

## YOUTH FOR YOUTH

### New outdoor education program launches this summer in Orillia

In the shade of the Paper Birch tree for which the Wiigwasitig Gitigaan (Lakehead University Community Gardens) is named, young adults Allysha Wassegijig and Ashley Lacouriere hosted a public planting ceremony to launch a summer-long outdoor education program they brought to the community with the help of UWSM's Youth United program funding.

"The project will play an active role in contributing to local food security needs, positive youth health and wellness, as well as the reintroduction of Indigenous plants to the area," they wrote in their grant proposal. "(It will also) bring high school youth together with local experts in gardening, Indigenous knowledge, sustainable environmental science and business."

Intermediate students from Severn Township's Marchmont Public School and Orillia's Regent Park Public School participated in the May 29th planting ceremony and in the teachings led by community elder Vera Jones.



More photos on Facebook: [/UWSimcoeMuskoka](https://www.facebook.com/UWSimcoeMuskoka)



Vera Jones  
Community Elder



CCI students

### Collingwood teens celebrate diversity

**"Personally, with me being a student with autism, I definitely know what it is like to be on the outside of things and not be accepted for my differences. I really liked this project because it was a way to unite everyone and celebrate our differences."**

– Savannah Ekman, Youth Leader

Raising awareness about diversity with 1,400 of your peers may seem like a daunting task, but four Collingwood Collegiate Institute (CCI) students thought differently and put "Celebrate Diversity Week" into action. A Youth United grant from United Way Simcoe Muskoka supported their initiative.

The four-day week was filled with mind-opening activities. Pride rainbow cookies and pins were distributed, the cafeteria served ethnically diverse foods, students were invited to place a pin on the global map to point to their birth countries or ancestral origins, and special guest Anthony McLean – rapper, YouTuber and motivational speaker – performed. The week also featured the two-hour Safe Space Social, held by CCI's Gender and Sexuality Alliance (GSA); and a powerful personal story shared by a courageous student at the assembly.



Read more at: [UWSimcoeMuskoka.ca/Youth-United](https://www.uwsimcoemuskoka.ca/Youth-United)

Poster artwork: CCI students



## YOUTH POWER

Youth United is a UWSM-granting program to help youth leaders create the communities they want to live in. Learn about other Youth United-funded programs at [UWSimcoeMuskoka.ca/Youth-United](https://www.uwsimcoemuskoka.ca/Youth-United)

## Designing new partnerships

What do you do when local nonprofits need quality marketing material to promote programs and encourage donations – but there’s no room in the budget to make it happen? You innovate!

In 2015, United Way Simcoe Muskoka partnered with Georgian College’s Graphic Design program to connect Simcoe Muskoka nonprofits with pro bono design services done by students for course credit. So far, 66 non-profit clients have benefited and the program has been renewed for 2018. A great win for our whole region!



Georgian College’s recent grads (l-r) Susannah Reaman, Mat Hodder and Jasmine Lourenco were among the participating students led by professor George Mashinter in the last school year.



Read the blog at:  
[UWSimcoeMuskoka.ca/news](https://UWSimcoeMuskoka.ca/news)

## VOLUNTEER PROFILE

### Three months made a lifetime

In 1984, I was living in Vancouver homeless. That summer, I travelled to Ontario to try and get my life back on track. Unfortunately, jobs were hard to come by as I was only 18 years old and really had no experience in work yet. As money ran out, I started looking for a way to get a hand up to help me survive three months of no income until I could start college. I turned to United Way and they helped me find the resources to survive.

United Way helped change the course of my life. I went from being a penniless and homeless teenager, to having a very successful and long-standing television career and becoming a contributing member of society. Without their support, I doubt my life would be where it is today.

Thank you United Way for being there when I was down.” – **Don Wright, Running Rabbit Productions**



Don



**“I loved this course and I think that it helped me a lot!”**

## Looking through a lens of positivity

**“This course makes everyone more happy.”**

Eighty-seven South Simcoe teens attended the life-changing program Living Life to the Full (LLTTF), delivered by Canadian Mental Health Association York and South Simcoe, with a grant from the UWSM Women’s Leadership Council (WLC).

Of the 51 youths that filled out the post-course evaluation,

- 94% said they’d recommend the course to a friend.
- 67% thought it was useful for improving social relationships. (27% - no opinion)
- 78% agreed the course increased their ability to deal with stress. (12% - no opinion)

This year, to continue supporting area youth, UWSM’s WLC is funding an expansion to the All About Youth Mental Health walk-in clinic offered by John Howard Society of Simcoe & Muskoka in Barrie, Bradford, Orillia, Stayner and Muskoka.



[Learn More: UWSimcoeMuskoka.ca/Womens-Leadership-Council](https://UWSimcoeMuskoka.ca/Womens-Leadership-Council)

## United Way Simcoe Muskoka donors are #ChangingLocalLives.

**Remember, there are three easy ways to give:**



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