



## **NEWS RELEASE**

### **For Immediate Release**

#### **Youth get together to hand out “Meals with Love”**

Brampton, ONT. -- Five passionate youth from Brampton and Mississauga created 50 food hampers and distributed them to low income families across the Greater Toronto Area. What was unique about this distribution was the fact that it included a variety of fresh locally produced Ontario fruits and vegetables and low sodium food items. The food was accompanied with tips on healthy eating. It was packed in reusable environmentally-friendly bags and involved zero-waste packaging!

Approximately 350 lbs of fresh fruits and vegetables were distributed by the youth to 50 families to help take care of a week's supply of ration. Each hamper consisted of organic and low sodium food items including: onions, potatoes, bell peppers, tomatoes, carrots, peaches, Canola oil, rice, whole wheat bread, chocolate, a water bottle, and a \$5.00 grocery store gift certificate for milk. The tag line of the Meals with Love initiative – “*from our heart to yours*” -- describes the spirit of the initiative.

On August 26, the hampers were distributed at not-for-profit agencies working with abused women. Some of the hampers were also distributed to marginalized seniors. The agencies where the distribution took place included: the Interim Place, Surveyor's Point Social Housing and South Asian Family Support Services. In each agency, the youth began their distribution with a short skit on healthy eating. The skit included tips on how to distinguish between healthy and unhealthy ingredients.

The distribution of these hampers led to the launch of the “Meals with Love” project. This project is the brain child of five youth completing their global citizenship and leadership program called “Shape the Future”. “We wanted to apply the concepts we learned in the Shape the Future program. So we came up with the idea of these hampers that have less food miles and are healthy,” says Project Coordinator Aaron Pinto. Subsequently, the youth raised funds for buying the food items and launched the program with support from Community Environment Alliance, a Peel-based non-profit agency.

Through this initiative, Aaron Pinto (Project Coordinator), Amita Pande (Finance Director), Simona Rasquinha (Marketing Director), Shreya Bhandari (Communications Director) and Zarmina Khan (Public Relations Director) hoped to make a difference in the world this summer, starting first with their local community!

The *Meals with Love* project is a part of Shape the Future Youth Leadership Program (STF-YLP) of Community Environment Alliance. The program was launched last year with generous financial support from Ontario Trillium Foundation.

Community Environment Alliance of Peel is a registered, community based organization dedicated to building healthy communities through education, action and empowerment.

The Ontario Trillium Foundation is an agency of the Ministry of Culture that receives annually \$100 million of government funding generated through Ontario's charity casino initiative.

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