



# Engaging Young Women in Politics: Head Start London kicks off at King's

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Leading female politicians from London and the surrounding area will gather at King's on Friday October 18, 9:30a.m. – 11:30 a.m. to kick off the Head Start London initiative. With a goal of having more women actively involved in leadership roles in political and community life, Head Start London will work towards removing barriers some women face to entering political life.

As a collaboration between King's Social Justice and Peace Studies students and faculty with London City Hall elected councillors including Joni Baechler along with the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, London is one of only seven communities from across Canada to be part of the Head Start program, and the only one in Southern Ontario.

Friday's program includes participation from 60 King's students along with Western University, The City of London and King's Students' Council. The goal is to have 30 percent or greater participation of women on elected councils across Canada. In London, there are currently 5 women elected out of 15 on council.

"I think you have a primary social justice issue anytime a group is excluded from decision making capacity," says Patty Mockler, 4<sup>th</sup> year King's student and intern of Joni Baechler.

King's professor Allyson Larkin has her entire class participating in Friday's program. "The Head Start initiative is exactly the type of opportunity that we are seeking for students from Social Justice and Peace Studies at King's. It is a chance to work side by side with leading local politicians, to gain first-hand knowledge of political processes and begin to integrate the theory learned in the classroom with the real demands of the local political arena. I am very grateful to Joni Baechler's leadership--she became involved with King's SJP students last year and inspired students to take their concerns to City Hall and to voice them during the public participatory budget sessions. I am looking forward to continuing to work with Councillor Baechler and to support King's students in their desire to contribute to a building a socially just community," says Professor Larkin.

Also attending the event will be M.P. Irene Mathyssen, M.P.P. Peggy Sattler, Strathroy-Caradoc Mayor Joanne Vanderheyden, Lucan-Biddulph Councillor Cathy Jesson-Burghardt, London Councillors Judy Bryant, Joni Baechler, former London Mayor Anne

Marie DeCicco-Best, former London Controller Janet McEwan and FCM Head Start Coordinator Melissa Newitt.

Media are invited to attend. The event will be held in Bessie Labatt Hall, 266 Epworth Ave, Room 101. Parking in lot 1, north side of Epworth Ave if you identify yourself as media.

You can follow on twitter @headstartldn #headstartldn.

**For more information please contact:**

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