

First time back since 2019!

# 2024 YOUTH SYMPOSIUM

17<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL EDITION

Adolescence can be an **exciting but challenging time** for many young people. Youth Symposium is a **meaningful program** that equips youth with **confidence, inspiration, and empowerment to thrive** – both now and well into the future!

Child  
Witness  
Centre



## ★ DAY 1 ★

**TUESDAY, APRIL 16**

**9:50 am - 1:30 pm**

Galaxy Cinemas  
485 Woodlawn Road West  
Guelph

## ★ DAY 2 ★

**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 17**

**9:50 am - 1:30 pm**

Galaxy Cinemas  
550 King Street North  
Waterloo

## ★ DAY 3 ★

**THURSDAY, APRIL 18**

**9:50 am - 1:30 pm**

Galaxy Cinemas  
550 King Street North  
Waterloo

## General Information

- ★ This program is 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.
- ★ 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 event 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 (CWC).
- ★ Students will learn how CWC can walk with and support them on their journey through the criminal justice system if they are ever a victim or witness of abuse or crime.

## Program Objectives

- ✓ Provide grade 8 students with current and relevant information that supports their mental health and overall wellbeing (i.e.: social, physical, and emotional).
- ✓ Provide youth with tools and strategies to develop resiliency, and empower them towards strong futures.
- ✓ Equip students with skills and confidence to better embrace life's opportunities and overcome challenges.
- ✓ Challenge youth to dream big and make a positive difference in the world.
- ✓ Utilize a variety of presentation approaches to suit various learning styles.
- ✓ Support teachers in their important work with their students.

## Presentations

### 1) DEBB BODKIN

#### Global Citizenship and the Experience that Moved Me to Action!

Debb was a Sergeant with Waterloo Regional Police Service for 24 years. She loved her career here in Canada, but also found ways to use her police training 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 motivate students to do what they can to make the world a better place.

[www.debbiebodkin.com](http://www.debbiebodkin.com)

### 2) MANDY BUJOLD

#### Overcoming Obstacles

Canadian Olympic Boxer and 11x Canadian Champion Mandy Bujold talks about the mental toughness it took 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.

[www.mandybujold.com](http://www.mandybujold.com)

### 3) FAMILY VIOLENCE PROJECT OF WATERLOO REGION

#### 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 a better understanding of what makes for healthy and respectful dating relationships. Students will take away key insights for recognizing what qualities to look for, and what to watch out for.

[www.familyviolenceprojectwr.ca](http://www.familyviolenceprojectwr.ca)

***“Very inspirational. One of the stories that was shared made me believe I can achieve anything.” – Student***



#### 4) 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 boldly 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.

[www.youthspeakers.ca/speaker/chris-gray](http://www.youthspeakers.ca/speaker/chris-gray)

#### 5) JEFF A.D. MARTIN

##### **Diversity and Inclusion**

Many people do not recognize that the only difference between any one of us, as human beings on a microscopic level, is 0.01%. This is despite our various differences in gender, skin complexion, religion, etc. 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 on the power of inclusion and diversity.

[www.youthspeakers.ca/speaker/jeff-a-d-martin](http://www.youthspeakers.ca/speaker/jeff-a-d-martin)

#### 6) MIND BENDER

##### **How My Mind Got Bent!**

At eight years of age, it became clear that Jordan Murciano had a learning disability. Once Jordan discovered magic, and was transferred to a new school that catered to students with learning disabilities, it became clear that Jordan wasn't alone and could still live a fulfilling life and even run his own business. This presentation features some of Mind Bender's favourite pieces of interactive magic, his personal story, and the universal techniques he discovered for feeling accepted and working through difficult problems.

[www.mindbendermagic.com](http://www.mindbendermagic.com)

#### 7) 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 a past like Rick has, and move forward with the ability and motivation to make a difference in so many young lives.

[www.facebook.com/truth4teens](http://www.facebook.com/truth4teens)

#### 8) 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.

[www.peregrineleadership.ca](http://www.peregrineleadership.ca)

#### 9) ANDY THIBODEAU

##### **Get Your Hand Up!**

On the first day of high school, Andy was six feet tall and 115 pounds. His #1 enemy... the wind! He tried out for the junior football team and on the second day of school 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 who 'Gets Their Hand Up' to answer questions, ask questions, and volunteer. Work ethic, self-confidence, school spirit, resiliency, and volunteerism are the key themes of this presentation.

[www.andypresentations.com](http://www.andypresentations.com)

*"These opportunities are **difference makers** for kids. The learnings **cannot** be found in a textbook." – Teacher*

## Immense Gratitude

We're so glad that you're part of our **2024 Youth Symposium!** Please join us in thanking our sponsors for making this program possible and affordable for so many local youth.



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*"I liked how **all the presenters** had a story, but they told it in different ways, and related their stories to us, in order to **teach us something.**" – Student*

## About Child Witness Centre

Did you know **27%** of Canadians report experiencing physical or sexual abuse before the age of 15? At Child Witness Centre, we believe every hurt and harmed young person should be helped through the criminal justice system. That is why we walk with child and youth victims, and their families, from the time of investigation, through to a court resolution. We offer a safe landing place, listening ear, and education. We also provide testimonial support and attend court with them.

Last year alone, we supported **1,261** young survivors of abuse and crime in Waterloo Region, Guelph, and Wellington County. Their trauma was reduced, and futures became brighter. Unfortunately, we were forced to add **201** young people to a waitlist for the first time since we began in 1981. This was due to high demand and strained resources. Through our "Child Victims Can't Wait" campaign, we are determined to wipe out our waitlist. Visit our website to learn more.



Charitable registration # 10097 7180 RR0001

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Our Website

