

“I’m having a great childhood!”

A born performer, Kealey’s natural zest for life was threatened when her parents split up and her entire lifestyle changed. Thanks to her quick-thinking mom, United Way Simcoe Muskoka donors and community supports, Kealey’s ever-playful smile continues to shine brightly.



Kealey, 13



VIDEO

at UWSimcoeMuskoka.ca

“We can talk about anything in this group.” ~ Participant

Guest columnist: Stacey Schat, YWCA Muskoka



YWCA Muskoka was the grateful recipient of a grant for our Quest program from the United Way Simcoe Muskoka Women’s Leadership Council.

The areas where we noticed learning gaps and that the boys seemed eager to learn about and explore were:

- Sexual & Relational Health
- Stress Management
- Financial Security & Knowledge

Quest is a group for boys in grade 9 and 10 that focuses on healthy relationships, stress management and self-esteem building. It also works with the boys to examine and deconstruct messages the media and society are sending them regarding masculinity and gender roles. Meeting weekly, during the school day for 10 weeks, allows young men to create a safe space where they can voice their thoughts and ask ‘big’ questions.

“We need Quest in school because it helps us understand society,” said one participant.

YWCA Muskoka hopes to continue to offer Quest to the boys of Muskoka.

Quest participants say:

“It teaches us things that school doesn’t teach us, like finance.”

“It allows us to talk about sex and not be judged.”

“You need to find a way to relieve stress or you are never going to be okay.”

“I got to hear girls ask questions and see how they think and that helps us to understand them more.”

“Boys’ Quest makes me want to come to school. It gives us friends to talk to.”

“I think I will now meditate. That was my favourite part.”

Donor-directed fund sees success after first year

In 2016, our Women’s Leadership Council members used their inaugural donations to increase mental health supports for Simcoe Muskoka youth: one in Muskoka (see Quest column above) and another in South Simcoe that just finished (results to be posted online).

“I’m honoured to be a founding member of this organization that supports youth in our area, and allows our members to have a say in how our help can benefit youth in need.”



DETAILS

at UWSimcoeMuskoka.ca

~ Lisa Bertram
WLC Founding Member
President, Bertram Construction



United Way YouthUnited

creating the communities they want to live in

For the third time, youth leaders ages 14-22 across Simcoe Muskoka met and exceeded our challenge to empower other young people in their community. In 2016, six teams of young people wrote successful proposals and received Youth United grants of up to \$1,500 each to put their plans into action.

Their results are now in:

ZUMBA LUNCH

GOAL: inclusion/shared activity

"This program gave me leadership skills Students became more accepting of each other." ~youth leader

CCI MENTAL HEALTH DAY

GOAL: mental health awareness

"All (CCI) feeder schools came and enjoyed the play and they thought it was a meaningful day. We were very pleased that all could attend thanks to your funding." ~youth leader

MAPLEVIEW BASKETBALL

GOAL: healthy lifestyle promotion

"It was awesome, having a range of students; grades 6-12 People really got to know each other, too." ~youth leader

SPECIAL OLYMPICS WANTS YOU!

GOAL: volunteerism

"The best was someone in grade nine asking me in the supermarket line-up after school ended how he should sign up in August." ~youth leader

TRAINING FOR DEAF YOUTH

GOAL: first aid/safety training

"I learned a lot and am extremely thankful that I got the opportunity to help and give back to my community I plan to continue similar projects in the future." ~youth leader

MEDITATION WORKSHOPS

GOAL: stress reduction

"The tone of the (Tibetan meditation) bowls ... really resonated within me ... (I felt) much calmer afterwards, peaceful." ~participant

 **MORE** at UWSimcoeMuskoka.ca



Thanks to our Youth Council!

After extensively reviewing and discussing all Youth United grant proposals, this year's volunteer Youth Council made funding recommendations that resulted in seven new projects getting the green light.

In the coming weeks, youth project leaders and their teams will begin implementing the changes they want to create in their communities.

United Way Simcoe Muskoka donors are changing local lives.

Remember, there are three easy ways to give:

 Mail a cheque to UWSM, 1110 Hwy 26, Midhurst, Ontario L9X 1N6

 Call 705-726-2301, extension 2039, 8:30am-4:30pm Monday to Friday.

 Online at UWSimcoeMuskoka.ca (single donations only)

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