



## ONE GENERATION OF YOUTH WILL CHANGE THE WORLD

*Volunteer Halton of Community Development Halton hosted its annual awards breakfast to celebrate the start of National Volunteer Week (April 23-29), as well as to recognize and give thanks to our community volunteers for all their time and efforts dedicated to the Halton community. This event also marked the launch of this year's Change the World: Ontario Youth Volunteer Challenge. Change the World is a youth-led volunteer campaign that encourages high school students to reach out and become actively involved in their community. At this year's Volunteer Halton Breakfast Awards, three members of the Change the World Youth Council spoke on the importance of giving back and the power of volunteerism. The words of these youth are moving and hopeful. I salute these youths and share their thoughts with you.*

*Joey Edwardh*

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### **Vanshikha Sinha, from White Oaks Secondary School, remarked:**

*We would like to start off by congratulating all the volunteers present here. All of you are a great inspiration in our community and true examples of what hard work and dedication can result in. For us as teenagers, it is a privilege to be here and to talk about what we are doing in the community and to get other teens like us involved. We are trying our best to take those small steps to achieve something bigger. This is only possible because of all of you. So, to highlight National Volunteer Week, we are inviting youth volunteers to join us in the Change the World campaign.*

*So, what is Change the World all about? It is an Ontario Youth Volunteer Challenge starting during National Volunteer Week and running till June 3rd. The objective of this campaign is to encourage youth between the age of 14-18 to get involved in exciting community initiatives or even provide an opportunity to start their own. Youth are required to volunteer for a minimum of 3 hours over the 6 week time period to become part of the provincial campaign. This campaign is a great way to make a positive impact on the community and develop essential skills needed throughout life. Our goal this year is to beat the recorded 4,212 students in over 45 community events, which amounted to 19,124 volunteer hours from last year. We continue our mission to change the world.*

### **Piya Mehta, from Oakville Trafalgar High School, shared:**

*People often underestimate the power of volunteering, and sometimes, the benefits are difficult to see. Volunteering is a way to exercise various skills such as leadership and collaboration as well as adapting to a growth mindset. Volunteering helps enhance skills, like leadership and collaboration, which are very important in life, especially for young people. Learning these skills at a young age are beneficial as you will have many years to learn and improve your skills as you head into adulthood. It does not only help you learn how to be a leader or how to work well with others, but it creates your personality and image. Whether you are helping at a soup kitchen, a*

*food drive or a marathon, it shows the initiative you've taken to help and the passion you have to help others.*

*Volunteering teaches you how to work and share ideas with all sorts of different people which is an essential skill to have. Growth mindsets are expanded when you are exposed to volunteering as well. It makes you see how you can make a positive impact for people while earning nothing but the intangibles; an experience you would want all over again. Before volunteering, you may wonder, "what's the point if I am not getting my hours or a reward?" Think again, because the rewards you earn are more valuable than anything: a reputation of helping others.*

**Natasha Rozario, from Oakville Trafalgar High School, expressed:**

*In an incredibly stressful world that puts pressure on people to be perfect, we often neglect the simple things in life like human interaction and strong relationships. The society that we live in breeds anxiety, and the pressure to succeed can be crippling. Depression, amongst other mental illnesses, is more prevalent today than ever before, affecting individuals at younger and younger ages, as people begin to feel less and less connected to their community. Volunteering is about helping to ensure that people are not stranded alone in their community. Volunteerism ties people*

*together. When everyone has a voice and they feel like they are seen and heard, we promote a real sense of solidarity, which makes us stronger. We rise by lifting others, and one small drop in the bucket creates ripples to reach those lost at sea. Volunteering provides people with a sense of purpose. In the confusing, busy, hustle of life, and by being invested in something greater than ourselves, we are grounded.*

*Humans are innately social creatures, and evolution has gifted us with the ability to connect to our past and sympathize with each other. The act of giving has been a fundamental part of human civilization since the very beginning, and is a key part of our development as a species and it shapes our humanity.*

*More powerful than anything are the simple acts of kindness, the small good deeds that are so easily overlooked and have a larger impact than we could ever know. Through volunteering, we can have a little ease of mind as we grow older, knowing that we didn't just leave the Earth as we found it, but we made it better. Instead of carelessly wandering through life, we make our journey with purpose, not necessarily knowing where we're going, but knowing why.*

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*"We cannot always build a future for our youth, but we can always build our youth for the future." – Franklin D. Roosevelt*



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