

# S'port For Kids Foundation

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## Children's Aid Foundation

In 2002, S'port for Kids Foundation awarded a grant to the Children's Aid Foundation Play Fund, and since then the relationship between the two groups has developed into nothing less than a strategic partnership.

In 2003, a new partnership with the Children's Aid Foundation was announced and the "S'port for Kids Play Fund" was created, allowing S'port for Kids Foundation to expand 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".

## Durham Family Court Clinic

The DFCC promotes the advancement of our youth participation in sports and leisure activities. The organization understands that participation in sports clearly helps youth to develop a personal sense of meaning and purpose, strengthens their self-esteem and their ability to overcome challenges, while promoting their inclusion in a society from which they often felt ostracized.

The grant will support the DFCC's Connecting Our Kids program. The DFCC help youth to develop life skills to enhance personal development and interpersonal skills, improve their physical and mental health as well as inclusion in a community, from which they often felt ostracized. The Court Clinic plays an integral role in these youths' lives by helping to breakdown social and individual barriers, which undermine their success. Issues of domestic violence, poverty, the lack of resources for parents and families are common themes, which underline most of the young clients' need for service. Children and youth seen by the DFCC often have un-addressed mental health and victimization issues as well as educational deficits. Every initiative possible is undertaken to get their youth engaged in therapy and invested in activities that build resilience and personal investment and connection to their community.

## 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.

Since 2002, S'port for Kids adopted the hockey program. 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.

S'ports for Kids is proud to support this very successful program, which is drawing more participants and interest with every year that passes.

### **Stay in School and Keep the Peace Basketball**

The purpose of this organization is to teach children fundamental life skills through playing sports, with emphasis on attitude, sportsmanship, leadership and team building. Its ultimate goal is to see students continue their education beyond high school and receive College Diplomas and University Degrees. Excellent leadership is provided by Staff Sergeant Chris Wilson, Toronto Police Service, Division 11, who organizes the program.

With an estimated 80 street gangs operating in the GTA and up to 100 members in each gang, high school students are being actively recruited and pressured to get involved in crime and drugs. Research shows that youth 13 to 18 years are twice as likely to create a violent offence and be arrested than adults.

S'port for Kids Foundation has been supporting the organization since 2000, and we are proud to provide the opportunity to the hundreds of kids that participate in the *Stay in School Tournament*, *Raptorball House League* and *Provincial Competition Teams*. Keep up the good work, Chris!

### **Toronto City Mission**

The Toronto City Mission works with under-privileged children in the St. James Town and Malvern communities. In 2001, S'port for Kids supported the St. James Town community centre to enable them to create after-school sports programs in Soccer, Floor Hockey and Softball. In 2002, S'port for Kids Foundation created a new after-school program offering Basketball in the Malvern community, an area where there is one of the highest percentages of mothers living under the poverty line. Before this, children had little or no opportunity to participate in sporting activities, the only options were being left home alone or on the streets where negative influences are ample.

S'port for Kids recognizes the value these programmes bring to the St. James Town and Malvern communities, and the time it takes for new habits to form. We are pleased to continue in our support of these programmes.

## 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.

In 2001, a S'port Grant was awarded to the YSM to allow for the purchase of sporting equipment for use in after-school activities and summer camp programs. 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.

S'port for Kids is pleased to continue supporting a program in partnership with YSM that will expose children to the positive aspects of sports, while stressing the importance of education for well-rounded development.