

November's East York Strategy Planning Session

November 28, 2006 7:00 PM

Location: William Burgess School, 100 Torrens Rd, East York

- Welcome and introductions of the 17 people (or so) in attendance, including rep's from churches, police from 54 Division, local politicians, schools, community groups and interested individuals. The meeting was Chaired by Rev. Jim Parker.

Updates

Toy Guns and Mirror Article, Maureen Skuja

The meeting was advised that -- as a result of our October meeting and contacting media - - an article would be in the Friday, December 1st, issue of the East York Mirror promoting a "gun free" environment. The article will detail that 179 toy guns were purchased from 2 dollar stores at the intersections of Pape and Cosburn Avenues and a commitment was obtained from both stores not to restock. Both stores agreed to post signs in their stores that reads: "We thank the Community Minded Action of (the named store) for being a GUN FREE STORE", signed East York Strategy.

Suggestions from the meeting included putting out a challenge to other East York dollar stores to participate in this initiative and Post on the EYS website pictures of the toys guns purchased.

Jim Parker noted that the toy guns are a part of the "Multi-faceted onslaught" that EYS participants are attempting, to keep doing "little" things to help our youth and pursue peace in our neighbourhood. If we keep up the multi-faceted onslaught of good things, we will make a difference!!

Treasurer's Report

The Chair advised the meeting that an EYS Bank account was opened with the initial donation of \$50 plus an additional \$40 donation toward the purchase of the toy guns and \$30 collected from the Meeting October 18th.

Grant Submissions

The "Youth Justice" grant application submitted by Touchstone Youth Centre and supported by EYS and others, unfortunately, was denied.

The meeting was reminded that there are other submissions still in the works, submitted by the partnership of Eastview Community Centre, Madina Mosque, and EYS to the Trillium Foundation, Youth Challenge and the United Way.

Addendum to meeting: *United Way grant (for \$25,000) has been approved. Good News!*

Peter Tabuns advised that EYS might also qualify for Toronto Community Foundation grants, and that these applications should be pursued at the various deadlines.

Website:

Etobicoke Strategy, from which EYS has learned much and by which we have been greatly helped, commends EYS for our website, and has indicated they might pursue one for themselves, and model it after ours (www.eastyorkstrategy.com).

Other Reports:

Wm Burgess reported that in conjunction with Eastview Community Centre, the school had started a "Boys & Girls" Club and that there were approximately 32 children in attendance. The program is free, except for a one-time membership fee of \$5.

There was a Parents Council Grant submission proposal to have a parent resource centre to get ESL parents involved in the school community as well as to purchase a security camera for the back of the school where there is poor lighting.

The meeting was advised that a good part of the student population at Wm. Burgess was engaged in the programs introduced.

East York Action Committee - Jim Parker indicated that despite not meeting this fall, the EY Action Committee may still be active.

Church Activity

Woodbine Heights Music Club

Woodbine reported that they had obtained a \$200 donation toward the purchase of musical instruments and had estimated a budget of approximately \$1,200.

That they had an instructor on board and that there were approximately 20-25 youth who were interested.

Some of the suggestions that came out of the meeting indicated that in order for the club to "happen" perhaps personal invitations to Youth would be pursued, along with flyers, posters, and the like. EYS is known and trusted by the leadership of the High Schools. Police Officers in the high schools might also be able to open doors and highlight the program among interested youth.

Bethany - continuing efforts to hire youth outreach pastor, grant proposal

Jim Parker reported that in their effort to hire a half-time Youth Pastor for the church there was an opportunity to apply for funding through the Ministry of Community Safety in conjunction with the Community Police Liaison Committee. Thanks EYS members for their support in form of letter, to be requested when details are finalized.

Summer Mission Team

The meeting was advised that there was an opportunity to invite U.S teams to come to Toronto next summer and was asked for ideas how EYS could spend a week with these youth and build something that was sustainable.

Pape Youth Centre, Gary Colborne

Gary advised the group that the Pape Youth Centre was continuing to focus on youth 10-14 years and approximately 50 kids were showing up on Friday nights. The meeting was informed that the real issue was what to do with the kids over 14 years. Currently the Thursday night basketball was still in place but there needed to be a more concerted effort putting together a program that addressed the 14+ needs.

Unfortunately, PYC could no longer continue to provide the Homework club due to lack to volunteers.

Gary was approached by Touchstone Youth Centre and was currently meeting with some of their youth on their spiritual issues.

Gary also reported that he was now working full-time as a community worker (1 yr contract) through Youth Unlimited.

Community Policing

Insp. Tom Fitzgerald, of 54 Division, explained the difference the concept of "Community Mobilization". 'Community mobilization' means a different problem solving approach being applied whenever there is a chronic problem in a neighbourhood and the residents of those neighborhoods show an interest in working with the police to resolve the issues.

Insp. Fitzgerald indicated that:

- people in the neighbourhood had the capacity to solve problems,
- police have an important role in opening doors to mobilize concerned residents of the community to create safer neighborhoods
- people getting together can make "little" but substantial differences
- all stakeholders have a voice - especially the youth
- that EYS is a good model and test case for the police

EYS fits well into this community mobilization model.

Earl Beatty School Event - CPLC & Church of the Res.

The meeting was advised that Earl Beatty principals had approached EYS in September about making positive connections with police officers. On November 23, a volleyball game and pizza event was sponsored by Church of the Resurrection (an EYS supporting church), the CPLC, and the Earl Beatty School Council. About 6 officers played volleyball with about 35 youth (grades 7-8), and a very productive question-and-answer time followed.

Engaging Youth in the Process

Jim Parker reported on the Youth Gathering held on November 14th at Bethany Baptist Church. About 12 youth attended and a free open discussion was held. Even though the gather was slow to get started the gathering was a success since a number of issues were voiced by the youth who attended and they were very open about their dealings with the businesses, schools, and especially the churches and police.

The youth clearly affirmed the need for a positive place for the youth "to hang out" would be good, and especially a basketball drop-in and/or basketball tournaments would be welcomed.

Doing more youth focus groups in different contexts was deemed to be beneficial for the future.

Meeting closed with a prayer of blessing and peace for our youth and community.

Picture taken with toy guns followed.