



**For Immediate Release**

## **PROMOTING LEADERSHIP SKILLS FOR ABORIGINAL YOUTH**

*McGuinty Government and Right To Play Expand Life-Skills Program with \$1,000,000 Investment*

TORONTO (August 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2011), Ontario is helping more than nine hundred Aboriginal youth get the support and skills they need for future success.

Over the next year, the Youth Leadership component of the Promoting Life-Skills for Aboriginal Youth (PLAY) program will expand into an additional 30 Ontario First Nations communities. The program helps youth build leadership skills, increase their self-esteem and confidence, and improve their ability to set goals and create plans for the future.

The youth leadership training workshops were piloted successfully in Moose Cree First Nation, a remote northern Ontario community last year. The workshops inspire and motivate youth to lead cultural and sporting events, build relationships with Elders and other community members, and plan activities to help address local social issues.

PLAY was developed by Right To Play in partnership with the Ontario government, First Nations communities and other organizations.

### **QUOTES**

“Great things can happen when we work together - government, Aboriginal communities, not-for-profits and private sector partners. Through PLAY, we are helping shape Ontario’s future leaders and giving Aboriginal youth an opportunity to reach their full potential.”

— Chris Bentley, Minister of Aboriginal Affairs

“The PLAY Program has been a genuine success over the past year benefiting children, youth and Elders in four First Nations communities in Northern Ontario. We are very excited to expand across Ontario and tremendously grateful to our many partners for helping to make this program possible, particularly the First Nations communities with whom we work. Their enthusiasm and commitment are the reason for the program's success and growth.”

— Robert Witchel, National Director, Right To Play

“Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) is pleased to see Right To Play expand its program to include more northern First Nations as we see the benefits the program offers in assisting the advancement of leadership and sports skills. NAN First Nations are most disadvantaged when it comes to sports and recreation facilities and programs. Right To Play offers an excellent opportunity for our youth to build

confidence and esteem that they will hold within themselves to last their lifetime. I've seen the excitement of the children who have participated in the past and I am pleased more children will be able to experience this life-changing opportunity."

— NAN Grand Chief Stan Beardy

"RBC is proud to be one of the founding partners of the Right to Play's PLAY initiative. The program provides critically important leadership opportunities for youth, and has already achieved positive results. The newly announced program expansion will give a greater number of Aboriginal youth the chance to develop leadership skills and to contribute to their communities and to Canada."

— Shari Austin, Vice President, Corporate Citizenship RBC and Executive Director, RBC Foundation

## QUICK FACTS

- In 2010-11, Youth Leadership program participants from [Moose Cree](#) First Nation and [Sandy Lake](#) First Nation planned a number of community events including a Fall Fair, a fashion show, an intergenerational hockey tournament and a 3-on-3 youth basketball challenge.
- The Ontario government has committed to providing more than \$1.5 million over four years to support PLAY, including \$1 million to expand the Youth Leadership program.
- The **Tim Horton Children's Foundation** and the **NHLPA** have recently joined the PLAY partnership. Other partners include: Nishnawbe Aski Nation, Merck Canada, RBC Foundation, Larry and Judy Tanenbaum Foundation, Ontario Trillium Foundation, Sport Canada, the University of Ottawa School of Human Kinetics, Motivate Canada, Hydro One, Elementary Teachers Federation of Ontario, Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, The GROOVE Method.
- **High resolution images** of the PLAY Program are available [here](#).  
Username: rtpftp  
Password: athlete  
*Images located in folder: "PLAY Program Expansion"*

## LEARN MORE

Find out how your organization can support [PLAY](#).

First Nations communities – [apply to host the PLAY Youth Leadership Program here](#).

Read about Right To Play's PLAY Program and Youth Leadership Expansion Program [here](#).

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**About Right To Play**

Right To Play is an international humanitarian organization that uses sport and play programs to improve health, develop life skills, and foster peace for children and communities in some of the most disadvantaged areas of the world. Working in both the humanitarian and development context, Right To Play builds local capacity by training community leaders as Coaches to deliver its programs in 20 countries affected by war, poverty, and disease in Africa, Asia, the Middle East and South America. Founded in 2000, Right To Play is headquartered in Toronto, Canada and has national offices in Canada, Norway, The Netherlands, Switzerland, United Kingdom, and the United States. The national offices raise funds, build awareness for Right To Play programs and advocate for Sport for Development.