

Monthly Message: When young voices take the mic, we all should listen

This Saturday, Nov. 15, something powerful is happening in Shelburne.

A group of local youth will take to the stage for the final round of our 5th annual Word of Mouth Monologue Competition ? a celebration of voice, courage, and the deep emotional landscape that lives inside our young people.

In case you're unfamiliar, the Word of Mouth Monologue Competition is a performance-based competition developed and hosted by Streams Community Hub that invites youth across the county to choose from a curated list of monologues ? dramatic, comedic, and everything in between. These pieces are designed to reflect real, relatable experiences, and our performers are judged not only on skill but on authenticity, emotional connection, and stage presence. After an open call, video submissions, and community voting, the top finalists are selected to perform live in front of a panel of guest judges and a cheering audience that we hope you will be part of.

This isn't just a show of talent. It's not theatre for theatre's sake. It's something much deeper. These young performers take on stories of grief, joy, identity, fear, and hope. They don't just recite lines. They bring them to life. And in doing so, they offer us a window into the world as they see it.

Behind every brave performance is a bigger story. A student who has never spoken in public before. A teen who's navigating big emotions and who finds healing in expressing them through character. A young person who didn't think they had a voice that mattered, until now.

At Streams, this is what we do: we create space for creative discovery, personal growth, and bold self-expression. Whether it's through art, baking, music, or monologue, the goal is the same: to help young people find their voice and share it.

We're proud to partner once again with Crewson Insurance Brokers, our presenting sponsor, whose generous support furnishes the cash prizes awarded to our winners. Their belief in this event helps remind youth that their courage is worth celebrating and rewarding.

We're also thrilled to welcome a stellar panel of judges this year.

James Gerus, an actor and writer from Mono, whose short film *Crispy* screened at Cannes, and who recently placed third in Toronto's competitive Monologue Slam.

Jay Vaidya, a Toronto-based television writer and showrunner, has written for hit series like *Odd Squad*, *The Hardy Boys*, and *Run the Burbs*, and is known for crafting stories that centre on belonging and resilience.

Rounding out the panel is returning judge, Bradley Reid, a former child actor whose early film and commercial work has evolved into a lifelong love for storytelling; now based in Dufferin County, he brings both heart and insight to the judging table.

The Word of Mouth Monologue Competition Final is a live event held at Grace Tipling Hall in Shelburne, featuring this year's standout youth performers. Admission is free, but seating is limited. Reserve your tickets at yourwordofmouth.ca.

And if you've never experienced Word of Mouth before, this is the year to come. The performances are unforgettable, but even more than that, the stories are real. Honest. Brave. And deeply human.

As always, if you've been part of our journey, we thank you. If you're just finding out about us, we welcome you. And if you believe in making space for young voices to rise, we'd love your support:

? Attend and share the Word of Mouth final: yourwordofmouth.ca

? Become One of 1000?our campaign to find 1,000 monthly donors giving \$10/month: streamshub.org/oneof1000

? Explore our programs or get involved by volunteering. Among other roles, we're currently seeking volunteer drivers to drive our transit van, Miles, to get kids from school to the hub on weekdays. Sign up at streamshub.org/volunteer

Together, we're building something that lasts. And this Saturday, you're invited to witness the power of a young person stepping into the spotlight and owning their story.

This week's Community Voice submission was written by Juli-Anne James, executive director of Streams Community Hub.