your project," says Ms. Hughes. It can include things like food for volunteers, use of a building, vehicle or equipment, tutoring or mentoring. Eligible expenses that the Foundation will cover include things like project materials, promotional costs, transportation, food and lodging for volunteers.

The Foundation's YAC will accept project proposals until February 27, 2009; projects must be completed by December 31, 2009. 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 the Foundation's work.

For more information and application forms for Youth-Led Community Action Projects, visit HCF's website at www.hcf.on.ca; or contact Linda Hughes at l.hughes@hcf.on.ca.

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CONTACT:

Linda Hughes
Adult Advisor, Youth Advisory Council
Hamilton Community Foundation
905-523-5600 x 264...
l.hughes@hcf.on.ca

Media Contact:

Grace Diffey
Vice-President, Community Relations
Hamilton Community Foundation
905-523-5600 x 260 905-518-4641
g.diffey@hcf.on.ca