

MEDIA RELEASE

November 20, 2017

\$36,700 Ontario Trillium Foundation Grant Boosts Child Personal Safety Education in Huron County

Clinton – In October, Rural Response for Healthy Children (RRHC) introduced an enhanced child abuse prevention program to a class of Grade 3 students in Huron County. Kids On The Block is a long standing program that educates children about their rights to personal safety and what to do if that boundary is crossed. The program aims to reach every Grade 3 student in Huron County each school year.

On Friday, local MPP Lisa Thompson and Judy Keightley, an Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF) volunteer stopped by the organization's office to hear how a \$36,700 Seed grant made in late 2016 has made a difference. They viewed the group's new short film, learned about its newly created "Guide To Protecting All Children in Huron County" and congratulated the community-based, non-profit on its continued work to educate families to ensure children grow up in a safe community.

"The safety and well-being of our children is always paramount in our communities. No one should ever have to experience physical or mental harm, least of all kids. Through the development of Kids on the Block, RRHC has provided families and schools with a child-friendly, age-appropriate tool to teach children about personal space, and facilitate healthy conversations about a sensitive topic. I'm pleased to see the grant funding has been put to effective use." - Lisa Thompson, MPP for Huron-Bruce

Originally presented as a puppet show, the program was experiencing challenges finding puppeteers willing to present the sensitive content. OTF's grant created the opportunity to professionally film the puppet show, and helped with staffing, workshops and supplies and materials. It also supported the development and production of a new Parent Guide that helps families further the discussion about personal safety at home. The Guide features age appropriate games and video links to help parents and caregivers talk with their children, be vigilant about the safety of all children in our community and be fearless when it comes to reporting suspected abuse to Huron Perth Children's Aid Society.

"This investment by the Ontario Trillium Foundation to enhance children's knowledge and provide them with strategies to keep safe, contributes to the overall well-being of families living in Huron County," said Michael Russo, Chair of RRHC's Board of Directors. "This grant has allowed flexibility in delivering it to local schools and greatly enhanced the resources provided to families to support them in discussing a difficult topic at home."

Rural Response for Healthy Children is committed to ongoing education at elementary schools and within our rural communities to ensure child safety. If you would like a presentation about personal safety for your group or event, please contact the Project Coordinator, Genelle Reid, at 1-800-479-0716 or greid@rrhc.on.ca

An agency of the Government of Ontario, the Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF) is one of Canada's largest granting foundations. With a budget of over \$136 million, OTF awards grants to some 1,000 projects every year to build healthy and vibrant Ontario communities. www.otf.ca

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For more information, please contact:

Selena Hazlitt, Executive Director
Rural Response for Healthy Children
519-482-8777
shazlitt@rrhc.on.ca