

What Mental Health, a Bear & a Super Model Have in Common? Mental Health Week 2017



MENTAL HEALTH WEEK MAY 1 – 7 Peer Project Celebrates 40 Years of Supporting Greater Toronto Area & York Region Youth

What: Mental Health Week 2017 marks 40 years of The Peer Project | Youth Assisting Youth helping over 30,000 newcomer and at-risk kids – many with mental health needs.

- **1 in 5 children and youth in Ontario** will experience some form of mental health problem. Of those, only 1 in 5 will receive help.
- Over **12,000 youth in Ontario** are currently waiting to access mental health services.
- 28% of students report not knowing where to turn when they wanted to talk to someone about mental health.
- Canada's youth suicide rate is third highest in industrialized world.

This is the state of youth mental health in Ontario and why during May 1-7 Mental Health Week – the conversation will focus on youth who are waiting to get help. Ontario doesn't have sufficient resources or support programs to meet the needs of the growing number of kids seeking treatment for mental health issues in the community-based sector.

Since 1976, Peer Project is doing their part to address this major health issue by helping the kids who are often too challenging for many other community agencies. They've seen first-hand how mentoring can be life changing and help youth overcome mental health and life challenges.

"For four decades we've played an important role in helping youth who are at risk of falling through the cracks, and who are struggling with mental health," said Sally Spencer, CEO of The Peer Project.

Over the last 40 years, highlights have included the A&W Root Bear summer camp visit in the early 1980's to super model, Monika Schnarre as a Youth Ambassador 1987-89. Download images below.

To round out your story:

- A shortage in mental health care in **Ontario is also costing taxpayers**. In 2015/2016 the government spent nearly \$10 million to send 127 youths to the United States for treatment.
- **Lighting Ontario Green!** Look for Ontario landmarks, such as the CN Tower, to be lit green to raise awareness about the importance of children and adult mental health in communities across Ontario.

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About The Peer Project | Youth Assisting Youth (YAY) thepeerproject.com

The Peer Project | Youth Assisting Youth is a non-profit charitable organization that matches at-risk and newcomer children ages 6-15 with fully trained and dedicated volunteer youth mentors ages 16-29. Operating since 1976, The Peer Project has helped over 30,000 newcomer and at-risk kids. There are over 600 youth supported by the organization, and over 400 more kids on a wait list. The organization operates with a 98% success rate for keeping kids in school and out of the criminal justice system.

DOWNLOAD IMAGES - 40 Years Best Of

<http://bit.ly/yayphotos>

A & W Bear visits YAY summer camp circa 1981
Monika Schnarre YAY Ambassador circa 1987-89
And more!

Watch Video on Why Peer Project Matters

With Celebrity Designers, Glen Peloso & Jamie Alexander

<http://bit.ly/yayvideo1>

**Contact for Media Enquiries,
including Interviews with Sally Spencer CEO, Peer Project**



Shelley Mantei | mediatonicpr.com

o. 647.559.7713 m. 604.649.2893

buzz@mediatonicpr.com