

Municipal Internship: Youth Engagement Strategies Program

During the summer of 2019 ROI worked alongside amazing young interns across rural Ontario to explore what communities can do for youth engagement in support of workforce development, mental health, young leaders and strong rural communities.

Meet the Interns:

Erin

Erin is working with the Timmins Youth Wellness Hub, supporting youth to better share their own stories about community.

"I am from Timmins (more specifically Porcupine) where it is isolated, cold – which I absolutely love! I have always been very passionate about working with children and youth, and this job is an amazing opportunity to work with older youth in my community and really make an impact. Something I am very passionate about is learning about world religions and cultures, and I am excited to travel to southeast Asia this fall."



Learn more about Erin's Project

- **Timmins Youth Wellness Centre**

The youth engagement project in Timmins will be a collaborative multi-media project primarily based in film. We will be collecting the stories of approximately ten youth who attend the Timmins Youth Wellness Hub in any creative way that they would like to share them as well as five Youth Wellness Hub peer mentors. We will be creating a film that tells their stories and showcases the youth's strengths and talents. They will also be able to create physical portrayals such as paintings/photos and we will be incorporating those as well in a final showcase. A collaborative project like this could be shared online, reach a large audience and inspire the youth to take on roles that they may not have considered before."

Rachel

Rachel is working with the Perth County Economic Development team to further the Prosper In Perth campaign – increasing exposure to employment opportunities within the region.

"Growing up in a small town, I was often taught that opportunities were in big, urban areas. So naturally, when it was time to pursue my university education, I moved to a city six hours away. Flash forward four years, I transferred to a university closer to home where I completed my BA in political science and have now focused my career aspirations on local government in rural settings. I can confidently say that everything about my rural upbringing shaped me into the person I am. I want to encourage youth to embrace their rural roots and be proud of their small hometowns."



Learn more about Rachel's project:

- **Perth County**

The Perth County Youth Engagement Intern will work to execute the Prosper in Perth County initiative to increase regional youth (ages 15-29 years) participation and encourage them to locate to Perth County. Through projects such as Youth Profiles, collaboration with member municipalities' Youth Advisory Councils, and Young Professional Networking events, the Intern will generate best practices in relation to youth engagement strategies, and provide exposure to employment opportunities within the region – specifically in terms of apprenticeships and entrepreneurial ventures. Other outcomes include reversing outmigration, attracting young newcomers and ultimately, growing the workforce to allow local businesses to expand and prosper in Perth County."

Erin

Erin is working with a collaboration of Northern Wellington communities to build civic engagement and leadership among youth.

"I've always felt super connected to my small town of Harriston growing up, whether it was joining teams, theatre, the youth council, or just showing up at events. I love the small town vibe where you feel like you know everyone and that there are people who are always eager to help with whatever project you've undertaken. I'm excited for this position because I'm passionate about my town, and I want to help our youth find a way to connect to the community like I have, by hearing their ideas and trying to make them happen!"



Learn more about Erin's project

- **Northern Wellington County**

The Northern Wellington Youth Intern will connect with local service providers and underrepresented youth (ages 15-29 years) in order to identify best practices for engaging with and finding ways to support this population while helping to break down stereotypes. Other outcomes will include finding data to support the development and/or implementation of youth engagement strategies in Northern Wellington County; to build civic engagement and leadership among youth, and to increase community capacity for future youth engagement; and to produce a report detailing the youth engagement strategies implemented by Northern Wellington County with reflections on lessons learned and promising practices.

Aashima

Aashima is working with the Town of Hanover to share youths' stories, to better connect with them and to get them involved in community decision making.

"I grew up in Hanover from the age of 7, but I was born in India. This Fall I am heading to Law School, in the UK. I wanted to apply for this job because of my previous experiences working with youth. Which includes lifeguarding, swimming lessons, University orientation week, municipal volunteering, youth council, and the list



goes on. I am excited that I am connecting with many different people within my community More importantly taking in their opinions and ideas about youth related issues and finding a way to implement them during this summer."

Learn more about Aashima's project

- **Town of Hanover**

Hanover's Intern will lead the Town of Hanover and community stakeholders in their youth engagement efforts by sharing stories, establishing ways to better include and build awareness among our youth and to help to get them involved in community decision making. Proud home to Launch Pad Youth Activity and Technology Centre, our intern will utilize this space to engage youth and help share stories of youth doing cool things there and in the broader community. Working with community stakeholders, including business and community leaders, community organizations and committees, the Intern will be tasked with producing a report detailing the youth engagement strategies implemented with reflections on lessons learned and promising practices, while being exposed to operations and decision-making processes in the Town of Hanover.

Vanessa

Vanessa is working with South Huron to create a youth strategy so the municipality can position itself as a youth friendly community.

"I am originally from Owen Sound, spent some time living in Goderich, and now call London home. I recently finished a Post Grad at Fanshawe College in Public Relations and Corporate Communications. I also have a diploma in Broadcast Journalism (and spent the last three years working as a news anchor/reporter). I believe youth are our future. We need to foster an environment where they can grow and thrive. I would like to continue working in government/non-profit work in communications/social media management."



Learn more about Vanessa's project

- **South Huron**

Youth retention and attraction is an issue in many rural communities in Ontario. The primary goal of this four month project is to create a youth strategy so the Municipality of South Huron can position itself as a youth friendly community. We will be working with local youth and as well as engagement coordinators across Ontario to identify ways to make South Huron an even more attractive place to live, work and play. A secondary goal is to make youth aware of the wide range of career options available in the municipal sector.

Abby

Abby is working with Big Brothers Big Sisters of Centre Wellington to improve mental health, resilience and foster a sense of engagement.

"I just finished my undergrad in Health Studies and I will be returning to Queen's University in Kingston for my Master's degree in Health promotion. In the fall of 2017 Centre Wellington lost 6 males to death by suicide in the span of 2 and a half months. At this time I was in Kingston and I felt helpless, this was the thing I was studying at school and I felt like I was failing my community. That's when I decided I needed to get more involved in my community and when this opportunity



came to Big Brothers and Big Sisters I knew this was the perfect opportunity to take what I learned in university and my passion for mental health promotion and apply it to this internship."

Lean more about Abby's project

- **Big Brothers Big Sisters, Wellington County**

We are focusing on getting youth meaningfully engaged to improve mental health, resilience and a sense of engagement. BBBSCW is pulling together several organizations and services geared to youth, all under one roof, currently being referred to as the "Hub". Our intern will focus on creating a youth panel that will help determine how youth want to be served and

engaged. They will also put a plan in place of long term, how this space will run, and who will run it.

Allison

Allison is working with the Brock Youth Centre creating a team of youth ambassadors, to ensure youth have a voice in their community on topics that matter to them.

"As a young person, I never really felt a connection to my hometown. I grew up there, but most of my involvement and even schooling ended up being in the neighbouring communities or townships. I completed my Honours Bachelor's of Science at the University of Toronto and continued on to graduate school at the Toronto Art Therapy Institute where I studied Art Psychotherapy. Doing most of my work there with adults who have been incarcerated and youth who are involved in the justice system, I realized that this is where my career aspirations lie.



As someone who never really felt a strong tie to my community growing up and seeing first hand some of the disconnect between youth and their communities, I wanted to be part of that change and show people of all ages there is something more in their communities, for everyone. It was through my role as the Coordinator of Programs and Events at the Brock Youth Centre that I am able to take on this role to better engage youth in our communities, something I wish was more available to me when I was growing up."

Learn more about Allison's project

- **Brock Youth Centre**

This project will give youth the opportunity to have a voice in their community on topics that matter to them. By creating a team of youth ambassadors, they will be able to work collectively to propose ideas and solutions around these community topics to their municipal government. They will have the chance to understand what their local councils can and cannot do within the community, use their voices to show their presence

and contributions to their communities through a civic engagement, and know that their ideas matter.

Kaeghan

Kaeghan is working with South Dundas to build civic engagement & leadership among youth, & to increase South Dundas' capacity for future youth engagement.

"Being from a small town within the Municipality of South Dundas, I've always felt that the impact that I could have to make positive changes in the community was endless. Which is why I decided to apply for this opportunity! I know youth in the community have concerns that need to be addressed, and I would love to help them come to light, as well as strategize ways to get youth more involved within the community! I hope to be able to apply all my experiences within this internship through my undergraduate studies at the University of Guelph, as well as further my career in becoming a teacher."



Learn more about Kaeghan's project

- **South Dundas**

The South Dundas Youth Engagement Intern will engage with youth (ages 15-29 years) in our community to build civic engagement and leadership among youth, and to increase South Dundas' capacity for future youth engagement; to produce a report detailing the youth engagement strategies that could be implemented by the Municipality of South Dundas with reflections on lessons learned and promising practices; to tell 3 to 5 stories of youth doing amazing things in our Community and to provide the intern candidate with exposure to operations and decision-making processes in the Municipality of South Dundas.