



## **Ontario Government's OTF Grant Supports Expansion of Campfire Circle's Programs for Kids with Serious Illness**

**Rosseau, ON, July 14, 2024** – On Sunday, MPP Graydon Smith and a member of the Ontario Trillium Foundation's (OTF) Board of Directors, Andy Blenkarn, announced a grant to Campfire Circle, which provides play-based programs for kids with cancer or serious illness and their families through in-hospital, community and overnight camp programs. It was a chance for MPP Smith and Mr. Blenkarn to learn more about how work is proceeding with a two-year, \$200,000 Resilient Communities Fund grant that was awarded in the spring of 2023. The OTF grant has enabled Campfire Circle to further expand its programs to serve more kids with life-impacting illnesses, at no cost to families.

"I am so proud of the work Campfire Circle is doing to help enrich the lives of young people who are dealing with serious conditions," said Graydon Smith, MPP for Parry Sound-Muskoka. "Parry Sound and Muskoka is a place for kids and families to enjoy summer, so it is important for places like Campfire Circle to exist so that all kids and families get that opportunity. I'm thankful that the government has recognized the importance of Campfire Circle and is helping it expand its services even further through the Ontario Trillium Foundation."

Thanks to the grant, Campfire Circle is able to provide a medical camp session at its Muskoka site for children from the Toronto area with serious blood disorders this summer, in partnership with Camp Jumoke, and provide a medically supported weekend program for complex care campers this fall.

The grant is helping the group deliver these camp experiences for children and youth by helping with some staffing and administrative costs, program and camp supplies, as well as workshops and assistance from a consultant to do a feasibility study regarding needs and service gaps.

"We are thrilled to receive this grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation, which is helping to fund new pilot programs so that we can expand our programming to serve more children with serious illness," says Alex Robertson, CEO of Campfire Circle. "These communities are currently underserved but face the same long-term health consequences as children with oncology diagnoses. With this funding, we will be able to provide equitable access, reaching more kids and families in Toronto and across Ontario."

"Whether it's helping people learn new things, connect with their community, or simply have fun, organizations like Campfire Circle deliver experiences that make a difference," said Stan Cho, Minister of Tourism, Culture and Gaming. "That's why grant support through the Ontario Trillium Foundation is so important. This funding will help ensure that it remains at the heart of the community for decades to come."

The Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF) is an agency of the Ontario government with a mission to build healthy and vibrant communities across the province. Last year, OTF invested more than \$110M into 1,044 community projects and multi-sector partnerships. Projects aim to enhance economic well-being, foster more active lifestyles, support child and youth development, provide spaces for people to come together and connect, and create a more sustainable environment. Visit [otf.ca](http://otf.ca) to learn more.

For photos from the day's event, click here: <https://campfirecircle.canto.com/b/NKK3J>. Please contact us directly for captions, further information, or more photography.

### **About Campfire Circle**

Since 1983, Campfire Circle has provided healing through happiness by providing camp-inspired programs to kids affected by childhood cancer or serious illness and their families. Programs are delivered in hospitals across Ontario, at community events and at overnight camps. At no cost to families, these programs help improve overall well-being, build self-confidence and resiliency, and provide much-needed connection with others who share a similar journey. For more information, visit: [www.campfirecircle.org](http://www.campfirecircle.org). Follow @campfirecircleorg on Instagram, Facebook, YouTube and LinkedIn, and @campfirecircle\_ on Twitter.

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