

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Report Aims to Address Barriers and Empower Youth through Employment**

*Mayor Crombie, Community Leaders put forward recommendations to help youth unlock their potential*

**(Mississauga, ON), May 3, 2016** – Mayor Bonnie Crombie and members of the Healthy City Stewardship Centre (HCSC) announced the release of a new report on the status of youth employment in Mississauga and a funding grant of over \$750,000 provided through Ontario Trillium Foundation’s Youth Opportunities Fund (YOF) to support the recommendations laid out in the report.

*Unlocking Potential: Empowering our Youth through Employment*, provides an in-depth look at the most common barriers facing youth, in particular youth within marginalized populations, as they seek to establish themselves in the labour force. It also provides an action plan for a wide-reaching, coordinated and focused effort to ensure young people are learning, working and contributing to their highest potential.

Young people in Mississauga experience multiple barriers to secure, meaningful employment, an issue that has left up to 32,000 youth in the region unemployed. In Peel, youth unemployment rates have hovered around 17 per cent since 2011, higher than the national average.

“I am honoured to formally accept the Healthy City Stewardship Centre’s report on the status of youth employment in Mississauga entitled *Unlocking Potential: Empowering Our Youth Through Employment*,” Mayor Bonnie Crombie said. “What we have before us is a made-in-Mississauga action plan; a blueprint to help our young people reach higher and for them to be active, engaged and complete citizens. I would also like to recognize our partners in the Wynne government who have committed a funding grant of over \$750,000 provided through Ontario Trillium Foundation’s Youth Opportunities Fund (YOF) to support the recommendations laid out in the report.”

“Youth unemployment in our community has been an ongoing challenge since the recession in 2008. HCSC recognized that as leaders in this community it is our responsibility to tackle the issue at a system level so that our young people are supported to meet their full potential,” said Michelle DiEmanuele, Chair of HCSC and President and CEO of Trillium Health Partners. “Youth from marginalized populations are especially in need of champions who will commit to opening doors for them. In turn, these young people will go on to build a vibrant, skilled and diverse workforce that will ensure economic growth and the continued physical, mental and social health of our community.”

As part of its youth employment initiative, HCSC established a youth advisory council whose personal experiences helped shape the report and whose voices were instrumental in the development of the report’s recommendations to address the barriers youth face on their path to employment. Some of the key barriers identified include:

- **Widespread anxiety and a lack of confidence** - frequent rejection, greater competition in academics and the workforce and an increase in unpaid internships and short-term contract work leaves many youth feeling hopeless about their futures.
- **Marginalized youth experience discrimination** - racialized young people and those with disabilities report discrimination, including, but not limited to, subtle messages labelling

them as lazy or incapable, and employers who are unwilling to provide simple and inexpensive modifications to physical workspaces.

- **Stigma towards trades and other non-professional career paths** despite excellent efforts by educational institutions and organizations promoting the benefits and rising demand for skilled trades workers, youth report strongly negative attitudes amongst their peers and families towards pursuing the trades.
- **Potential employers underestimate the value of youth as employees** - misperception that young workers are lazy, unmotivated and lacking in required skills is a detriment to securing meaningful employment.

Funds provided by the YOF will be dedicated to advancing the recommendations put forward in the report, which will make it easier for youth from marginalized backgrounds to navigate and access employment resources in Peel. Funds will be used to hire a Youth Coordinator to oversee the project, develop and implement a strategy and deliver communications materials.

“We are truly thankful to the Ontario Trillium Foundation for this gift, which allows us to take immediate action to support some of our most vulnerable youth in accessing the services and opportunities they need,” said DiEmanuele. “The Youth Opportunities Fund shares the same vision as we do, which is the creation of a complete and connected system that supports young people throughout their transition to adulthood. By empowering businesses and youth to work collaboratively to build a stronger economy while mutually learning and growing, this funding will help break down barriers and build the foundations for youth to succeed regardless of their backgrounds.”

More information about the Healthy City Stewardship Centre and the full report, *Unlocking Potential: Empowering our Youth through Employment*, are available here:

[trilliumhealthpartners.ca/newsroom/HCSC/](http://trilliumhealthpartners.ca/newsroom/HCSC/)

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## Backgrounder

**The Healthy City Stewardship Centre (HCSC)** is a volunteer initiative that brings together key decision-making organizations in the City of Mississauga and the Region of Peel to work proactively and collaboratively toward the betterment of the health of the people of Mississauga. The HCSC was formed in 2004 when the City of Mississauga, the University of Toronto Mississauga and other key organizations in the city came together to collectively work toward improvements in local health. The vision of the HCSC is that Mississauga will be a healthy city of people with optimal physical, mental and spiritual health.

### Membership 2015/16

**Mayor Bonnie Crombie**  
City of Mississauga

**Michelle DiEmanuele (Chair)**  
President & CEO  
Trillium Health Partners

**Janice Baker (Vice-Chair)**  
City Manager & CAO  
City of Mississauga

**Dr. Eileen de Villa**  
Medical Officer of Health  
Region of Peel

**Chief Jennifer Evans**  
Peel Regional Police

**Bridget Fewtrell**  
President & CEO  
ErinoakKids

**Marilyn Knox**  
President  
Trillium Health Partners –  
Institute for Better Health

**Marianne Mazzorato**  
Director of Education  
Dufferin-Peel Catholic District  
School Board

**Bill MacLeod**  
CEO  
Mississauga Halton LHIN

**Medhat Mahdy**  
President & CEO  
YMCA of Greater Toronto

**Karen Menard**  
Director, Research & Innovation  
Trillium Health Partners –  
Institute for Better Health

**Lynn Petrushchak**  
Executive Director  
Dixie Bloor Neighbourhood Centre

**Tony Pontes**  
Director of Education  
Peel District School Board

**Deep Saini**  
Vice President & Principal  
University of Toronto Mississauga

**Helen Seibel**  
Senior Manager, Corporate  
Responsibility  
AstraZeneca Canada Inc.

**Shelley White**  
President & CEO  
United Way of Peel Region

**David Wojcik**  
President & CEO  
Mississauga Board of Trade

**Jeff Zabudsky**  
President & CEO  
Sheridan College

### Vision

Mississauga will be a Healthy City of people with optimal physical, mental and spiritual health.

### Goals

- All people in Mississauga will value and strive for optimal health.
- All people in Mississauga will feel safe in their communities.
- All people in Mississauga will have equal access to information and services.
- All people in Mississauga will live in and contribute to a clean and sustainable environment.
- All people in Mississauga will feel part of a larger community and will know that they will be cared for in times of need.