



**Youth Assisting Youth
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NEWS RELEASE

Attention: Assignment Editor

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**YOUTH ASSISTING YOUTH HAS BECOME A VICTIM OF ITS OWN SUCCESS
NEED FOR MENTORS GROWS, FUNDING DOESN'T**

TORONTO—In 2009, Youth Assisting Youth matched more newcomer and at-risk youth with volunteer mentors than ever before. This activity responds to an increased community need for mentors across Toronto and the GTA, despite the high cost of providing that service.

“There is a desperate need for young people to receive further support. YAY’s matching of children with mentors has kept pace with this need. Funding hasn’t,” said YAY president and CEO Sally Spencer. “In order to continue delivering this vital community service in a meaningful way and keep up with the influx of children, this agency needs additional financial support.”

The organization seeks support from the community to help ensure that it can meet the demand of at-risk and newcomer youth seeking mentors. Hundreds of children and youth currently receive weekly guidance from their volunteer mentors. Many of these children come from single-parent homes, live below the poverty line, have escaped abusive relationships or reside in priority neighbourhoods.

“Mentorship is a critical, proactive way to prevent tragedies like the deaths of Jordan Manners and Stefanie Rengel,” said Ron Kelusky, chairman of YAY’s board of directors. “We have a responsibility to deliver this service to the community, but to do so for the influx of people coming to us, we need financial support.”

“They are vulnerable – looking for role models,” said Grant Peckford, managing director at YAY. “We are determined not to turn them away. Building vibrant communities depends on proactive measures like mentorship. The impact is too significant for businesses and community members to ignore.”

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Youth Assisting Youth

Youth Assisting Youth is a peer mentoring organization that matches volunteer mentors aged 16 to 29 with newcomer and at-risk children aged six to 15. Since 1976, YAY’s unique service has helped over 20,000 children and youth. For more information, or to make a donation, visit www.yay.org.