

**For immediate release – Central and South Okanagan**

## **Community Youth Led Projects Receive Local Funding**

**May 15, 2019** – This spring, the Central Okanagan Foundation for Youth (COFFY) and United Way's GenNext contributed \$9,500 to support five youth led projects based in the Central and South Okanagan.

These grants are available to young people up to age 25 who are partnering with an organization to create positive change in their local community. A committee comprising of youth representatives from the Central Okanagan Foundation and GenNext Kelowna representatives met in late March to review the applications and make funding decisions. The awards ranged from \$1,500 to \$2,000.

“United Way is so proud of our youth board, GenNext, who help fund and evaluate these applications each year,” says Jude Brunt, Community Investment Manager of United Way SIBC. “The learning process is two way and it’s so empowering to see youth leadership championing other local youth, for their community spirit and great ideas. United Way is involved in many initiatives across the valley and this is one of our favourites, as we see how much community impact can be achieved with relatively small amounts of money and a whole lot of youth passion!”

The Youth Initiative Grant recipients for 2019 are:

- **Green Screen, Enactus Okanagan College** (Kelowna)
- **More LGBTQ+ Friends, Etcetera - The Bridge Youth and Family Services & Okanagan Boys and Girls Clubs** (Kelowna)
- **YAAC Mental Health Week Campaign, Foundry Kelowna** (Kelowna)
- **Mural Project-Foundry, OneSky Community Resources** (Penticton)
- **Silver Surfers, Enactus Okanagan College** (Kelowna)

“These grants encourage community members who are 25 and under to get involved in important issues like the environment, inclusivity and mental health. The projects and the review process help inspire the passions of younger people in our community,” says Joanne Carey, Coordinator of Grants & Community Initiatives at the Central Okanagan Foundation.

An example is the Green Screen Project –which sees students from Enactus at Okanagan College work with middle school students in Kelowna to collect un-used technology and re-distribute it to people who need it.

“Project Green Screen focuses on environmental sustainability and repurposing neglected technology. With the involvement of youth from schools in the community, we are able to teach the importance of re-using and recycling technology. The funding received from the Youth Initiative Grant will allow us to refurbish a greater amount of technology. This will further provide more technology for those unable to gain access to the technology they need.” says Isaac Hossmann, the student project manager of the Green Screen - Enactus Project.

Youth Initiative Grant funding will be available again in the winter of 2019. For more information, visit: <http://www.centralokanaganfoundation.org/grants/youth-initiative-grants/>

**About Central Okanagan Foundation Youth Volunteers:** The Central Okanagan Foundation Youth endowment fund supports projects and programs from Lake Country to Peachland that are youth-driven, collaborative and impactful. The volunteers reviewing the Youth Initiative Grants are young adults age 15 – 25, who have received a Central Okanagan Foundation Volunteer Spirit Scholarship. For more info: <http://www.centralokanaganfoundation.org/>

**About United Way Southern Interior BC (SIBC):**

United Way Southern Interior BC serves the communities of the Okanagan, Columbia, Shuswap and Similkameen regions. Formed by the merger of United Way CSO and United Way NOCS, United Way SIBC builds on over 65 years of community investment. Our mission is to improve lives and build community by engaging individuals and mobilizing collective action. The United Way invests time and resources in three focus areas that support all that kids can be, move people from poverty to possibility and build healthy, strong communities. For more information, visit [www.unitedwaysibc.com](http://www.unitedwaysibc.com) or call 1-855-232-1321.

**About GenNext:** GenNext is an affinity group of United Way SIBC consisting of young, emerging leaders who are looking to support our community in a meaningful way. GenNext's Board of Directors is made up of professionals who are passionate about volunteerism and furthering the United Way's mission. For more information about GenNext Kelowna, visit: <http://unitedwaycso.com/get-involved/gennext/>

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