

Trails Youth Initiatives Launches Second Annual Get Outside Challenge to Empower Vulnerable Youth in Toronto

TORONTO, March 8, 2022 – Trails Youth Initiatives (Trails) today announced the second annual Get Outside Challenge to empower vulnerable youth in Toronto through outdoor education. During the Get Outside Challenge, taking place May 7-15, 2022, participants pledge to spend at least eight hours outdoors while raising much-needed funds to support Trails participants.

Since its foundation 30 years ago, Trails' mission has been to challenge and equip youth from at-risk areas of Toronto to become contributing members of their communities. Each Trails cohort builds confidence through skill development, high school credits and mentorship - support they need to graduate high school and, in most cases, pursue post-secondary education via available bursaries.

“Trails participants have a 99 percent high school graduation rate in a city where racialized youth and those from single-parent families are three times more likely to drop out. Through long-term, consistent engagement, Trails has a life-changing impact on a relative few, versus a small impact on many,” said Melissa Millward, President of Trails Youth Initiatives. “The generosity of the Get Outside Challenge donors, participants and sponsors will allow us to strengthen and scale our ‘Four Seasons, Four Years, For Life’ program.”

To participate in the Get Outside Challenge, register yourself or a team of up to six participants at www.trails.ca/GO. Teams pledge to spend at least eight hours outdoors during the Get Outside Challenge while raising funds for Trails. Individuals, families and chosen teams can choose whichever outdoor activities they'd like. Log your hours and share your journey using #GetOutsideForTrails. Visit www.trails.ca/GO to learn more about the Get Outside Challenge and stay tuned for a silent auction featuring exciting experiences.

In 2021, more than 380 donors and 29 teams raised \$84,000 for vulnerable youth in Toronto and logged over 1,500 hours outdoors. The Get Outside Challenge was born during the COVID-19 pandemic when Trails provided outdoor-only programming for its participants.

Trails by the Numbers:

- 150 current Trails participants aged 12-17 annually
- Over 500 participants in Trails' 30-year history
- Currently, 39 Trails alumni are receiving the Trails Danielle Dion Bursary in support of their post-secondary education
- 89 percent of Trails participants identify as Black, Indigenous, People of Colour
- 100 percent of Trails participants graduate high school
- 72 percent of Trails participants go on to post-secondary education
- 98 percent of Trails participants reported developing self-confidence through Trails
- 95 percent of Trails participants said Trails helped them be more successful at school and at home

Stay up to date on the Trails program by following us on Instagram at @TrailsYouth. You can learn more about Trails, its history, and how to support the program online at www.trails.ca

About Trails Youth Initiatives

Trails Youth Initiatives has a mission to challenge and equip vulnerable youth from at-risk areas of Toronto to become contributing members of the community. The “Four Seasons, Four Years, For Life” program represents experiential education at its best. In our long-term, consistent and preventative program, youth are building confidence and enhancing their well-being by facing and overcoming challenges. Through outdoor skills development, high school credits, bursaries, mentorship and job opportunities, Trails is helping to break the cycle of poverty and systemic racism. 100% of Trails participants graduate from high school and 72% of alumni enter post-secondary school, with tuition costs covered by Trails. Trails relies on the generosity of non-government donations from companies, foundations and individuals to provide life-changing experiences for its participants. www.trails.ca.

Media Contact:

Janelle Dayman

Director of Development

janelle@trails.ca

905-836-0285