



For Immediate Release

## **Creative Arts Training for At-Risk Toronto Youth Transitions to Online Model**

**UforChange continues to deliver its valuable arts programs to students via online conferencing and collaboration hubs during the COVID-19 crisis**

**TORONTO, ON, March 25, 2020** — UforChange, a not-for-profit charity providing arts education and creative workshops for marginalized or at-risk youth is transitioning its arts programs to an online model to continue to serve students through the COVID-19 crisis. Its popular fashion arts program launches its first online class today, Wednesday March 25 at 530pm., taught by leading Canadian evening wear designer Chris Paunil.

Fashion students will attend live online sessions led by Paunil from his studio each week, for the duration of the program. In addition, supplies for at-home student projects are being assembled with the assistance of fashion suppliers in the Spadina textile district. Youth are being asked to make individual appointments to meet at UforChange (scheduled in 30-minute intervals with strict hygiene processes in place) to safely pick up a bag or box containing their fashion materials so they may continue to work and learn at home.

*“Some of our students are struggling with isolation, many are afraid,” says Lea Greenwood, executive director of UforChange. “By keeping our arts programming alive through this COVID-19 crisis using collaboration hubs and online conferencing, we are giving our youth the support and outlet they need ... along with a vital lifeline to the future.”*

UforChange is planning similar initiatives with its photography and DJ arts programs. In coming weeks, they are expecting to roll out an online model for workshops serving youth in these arts disciplines.

Technology used by the non-for-profit charity include Slack collaboration hub for providing check-in calls, group information posts and support for youth, and Zoom video conferencing for delivery of the online arts instruction.

*“During this critical global crisis, we believe creative arts training for youth is more important than ever,” says Greenwood. “All the more reason that funding is direly needed to help us keep delivering these essential programs, however we possibly can.”*

*UforChange is a not-for-profit charity providing arts education and creative workshops for marginalized or at-risk youth across Toronto. Since 2009, it has offered professional training in fashion, photography, film and DJ arts, along with career guidance and volunteer opportunities. Its goal is to empower, educate and equip young creatives to pursue a fulfilling career.*

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