

Night of Light Supports Oolagen Youth Mental Health

Gala dinner and auction will raise critical funds for Toronto youth living with mental health problems

Toronto (April 30, 2013) — On **Thursday, May 30, 2013**, friends and supporters will gather for *Night of Light – Engage the Child, Unite the Family*, a fundraising dinner in support of Oolagen Youth Mental Health.

The *Night of Light* gala at the Ritz Carlton, 181 Wellington Street West, Toronto, will raise much needed funds to further the work that Oolagen, an accredited youth mental health centre located in downtown Toronto, undertakes every day in helping Toronto's youth and their families overcome the devastating effects of emotional, social, and psychological difficulties. The evening will feature cocktails, dinner, and an auction.

Honourary Chair **Ken Taylor** will preside over the *Night of Light* gala. Taylor is an Order of Canada and United States Congressional Medal recipient for his work as a former Canadian Ambassador to Iran who, in 1980, risked his own life to help save six American hostages during the Iran crisis. He was recently portrayed in Ben Affleck's Academy Award-winning movie, *Argo*. Taylor lends his support for improving the lives of at-risk youth and their families by joining the Oolagen team for this important event.

"One in five Ontario children suffers from challenges like depression, anxiety, or substance abuse," says Ken Taylor. *"I am honoured to be involved with an organization that empowers youth and their families to improve their wellbeing and mental health through services that really respond to their needs,"* says Taylor.

The dinner will feature celebrity emcees, husband and wife team **Colin Mochrie** and **Debra McGrath**. As Oolagen's Patrons since 2009, Mochrie and McGrath have been tireless in their commitment to reducing the stigma of mental health and ensuring that every kid gets the best start in life.

As part of *Night of Light*, **Michael Landsberg** will be presented with the 2013 Oolagen Award. Landsberg has been the host of *Off the Record* (OTR), TSN's highly acclaimed sports program, since 1997, and was daytime host during Vancouver's 2010 Olympic games. Landsberg recently began speaking publicly about his 14-year battle with depression, and considers his ability to reduce the stigma of mental illness his most important professional calling. Oolagen is proud to present this year's award to Michael Landsberg in recognition of his commitment to raising the profile and understanding of mental health issues in Canada.

oolagen

youth mental health

About Oolagen

Oolagen is an accredited youth mental health centre located in downtown Toronto. Common issues that Oolagen helps youth deal with include physical and sexual abuse, school issues, violence, issues of grief and death, family conflict, separation and divorce, alcohol and drug misuse, depression, eating disorders, sexuality, and suicidal and self-harming behaviours. The hopes and aspirations of Oolagen are based on our vision for healthy relationships between youth and their families that recognize and build upon strengths, a community that works in partnership to enhance the social and emotional well being of its citizens, and a comprehensive, flexible service system that effectively responds to the challenging and diverse needs of the people we serve. Oolagen's overhead costs are uniquely managed to remain below 10%, which means that over 90% of every dollar goes directly toward helping at-risk youth in Toronto.

Quick Facts about Youth Mental Health

- Young Canadians aged 15-24 have the highest incidence of mental illness of any age group in the country.
- Suicide is the second leading cause of death for the 15-24 age group and statistics indicate that 90% of youth who take their own life had a diagnosable mental illness.
- Nearly one in four Ontario children between the ages of 9 and 19 is currently living with mental illness.
- Mental health problems and illnesses cost the Canadian economy at least \$50 billion per year.
- The cumulative cost of providing treatment, care, and support services over the next 30 years in Canada is expected to exceed \$2.5 trillion dollars.
- Youth support programs have been demonstrated to provide better outcomes for people living with mental health problems with investment returns of up to \$17.07 for every dollar invested towards support programs like Oolagen youth mental health.
- 70% of all mental health and addictions issues begin in childhood and adolescence.

Sources: Canadian Mental Health Association, "Making the Case for Investing in Mental Health in Canada", Mental Health Commission of Canada 2013

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