

TROPICANA INSIDER

FALL 2019

TROPICANA
COMMUNITY SERVICES



10TH ANNUAL AWARDS AND SCHOLARSHIP CELEBRATION FOR THE PRE-APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM

Since 2009, Tropicana Employment Centre has been awarded and has consecutively delivered a Pre-Apprenticeship Level 1 Auto Body and Collision Damage Repairer 310B program. This program is geared towards youth who are considered at risk. The program (which was previously funded by Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities), enables youth to develop the necessary tools to assist them in gaining meaningful employment in local shops. Students are trained to combine their own trade specific knowledge with critical thinking, creativity and interpersonal skills.

On Friday, September 27, 2019, friends, family, community partners, sponsors, employers and dignitaries were on hand for the 10th Annual Awards and Scholarship celebration for the Auto Body Collision Pre-Apprenticeship program. They celebrated the accomplishments of 18 youth who successfully graduated from the program, despite facing financial challenges. These youth are now employed in the auto body industry.



MPP VINCENT KE MAKES IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

On November 8, 2019, Vincent Ke, MPP for Don Valley North visited Tropicana's Centre of Excellence to make an important announcement about local pre-apprenticeship programs.

He shared that Ontario has expanded its investment in pre-apprenticeship training to \$20.8 million – an increase of \$2.5 million from the previous year. This expanded investment will fund 91 projects across the province and help more than 1,800 people across the province, including youth in Tropicana's Pre-Apprenticeship Auto Body and Collision Damage Repairer Program, prepare for jobs in the skilled trades.

This is definitely fantastic news for youth and Tropicana's pre-apprenticeship training program!

Topicana Community Services is Certified a Dementia Friendly Organization

On September 16, 2019, staff attended a Dementia-Friendly Communities training at Tropicana's head office. The training was facilitated by Alzheimer's Society of Toronto's Public Education Co-ordinator, Nouchine Davarpanah. Staff were educated on how to recognize the various types and symptoms of dementia and know the warning signs of Alzheimer's disease. Attendees participated in a simulation exercise that provided the opportunity to feel what it is like to live with dementia and physically support someone living with dementia. The training also included education on how to enhance communication with and offer appropriate supports to individuals living with this disease.

It is evident from personal stories shared before, during and after the training that many staff members have been impacted in some way by people living with dementia related diseases. One of the interesting takeaways from the conversations was that while they supported and cared for loved ones who exhibited the symptoms mentioned in the training, they were unaware at the time that they were dementia related. The presentation was able to assist the attendees to



differentiate normal age related changes from the symptoms of dementia.

As more than 75% of staff attended the training, Tropicana Community Services was successfully certified a Dementia Friendly Organization.

On October 10, 2019, Nicole Gardener, Public Education Co-ordinator, Alzheimer's Society of Toronto, facilitated a presentation to the Women Empowering Women Support Network entitled, "The Overview of Dementia". While on site to deliver the presentation, Nicole was able to join Board President, Carol Comissiong and Executive Director, Raymund Guiste to post the Dementia Friendly Communities Toronto decal. This decal was posted at the entrance of the building to signify to the public and service users that Tropicana is dementia friendly.

5th Annual Youth Outreach Movement



On Sunday, August 25, 2019, the Culturally Appropriate Counselling program collaborated with thirteen volunteers from apm Consulting Services to host the 5th Annual Youth Outreach Movement entitled, "Growing Communities: Empowering Minds".

The focus of this 2019 event was three-fold: Innovation, Teamwork and People, specifically relating to building strong relationships, health promotion, active living, creative thinking and peer collaboration. To encapsulate the three values, activities such as an obstacle course, tug o' war, potato sack and three-legged race, as well as a discussion with the firefighters from Fire Station 242 were undertaken. To commemorate the day of learning, the children designed t-shirts using positive adjectives that not only completed the statement "I AM" but also affirmed their self-worth. Feedback, as reported by the parents and caregivers, indicated that the children enjoyed themselves and learned teamwork through the activities.

Youth Network Event

Tropicana Community Services in collaboration with United Way Greater Toronto and the Toronto Employment and Social Services (TESS) Malvern office, hosted a Youth Networking and Mentoring event on October 2, 2019. This event supported over 60 young people in building employment related connections with 19 professionals from across the GTA. Young people, ages 18-29 were engaged in meaningful conversations about possible career paths and received advice and support from experienced individuals from a variety of industries. This event was a great success for the netWORKS program at Tropicana!



Camp Tropicana - Summer 2019

Whether it's riding the tallest roller coaster in Canada, taking a scenic stroll in nature, or being a part of an amazing animal show at the zoo, Camp Tropicana gives the ultimate experience. Tropicana's Youth Development and Education department offered a summer camp program for children and youth aged 5-12. In partnership with the Toronto Catholic District School Board, the 6-week program took place in a safe space where campers fostered community and a sense of belonging with other fellow campers. Many subsidies were available for families that required additional support. Daily lunch and snacks were also provided to the participants through donations and the participants were guided positively by an incredible camp staff which included volunteers.

Camp Tropicana provided the opportunity to be actively involved in the community by attending workshops at the local library with activities such as the Summer Maker program and the Butterfly

Conservation program. Local community groups such as the Toronto Inner City Rugby Foundation and Ko Fung Martial Arts brought their programming expertise to campers. Guest speakers were brought in to share knowledge and the importance of various topics, including sun safety and body awareness. The participants also had the chance to dress up and learn about their dream careers during the "I Love STEM Selfie" workshop.

Other program activities and events included dance, drumming, sports and recreation, arts and crafts, literacy and numeracy, and a variety of field trips for campers to explore the world around them.

Camp Tropicana had a positive impact on the participants and their families. The feedback from parents was exceptional and most families are looking forward to next year's summer camp.



Together We Can- Youth Mentorship Program

Tropicana's Together We Can – Youth Mentorship Program

is an initiative under the Ontario Black Youth Action Plan to serve black youth between the ages of 12-24. Part of this plan is to provide support and guidance to youth to help them develop their social skills while making positive connections with professionals and experienced post-secondary students from various industries. Through mentorship, youth are given the opportunity to gain insight and support in employment, entrepreneurship, civic engagement, leadership and academic advancement.

Some of the events and activities that the mentors and mentees have participated in since the summer, include the following:



A



B



C



D



E

In addition to the activities listed, the mentoring team typically meets at least once a month on Wednesdays from 5:30pm – 7:30pm to regroup and facilitate workshops.

A Royal Ontario Museum & University of Toronto Tour

..... Jul 2019

B Go Karts at Polson Pier & Cherry Beach – Downtown Toronto

..... Aug 2019

C Toronto Climbing Academy – East York

..... Aug 2019

D Fairview Library Theatre: Play – “Dying To Live”

..... Sept 2019

E Civic Engagement: Moral Reasoning Debate/YMP Elections 2019

..... Oct 2019

GIVE A MONTHLY GIFT TO

Your monthly donation will make a difference in the lives of youth, newcomers, people of Black and Caribbean heritage and others in need.

You can donate monthly through pre-authorized gifts by credit card (Visa, MasterCard and Amex) or by submitting a void cheque for pre-authorized payments through your bank account.

Simply let us know the amount that you would like to give, and where you would like to designate your gift. Information about your monthly donation can be provided to us by fax, mail, phone, or online through canadahelps.org.

Be sure to include your name, address and telephone number so that we may properly acknowledge your gift and provide you with a charitable tax receipt.