

## Advancing Youth-Led Equity and Anti-Racism Initiatives in Durham

(Toronto, December 14, 2017) -- Harmony Movement is pleased to announce the receipt of a three-year grant from the [Ontario Trillium Foundation](#) that will support equity and anti-racism education and leadership development for youth in the Durham region.

The **Youth Leadership for Equity and Anti-Racism in Durham** project, or *YouthLEADS*, will provide 300 youth with experiential learning, skill-building and leadership development opportunities. This will help them to create their own projects and work with local organizations to address racism in their communities.

Guided by a Project Advisory Committee, the *YouthLEADS* will also engage educators, parents and caregivers, and diverse community partners in critical conversations about creating safe and inclusive environments where youth can grow and thrive as agents of social change.

Working collaboratively with Durham's Catholic and public school boards and their community partners, the Harmony Movement team will engage youth in schools and in the community through student conferences, leadership building workshops and after-school groups. In the summer, a youth-led anti-racism leadership summit will provide opportunities for participants to present their projects, share ideas and network with other youth leaders.

Durham's fast-growing population is 17% racialized, while the percentage of immigrants, currently at 20%, continues to grow. Yet bullying, harassment, discrimination and racial disparity continue to have a negative impact on youth wellbeing and success:

- One in two students believes bullying is a problem according to a 2015 [report](#) by Durham Department of Health while 35% of elementary students reported that they were themselves bullied;
- 80% of teens have been exposed to racist or sexist content online, according to [PrevNET](#);
- Black students face significant disparities in access to academic opportunities ([James and Turner, 2017](#))

"We have worked with both public and Catholic school boards in Durham for many years," said Cheuk Kwan, Executive Director at Harmony Movement. "And we are happy to be collaborating with them again to go deeper into the community to promote equity and inclusion in the region."

Founded in 1994 with a vision for all Canadians to value diversity and to foster a commitment to a just and caring society, Harmony Movement provides experiential education programs in diversity, equity and inclusion that empower and inspire positive social change in youth and adults.

For more information:

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