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## Communications and Public Affairs

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### **MEDIA RELEASE**

**TO ALL ASSIGNMENT EDITORS/EDUCATION EDITORS**

*For Immediate Release*

## **Summer Opportunities for Children and Youth**

**The Toronto District School Board launches its 2009 *Focus On Youth Toronto* summer program offering opportunities for children and youth across the City.**

**Toronto, ON, Friday, June 26, 2009** – The Toronto District School Board (TDSB) will launch its 2009 *Focus On Youth Toronto* program (FOYT) at Central Technical School, 725 Bathurst Street on June 29, 2009, at 11 a.m. The program will provide free school space to allow 110 agencies to offer over 140 learning and recreational programs for children and youth in 105 school and community sites during July and August 2009. These programs are expected to serve over 15,000 children and youth from high-need neighbourhoods.

*Focus on Youth Toronto* will also employ 400 secondary students who will be placed in jobs in these agencies as well as in summer school maintenance and skilled-trades jobs in TDSB schools. All students will be provided with pre-employment training, and leadership training during the summer.

This is the third year of operation for this program, which was introduced to school Boards in Toronto and Ottawa in 2007 by Education Minister Kathleen Wynne, as a way of extending learning and recreational opportunities for children and youth during the summer months. The Ministry of Education has allocated \$2.8 million to the TDSB for this program.

“Even with a smaller grant this year, we are providing opportunities for more agencies than last year to use our schools to provide enriching and enjoyable summer activities for children,” said Focus on Youth Steering Committee Chair, TDSB Trustee Chris Bolton. “We have hired 75 more students than we did last year because we believe that young people in our high-needs communities badly need employment to gain workforce experience as well as income to support their needs.”

The United Way Toronto is a major FOY partner and provides additional funding to their agencies to support their participation in the program. “United Way Toronto is once again proud to support Focus on Youth. Our agencies have a significant role to play in helping the children and youth of our communities to develop the foundation they need for future success,” said United Way Toronto President and CEO, Frances Lankin. “Our partnership with TDSB in Focus on Youth enables us to work together towards that goal.”

Toronto Community Housing Corporation is another important contributing partner to this program, through their summer activities for children and youth, and by offering job placements for TDSB student employees in their programs.

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