



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Meet the 11 Youth Ambassadors Looking to Influence Student Nutrition in Ontario  
 First Ever “Agents of Change Summit” Sees Students Present Roadmap to CPG and Retail Industry Leaders &  
 Issue Stakeholders on Engaging Youth in Cause**

Toronto — February 8, 2016 — Today, as more than 800,000 school-aged children attend student nutrition programs<sup>1</sup>, leaders from the retail and food industry, alongside issue stakeholders, are hearing from 11 Youth Ambassadors on what more should and can be done to engage youth across the province in this pressing issue. A first of its kind initiative, the *Agents of Change Summit* (#AOCsummit), has been created to afford students, who take part in 4,500<sup>2</sup> programs province-wide, a platform to collectively shape them.

Hosted by [The Grocery Foundation](#) (@Groceryfndtn), in partnership with the Ontario Student Nutrition Program Network (OSNPN), the Summit is an integral part of the [Toonies for Tummies](#) (#Toonies4Tummies) campaign currently underway across the province, February 4-18<sup>th</sup>. With the support of campaign sponsors and retail partners including Metro, Food Basics, Longo’s and select independents, The Grocery Foundation is looking to raise awareness of the need and impact of student nutrition programs and raise funds to enable their success. A goal of \$600,000 has been set for this year’s campaign. One hundred percent of proceeds from donations raised in 400 stores and online will be redirected back into the communities where the donations are made.<sup>2</sup> Using their postal code, shoppers can track their donations via the campaign [microsite](#) and learn more about local programs across the province and their impact.

While shoppers encounter the campaign in-store, the Summit will explore ways to collectively engage school-aged students who partake in programs across the province daily. Each Youth Ambassador, who are in Grades 9-12, will represent their regional student nutrition lead agency. These agencies are part of a province-wide network supported by the Ministry of Children and Youth Services and industry funding. Each Ambassador will share insights into local programs and offer ideas to generate further engagement and awareness on the issue, including among youth. The recommendations brought forth by these Ambassadors will shape future campaigns undertaken by The Grocery Foundation and industry in partnership with OSNPN and issue stakeholders. The 11 Ambassadors are:

Kiera Coulter (Grade 12) Rothwell-Osnabruck School Ingleside, ON	Kristen Sutherland (Grade 11) North Hastings High School Bancroft, ON
Josée Lacasse (Grade 12) École Secondaire Catholique Franco Ouest Espanola, ON	Shannon BoolsenVorster (Grade 12) Bracebridge and Muskoka Lakes Secondary School Bracebridge, ON
Victoria McGonegal (Grade 9) Korah Collegiate Algoma, ON	Swaizie Lauzon (Grade 12) Fort Erie SS Fort Erie, ON

1. Source: OSNPN

2. Source: OSNPN

3. The Grocery Foundation survey of 1505 Canadians was completed online between December 2 and December 5, 2013 using Leger’s online panel, LegerWebA probability sample of the same size would yield a margin of error of +/- 2.5%, 19 times out of 20.



Khadeeja Tariq (Grade 12) Conseil des écoles publiques de l'Est de l'Ontario Ottawa, ON	Sara Ferreira (Grade 12) George Harvey Collegiate Toronto, ON
PJ Litvack (Grade 9) Stephen Lewis Secondary School Thornhill, ON	Katherine Bailey (Grade 12) TA Blakelock Oakville, ON
Kaelyn McCallum (Grade 10) St. Ignatius High School Thunder Bay, ON	

“Through programs like Toonies for Tummies and [Ontario’s Poverty Reduction Strategy](#), considerable efforts are underway to improve nutrition and positively shape outcomes for school-aged children. But despite these efforts, we’ve yet to collectively invite ideas from youth across the province in terms of how we go about shaping programs or how to get youth thinking about, talking about, and being a part of them. Imagine how much more can be achieved by inviting them to the table,” says Michelle Scott, the Foundation’s Executive Director.

Research released by the Foundation in 2014 confirmed that Canadians believe Canada's ability to feed its hungry children is directly tied to the future prosperity of our country.<sup>3</sup> At the same time, the study confirmed many Canadians lack clarity on school-nutrition programs, including the average cost of a nutritious breakfast and the age of children entitled to receive them. Little to no research exists today on how students across Ontario collectively view the cause or what they believe to be opportunities to help guide efforts to engage them in programs that are designed to provide them with adequate nutrition and support their success.

“We’re very excited to enable this entirely new level of collaboration between youth, private industry and public stakeholders as we consider new ways to support this cause on a more pervasive level. We’re optimistic about what the future holds and our ability to continue to make this a topic of conversation across the generations,” adds Scott.

### **About the Grocery Foundation**

The Grocery Foundation is an Ontario-based not-for-profit, representing leaders from Canada’s grocery industry. It was established in 1979 to enrich the lives and wellbeing of children. To date, The Grocery Foundation has raised in excess of \$85 million which has gone toward over 250 organizations across the province to help them meet a number of health and wellness needs. This includes proceeds from the in-store Toonies for Tummies campaign which provides funding for nutritious breakfasts and snacks for school-aged students across the province. To learn more about The Grocery Foundation, visit: [www.groceryfoundation.com](http://www.groceryfoundation.com) or [www.facebook.com/groceryfoundation](https://www.facebook.com/groceryfoundation).

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 416-930-9756

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