



The Slaughter Family Foundation commits \$26.5M to youth and mental health initiatives

Approximately 1 in 5 children and youth in Ontario faces a mental health challenge

TORONTO (SEPTEMBER 26, 2023) – The Slaughter Family Foundation today announced it will donate \$26.5 million to 19 organizations including national charities, Greater Toronto Area hospitals, and community service providers to support and expand services for youth suffering from mental health issues. The initiative will enable recipient organizations to provide new or enhanced models of care for youth suffering from such issues as substance abuse, psychosis, schizophrenia, eating disorders and post-partum depression.

A major component of this initiative is the creation of formal partnerships between 12 GTA hospitals and local mental health organizations serving youth that will establish a continuum of care that youth will receive after being discharged from hospitals. This includes implementing better and more realistic models and programs that can be replicated across the country to prevent youth from falling through the cracks—particularly those from underserved and vulnerable communities.

“Funding for mental health initiatives doesn’t just improve lives; it strengthens our entire social fabric,” said **Gary Slaughter, President and CEO, The Slaughter Family Foundation**. “One of the issues we heard loud and clear was the disconnect between youth discharged from hospitals and the continued community support or services available to them. Investing in these connecting services and programs is an investment in the well-being and future of our youth. We consider this support a fundamental step towards breaking down barriers and creating a more equitable, accessible healthcare system.”

The announcement comes ahead of World Mental Health Day (October 10) and at a crucial time, as Canadians between 15 and 24 years old are more likely to report mental health and substance use concerns than any other age group.

According to Katherine Hay, CEO, Kids Help Phone (KHP), 50 per cent of youth in Canada reported experiencing a form of depression and anxiety, particularly through and since the pandemic. Suicide continued to be the second leading cause of death among young people in 2022 – with equity-deserving communities at higher risk due to a disparity in access and service. In 2022 alone, KHP was able to de-escalate and safety-plan with more than 13,000 youth at imminent or significant risk of suicide or self-harm, reducing the need to use emergency services.

“At Scarborough Health Network (SHN), referrals to our Child and Adolescent Mental Health program doubled over the course of 2022, leading to increased wait times,” says Megan Cameron, Manager Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, SHN. “This support will allow us, along with our partner, Strides Toronto, to take proactive steps to address the needs of youth in our community. With the Slaughter Family’s support, we will create a ‘stepped’ care approach for at-risk Scarborough adolescents that will include Dialectical Behaviour Therapy, providing easier access to life-saving mental health treatment and support for our most vulnerable youth.”

The addition of this new gift brings the total of support for mental health initiatives from the Slaughter family to over \$71M to date.

The Slaughter Family Foundation Youth & Mental Health Initiative Recipients:

Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH)	\$2,100,000
Covenant House	\$1,000,000



Drug Free Kids Canada	\$250,000
Humber River Health	\$1,500,000
Jack.org	\$1,000,000
Kids Help Phone	\$1,500,000
Michael Garron Hospital	\$1,700,000
North York General Hospital	\$1,600,000
Ontario Shores Centre for Mental Health Sciences	\$1,620,000
Pine River Institute	\$1,300,000
Scarborough Health Network	\$1,500,000
The Hospital for Sick Children (SickKids)	\$1,500,000
Sinai Health	\$1,000,000
St Joesph's Health Centre	\$1,500,000
St. Michael's Hospital	\$1,780,000
Sunnybrook Hospital	\$1,600,000
University Health Network	\$1,500,000
Youth Wellness Hubs Ontario	\$700,000
Women's College Hospital	\$1,850,000

About The Slight Family Foundation

Since 2013, The Slight Family Foundation has funded several strategic initiatives to multiple organizations. These initiatives started with gifts to five Toronto hospitals to support priority healthcare issues, followed by programs to address global humanitarianism, the healthy development of children and youth across Canada, support for Indigenous issues, a seniors' initiative to help keep seniors in their homes and communities, supporting mental health challenges exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, support for women and girls at risk in Canada and most recently to support the performing arts industry as it continues to recover from pandemic-related closures. This gift of \$26.5 million brings the collective support for these strategic initiatives to \$211.5 million.

The Slight Family Foundation was established in 2008 by John Allan Slight. Allan Slight (1931-2021), known as Canada's broadcast pioneer, was a leader in the music industry and a prominent Canadian philanthropist. Through his generosity, the Foundation proactively supports charitable initiatives in the areas of healthcare, at-risk youth international development, social services and culture. Allan's son, Gary Slight, oversees the foundation as President & CEO, The Slight Family Foundation.

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Media Contact:

Alex Shinnan

Alex.shinnan@mediaprofile.com

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