



# *Breaking the cycle of poverty*

## *funding a homework club for at-risk youth in Peel*

“ ... I like coming to Homework Club, because when I come I get my homework done ... and I've seen improvement with my work ever since homework club started. The staff who work at the homework club don't give you the answers but they help you understand the question. ”

- Claudia, Grade 6

### **The Impact on Children Living in Poverty**

Ross and Roberts conducted a research study on income and children on behalf of the Canadian Council on Social Development. Their article, “Income and Child Wellbeing: A New Perspective on the Poverty Debate,” found that low-income children and youth are adversely impacted in the areas of behaviour, learning and cultural and recreational participation. Some key findings include:

- Almost 40 per cent of children and youth in low-income families demonstrate high levels of indirect aggression compared to 25 per cent of children in families whose incomes are higher
- Low-income children and youth are almost twice as likely to suffer from high levels of emotional-disorder anxiety
- Children and youth from low-income households have scores within the top ten per cent in terms of frequency of delinquent behaviours and are three times more likely to hang out with kids who are in trouble

The directors of The CGOV Foundation have researched and approved this charitable project as an avenue to help break the cycle of poverty. The project funds a homework club in the Acorn Community at the Peel Youth Village, operated by the YMCA. It was initiated in 2008 and RBC Foundation is currently a major funding partner.

### **ABOUT THE COMMUNITY**

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The Acorn Community is located in Mississauga, Ontario just north of Highway 403.

- It is the highest density non-profit housing area in the Peel region
- It is comprised of 1,370 individuals and families
- The average income is \$39,898 – almost half the average for the rest of Peel
- Over 48 per cent of the population are young people aged 10 to 24
- A full 68 per cent of these families are single parented homes

The community is geographically isolated with no access to local human care services or after school activities. Kids are bused to and from school, typically with no family member at home between 3:30 and 6 p.m.

The Peel Youth Village acts as a hub for families to connect with each other and their community. With this unique and high need neighbourhood the YMCA provides a “good place to be.” The homework club, under the direction of Erica Taylor, who has over 15 years experience delivering programs to at-risk youths, is providing an important service by tutoring and mentoring students that otherwise do not have sufficient support at home. ↪

“...homework club is very helpful to me. Candice our teacher educates us in an amazing way. When I come to the homework club I know that I will get my homework done day by day.”

- Tiana Smith, Grade 8



The main objectives of the homework club are:

- To foster a positive attitude in the participants regarding themselves and their education
- To improve academic performance and competence
- To acquire better habits and develop skills for success in school and other aspects of their lives
- To enhance relationships among participating adolescents by increasing trust, cooperation and respect for one another

Currently, there are 17 registered youth participants and other youths who attend on a drop-in basis.

## COST

- The base-line operating cost each year is approximately \$40,000
- Funds in excess of the \$40,000 operating budget would be used to add more teaching time so the homework club could accommodate more students, as well as purchase equipment ↔

## FUTURE IMPACT

We have met with Erica Taylor who has a real passion for this program and the children involved to succeed. Ultimately, Erica would like to see 10 or more students in the homework club enroll in post-secondary education and some successes have already been seen in the two years the program has been running. Erica would also like to see some funding raised to help successful students pay for a portion of the costs of their post-secondary education, including tuition, books, housing, etc.

What does it mean, to have these students enter into post-secondary education? The higher education translates into higher paying employment, and ultimately the cycle of poverty is broken. We look forward to tracking this progress in the years ahead.

We invite you to participate with the Foundation and partners of CGOV Asset Management in supporting this impactful charitable project. Should you be interested in learning more about this initiative, please feel free to contact me.↔

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