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Press Release
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Community Can Play a Big Role in Helping Children and Youth Thrive

Everything counts. That was the key message at the official launch of the Our Kids Network's 2008 A Vision for Children in Halton Report Card which took place in Oakville on Thursday, February 12, 2009. Various community agencies, volunteers and parents were on hand for the official release of the 2008 Report Card which provides detailed information about the issues facing children and youth in Halton. It is the mission of the Our Kids Network that all children thrive and the results of the report card indicate that there is work that still needs to be done at a community level to support children, youth and their families.

"The most significant findings relate to the mental health of our children and youth," said Nancy MacGillivray, Executive Director of the Halton Children's Aid Society and a partner on the Our Kids Network. "One in six students in Halton is experiencing mental health issues. Parents and community agencies need to be aware of these findings and we need to work together to help our children and youth face these challenges."

The 2008 A Vision for Children in Halton Report Card measures the progress of children and families in Halton using data collected from local, provincial and national sources. The Our Kids Network has identified seven key results that help measure the progress of child and youth development in Halton. Collectively we want children who are healthy, children who are learning, children who are positively connected, children who are safe, families that are strong and stable, schools that are connected to the community, and neighbourhoods where we can live, work and play.

The report findings reveal that parent-child relationships, parental monitoring, and connection to peers and school play an important role in healthy development and protecting against risky behaviours and promoting positive and healthy choices. The findings suggest that the work of parents, teachers, community agencies and volunteers at a community level is having a positive impact on the healthy development of children and youth in Halton.

The Our Kids Network strongly believes that individuals or groups working towards a common goal can make a real difference. Part of the official ceremony during the release of the 2008 Report Card included the recognition of "Community Heroes" in Halton who have made significant contributions to the quality of life for children and youth in their community through their work with the Our Kids Network Neighbourhood Hubs.

Halton District School Board • Halton Catholic District School Board

- Halton Children's Aid Society • Halton Region – Departments of Health and Social & Community Services
- Transitions for Youth • ROCK – Reach Out Centre for Kids • Halton Regional Police Service

“Our Kids Network Community Heroes are extraordinary individuals whose passion, perseverance and purpose have positively contributed to the work being done in the Neighbourhood Hubs,” said Nancy MacGillivray, Executive Director of the Halton Children’s Aid Society and a partner on the Our Kids Network.

The following individuals were presented with the Our Kids Network “Community Heroes Award”:

- ◆ Acton Neighbourhood Hub – Bekky Gibson and Hayley Gendron – two young women who stand out from the ordinary by dedicating their time to improve opportunities, programming and well being for youth in Acton.
- ◆ Aldershot Neighbourhood Hub – Karen Phelps, an advocate for food security and volunteer with the Aldershot Hub Fresh Food Box Program.
- ◆ Aldershot Neighbourhood Hub – Linda Cupido, a community advocate who fundraises for the Aldershot Hub to secure financial support for programs offered at the Hub.
- ◆ Milton Neighbourhood Hub – Misty Hobbs, a volunteer who organizes community meetings and focus group sessions at the Hub to help individuals or families in Milton who need assistance.
- ◆ Oakville Neighbourhood Hub – Mojgan Sagharichi, an advocate for food security and site coordinator for the Oakville Fresh Food Box Program.

The Our Kids Network is a community network of partners including Halton Region, Halton Regional Police Services, Halton District School Board, Halton Catholic District School Board, Halton Children’s Aid Society, ROCK, and Transitions for Youth who joined together to promote the healthy development, security and safety of all children, youth and families in Halton. The vision of the network is that “all children thrive!” Partners in the Our Kids Network work towards this vision by providing service integration through neighbourhood hubs and by committing to collecting local data on an ongoing basis to help identify where needs exist with respect to the health of children and youth in Halton. To learn more about the Our Kids Network visit www.ourkidsnetwork.ca

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