

## Mindyourmind will showcase the talents of youth during its annual Mash Up

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[Newswriter22](#) The United Nations is recognizing International Youth Day with eight events in countries across the globe, and only one of them is happening in Canada — in London to be exact. Mindyourmind, an internationally recognized youth mental health support program based in the Forest City, will be holding its third annual youth day event on Sunday, Aug. 12. And for the second year in a row, that event will be putting the talents of both local and international youth and young adults on display. The International Youth Day Mash Up will take place at the Central Library's Wolf Performance Hall, starting at 7 p.m. Even though it is a free event, with tickets available online, organizers are asking people to reserve their tickets. The mash up is a video contest that will see the top five vote getters (determined through votes placed on [www.mindyourmind.ca](http://www.mindyourmind.ca)) compete live on stage for a \$500 grand prize. Heather Miko-Kelly, Mindyourmind youth projects and volunteer coordinator, said the mash up is the perfect type of event for International Youth Day. "It is something people are interested in doing. That it is the only (International Youth Day) event in Canada, that is pretty amazing," Miko-Kelly said. "We really wanted to celebrate youth and the talents they have. That is really what it is all about." The mash up is open to youth and young adults, ages 14-25, and allows participants to share a wide variety of talents. "Singing, a musical act, dance, magic, juggling, comic acts, b-boxing, slam poetry, even whistling. If you can whistle a good song, you might get voted in," Miko-Kelly said. "We want this to be a fun event. Last year it was a really high-energy night, that is what people came away with. Everyone had such a great time, performers and audience members." There will be other special performances during the evening, Miko-Kelly said, although final details are still being firmed up. She did say, there will be other dancers and singers at the very least. The first place prize is in the competition is \$500 and will be picked that night by the guest judges (who are also still to be finalized). Miko-Kelly said organizers have been very successful in getting sponsorships for the evening, including a huge variety of door prizes — of local, national and international origin — that will be given away to the audience. Last year's event was a success, selling out the 375-seat Wolf Performance Hall. That kind of response shows the demand for an event like this, that according to Max Specht, Mindyourmind's youth outreach assistant. "That turnout last year tells us youth want to come out and support one another. That there is probably a need for an event like this where youth can attend," Specht said. "And if you compare it to the other events that are going on, which are mostly seminars, stuff like that, what we are doing is rather unique and fun. The others are a little more dry I suppose. Ours is more of a celebration." Last year's the mash up generated around 30 submissions, Miko-Kelly said. So far this year, submissions have been a little slower to start, but she is confident things will pick up closer to the Aug. 2 deadline for submissions. One change for this year will open up the event to a slightly wider audience than just those able to attend the event live in London. "Anyone who can't be available to perform live the night of the event enters into an international category. That can be someone who lives in Toronto or lives in Portugal," Miko-Kelly said. "They submit their video the same way, it is



the same voting process, but they will be in a different category. We wanted to truly make it an international event. We recognize what the UN is doing." Specht said he had spoken with many people who had attended last years' event and found them very excited around not only the event, but also the excitement created by the competitors and the audience alike. That energy, Specht said, is something that needs to be recognized and supported. "They get excited, the energy rises, and they realize that maybe there is a need for something like this, maybe we should be celebrating this more often," Specht said. "It is all about support and support builds energy. And energy, in that regard, can be based off love. If you show that kind of emotion, the energy is built with it."