



### London Community Foundation supports hospital's youth mental health initiative



*From left: Dr. Javeed Sukhera, Senior Designate Physician Lead, Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, London Health Sciences Centre; Mirella Bryant, Manager Transition Services, Youth Opportunities Unlimited; and Lori Hassall, Director of Crisis Services, Canadian Mental Health Association – Middlesex*

**London, Ont.** - On November 10, London Community Foundation hosted its third annual Community Vitality Celebration at Goodwill Industries, granting more than \$1.2 million to six local groups and a handful of outstanding individuals.

“These projects and people are really taking the lead in driving change in our community,” says LCF President & CEO Martha Powell. Tackling issues such as poverty, homelessness, mental health, abuse and citizen engagement with culture, this year’s Community Vitality grants will have a significant impact on our community.”

Each year dozens of charitable organizations apply for funding. Proposals that demonstrate innovative, strategic, evidence based ideas are selected by LCF’s grants committee and chosen based on their evaluated potential to tackle a pressing community need.

London Health Sciences Foundation received a \$250,000 grant to help sustain a five-year pilot project by London Health Sciences Centre’s Transition Age Project (TAP) and its partners: Youth Opportunities Unlimited (YOU), Addiction Services of Thames Valley, Canadian Mental Health Association – Middlesex, Mind Your Mind, Centre for Addiction and Mental Health.

The LHSC Auxiliary is also supporting this project as part of their 2012 pledge of \$1 million to LHSC Mental Health Services.

Currently, mental health programs for youth have strict inclusion criteria and are geared only for individuals clearly presenting with an onset of either a primary psychotic or mood/anxiety disorder. In addition, youth and families struggling with mental health issues may experience barriers to care such as long wait-lists, the need for physician referral, lack of developmentally appropriate services, and settings and practices that are not engaging for youth.

The Transition Age Project’s mandate is to improve the system of mental health and addictions care for transition age youth (ages 16-25 years) by offering a seamless continuum of service, reducing existing barriers to care, addressing psychosocial needs, in youth-friendly, community settings.

“What we’ve started to do with TAP is not only build a service that’s based on these sound principles, but also be part of a founding group of services that are starting a provincial network in Ontario,” says LHSC’s Senior Designate Physician Lead for Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Dr. Javeed Sukhera.

With TAP, the goal is to build on existing partnerships by collaborating and leveraging services between hospital and community agencies and by engaging youth in the design, delivery and evaluation of these services. The Transition Age Project is working with YOU to secure a site which will house a network of supports including vocational training, housing, physical health and addictions services in one location that will be easily accessible and offer extended hours for calls and walk-ins.

For more on this initiative and London Community Foundation’s support see [www.lhsf.ca/LCFhelpsTAP](http://www.lhsf.ca/LCFhelpsTAP).

*For more information on donor-supported Mental Health Services, please visit [www.lhsf.ca](http://www.lhsf.ca) and click on the Hospital Priorities tab, or contact LHSF Senior Development Officer Simona Dobransky at 519.685.8798, [simona.dobransky@lhsc.on.ca](mailto:simona.dobransky@lhsc.on.ca).*