

Mike Burns is the recently appointed director of The Deck, a ministry of Youth for Christ/Youth Unlimited.

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Milton youth centre welcomes new director

By Melanie Hennessey
CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

Mike Burns sees abundant potential in today's adolescents.

But he also sees they have a huge need for community services to help guide them through this "transformative" stage of life.

And that's where he enters the scene.

As the recently appointed director of The Deck — a youth centre on Nipissing Road that also goes under the names Youth for Christ/Youth Unlimited — Burns is excited about the opportunities to come as he strives to make a difference in the lives of local youth.

"Teens are really struggling to find purpose and meaning in today's world. Many — if not all — of the pillars that used to hold up our youth and help them through the journey of adolescence have fallen away," he said. "It's essential that there are community services for youth to help them through this time of life."

The Milton resident brings 15 years of experience with teens to the table. He previously served as Southside Community Church's youth pastor, and prior to that he was a youth counsellor at the Safe Haven Youth Shelter in Kitchener/Waterloo, working with 12 to 15 year olds. He was also responsible for creating a youth drug addiction awareness program in KW — a self-referral initiative that became an early intervention program.

"I'm passionate about working with youth because I think it's probably one of the most transformative times in their lives," he said. "They're moldable and pliable, and they're also a ton of fun."

As a satellite ministry of Southwestern Ontario Youth for Christ, The Deck is committed to helping youth in a holistic fashion — physically, mentally, emotionally, socially and spiritually. The youth centre has been in Milton for 11 years and at its current location since 2011.

The father of two said he enjoys speaking with youth from a faith-based perspective on finding meaning

