

# FYI project gets \$1.38-M in funds

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For Youth Initiative (FYI) received \$1.38-million in funding Monday for a by-youth, for-youth project that will provide much-needed community space for youth organizations in the former city of York.

FYI was one of six groups to receive a financial boost from Toronto's Youth Challenge Fund (YCF), a partnership between the province and United Way Toronto, which invested \$4.8 million in this latest round of funding for youth-driven projects.

For FYI, the money will go towards its 1652 Keele Space Initiative to transform the basement of the current FYI office near Keele Street and Rogers Road into a newly furnished community space for youth.

"This whole project itself was youth-led right from the beginning," said Kosal Ky, FYI executive director, noting they received previous YCF funding to do a feasibility study for the project.

Local youth imagined what the space would look like and advocated for com-

munity space to city officials, Ky added.

"It's not just one sole person but it's been a community effort," she said.

Moving ahead with the project, FYI is continuing to take a collaborative approach by supporting other local youth-led organizations that will be sharing the new space consisting of administration offices and rooms to run various youth programs.

Renovation of the FYI basement is expected to begin in January and continue into mid-summer. Project completion with all the rooms furnished and ready for youth to use is slated for late 2009.

More than 500 applications for funding has been received to date, which all go through a stringent assessment and approval process, said Pamela Grant, YCF executive director.

Grant commended FYI and the local youth involved with the 1652 Keele Space Initiative, working together with other community groups and the city to make their project a success.

"It's exciting to see youth taking charge," Grant said.