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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Youth Recognized at Their Graduation for Changing the World

June 29, 2010 – Mississauga, ON – Carine Strong, Executive Director of Volunteer MBC, presented certificates to a number of youth from the Peel Alternative School - West (P.A.S.) at their graduation ceremony in Mississauga to recognize their participation during the *ChangeTheWorld – Ontario Youth Volunteer Challenge*. The youth assisted with the revitalization of a community park by painting murals and planting gardens in the Central Parkway area. The project was a partnership between the City of Mississauga and Volunteer MBC and a separate announcement is being made with regards to highlight the overall success of this specific project.

For three days in early May, students from P.A.S. West endured frigid, wet weather to clear pathways from overgrown bushes and trees, to paint railings on bridges and walk-ways, as well as to work closely with mentor artists to paint a mural in an overpass located at the Gordon S. Shipp Memorial Park on Robert Speck Parkway in Mississauga. The park was selected for the project as it had been vandalized and was often used for gang activity.

“This volunteer experience afforded the P.A.S. West students not only an opportunity to improve and enhance their community, but to realize that a small effort can go a long way,” said Laura Pickering, Youth Worker at the school.

A number of the youth expressed gratitude in volunteering with the project as it helped many of them to find untapped talent that they had not realized previously. One of the youth stated, “Community work meant a lot to me as I have always wanted to help others. I got great joy in helping out and feel lucky that I was a part of something great. It also helped me learn more about myself as I found a lot of hidden talent and I did my best.”

“It was amazing to see the artistic abilities that these youth brought with them and how they were able to flourish under the direction of mentor artists, a couple were talented senior volunteer artists,” said Carine Strong, Executive Director of volunteer MBC. “It is important for our volunteer centre to be able to find opportunities for volunteers of all ages, but to also be able to have them work together so that the younger generation can learn from the older generation. It is a perfect example of being able to close the generational gap that often exists in our communities.”

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The Peel Alternative Schools (P.A.S.) offer programs designed for students who require a non-traditional approach to learning with varied program delivery options and for whom the regular secondary setting has not led to successful completion of credits. Programs are also available for students who require a flexible learning landscape to balance personal schedules. The primary focus of P.A.S. is to prepare students to return to community school, to integrate into the world of work or to successfully transition to post-secondary institutions.

Volunteer MBC is a volunteer centre serving the cities of Mississauga and Brampton, and the Town of Caledon. The centre offers a referral service for volunteer placement within the community for all ages to include youth, seniors, newcomers and groups. Additionally, the centre provides education and support for volunteers and community service agencies and organizations through topic and issue related workshops, comprehensive and informative programs, and community outreach.

Volunteer MBC is located at 2601 Matheson Blvd. E., Unit #43 in Mississauga, with satellite locations planned for the future in Brampton and Caledon. For more information about Volunteer MBC visit www.volunteermbc.org, or call 905.238.2622.

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For more information and media inquiries, please contact:

Sharon Clark-Koufis
Marketing & Communications Manager
Volunteer MBC
P: 905.238.2622 ext. 21
C: 416.433.0639
E: media@volunteermbc.org



Photo Attachments:



Caption: Peel Alternative School – West and mentor artists located at the overpass mural site at Gordon S. Shipp Memorial Park



Caption: Peel Alternative School – West Graduation Event

1st from left: Maria Starling, SALEP/Life Skills & Continuous Intake Coop Teacher
5th from left: Carine Strong, Executive Director, Volunteer MBC
1st from right: Laura Pickering, Youth Worker
Others in photo: A few of the graduating students who participated in the project

