



August 7, 2016

MLSE FOUNDATION AWARDS TORONTO FC COMMUNITY ACTION GRANT PRESENTED BY JUST ENERGY FOUNDATION TO WOODGREEN COMMUNITY SERVICES

MLSE Foundation announced WoodGreen Community Services as this year's recipient of the \$50,000 *Toronto FC Community Action Grant presented by the Just Energy Foundation* at BMO Field on Saturday. MLSE Foundation representative Eric Nachman was joined by Just Energy Senior Vice President Amy Gasca for the announcement. As part of the celebration, WoodGreen Community Services President and Chief Executive Officer Anne Babcock and WoodGreen youth were invited to the Toronto FC versus New England Revolution match as guests of MLSE Foundation and to participate in the cheque presentation. The \$50,000 grant will directly support the WoodGreen Newcomer Youth Soccer League.

"The Newcomer Youth Soccer League is a great demonstration of WoodGreen's efforts to provide reliable and impactful services for immigrant families," said Michael Bartlett, Executive Director of MLSE Foundation. "We're excited to see this program come to life and help youth in the City of Toronto develop a sense of belonging through sport as they settle in their new home."

The WoodGreen Newcomer Youth Soccer League provides opportunities for newcomer youth (non-citizen: permanent resident, convention refugee, live-in caregiver, visa students and refugee claimants) to meet each other, share common interests, combat isolation and address other issues relating to adjusting to life in a new country. These teams come from different organizations across the City of Toronto and are comprised of youth ranging from 13 to 24 years old. As the league has been operating informally for the past six years, the grant will help grow the program with workshops for participant settlement-related issues.

"WoodGreen is thrilled to be a recipient of the \$50,000 Toronto FC Community Action Grant," said Anne Babcock, President & CEO of WoodGreen Community Services. "We know that the settlement journey for young people comes with unique challenges. The WoodGreen Soccer League gives newcomer youth the opportunity to come together in a safe space to make new friends, get to know their new city, and above all, to have fun. On behalf of the newcomer youth we serve at WoodGreen, we would like to express our sincere thanks to the MLSE Foundation, the Toronto FC and Just Energy."

The Toronto FC Community Action Grant along with the *Toronto Maple Leafs and Toronto Raptors Community Action Grants* are three \$50,000 sport-specific prizes presented by the Just Energy Foundation that MLSE Foundation will award to non-profit organizations supporting youth sports programming in the city each year. Eligible non-profits can apply for all grants at mlsefoundation.org, where submissions are reviewed by a selection committee before a winner is chosen and announced at a special event in their community.

“It is truly inspiring to see WoodGreen’s support network that works so hard to address critical social issues, especially those faced by immigrant families” says Deb Merrill, Just Energy's co-Chief Executive Officer. “It is particularly encouraging to see the innovation they present through the WoodGreen Newcomer Youth Soccer League and the use of sport to promote inclusion and community for young newcomers. With this latest \$50,000 Community Action Grant, we are delighted to help Woodgreen grow their program as an investment in the health and well-being of our community, and our youth.”

About WoodGreen Community Services

WoodGreen Community Services is one of the largest social service agencies in Toronto. A founding United Way of Toronto member agency, WoodGreen has grown to span 36 locations and serves 37,000 people each year. WoodGreen helps people find safe, affordable housing, seniors live independently, internationally-trained professionals enter the job market, parents access childcare, children and youth access after-school programs, newcomers settle in to Canadian life, homeless and marginalized people get off the streets and youth find meaningful employment and training. Visit www.woodgreen.org for more information.

About MLSE Foundation

MLSE Foundation believes all kids should have access to sport and the opportunity to develop lasting dreams on the playing field. With the support of MLSE’s teams, the Foundation funds the refurbishment of local athletic facilities and programs that support kids through sports and recreation. Set to open in 2017, MLSE Foundation’s latest project, MLSE LaunchPad, will be the first collaborative space in North America to leverage sport, education and research to promote social change. Since launching in December 2009, MLSE Foundation has invested more than \$24 million into our community. For more information visit mlsefoundation.org, or follow @MLSEFoundation.

About Just Energy Foundation

The Just Energy Foundation was established in 2013 by Just Energy Group Inc. to help registered Canadian and U.S. charitable organizations secure the resources required to promote the health and well-being of communities in need. Funded entirely by Just Energy, the Foundation invests in local programs that work to enhance the quality of life in Just Energy's operating markets towards building stronger and supportive communities. Visit justenergyfoundation.com to learn more.

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