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For Immediate Release

**The Power of Partnerships:
Exploring Experiential Learning in Halton**

HALTON – For young people today, venturing down a career path can be daunting. The economy has been slow to recover and job prospects in some industries remain scarce for those just entering the workforce. This challenging economic landscape has put an increased emphasis on experiential learning and training programs that can help young job seekers understand the variety of career paths and post-secondary choices available to them.

That's where organizations like the Halton Industry Education Council (HIEC) and The Centre for Skills Development & Training can help.

With decades-long histories of serving Halton and inspiring people to find their career passion and fit, these community-led not-for-profits collectively offer a continuum of programs and services, beginning in senior elementary school and continuing through to post-secondary career training and job search assistance.

HIEC engages with the community through a variety of programs and events. On November 23, HIEC will help celebrate Experiential Learning Week, a province-wide initiative, with a Breakfast with the Mayors Event held in Milton. The program will celebrate the success of the thousands of high school students currently involved in cooperative education and other programs, along with the many employers and educators who make these valuable programs work for young people.

HIEC also supports efforts to increase awareness of career options with mentorship programs like Men and Women as Career Coaches and the longstanding Grade 8 Career Awareness Program, delivered to over 7,000 students each year from both Halton school boards.

At The Centre, experiential learning is a common theme that runs through all programs. The Get in Gear (GIG) program, funded by the Government of Canada, provides hands-on learning in the skilled trades for youth, and coordinates job placements for students in the program.

The Centre also offers a renowned pre-apprenticeship skilled trades program, with a strong focus on hands-on learning. Participants in the program spend more time in the shop than in the classroom, giving students skills and experience directly applicable to the workforce.

The Centre and HIEC recently partnered to launch Summer in Smallywood, an online video game that gives young adults a virtual world in which to experience, practice and enhance three essential skills: oral communication, thinking skills, and working with others.

These are just a few examples of how HIEC and The Centre are working in the community to help young adults achieve better outcomes in their jobs through experiential learning.

Adults and youth need help navigating the changing employment landscape. Working together, HIEC and The Centre have helped people find meaningful jobs and enhance their quality of life, while providing local employers with an increasingly skilled and engaged workforce.

For more information, visit HIEC at hiec.on.ca and The Centre at thecentre.on.ca.

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