



PARKS AND RECREATION ONTARIO

PRO Commends Provincial Funding Increase to Ontario's After School Program

Toronto, ON – (October 20, 2023) - Parks and Recreation Ontario (PRO) fully supports the recent provincial government funding increase of \$1.1 million to support Ontario's After School Program. This critical investment marks a significant step forward to enhancing the well-being and development of children and acknowledges the importance of providing them with quality recreation opportunities that promote learning, growth, and socialization.

Since 2009, [Ontario's After School Program](#) has enabled providers to create a safe, proven, and affordable choice for parents in vulnerable communities across Ontario. The program supports over 13,000 children and youth to participate in supervised activities during the school year and plays a pivotal role in ensuring access to enriching, safe, and structured after school recreation. This investment brings total program funding to \$14.6M for the 2023-2024 school year.

"After school programs provide opportunities for children to explore recreation and develop valuable life skills" says Jeff Payne, Chair of PRO's Board of Directors. "This funding boost reflects our shared commitment of nurturing the potential of children, and supports the vision of creating safe, enriching, and inclusive environments where youth can recreate.

Ontario's After School Program is delivered by over 80 municipalities, Indigenous communities and organizations, non-profit and grassroots recreational organizations, supporting low-income and northern/rural communities, Francophone neighbourhoods and First Nations. PRO continues to proudly serves its 6,500 members, including many that deliver quality after school programs across Ontario.

PRO members who operate after school programming are grateful for this funding infusion that helps them deliver essential recreation opportunities to support healthy child development. As a PRO member, the City of Windsor knows exactly how impactful after school programming can be. "We are extremely thankful for the funding increase to support this valued programming, enhance participant opportunities, program resources and specialized staff training" said Nada Tremblay, Manager, Community Programming and Development.

PRO acknowledges the wide range of economic benefits that a robust and well-funded After School Program provides Ontario families. In recent years, the impacts of inflation, rising insurance rates, increases to wages, facility rental fees and demand for programming, have resulted in after school providers experiencing significant demand and waitlists. Funding increases promote a stronger provincial workforce and will yield substantial economic benefits by supporting working families with children.

"After school programs are a lifeline for many families and we look forward to seeing the positive impact that this funding increase will bring to communities across Ontario" says PRO's Chief Executive Officer, Kim Gavine. "We will continue to advocate for regular and meaningful increases to Ontario's After School Program and remain dedicated to



PARKS AND RECREATION ONTARIO

collaborating with the government and supporting our members to provide vital after-school recreation opportunities.

PRO believes that investments in after school programs are investments in a brighter future and we encourage the government to continue to fulfil its commitment of working with sector partners to create more opportunities for children, youth and families to thrive in Ontario.

-30-

For media inquiries, please contact:

Sarah Ane
Director, Policy and Partnerships
sane@prontario.org