



The Rotary Club Of Toronto Funds Project: Humanity

The Rotary Club of Toronto gives \$12,000 grant to arts mentorship program for youth in homeless shelters.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

04/05/2024 - Project: Humanity (PH) is proud to announce that The Rotary Club of Toronto has awarded the PH 1:1 Mentorship Program \$12,000. The program is designed to support the mental health of youth living in homeless shelters by providing a free three month mentorship between themselves and a professional artist in their preferred area of study. ***The Rotary Club of Toronto was one of the first supporters to help PH get this program off the ground in 2020 and is stepping in again at a crucial juncture when Project: Humanity is seeking sustainable supports.***

In 2019 the WHO released a report affirming that the arts play “a critical role in helping to prevent the onset of mental illness and supporting the treatment or management of mental illness”. Research has also shown that the health risks of loneliness are comparable to obesity or smoking 15 cigarettes a day. This program is designed to give youth tools and resources to end isolation, support mental health, and provide artistic opportunities with 93.33% of participants responding that they feel more connected to other people as a result of their mentorship.

“Looking back I realize how much of a negative mindset I was in, but even though I was, I always looked forward to our sessions because I knew I could be vulnerable with someone and that person wouldn't judge me.”

- PH 1:1 Youth Mentee

PH 1:1 is fully customized by the participants, which leads to a high rate of engagement and completion. 100% of youth have responded that they feel more confident after their mentorship. 100% of youth have responded that they approve of their mentors. 90% of youth have responded that they would want to continue with their mentors post mentorship completion if given the chance and 1/3 of all youth to have completed the program have gone directly into further training, internships or jobs in their artistic field as a result of their mentorship.

Despite this program's unprecedented success, with the disappearance of emergency Covid Funding, economic hardships, and cutbacks to government bodies such as the Ontario Arts Council, finding the essential money needed to continue this work is a challenge. In 2023/24 PH had to reduce mentoring partnerships from 40 to 28, leaving vulnerable youth sidelined. ***This is why receiving support from The Rotary Club of Toronto is so important to guarantee this work can keep going and that Project: Humanity can provide support in perpetuity.***

“The mentorship was excellent and was very well-paced. I didn’t feel rushed. I felt that I was actually absorbing the information at a good speed and I’m very happy where I am now with my new abilities.”

- PH 1:1 Youth Mentee

The PH 1:1 Mentorship Program began during the Covid-19 crisis when Project: Humanity had to pause our in person shelter programming, which we had been delivering consistently to youth-on-the-margins since 2007. To make sure we continued offering care, support, and artistic resources we created CAPP (the Covid Artist Partnership Program). The program proved so successful and impactful, that we renamed it the PH 1:1 Mentorship Program and have made it a corner stone of our youth arm.

"Rotary is involved in supporting so many great causes - it is a meaningful affirmation that they see the impacts of our work and have returned to support this important program." - Dan Chapman-Smith, Executive Director, Project: Humanity

Rotary is a worldwide organization of more than 1.3 million business, professional, and community leaders in 200 countries, who make a difference in the communities in which they live. The Rotary Club of Toronto is one of the largest Clubs in Canada and oldest Rotary clubs in the world. The various Philanthropic Committees and the Charitable Foundation work to make an impact on economic, social and environmental challenges including: homelessness, hunger, social injustice, gender inequality, access to education, environmental sustainability, and challenges of recent immigrants and the poor. Funding priority is directed to the fields of health, education, youth and welfare, both in the GTA (Greater Toronto Area) and internationally.

Project: Humanity is grateful for the support from this esteemed organization.

Project: Humanity (PH) is a socially-engaged, incorporated not-for-profit theatre and community arts company founded in 2008. PH began as a group of artists who developed a pro-bono drama program for youth in Ontario prisons as a means of giving back, later moving focus to youth in Toronto’s shelter system. Project: Humanity raises awareness of social issues through the arts, with a strong emphasis on community service. Our PH: YOUTH program engages and inspires young people through the arts and our PH: THEATRE arm uses verbatim theatre to explore questions of social justice with general audiences locally, provincially and nationally. Over the past 16 years, PH has impacted the lives of over 19,000 young people across the GTA.



To learn more about Project: Humanity, the 1:1 Mentorship Program, or ways to get involved please contact Communications Coordinator Sarah Illiatovitch-Goldman at sarah@projecthumanity.ca and check out the website at www.projecthumanity.ca

To learn more about The Rotary Club of Toronto, granting programs, areas of service or ways to get involved please send an email to office@rotarytoronto.com or check out the website at www.rotarytoronto.com