

Boys and Girls Clubs bring positive change to 23 Ontario communities

Partnership with Alterna Savings allows important program to expand across province

TORONTO, March 26, 2013 – Young Ontarians from culturally-diverse backgrounds are getting the support they need to succeed, to become active leaders and to drive positive change in their communities.

Backed by Alterna Savings, the Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada (BGCC) is delivering an exciting program that focuses on the role youth can play as agents of change and leadership within the communities they live: the Youth ABCs (Ability to Bring Change) program.

This BGCC program builds the capacity of youth to lead positive change at both the community and provincial levels. Engaging 500 youth across Ontario, the initiative tackles social issues, such as bullying, and provides mentorship support to allow BGCC youth leaders the opportunity to participate in public policy to affect community change.

With Alterna Savings' generous support, the Youth ABCs program has expanded to another eight clubs – making it possible to engage more than 100 new youth and ensure that all 23 Ontario Boys and Girls Clubs are able to participate. A recent fundraising initiative by Alterna Savings' employees and members has also resulted in 19 post-secondary scholarships to be awarded to Ontario youth in June.

"We are thrilled that Alterna is investing in Ontario youth and that they have recognized the Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada as a leader in youth development," said BGCC President and CEO Pam Jolliffe. "Youth ABCs helps young people build their confidence, leadership skills, and capacity to participate in peer-to-peer leadership. It also provides them with the information and skills required to make positive changes in their own lives, and become more actively engaged in their clubs and communities. We believe that the Youth ABCs program, just like the youth it supports, has real potential to grow and develop and make a difference in the communities Boys and Girls Clubs serve," added Jolliffe.

Since the program's launch in 2009 with support from the Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport and Ontario Trillium Foundation, Youth ABCs has had widespread impact, with youth participants reporting strengthened leadership and communication skills, as well as confidence to create positive community change, among other new skills. For example, *Youth Taking Action Together for Health NOW!*, is a social change project stemming from Youth ABC's that inspires young people to make life-long healthy personal choices, and work together to make their neighbourhoods healthier places to be. Youth at the Hamilton Club participating in this program launched "Get Moving!" To promote the benefits of an active lifestyle, Get Moving engages young people aged 13-18 in regular, affordable physical activity at the Club and within the community."

Interim President and Chief Executive Officer, José Gallant said Alterna was pleased to partner with Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada for an initial commitment of support for at least the next three years, with the expectation of a long-term relationship.

“This partnership is a great fit for Alterna Savings; our history is rooted in community investment,” said Gallant. “Like BGCC, we believe that investing in our youth will result in a brighter future for Canada, which includes making higher education possible for more Ontario high school students. This is one of the many reasons we are committed to our partnership with the BGCC and why I am proud of our employees and members for taking the initiative to raise the funds for 19 post-secondary scholarships. This will help set even more young people on the path to future success,” explained Gallant.

About Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada

Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada is a leading non-profit organization providing programs that support the healthy physical, educational and social development of more than 200,000 children, youth and their families each year. In 650 locations across Canada, Boys and Girls Clubs offer opportunities, after school and at other critical times when children are not in school, to develop healthy behaviours, academic success, positive relationships and life and leadership skills. Boys and Girls Clubs have been helping young Canadians to discover, develop and achieve their potential for over 110 years. Visit www.bgccan.com.

About Alterna Savings

Alterna Savings is a full-service, member-focused, and community-based credit union that operates in the National Capital Region and the Greater Toronto Area. Guided by a commitment to support the well-being of members, employees and communities, Alterna offers a broad range of financial products and services to over 100,000 members. Learn about the Alterna Savings difference at www.alterna.ca.

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