

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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

TORONTO — Ontario Minister of Children and Youth Services the Honourable Mary Anne Chambers, joined the African-Canadian Christian Network (ACCN) at a news conference today for the announcement of the \$506,000 in funding for 14 more churches and their partners to work together with youth to provide them with positive supports, opportunities, and alternatives in Toronto.

"The partnership between the provincial government and the ACCN illustrates our shared commitment to provide children and youth with the opportunities and hope they need to help them overcome the challenges they face in their lives," said Chambers. "The positive feedback I've been getting from projects funded in the first two rounds makes it even more exciting to announce this third round of our \$3 million grant."

Since receiving the \$3 million grant from the provincial government, the ACCN has funded 47 community projects led by churches and their partners to positively impact Toronto youth and their families. The projects focus on education, crime prevention, employment and family.

"We're moving forward together - we're working with our communities and the ACCN. Our young people are getting the opportunities they deserve," said Premier Dalton McGuinty. "More and more are making the life-changing decision to put down a gun, and choose opportunity instead. I believe in our young people and I'm proud of the progress we're making together."

"The reports we have received from many of these projects to date are simply outstanding", said co-chair Rev. Alvin Nicholson. "We are encouraged by the good news stories from the youth and parents who have benefited from the support of these programs, especially those who have faced challenges in the schools and in the courts. We are definitely making a difference in the lives of these young people."

The ACCN has been forging significant partnerships with other organizations to provide a wide array of opportunities beyond the program funding. One major area of focus has been capacity building.

"All of our awardees have, as a first step, attended a Project Design, Implementation and Evaluation workshop through a partnership with Humber College. They are excited and raving about the significance and relevance their new knowledge will have on the successful implementation of their programs", said Pastor Morris. "Plans are well underway to offer an additional menu of workshops from the Fall that we believe will ultimately lead to the success and sustainability of each program far beyond ACCN's funding."

"This third round of grants for youth programs is building a strong foundation for large scale transformation in communities struggling with youth violence," said Rahul K. Bhardwaj, President and CEO of the Toronto Community Foundation. "We are very pleased to be working with such a courageous group of faith leaders and the Province of Ontario on this collaboration which is generating new thinking, new behaviour, and a new understanding of what's possible."

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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