

MP's REPORT: Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill Youth Council

By Leona Alleslev, MP

Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill

It is often said that "our youth are the leaders of tomorrow." However, I believe that this statement overlooks the important contributions that our youth make to society every day. Our youth are not only the leaders of tomorrow but they are also leading today.

Our Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, has said that "young voices must be part of our decision making process" and that's why I have launched a new initiative to bring youth together from across Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill to engage in the federal political process.

Our Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill Federal Youth Council will meet once a month to learn about our Canadian political process, explore different federal jurisdiction policy issues, gain valuable collaborative and leadership skills and earn volunteer hours.

These young Canadians will be providing me, their Member of Parliament, with broad advice beyond political party lines on national policies and programs that are important to them. We will collaborate on projects regarding national issues such as employment and employment conditions, transportation, access to education, building stronger communities as well as climate change and clean growth, among others. Listening to the issues that matter most to our next generation is an important promise of this government, and me to which I have personally committed.

After reviewing applications, we have accepted 15 individuals from across Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill. These 15 individuals range in age from 14 to 24-years-old, and while some are in high school there are others who have graduated university, and those who are currently studying masters programs. These young leaders come from different backgrounds and communities so they truly represent the vibrant makeup of our area.

Our Youth Council held its first official meeting on October 11. The meeting was introductory in nature but we discussed the relevance of the Federal Government as well as potential roundtable topics for future meetings. The Youth Council communicated that they are specifically interested in the environment and climate change, electoral reform, civic engagement, and employment, among others.

Throughout the next year these young leaders will bring their best ideas to bear on issues facing Canada. We will work together to engage members of our community on national issues and ensure that these young leaders are not only developing their own skills, but are helping to shape the future Canada that they and their children will inherit.

Our Prime Minister has said that "Countries that do not use the talents of all their citizens "regardless of ethnicity, gender or age" risk finding out that the status quo is no way to meet the very real challenges they face." I agree, and I am excited to work with the Youth Council, to invite them to take part in government policy, and to make clear to all Canadian youth that there are many avenues for them to be the leaders of today, particularly in the governing of our nation.

If you have any questions regarding the Youth Council, or federal matters, please feel free to contact me at Leona.Alleslev@parl.gc.ca or stop by our office at 12820 Yonge St. in Richmond Hill, suite 202.