

# 2024 – 17th Annual Child Witness Centre Youth Symposium for Grade 8 Students in Waterloo Region, Guelph, and Wellington County



**Tuesday, April 16, 9:30 am - 1:50 pm –**

Galaxy Cinemas, 485 Woodlawn Road West, Guelph

**Wednesday, April 17 & Thursday, April 18, 9:30 am - 1:50 pm –**

Galaxy Cinemas, 550 King Street North, Waterloo

## GENERAL INFORMATION

- Open to Grade 8 students and their teachers, in public, Catholic and independent schools in Waterloo Region, Guelph and Wellington County. We will welcome over 4,000 students in total over the three days.
- The program is strategically scheduled in April, reaching students as they prepare for high school.
- Registration fee is \$15 per student, teacher, and parent supervisor.
- Each class remains together throughout the Symposium and is supervised in the theatre by their teacher.
- Students and teachers will participate in three presentations throughout the day as well as learn more about the services provided by Child Witness Centre. Students will learn how we can walk with and support them on their journey through the criminal justice process if they are ever a victim or witness of abuse or crime.

## GOALS OF THE YOUTH SYMPOSIUM

- Share with students information that is relevant and supports their mental health and wellbeing (i.e.: social, physical, and emotional).
- Educate students on tools and strategies that will help them develop resiliency and empower them towards strong futures.
- Support youth by equipping them with the skills and confidence needed to embrace life's opportunities and challenges.
- Challenge students to make a difference in the world.
- Utilize different presentation approaches to address a variety of learning styles.
- Support the teachers in their work with their students.

## PRESENTATION DESCRIPTIONS

1. **Stu Saunders – Take the Risk – Be STUpendous!** A hilarious and inspirational look at the challenges that young people face on a daily basis, with real tools which students can use to make the right choices. Stu Saunders is one of Canada's most experienced youth speakers. <https://peregrineleadership.ca/>
2. **Mandy Bujold – Overcoming Obstacles:** Canadian Olympic Boxer and 11X Canadian Champion Mandy Bujold talks about the mental toughness it takes to overcome obstacles on her road to excellence. She also shares some simple tricks to help you become a champion at setting goals for your future. <https://mandybujold.com/>
3. **Scott Hammell – Resilience:** Sometimes our worst experiences can end up making us stronger. Scott sees opportunity in adversity and offers strategies to control perspective. We can't control adversity, but we can control our perspective. Like most things in life, the more we practice resilience, the more naturally it comes. Scott's passion-based approach to resilience offers a clear starting point as well as room to build solid foundations so that later work feels effortless. <https://youthspeakers.ca/speaker/scott-hammell/>
4. **Rick Osborne – A journey through Addiction, Crime and Prison:** Rick Osborne connects with students about his life as a former gang member and his 23 years in the prison system. Rarely does someone survive Rick's past with both the ability and motivation to make a difference in so many young lives. <https://www.facebook.com/truth4teens/>

5. **Andy Thibodeau – Get your Hand UP!**: Bring back your Grade 2 attitude of “PICK ME, PICK ME”!; School is about balancing learning and having fun; Get Your Hand Up to: Answer Questions; Ask Questions; Volunteer; In Grade 2 you did not look around at others for their approval to “Get Your Hand UP!” You just did it! Bring that back! Be an example of Positive Peer Pressure for others to follow.

On the first day of high school, Andy was 6 foot and 115 pounds. His #1 enemy ... the wind! Andy tried out for the Junior football team and on the second day of school he experienced the failure of being cut. This hilarious and inspiring program encourages students to have an attitude of “Pick Me, Pick Me”! Fight the fear of failure and be the student that “Gets Your Hand UP” to answer questions, ask questions, and volunteer.

School is about balancing learning and having fun! Work ethic, School Spirit, Self-Confidence, Resiliency, and Volunteerism are the key themes of this presentation. <http://www.andypresentations.com/>

6. **Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Treatment Centre – Healthy Dating Relationships**: Youth are bombarded with media images and the social pressure to be in dating relationships – from “hanging out” to “hooking up”. This session will provide youth with an understanding of what makes for healthy, respectful dating relationships. Students will take away some skills for recognizing both qualities to look for and what qualities to watch out for. <https://www.smgh.ca/areas-of-care/sexual-assault-domestic-violence>
7. **Chris Gray – The Power of Perseverance**: In this presentation, Chris focuses on the power of persevering through hardship. He tells stories of his childhood, which was riddled with alcohol abuse and psychological disorders. Despite these hardships, Chris dared to dream big. Viewers take away the realization that their circumstances don’t have to dictate their actions. We all have the power to persevere if we put enough passion and drive into achieving our dreams. <https://youthspeakers.ca/speaker/chris-gray/>
8. **Jeff A.D. Martin – Diversity and Inclusion**: Many people do not recognize that although we are all different in gender, skin complexion, religion etc., as human beings, the only difference between any one of us, on a microscopic level is 0.01%. This means we are more alike than not. The sad part is people are being bullied, discriminated against, and even killed over the difference of 0.01%. Jeff focuses in on the power of inclusion and embracing diversity. <https://youthspeakers.ca/speaker/jeff-a-d-martin/>
9. **Debb Bodkin – Global Citizenship and the Experience that Moved Me to Action!** Debb was a Sergeant with Waterloo Regional Police for 24 years. She loved her career here in Canada, but she also found ways to use her police training to do more in other parts of the world. Debb worked overseas in war torn countries including Kosovo, Sudan, Rwanda, and Bangladesh. She will speak about her experiences and the incredible people she met, with the goal of motivating students to do what they can to make the world a better place. <https://www.debbiebodkin.com/>

## THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS!

Please join us in thanking our current sponsors whose support makes this unique program possible:

- ✓ [Cambridge Highlands Lions Club](#)
- ✓ [Canadian Youth Speakers Bureau](#) (CYSB)
- ✓ Private donor through [Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Treatment Centre of Waterloo Region, St. Mary’s General Hospital](#)
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