



For Immediate Release  
July 5, 2019

### **Dryden summer Youth Centre to open its doors**

Youth ages 11-16 in Dryden will have a summer Youth Centre, thanks in large part to the Dryden and Area Community Well-Being Committee and its stakeholders. The Dryden Youth Centre (DYC) aims to provide a dedicated space for youth to be, that fosters opportunities for positive engagement, mentorship and community connectedness. The DYC will be located on the upstairs level of the Dryden Children's Resource Centre on Albert Street.

The Dryden and Area Community Well-Being Plan has four pillars, one being a Youth Pillar comprised of multiple stakeholders that support positive youth engagement and development ideas and opportunities. The need for proactive supports for youth in Dryden was identified as a vital priority. The DYC's location has been offered in-kind by the Kenora District Services Board (KDSB). Additionally, the KDSB was able to allocate funding to support the hire of a full-time Youth Centre Facilitator to oversee the program, which runs Tuesdays through Saturdays, 1:00 pm – 9:30 pm and closed 3:30 pm – 4:30 pm.

"The Youth Centre will allow young people to drop-in and participate in a variety of free, supervised activities. Activities taking place this summer will be driven by youth input to ensure that participants gain a sense of ownership and belonging to the centre," says Denise Szachury, Community Services Officer of the Dryden Police Service. She notes, "An extensive youth survey was conducted, which resulted in 281 responses. The survey showed that youth want a safe environment where they can participate in activities."

The DYC will provide a barrier-free experience and fills a gap in youth support services following the closure of the Dryden Youth Centre in 2013. "A Youth Centre is a worthwhile endeavor for youth in our community to feel empowered, valued and at the forefront in determining meaningful activities for themselves. In partnership with the youth, we hope to create something that is inclusive and meaningful to all." says Catherine Kiewning, Youth Engagement Coordinator of the Northwestern Health Unit.

The DYC will be overseen by a dedicated Youth Centre Facilitator, Megan Silander. "I am excited to work with the youth and gain a perspective on what types of activities and events they would like to take part in. I hope that through the summer Youth Centre the youth feel that they have a safe space and have the opportunity to build stronger relationships and networks with their peers." says Silander.

The DYC will be hosting a soft opening on Friday, July 5, 2019, at 1:00 pm at the Dryden Children's Resources Centre, 113 Albert Street. Youth ages 11-16 are encouraged to attend. The DYC grand opening will be held on Friday, July 12<sup>th</sup> with a youth dance beginning at 7:00 pm. The DYC will operate from Friday, July 5, 2019, through to August 24, 2019. You can find the DYC on Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat by searching 'Dryden Youth Centre' to learn more about its day-to-day activities and events.

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