



Real People, Real Connections: Join Boys and Girls Clubs and Unplug to Connect!

[Toronto – May 28, 2018] Hundreds of thousands of kids and their families. Corporations and local businesses. Young and old alike. On June 1, Boys and Girls Clubs are inviting Canadians from coast to coast to coast to join us and Unplug to Connect!

For one hour (or more), unplug from your devices and connect face-to-face with friends, family, coworkers, and peers—and watch the magic happen.

The Boys and Girls Clubs initiative will be hosted in cities across the country, including:

- **Toronto**—Canadian R&B sensation **Jully Black** will visit our Jane & Finch Boys and Girls Club to connect with kids and members of the community ... and give an “unplugged” performance. And the CN Tower will be lit up in Boys and Girls Club green!
- **Ottawa**—MPs and staffers will team up with kids from our Ottawa Club for a basketball game on the front lawn of Parliament Hill, on a special court built just for Unplug to Connect (event sponsor: Sun Life’s Dunk For Diabetes)
- **Calgary**—Local politicians and community partners have been invited to a “choose your own adventure” event, including crafts, games, reading, and outdoor play. And the Calgary Tower will be lit up in Boys and Girls Club green! (event sponsor: Sun Life’s Dunk For Diabetes)
- **Halifax**—Kids and staff from our Halifax Club will enjoy a pancake breakfast, and then shoot hoops at a basketball event (event sponsor: Sun Life’s Dunk For Diabetes)
- **Vancouver**—MPs and local politicians have been invited to unplug and connect with Club youth and staff in Delta, and Old Navy employees will be onsite to help out
- Plus an Unplug-a-thon in **Lethbridge**, community painting in **Stettler**, a street clean-up in **Winnipeg**, ball hockey in **Hamilton**, a 50th anniversary celebration in **Fredericton**, a family picnic in **Charlottetown**, a popcorn carnival in **Gander**, a parade with RCMP in **Wabana**, and more ...

Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada’s corporate partners are also participating in Unplug to Connect in communities across the country. Old Navy and Gap Inc. will be providing volunteers, program partners Celgene and Jays Care Foundation are hosting their own internal Unplug to Connect events, and all of our national partners will be getting loud on social media!

Why Unplug to Connect? We all know that the internet and smartphones are changing the way that people connect with the world around them. Anxiety is on the rise, especially among kids and teens, as they feel the need to be “plugged in” at all times. The percentage of teens with smartphones has jumped to 89%, while studies show that their psychological well-being decreases dramatically the more time they spend on screens.

Our technological devices are designed to connect us with others, but they are causing us to feel isolated and alone.

At 700 locations across the country, Boys and Girls Clubs serve 200,000 children and youth annually. And at our Clubs, kids spend time away from smartphones and computers every single day—playing together, learning together, and being mentored by caring adults. We know that building relationships is an important life skill, and we strive to create a sense of community for all children and youth.

As adults, we know that social media is an important part of our culture and it’s not going anywhere. But we also know that it is our job to help young people understand the risks.

On **June 1**, pledge to Unplug to Connect and let’s prove that when you put down your phones, anything can happen!

Visit unplugtoconnect.ca to learn more and find all the resources you need to help us spread the word. And when you plug back in? Follow all the action on social media at **#UnplugToConnect**.

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About Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada

Community-based services. Positive relationships. Life-changing programs. As Canada's largest child- and youth-serving organization, Boys and Girls Clubs provide vital programs and services to over 200,000 young people in 700 communities across Canada. Learn more at bgccan.com and follow us on social media **@BGCCAN**.

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