

East York Strategy Planning Session

Aug. 1, 2006 7:00 PM

Bethany Baptist Church

- Welcome and introductions of the 22 people (or so) in attendance

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Updates

* Steering Committee (on agenda but forgot to be introduced!): from direction from last EYS meeting to provide a more manageable and consistent group to give leadership. Pleased to welcome: Dan Shibata, Pauline Adams, Lynn Marsh, Jai Reid, Marta Portengen, Marion Stephens, and Jim Parker

* Pape and Cosburn happenings:

- 2 shootings in late June, as well as dramatically increased drug dealing going on
 - community meeting held at Bethany, coordinated by Rita Smith and Pape Village Business Improvement Area (June 29), resulting in the establishment of a “Pape Community” group to meet every 3 months to discuss ongoing concerns; EYS is included in this new group.
 - Councillor Case Ootes (Ward 29) hosted a Community Safety Meeting at East York Community Centre (July 6). Attended by about 150 concerned citizens. EYS was mentioned many times at the meeting, as an example of an existing group that is working to address the situation in a proactive manner. At this meeting, Inspector Tom Fitzgerald urged the attendees to not try to put one face on the troubled youth (or blame it on Touchstone Youth Centre), and emphasized that the youth that are causing the problems are “our own kids, and our friends kids”. Reinforced that this is our problem, our community, and it is up to us to address the issues.
 - Rita Smith gave a report on a walk-about that she attended with EYS’s Pauline Adams and Dan Shibata, with MP Jack Layton and MPP Peter Tabuns. It was productive in discovering more about what is happening in the Pape & Cosburn area, meet some business owners, and even our local drug dealer. Jack initiated an “interesting” conversation with the drug dealer!
 - Police constables confirmed that there had been a crack house raid in the Pape and Cosburn area, tripled police presence, and a recovery of a firearm (which may or may not be connected to the shootings).
 - Touchstone Youth Centre: Executive Director Susette Clunis and Fund Developer Dianne Morgan spoke about Touchstone, the youth they serve, and Touchstone’s desire to continue to interact in positive ways with the community. While Touchstone has been “on the hot seat” recently in the community, Susette also noted the great support she had received, the many tours she had conducted, and her thankfulness to EYS and others for their helpfulness.
- Everyone agreed that EYS should try to do what we can to connect in intentional ways with Touchstone and the good work they are doing.

* Argos: Walter from Etobicoke Strategy received 500 free tickets to a recent Argo game. He passed on 25 tickets to Jim Parker, who distributed them. There may be opportunity for more of this in the future, with a possibility to distributing them to the schools and anyone else that would like them. We should continue to try to encourage adult-kid (mentoring) connections through possibilities such as this.

* Constable Kelly Grenell, from 54 Division, has taken the initiative to run a kids craft programme (Tuesday and Thursday from 10am-12pm at the Legion (Pape just south of O’Connor)). Reinforced that simple things can make a difference.

* Website: Dan Shibata is continuing to do a great job in updating our website (www.eastyorkstrategy.com). In response to one email sent after last meeting, we have received word back from about 10 churches and 12 other organizations to be listed on the website as an EYS Supporter. Some groups have provided a link on their website as well.

* Peter Tabuns (MPP) gave an update on his efforts to attract funders for the partnership that is forming among Eastview Community Centre, the Medina Mosque (Danforth near Greenwood), and EYS. We are asking for 2 Staff Workers (one for Muslim community, one for EYS), as well as part-time leaders, and other funds. Progress is happening but summertime is a little slow.

* Urban Promise Youth Ministry: continues to be very supportive of EYS and willing to help as they can. They are presently doing children and youth programming from the Christian faith perspective in four needy areas in Toronto that is very similar to the type of stuff we have been talking about, and with a similar “kids matter” wholistic approach.

- in response to our request for training (from last meeting), they are happy to do this. Date of Friday evening, November 3 is the earliest they can do it [note from Jim: I think I will confirm this date and go from there]. Possibility of more training slots in 2007.

- In response to our request about a Staff Worker, UP Director Colin McCartney, is very willing to work with us, recommend names, etc. A promising partnership between UP and EYS is brewing!

Brainstorm of EYS Ideas / Programmes

- Bronwen mentioned St. Luke’s Anglican’s idea of a church banner outside the church
- Pauline (and others) suggested connecting in practical ways with Touchstone Youth Centre (helping to paint, etc.); Rita mentioned that Pape Village businesses might be interested in donating some things to help
- Jennifer mentioned the need to collect information on what churches and groups could offer (i.e. space, resources, volunteers, etc.)
- Marion mentioned connecting with the Christian groups at EYC High School and Danforth Tech. Specifically, an Alpha programme for Youth is a possibility at Danforth Tech.
- Basketball League (Recreational); Jim explained that Gary Cockburn (who had offered to organize this) can no longer do it, but the good of such a league is still viable.
- Drum circle - mentioned at last meeting. [bob paterson-watt from Woodbine Heights is continuing to develop this]
- Kay (and others) mentioned Homework Clubs
- Peter suggested Cooking Opportunities for children and/or youth. Youth learn how to cook something, and eat together. Much excitement was generated by this possibility.
- Rita mentioned her People Skills Workshops, and the possibility for more, and everyone agreed how important this could be.

Next Steps

1. Jennifer Story agreed to lead the “call-around” of various EYS contacts to get a better idea of what resources we have [note: Jennifer drafted questions, were finalized with Jim, and Harry (also from Jack Layton’s office) is in process of calling around]
2. Steering Committee to meet
3. Rita Smith will coordinate People Skills Workshop(s)
4. Training Day conducted by Urban Promise – Friday, Nov 3 (evening)
5. Rita Smith and Pauline Adams and Rhoda Rosenthal volunteered to pursue the Cooking Opportunity
6. Ideas of both a drum circle and a Basketball League remain as possibilities.
7. Next planning session to be August.29, 7pm at Westminster Presbyterian (154 Floyd Ave., near Pape, south of Cosburn)