

NEWS RELEASE

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**AFRICAN-CANADIAN CHRISTIAN NETWORK TO FUND
20 MORE CHURCHES AND THEIR PARTNERS FOR YOUTH FOCUSED PROGRAMS**
Churches, community organizations and government continue fight against youth violence

TORONTO —The Honourable Mary Anne Chambers, Ontario Minister of Children and Youth Services, today attended the African-Canadian Christian Network (ACCN) news conference announcing the \$865,000 in funding for 20 more churches and their partners to combat youth violence in Toronto.

“Our government is committed to supporting initiatives that can make a difference in vulnerable young people’s lives by helping them get on the right track and turn their lives around,” said Minister Mary Anne Chambers. “Together, we can offer our youth hope and supports to overcome obstacles realize their dreams and reach their full potential.”

One year ago the Ontario government awarded ACCN \$3 million over two years to support church and community based approaches to helping Toronto youth lead lives free of violence. With the support of its trustee, the Toronto Community Foundation, ACCN has already provided grants to 33 culturally sensitive projects that are meeting the needs of many young people in communities across the city.

"When a young person makes that life-changing choice to turn away from violence and seize opportunity instead, that's hope", said Premier Dalton McGuinty. "We believe in our young people. We believe that given the right opportunities, they will make the right choices. We're going to keep working with communities to make sure these opportunities are available."

"The projects that have been approved will help to foster a sense of community cohesion and support in children and youth from marginalized and underserved neighbourhoods. These programs will enable them to use their energy in positive and creative ways, allowing them to be more resilient in an ever changing and sometimes hostile environment" said ACCN Co-chair Pastor Michael Morris. "We are determined to help the churches and their community partners enhance their capacity so that these services for our young people can be sustained."

The churches and their community partners that are the cornerstone of the ACCN, offer a wealth of resources, which includes but is not limited to, culturally sensitive programming, real estate, and the skills and knowledge of a multi-disciplinary pool of talented and generous volunteers who are dedicated to the betterment of our youth, families and community.

"The grants to these deserving organizations represent more than just an investment in the present; it is an investment in the future - an investment in all our futures" said ACCN co-chair Rev. Alvin Nicholson. "We thank all those who applied and encourage new applications for our third round of funding. The deadline is May 23rd."

ACCN is a volunteer-driven organization and welcomes the support of people from various disciplines who would like to help make a difference in the lives of young people.

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