

Tuesday, October 03, 2006

Mohawk brings learning, leadership and citizenship to North Hamilton neighborhood

HAMILTON – Mohawk is joining forces with the Robert Land Community Association to help make a North Hamilton neighborhood a better place to raise a child.

Mohawk will work with the community association to transform the former Robert Land School on Wentworth Street North into a community centre for hundreds of children, teens, single mothers and seniors from the Keith neighborhood.

“The Keith neighborhood deserves better so Mohawk is putting our best and brightest to work on their behalf,” says President MaryLynn West-Moynes. “Mohawk is proud to work alongside neighborhood residents, the Robert Land Community Association and the YMCA of Hamilton / Burlington to open the doors of a much-needed community centre in the heart of North Hamilton.”

Mohawk joins other supporters of the Robert Land Community Association, including the Hamilton Community Foundation, the Trillium Foundation, the Rotary Club of Hamilton, the Inner City Outreach Ministry, corporate and individual donors. “Mohawk is bringing to the table our greatest strength – the talents of our students, staff, alumni and retirees,” says West-Moynes. “Together, we’ll be engaging our heads, our hands and our hearts to help make a real difference in the community.”

During the 2006-07 academic year, Mohawk will focus on three initiatives that leverage the college’s strengths in Apprenticeships, Business, Engineering Technology, Health Sciences, Human Services, Arts, Sciences and Communications:

- Renovating former classrooms through a series of “Mohawk Makeovers”.
- Developing and delivering recreational and educational programs in partnership with the YMCA and in consultation with the community.
- Raising the community centre’s profile in the neighborhood and throughout Hamilton with student-driven advertising, marketing and public relations campaigns.

“Having Mohawk lend their support as an entire college in so many ways is just such a blessing for the community centre and the entire neighborhood,” says Robert Land Community Association Chair Don MacVicar. “Mohawk is bringing learning, opportunity and hope to the community.”

Ward 3 Councillor Bernie Morelli says Mohawk's partnership will strengthen both the community centre and the Keith neighborhood. "Education opens doors and overcomes barriers. Having Mohawk involved in a real hands-on way will lead to new opportunities for so many residents."

Mohawk's partnership will also serve as a blueprint for collaborative, grassroots efforts to reduce and prevent poverty across Hamilton, says the Director of the Hamilton Roundtable on Poverty Reduction. "Making Hamilton the best place to raise a child is the Roundtable's vision," says Liz Weaver. "Mohawk is taking the initiative in helping to make a North Hamilton neighborhood a better place for children, teens and their families."

The YMCA of Hamilton / Burlington has been working with the Keith neighborhood since 1997 through YMCA Outreach Programs. In 2001, the YMCA opened Canada's first Virtual YMCA Program at the former Robert Land School. "Our staff have built strong relationships within the neighborhood and the YMCA is committed to continuing to support these families and help meet the needs of the Keith neighbourhood," says President and CEO Jim Commerford. "We're extremely pleased, not only as a partner but also as a charitable organization, to see Mohawk support this much needed community resource centre in the Keith neighbourhood."

The Robert Land Community Centre project is the first community outreach initiative to be adopted by Mohawk's newly established Active Citizenship Team. Chaired by the West-Moynes, the team's mandate is to act on Mohawk's vision of inspiring learning, leadership and citizenship and make sustainable and significant contributions to economic growth, prosperity and social wellbeing in the community.

"Working with outstanding community partners such as the Robert Land Community Association and the YMCA of Hamilton / Burlington will create an incredible and unique wealth of real-world learning, leadership and citizenship opportunities for everyone involved," says West-Moynes. "Our hope is that Mohawk students in particular will develop a lifelong commitment to giving back and making a difference as leaders in their community."

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Mohawk College annually serves 10,000 full-time, 3,000 apprenticeship, and 300 international students, as well as 5,000 adult learners, and 42,000 Continuing Education registrants. Mohawk offers over 100 full-time programs and 1,000 Continuing Education courses to the communities of Hamilton, Burlington, Brantford and the surrounding region. Mohawk also celebrates the achievements of over 70,000 alumni.

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