

# THE NEXT GENERATION

**“This program changed me by showing me what I have to be proud of.”**

*- Youth Participant, Halton Sport Leadership Program*

Children and youth living in poverty, in households under stress, or struggling with mental health issues and isolation need support to build resilience and achieve wellness. Below are examples of what's being done to strengthen the next generation of Oakville citizens so that they can succeed in school, develop healthy relationships, gain meaningful employment and participate fully in the community.

## REDUCING ISOLATION

The Halton Sport Leadership Program is a collaboration of the YMCA of Oakville, the Town of Oakville, Halton public and separate school boards, and the Halton Poverty Roundtable. The pilot program was designed to give disengaged teens (15-18) the opportunity to develop leadership skills while earning the certifications needed to find employment in the sport and recreation field. The initial six-month program resulted in 16 youth successfully completing the program with the support of their adult mentors.

## CREATING BELONGING

Newcomer youth (9-12) are offered important supports to ease their social transition to life in Canada through Big Brothers Big Sisters of Halton's Adventure Canada Club. The school-based mentoring program offers homework assistance and Canada-themed activities to help students improve their English language skills, build self-confidence and learn more about their new country. During the 2014-15 school year, the program served 142 youth at nine Oakville schools; 95 per cent of participants reported feeling improved self-esteem and 100 per cent felt a greater sense of inclusion at school.



**95%**

Improved self-esteem

**100%**

Greater sense of inclusion at school

## REMOVING BARRIERS

Halton Learning Foundation helps public school students in need through emergency help, enrichment funds and scholarships. In 2014, the Foundation provided emergency assistance to more than 150 Oakville students to pay for food, proper clothing, school supplies, field trip fees, tools and attire needed for co-op placements, and supported 20 more students with scholarships to help offset the cost of post-secondary education.

# WELCOME CENTRES FOR NEW STUDENTS AND FAMILIES

In 2015, the Halton Catholic District School Board launched a new program called the “Welcome Centre” to support newcomer and immigrant children and their families. The program offers an academic intake day, educational assessments, and help accessing needed programs at the most appropriate school. Parents are invited to attend the sessions where they can connect with Halton Multicultural Council and other agencies that provide wraparound services for students and their parents aimed at removing barriers to newcomer success. About 450 students are expected to be served during 2015-16 school year.

## PREPARING FOR EMPLOYMENT

STRIDE’s Youth Employment Program works with youth (16-24) with mental health needs, their families and service providers to help vulnerable youth prepare for a career and participation in community life.