

GEORGETOWN YOUTH CENTRE CELEBRATES RENOVATED KITCHEN

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Every other day during the week, Jude Thibeault, EJ Moffat, and Ben Trant meet at the Georgetown Youth Centre to play Dungeons & Dragons, among other activities.

Thibeault, a Grade 9 student at Georgetown District High School by day and a dwarfrogue by night, said he's been visiting the centre since it moved to Gary Allan High School in October.

"My geography teacher showed me this place," Thibeault said.

The youth centre attracts a range of local youths.

"Some are just waiting for their bus or parents to pick them up," said Erica Dunn, youth programmer at the centre for the Town of Halton Hills.

Programming is based on what youths ask for; there are movie nights, pizza nights, crafts and activities. On the afternoon of the grand opening, youths are getting to decorate their own cupcakes.

In the summer, Dunn said, youths can take advantage of the open gym.

While there are spaces



Erica Dunn, youth programmer, and Stephanie Barrington, recreation coordinator - youth for the Town of Halton Hills, in the youth centre's newly renovated kitchen.

Bryan Myers/Torstar

in town that cater to after-school athletics, the centre provides a space for other activities. For many youths, the lounge is a place to develop friendships and to feel part of a collective group.

"This brings another dimension," said Jeanne Grey, Halton Hills trustee for the district. "This town

is very isolated without public transit."

The centre is centrally located, near both of Georgetown's high schools. Prior to moving the centre to Gary Allan, the Georgetown Youth Centre was housed in a church basement.

In the fall, about 10 to 15 youths were regularly vis-

iting the centre, said John Pennyfather, superintendent of education with Halton District School Board. Now, about 35 visit regularly, but numbers have been as high as 68 in an evening.

One of the additions to the centre is a newly renovated kitchen space.

"We hope this will ex-

pand their ability to program and attract more Georgetown youths," Pennyfather said. "Kitchen facilities are really important for a youth hub."

Programming around food security and nutrition is expected to be offered in the future.

On Tuesday, Halton Hills council and staff, as

well as school board staff, celebrated the completion of capital improvements to the kitchen at the Georgetown Youth Centre.

"This is a collaborative effort between the town and us, with some funding from the Ministry of Education," said Stuart Miller, director of education with the Halton school board.

A grant from the previous provincial government contributed more than \$400,000 for youth centre improvements that included the renovated kitchen space.

"It's a real example of collaboration," Miller said. "The way forward in education is partnerships and collaborations with municipalities, towns, communities and boards."

The Georgetown Youth Centre is open to youths between the ages of 12 and 24 and is an inclusive space for kids to hang out, build relationships and take part in a variety of activities. The centre is open Monday to Friday, from 3 to 7:30 p.m., at 96 Guelph St. During the summer, the centre will be open from 1:30 to 6:30 p.m.

More information is available at haltonhills.ca/youth.

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