

GREAT GRANT STORIES

The Toskan Casale Foundation

Youth, Philanthropy and Making Change: The Story of YPI

In 2001, Julie Toskan-Casale together with her husband Victor Casale and brother Frank Toskan, started a family foundation dedicated to supporting and strengthening local, community-based social service agencies. As one of their main strategies, the Toskan Casale Foundation chose the idea of educating youth to become the philanthropic leaders and community volunteers of tomorrow. To accomplish this, Julie and her colleagues at the Toskan Casale Foundation created the Youth and Philanthropy Initiative (YPI), with the aim of teaching philanthropy to high school students. Their idea was that helping young people to become engaged citizens and philanthropists would benefit society directly at the grassroots level of the community. Local and grassroots focused change can facilitate important social change on a larger scale.



YPI is a program that provides students with the tools to research social issues and advocate solutions for their community in partnership with local charities. YPI gives Grade 9 and 10 students a chance to play a direct role in making \$5,000 financial grants to local social service organizations. This has resulted in thousands of high school students distributing over \$6.1 million dollars to charities internationally. Since its launch in 2001, YPI has provided over 162,000 students with a reality-based experience of charitable giving that benefits local, community-based social service agencies.

From a YPI student:

'YPI is the best thing I have ever done. It made me aware of the long-term problems in my community and gave me direction in how to solve them. I wish I could do it all again because I actually loved it!'

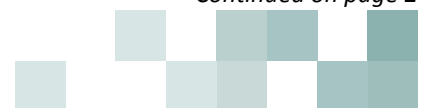
In Ontario, YPI is delivered in 24 school boards. As a combination of in-class learning and hands-on experience, YPI enhances the retention of research, teamwork, communication and presentation skills and fits within a variety of mandated curriculum.


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High school teachers engage with YPI because they share in the passion for giving to local charities with their students.

From a YPI teacher:

‘YPI is a fantastic way to encourage students to become active citizens. The program brings the subject alive. Students loved it and it was easy for me to deliver thanks to the great support from the YPI staff.’

The Youth and Philanthropy Initiative (YPI) has been running in classrooms across Canada since 2002 and is now mandated in high school curriculums in England, Scotland and the United States. Through a partnership with Credit Suisse and the Institute for Philanthropy, YPI was successfully introduced in London and then expanded into other parts of England. In Scotland, Sir Ian Wood and the Wood Family Trust took on the roll-out and expansion of YPI. As Principal Funder and Operational Manager of YPI across Scotland, the Wood Family Trust has supported over 20,000 pupils, since 2008, from 55 secondary schools to engage with over 400 grassroots organizations.

In 2011, a new milestone was reached. The Ontario government announced a two-year, \$500,000

commitment of support to YPI as part of an investment in the youth of Ontario that will shape the next generation of leaders through involvement in local community building activities. The grant from the Government of Ontario allows YPI room to grow on a scale with maximum impact on charities, local communities and students. The Foundation is looking to other ministries across Canada and internationally to partner their support with YPI.

What makes YPI unique is that its strategy is to engage young people and their peers in the needs of the community at the local level. Because of the constantly changing multiple social needs within the community, this makes YPI an effective philanthropic strategy for positive social change. The diversity of young people in high schools and their particular community demographics, their material wealth, their ethnicity, or their culture and heritage, all mirror the needs that are being addressed in the community.

YPI was recognized as a Canadian Best Practice in Civic Education by the

Institute for Canadian Citizenship (2010). As well, Julie Toskan Casale has received the (Ontario) Premier’s Award for Philanthropy in Education as part of the Premier’s Awards for Teaching Excellence.

Julie sums up the learning of the Foundation: “Through YPI we have been able as a foundation to make other communities across Ontario, and internationally, aware of the impact of a grassroots initiative in a community. Our experience confirms that YPI not only benefits the community but also strengthens volunteerism and often leverages additional support.”

From a winning charity:

‘It was absolutely fantastic to win a \$5,000 donation. YPI is an excellent way to engage young people in philanthropy. The skills and experience gained by participants will be a huge help to them in their future careers.’

For more information, please visit The Toskan Casale Foundation at: toskanfoundation.org
goypi.org



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