

## MEDIA RELEASE

June 14, 2021

### LAY-UP RECEIVES ONTARIO TRILLIUM FOUNDATION RESILIENT COMMUNITIES GRANT

**TORONTO, ON** – In April, Lay-Up Youth Basketball learned that it has received a \$73,100 Resilient Communities Fund grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF) to help it recover and rebound from the impacts of COVID-19. Funds will be used to help develop new, sustainable fundraising strategies, design virtual and contactless after-school basketball programs and buy needed program and personal protective equipment.

“Now more than ever children and youth need access to the engaging after-school activities. Lay-Up has done an incredible job of adapting to our current reality,” said Suze Morrison, MPP for Toronto Centre. “It is wonderful to hear about the impact this funding has had to help sustain Lay-Up’s work empowering children and youth in our community and supporting their physical, mental and emotional wellbeing during this challenging time.”

Drawing on research from organizations that include the World Health Organization, ParticipACTION and the Jumpstart Foundation, Lay-Up has taken an evidence-based and research-driven approach to its response to COVID-19. Continuing to provide cost-free, city-wide, year-round basketball throughout the pandemic has required a high-level of creativity and flexibility.

“Meaningful outreach and community engagement during COVID-19 means overcoming barriers that became even more challenging,” said Marion Mendoza, Community and Outreach Manager. “And our plan for this grant makes keeping the Lay-Up community connected our top priority.”

“This Resilient Communities Fund grant plays a major role in allowing us to provide what we see as an essential service in an environment where access to physical activity has been limited for children and youth and where cost-free sports organizations are struggling to provide the necessary physical activity,” said Chris Penrose, Director of Programs and Operations.

“The curriculum development, additional equipment for our contactless basketball and the creation of a new version of our virtual basketball program will allow us to continue to adapt to the changing needs of our community” explained Dan Hula, Executive Director.

Navigating the impacts of COVID-19 has been a challenge for communities facing barriers across Toronto, and this grant provides Lay-Up the opportunity to continue its contribution to this important work.

**Lay-Up** is a community-based basketball program designed for children and youth (6-14) of all skill levels, delivered year-round in Toronto’s Neighbourhood Improvements Areas. They provide evidence-based programming, delivered by certified coaches and designed for players of all skills levels to have fun and develop their skills. For more information visit [layup.ca](http://layup.ca) or support [here](#).

The Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF) is an agency of the Government of Ontario and one of Canada’s leading granting foundations. OTF awarded \$115 million to 644 projects last year to build healthy and vibrant communities in Ontario. [www.otf.ca](http://www.otf.ca)

- 30 -

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