

LOCAL WALMART STORE RECEIVES 2010 EMPLOYER CHAMPION AWARD

North York Walmart recognized for outstanding development of school-work programs for special needs high school students in the community

Toronto (September 29, 2010) – The North York Walmart today received a 2010 *Passport to Prosperity* Employer Champion Award in recognition of its outstanding commitment to providing meaningful experiential learning programs for high school students in the community.



(Back L-R) North York Walmart staff; Ian Cunningham, Provincial Partnership Council; MPP Kevin Flynn, Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Education;
(Front L-R) Toronto City Councillor Frank Di Giorgio, York South-Weston, Ward 12;
Award winner Hillary Green, HR Manager, North York Walmart;
Linda Lucciantonio, Manager, North York Walmart

"By providing valuable workplace experiences to high school students, these employer champions are helping young Ontarians make some of the most important decisions in life, including setting career goals and choosing what type of post-secondary education and training to pursue," said Leona Dombrowsky, Minister of Education. "School-work partnerships are critical to boosting student achievement and helping more students graduate."

"I applaud the work Walmart for giving young people an important insight into the skills and experience essential to finding work in today's economy," said John Milloy, Minister of Training,

Colleges and Universities. "Helping students learn about careers, and the education and training necessary for success, will help build the skilled workforce Ontario needs."

The North York Walmart, located at 1305 Lawrence Avenue West, has been supporting specialized experiential learning programs for local special needs high school students for more than five years. During this time, Walmart has brought on many special needs students from James Cardinal McGuigan Catholic Secondary School. These students are able to gain work experience, independence and self-confidence.



L-R: Ian Cunningham, Provincial Partnership Council; Toronto City Councillor Frank Di Giorgio, York South-Weston, Ward 12; Stephanie Tobar, James Cardinal McGuigan Catholic Secondary School; Hillary Green, North York Walmart; MPP Kevin Flynn, Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Education;
(Front) Carlos Jean Medina, James Cardinal McGuigan Catholic Secondary School

Opportunities that Walmart has provided include customer service, stocking shelves with merchandise and greeting customers. These students have worked independently and have made a very positive impression on staff, managers and customers alike.



“At Walmart we are committed to serving the needs of the communities where we operate and providing meaningful job training to special needs students is just one of the ways that we are working to contribute,” said Linda Lucciantonio, store manager, North York Walmart. “We are extremely proud of the students who have chosen to offer us their enthusiasm, time and dedication.”

The Employer Champion Award program was established by the Provincial Partnership Council (PPC) to recognize employers in communities across Ontario who demonstrate outstanding dedication and commitment in providing meaningful work experiences to local high school students. The *Passport to Prosperity* campaign, led by the PPC, encourages Ontario employers to provide experiential learning opportunities for high school students.

“This Walmart store is an example of forward-thinking leaders that recognize the value of experiential learning as an effective way to recruit, train and retain young workers,” said Jon Hamovitch, chair of the Provincial Partnership Council. “We applaud the dedication of their staff in helping local students develop practical work and leadership skills through dynamic assignments that best suit their educational backgrounds and learning styles.”

Today more than 40,000 employers have recognized the value of opening their doors to high school students, but more are needed. Without the commitment and dedication of employers, including the Employer Champion Award winners, high school students would have limited opportunities to explore their career options and gain valuable training as they prepare for the working world.