

2018 Youth engagement Showcase Stories

Who says youth aren't engaged? Read more about how each of these young people are making a difference in rural Ontario.



Ashley Aylward

Age: 23
Palmerston

Ashley is the President of Big Brothers and Big Sisters of Listowel and District where she is heavily involved. In this role, Ashley has worked with the board to develop a Group Mentoring Project that engages volunteers to spend time with children in a group setting rather than one on one, twice a month. This program provides opportunities and mentorship for youth who are waiting to be matched with Bigs. As part of this initiative, Ashley worked with the Big Brothers and Big Sisters board of directors to bring the proposal to a local network called '100 Women Who Care' securing \$10,000 to start and run the program. Additionally, Ashley is the Vice President and youngest board member on the North Perth Chamber of Commerce. She volunteered to be a part of the Strategic Plan Committee to develop a three-year plan for the future of the organization.



Ayla Fenton

Age: 28
Kingston

Ayla is active and passionate about helping young farmers in rural communities. For the last several years she has been active in working at organic farms in the Kingston area and becoming involved with the National Farmers Union acting as the Youth President in 2015–2016. She planned and hosted a Young Agrarians Farmer Mixer bringing together 70 local young farmers for a series of workshops, cooperative sessions and discussions on the challenges young farmers face. Ayla has given testimony to the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-food, asking the committee to make food sovereignty the basis of food policy and advising them on what supports are needed for new farmers. Ayla's work is not only local, but also spans North America through

her involvement with La Via Campesina. In this she assists in the coordination of communication in Canada, U.S.A and Mexico to exchange information and strategies to take in political work that will uplift young farmers.



Phil Fritz-Soehner

Age: 18
Elmira

Phil is a volunteer with OK2BME, a program of KW Counselling Services offering free supportive services for LGBTQ+ youth in Waterloo Region. Phil was one of the first youth leaders involved in the Youth Leadership Program and played a large role in organizing the 2018 Gay Straight Alliance Conference where they were a keynote speaker. In order to be involved in the OK2BME Phil takes a bus from Elmira to Kitchener, and has never missed a meeting. Phil also volunteers their time to help run the GSA at Elmira District Secondary School, where they spearheaded anti-bullying campaigns and sought to educate staff and students alike on challenges they and other LGBTQ+ youth face. Phil is a leader in education and advocacy for youth in Waterloo region working towards creating a more inclusive community for LGBTQ+ youth.

Chase Goldie

Age: 13
Sutton

Chase is a student leader at her elementary school acting as a key member in several student leadership groups. She is the chair of the Sutton Public School Eco Club, a member of the We Team, and she secured funding to begin an after-school program to teach students to cook simple, healthy meals. Chase also participated in a workshop, alongside 20 industry leaders from across North America, on the future of renewable energy. Chase is always looking for ways to support and encourage the students in her school.



Brooklyn Lampi

Age: 14
Kincardine

At the age of 7, Brooklyn learned that people were living without homes. She responded by making jewellery and selling it on her front lawn to raise money for the homeless. At age 9 she raised money for a family who was struggling to make ends meet after losing a father/husband. When Brooklyn was 11 she participated in the Ride for Refuge event in Kitchener. Brooklyn founded, organizes, facilitates and participates annually in the Neon Night Run, raising money and awareness for various causes locally and further afield. Brooklyn is a member of the Youth Waves Coalition and the Youth Advisory Council for Kincardine, as well as being the Co-Chair of her grade 8 student council. Her volunteer portfolio is extensive, and includes Breakfast Club, Big Brothers and Big Sisters, MS Walk, Cystic Fibrosis Walk, Kincardine's first Annual Pride Parade and Community Living Beach Run. She has travelled internationally to build a school in Ecuador and in India. Her list of recognitions include School Spirit Award, Service Award, Bruce Grey County Young Women of Distinction Award and Ontario Junior Citizens Award.



Grant Sparling

Age: 24
Blyth

Grant is the Vice President and General Manager of Cowbell Brewing Co. in Blyth. Grant was born and raised in Blyth attending St. Anne's High school in nearby Clinton before going to Dartmouth to study Government. Upon graduation, in 2015, he returned home to create Canada's first destination brewery with a commitment to fostering economic development solutions for his hometown. In the construction and running of Cowbell, Grant is committed to sourcing local products, businesses and labour. Grant is a member of the Ontario Craft Brewers Association and represents the only rural brewery in the "Fast Growing Five". As a member of the "Fast Growing Five", he brings a rural voice to lobbying efforts in Queen's Park

calling for investment and development policy that translates outside of the GTA. Outside of his role at Cowbell, Grant is the CEO of Medicine for a Better Tomorrow, a company that invented a non-invasive influenza vaccine that has received patents in various countries.

As part of the 2018 Youth Engagement Showcase, an advisory group chose to invite three nominees to speak at the Parks and Recreation Ontario Educational Forum and Trade Show, held in the Village of Blue Mountain in April. **Ashley Aylward, Phil Fritz-Soehner** and **Brooklyn Lampi** shared their youth engagement stories with conference delegates.