



Community Announcement

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Every Kid in Our Communities Celebrates Local Champions for Youth

LEEDS AND GRENVILLE — The Every Kid in Our Communities Coalition (EKIOC) proudly hosted their 11th annual **Recognition of Asset Builders** event on Sunday, June 7, 2026, at the YMCA of Eastern Ontario in Brockville. This special event celebrated individuals, organizations, and businesses across Leeds and Grenville that make a meaningful difference in the lives of children and youth - our community's asset builders.

Through a public nomination process, **24 asset builders** were selected and recognized at the celebration for their dedication and contributions to the positive development of young people. We are proud to recognize the following individuals and groups for their outstanding contributions: Bruce McLeod, Scott Halladay, Dave Balfour, Alyscha Morrison, Tyler St. John, Shannon McCarthy, 1st Merrickville Scouts, Youth Opportunities in the Arts, Gananoque Lions Club, Mark Whitton, Melissa Hindman, Gord Casselman, Colleen Cooper, Jill Andress, Justin Cunningham, Kemptville and Area Resource Center, Leeds Learning Center, Michelle Daley, Joeal Satkunarajah, Anita Andrews, Laura Deimling, Mallory Coach House Volunteers, Early ON Child and Family Centre and Emma Empey.

"These 24 asset builders are helping shape our community by inspiring, supporting, and empowering the next generation," said **Bev Heuving**, Chair of EKIOC's Developmental Assets Work Group. "We're incredibly fortunate to live in a region where so many individuals and organizations care deeply about our youth."

To keep the spirit of asset building alive, EKIOC is encouraging residents to take part in the "Start with Hello" initiative. The idea is simple but impactful: greet a young person and, when possible, build a caring, supportive relationship. By fostering these everyday connections, EKIOC aims to create communities where children and youth feel a strong sense of belonging, are supported by caring adults, and know they are valued.

To learn more about how to build strong, supportive relationships with youth, visit the Search Institute's Developmental Relationships Framework: <https://searchinstitute.org/developmental-relationships>.

For more information about EKIOC, and how you can get involved, visit www.everykid.on.ca

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