



May 10, 2012

Frances Pritchard  
City of Toronto

Dear Frances:

I am writing to express my concern about the termination of the Slots at Racetrack Program and the negative impact it will have on Woodbine Entertainment Group's operations at Woodbine and Mohawk Racetracks and the supports they provide to Community MicroSkills Development Centre.

Community MicroSkills Development Centre is a non-profit, charitable organization that has served communities in Toronto and the surrounding areas since 1984. Our programs and services focus on assisting our client community – the unemployed or underemployed, newcomers, low-income women, and youth – to achieve economic self-sufficiency, active participation in community life, and productive contribution to Canadian society.

WEG is a strong community partner focused on building a strong sustainable community, working in collaboration with various stakeholders to ensure the most vulnerable in our community experience quality of life. To achieve their commitment to community, over many years WEG have consistently supported programs for youth, women, and newcomers.

The Rexdale community is economically deprived and any changes to this community that does not focus on economic stability, will further marginalize its residents. Specifically, Rexdale continue to be disproportionately impacted due to loss of employment, especially, jobs loss due to the decline in our manufacturing sector. Woodbine presents itself as a beacon of hope in this community. As such, changes that reduce their ability to support programs that address poverty in our community is ill advised.

Woodbine has worked in co-operation with many organizations, including MicroSkills with job fairs to assist new residents with resume writing and job interview skills. WEG has supported MicroSkills' program which helps internationally trained individuals prepare for jobs in Ontario. Their employees have donated their time and expertise in mentoring immigrants and youth to be successful in their job search. In fact, WEG employees have contributed over 200 hours in our last fiscal 2011-2012 to support our clients become employment ready.

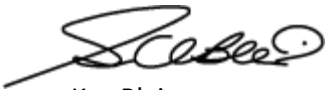
Unquestionably, WEG's commitment to education and internships programs has made a difference in the lives of many young people in our community. They have set up awards and scholarships for students at universities and colleges along with supporting leadership and summer camps, riding programs for the disabled and ongoing support for local shelters for women and youth. Several of the students who have received scholarships have expressed that they were the first in their family to attend post-secondary. We applaud WEG's leadership and their commitment to education as an equalizer of opportunity.



I understand the Executive Committee is considering whether Toronto will host a full casino. I want to express support for Woodbine Racetrack being the identified location for a casino. With approximately 3,000 slot machines already located there, it is an existing major gaming site. Expanding this is a natural evolution. The community recognizes the strong ties and first-class operations that Woodbine Entertainment Group have. With the already demonstrated public support, there should be no need to conduct a referendum.

I urge you to reconsider the successful partnership of the Slots at Racetrack program. Woodbine Entertainment Group has been instrumental in bringing employment and economic stability to our neighbourhood - women, youth, disabled, and newcomers- helping these individuals find their way toward citizenry.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kay Blair', with a stylized flourish extending from the end.

Kay Blair  
Executive Director  
Community MicroSkills Development Centre