

YOUTH ARE 100% OUR FUTURE!

2025 YOUTH SYMPOSIUM

18TH 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 15
10:00 am – 1:30 pm

Galaxy Cinemas
485 Woodlawn Road West
Guelph

★ DAY 2 ★

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 16
10:00 am – 1:30 pm

Galaxy Cinemas
550 King Street North
Waterloo

★ DAY 3 ★

THURSDAY, APRIL 17
10:00 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 welcome over 3,500 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 program 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 students.

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

Presentations

① 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 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.

www.debbiebodkin.com

② KAITLYN CLARK

Punching Through Obstacles – Resiliency and Goal Setting

2x Canadian Champion and Team Canada Boxer Kaitlyn Clark shares how to embrace resiliency and set powerful goals to navigate life's challenges. Drawing from her personal journey of overcoming obstacles, Kaitlyn shares how resiliency and a clear vision have been key to her success. She discusses the importance of setting realistic, meaningful goals, staying determined through setbacks, and developing mental toughness to persevere when things get tough. Kaitlyn's story highlights that while life is full of challenges, anyone can achieve their dreams with the right mindset and the ability to bounce back.

www.instagram.com/kcboxing_

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 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.

www.familyviolenceprojectwr.ca

4 ANDREW GIORDANO

From Flailing to Flourishing

Andrew's story of allowing the joy of celebration to carry him through an anxiety disorder to become a world record setting circus artist, and lift up those around him in the process, is transformational – especially for those who also struggle with internal difficulties. With his amazing acrobatic skills, Andrew carefully crafts awe-inspiring experiences, to teach us all that through our struggles is the path to our most fulfilling existence.

www.theanxiousacrobat.com

5 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.

www.youthspeakers.ca/speaker/chris-gray

6 SCOTT HAMMELL

The Stuntman's Guide to Staying Calm

Scott Hammell has built a career out of staying calm under extreme pressure—whether performing daring stunts in the air, on land, or underwater. With over 20 years as a hypnotist, he shares simple yet powerful techniques for managing stress. Through immersive storytelling, Scott takes audiences inside his mind during high-risk stunts, breaking down the methods he uses to stay focused. He also reveals how anyone can develop a “superpower” to improve sleep, memory, and focus through his free relaxation podcast.

www.youthspeakers.ca/speaker/scott-hammell

7 JEFF A.D. MARTIN

I Am Worth It, I Am Enough

Some studies show that 1 in 5 students suffer from depression and/or anxiety. One of Jeff's favourite presentation topics is about finding your self-worth and believing in who you are. Jeff helps to combat depression and anxiety by teaching on the positive effects of self affirmations.

www.youthspeakers.ca/speaker/jeff-a-d-martin

8 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, Jordan began to realize he 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

9 RICK OSBORNE

A Journey through Addiction, Crime and Prison

Rick Osborne's life story is marked by overcoming intense adversity. After experiencing bullying and victimization by heroin addicts, he spiralled into drug addiction, street gang involvement, and crime. This led to Rick joining an outlaw motorcycle club and receiving a 25-year prison sentence. Despite these challenges, he completed an apprenticeship and overcame his heroin addiction. Rick went on to earn a BA in Psychology and an Addiction Care Worker diploma. Since his release, he has dedicated his life to mentoring youth. Rick runs a mentorship program called “Ozzy's Garage” in Port Colborne and has extended its reach to other communities.

www.facebook.com/truth4teens

10 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 adopt an attitude of “Pick Me, Pick Me!” Fight the fear of failure and be the student who ‘Gets Their Hand Up’ to ask and answer questions, and volunteer. Work ethic, self-confidence, school spirit, resiliency, and volunteerism are the focal points of this presentation.

www.andypresentations.com

Our Immense Gratitude for Everyone Who Make It Happen

We are so glad that you're part of our **2025 Youth Symposium** – which is the 18th annual edition of this big multi-day event!

*Please join us in thanking our wonderful **sponsors and volunteers** for making this truly unique program possible and affordable for so many local youth.*

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*"I realized that **every decision** I make, **every step** I take, I should reflect on **my actions** whether they be good or bad." – Student*

About Child Witness Centre

Did you know **27%** of Canadians report experiencing physical or sexual abuse before the age of 15? Child Witness Centre provides trauma-informed support, education, and advocacy for children and youth who are victims or witnesses of abuse or crime. Our support ranges from three months to three years, depending on the severity of the case and its progression through the criminal justice system.

Last year alone, we supported **1,088** young victims, and their families in Waterloo Region, Guelph, and Wellington County. We ensure that young victims are informed, supported, and actively involved in the criminal justice process, helping to reduce the risk of re-victimization and break generational cycles of trauma. Through targeted prevention and long-term mental health support, we empower these young survivors to heal and thrive, fostering their overall wellbeing and resilience. Visit our website (childwitness.com) to learn more.



Charitable registration # 10097 7180 RR001

111 Duke Street East, Kitchener, ON N2H 1A4
Tel: 519-744-0904 | Toll-free: 1-888-544-0904
Fax: 519-744-5379 | admin@childwitness.com

childwitness.com     

Our Website

