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Annual URBANA event raises \$13,000 for Ottawa youth; has raised more than \$80,000 for local organizations over six years

(Ottawa, ON) Ottawa's Youth Services Bureau (YSB) has a little more to celebrate during its 50th anniversary this year. The organization just received a nice financial boost from URBANA'S sixth annual fundraising event – to the tune of \$13,000. The funding will be used to improve YSB's downtown drop-in centre, a facility that enables street-involved youth to access food, mental and medical health care, counselling and employment services.

URBANA – an annual fundraising event for organizations that help people find and keep safe, affordable, decent housing was founded in 2005 and has so far raised \$80,000 over its six-year lifespan. In addition to raising funds, the event, organized by Dharma Developments founders Akash and Katy Sinha, highlights the talents of emerging local artists in a cocktail event setting.

“Over the years, it has been an inspiration for us to work along side the unsung heroes of our city; the people who work tirelessly to make a positive impact on the lives of those who have trouble making it on their own. URBANA is our own small way of acknowledging the work of these impressive organizations and contributing to the outcomes they so tenaciously pursue. Our event celebrates their achievements and applauds the many, many Ottawa residents and businesses who also support their commitment,” said Akash, president of Dharma Developments. “As housing developers, we appreciated the need for all of us working together to build thriving communities,” said Katy, co-founder of Dharma Developments. “From our perspective, it literally is about how it takes a village.”

“We are all deeply touched that Dharma Developments has selected youth as its focus this year and YSB as the recipient of proceeds from its Urbana 2010 fundraising event,” said Alex Munter, YSB's executive director. “At YSB, we are all about hope and commitment, and turning kids' lives around for a better future. Urbana's theme this year of ‘building hope, building futures’ could not be a better fit for the work we have been doing at YSB for the past 50 years.”

This year's featured artists included DJ Memetic's who provided urban rhythms throughout the evening, and Jordan Kent, local artist and illustrator who directed the creation of a live piece of visual art, painted by guests depicting what 'home' means to them. As well, the evening included Ottawa's own Funk Delivery, performing street style dance. Raffle prizes include a grand prize trip for two courtesy of WestJet. A silent auction of unique pieces of art created on windows was also featured.

Emcee for the evening was well-known CJOH television personality, Kimothy Walker.

Corporate sponsors for the event included Gowlings, Community Champion; WestJet, Uniglobe, Hydro Ottawa and Enbridge, Ace Sponsors; jDesjardins, Welch LLP and Elite Windows, Heart & Soul Donors; and Metro News and DharmaArts.ca, Media Partners.

About Youth Services Bureau

The Youth Services Bureau of Ottawa (YSB) is one of the largest and most comprehensive non-profit agencies serving youth in Ottawa and is a registered charity. This year marks its 50th anniversary of offering a wide range of programs that give youth a chance to achieve their potential.

Every day, young people face difficult choices and life-changing events. YSB supports young people and their families as they resolve complex issues affecting their physical and emotional well-being. YSB provides a safe and non-judgmental environment for youth where they are valued and empowered. The organization promotes respect for diversity including gender, culture, religion and sexual orientation, and provides services in both French and English.

YSB services are strategically located in 20 sites across Ottawa. They offer a wide range of programs that serve between 2,500 and 3,000 young people and families each month that include:

- A 24-hour crisis line
- Short and long-term counseling
- Mental health services
- Emergency and supportive housing
- Services for street-involved youth
- Employment assistance
- Leadership development

About URBANA

Now in its sixth year, URBANA is an annual event that raises funds to help people find and keep decent, affordable housing. Founders of the event, Akash and Katy Sinha, who co-own Dharma Developments, believe it is important to give back to the community. Making a contribution to improve the community by supporting organizations that contribute to creating decent, affordable housing for those in need is where the couple agreed to focus. To date, URBANA has raised over \$80,000 to this worthy end.

The couple gets its inspiration from the many organizations that work tirelessly and without accolades to improve the quality of life of those less fortunate. Organizations that have benefited from URBANA in previous years include The Alex Munter Foundation, Habitat for Humanity, the Ottawa Youth Services Bureau, Cornerstone Housing, Raising the Roof and Options Bytown.

Additional information can be obtained by contacting:
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