



# Let's PLAY Ultimate!

## Promoting Leadership Amongst Youth

### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The *Let's PLAY Ultimate!* project aims to provide leadership and community engagement opportunities through ultimate to 100 youth in the Downsview-Roding neighbourhood of Toronto in order to promote the settlement and integration of newcomer families.

The project will see adult volunteers and youth leaders running practice sessions and league games two evenings a week (Mondays & Wednesdays) for 8 weeks over the summer (July & August), as well as potentially coaching teams in local tournaments.

The Downsview-Roding Neighbourhood Action Partnership – a group comprised of residents and local community organizations and organized by the City of Toronto – has identified youth support as a priority for 2017. By hosting a local youth ultimate league, the *Let's PLAY Ultimate!* project will provide an opportunity for youth to experience leadership opportunities on the field, resulting in a sense of engagement and further integration with their peers and the community.

Additionally, the project will reduce the financial and travel barriers for families to enrolling their children in sport, and will increase the ability for families to attend games and support their children in the activity.

**Identified short-term outcomes:**

- increased knowledge of ultimate among youth and their families
- increased ability for youth to play ultimate and be physically active
- increased opportunity for youth to experience leadership opportunities
- increased interaction between participants and their families and other families and community members
- increased awareness of community resources available for both youth and families in the Downsview-Roding neighbourhood
- increased support for personal growth and development for youth and family members

**Identified longer-term outcomes:**

- increased number of disadvantaged youth equipped with leadership skills
- increased engagement of parents and family members with their local community

Ultimate was chosen as the means to achieve this for several reasons:

- Mixed gender ultimate and the Spirit of the Game model behaviour for success both on and off the field;
- Unlike sports such as soccer, ultimate is not a hugely popular sport in the countries that newcomers in the Downsview-Roding area immigrate from. It is hoped that this lack of innate familiarity with ultimate will allow all youth to approach the game with lack of bias and with relatively equal playing skills; and,
- Relative to other sports available to youth in Toronto, ultimate is an inexpensive sport that participants could continue to play with minimal support after this project finishes.

## LEAD AGENCY

**Mennonite New Life Centre of Toronto (MNLCT) (<http://mnlct.org>)**

The Mennonite New Life Centre of Toronto is an established community agency that strives to provide responsive programs and services to meet the needs of newcomers. It is the Centre's mission to walk together with newcomers – to facilitate settlement and integration through holistic services and community engagement, carried out within a gender justice and anti-oppression framework.

In 2016, Seneca's Social Service Worker (Immigrants and Refugees) Program recognized the MNLCT for its ongoing commitment to improving the lives of immigrants and refugees, and the Centre's innovative programs and dedicated staff form the basis for this award.

The MNLCT is a place of welcome, friendship and community, where newcomers and neighbours gather to support each other, learn from each other, and take action together for a more just and compassionate society, and the Centre is pleased to have the support of the Toronto Ultimate Club and Toronto Elites Ultimate in the development and implementation of this unique initiative.

The Mennonite New Life Centre of Toronto is a registered Canadian charity (#107691149RR0001).

## PARTNERS

### **Toronto District School Board (TDSB)** (<http://www.tdsb.on.ca>)

The Toronto District School Board (TDSB) is the largest and one of the most diverse school boards in Canada, serving approximately 246,000 students in 584 schools throughout Toronto. The TDSB has provided complimentary field space under the Priority Schools Initiative – a joint project between the TDSB and the Ministry of Education aimed at making TDSB school spaces more accessible to the community.

### **Toronto Elites Ultimate (EU)** (<https://elitesultimate.com>)

Founded by Carla DiFilippo and Evan Phillips, both accomplished elite ultimate players and well-respected coaches in the Canadian youth ultimate scene, Toronto Elites Ultimate is a competitive club with a focus on skill development, positive learning and success at the provincial and national level. Participants learn in a healthy and competitive environment, and fair play, self officiating and sportsmanship are encouraged.

As an award-winning coach ([2014 Ultimate Canada Coach of the Year](#)) and Director of Arts and Athletics at an independent school (grades 7-12) in Toronto, Ms DiFilippo will be instrumental in the development of a program that not only provides an introduction to the game of ultimate but lays the foundation for youth to acquire the leadership skills necessary for success: independent thinking, perseverance through obstacles, and connection with their peers and communities.

Toronto Elites Ultimate is excited to be participating and, in addition to developing the curriculum, will be providing youth leaders to run the practices.

### **Toronto Ultimate Club (TUC)** (<https://www.tuc.org>)

The Toronto Ultimate Club is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to serving the needs of Ultimate players in Toronto since 1980, and with over 3000 members is one of the largest ultimate clubs in the world. TUC organizes leagues through all seasons of the year, hosts tournaments, runs skills and strategy clinics, develops teen and pre-teen Ultimate, and provides support to local touring teams.

With integrity, excellence, and citizenship as the core values of the club, it is no surprise that TUC was quickly on board with this project.

TUC will provide support for obtaining field permits and insurance, registering participants and scheduling games.

### **Ultimate Canada (UC)** (<http://www.canadianultimate.com/>)

Ultimate Canada is the governing body for the sport of Ultimate in Canada. Ultimate Canada is committed to supporting local initiative and Canadian development and is supporting PLAY Ultimate with funding from the Art Hawkins Development Fund, which has the purpose of supporting the accessibility and development of Ultimate and Spirit of the Game in Canada with children, youth and those with a disability, especially in economically disadvantaged communities.

## PARTICIPANT DESCRIPTION

Target participants are youth (Grades 8-12, approximately 13-18 years old) of any gender living, going to school, or working in the Downsview-Roding area in North West Toronto. It is anticipated that participants will have a range of skill levels, with most being at the beginner to intermediate level.

The Downsview-Roding area has been identified by the City of Toronto as a Neighbourhood Improvement Area – an area scoring poorly on vitality indicators such as employment, mental health, and high school graduation rates and requiring special attention.

In Downsview-Roding<sup>1</sup>:

- 58% of residents were born outside of Canada
- Recent immigrants are primarily from the Philippines and Latin America; the area also hosts significant temporary housing for recent Syrian refugees
- 50% of residents aged 25-64 years had less than post secondary education (30% high school and 20% no certificate)
- 20% of the population is Low-Income
- Approximately 4,000 residents are aged 10-19 years

The MNLCT supports newcomers in achieving their integration goals and wishes to provide an opportunity for newcomer youth to interact with their peers and community members in a meaningful way; therefore, participation in this project will be based on age and home/school/work location and not immigration status.

## LOCATION AND DATES

The project will run Monday and Wednesday evenings for an 8-week period from July-August 2017. One evening will be a practice, and the second evening will be a game.

Games and practices will be held at Beverley Heights Middle School, 26 Troutbrooke Dr, North York, ON M3M 1S5 (near Jane & Wilson).

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<sup>1</sup> 2014 initial neighbourhood estimates, based on 2011 Census / National Household Survey;  
[http://www1.toronto.ca/City%20Of%20Toronto/Social%20Development,%20Finance%20&%20Administration/Shared%20Content/Demographics/PDFs/NIA\\_2014\\_Profiles/26%20Downsview-Roding-CFB.pdf](http://www1.toronto.ca/City%20Of%20Toronto/Social%20Development,%20Finance%20&%20Administration/Shared%20Content/Demographics/PDFs/NIA_2014_Profiles/26%20Downsview-Roding-CFB.pdf)