Youth: Our Future. Invest in it.

Coquitlam Leisure & Parks Youth Strategy

June 2006

Coquitlam

The Coquitlam Youth Strategy.
Developed by the Coquitlam Leisure & Parks Youth Services staff team:
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introduction

The Coquitlam Leisure & Parks Youth Strategy has been updated since it was originally developed by a team of Youth Services staff, youth and contributing agency representatives in 2004. This updated strategic direction for Coquitlam Leisure & Parks - Youth Services, furthers the work the original team proposed and updates information as possible. While continuing to utilize research that was collected in 2002/2003, this revised strategy also includes other inputs and information that contribute to a strategy that is more than simply relevant for 2006. The guiding principles and strategic directions outlined in this strategy offer Leisure & Parks Services a renewed focus for promoting the health and well-being of young people in our community.

thank you

The Youth Services team acknowledges the contributions from the original Youth Strategy research team. This list included Banting Middle School, Boys and Girls Club, CABE/ Teen Parent Program, Centennial School, Circle of Friends, Como Lake Middle School, Coquitlam Youth Council, Cottonwood Neighbourhood Program, Elizabeth Fry Society, Hoy Creek Housing Co-op, Pinetree Community Centre – Landing Teen Centre, Maillard Middle School, Multicultural Youth Council, Planned Parenthood of B.C., Pro-Ed, School District 43, Simon Fraser Youth Day Treatment Program, SUCCESS, Poirier Community Centre – The Centre – A Place for Youth, Virtues Club, and Youth Matters!

The Youth Services team also wishes to thank the 2004 Recreation and Cultural Services Advisory Committee and its Youth Strategy subcommittee that included Lee Bond, Richard Marion and Jack Trumley whose dedication and positive vision for the youth of Coquitlam established a legacy of adult / youth positive relationships.

Also acknowledged are the contributions of the 2006 Sport and Recreation Services Advisory Committee and its Youth Implementation Strategy subcommittee that again include Lee Bond and Jack Trumley, as well as three members of our youth community who have strived to make a difference for their peer group. Paul Choi, Beth Hong and Aygul Mammadova worked effectively with Youth Services staff Chill Yin Lee, Michael Fox, Jennifer Bradley and Jessica Nelson to revise this Youth Strategy and ensure that young people had a voice in determining this direction.

Additional thanks to Lori Lauriente, City of Coquitlam, for the contribution of her time, efforts and ideas in the formatting and preparation of this document.

David Leavers,
Manager Leisure Services

mission statements

City of Coquitlam Mission:

We serve the public interest through leadership, innovation, and a focus on community priorities and strengths.

Coquitlam Leisure & Parks Mission:

We work with the community to create and support leisure and parks opportunities that encourage healthy lifestyles.

a message from city council

June 29, 2006

Back Row: Councillor Mae Reid, Councillor Brent Asmundson, Councillor Barrie Lynch, Councillor Doug Macdonell
Front Row: Councillor Lou Sekora, Councillor Mae Reid, Mayor Maxine Wilson, Councillor Louella Hollington, Councillor Fin Donnelly

Coquitlam City Council is pleased to endorse the Coquitlam Leisure & Parks Youth Strategy. The guiding principles and strategic directions outlined in this document offer a renewed focus for promoting the health and well being of young people in our community.

Building on the Youth Strategy developed by a team of Youth Services staff, youth and contributing agency representatives in 2004, this updated strategy includes information that is more relevant to our youth in 2006.

We are focusing on four directions: eliminating the barriers to participation, promoting safety and personal wellness, building relationships between adults and youth and providing opportunities for youth to have a voice in the community by ensuring they are being asked and heard. A variety of initiatives fall out from each of these four directions.

While we know that organized recreation is not a cure-all for the complexity of social problems faced by today's youth, we also know that youth who participate in extracurricular activities are healthier physically and emotionally, have more positive peer relationships, perform better at school and are less likely to take part in negative behaviours.

Coquitlam is proud to be creating opportunities for our youth in the community and we look forward to seeing this strategy implemented.

Yours truly,

Mayor Maxine Wilson & City Council

background

DEVELOPING A YOUTH STRATEGY

It's been the best of times and the worst of times, observed a secondary school principal at a forum organized to address an outbreak of criminal activity in the local community. Rarely, explained the principal, had he witnessed such extremes in youth behaviours and attitudes. On one hand, he had never been more impressed with students at his school. These were youth fully engaged, excelling in all areas of school and community life. On the other hand, he was concerned that a growing number of youth seemed to be experiencing the polar opposite, and expressing it through behaviour that was increasingly destructive to themselves and others.

Almost a year earlier, Coquitlam Leisure & Parks Youth Services staff had begun to look more closely at the youth populations in Coquitlam: who they were serving and not serving. It had become apparent that while the current recreation programs offered by Youth Services were addressing the needs of a percentage of youth very well, a significant number of young people in the community were not spending their leisure hours in ways that are positive or healthy.

To clearly identify the population Youth Services is to be serving, Coquitlam Leisure & Parks define youth as citizens between the ages of 11 and 18 years.

This is not to suggest that organized recreation should be viewed as a cure-all for the complex social problems that youth may experience. But it is an important piece of the puzzle. Studies show that youth who participate regularly in extracurricular activities are healthier physically and emotionally, have more positive peer relationships, perform better at school, and are less likely to take part in negative behaviours, such as substance misuse (Canadian Parks and Recreation Association, 2001).

* The Gender Equity research conducted by the City confirmed that girls and young women had significantly less access to resources, including space, facilities, funding, coaching and opportunities to participate. A major initiative was launched by the City to work with staff and community organizations to ensure fairness and equity for girls in sport and movement programs.

The Youth Services staff, in the process of working in support of several community projects, recognized the extent to which youth in various neighbourhoods and from various demographic groups, were facing significant barriers to participation. Barriers experienced by girls in sport and movement programs, often due to historical gender biases, were being seriously addressed. *

However, the Youth Services team recognized that young people were experiencing a variety of barriers--socio/economic, cultural, and geographical--that were hindering their positive participation.

To increase opportunities and access for all youth populations, and to clarify the Youth Services role as the staff worked to respond to the diversity of youth needs, the team undertook the development of a Youth Strategy in September 2002. Through this process, the team members could define their mission and mandate, identify the principles and philosophy that would guide their work, and develop a vision for the future.

The Youth Strategy process would begin with a study to explore how youth in Coquitlam spend their leisure time. It would describe the barriers youth experience; the challenges they face; the gaps in programs and services; the degree of safety they feel in the community; and the kinds of neighbourhoods in which they would like to live. It would also explore how youth feel about their relationships with the adults in their immediate lives and in the wider community.

In 2002 and 2003, while the Youth Services team was conducting this research, an unprecedented number of individuals, groups and organizations in the Tri-Cities were also working to develop major youth initiatives.

Ironically, as these initiatives were gaining momentum, the Tri-Cities were grappling with some of the most challenging youth behaviours experienced in years. Youth criminal activity is usually present to some degree in most communities, and it is not uncommon to experience peak problem years. But incidents of vandalism, and other neighbourhood problems, seemed to be in 2003.

In response, a community forum was organized by Coquitlam Leisure & Parks, the RCMP and School District 43. More than two hundred adults and youth gathered in a school theatre to consider ways the community might work together to address these concerns. Participating organizations such as Education for Peace, Leave Out Violence, End Youth Violence, and Circle of Friends provided important perspectives, focusing on the need for outreach and prevention programs. Many of the youth who attended the forum stood up and eloquently expressed their concerns and ideas for change.

If it was the worst of times, it was indeed also the best of times. Throughout the Tri-Cities, citizen groups and organizations were inspired to begin thinking about how they could better support youth in their neighbourhoods. Partnerships were developing to share resources and articulate common goals. And many youth volunteer groups throughout the community were making important contributions to the well-being of their peers. For the Youth Services team, the process of developing a youth strategy had evolved into something more challenging and farther-reaching than ever expected. And it was just the beginning….

* The Youth Services team chose to develop a questionnaire that would target specific youth populations: youth living in low-income neighbourhoods; youth in after-school and alternative school programs; youth who have been in conflict with the law; new Canadian youth; youth in two leadership programs; and youth who frequent the two teen centres in Coquitlam.

our research

In September 2002, the Youth Services team* embarked on a year of research to understand:

- how youth in Coquitlam spend their leisure time, and the diversity of their needs and interests
- the recreational activities in which they participate and where
- the specific barriers to participation that they experience
- the most significant challenges they face
- the gaps in youth-oriented programs and services in the community
- the degree of safety youth feel in their schools and neighbourhoods
- the kinds of neighbourhoods in which youth would like to live
- the extent to which their opinions and ideas are sought and heard by adults
- the presence or lack of adult mentors/role models in their lives

**Coquitlam Leisure & Parks Youth Services Team consists of four staff; A Recreation Program Coordinator and Recreation Leader in "East Coquitlam" / Town Centre, and the same in "West Coquitlam" / Poirier.*

RESEARCH TOOLS

1. Youth Survey and Focus Groups

The Youth Services team developed a survey that consisted of:

- a questionnaire that was distributed to professionals working in youth-serving agencies and school programs in the Tri-Cities (12 questionnaires completed and returned). See Appendix A.
- a questionnaire that was distributed to youth between the ages of 11-18 years (106 questionnaires completed and returned).* See Appendix B.
- and an interview questionnaire that was used for focus groups that involved 80 youth and adults. See Appendix C.

2. Review of Regional and National Research
The team undertook a review of large-scale surveys in order to compare local findings with regional and national statistics on youth issues, health and community participation. (See reference section for list).

3. A Literature Review of Philosophical Frameworks, Models and other Municipal Strategies
(See reference section for list).

4. Community Profile
This included City demographics and census data: the number of youth in Coquitlam, ESL populations, and income levels by neighbourhood.

5. A Review of Programs and Services for Youth
This included an inventory of: Coquitlam Leisure & Parks programs and services for youth; youth participation statistics in Leisure & Parks programs; partnerships with community groups and organizations.

Future considerations:
In 2006, Coquitlam Leisure & Parks will undertake a master planning process which will identify both current and long-term service needs of our community, including youth, to 2021.

COQUITLAM COMMUNITY PROFILE

Population:

- Total population in Coquitlam: **121,463 (latest estimate: July 2004)**
- Youth population, 10-19 years, in Coquitlam: **~ 16,955 (latest estimate: 2004)**

Diversity:
Coquitlam is an ethnically and culturally diverse community. The languages most often spoken include: English, Cantonese, Korean, Mandarin, and Farsi, but there are growing populations of Spanish, Polish and many other European and Asian-speaking citizens in Coquitlam.

HOW ARE YOUTH SPENDING THEIR LEISURE TIME?

The Youth Services research indicated that approximately 20% of Coquitlam youth, 11-18 years, participate in Leisure & Parks Services programs (sport and movement, health and fitness, general interest, arts & crafts, performing arts, leadership, camps, out-trips, special events, youth committees and other volunteer opportunities).

- Approximately 18% of youth in Coquitlam are involved in community sports organizations.
- Youth Services partners with several organizations that provide programs for youth.
- Youth also participate in school sports, clubs, faith groups, arts, individual activities and other programs in the community.

However, at least one third of youth are not involved in extracurricular activities:

- **2002/2003 Coquitlam Youth Services Youth Survey (Local Survey)**:

38% of the youth surveyed do not participate in organized extracurricular activities at least once a week.

- **2002 Understanding Youth in Canada (National Survey)**:

30%-50% of youth are not physically active enough for optimum growth and development.

- **2003 Adolescent Health Survey III (Provincial Survey)**:

72% of youth surveyed report participating in extracurricular activities once per week on average in the calendar year. In addition, only *60%* reported participating in organized sport and/or physical activity, and only *71%* in unorganized sport and/or physical activity, at least once per week.

- **2006 Progress of Canada's Children and Youth**:

78% of youth aged 12-14 reported they were physically active on a regular basis, and *76%* of youth aged 15-19 reported regular physical activity. This report also shows that *36%* of 12-14 years olds and 48% of 15 - 19 year olds are sedentary at least 30 hours per week.

WHY IS IT A CONCERN THAT ONE THIRD OF YOUTH ARE NOT POSITIVELY INVOLVED?

There is a very strong link between healthy lifestyle choices and participation in positive extracurricular opportunities. The one third of youth who do not participate is at a higher risk of experiencing school difficulties, emotional and behavioural problems, poor physical fitness, and becoming involved in unhealthy, high-risk activities.

Encouraging positive participation is not only a matter of "keeping kids out of trouble." Youth who do not participate in organized extracurricular activities or community life miss out in all kinds of ways: they have limited opportunities to develop new skills and talents, such as leadership, community service and citizenship; to develop an attachment to, and sense of responsibility for, their community; to work with diverse groups of people; or to be in contact with positive adult role models outside their home and school environments.

guiding principles

When seeking a philosophical framework that would guide their work, the Youth Services staff chose two approaches that could effectively operate in tandem.

The *Child and Youth Friendly Communities Approach* suggests how policy-makers can develop structures and decision-making processes that strengthen and promote the health and well-being of young people in a community.

The *Healthy Communities – Healthy Youth – 40 Development Assets Approach* focuses on ways that adults—including parents and extended family, neighbourhoods, friends, coaches, teachers, youth workers, police, and ordinary citizens—can offer, to every young person within their sphere of influence, the kinds of tools needed for success.

CHILD AND YOUTH FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES

Child and Youth Friendly Communities is a global movement – its long-term vision is to create living, playing, learning and working environments for young people that are safer, healthier and more enriching. The Society for Children and Youth of British Columbia (SCY) has identified seventeen domains that affect the lives of children and youth, and has outlined the steps that policy-makers can take in order to bring this vision closer to reality.

The domains include: Housing, Close to Home (Amenities), Parks and Open Space, Family Support Services, Childcare and Early Childhood Education, Schools, Neighbourhood Security and Policing, Transportation, Recreation and Community Services, Organized Sport and Physical Recreation, The Arts and Culture, Health Services, Social and Justice Services, Local Businesses, Workplaces, Local Government, and the Media.

Eight Key Asset Topics

- Support
- Empowerment
- Boundaries and Expectations
- Constructive Use of Time
- Commitment to Learning
- Positive Values
- Social Competencies
- Positive Identity

What is Asset Development?

- Focusing on the positive - the gifts and capacities of others
- Unleashing the caring potential of all citizens
- Mobilizing the public rather than relying heavily on professionals
- Doing small but important gestures: calling children and youth by name, acknowledging their presence, exchanging greetings, smiling.

HEALTHY COMMUNITIES, HEALTHY YOUTH, 40 DEVELOPMENTAL ASSETS

While the *Child and Youth Friendly Community Approach* focuses on the important steps that policy-makers can take, the *40 Development Assets Approach* illustrates that small but meaningful acts, by ordinary people, can add up to a significant improvement in the lives of youth.

The Healthy Communities – Healthy Youth: 40 Developmental Assets Approach was developed by the Search Institute of Minneapolis, Minnesota after ten years of research about what youth need in order to experience success in their lives. The Institute developed a list of forty developmental assets, built around eight key topics that provide the foundation of success which help young people to grow up healthy, caring and responsible.

The Developmental Asset framework is categorized into two groups of 20 assets. External assets are the positive experiences young people receive from the world around them. These 20 assets are about supporting and empowering young people, about setting boundaries and expectations, and about positive and constructive use of young people's time. External assets identify important roles that families, schools, congregations, neighbourhoods, and youth organizations can play in promoting healthy development.

The twenty internal assets identify those characteristics and behaviours that reflect positive internal growth and development of young people. These assets are about positive values and identities, social competencies, and commitment to learning. The internal Developmental Assets will help these young people make thoughtful and positive choices and, in turn, be better prepared for situations in life that challenge their inner strength and confidence.

strategic direction #1

ELIMINATE BARRIERS TO ACTIVE PARTICIPATION

Research Findings:

In the survey, youth were asked: "If you are not involved in recreational activities, what stops you?" The following were the top barriers cited:

"Too busy with school. Not enough time":

"It's hard to have fun with so many worries about school" (youth survey respondent)

Some youth are very driven to excel in school – their families and peer groups place a high value on academic achievement. While we all want young people to do well in school, there is a concern that those youth who focus only on academic achievement are not developing a healthy life balance, resulting in isolation, poor physical fitness and high levels of stress.

When youth were asked to list the greatest challenges they face, "school and employment" concerns were in the top five. Comments such as: "not enough time to relax," "not enough time to sleep," and "all sorts of tests, requirements, opportunities hitting us all at once," illustrate the stress many of the youth are feeling.

"Lack of money":

Poverty rates are increasing: 19.1% of families in Coquitlam live below low income cut-offs (United Way, 2001). In 1989, 1 in 7 Canadian children were poor; in 1996, 1 in 5 children were poor (Canadian Council on Social Development, 2001).

Youth are among the most vulnerable groups. In the 1996 Census, approximately 1 in 4 Coquitlam youth aged 15-24

* Poverty is defined by LICO (Low Income Cut-Off) a relative number based on household size and the size of the community. It reflects an average household's expenditures on the essentials of food, clothing, and shelter

were living below the low income cut-off levels (United Way citing Stats Canada 1996 Census). Some of these youth are students; many are low-wage earners, or living in low income households. There is often not the disposable income in the household to spend on recreation programs. *

"My friends are not involved/Not interested":

When professionals working for youth-serving agencies and school programs were asked why their youth clients/ students were not participating in recreation, several said: "The families have not participated in the past, so the youth are not motivated to begin." Many youth have not developed the skills or interest to participate.

"There should be more programs available to middle school students, based on their interests, within walking distance."

(youth survey respondent, male, age 13)

Youth who do not participate in positive activities are more likely to join peer groups who are engaged in higher-risk and unhealthy behaviours. Once youth are involved in risk-taking behaviour, it can be difficult to engage them in more positive alternatives.

"No transportation to programs":

"Come to where the kids are, rather than hoping the kids will come to you." (Alternative School Educator)

Cost: the cost of public transportation is prohibitive for some low-income families.

Accessibility: for youth in some neighbourhoods, there is a lack of frequent, accessible public transportation to recreation facilities. Accessibility is an ongoing issue for youth with disabilities, also for young parents.

Safety: Especially a concern in the evenings or when youth live a distance from bus stops.

Fifty-one percent of the youth surveyed said they participate in recreational activities at home or at their friends' homes. The second location cited was their school. Neighbourhood-based programs are preferred for cost, accessibility and safety.

Priority Areas for Action:

1. Offer Accessible Programs for Youth

a. Offer Affordable Programs. Most Youth Services programs are reasonably-priced. However, for youth in some low-income circumstances, even a minimal drop-in fee is a barrier to participation.

Therefore, Youth Services will continue offering free or low-cost programs whenever possible. Some examples include: the teen centres, the Youth Park, and late night swim and skate events. In addition, Leisure & Parks has financial access resources available to assist youth and families in accessing leisure opportunities offered by our department.

b. Decentralize Programs. Many of the survey participants said they would prefer programs to be offered in their own neighbourhoods, within walking distance from home.

Youth Services staff will continue working to develop relationships with schools and possibly other organizations, in order to offer after-school, neighbourhood-based programs.

c. Provide Equitable and Balanced Programming. Youth Services will continue striving to create accessible and diverse programs that will be of value and interest to girls as well as boys. The Youth Services team will also look for ways to make programs and services more accessible and engaging for youth with disabilities and for youth from other countries.

d. Support Youth Serving Initiatives. Youth Services will continue to seek out community partners and support youth serving initiatives in order to better serve the youth population within Coquitlam.

Community Development as Asset Development

Youth services embraces John McKnight's definition of community development as asset-development:

Identifying, bringing together, building on, and celebrating the strengths, talents, skills - the contributions and "gifts" of individuals and groups in the community

- Kretzmann & McKnight 1993

2. Incorporate an Asset-Based Community Development Model Whenever Possible

For some youth, the service-delivery model works well – these youth are able to access registered and drop-in programs at community centres and enjoy these kinds of seasonal activities.

But for other young people, this model is not effective. Youth who face financial, transportation, language, or other barriers may be prevented from accessing traditional programs on a consistent basis.

Also, as most youth mature, they will be less interested in the kinds of structured or supervised programs traditionally offered by recreation departments. Older teens want to create their own activities. They also want and need a lot of flexibility. And many are looking for opportunities related to academic achievement, leadership, service or employment skill development (Forum Focus, 2004).

A community development model can respond to this diversity of needs and interests. For example, this model is used when working with teen committees. Teens who join the committees create, plan and implement their own activities and projects, and in the process, they develop valuable leadership, group facilitation and team skills. Some committee efforts include: community service, environmental and public art projects, multicultural events, sports, and extreme sports, music events, and governance activities. The Youth Services staff support the process by providing resources as needed, but most importantly, by offering mentorship and role-modelling.

The community development model has also been used successfully in several Coquitlam neighbourhoods. After-school and evening programs have been developed with and for youth and their parents who would not otherwise be involved in positive extracurricular recreation. The content and structure of the programs reflect the particular needs and interests of each group and neighbourhood.

3. Support and Sustain Youth Facilities

Coquitlam Leisure & Parks currently operates two teen centres: *The Landing Teen Centre,* located at Pinetree Community Centre, currently serves the needs of youth in the community. *The Centre - A Place for Youth,* located in the lower level of the Poirier Community Centre, offers limited services and accessibility for youth currently.

According to survey participants, suggestions include:

- **New Youth Centre*** in the Poirier Recreation Complex
- **Satellite facilities** in neighbourhoods throughout the community, such as existing schools and parks.
- **A store front youth centre** at a mall or shopping plaza that could focus on resource information and could also provide recreational programming.

* The Poirier West Master Plan (2005-2006) identified a potential site for the future development of a new youth centre.

In the 2006 Corporate Strategic Plan Survey conducted by Ipsos Reid Public Affairs the development of a new youth centre was listed as the highest rated priority related to community facilities and services.

4. New Neighbourhood Amenities

In addition to teen centres, the survey participants said they would like more youth-friendly places to meet in their neighbourhoods.

According to survey participants, suggestions include:

- skate and BMX park in West Coquitlam
- amusement facility/teen club/coffee house
- more basketball and tennis courts

strategic direction #2

PROMOTE SAFETY AND PERSONAL WELLNESS

Research Findings:

"We need communication, drug info, and a meeting about racism."

(youth survey respondent, male, age 17)

When survey participants were asked what they thought were the three biggest challenges facing youth their age, the top three issues cited were:

- **Substance abuse**
- **Safety and security issues**
- **Mental health issues**

Many of the youth surveyed are concerned about alcohol and drug abuse, especially as it intersects with safety. For example, when asked what their ideal neighbourhood would be like, one survey respondent said, "a safe skate park with no drugs or bad people around." Other comments included: "clean, safe, fun stuff to do," "safe and clean neighbourhoods," and "safe-that is all."

Safety was an issue that emerged in both the youth survey and the focus groups. While approximately 68% of the Youth Services survey participants said they generally feel safe in their school and neighbourhood, 32% said that they do not always feel safe. The McCreary Centre Society, which conducts comprehensive regional studies on adolescent health, found that more than half of young people do not feel safe in their schools and neighbourhoods.

Feelings of safety are often dependent on a sense of connection to a group. Youth who do not belong to a group are perceived by their peers as being much more vulnerable. Social isolation is a serious problem for many. Bullying, name-calling, peer pressure, racism and discrimination, being threatened, violence, fighting, weapons and gang activity were concerns mentioned by many of the survey respondents.

Motor vehicle accidents involving young drivers were also

cited as a concern, in response to the increase in injuries and fatalities due to speeding.
Some of the youth in the survey described their parents as "overprotective" in responding to actual or perceived risks in the community.

Mental health issues such as stress, depression, fear of failure, peer pressure ("to fit in"), school pressure, problems at home, body image, and fear of being judged or rejected also ranked among the primary concerns for youth.

Priority Areas for Action:

1. Promoting Safety & Well Being

Youth and adults need to work together to increase neighbourhood safety. The City can play an important role in this process by:

- **Participating in forums** for youth and adults about crime and security issues.
- **Supporting community anti-violence initiatives** such as "Together Against Violence."
- **Supporting neighbourhood-based safety programs** such as Block watch and Vandal watch.
- **Bringing youth together** to assist in problem-solving and crime prevention.
- **Support youth services staff** to connect positively with youth in high-need areas, assist youth in accessing community resources, and encourage their involvement in the development of positive activities that are of value and interest to them.
- **Supporting Community Development Projects.** According to the Regional Prevention Centre, one of the highest risk factors for neighbourhood crime is low neighbourhood attachment. Youth Services can support initiatives where the focus is on creating positive multi-generational relationships, and a shared sense of ownership, attachment and belonging in every neighbourhood.

2. Promoting Health and Well-Being

a) Support community organizations that serve youth to achieve short and long-term goals.

Survey participants (refer to Appendix B) said that the following services are needed in the Tri-Cities:

- Youth Health Clinic where accessible, confidential health care and counselling is available to all youth.
- A shelter for youth in crisis and in addiction recovery.

"We need more community activities involving both youth and adults."

(youth survey respondent, female, age 17)

b) Provide Resource Information for Youth and Parents regarding:

- Educational programs and services that are provided by community agencies and organizations, such as drug & alcohol education and counselling, conflict resolution, and mental health supports.

c) Support community initiatives that strive to reconnect isolated youth with caring peers and adults.

d) Encourage families to become actively involved in recreation to counteract the effects of stress and social isolation.

Developing strong, positive bonds with family members is one of the most effective ways to reduce risks for young people.

e) Promote the health, social and academic benefits of recreation. Involvement improves physical, emotional and mental health. It is also strongly linked to improvement in school performance.

(Symons, et al., 1997).

f) Support community policing through working with liaison officers, community police stations, bicycle and foot patrols, and provide opportunities for positive interaction between youth and police.

strategic direction #3

YOUTH AND ADULTS BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

Research Findings:

The survey respondents felt that many adults hold negative stereotypes about youth, which affects how youth are treated in the community, and in some cases, how they behave. Store-owners, the security guards at the mall, and neighbours were among the adults from whom they have sometimes felt suspicion and mistrust.

Comments such as "people think skaters are dumb," "(people think) we're too young (to have an opinion)," "(people don't listen) because of the way I look," "(there is a) bad image of youth portrayed by the media" indicate that many youth do not feel heard, and often feel misrepresented and stereotyped.

Unfortunately, negative perceptions are fuelled by the destructive actions of a relatively small percentage of youth in the community. Acts of vandalism and theft create anger and resentment; reports of violence and weapons create fear. In consequence, a vicious cycle is created, with adults distrusting youth and youth distrusting adults.

However, the research on neighbourhood crime strongly suggests that crime increases where youth have a low attachment to their community, feel a lack of belonging, and are disconnected from positive adults (Regional Prevention Centre). Due to the generational disconnection in our communities, many youth are lacking what they need most: positive relationships with adults.

In the survey, participants were asked how they thought youth and adults could work together for change. Their suggestions included:

- "(adults being) nicer to youth"
- "(making the effort) to learn more about one another (youth and adults)"
- "(creating opportunities) to meet one another and become friends"
- "(developing) trust"
- "treating youth as individuals"
- adults becoming positive role models (i.e. adults need to model healthy behaviour choices, especially in regard to substance use).

"Youth and adults need to gain more trust with each other."

(youth survey respondent, male, age 18)

Priority Areas for Action:

1. Support the Search Institute's 40 Developmental Assets Initiative

"Adults and youth — in big and small ways — can help increase Developmental Assets in the daily lives of young people. What's needed is an understanding of what actions and behaviours breed success, willingness and ideas to apply that knowledge, and most importantly, a desire to see young people grow up happy, healthy and confident."

The central theme of this initiative is the development of positive, supportive relationships between youth and adults.

2. Adults Recognize and Celebrate Youth Accomplishments:

Each year in May, Coquitlam Leisure & Parks youth committee members and staff organize activities and events for Youth Week. As part of this celebration, the Tri-City REACH Awards (Recognizing Efforts Across Community and Home) are held to recognize outstanding youth volunteers as well as individual adults mentors, businesses and organizations who have made a special effort to support youth efforts throughout the year.

City of Coquitlam Volunteer Services also recognizes the many youth volunteers who assist with Leisure & Parks programs.

In addition, other organizations and groups in the community recognize youth achievements with awards and scholarships each year, such as Society for Community Development's Spirit of Community Award.

It is important that youth, who do not typically fit the "high achiever" profile, also receive positive feedback for their efforts and progress. Youth Services will continue working with community groups to look for ways to consistently recognize all levels of youth effort.

3. Collaborate with Community Associations

Youth Services team will support the creation of a network of associations that may be interested in assisting with youth asset-development, and related projects. There are hundreds of volunteer groups in the Tri-City area and they can be among the community's strongest resource.

Arts and culture groups have already expressed a strong interest in involving more youth in their initiatives. Local sports organizations also provide numerous opportunities for youth to participate and gain experience in a variety of sporting disciplines.

There are also many opportunities for youth to contribute and partner with Coquitlam environmental stewardship community. Coquitlam is home to a large diversity of non-profit community groups that focus on environmental conservation and protection. These groups rely heavily on volunteers as resources and there are many opportunities for youth involvement.

By working to develop an alliance of community groups, many more opportunities will develop for youth and adults to share their "gifts and contributions" with one another and with the larger community.

4. Learning Opportunities

The Youth Services team will provide learning opportunities for staff and community and will advocate for youth on issues from all key departments within the City that interact with youth. Supporting youth in Coquitlam is not the domain of only one department, but of all City staff and volunteers.

strategic direction #4

YOUTH BEING ASKED AND BEING HEARD

Research Findings:

In the focus groups, youth were asked the extent to which they feel they have a "voice," that their opinions and suggestions are sought, heard and taken seriously by adults.

Most youth feel that there are adults in their lives who do listen to them. However, they do not feel most people in the community are interested in what they have to say.

Priority Areas for Action:

1. **Youth Having a Voice:**

Children and youth have the right to be involved in all aspects of community decision-making (Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 12).

Council and staff need the tools and processes in place to ensure that the ideas and perspectives of young people are sought and heard on all issues that will affect them, including transportation, neighbourhood security and policing, recreation, arts and culture, parks and open space, amenity and facility development.

The ideas and perspectives of youth can be heard through:

- **Reserving space for young people** (age 16 - 24) each year on Advisory Committees to Council.
- **Support for City facilitated youth committees** Members of youth committees will be consulted as major city issues involving youth are discussed.
- **A website devoted to youth**, and possibly an on-line forum allowing youth to voice opinions about local issues and decisions.

2. Youth Learning Leadership:

- **Leadership Courses** provide youth with opportunities to learn the principles of effective and inclusive group participation and shared decision-making. In "Youth as Decision Makers," the Laidlaw Foundation researched the components necessary for meaningful youth engagement in decision-making and governance. See Appendix D.

- **Membership on Committees** allows youth opportunities to practice leadership skills by working through each stage of the planning process. Youth also can take part in the policy and/or procedure development process for a youth centre or other program or service.

- **Program About Local Government.** To enhance citizenship skills, youth should have opportunities to learn how policies are developed and decisions are made at the municipal level. This may be achieved by creating an engaging, interactive program for youth on how local government functions.

- **Volunteer Services and Programs.** Approximately 200 volunteers annually gain work experience and time towards their school practicum. Youth are required to participate in a formal application process, orientation and are provided with on-going training opportunities. Volunteers have a variety of opportunities available to them, including one-to-one support, recreation assistant in programs, special event hosting, and more.

in conclusion

Youth have much to teach us about their experience. Sometimes their thoughts and feelings are expressed in words, but perhaps most often and most profoundly, they are expressed through actions. All behaviour communicates a message. It can say: "I'm lost, bored, afraid, lonely, angry, confused…."

Or it can say: "I'm interested, concerned, curious, involved….."

The Coquitlam Youth Strategy is about paying attention to the messages that youth send and responding with care and creativity. It's about providing opportunities for more youth, more often to experience positive involvement and connection. It's about valuing young people, and valuing the communities to which they belong.

All the pressures that youth experience, the challenges they face, the choices they make, and the support, guidance, and friendship they receive will profoundly shape their future lives, and the lives of everyone they will encounter.

We're all in this together. It's everyone's future.

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appendix a

Youth-Serving Agencies & School Programs Summary of Survey Findings

This survey was distributed to approximately 28 youth-serving agencies and school programs in Coquitlam in the Fall of 2002. Twelve returned the questionnaire.

1. Coquitlam neighbourhoods: The majority of the agencies/schools that participated in this survey work with a high percentage of higher-risk youth. Many of the youth live in low-income neighbourhoods such as Austin heights, Cottonwood, and Central Coquitlam.

2. Youth Participation: Most of the youth-serving organizations report very low participation of their youth clients/students in extracurricular and recreation programs – as low as 2%. Average 25%. See question #6.

3. Barriers to Participation: (Question asked on survey: *Which of the following barriers prevent your youth clients/students from participating in recreation programs?)*

Twelve youth-serving agencies/schools participated in this survey. The numbers below are the number of agencies that cited these as barriers to youth participation. For example, 10 out of the 12 agencies report that their youth clients face economic barriers; 9 out of the 12 agencies cite lack of transportation as a barrier for their youth clients, etc.

- Economic barriers—can't afford programs 10
- Transportation barriers (getting to/from centres) 9
- Lacking skills/confidence to participate 9
- Lack of interest/motivation/friends don't participate 8
- Lack of knowledge about recreation opportunities 6
- Too busy with school work 3
- Too busy with other responsibilities 3
- Health or disability access barriers 2
- Other 2
- Language barriers 1
- Too busy with part-time jobs 1

4. Issues that majority of youth clients/students face. (Question on survey: *Do a significant number of your youth clients/students face the following issues?)* The numbers below are the number of agencies (out of 12) that cited these as issues affecting their youth clients/students.

- Social isolation/loneliness/disconnection 10
- Low self esteem 10
- Poverty/low income 9
- Conflicts with peers 8
- Poor physical fitness 7
- Behavioural problems 7
- Serious conflicts with parents 7
- Mental health issues (depression, anxiety, addictions) 7
- Use of drugs and alcohol 7
- Conflicts with the law, i.e. Vandalism, theft 5
- Poor nutrition 5
- Eating disorders 3
- Other: Grief/Divorce 1
- Other: Teen Parenting 1

5. The most serious gaps and suggested solutions. (Questions on Survey: *In your opinion, what are the most serious gaps in services for youth in the Tri-Cities? How do you think we might address some those needs?)* Agencies answered:

Deficit/Issue/Barrier:	**Suggestions to Address Deficit/Barrier:**	**Other comments:**
Families have not participated in the past, so the youth are not motivated to begin.	Leisure & Parks could work cooperatively with the School District to find ways to encourage inactive youth to get involved.	
For many youth, low income and lack of transportation are significant barriers to participation in recreation. (Transportation major problem for young parents. So is the cost of programs).	• Programs should become more inclusive and accessible. • More youth programs should be offered for free. "Come to where the kids are rather than hoping kids will come to the services." • More programs should be held in neighbourhood schools. • Need "immediately after-school" programs.	Leisure Access Cards can be helpful, but "parents, in some cases, either do not follow through or have pride issues (about applying for the card)." People concerned about confidentiality with Leisure Access Card.

Not enough programs are focused on the issues that are faced by youth.	• Focus on prevention – not just recreation. • Motivational leadership by youth workers in the community	
Lack of comprehensive health services for youth	• Allocate a site where confidential, safe, clinical and counselling services are accessible to school, street-engaged and other youth, i.e Greg Moore Centre in Maple Ridge	
Youth with mental health issues also disconnected. Youth who have been in conflict with the law are disconnected from community.	Need more programs to address the needs of these youth. When youth are sent out on a work service order by the court, the organization accepting that youth can assist in helping him/her to reconnect with others in the community. • Need more partnerships between agencies and organizations to share resources for youth programs.	

appendix b

Youth Survey
Summary of Findings

In the Fall of 2002 this survey was distributed to approximately 120 youth (age 11-18 years) from diverse backgrounds in Coquitlam. We received 106 questionnaires back. Males: 59; Females: 47

Survey Participant Distribution:

Banting After-School Program: 4 /
Banting Youth Worker students: 9
CABE: 9
Centennial: 9
Coquitlam Youth Council: 8
Cottonwood Program: 4
Pro Ed Probation Program: 6
Elizabeth Fry Probation: 3
Hoy Creek Co-Op: 5
Landing Teen Centre: 7
Multicultural Youth Council: 7
Place Maillard Boys and Girls Club: 17
SUCCESS Program: 5
Youth Day Treatment: 4
Underground Teen Centre: 9

Question #5: How do you spend your free time? (please check your top three activities)

Watching T.V.:	56%
Playing sports/fitness:	51%
Playing computer/video games:	47%
Hanging out with friends, i.e. the mall:	45%
School work/studying:	33%
Arts (music, dance, etc):	25%
Reading:	18%
Spending time with family:	15%
Part-time job:	12%
Family responsibilities, i.e. taking care of siblings:	11%
Volunteering & community service:	7%
Other: sleeping, listening to music, talking on the phone:	3%

Question #6: Are there recreational activities that you do at least once per week (sports, fitness, arts, leadership, volunteering, etc.)?

62% are involved in some kind of recreational activity at least once a week.
38% are not involved at all.

Question #7: Where do you participate in recreational activities? (please check the places you visit regularly).

1. At home or your friends' homes
2. After school at your school
3. Community Centres
4. Sports Fields, Tennis Courts, Trails, Bball courts
6. Private studios (dance, martial arts gymnastics)
7. Youth Park

Question #8: If you are not involved in recreational activities, what stops you? (please check all that apply)

Too busy with school:	32%
Lack of money:	29%
My friends are not involved/ I'm not interested:	29%
No transportation to programs:	21%
I don't think I have the right skills to participate and I feel embarrassed:	11%
Too busy with responsibilities at home:	11%
Too busy with part-time job:	6%
Other reason ("don't want to/ "too lazy"):	5%
Disability/health barriers:	1%

Question #9: What do you think are the three biggest challenges or problems facing youth your age?

Results: The following categories were mentioned most often (these are recorded with the exact terms/language that youth used in their survey answers)

1. Substance Abuse

- Drugs
- Drinking
- Smoking

2. Violence/Threat of Harm

- Being afraid
- Parents are scared we will get hurt/abducted
- Over-protected
- Discrimination
- Cops – being chased
- Racism - because I'm not a white person
- Teasing
- Getting hurt
- Fights
- Being bullied
- People threatening each other
- People calling you names
- Peer pressure
- Violence
- Gangs
- Speeding in cars/ car accidents

3. Mental Health

- Peer pressure (they like to be cool but I don't, turning down things, saying no; pressure to fit in)
- Popularity (type of clothes one should wear; one must adapt to many people in order to be popular)
- Being judged
- Stress
- Depression
- Failure
- Pressures (school, work, home, friends)
- Trying to take responsibility for ourselves
- Making decisions
- Boredom
- Family problems
- Problem about appearance

- Body weight
- Dating
- No respect
- Lack of ambition

4. School /Employment

- Pressure to study
- Pre-career concerns
- Unemployment
- Homework
- Doing well
- Hard to have fun with so many worries about school
- Lack of time and experience to choose post-secondary programs
- Time management
- School board cutting funding
- Changing grad requirements
- Not enough time to relax
- Not enough time to sleep
- All sorts of tests, requirements, opportunities hitting us all at once

5. Barriers

- Lack of money
- Cost of programs
- No transportation to community centres
- Parents won't let us do things /Over-protection by parents
- Limits
- Adults with negative stereotypes about youth
- Our age
- Homeless

Question #10: How do you think adults and youth in the community can work together to solve these problems?

Respondents answered:

1. Change in Attitude

- "If old people were nicer to youth."
- "Learn more about each other."
- "Meet each other and become friends."
- "Trust."

2. Communication

- "Parents listen more."
- "Talk about it in a way we understand."
- "Talk to them (youth) and deal with it."
- "Talking and resolving them (issues)."
- "Have better communication."
- "Get together and have a meeting."
- "Talk about it in a way we understand."

3. Role Models

- "Both adults and youth need to stop drugs."
- "Get more involved."
- "Give them (youth) encouragement not to smoke."

4. Programs & Services

- "Create a fun, safe place for people to come and meet friends."
- "Find something all youth want to participate in."
- "Volunteering to help support programs and help out with activities."
- Counselling

Quite a number responded: "I don't know." Others responded to this question with a sense of futility:

- "It will never happen."
- "They can't do anything about it."

Question #11: Do you know some adults, in addition to your parents, who you can go to for advice and support?

Yes: 68 Sort of: 2 No: 14

Who: school counsellors, teachers, principal, grandparents, parent's friends, youth workers, Boys and Girls' Club staff, past caregivers, teen centre staff, police, school club leader, older siblings, neighbours

Question #12: Do you and your friends feel safe in your school and neighbourhood?

Yes: 59 Not always: 16 No: 12

Question #13: What would you like to see in your own neighbourhood that isn't there now?

Participants responded:

1. Amenities in their neighbourhoods

- basketball court
- tennis court
- arcade
- skate park
- go-carts
- more teen centres
- teen club with no alcohol
- martial arts in neighbourhood
- parks for youth distinct from children's parks ("Good parks for young people, not just grade 5's and under;" "Place for kids to play so they don't go screaming outside my window."

2. After school activities (cited many times)

3. Better access to programs – free programs within walking distance

4. Clean neighbourhoods and amenities where there is a strong sense of safety

- A safe skate park with no drugs or bad people around
- I would like to see some of the so-called 'Thugs' cleaned out

- Clean, safe, fun stuff to do
- Safe and clean neighbourhood
- More green spaces
- No bad, rude people
- Safe that is all
- It would have security and be safe for kids and would be clean
- Somewhere no one would have to suffer from peer pressure

5. **Accessible services for youth** (i.e. "A community counsellor serving only teenagers so they don't pass off the information to the parents.")

6. **Neighbourhood activities/events** (i.e. activities that would enrich the culture in the community)

7. **Other:**

- Allowed to have pets (in apartments)
- More reliable public transportation
- Study groups for youth to meet, study and help each other with schoolwork.

appendix c

Focus Group Questions
Summary of Results

October 1, 2003

Approximately: 80 youth / adults surveyed

1. Do you feel you can make a difference in your community? If so, how? If not, why?

Port Coquitlam – Offside (17 to 22 years) *and Hyde Creek* (10 to 14 years):
(Make a difference) Yes and No for both (How) clean up community, have connections with people, (Why not) no one listen to my ideas, too quiet, too lazy

Coquitlam – Summit (11 to 14 years), *The Centre* (13-18 years), *Landing Teen Centre* (14-18 years), *and Coquitlam Skate Park (*16 to 20 years):
(Make a difference) 2 groups said yes and 2 groups said no
(How) through teachers and counsellors, little kids look up to us, skaters don't commit crimes
(Why not) community won't change, new to neighbourhood, don't know how or who to talk to, scared to speak up

Port Moody: Alley Teen Centre (11 to 14 years) and *Skate park* (9 to 14 years):
Yes, someone has to make the 1st step, youth make up a big chunk / No, don't want to, nobody listens, stereo types

2. Do you feel you have a voice in the community, that people will listen to your ideas and suggestions?

Port Coquitlam: (Voice) Yes in the teen centres and No because I look like a junky, police know me on bad terms and people don't care because we are not organized

Coquitlam: 3 groups said no and 1 group said yes (no) Looked at weird when greeting strangers, disrespected results of bad image of youth portrayed by the media, too young, people don't listen, people think skaters are dumb, not enough

people are involved (yes) through youth workers
Port Moody: Yes. / No, only parents listen

3. What do you like about your community?

Port Coquitlam: Authorities are good, some people are ok, teen centres, small community, rivers
Coquitlam: Friends live close by, CCAC, water park, dances, community bus, teen centre, people, friends, free youth programs, close to everything, skate park, clean, school faculty
Port Moody: Safe / Skate park, street spots

4. What would your ideal community/neighbourhood be like?

Port Coquitlam: Clean, friendly, less crowded, more skate parks, cheaper activities and transit
Coquitlam: Portable or expanded teen centre, local "Playdium", arcades, bowling, paint ball, less: swearing, drugs, violence and prostitutes
Port Moody: Separate times for preteens and teens in the teen centre, more supervision for younger youth / lots of skate parks, indoor skate park, bmx park, skate comps, free activities

Transportation:
Port Coquitlam: Get rid of community buses; go back to original system, free transit/taxi
Coquitlam: good, like community bus
Port Moody: Long wait, not frequent enough, fair discount / no rude bus drivers

Access to health services & information:
Port Coquitlam: there should be one local, in the Tri-Cities
Coquitlam: yes
Port Moody: should be a local youth clinic

What would be the coolest place to hang out?
What stuff does it have?

Where do you like to hang out and why?

Port Coquitlam: café, run by youth for youth
Coquitlam: Teen centres, Arcade, Nestor School, skate park
Port Moody:

What recreation activities would you be doing more if you could? What prevents you?

Port Coquitlam: (prevents) personal conflicts

5. What do you do for fun?

Port Coquitlam: TV, internet, guitar, sports, skateboarding, video games
Coquitlam: Sports, movies, shop, art, socialize, arcade, video games, internet, teen centres, sleep, hang out, skateboard
Port Moody: Sports, music, computer, TV, camping, shop, skateboard, bmx, sleep

6. Who are your role models?

Port Coquitlam: Famous people, teachers, parents
Coquitlam: Famous people, brother, grandma/pa, cousin, friends, famous skateboarders
Port Moody: Teen Centre workers, youth workers, parents, friends, siblings, famous people, famous skate boarders

7. Do you feel safe in your community?

Port Coquitlam: Yes, they know a lot of people / No, fights after school
Coquitlam: 3 groups said Yes and 1 said No (Yes) over-protective parents, know lots of people, hang out in groups, we protect each other (No) not at nights, gang fights, drunk teens, need more police presence, want lights later at the skate park, drugs, weapons, violence
Port Moody: Yes, overprotective parents, hang out in groups with friends / No, almost jumped

8. What are the three biggest challenges or problems facing youth your age and why?

Port Coquitlam: School, drug abuse, finding a job, nothing to do, boredom / bullies, money (not enough)
Coquitlam: Peer pressure, school pressure, not enough money, violence, drugs, family pressure
Port Moody: Drugs, alcohol, school pressure, sex, dying, crashing, being rejected

9. If you had a million dollars to change the community, what would you do?

Port Coquitlam: clean up old buildings and turn them into: homeless shelters, community housing, recovery houses / charity, homeless shelter, nature, parks
Coquitlam: Arcade (playdium), dog park, go-kart, paint ball, expand teen centre, fix roads, free driving lessons, indoor tennis courts, skate park with a roof, BMX park
Port Moody: Buy cell phones for all youth, fix broken pay phones, give stuff to lower income families, get rid of 'druggie' areas and give their houses to the less fortunate/big skate park, professional graffiti

10. What is the best way to get information to you?

Port Coquitlam: E-mail, phone, school newsletters, newspaper / phone, e-mail, TV
Coquitlam: Word of mouth, TV, phone, e-mail, news, newspaper, advertise "free stuff", teen centre computers, bulletin board
Port Moody: Phone, internets, e-mail, schools, bus shelter ads, word of mouth, posters at the park, newspaper

11. What do you think about our technology (ie. Computers, e-mail, internet, etc.)?
Do you think technology is positive or negative?
Why?

Port Coquitlam: It is abused, causes people to be over dependent / + and -
Coquitlam: All 4 groups said it is positive
Port Moody: Both said negative, faster internets, less porno, too scary

12. Do you think youth your age are getting enough factual information on drugs, alcohol and sexuality to make positive/healthy choices?

Port Coquitlam: Yes but people don't listen to it, people already know enough / Yes too much
Coquitlam: All groups said yes enough info
Port Moody: No, the info should be taught by youth, young adults with experience regarding the discussed topic / Yes, too much

13. Do you feel welcome in the community?

Port Coquitlam: No, it is like a ghetto / Yes, everyone is nice and No, don't like limitations
Coquitlam: 2 groups said yes, 1 sometimes-followed by security in stores and malls and 1 no – not by seniors, rude adults and don't know many people
Port Moody: Sometimes, not in corner stores, judgemental neighbours / No, not by the seniors

14. How could your schools help you?

Port Coquitlam: Stop lying and start caring, schools don't break policy, should treat students as individuals, counsellors should not be fake…they don't give a crap / more resources and funding
Coquitlam: More activities after school, they can't, not enough support, treated like a problem, schools are fine, skate board field trips/classes, free food
Port Moody: Smaller classes (less students per class), not enough help from teachers, hire teachers who are not burnt out or old fashion / No homework, slow down lessons

SUMMARY

PROS

- Most youth interviewed feel good about their community (ie. small town feel, transportation, friendly, close to everything, etc)
- Transportation has improved with smaller community buses
- Most youth have been involved in diverse activities and feel connected to family and friends

Technology is a positive and well used to find out information on community activities

CONS

- Youth lack the confidence to make a difference in the community.
- Youth have no problem getting factual information on health but access to health services is lacking in the Tri-Cities
- Youth would like to see more free to low cost programs and services
- Youth would like to have more support (attention) in their schools

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Look at positive ways to empower youth through schools, community groups, clubs, neighbourhoods, etc (ie. training staff, community members, youth on how to empower youth and to build a safer and respectful community).
- Develop a plan for a youth clinic in the Tri-cities or a mobile youth clinic to reach youth who may not have means to travel or motivated to find help.
- Seek further funding and/or partnerships for positive free to low cost outreach programs and services (ie. recreational activities, portable teen centres, etc…).
- Develop an 'asset' building program, in Middle and Secondary Schools, where older students help the younger students in academics and social pressures in school (similar to Port Moody Secondary program).

appendix d

In "Youth As Decision-Makers," the Laidlaw Foundation researched the components necessary for meaningful youth engagement in decision-making and governance. The youth participants in their study suggested the following.:

- Recognize that youth are action-oriented; they want to see results, and they have different way of thinking about time: short-term is "almost immediately" and long term is a matter of months (not years).
- Be willing to take risks - recognize that youth will make mistakes and need to learn from this process.
- Ask youth questions about what they think and how they see an issue.
- Recognize that many youth are "outside of the box" thinkers, bringing a fresh approach to problem-solving.
- Don't make procedures unnecessarily complex.
- Recognize youth diversity – don't generalize; do strive to capture the diversity of youth ideas and opinions.
- High-achieving youth may not represent the "consumers" of programs and services. Special efforts may be needed to attract other groups of youth.
- Don't tokenize – if youth are to be represented at the table, there should be several young people to provide a strong voice.
- Provide sufficient orientation and training. Provide recognition and incentives.