



February 22, 2016

**MLSE FOUNDATION AWARDS \$50,000 TORONTO MAPLE LEAFS COMMUNITY ACTION GRANT  
PRESENTED BY JUST ENERGY FOUNDATION TO BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS OF HAMILTON**

On Monday evening, MLSE Foundation announced Boys & Girls Clubs of Hamilton as this year's recipient of the *Toronto Maple Leafs Community Action Grant presented by the Just Energy Foundation* at Eastwood Arena in Hamilton. Children and youth from the organization's *Skate the Dream* program were present to celebrate the announcement and participated in sport development programming with Toronto Maple Leafs hockey development clinicians following the cheque presentation.

"We are incredibly excited to announce Boys & Girls Clubs of Hamilton as the second winner of the *Toronto Maple Leafs Community Action Grant presented by the Just Energy Foundation*. Their *Skate the Dream* program is making a positive impact on youth in Hamilton by providing hockey programming," said Michael Bartlett, Executive Director, MLSE Foundation. "With this grant, we are looking forward to growing the program and involving more families in the Greater Hamilton Area."

Boys & Girls Clubs of Hamilton will receive the \$50,000 grant to help fund its *Skate the Dream* program; a nine-week, introductory hockey program designed for children who have little to no experience playing the sport. Introduced in 2012, *Skate the Dream* is open to youth between the ages of six and 10 and teaches the basics of skating through drills and games followed by basic hockey skills, positively impacting the lives of over 200 children and youth. The program is open to any family in Hamilton who otherwise could not afford to play hockey, and operates at a cost of \$10 per participant, which includes a full set of equipment.

"For many young people in Hamilton, hockey is just something they see on TV and that other children play. Our vision for *Skate the Dream* is to address the barriers to participation by offering the program in underserved neighbourhoods, providing the equipment, and focusing on physical literacy and the fundamental skills children need to play to hockey," said Glenn Harkness, Executive Director, Boys and Girls Clubs of Hamilton. "Whether it is watching new Canadian children step into an arena for the first time in their life and teaching them to skate or seeing one of our young participants move on to competitive hockey thanks to the progress they have made, the impact of this approach is tangible to our volunteers every day. And this significant investment by the MLSE Foundation is going to help make *Skate the Dream* a reality for so many more young people in Hamilton."

*The Toronto Maple Leafs, Toronto Raptors and Toronto FC Community Action Grants* are three \$50,000 sport-specific grants presented by the Just Energy Foundation that MLSE Foundation will award to charitable organizations supporting youth sports programming each year. In addition to team-related grants, MLSE Foundation will award a \$50,000 grant that is not sport-specific to a selected charitable organization. Eligible organizations can apply for all grants at [mlsefoundation.org](http://mlsefoundation.org), where submissions are reviewed by a selection committee before a winner is chosen and announced at a special event in their community.

“We are extremely pleased once again to partner with MLSE Foundation to award this latest Community Action Grant to the Boys & Girls Clubs of Hamilton’s *Skate the Dream* program” says Deb Merrill, Just Energy’s co-Chief Executive Officer. “The Grant was developed to bring sports within reach to more youngsters who dream of participating but lack the resources. When we facilitate access to play, we’re helping to build stronger, more inclusive and supportive communities where youth gain unique and exciting experiences to learn and thrive.”

### **About Boys & Girls Clubs of Hamilton**

For more than 60 years, Boys and Girls Clubs of Hamilton have been at the forefront of empowering and encouraging children and youth to live healthy lives. Over 4,000 children and youth living in Hamilton, and more than 200,000 across Canada, count on Boys and Girls Clubs for guidance and support. By providing young people with access to structured, enriching recreational and social programs outside of school, their peer relationships, emotional health and academic performance can flourish. Boys and Girls Club programs are relevant, affordable and accessible to all children and youth. The Clubs take a preventative approach to tackling a broad range of critical issues facing young people today including: fitness, education, nutrition, safety, youth employment, violence, sexuality, homelessness and substance abuse. To learn more, visit [www.kboysandgirlsclub.com](http://www.kboysandgirlsclub.com).

### **About MLSE Foundation**

MLSE Foundation believes all kids should have access to sport and the opportunity to develop lasting dreams on the playing field. With the support of MLSE’s teams, the Foundation funds the refurbishment of local athletic facilities and programs that support kids through sports and recreation. Since launching in December 2009, the MLSE Foundation has invested more than \$19 million into our community. For more information visit [mlsefoundation.org](http://mlsefoundation.org), or follow @MLSEFoundation

### **About Just Energy Foundation**

The Just Energy Foundation was established in 2013 by Just Energy Group Inc. to help registered Canadian and U.S. charitable organizations secure the resources required to promote the health and well-being of communities in need. Funded entirely by Just Energy, the Foundation invests in local programs that work to enhance the quality of life in Just Energy’s operating markets towards building stronger and supportive communities. Visit [justenergyfoundation.com](http://justenergyfoundation.com) to learn more.

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### **Media contacts:**

Melissa Perri, MLSE, 416-815-5524, [melissa.perri@mlse.com](mailto:melissa.perri@mlse.com)

Nancy Donnaperna, Just Energy Foundation, 905-670-4440, [ndonnaperna@justenergy.com](mailto:ndonnaperna@justenergy.com)

Glenn Harkness, Boys and Girls Clubs of Hamilton, 905-549-2814 ext.226, [glenn@kboysandgirlsclub.com](mailto:glenn@kboysandgirlsclub.com)