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MEDIA RELEASE

Peel Region Youth Took the Challenge and Changed the World

June 5, 2012 – Brampton, ON – From April 15 through to May 6, youth from all across Ontario participated in the *ChangeTheWorld - Ontario Youth Volunteer Challenge*. The goal of the annual campaign is to engage high school students to volunteer in their communities for a minimum of 3 hours of volunteering during the three weeks. Volunteer MBC, the local volunteer centre serving the Peel Region, is pleased to announce that **5,183 youth volunteered over 24,426 hours**. This exceeds the centre's target by over 66% for youth volunteers and over 102% for volunteer hours contributed.

"Youth have, once again, proven that they can make an enormous difference in our community," said Carine Strong, Executive Director of Volunteer MBC. "They've shown tremendous passion for a number of very worth-while causes and charities, and have truly changed the world locally and beyond through their dedicated efforts and voluntary contributions during the *ChangeTheWorld* campaign, everyone did a fantastic job!"

During the campaign there were 36 events that were held at schools and 40 events that were coordinated by community service organizations. Youth also took the lead by initiating 16 of the events which supported many causes including environmental clean-ups and stewardship; supporting at-risk youth; World Vision's campaign to stop famine; a charity event in support of orphans in Ghana; HIV/AIDS awareness; and combating childhood obesity.

ChangeTheWorld has been made possible through the support of the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration, in partnership with the Ontario Volunteer Centre Network (OVCN). This year the campaign celebrated its 5th year and it has now become a youth movement across Ontario.

Volunteer MBC was also host to a provincial kick-off event which was held on April 14 where youth rode a bus to community park clean-ups in South Mississauga, accompanied by the Honourable Charles Sousa, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, and Councillor Jim Tovey, Ward 1 – City of Mississauga. To wrap-up the campaign, the volunteer centre coordinated a charitable soccer game and park clean-up event on May 6 in Brampton, which collected sports apparel and equipment donations for an orphanage in Ghana.

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“It felt great to volunteer for ChangeTheWorld,” said Michelle, a grade 11 student from Brampton. “It really gives you a sense of accomplishment. I felt like I was doing my part in changing the world in my own little way.”

Ridhdi, a grade 11 student from Mississauga said, “It was really fun, a great experience and I really enjoyed it. It also felt nice because I was helping to make a difference in my community and in the world.”

Alysia, a grade 10 student from Caledon, had a chance during an Earth Day celebration event to put smiles on the faces of the little ones with her beautiful face painting art. She shared her thoughts, “It felt great, I love volunteering and I got to meet new people, which was amazing”.

Volunteer MBC is a volunteer centre serving the cities of Mississauga and Brampton, and the Town of Caledon. The centre offers a referral and matching service for volunteer placement within the community for all ages. They also provide education and support for volunteers and community service agencies and organizations, and serves the corporate community with various programming services that engage individual and team volunteering. Additionally, the centre strives to be a strong voice to support and promote volunteerism.

For more information about Volunteer MBC, to access their on-line volunteer opportunities database, and for details about the *ChangeTheWorld - Ontario Youth Volunteer Challenge*, visit www.volunteermbc.org. Photos during *ChangeTheWorld* can be viewed on-line at: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/volunteermbc/sets/>

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*Photo attachment:
ChangeTheWorld Photo (JPEG)*

*Photo caption:
Peel Region youth changed the world during the Ontario Youth Volunteer Challenge (April 15 to May 6).
5,183 youth contributed 24,426 volunteer hours during the 3 week campaign, which exceeded all targets
set by Volunteer MBC, the local volunteer centre.*