

## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **MAJOR GRANTS FROM WESTON FAMILY PARKS CHALLENGE**

*The W. Garfield Weston Foundation supports innovative park projects across Toronto*

**(Toronto, January 16, 2014)** – The Weston Family Parks Challenge has provided more than \$1.3 million to help improve Toronto’s parks and help communities engage in the long-term care and maintenance of their parks. This includes the latest round of funding to five vital community greenspaces across Toronto. The funds stem from the \$5 million, three-year initiative that the Weston Foundation launched last year.

“These exciting initiatives will enhance nature and be transformative for several communities”, said Camilla Dalglish, Director of The W. Garfield Weston Foundation. “We are delighted to support these innovative projects that are models of new partnerships focused on the long-term care of Toronto’s parks.”

Each funding recipient is a community driven project. The W. Garfield Weston Foundation has enabled these groups to enhance their connection to nature and develop new partnerships among park friends groups, non-profits, the private and public sectors. The latest round of projects include:

- \$295,000 for William Burgess School near Danforth and Pape to enhance the schoolyard into a natural community gathering point for the entire neighbourhood. The funding will complete a multi-year effort that is a partnership between the school, parents, the city councillor, and several non-profits who have been working for three years to bring their vision to life. The project will include a new natural playground, discovery trail and improve natural landscaping.

“We’re happy to add The W. Garfield Weston Foundation as another partner in transforming William Burgess School into a green oasis for our community” said Alexandra Maric Jones, chair of the school grounds committee. “This generous gift from the Weston Foundation will allow us to complete the vision of a natural community gathering place which we’ve been working towards for 3 years.”

- \$125,000 over two years for the Thorncliffe Park Women’s Committee to turn R.V. Burgess Park into an outdoor natural classroom in the heart of one of Canada’s most dense and diverse neighbourhoods. The funding from The W. Garfield Weston Foundation will enable new Canadians to learn and be inspired about conservation and healthy living and open a gateway to exploring the vast ravine system in the Don Valley.

“R.V. Burgess Park is an essential part of the Thorncliffe Park community, and the support of The W. Garfield Weston Foundation will bring an appreciation for this essential greenspace to members of our community” said Sabina Ali, Project Coordinator at the Thorncliffe Park Women’s Committee. “Neighbours will participate in every aspect of the natural environment, including planting, stewardship, clean-ups and education, and will have a new appreciation for conservation and healthy living as a result.”



- \$120,000 over two years to support an innovative and collaborative partnership in Regent Park to engage the community with the City of Toronto's newest park. The contribution of The W. Garfield Weston Foundation will support community engagement efforts to ensure the long term sustainability of this new park space as part of the revitalization of the Regent Park neighbourhood.

"The generous contribution of The W. Garfield Weston Foundation will ensure this new greenspace in the Regent Park neighbourhood will be off to a successful start when it opens in 2014" said Liz Curran, Community Food Centre Manager at CRC. "The funding being provided by the Weston Foundation will ensure that the local community is engaged with the wonderful new amenities in this park, which will become a community hub for all who live in the area."

Working in partnership with Toronto Park People, Toronto's nonprofit catalyst for better parks, the Weston Family Parks Challenge supports projects that spark new ways to operate parks and engage the public with community and nature.

"We are thrilled to announce the projects that will complete our first year of this innovative multi-year partnership," said David Harvey, Director of Toronto Park People.

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