

2003 S'port Grant Recipients: DETAILED FACT SHEET

Children's Aid Foundation

S'port for Kids Foundation is very excited to formally announce a new partnership with the Children's Aid Foundation and the creation of a new program – the S'port for Kids Play Fund. Starting 2003, S'port for Kids Foundation is expanding its reach nationally to assist even more at-risk children. Utilizing the Children's Aid Foundation network, S'port for Kids Foundation is able to provide financial resources to children that are in foster care, at high risk of behavioural issues and criminal activities, due to emotional, physical and substance abuse issues.

In Canada, there are approximately 300,000 children and youth that are considered to be in need of child welfare services, and on an annual basis approximately 66,000 of these children are removed from their families into the safety of foster homes or group homes. Due to a lack of financial resources, those children that are most disadvantaged and under the care of Children's Aid Societies are unable to participate in organized sports activities. Ample research shows that physical activity is a prime contributor to children's healthy development, and promotes social and emotional growth. Our goal is to identify the neediest children coast to coast to provide them the opportunity to get involved with something FUN. After all, our motto is "Let the Children Play".

ASSIST Community Services Centre

S'port for Kids Foundation is pleased to support ASSIST Community Services Centre, based in Edmonton, Alberta, in its "Fit Now, Fit for Life: A Children's Fitness Program". ASSIST was established in 1977 to address the needs of the immigrant population in Edmonton. It is a non-profit and charitable organization with a mission to enhance the lives of individuals and families through quality programs and services.

The "Fit Now, Fit for Life" program was created to introduce low income Asian children who do not have an active participation in sports to new and fun fitness activities. Coaches and physical education teachers will be invited to work with Asian families to educate them on the importance of sports, and the S'port Grant will be directed towards the creation of new activities.

Zardasht Oqab

S'port for Kids Foundation has as part of its mandate a goal to help new under-privileged immigrants integrate better into Canadian life. We also have a commitment to assist the country's promising young athletes in continuing to progress and reach their full potential.

Zardasht Oqab certainly meets those criteria. Zardasht is a three time Ontario Championships qualifier in wrestling, and has also won the Ontario age group championships which allowed him to qualify to attend the Canadian Wrestling Championships to be held in Calgary, Alberta this coming April 4 – 6. His overall wrestling record this year is 39-1. Unfortunately, due to his family's financial constraints, Zardasht was unable to afford the travel and tournament expenses to attend the Championships.

S'port for Kids Foundation is pleased to support Zardasht in his wrestling endeavours and wish him every success at the upcoming Canadian Wrestling Championships. Go, Zardasht!

In 2002, S'port for Kids Foundation created three new programs and pledged a multi-year financial commitment. They are:

A. **Toronto City Mission**

The Toronto City Mission works with under-privileged children in the St. James Town and Malvern communities. In 2002, S'port for Kids Foundation created a new after school program in the Malvern community, an area where there is one of the highest percentages of mothers living under the poverty line. Children had little or no opportunity to participate in sporting activities. With the S'port Grant, the Mission created a basketball program, providing an attractive and positive alternative to being left home alone or on the streets where negative influences are ample.

B. **Yonge Street Mission**

The Yonge Street Mission was formed in 1896 and responds to the homeless, hungry and hurting of downtown Toronto. Over 12,500 people come to the YSM **monthly** for help and support. The community centre is the hub of the organization and is located on the borders of Cabbagetown, Regent Park and St. James Town.

Commencing 2002, S'port for Kids Foundation worked with YSM to create a formal after-school sports program that runs 3 to 4 days per week from 3 to 7 p.m.. The program allows an estimated 500 children to participate in gymnastics, soccer, floor hockey, karate and Tae Kwan Do. Furthermore, the sports program serves as a great attraction for children to visit the community centre, and provides the opportunity for YSM staff to encourage participation in additional programs, such as group study and tutorial sessions.

C. **Regent Park Community Centre**

The Regent Park Community Centre has experienced great success in developing a hockey program, in which approximately 150 children participate. The house teams are proud city-wide champions in three age categories, primarily benefiting from strong community volunteers and a minimal budget. The program has depended on recycled equipment due to limited financial resources, and some have had to compete with missing safety equipment, such as neck guards. The centre covers the area of Don River to the East, Sherbourne Street to the West, King Street to the South and Gerrard Street to the North.

S'port for Kids adopted the hockey program in 2002. The new program not only provides continued opportunity for kids to participate, a key component is that it also expands the opportunity for top players to participate at a higher level, thereby moving beyond the house league, something that the community centre has tried to do for years. This will allow talented players the opportunity for continued improvement, and will also expose those players to life beyond the community in which they reside.