

# ACI CASE STUDY

## PROBLEM

Young people are taking action at the local level to combat issues that are important to them. Students from Cindy Savard Civics class at Glebe Collegiate decided to raise awareness for climate change by organizing an environmental fair for younger students at Mutchmor Elementary school. The project stemmed from a need to promote civic engagement so that young people could be empowered to contribute to society. After research and development, students agreed it was important to educate younger grades about the impacts of climate change and to share concrete actions that they could apply on a daily basis.

## RAISING AWARENESS FOR CLIMATE CHANGE

### SOLUTION

Youth Ottawa worked with Mrs. Sivard and her students to facilitate the Active Citizenship Initiative (ACI) - a program created by Youth Ottawa. The ACI provides experiential learning interventions to Grade 10 Civics classes and employs extraordinary young post-secondary changemakers to facilitate high school student-led civic engagement projects.

#### Broken down into three units, the ACI program:

- Amplifies student voices and challenges students' creativity by brainstorming civic issues
- Enables innovation by allowing youth to initiate an action plan
- Activates solutions to community challenged by helping students develop a civic-action plan on a project of their interest

Students from Mrs. Savard's class were divided into four teams (research, planning, timeline and promotion) and each one of the teams planned a climate change-oriented workshop to teach Elementary School students in a fun and engaging way. The activities included a science experiment related to climate change, a vegan cooking activity and a storytelling session. Students were also able to collaborate with community organizations and invited Elyse McCann -Director of Community Sustainability Programs at EnviroCentre to speak to the class about Climate Change.

### IMPACT

Through the ACI program, students were able to engage with civics tactics, strategies and opportunities to create an actionable solution to Climate Change. Students learned skills such as collaboration, critical thinking, civic engagement and were able to successfully implement a plan and execute their event. The students who took part in the ACI program were asked how this program has impacted their perception of school. The most frequent answers were that it made their civics and careers class more interesting and that they enjoyed being able to experience more hands-on learning.

"It had an enormous impact on their motivation to become a model for younger kids. They felt they could make a difference, they grew confidence in their capacity and they learned what civic engagement meant. They realized that they were part of a system where they could have a real impact on their community."

**- Mrs.Savard**

Teacher at Glebe Collegiate