

Ontario Youth against Violence Initiative

Submitted by:

Education & Advocacy Youth Advisory

Youth Services Bureau of Ottawa

Youth Engagement Program

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Overview

The Youth Services Bureau of Ottawa's recent partnership with the Provincial Child and Youth Advocates Office in Toronto created an opportunity for Ottawa youth and adults to work in partnership through the Ontario Youth against Violence Project. This initiative was to develop and delivery projects that would create solutions for and impact the issues surrounding Youth and Violence. The Projects would be delivered as youth to youth initiatives through a youth engagement model and provide new solutions to the issues that impact youth and violence. Included in this province-wide strategy were seven (7) regions across the province of Ontario who had been selected to work together to identify, develop and deliver specific youth projects as defined by each individual region to best meet the needs in their local community. All projects were delivered under the umbrella of the Ontario Youth against Violence Initiative and included the regions of Ottawa, Toronto, Sudbury, Hamilton, Windsor, Thunderbay and London.

The Youth Services Bureau of Ottawa's (YSB) Education and Advocacy Youth Advisory took the lead with the local Ottawa area project under the supervision of YSB's Youth Engagement Program. This team of youth reviewed the possible options for developing a project that would benefit the local community and bring about change within the area of youth and violence. Following considerable brainstorming it was unanimously decided that the most important aspect of this project would be to create something that could be sustainable. As a result the youth determined that the best way to focus on this issue and to provide a means to sustain the focus was to create a Network that could come together and tackle the issues in this area.

Project

The Education and Advocacy Youth Advisory worked within their weekly meetings to establish what the project would look like. Over the course of the timeframe allotted there were two goals set to accomplish. These included:

1. To set up a network comprised of youth and youth serving organizations that would meet on a monthly basis to review issues impacting youth and violence and to develop strategies from a youth to youth perspective and in partnership with adults to deal with these issues.
2. Once the network was established the first project identified was to create an awareness campaign to bring focus to youth and violence issues as well to promote the Youth against Violence Network initiative.

Why a Network?

The Education and Advocacy Youth Advisory identified the need for more than just a quick and simple solution to dealing with the issue of youth and violence. It was important to look long term and to try to choose a project that would have a longer term impact and would provide for a means to continue to work on this issue over a significant period of time. Therefore the decision to develop a Network seemed to be the best solution to bringing some consistency and focus to the issue. Developing a network would:

- Create an opportunity for many youth and youth serving organizations to meet regularly which would serve to creating partnerships to tackle the issues as a group
- Encourage people to work together to develop solutions and support different views and include more ideas
- Provide an opportunity for youth and adults to work in partnership
- Provide a way to increase the impact on making changes
- Provide a way to share resources
- Allow youth to learn new skills and become leaders in the area of youth and violence issues

Why an Awareness Campaign?

- Would serve to create momentum and publicity to engage youth in the Ontario Youth against Violence Network and in future projects that would be developed and delivered in the Ottawa area under this initiative
- Would create opportunity for discussions on issues that impact youth and violence (i.e. attendance at info fairs, speaks...)

Outcomes of Project

1. Establishment of a Youth against Violence Network

The Education and Advocacy Youth Advisory has now established a Youth against Violence Network with in the City of Ottawa. The committee continues to strive to increase the membership of this Network however to date the following organizations and youth have joined the Network:

Ontario Youth against Violence Network

1. Youth Services Bureau of Ottawa
2. Children’s Hospital of Eastern Ontario - Youth Net
3. Students Commission – Ottawa Office
4. Pink Triangle Services - Pink Triangle Youth Group
5. Building a Safer Ottawa/Wise
6. Minwaashin Lodge Aboriginal Support Centre
7. Provincial Centre of Excellence on Youth Engagement
8. Jer’s Vision
9. Raphaelle Ferland (youth)
10. Tanner Hiemstra (youth)
11. M.J. Cleroux (youth)
12. Dominique Lamarche (youth)
13. Tabitha Lewis (youth)
14. Jeremy Britt (youth)
15. Susan Pigeon (youth)

In addition the National Youth in Care Network and Planned Parenthood Ottawa have indicated that they are interested in receiving minutes from the Network however at present do not have an individual that could attend the meetings but will work towards this.

Other agencies identified to get involved that the Education and Advocacy Youth Advisory is in contact with and soliciting their involvement includes:

- Children Aid Society of Ottawa*
- Youcan*
- United Way of Ottawa*
- Community Foundation of Ottawa*
- Boys and Girls Clubs*
- Inner-city Ministries*
- Elizabeth Fry Society*

The first project of the Network has been to develop and awareness campaign. Once the awareness campaign is complete the Network will begin the process of identifying key areas of focus and the means to acquire further funding for projects identified by the network as key to bringing about change.

2. Awareness Campaign

The Youth against Violence Network is presently working on the development of the Awareness Campaign to begin to solidify interest and create exposure to the network itself as well as to bring attention to the issues surrounding youth and violence.

The Network has identified several promotional items to be purchased, however, needs to finalize the messaging to be inscribed on the promotional items. Items include lanyards, buttons, stress balls, silicone bracelets, t-shirts and toques. Once the messaging is finalized these items will be ordered and used to promote the network through participation at area info and health fairs, at youth events, and through other activities that the youth will engage in to bring about increased knowledge and awareness of issues impacting youth and violence.

Budget

To date the funding received by the Youth Services Bureau of Ottawa's Education and Advocacy Youth Advisory has not been spent. The funding received will be used to cover the costs of purchasing the promotional materials for the network. These items should be purchased by no later than December 31, 2008. We have forecasted the budget expenditures as follows:

Item	Quantity	Price per item	Total
Lanyards	1,000	\$2.28	\$2,280.00
Stress Balls	1,000	\$1.50	\$1,500.00
Button Maker	1	\$600.00	\$600.00
Button Supplies		\$800.00	\$800.00
Toques	300	7.95	\$2,385.00
Silicone Bracelets	1,000	.75	\$750.00
T-Shirts	400	\$5.46	\$2,185.00
TOTAL Budget			\$10,500.00