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Vision, Voice and Leadership

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ROI Announces Launch of the 2024 Rural Change Makers Program

GUELPH, ON, October 9, 2024 (TBC) – The Rural Ontario Institute (ROI) is pleased to announce the launch of the 2024 Rural Change Makers (RCM) Program.

"The Rural Change Makers Program has a powerful track-record of cultivating the next generation of rural and northern community leaders," said Rob Flack, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness. "By supporting and investing in ambitious young leaders and deepening their commitment to our communities, the Rural Ontario Institute will help ensure that every corner of Ontario reaches its full long-term potential."

"Our government values initiatives that provide young leaders, from across the province, with opportunities to enhance their skillsets and grow their networks so they make a difference and drive economic growth at home and in the sectors they work in," said Lisa Thompson, Minister of Rural Affairs. "It is thanks to programs like Rural Change Makers young rural leaders are inspired and confident they can have a positive impact in their work and communities."

"Young leaders are key to driving positive outcomes for rural communities while retaining youth and catalyzing the labour market," says Ellen Sinclair, ROI Executive Director. "Rural Change Makers are the leaders of tomorrow and the RCM program prepares them for future challenges."

"As a 20-year-old advocate from Prince Edward County, I am incredibly excited to be part of the Rural Ontario Changemakers program," says 2024 Rural Change Maker Kiydan Zacharia. "Having worked closely with non-profit organizations to improve youth well-being and leadership, and now supporting youth engagement for various projects with the Municipality, I know the power of youth voices in shaping our future. This program is an opportunity for me to build on my experiences and further develop the skills I need to help young people realize their potential. I once thought I had to leave PEC to find my path, but returning home and finding the right network allowed me to see the unique charm and opportunity here. Now, I hope to inspire other young people to not only discover their potential but to see how that potential can thrive right here in Prince Edward County."

"These incredible young leaders are building their preferred futures at home and reframing the rural landscape through business start-ups, not-for-profit organizations, social enterprises, community development projects and activities. The impact of their community activities is profound personally, and collectively driving social good, rural development capacity and economic resiliency throughout rural Ontario," says Melanie Bidiuk, ROI Communications and Program Manager.

Support for the Rural Change Maker Program has been generously provided in part by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness and Farm Credit Canada. If you would like to support young rural leaders, we invite you to become a program sponsor. Your sponsorship ensures youth have access to expert training and necessary resources to make a difference in their community. For more information, please contact mbidue@ruralontarioinstitute.ca

About ROI:

The Rural Ontario Institute (ROI) is a not-for-profit organization committed to developing leaders, informing decision makers and connecting communities. ROI delivers the renowned Advanced Agricultural Leadership Program (AALP) in its 40th year of operation, and the Rural Change Maker program, a youth leadership initiative for young rural, emerging leaders to address local priorities. We provide data, research, and analysis on rural trends and issues. Information is disseminated through our new Community Wellbeing Dashboard and the Rural Housing Information System.

ASSOCIATED LINKS

- RURAL CHANGE MAKERS
- RURAL ONTARIO INSTITUTE

CONTACTS

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