

**PLAY WORKS**

Partnership for Active and Engaged Youth



# YOUTH FRIENDLY COMMUNITY RECOGNITION PROGRAM 2011

Roz is looking  
for a place to play.

A place where  
she can –

Be physically active.

Be creative. Be a leader.

Feel accepted.

Feel connected.

Feel safe.



## IS IT YOUR COMMUNITY?

Find out how being recognized as  
**YOUTH FRIENDLY** can help your community...



**HEART &  
STROKE  
FOUNDATION**

This project was made possible through funding from the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario.

## WHAT DO WE MEAN BY PLAY?

Play is any non-school activity that has elements of choice, leads to satisfaction, and encourages progressive learning and enjoyment.

Activities can include – but are not limited to – recreation, sport, leisure, arts, drama, dance, civic engagement, youth activism, volunteerism, social clubs and youth leadership.



“The City of Pickering is a recognized leader in youth programming, events and initiatives. We make a concerted effort to foster a Youth Friendly Community, as we truly believe that our young residents are our most valuable asset. By supporting and nurturing our youth, we are the building the foundation for a more dynamic, strong and cohesive community.”

*Mayor David Ryan  
City of Pickering*

# Have you ever asked yourself if your community is “youth friendly?”

**Play Works** presents the **Youth Friendly Community Recognition Program**.

Play Works is on the search for communities in Ontario that are meeting the needs of adolescent youth.

**A YOUTH FRIENDLY community is one that actively supports and provides opportunities for the growth and development of youth (ages 13 to 19) through play.**

- Does your community believe in supporting youth?
- Does your community offer young people opportunities to participate in meaningful play?

- Does your community have a variety of play activities, such as recreation, arts, drama, sports and dance?
- Does your community offer play opportunities that include activism, volunteerism, and leadership development?

If so, your community could be recognized as “youth friendly.”

## Why get involved?

### Because it makes sense.

A community where youth have the space, support and freedom to play tends to be one with less crime and more post-secondary graduates. Fewer people use social services and more people use bike paths. A community where opportunities for recreation, arts, culture and civic responsibility bloom is one that is healthy, competitive and artistic.

### Because a Youth Friendly community provides benefits to the entire community:

- Provides an expression of support of and commitment to the youth in your community.
- Helps to avoid the migration of young people to other communities by encouraging local youth to help guide the future of their own community.
- Families are attracted to communities that provide the kind of programs and services for their teenagers that say, “We like young people here!”

### Because, with a Youth Friendly designation, your community will be recognized:

- as a Bronze, Silver, Gold or Platinum Community Builder through a formal presentation to be held at a distinguished location and to which those who assisted with the community application will be invited
- as a Youth Friendly Community in *Municipal World* magazine
- in a news release to media in Ontario
- as a Youth Friendly Community on the Play Works website
- as a mentor for other communities to become youth friendly

# Who is eligible to apply?

**Any community** in Ontario can apply.\* Communities can be a geographically-specific neighbourhood such as Lawrence Heights in Toronto, a small township such as Brooke-Alvinston, a First Nations community such as Wikwemikong, a defined community such as a Canadian Forces Base or a larger city such as Pickering.

**The lead applicant** can be from the municipal government, an agency such as the Boys and Girls Club or YMCA, or someone representing a collection of local agencies. All application forms must be signed by the most senior elected official of the municipality, township or aboriginal community.

**Co-applicants** are also encouraged to play an active role in providing documentation to support the application. Like lead applicants, co-applicants can come from any group such as the faith community, community associations, schools, etc.

\* A community is not an individual agency, organization or parks and recreation department. It is larger than just one service provider. It is all the service providers combining their efforts to best serve the needs of youth in their community.

## To apply:

- Fill out the application form and provide documentation as outlined on the application form.
- There are 16 youth friendly criteria. Applicants must provide evidence that they meet at least 10 of the 16 criteria as listed on the application form. It is not expected that communities will meet all 16 criteria in the first year of application. Those that meet 10 or 11 criteria will be recognized as a **Bronze Youth Friendly Community Builder**, those that meet 12 or 13 criteria will be recognized as a **Silver Youth Friendly Community Builder**, those that meet 14 or 15 criteria will be recognized as a **Gold Youth Friendly Community Builder** and those that meet all 16 criteria will be recognized as a **Platinum Youth Friendly Community Builder**.
- Recognition is awarded for a five-year period, after which communities must re-apply for recognition. At any point a community that has been recognized and has not met all 16 criteria may re-apply to do so. A full new and updated application must be submitted for the criteria that the community believes it meets.
- On-going development is encouraged so that communities can re-apply and work toward meeting all the criteria within the five-year period.
- There is no cost for application or re-application to be recognized as a Youth Friendly Community.
- The program is not a competition and there is no limit to the number of communities recognized each year. However, a Review Team considers each application and submitting does not automatically ensure recognition.

**For all communities that have previously applied** for recognition, please note that there are slight changes to the criteria, which should be considered in your application preparation.

For communities that have previously been recognized and are re-applying for the next phase of recognition, all documentation should be current. The Review Team will look for ways in which your community has continued to advance and champion youth play and takes your community past its previous application.

## YOUTH FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES

### CITIES

Barrie  
Brampton  
Burlington  
Cambridge  
Hamilton  
London  
Peterborough  
Pickering  
Sarnia  
Sault Ste. Marie  
Greater Sudbury  
Thunder Bay  
Vaughan  
Welland  
Windsor

### COMMUNITIES

Lawrence Heights, Toronto

### MUNICIPALITIES

Chatham-Kent  
Port Hope  
South Huron

### TOWNS

Ajax  
Aurora  
Blind River  
Caledon  
Halton Hills  
Hanover  
Ingersoll  
Markham  
Milton  
Newmarket  
Oakville  
Richmond Hill  
Whitby  
Whitchurch/Stouffville

### COUNTIES

Brant  
Norfolk

### TOWNSHIPS

Brooke-Alvinston  
Rideau Lakes

### FIRST NATIONS

Wikwemikong Unceded  
Indian Reserve No. 26

### CANADIAN FORCES BASES

Petawawa

## Application deadline:

**Thursday,  
December 1, 2011.**

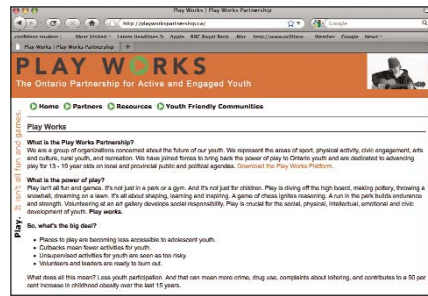
Applicants will be notified of the results by April 2012.



“Being recognized as a Youth Friendly Community is important to the Town of Caledon. During the process of creating the Town’s Recreation Master Plan, youth were identified as a key priority, and we used the criteria set out by Play Works as guidelines on how to better serve Caledon’s youth. Because of the geographic challenges in Caledon, our mobile skate park travels to our youth, and our Youth Centres provide convenient locations for on-site activities. We formed a Mayor’s Youth Council to empower youth by creating a forum for them to give input on matters that affect them directly.”

*Mayor Marolyn Morrison  
Town of Caledon*

# Application assistance...



Visit the Play Works website:  
[www.playworkspartnership.ca](http://www.playworkspartnership.ca)

In particular, review the 16 criteria listed. As you click through each description, you will find examples from Youth Friendly Communities in Ontario. These may give you an idea of where to find documentation about how your community is Youth Friendly.

## Contact Play Works

While this is not a requirement of application, previous experience has shown that those communities that take this step have appreciated the help. This initial contact often results in a subsequent one-hour orientation call where you (and representatives of agencies in your community that will be helping with the application process) can learn more about how to approach the application process. Play Works can provide you with information on how to engage youth in the process and how to involve the community and community agencies.

**For more information**, or to set up an orientation call, please contact Play Works at 416-426-7065 or email [pwp@playworkspartnership.ca](mailto:pwp@playworkspartnership.ca).



Elected officials, youth, and local representatives receive their community's award from the Minister of Health Promotion and Sport, The Honourable Margaret Best, at the Play Works Youth Friendly Community Recognition Ceremony for 2009 recipients, held October 4th, 2010 at Queen's Park in Toronto.



Play Works is a group of organizations that are concerned about the future of our youth and have joined forces to bring back the power of play to Ontario's young people. Play Works believes there are communities across Ontario that are taking steps to open their doors to youth by reinvesting in youth play. Let us know about yours! Those involved with Play Works include: 4-H Ontario, Arts Network for Children and Youth, Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada - Central Region, Laidlaw Foundation, Ophea, Parks and Recreation Ontario, Sport Alliance of Ontario, YMCA Ontario.

Please provide **3 (three) complete copies** of the application form and additional documentation (including three copies of all videos, photographs, CD ROMs or audio tapes). Please note: You will receive two copies of these materials back once the review process is complete. To learn more about how to apply, please contact Play Works directly at pwp@playworkspartnership.ca or at 416-426-7065.

**1) Lead Applicant Group, Department or Organization** (see “Who is Eligible to Apply,” page 3)

Name of Group/Dept/Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Person: \_\_\_\_\_ Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Website: \_\_\_\_\_

**2) Applicant Community Information**

Name of Community \_\_\_\_\_

**Language**    Anglophone                       Francophone                       Multilingual                       Aboriginal

**Population**    less than 5,000                       5,001 - 12,000                       12,001 - 25,000                       25,001 - 50,000  
 50,001 - 100,000                       100,001 - 200,000                       200,001 and up

**Area Code**    807                       705                       519                       613                       905/289                       416/647

If the lead applicant is a municipal government, please answer the following questions from the perspective of the municipal government as provider of youth programs. If the lead applicant is not a municipal government, the lead application should contact the local government to access and complete this information.

- a) From a municipal government perspective:
  - i) How many youth (ages 13 to 19) are in your community? (Refer to Statistics Canada or another credible research source) \_\_\_\_\_
  - ii) How many individual youth do you serve that participate in play programs run by the municipality? ( youth only, ages 13 to 19, not children 12 and under) \_\_\_\_\_
  - iii) What is the total budget spent on supporting all forms of recreation, sport, culture, leisure and volunteer programs for all age groups? \_\_\_\_\_
  - iv) Of this total budget, what is the annual amount committed to support youth play programs? \_\_\_\_\_
- b) Please contact and list at least 3 and up to 5 other groups or agencies that provide services to youth and ask them to provide the following information.

Name of Provider (e.g. sport, culture, arts)	\$\$ Spent on Youth Programs	# of Youth Served (ages 13 - 19)

**Selection Guidelines:**

- Play Works regrets that only submissions completed in full will be considered, and must be postmarked no later than December 1, 2011.
- Play Works reserves the right to withhold recognition.
- The decision of the Review Team is final.

**3) Youth Friendly Community Criteria** — Please check the criteria for which you are applying and on which you are basing your application (a minimum of 10 criteria must be checked). For each criteria for which you are applying, please include a one to two-page description of how your community meets this criteria and provide additional documentation to provide a selection of examples with tangible documentation of how your community is meeting these criteria. Tangible documentation can include minutes of meetings, council or board reports, terms of reference, policies that support youth friendly play, newspaper clippings, copies of flyers, videos, pictures, program statistics summaries, etc.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1) Youth have options for play in their community.                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> 9) The community supports youth volunteerism and leadership development. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2) Youth are formally connected to the community.                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> 10) The community has effective community partnerships.                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3) Facilities are dedicated to youth play.  | <input type="checkbox"/> 11) Youth activism and advocacy for play is nurtured.                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4) It is easy for youth to find information about play activities in the community. | <input type="checkbox"/> 12) Youth feel comfortable in their own community.                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 5) The community supports public youth events.                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> 13) Youth can get to the play programs that are offered.                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 6) The community celebrates and recognizes its youth.                               | <input type="checkbox"/> 14) Schools support the youth friendly approach.                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 7) The community commits funding for youth play.                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> 15) Adults champion the need for youth play.                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 8) The community supports positive youth development.                               | <input type="checkbox"/> 16) Play is inclusive.   |

**4) Local issue response** — Please identify one issue in your community that is affecting youth's ability to play. In two pages or less, please outline how your community has responded/is responding to that issue AND the results to date of that response (i.e. how it has led to increased youth play in the community)

**5) Local youth input** — To complete this application form, you must provide a summary of input received from a cross section of youth in your community as to why they feel your community is youth friendly. To gather this information, you may choose to have a youth focus group, have youth provide personal testimonials, do a random phone or written survey, and/or have youth create a PowerPoint or some other media presentation. Every application needs to include the voice of youth; youth who are highly engaged in their community and those who may be less actively engaged.

**6) Co-Applicant Endorsement** — Please have a representative of at least three other youth service providers in the community, and who have contributed to the documentation included in this application, review and endorse this submission.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Organization: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Organization: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Organization: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

**7) Official Endorsement** — Please have the most senior elected official of the municipality, township or aboriginal community review and endorse this application.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Organization: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

**8) Youth Endorsement** — Please have at least two youth review and sign this application and provide a letter of endorsement as to why they feel their community is youth friendly

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Affiliation (group represented): \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Affiliation (group represented): \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

**9) Submit Application by December 1, 2011 to:**

Youth Friendly Community Recognition Program  
Play Works  
c/o #302 – 1 Concorde Gate, Toronto, ON M3C 3N6

Tel: 416-426-7142

Fax: 416-426-7371

pwp@playworkspartnership.ca

www.playworkspartnership.ca

# Youth Friendly Criteria Descriptions

For the purpose of this recognition program, **'youth friendly'** means that youth (ages 13 to 19) are actively supported and provided with opportunities for their growth and development through 'play.' All documentation included to provide tangible evidence of how your communities meets the criteria must relate to the 13 to 19 age group. **Documentation for those 12 and under will not be considered by the Review Team.**

The youth friendly list of criteria was developed by Play Works, in consultation with youth groups and youth serving agencies from across Ontario. The descriptions include examples that show how each of the criteria might be met. Note: your community may have different examples.

## 1) Youth have options for play.

The community offers a consistent and varied mix of play opportunities for youth, ages 13 to 19. Play includes recreation, sport, arts, drama, dance, civic engagement, youth activism, volunteerism, social clubs and youth leadership. It is structured and unstructured, facility and non-facility based, competitive and recreational, active and passive and it is adult-led and peer-led. It is offered by public service, not-for-profit agencies, private enterprise or through informal groups. There is evidence that a variety of activities are offered and that youth are actively participating in them.

## 2) Youth are formally connected to the community.

The community has ways in which youth can have their voices heard. These can be neighbourhood or municipal-wide, such as youth advisory committees or councils. Formal opportunities for youth involvement could include having designated seats for youth representatives at decision-making tables such as Business Improvement Associations, Recreation Committees, Staff Hiring Committees and/or Selection Committees for Recognition Awards. Youth could also have a formal connection through a regular column in the local newspaper or on a website.

## 3) Facilities are dedicated to youth play.

The community has dedicated public space for youth play programs and/or events. Youth feel a sense of ownership and belonging for these spaces. Dedicated space is not limited to one location, but to a number and in a variety of settings. Places where youth can meet socially are important to the community and may be provided by the municipality, not-for-profit agencies, schools, faith-based groups, private businesses or service clubs. Space is made available at times and locations suitable to youth participation and access to space increases as does the youth population.

## 4) It is easy for youth to find information about play activities in the community.

The community has a variety of youth friendly information vehicles such as websites, newsletters, bulletins, brochures, newspaper advertisements and articles, social marketing tools and community bulletin boards. Municipal services, community agencies, clubs, private businesses, schools and other service providers collaborate and/or are creative in finding easy ways for diverse groups of youth to access this information.

## 5) The community supports public youth events.

The community comes out to support larger public events planned by youth, works with youth to plan these events, and/or plans public community events in which youth come out to participate. Local citizens are able to see youth in a positive and public light. These large scale community events can include art shows, skate board exhibitions, tournaments, battle of the bands, community carnivals, dances, etc. Agencies and groups, such as health, police, local government, recreation, culture, service clubs and accessibility groups, may collaborate to present and support these events. Through outreach and networking, isolated and disenfranchised youth are engaged in the process and/or event.

## 6) The community celebrates and recognizes youth.

The community offers youth awards, special recognition and/or scholarship programs to recognize youth participation and contributions as leaders, volunteers and/or engaged community members. This recognition may be given by local government, service clubs, schools, community agencies, etc. Formal announcements on these opportunities, and on the results of the recognition, are publicized and promoted throughout the community such as in the newspaper, on the radio, on the municipal website, on agency websites that are youth friendly, in program brochures and/or newsletters.

## 7) The community commits funding for youth play.

The community has a variety of funding sources that support youth play, and policies are in place that reflect this investment. These should include the municipal budget and local service agencies (e.g. YMCAs, Boys and Girls Clubs, Youth Centres), where there is a line item for youth play and/or through which a youth programmer is hired. Support can also be provided by groups such as service clubs, special granting programs, sports groups and/or the business community. This funding opportunity is well known to groups who work with youth in the community and it is promoted through these groups and through the school system. Systems are in place to help youth to also regularly access these funds. Some youth play programs are free or have minimal costs. Where agencies/groups have subsidy programs, there is evidence that youth are being funded through these subsidies. The community commits funding for current and long-term capital for diverse facility development and improvement, such as indoor/outdoor parks, skate parks, creative arts spaces, dance studios and/or drop in centres.

## 8) The community supports positive youth development.

Positive youth development is a formal process through which a youth makes the transition from childhood to adulthood. During this time, youth are exposed to and learn the critical five competencies: social, emotional, ethical, cognition and physical. They also participate in programs and services which meets their seven developmental needs, which are: meaningful participation, mastery and achievement, positive interaction with adults and peers, physical



## How to organize your submission

For ease of reference for the review team, please separate the documentation you are providing for each criterion. For example, submit each criterion description and the corresponding documentation with a tab or cover sheet indicating the criterion number.



**"Brooke-Alvinston prides itself in the contributions made by the youth in our small community. Not only do our youth participate in the sports and recreation programs, they also volunteer with other community activities. Our facilities invite and encourage our youth to lead involved and active life styles. By engaging themselves in the community, our youth have benefited while still excelling in fitness, their studies and civic awareness. Brooke-Alvinston is honoured to be selected as a Youth Friendly Community."**

*Mayor Don McGugan  
Municipality of  
Brooke-Alvinston*



This project was made possible through funding from the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario.

## Youth Friendly Criteria Descriptions (continued)

capacity, creative expression, self-definition, and structure and clear limits. The community, and community agencies, do not reference 'deficit-based approaches' in their language and promotional information (e.g. reduce crime, get kids 'off the streets', pregnancy prevention workshops) but rather speak to the skills and talents and potential which youth have and which the community is working to support (the 5 C's - Competence, Connection, Confidence, Caring and Character). The community supports positive youth development by ensuring staff and volunteers of youth service programs are offered opportunities, and are actively encouraged to participate, in orientation and training sessions on positive youth development and there is evidence of this training occurring in the community.

### 9) The community supports youth volunteerism and leadership development.

The community recognizes youth volunteerism and leadership development. Older children are sought out to fill junior leadership roles in sports clubs, youth groups, day camps and/or faith groups. There are systems to help youth get connected to volunteer opportunities, and youth are familiar with these systems and can access them. Appropriate training about volunteerism and leadership is provided for youth. There is evidence of programs to recognize the efforts of youth leaders and volunteers as they contribute to community life.

### 10) The community has effective partnerships that support youth play.

Local government departments work cooperatively with each other and with community groups to provide the best menu of opportunities for youth play. Specific attention is given to the needs of hard-to-reach, isolated, vulnerable and disenfranchised youth. Community partners include not-for-profit agencies, cultural groups, housing cooperatives, youth associations, sports clubs, arts groups, justice, social services, the faith community, health, and education. Local businesses and the corporate world play a key role in supporting youth play.

### 11) Youth activism and advocacy for play is nurtured.

The voice of youth is a critical component of community life. The community ensures that youth actively participate in planning, promotion, implementation and evaluation of programs and services that affect them. Youth actively speak out about their needs and, where this is not in evidence, youth are encouraged to do so with and by local champions. The community, including local decision-makers and the media, create ways for and encourage the voice of youth to be heard at council meetings, in newspaper columns and articles, and at community gatherings. Decision makers and media respond pro-actively. Change happens as a result of the youth voice being heard and this change is evidenced in documentation.

### 12) Youth feel comfortable in their own community.

When youth are asked if they feel respected and valued in their community, they say "yes!" Youth are not asked to leave locations, or limit the numbers that meet at the same time in the same area, or leave their bags at the door of a shop. Rather, the community encourages businesses, recreation centres, malls, theatres and other locations to understand the needs of youth and works to recognize and engage youth as contributing citizens within the community. Spaces are promoted as 'youth friendly,' and youth are provided opportunities to interact with others in a positive and mutually respectful way. Staff who work in facilities where youth play receive an orientation about the needs and interests of youth, and how to build positive adult/youth partnerships. Documentation from youth, representative of the community demographics, confirms their belief that their community is youth friendly.

### 13) Youth can get to the play programs that are offered.

The community has explored innovative ways to physically connect youth with play opportunities. Examples include: responsive transit systems with routes to dedicated youth play spaces, and that operate on days and times to maximize participation by youth; lighted bike paths and/or bike lanes on major roads; car pools; standard-rate taxi services; reduced or free youth transit fees; and mobile outreach into isolated areas. Where public transit is not available, activities have been specifically located or relocated to be closer to youth and to increase access for youth.

### 14) Schools support the youth friendly approach.

Schools are recognized for their contribution to the community's youth friendly approach. They encourage the circulation and explanation of information to students on play activities. The schools offer opportunities for service providers and the larger community to become involved with school-based play activities. They also actively participate in, and have a presence at, community-based youth play events. Representations from local schools and/or school boards sit on community committees to bring the student/school perspective to discussions. Schools work to adjust bussing to help youth get to play areas. They pro-actively work to increase access to school facilities through formal relationships with service providers, the Community Use of Schools Agreement and through reciprocal agreements with local governments.

### 15) Adults champion the cause for youth play.

The community has many adult leaders from diverse backgrounds and positions who recognize and advocate the need for positive youth play. They publicly support youth by ensuring elected officials, police, local celebrities and media are involved in local youth events and their efforts are reflected in print and visual media and in other publications. For their part, youth regularly share their experiences of positive play with adults and at adult-led events, such as service club meetings, school board sessions, annual general meetings and professional association meetings. There is evidence that youth are able to identify those who are champions of youth in their community.

### 16) Play is inclusive.

In a Youth Friendly Community, all youth have options for play. Whether they be programs for youth with physical or developmental considerations, programs that are intentionally and proactively sensitive to the ethnic, gender or sexual orientation or youth, or programs that consider the increasing number of youth with mental health challenges, there are options for, there is outreach to, and there is evidence of, inclusive play opportunities for youth.