



Media Release

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For Immediate Release

York Region launches book on building character communities, emphasizing need for ethics in Canadian politics, business

Hockey legend Wendel Clark, peacekeeper Romeo Dallaire say youth play key role

NEWMARKET – Based on its success as the first municipality in Canada to introduce character living to its communities, York Region is launching a self-published book entitled *Building Character: A Community's Success Story*.

This easy-to-read resource was written by the community for the community and is told from the unique perspective of 12 authors who chronicle the steps York Region took to become a "community of character".

Each of the authors had an integral role in the evolution of York Region's character initiative and shares his/her expertise in this "how to" guide which seeks to encourage school communities, families and business organizations across Canada to start their own Character Community movement.

Markham Mayor Donald Cousens, who has been involved in the initiative since its inception in 2002, acknowledges the importance of fostering Character Communities everywhere.

"York Region has a story to tell about the tremendous inroads we made, over the span of four years, in bringing character to the forefront of daily living," says Mayor Cousens. "I'm thrilled this book has the potential to provide others with a blueprint for improving their communities."

York Regional Council is a strong advocate of the Character Community initiative and York Regional Chair and CEO Chair Bill Fisch adds that the book provides practical solutions for promoting respectful behaviour in the classroom, harmony at home and cooperation at work.

"I believe our values must be instinctive, learned at an early age, demonstrated by our mentors and practised in every area of our lives," says Fisch. "If this book can make a difference in one person's life or in one school or organization, then we've accomplished something very worthwhile."

Teachers, parents and business leaders are the primary target audience for this book with the majority of each chapter providing compelling examples of character in action, specific to these groups.

Notable contributors also include former Toronto Maple Leafs captain, Wendel Clark, author of the preface and a member on York Region's Character Community Advisory Board, who kicks off the book's overall tone with his message about character and sportsmanship, and Lt. Gen Roméo Dallaire (Ret.), who suggests that a country's legacy is dependent on the character development of its youth.

To date, there are more than 150 cities of character in the U.S. and more than 25 cities of character worldwide spanning Australia, Mexico, Romania, Peru, the Philippines and Guatemala. York Region is Canada's first character municipality.

Building Character can be found in most Chapters and Indigo stores across Canada for \$12.95.

An official book launch will take place Friday, October 14, 11 a.m. at Indigo Bookstore, 8705 Yonge Street, Richmond Hill, Ontario (located on the east side of Yonge Street, north of Hwy 7). Wendel Clark is scheduled to sign copies at the launch. More details will follow closer to the event.

For more information on York Region's Character Community initiative, including our mission statement, philosophy and the 11 essential attributes of Character Community, please visit: www.charactercommunity.com

*Please note that a limited quantity of books is available for media review.

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