



## Press Release

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# City of Surrey Wins National Play It Fair! Award 2016 for exceptional work with children and youth

- [The City of Surrey is a champion in promoting children's rights and applying a rights based approach into their work with children](#)
- Over 700 city staff were trained in *Play it Fair!* over last four years, and ongoing
- City of Surrey's MYzone After-School Program has integrated Play it Fair! activities to reach 380 children aged 8-12 every year

**Surrey, November 20, 2016** - Equitas – International Centre for Human Rights Education is pleased to announce that the **City of Surrey** is the 2016 winner of the **Play It Fair! Award**. Every year around [National Child Day \(November 20th\)](#), Equitas acknowledges the great contribution of a Canadian community or youth organization by presenting them with the *Play it Fair!* Award. This year the news will be first shared with children during the [10th Annual Surrey Kids Conference on November 18-19, 2016](#). The City of Surrey [will officially be presented the Award on December 5th, 2016 at the TD Centre in Toronto](#) during the Equitas National Play it Fair! Gathering.

The [Equitas Play it Fair! program](#) is implemented in 42 communities across Canada and in 15 countries around the world. With *Play it Fair!* children learn through play. The human rights value-based activities build social, emotional, physical health and resiliency of children (6-12 years old) and reinforce community organizations' capacity to promote children's healthy development and participation in their communities.

*"The Equitas Play it Fair! Award recognizes outstanding leadership in promoting the values of human rights to children in Canada,"* said Equitas' Executive Director **Ian Hamilton**. *As both our national Play it Fair! program and the City of Surrey's Kids Conference are celebrating their 10th Anniversary this year, we are thrilled to recognize the City of Surrey's successful and inspiring work with Play it Fair! in their MYZone program and day camps to ensure that each child in Surrey has the opportunity to reach their full potential and participate in their community."*

*"We are delighted and honoured to be this year's recipient of the National Play it Fair! Award,"* said Mayor **Linda Hepner**. *"In order to ensure our young residents are happy, healthy and engaged, the City of Surrey is steadfastly committed to fair play practices, inclusive environments and supportive staff to provide great recreational service. We value our partnership with Equitas and we have had more than 700 of our recreation staff trained in the innovative Play it Fair! program to date."*

*"What a difference Play it Fair! has made for Canadian children over the past 10 years! By teaching human rights values to more than 700,000 children across Canada, TD — through Equitas and its partners — has contributed to building more inclusive communities based on respect for diversity, equality and the full participation of all its members. We are proud to empower Canadian children to stand-up and take leadership in promoting values of inclusion, non-discrimination and peaceful conflict resolution, and are looking forward to pursuing this work together." – Valérie Picher, Associate Vice President Community Relations, TD Bank Group*

- The TD Bank Group has been a longtime supporter of Equitas and *Play it Fair!* which has allowed over 700,000 children in Canada to play with a purpose, say no to bullying and embrace diversity.
- Since 2012, *Play it Fair!* has been supported by United Way of Lower Mainland to teach children about their rights and responsibilities in 18 communities in BC and create a sustainable community impact to help children grow great and healthy.
- Last year's Play it Fair! Award winner was the Borough of Montréal-Nord, in Quebec.

**For more information:**

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**Key Notes:**Kids benefit from *Play it Fair!* in Surrey:

- Children participated weekly in *Play it Fair!* activities and were provided an opportunity to take leadership in their community
- Through the City of Surrey MYzone program, children using *Play it Fair!* developed a series of community action projects called "Kindness Counts!". These projects encouraged children to address issues that were important to them, like access to healthy nutrition, children's participation, healthy environment, and peer support, and helped them gain knowledge about children's rights and raise awareness on the importance of positive values amongst their peers and in their community
- "Kindness Counts!" also enabled teamwork, active listening, problem solving, critical thinking, planning, public speaking, the development of children's social, communication and leadership skills, and enhanced physical health through active play

A future for rights education and the promotion of positive values:

- The City of Surrey integrates *Play it Fair!* tools into their recruitment and orientation processes to ensure staff are guided by a child-rights approach
- The City of Surrey promotes knowledge sharing among staff by using *Play it Fair!* games during meetings, sharing best practices for children's rights, and always advancing their programming for children
- Parents and community members in Surrey also have the opportunity to engage in conversations on children's rights through National Child Day and *Play it Fair!* Day events



*Thanks to the TD Bank Group, who have long supported Equitas and Play it Fair! every year, over 100,000 children in Canada learn to play with a purpose, say no to bullying and embrace diversity with TD Bank Group's help.*

*The Equitas Play it Fair! program was launched in Montreal 2005, with the support of the City of Montreal and the Quebec Ministry of Immigration, Diversity and Inclusion.*

#### National Child Day – November 20th

- Celebrated internationally and in Canada since 1993
- Honours the United Nations adoption of the Declaration of the Rights of the Child on November 20, 1959, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) on November 20, 1989
- Every year 10,000 children participate in Equitas' National Child Day Postcard to Parliament activity and share their ideas with the Canadian Prime Minister

#### Equitas – International Centre for Human Rights Education

- Equitas works for the advancement of equality, social justice and respect for the human rights in communities across Canada and around the world since 1967
- In Canada, we partner with 500+ organizations, camps, schools, and municipalities to offer training and coaching—strengthening leadership programming for Canadian children
- The award-winning *Play It Fair!* program turns 10 this year. An innovative initiative for children aged 6-12, it reinforces understanding of human rights, and equips children with knowledge and skills to address bullying, exclusion and discrimination. For more: [www.equitas.org](http://www.equitas.org)

## City of Surrey

- Recreation Surrey makes a vital difference each and every day. With more than 120,000 children and youth calling Surrey home, we now have the largest population of young people between birth and 18 years, in British Columbia. We believe in the power of recreation and play, and the lasting effects it has on building strong, vibrant communities. Through innovative programs and services, we create opportunities that inspire participation, encourage connection, and foster lifelong learning and growth
- Launched in September 2012, the City of Surrey created the MYzone drop-in program to ensure middle years children have access to high quality after-school programming that is open to all, safe, nurturing and supports the principles of healthy child development. MYzone provides active play and recreation, homework support, social-emotional skill development, leadership building, peer and staff relationship development and facilitates civic engagement. The program is inclusive of children's voices and built on research, best practices and ongoing quality assurance.

## **Ends**

### **Press Contact:**

### **About Equitas**

Based in Montreal, Equitas is Canada's oldest and most active human rights education organization, working for the advancement of equality, social justice and respect for human rights. In Montreal each year, more than 15,000 children and youth participate in Equitas programs taking leadership to promote respect, acceptance and build more inclusive, equitable communities. 2017 marks the organization's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary.



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