



MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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High Park Nature Centre Announces Major Funding and New Site

\$350,500 Ontario Trillium Foundation Grant to Support Capacity Building Move

Toronto - The Ontario Trillium Foundation has awarded the High Park Nature Centre the single largest grant in the Nature Centre's history. The Foundation has committed \$350,500 over three years to support the High Park Nature Centre's move to the historic 'Forest School' -- a larger, more prominent and more accessible building located at Bloor and High Park Ave. This move will increase the square footage for the Nature Centre's programs by nearly tenfold.

"As MPP of Parkdale-High Park, I have been honoured to attend many events and workshops at the High Park Nature Centre over the years. I have seen firsthand how the HPNC has created an awareness and appreciation among our community and visitors for High Park, Toronto's greatest natural resource. High Park Nature Centre has been an integral part of our community since 1999, educating both young and old and "giving back" to our beloved High Park. I'm delighted that High Park Nature Centre is receiving OTF funding to move to a larger space which will help it continue to grow and expand on programs offered to the community," said Cheri DiNovo, MPP Parkdale-High Park.

The 'Forest School' was originally designed in the 1920's with the belief that spending time in a healthy outdoor environment, taking daily walks in the park and resting in cots under the trees would benefit the health and well-being of the students struggling with health issues. This led to 50 years of outdoor teaching and education on the site.

Thanks to this grant, the High Park Nature Centre will be able to purchase necessary equipment, furniture and teaching materials as well as support four new staffing positions in the historic space. The site will include dedicated learning spaces for families and students and allow for more adult programming, conferences and environmental events. A volunteer hub and meeting space will encourage community-building and partnerships in the park by creating space and resources for volunteers to work and for park groups to meet.

The move is slated for April 2015 with programming shifting to the new site in July 2015 – just in time for summer camps!

"The impact of this Ontario Trillium Foundation grant cannot be underestimated. The grant will allow the High Park Nature Centre to substantially expand the number and reach of its programs. More programs touching more people will allow the High Park Nature Centre to have a greater and longer lasting impact on the lives of the community and beyond," said Lisa Clarkson, president of the High Park Nature Centre's Board of Directors.

"This ambitious vision will showcase the amazing nature in High Park by dramatically increasing access to environmental education, conservation and park stewardship programs," said Natalie Harder, the High Park Nature

Centre's Executive Director. "Located right at the entrance of the park and steps from High Park subway station, this site ensures anyone can come to spend time in, learn about and care for nature -- no car or cottage required."

The Ontario Trillium Foundation, an agency of the Government of Ontario, has a longstanding relationship with the High Park Nature Centre. A grant in 2006 helped the Nature Centre secure its first full time coordinator and begin running year round programs. This gave the High Park Nature Centre the boost it needed to grow into a fixture in the community.

"We're deeply grateful to the Ontario Trillium Foundation for investing in environmental education during this exciting time in the history of the High Park Nature Centre," said Harder.

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For media information or visuals, please call:

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About the **High Park Nature Centre**: Founded in 1999 by High Park Initiatives, the High Park Nature Centre promotes awareness and respect for nature by providing school programs, curriculum enrichment, educational camps, nature clubs, and community outreach programs. Our outdoor education and park stewardship programs currently serve more than 9,000 children, youth, families, adults and educators each year.
www.highparknaturecentre.com

About the **Ontario Trillium Foundation**: A leading grantmaker in Canada, the Ontario Trillium Foundation strengthens the capacity of the voluntary sector through investments in community-based initiatives. An agency of the Government of Ontario, OTF builds healthy and vibrant communities. For more information, please visit the website at: www.otf.ca.