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National Youth Commission to Engage Canada's Future Leaders in a Dialogue About Equality

Dr. Ursula Franklin to Address Canada's Youth

Toronto, ON, April 15, 2010 – The Women's Legal Education and Action Fund (LEAF) is launching a national Youth Commission to celebrate 25 years of the equality section of the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. **A launch event will take place today at the Ursula Franklin Academy, ([146 Glendonwyne Road, Toronto, ON](#)) from 10:05 a.m. – 11:20 a.m.**

Dr. Ursula Franklin will speak at the launch. Dr. Franklin is University Professor Emerita in the University of Toronto's Department of Materials Science Engineering and a member of the Order of Ontario. She has campaigned for social justice, peace and women's rights and is the figurehead of the group that ushered in Section 15. The United Nations Association of Canada awarded Dr. Franklin with the Pearson Peace Medal in recognition of her humanitarian work.

Speakers also include **Saron Gebresellassie**, a Youth Commissioner and York University doctoral candidate. Saron received the YWCA Woman of Distinction Award and was named in Chatelaine Magazine's "Top 80 Women to Watch" feature.

The Youth Commission is taking the pulse of Canada's youth to discover how social justice and equality issues impact their lives. LEAF selected 12 Youth Commissioners from across Canada to survey their local communities through focus groups and events. At these gatherings, Commissioners will pose questions about social justice, and the responses will be recorded.

LEAF will publish a video of youth responses, use the feedback to improve their youth programming and develop a report to support further research on equality issues in Canada.

Youth from across Canada are also encouraged to submit creative works that depict their perspectives on human rights to the Youth Commission blog at www.leaf.ca/youth.html.

"Today's youth are the first generation to grow up protected under the equality section of the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*," says Audrey Johnson, Executive Director of LEAF. "Through the Youth Commission, we hope to learn about the social justice challenges young Canadians currently face and how they see the future of equality in Canada."

To learn how you can interview a Youth Commissioner in your community, please contact Niki Popper, Education Program Coordinator at 416-595-7170 ext. 229 or n.popper@leaf.ca.

About LEAF: The Women's Legal Education and Action Fund (LEAF) is a national charitable organization that works toward ensuring the law guarantees substantive equality for all women in Canada. This year marks LEAF's 25th anniversary.

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