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The future rests in our helping hands

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Region of Peel Youth Participate in Ontario Youth Volunteer Challenge

April 16, 2009 – Mississauga, ON – Close to 700 youth across the Region of Peel are registered to participate in a provincial volunteer challenge. The *ChangeTheWorld - Ontario Youth Volunteer Challenge*, which starts today and ends on April 25, has been co-ordinated by the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration (MCI) in partnership with the Ontario Volunteer Centre Network (OVCN) and coincides with National Volunteer Week.

The challenge is a 2nd annual call to action for youth aged 14 to 18 years to volunteer individually or in groups through a wide variety of exciting community initiatives across the province of Ontario. The goal is to have 10,000 students volunteer across the entire province during a one week period.

The Region of Peel's new volunteer centre, Volunteer MBC, has organized a number of environmentally-themed events across the Region in recognition of Earth Day. The events include preparing gardens and winter clean-up at long-term care homes, planting trees and park/trail clean-ups, assisting at thrift stores, among a variety of other activities. There are 37 individual events in total and registrations are continuing to come in to the centre from youth wanting to participate in this initiative.

"Having been in operation for only 8 months now, it's been an enormous effort on our part to organize the vast number of events that we have available for youth to participate in during this challenge," stated Carine Strong, Director, Volunteer MBC. "However, we have received overwhelming support from all of the schools, students and the community and we are very excited about engaging and encouraging this many students to give back to help their community."

Students who participate in the challenge will gain 5 hours of recognition as a volunteer. For students who are working towards the 40-hour community service requirement or are enrolled in the International Baccalaureate Diploma programme, which has a 150-hour requirement, this initiative is an excellent opportunity to help students reach these goals.

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In Ms. Strong's speech during the official media launch of the challenge that took place on April 3 at Glenforest Secondary School, she conveyed to youth, "You are the future of our community and you can make a difference – you can change the world".

"We are also very fortunate to have the Volunteering Peel group assist us as leaders for a number of the events that we have organized", Ms. Strong further stated. In March, Volunteer MBC formed a partnership with Volunteering Peel, a youth-led volunteer organization. "We've also received incredible support from a number of corporations, which has helped us immensely," she further notes. Corporate partners for *ChangeTheWorld* include AstraZeneca, Entripy Custom Clothing, Pita Break and RONA.

A list of events is attached or can be found on-line at www.volunteermbc.org (click on the *ChangeTheWorld* banner ad). The media is encouraged to attend the events that are taking place as there will be numerous photo opportunities of the youth engaged in the various activities. All youth participating will be wearing a *ChangeTheWorld*/Volunteer MBC t-shirt.

Volunteer MBC is a new volunteer centre that has been created to foster, develop and support volunteerism in the Region of Peel, serving the cities of Mississauga and Brampton, and the Town of Caledon, by raising awareness of the power of service. The centre is located at 2601 Matheson Blvd. E., Unit #43 in Mississauga, with satellite locations planned in the future. More information on Volunteer MBC can be found shortly at www.volunteermbc.org or by contacting the centre at 905.238.2622.

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