

# Councillors approve funding for groups

Almost \$640,000 to be dished out in Community Investment Fund

Halton regional council approved last week almost \$640,000 in multi-year funding to local non-profit groups focused on health and social services programs.

Among the major recipients from the Region's newly-established Community Investment Fund is ReFresh Foods (www.refreshfoods.ca), a collaboration between the region's food banks and led by the agency Food for Life (FFL), which will receive \$160,000 in 2010.

ReFresh Foods is a food logistics and redistribution program modelled on a successful provincially-funded pilot project in Waterloo. The program works with a hub and spoke model in which surplus fresh and frozen as well as non-perishable food is collected from corporate food donors and stored at ReFresh's central dry and refrigerated warehouse. The larger shipments are then redistributed to local food banks and social service agencies across Halton to be given to residents in need.

According to ReFresh, there's a hunger gap of 29.5 million pounds of food in Halton at this time, as food banks are only able to serve under half of the people estimated to need such services.

Other major beneficiaries of Community Investment Fund are two youth centres in Acton and Georgetown that were in danger of shutting down without the money.

In April, Sandra Melhuish, executive director of Links2Care which operates Open Door Youth Centre in Georgetown and Acton's Off the Wall (www.theyouthcentres.com), said the centres could potentially face closure if funding wasn't found.

Links2Care will now receive \$60,000 for 2009 and \$75,000 for 2010 for the youth centres.

"I couldn't be more thrilled," said Melhuish. "It gives us a little bit of leeway, almost two years to be out there advocating for long-term sustainable funding."

Others receiving funding include:

- Friendly Visitor Program, Acclaim Health (\$21,075 in 2009 and 2010)
- Social Opportunities, Activities and Relationship (SOAR) Program, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Hamilton/Burlington (\$18,000 each in 2009 and 2010)
- First Mentors Program, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Halton (\$20,000 in 2009 and 2010)
- Volunteer Program, (Community Living Burlington (\$58,650 in 2009 and 2010)
- Youth Overcoming Depression and Anxiety (YODA) Woodview Children's Centre (\$50,000 in 2009 and \$25,000 in 2010)
- Youth Centre Program, YMCA of Hamilton/Burlington (\$20,000 in 2009 and \$13,000 in 2010).

In total, Halton Region received funding requests from 65 groups totalling more than \$4.3 million.

The next round of proposals is scheduled to take place in 2011. For more information, visit [www.halton.ca/communityinvestmentfund](http://www.halton.ca/communityinvestmentfund).

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