



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## New program launches to help South Simcoe youth access community services

South Simcoe teens and young adults have a new program designed to help them connect with the local services they need to move their lives forward successfully. The free service offers a live answer by an experienced Community Service Navigator, who will assist youth in creating and implementing a plan to support their goals and address their current needs.

YouthCALL Service Link (YouthCALL), launched week, is the joint effort of six local charities who collaborated to fill a service gap in Alliston and Bradford. Youth aged 14-28 are invited to call or text YouthCALL’s dedicated helpline 705-790-2338 on Tuesdays (11:30 a.m. – 6:30 p.m.) or Thursdays (9:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.).

“Young people in this age range are widely underserved and can get lost in a system that can feel overwhelming,” said Michelle Bergin, Executive Director of Catholic Family Services of Simcoe County (CFSSC), which is the program’s lead agency. “The pandemic has made easier access to local services more important than ever before.”

In addition to CFSSC, the founding program partners include Canadian Mental Health Association – York and South Simcoe, CONTACT Community Services, Gilbert Centre, New Path and Youth Haven. YouthCALL was made possible through multi-year funding from United Way Simcoe Muskoka (UWSM).

“Transitional-age youth are invisible victims of poverty,” said UWSM CEO Dale Biddell. “This vulnerable demographic is often overlooked by existing services, which causes potentially life-long consequences. United Way Simcoe Muskoka is happy to help fund YouthCALL to fill this gap. Together we can meet the needs of local youth and remove some of the barriers that block their path to a life of opportunity.”

The program will assist South Simcoe youth in accessing a broad range of services ranging from primary medical care, addiction services and mental health counselling, to housing, finances and legal support, to employment and opportunities for social engagement. Support for the program has already expanded beyond the charitable sector to the region’s school boards, police services and municipalities.

“The organizations involved with YouthCALL have a long history of collaborating on community-based programs to benefit local residents,” Bergin added. “We appreciate the dedication of our colleagues across sectors who contributed to the program’s development and will expand its future. I’d like to send a big shout-out to United Way especially, since we wouldn’t be launching the program without the support of its Community Fund.”

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### Program Partners



### Funded in part by



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