



March 30, 2015

**MLSE FOUNDATION AWARDS FIRST \$50,000 TORONTO MAPLE LEAFS COMMUNITY ACTION GRANT
PRESENTED BY JUST ENERGY FOUNDATION TO CHRISTIE OSSINGTON NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE**

On Monday afternoon, MLSE Foundation announced Christie Ossington Neighbourhood Centre as the first recipient of the *Toronto Maple Leafs Community Action Grant presented by the Just Energy Foundation* at St. Raymond School in Toronto. Youth from the Centre's *Nook Children's* program were present to celebrate the announcement that a new hockey program will be launched in their community and were invited to participate in ball hockey and combine skill testing with Toronto Maple Leafs hockey development coaches after the cheque presentation.

"We're extremely proud to announce Christie Ossington Neighbourhood Centre as the very first winner of the \$50,000 *Toronto Maple Leafs Community Action Grant presented by the Just Energy Foundation*. Their *Nook Children's* program helps to empower many at-risk youth in Toronto by getting them involved in the community, which speaks closely to the MLSE Foundation's investment in sport for development," said Michael Bartlett, Executive Director, MLSE Foundation. "We can't wait to see their hockey program come to life and improve kids' lives through the sport of hockey."

Christie Ossington Neighbourhood Centre will receive the \$50,000 grant to help fund the launch of its *We Nook, We Shoot, We Score* initiative; a free, weekly, after-school sport for development program focused on building participants' cooperation and life skills through hockey training. *We Nook, We Shoot, We Score* is open to youth between the ages of six and 12 and will positively affect the lives of over 1,000 high-needs, at-risk children in the Christie Ossington area by providing basic training in skating, shooting, scoring, goaltending and hockey rules and regulations. The program focuses on self-esteem, team building and healthy active living and will also provide equipment to participants unable to afford their own.

"I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the MLSE for this incredible funding partnership," said Jennifer Irving, Program Manager at Christie Ossington Neighbourhood Centre. "*We Nook, We Shoot, We Score* will allow children to learn a variety of skill building exercises on and off the ice. *Nook Children* come from all walks of life; however we prioritize our program for those facing social and economic barriers. Hockey is an expensive sport that many families are unable to commit funds to. Through this partnership we are excited to offer children within our community a program with the appropriate equipment and training to succeed."

(MORE)

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

“Through the Just Energy Foundation, we are passionate about our commitment to enhance the livelihood and well-being of the communities we serve” said Deb Merril, Just Energy's co-Chief Executive Officer. “It is especially satisfying to help underprivileged youth secure opportunities that would otherwise be out of reach for them. The Christie Ossington Neighbourhood Centre does tremendous work to build a nurturing and supportive environment. We’re delighted to contribute to their Nook program to promote accessibility and provide enriching experiences through sport for such deserving youth.”

About Christie Ossington Neighbourhood Centre

Founded in 1994, the Christie Ossington Neighbourhood Centre is a multi-service organization that provides community based programming for high-needs children, at-risk youth, homeless men and women, newcomers and other vulnerable community members. The organization is dedicated to building upon the strengths and visions of community members to improve the quality of life. The Nook Children’s Program aims to empower local at-risk children and youth with the knowledge to participate in and advocate for the positive community contributions. It is a free after school/summer/suspension help drop-in program for children ages five to 13.

For more information about Christie Ossington Neighbourhood Centre’s Nook Children’s program, visit <http://www.conccommunity.org/nook/>

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 all four MLSE teams - the Toronto Maple Leafs, Toronto Raptors, Toronto FC and Toronto Marlies - 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 \$15 million into our community.

For more information visit 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 to learn more.

-30-

Media contacts:

Akasha Di Tomasso, MLSE, 416-815-5924, akasha.ditomasso@mlse.com

Nancy Donnaperna, Just Energy Foundation, 905-670-4440, ndonnaperna@justenergy.com

Jennifer Irving, Christie Ossington Neighbourhood Centre, 416-792-7977, jenn@conc.ca