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NINETEEN GREAT GRANTS AWARDS FINALISTS SELECTED FOR FAR-REACHING COMMUNITY IMPACT

Toronto, October 13, 2005 – Helen Burstyn, Chair of the Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF), today announced the Great Grants Awards finalists. The awards, a tribute to excellence, recognize OTF grants that make a significant difference in communities.

“Ontario is home to many outstanding volunteer organizations,” said Burstyn. “OTF grants help them achieve great results. Great Grants Awards pay tribute to organizations whose work help Ontarians achieve their potential and improve the quality of their lives.”

At a November 3 ceremony in Toronto, in the presence of Minister of Culture Madeleine Meilleur, OTF will present four Great Grants Awards in each its funded sectors as well as the following awards:

- the Award of Distinction for the grant that best illustrates one of OTF’s granting priorities.
- the Minister’s Award for the Province-Wide Program grant that demonstrates the most impact across the province.
- the Chair’s Award for the grant that best exemplifies the building of healthy and vibrant communities that meet diverse needs.

The Foundation plays a vital role in building healthy and vibrant communities throughout Ontario. It supports the remarkable work of volunteer, community-based agencies and organizations through initiatives that strengthen the capacity of organizations in the arts and culture, environment, human and social services and sports and recreation sectors.

Great Grants Awards 2005 are sponsored by the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corporation, with additional support from TVOntario.

The Ontario Trillium Foundation, an agency of the Ministry of Culture, receives annually \$100 million of government funding generated through Ontario's charity casino initiative.

[For more information on finalists click here.](#)

[For more information on the 2005 Great Grant Awards program click here.](#)

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Backgrounder

2005 GREAT GRANTS FINALISTS ONTARIO TRILLIUM FOUNDATION

FINALISTS FROM THE COMMUNITY GRANTS PROGRAM

ARTS AND CULTURE

CANADA SOUTH SCIENCE CITY (WINDSOR)

Science and technology fun in Windsor

Can learning about science and technology be fun? Canada South Science City never doubted it. And they were right! Canada South Science City opened in March 2004. Since then, many thousands of children, families and people of all ages have visited its interactive, hands-on exhibits. In its first year, over 100 schools visited the centre. Canada South Science City keeps drawing more tourists to the area.

This youth and family-based recreational facility has far exceeded all expectations. Implementing a strong marketing strategy was essential for the centre to reach its revenue projections. Thanks to \$225,000 over three years in funding from OTF, Canada South Science City was well advertised and promoted in Southwest Ontario.

CAROUSEL PLAYERS (ST. CATHARINES)

Studio Theatre Space: Act II for historic building

Ever since it provided a home for Carousel Players, St. Catharines' quiet Old Court House Building has been resonating with the sound of applause. Carousel Players and other performing arts groups now have a well-equipped venue in which to stage their performances. With the help of a \$60,800 OTF grant over six months, Carousel Players renovated the 120-seat Studio Theatre Space by providing portable seating, stage lighting and sound equipment.

The Studio Theatre Space, an intimate performance space, is also available as a meeting place to other community groups. It is boosting St. Catharines' profile as a cultural destination while enhancing the revitalization of the downtown area.

FRANCOSCÉNIE INC. (PRESCOTT-RUSSELL)

The spirit of a community

For Prescott-Russell residents, Francoscénie's "Écho d'un peuple" is more than a large-scale musical celebrating 400 years of Francophone presence in North America. In 2004, Francoscénie launched one of the most significant artistic achievements of the local community. "Écho d'un peuple" attracted over 30,000 spectators in its first season and garnered the prestigious Trille Or for best musical event of 2005 presented by Association des professionnels de la chanson et de la musique (APCM).

In 2003, Francoscénie received a \$30,000 OTF grant over six months. The event generated over \$1 million for the Prescott-Russell economy. Local volunteers with "Écho d'un peuple" built the stage, put the production together and acted in it night after night. The production is now used as a teaching tool at Francophone schools. Écho d'un peuple is about the spirit of a community - the Francophone community of Prescott-Russell.

SKETCH (TORONTO)

Skills to draw on

Toronto homeless and at-risk for homelessness youth are being given the skills they need to find themselves an active role in their community. Sketch integrates diverse arts programs with job and life skills training for youth aged 16 to 29. Participants in the program find the confidence and skills necessary to leave the street, return to school or find self-employment. With the help of over 100 volunteers and Sketch staff, youth are better equipped to turn their lives around.

In 2003, OTF provided \$210,000 over three years to fund Sketch staff salaries and cover key program costs. Participants can enjoy art making out in the community, exhibition and sale of artwork, connections to mentorship and apprenticeships in the arts industry and support for education or a career in the arts.

ENVIRONMENT

2004 PROVINCIAL ENVIROTHON C/O THE BRUCE PENINSULA BIOSPHERE ASSOCIATION (TOBERMORY)

Green lessons in Tobermory

For four days in May 2004, more than 200 students, teachers, resource professionals and volunteers from over 20 different communities met in Tobermory for the 2004 Provincial Envirothon competition. They came to propose realistic green solutions and left behind five Legacy Projects to enhance local forestry, wildlife and soil.

For the first time in its history, the competition, founded by the Ontario Forestry Association, was held in a totally rural community and it captured the whole community's attention. Participants, volunteers and local residents had the unique opportunity to understand environmental issues better and see first-hand how living things are interconnected. A \$48,400 OTF grant over one year was used to promote the competition, train over 250 local volunteers and help transport and house participants.

COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT ALLIANCE: SHARE-IT (PEEL REGION)

Gapping the digital divide

Low-income families and individuals often must do without the technological tools that have become essential for school work or job searching. Share-IT, a project by the Community Environment Alliance, is reducing the digital divide in Peel Region. With materials from a computer firm, Share-IT's volunteers recycle computers, printers, scanners and cell phones and distribute them locally.

Since 2003, the organization has also raised public awareness of hazardous e-waste. Share-IT not only "connects" low-income families, it improves life prospects at the same rate it reduces hazardous e-waste in landfill sites. The success of the recycling program has raised interest across Ontario and abroad. OTF's \$219,000 grant over three years has been used to hire staff and volunteer support and cover administrative costs.

COMMUNITY STREAM STEWARD PROGRAM (PETERBOROUGH)

Reviving nature

Urban habitats are gaining ground over wildlife. How can we rescue the streams and rivers affected by this proximity? Community Stream Steward Program's answer is simple: one meter at a time! To involve local communities in the care and preservation of streams, this initiative has been recruiting and training volunteer stewards since the summer of 2003. It mobilized individual volunteers, landowners and organizations in Durham Region, Northumberland, Peterborough and the City of Kawartha Lakes.

The Community Stream Steward Pilot Program boasts a total reach of over 80,000 residents and in its first year has naturalized 1,700 m of shore in several communities. Already the successful pilot project is serving as a model for other areas beyond the original boundaries. Provincial and National organizations are interested in taking this model further. The program received \$225,000 over three years from OTF to organize hands-on community involvement in stream conservation and restoration. It received \$225,000 over three years from OTF to organize hands-on community involvement in stream conservation and restoration.

TREES FOR TOMORROW (WOODSTOCK)

Seeing the forest and the trees

When Oxford, Elgin and Middlesex counties tree planting groups and organizations discovered there was a shortage of native tree stock available, they came together to form Trees for Tomorrow. Local schools, community groups, people with developmental disabilities and experts got out their gardening gear to join them. In 2003, they started harvesting native acorns, walnuts and other seeds, and growing saplings. They have now planted over 20,000 trees with the help of 5,000 people.

Thousands of elementary and secondary students and adults of all abilities are now learning about their area's natural history. Through the effort of Trees for Tomorrow and a \$138,400 OTF grant over three years, a whole community has come together to preserve its forests for future generations.

HUMAN AND SOCIAL SERVICES

CROSSING ALL BRIDGES LEARNING CENTRE (BRANTFORD) ***Strengthening independence through abilities***

When a determined group of mothers wanted more options for their children with developmental disabilities, they created their own learning centre. Today, students at the Crossing All Bridges Learning Centre build on the skills they developed in high school to provide more opportunities for work and community living.

Activities at the popular learning centre include formal learning as well as preparing meals, personal fitness and money management. The centre was awarded \$75,000 over six months by OTF to renovate a section of the Brantwood Centre. It opened in November 2003 with 20 students.

GRIEVING CHILDREN AT SEASONS CENTRE (BARRIE) ***Healing support***

When trying to come to terms with a loss or a personal trauma, sharing your grief will often bring some relief. Created in 1995, Barrie's Grieving Children at Seasons Centre has helped hundreds of children and teenagers deal with bereavement and grief issues and avoid abuse, drug addiction, depression and other negative responses to loss.

Grieving Children at Seasons Centre, with its 40 well-trained volunteers, provides its programs free of charge. It received \$115,000 over two years from OTF to upgrade their information technology equipment, develop an awareness campaign for the centre and enhance program activities. With OTF's assistance, support programs at the centre have doubled.

ST. JOSEPH'S IMMIGRANT WOMEN'S CENTRE (HAMILTON) ***Nurses without borders***

With a shortage of nurses in Ontario, helping experienced, foreign-trained nurses find employment is a healthy idea. In 2003, Hamilton's St. Joseph's Immigrant Women's Centre started providing help for nurses to overcome language and academic barriers. In addition to assistance, its innovative pilot training program also delivered hope to these new Canadians.

This successful pilot project was established with \$25,200 grant over 18 months. It has raised awareness of professional immigrants trained overseas, attracting government funding and making possible the creation of an office to support foreign-trained individuals in the Hamilton area. As a result 15 individuals are now fully employed in Ontario's health care system.

TUTORING FOR KIDS COALITION C/O COMMUNITY LIVING PRINCE EDWARD (PICTON)

It takes a whole village... and two counties

In Hastings and Prince Edward Counties, students are happy to extend their days at school because they have a lot to show for it: improved marks and self-esteem. During the 2003-2004 school year, 150 local retired teachers, high school students, community members and parents answered Tutoring for Kids' call for help. They trained as volunteer tutors for a 14-month pilot after-school learning program for at-risk Grade 1 to 8 students.

Tutoring for Kids, a coalition of six area community agencies and the local school board, offered its no-cost program to over 300 students primarily from areas of high unemployment and larger representation of single-parent families in 16 communities. Created with the help of a \$90,400 OTF grant, the pilot project exceeded all expectations. Tutors, who brought their skills and their love of learning, contributed 9,670 volunteer hours. Participating students showed improvement in math, reading, grades in general and self-esteem.

SPORTS AND RECREATION

BETTER BEGINNINGS, BETTER FUTURES (SUDBURY)

Cool after school

When parents have to work long hours, who takes care of their children after school? As a safe and active alternative to the street, television or computer games, Better Beginnings, Better Futures operates its after-school program for 9 to 13 year olds. Located in an economically disadvantaged neighbourhood, it provides healthy snacks and a supportive and stimulating atmosphere in which to do homework, learn crafts or play various games and sports.

Better Beginnings was awarded \$77,000 over two years to support the salaries of two childcare workers, program materials and food supplies. It provides services in English and French.

LAKEHEAD CANOE CLUB (THUNDER BAY)

Paddling all the way to the top

Dragon boat racing is one of the fastest growing water sports in the world today. Since acquiring four dragon boats in January 2004, Thunder Bay's Lakehead Canoe Club has seen a dramatic increase in participation from local youth and adults. The first dragon boat race attracted an impressive 3,300 regional paddlers, cheered on by more than 27,000 spectators.

The Lakehead Canoe Club makes its dragon boats available to other communities in an effort to build a strong Northwestern Ontario competitive force at the national level. In 2003, the club received \$75,000 over one year from OTF to purchase the necessary equipment for racing and enhance fundraising festivals.

LAKE OF BAYS MARINE MUSEUM AND NAVIGATIONAL SOCIETY (DORSET)

The last witness of a bygone era

A century ago, visitors to Lake of Bays experienced the lake's beauty from aboard majestic steamships. Today the last survivor of the original fleet, Bigwin, is being restored and made lakeworthy for the enjoyment of present and future generations. Dorset's Bigwin Steamship Restoration Project is providing over 60 dedicated volunteers with boat building experience.

In 2004, OTF awarded \$50,000 over two years for the restoration of Bigwin as a historical attraction for residents and tourists to the Lake of Bays. Through the restoration efforts of Lake of Bays Marine Museum and Navigational Society, a piece of local history is also being preserved.

RUN FOR LIFE (WATERLOO)

People on the move

People of all ages often need encouragement to get in the habit of regular physical exercise. Run for Life provides just that. In the Waterloo region, Run for Life and its fit volunteers are getting people moving. They have developed a strong network of community-based running groups and recreational programs for children over five years of age, youth and families.

Thanks to a \$16,000 grant over one year from OTF, Run for Life was able to train volunteers, provide coaching kits to help deliver the program to over 500 people and produce a short promotional video for students in Grades 4 to 6.

FINALISTS FROM THE PROVINCE-WIDE GRANTS PROGRAM

CANADIAN PARTNERSHIP FOR CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND THE ENVIRONMENT: C/O CANADIAN CHILD CARE FOUNDATION

Growing up healthy

Children are uniquely vulnerable to toxic chemicals and other environmental hazards. Eleven health, social service and environmental groups joined in a partnership to protect children from indoor and outdoor hazards. Canadian Partnership for Children's Health and the Environment came up with solutions and useful tips for individuals and decision-makers to childproof their homes, their schools and their communities.

Together these committed partners are educating the public and raising awareness of children's environmental health issues. They have reached over 75,000 people through materials distribution, and 4,000 people through their workshops and seminars. Their comprehensive bilingual primer *Child Health and the Environment* is being distributed to decision-makers across government and the health, childcare and environment sectors. OTF provided \$396,800 over three years in support of this initiative.

HISTORICA FOUNDATION OF CANADA: HISTORICA FAIRS
Young historians wanted

Does history have to be taught from a textbook? Not according to Historica Foundation of Canada. The organization champions another approach. For Grade 4 to 9 students, it makes a lot of sense to learn history by taking on the role of a storyteller or a local hero. And presenting at a regional or provincial Historica Fair makes researching their local history all the more compelling.

OTF invested \$200,000 over 16 months to pilot the expansion of Historica Fairs in Ontario. It opened access to the program to 84,000 participants and involved 2,500 volunteers. The successful pilot project has generated renewed enthusiasm in history for the participating students and their teachers.

**ONTARIO SUSTAINABLE ENERGY ASSOCIATION (OSEA):
COMMUNITY CAPACITY BUILDING FOR SUSTAINABLE ENERGY PROJECTS**
Growing green projects

More Ontarians are interested in green power alternatives than ever before. It has a lot to do with the relentless efforts of the Ontario Sustainable Energy Association (OSEA) and its bold vision: to make community green power initiatives a widely acceptable option for meeting Ontario's energy needs.

Propelled by overwhelming public interest, the association has provided a series of 30 workshops to communities across Ontario. It offers ongoing technical support to communities interested in establishing community green energy projects. Through the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, OSEA is promoting the development of wind power as a potential source of income for farmers. OSEA received an OTF \$445,500 grant over three years. As a direct result of OTF's support, OSEA has fostered the development of new community power projects in Hamilton, Dufferin County, Prince Edward County, Schreiber, Thunder Bay, Temagami, Caledon, and Grand River.

Backgrounder

ONTARIO TRILLIUM FOUNDATION GREAT GRANTS AWARDS 2005

Introduced in 2002, Great Grants Awards celebrate remarkable organizations that make a difference in their communities and across the province as a result of OTF funding.

The 2005 Great Grants Awards showcase outstanding examples of OTF grants that contribute to further the Foundation's mission of building healthy and vibrant communities throughout Ontario by strengthening the capacity of the voluntary sector, through investments in community-based initiatives.

Great Grants Awards 2005 are further enhanced with the addition of a new Award of Distinction.

Categories

Great Grants Awards recognize outstanding results in OTF's four funding sectors. The categories are "Arts and Culture", "Sports and Recreation", "Environment" and "Human and Social Services".

Three other awards to be presented are:

- The Award of Distinction for the grant that best illustrates one of OTF's granting priorities.
- The Minister's Award for the Province-Wide Program grant that demonstrated the most impact across the province.
- The Chair's Award for the grant that best exemplifies the building of healthy and vibrant communities that meet diverse needs.

Eligibility

Great Grants Awards finalists were selected from among 3, 800 OTF grant recipients whose grant was approved in or after 2002 and who had completed at least one full year of their grant.

Selection of finalists and awards recipients

Finalists and awards recipients were selected by OTF's provincial Grant Review Committee, and the Awards Selection Committee comprised of OTF Board members, Grant Review Team Chairs and OTF staff members.

Selection criteria

Grants that:

- enhance the quality of life in the community through improved services, programs or events
- contribute to increased participation in community life by removing physical, financial, social, cultural and language barriers
- enhance volunteerism by recruiting and training volunteers or diversifying the volunteer base
- demonstrate potential for lasting impact after the grant is over.
- demonstrate one of OTF's granting priorities

OTF's granting priorities

The Foundation places priority on supporting organizations that work in the following areas to help Ontarians achieve their potential:

- Enhanced success for students and learners
- Healthier and more physically active Ontarians
- Enhanced employment and economic potential for workers and their families
- More effective volunteers and more people engaged in their communities

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