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## Media Release

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# Less than one week left to participate in Halton Youth Impact Survey

## Responses from teens and children will have a direct impact on community programming decisions

Halton ON – Young people often feel they are not heard by community organizations that develop programs and resources to meet their needs. Now, by participating in an important survey, they can help agencies across Halton Region make decisions about supports for teens and children.

Our Kids Network has developed the Halton Youth Impact survey with [UNICEF Canada](#), which runs until June 14. It is open to residents of Halton ages 9 to 18 years-old and takes about 25 minutes to complete; children 13 and under are required to obtain consent from their parent or guardian.

High school students who take the survey and promote it to their peers on social media can earn two volunteer hours. And, after completing the survey, all respondents may enter to win one of the top prizes (selected at random): a Canada's Wonderland Platinum Pass, a \$100 Amazon gift card or a one-year Conservation Halton family membership. An additional 200 Tim Hortons \$10 gift cards are up for grabs.

Halton Youth Impact Survey Ambassador Evan Hayward took the survey because it gave him a chance to connect with his community and earn volunteer hours toward his OSSGD at the same time.

"You know what you need to be successful in Halton and be involved in Halton," he said. "It's an easy survey. And if you're in high school like me, because of COVID, it's hard to do your volunteer hours if you're in Grade 9 or 10. You can do the survey and get two free volunteer hours if you just take the survey and recommend it to your friends. It's a good deal."

Responses collected from the survey will generate new data about the health and wellbeing of local youth by measuring factors such as connection to family, peers, school and the community, as well as physical health, safety, leisure, and risky behaviours such as smoking and drug use. All responses are completely anonymous.

Kacy Bao, a Youth Ambassador and a student trustee with the Halton District School Board, notes that it's important to hear what young people have to say – especially during these extraordinary times.

"Every youth is handling online learning differently and we all have different life situations during this pandemic, so you never really know what's going on in someone's life," she said, noting that the survey covers topics young people typically aren't asked about. "That's what's really great about this survey – it listens to youth. I think that many students my age have a lot to say and a lot to contribute. If there's someone that wants to listen to them, I think that youth input can really benefit our community."

OKN brings together and supports Halton organizations, agencies, and professionals who work with children, youth, and families. Data from the survey will inform decisions about programs, services, and other supports. Examples of organizations that will use the data include recreation departments, libraries, police services, children's services, public health and mental health agencies, and YMCAs across the region.

"The data will also help find specific neighbourhoods where there are groups of youth that they might need to connect to or where make an effort to talk to," added Kacy. "I think that through this survey, we will have a positive impact on the lives of youth in Halton."

Our Kids Network is leading the Halton Youth Impact Survey with Ontario Trillium Foundation, UNICEF Canada, the Canadian Index of Wellbeing (CIW) at the University of Waterloo, and the Medivae Foundation. Halton is one of four communities in Canada invited to coordinate this project, but there are plans to conduct the survey on a national level in the future and to continue to offer it on a regular basis.

OKN Youth Ambassador Clair Roufaeil says this means the survey means the voice of local youth will have a far-reaching impact.

"By giving your feedback about your experiences, you'll be helping all groups and organizations in Halton Region that work with children and youth understand what life is actually like for you, and how they can work together to make it better," she said. "Not only that, but you'll be helping create a survey that will one day be used all across Canada to improve wellbeing for children and youth."

To find out more, or to take the survey, visit <https://ourkidsnetwork.ca/Public/Halton-Youth-Impact-Survey>.

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**To arrange media interviews with an OKN representative or a Youth Impact Survey Ambassador, please contact Beth Williams, Communications Manager at 905-630-5263 or [beth@ourkidsnetwork.ca](mailto:beth@ourkidsnetwork.ca). For more information on OKN, visit [ourkidsnetwork.ca](https://ourkidsnetwork.ca).**