



## MEDIA ADVISORY

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**Head Office: 20 Anne St. South, Barrie, ON, L4N 2C6**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Youth-led public skate champions mental health**

An inclusive community skating event is being held from 2-5pm on Sunday, March 24 to support youth mental health, thanks to the youth lead at CFS Counselling + Wellbeing (CFS), and a Youth United grant from United Way Simcoe County (UWSM).

“We’re inviting the entire community to come out to the Peggy Hill Team Community Centre and have some last-chance winter fun while supporting local youth mental health,” said Ayla McCallum, the youth lead on staff at CFS. “Instead of an entrance fee to the event, we’re asking for donations to help stock our YouthCALL outreach van.”

YouthCALL, established in 2020 by CFS and operating in collaboration with many organizations across the county, is the front door to mental health and wellbeing services for local youth 12-25 years of age across Simcoe County.

“The pandemic intensified the already escalating mental health challenges we were seeing among young people,” according to CFS Program Manager Amanda Fellows. “YouthCALL uses an evidence-based, youth-centred approach with an emphasis on holistic wellbeing. That means we meet youth where they are and understand that conversations about mental health are easier when their basic needs are being met. The distribution of clothes, food and hygiene items are not only necessities many youth are living without, but they also allow for the vital sharing of information.”

In her role at CFS, McCallum co-chairs YouthCALL’s volunteer youth advisory council, which supports the development and direction of the program’s low-barrier, inclusive programming. With the support of her colleagues and council members, she applied for a Youth United grant to fund the event and was successful in her bid to bring this event to Barrie. The UWSM funding stream is designed to empower youth to make a difference.

“Physical activity, social time with friends and family, and just having fun are known ways to lower stress and build resilience,” McCallum added. “I thought this was a great way to serve local youth and the entire community.”

Non-skaters can also drop off donation items at the event. Donations may also be dropped off before or after the event at CFS’s Barrie office at 20 Anne Street South.

For more information about the event, including donation suggestions, visit <https://www.youthcall.ca>.

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