

September's East York Strategy Planning Session

September 26, 2006 7:00 PM

Church of the Resurrection

- Welcome and introductions of the 24 people (or so) in attendance, including rep's from churches, police from 54 Division, local politicians, schools, community groups and interested individuals

Vision and Purpose

Jim Parker, Chairperson of EYS, reminded people of who we are and what our purpose is

We are community people partnering together to reduce crime and especially to create good in our neighbourhood.

We are doing this because we believe that children and youth matter, that we must come together to benefit the youth in our community

We also believe that the church exists to serve the community, and rise up to take action in providing safe and positive places for youth.

We also believe that "it takes a village to raise a child", and in the need to cooperate together; EYS connects us together.

It was reiterated by the Police and others of the value for EYS to be led by the Churches in the area, as opposed to the police or politicians, because it has been proven that police and political initiatives are not as sustainable as community groups, since the mandate for the police and politicians are more far-reaching than ours.

Updates

U1: Police: EYS's area (Broadview to Woodbine-Main, Danforth to O'Connor) roughly corresponds to area #2 for 54 Division, which has seen a decrease in crime in the last 3 months. How much credit EYS can take to this decrease is debatable (!), but the police are appreciative of the various community initiatives that have taken place in our area recently. Members also noted that the increased police presence no doubt also contributed to the decrease of crime in our area. Police will continue to do what they can to monitor these things in the days ahead, pending their resources and the happenings in other parts of the Division.

U2: Toy Guns: Maureen gave a report following our discussion at last meeting. Steering Committee endorsed the idea that stores should be respectfully asked to not sell toy guns in our area. A letter from EYS was drafted, outlining that it is problematic for the police and proven to be harmful for kids to play with guns; the letter also presented that the message we want to send as a community (especially the violent issues we faced in June), is one of peace. Maureen and Jim approached both stores we are aware of at this time. Both were friendly and agreeable, but the decision to not sell toy guns had to go through proper process. We will follow-up.

U3: Pape Village:

Rita Smith, coordinator of Pape Village Business Improvement Area (BIA) and very supportive of EYS has taken a new job in Ottawa. She will be greatly missed in our community. We are unsure at this time how short-term or how long-term this new job will be. We welcomed Dave Smith to our meeting, Rita's son who is providing a temporary replacement for Rita in her BIA role.

Touchstone Youth Centre: Susette reported that Touchstone is doing well, with 30 youth living there at this time. Community people were invited to help paint the rooms [successfully done, as I understand, on Sat. Sept. 30]. Susette also thanked EYS for our ongoing support, and reported that the Touchstone Fundraising Dinner was a great evening, and raised \$10,000. EYS had a table at the Dinner.

Bethany Baptist Church: continuing to look for a part-time Youth Worker to work out of Bethany in the Pape Village area.

Take Back Gamble Park event: had over 100 residents of Gamble and Torrens Avenues at a BBQ in Gamble Park on Sept 24. Donations from Pape businesses and good connections were made among residents, and among some of the youth that use the park.

U4: School Report: Jim reported that he visited all the public schools in EYS's boundaries during the first week of school. Had many good conversations with principals, meeting new principals and re-introducing EYS to others. Most schools knew about EYS.

Reiterated that anything EYS does (ie. a church or individuals connecting into a local school) needs to make sure that it works for the school administration and the youth, and it is effective programs we are running. EYS serves the schools (and not the other way around!).

We also welcomed two principals to our meeting, and both spoke of their encouragement and support around what we are doing, and ways we can continue to partner together.

In response to one visit to Earl Beatty School, we are beginning the process of some collaboration among Earl Beatty, Church of the Resurrection, and the CPLC (Community Police Liaison Committee) to benefit the Earl Beatty students in grades 7-8.

U5: Argo and Blue Jay Tickets: Gave out 200 Argo tickets to September 9 game to the 4 Middle Schools within EYS as well as to the Police. Gratefully received by the schools.

14 EYS people (11 youth and 3 adults) were able to sit in SkyBox at the final Blue Jay Game, thanks to the generosity of Councillor Case Ootes and the City of Toronto.

U6: Pape Youth Centre (Pape and Danforth): a number of EYS participated in their Training Day, and the Pape Youth Centre is about to start up again for another season. Had to cancel their Homework Club at Westwood Middle School this fall because of lack of leadership.

U7: Funding: East York Youth Initiative: Lin Wong, representing Peter Tabuns (MPP), gave an update on efforts to attract funders for the partnership of Eastview Community Centre, the Madina 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 programming funds. Questions and suggestions followed as to what funds are available, and ways to access these funds.

Moving Forward:

MF1: Pape Community Walk: Saturday, Oct. 21 at 4:30pm (come after 3:30pm for meet-and-greet). Bethany Baptist Church (Pape and Cosburn).

Relaxed walk along Pape Avenue, to continue to connect with the residents and businesses in our area. Everyone welcome.

MF2: EYS Training Evening, led by Urban Promise Youth Ministry: Friday, November 3 (6:30pm). Designed for anyone within EYS to learn about positive ways to connect with kids, and effective ministry to them and with them. Colin McCartney, Executive Director of Urban Promise and world-renowned speaker, will give the main training session; it will be interactive and no doubt very helpful for anyone who comes.

MF3: Rotary Club: in response to a request, Jim Parker will speak at the Rotary Club of Leaside about EYS.

[response: this took place on Oct. 2, and went very well. The Rotary Club has asked for a "Wish List" from EYS as far as things we might need. If you have something, please pass it on to Jim and the EYS Steering Committee: bethanychurch@sympatico.ca]

MF4: Programs on Website: what we want to increasing do is offer effective and sustainable programming for children and youth. Churches and groups encouraged to “try something”, step out and offer something to contribute to the whole (even small things, as we have seen these last two months, can help our cause go forward).

We can then get a growing list of these programs, in various parts of our area, and list them on our website. Kids, families, and volunteers can then look on the website for the programs being offered, and take advantage of them.

Open Discussion

There was consensus that we wanted to not only work for youth, but also work with youth, and find ways to encourage youth involvement. We talked about perhaps having a youth-oriented gathering to inform them and inspire them about what could be done through EYS, and also to get their feedback and input.

[In a follow-up conversation with Chris Ball (from MP Layton's office), we decided to take action on this consensus from the group.

On Tuesday, November 14, from 5-7pm, we will host a EYS Youth gathering. Location to be determined. Please pass on this info to any youth you know that might be interested in this exciting effort.]

A number of people spoke about the value of the various connections and actions we have developed since May. The need to continue to cooperate, even with our differences, was validated. Our vision of it taking “a village to raise a child” is being realized. We even gave ourselves a little applause for how well we are working together!!!

Closing Prayer

Addendum:

Rhoda Rosenthal couldn't make the meeting, but writes:

You are probably aware of the Floyd Honey walk for homeless youth on October 22nd, with proceeds going to Touchstone and Raising the Roof Youthworks. Raising the Roof and their toque sales program through schools caught my attention. I spoke to Maureen Deery who is in charge of this program, and told her about the EYS and its affiliate schools. She was very excited about the potential partnership. For every \$10.00 toque sold, \$2.00 goes back to the school for it's own programming use, etc

More details to follow. Here's the link for the Floyd Honey Walk. <http://www.walkinghome.ca/>

Diane Morgan, from Touchstone Youth Centre, also wrote to us about the Floyd Honey Walk:

Rev. Honey lived a noble life and at the age of 86, while **walking home** one evening he was hit by a moving subway train, one week later in Hospital; he died. Rev. Honey believed that everyone regardless of race, colour or social status has a right to shelter. Your support would mean a great deal to me and it would lend support to a tremendous cause. If you are not able to walk please consider making a contribution to my walk.

To make an online donation, please visit www.touchstoneyc.com

Please let me know if you can walk with me, it would be a pleasure to add your name to "Team Touchstone"

Next Steps

1. Churches and others: continue to develop programming for children and youth; list on website
2. Wish list for specific Programming supplies -- email to Jim (for Rotary Club)
3. EYS Training Day conducted by Urban Promise – Friday, Nov 3 (6:30pm)
4. planning Earl Beatty-CPLC-EYS joint event - Jim, Ramonda, Marion,
5. toy guns: Maureen and Jim
6. Funding: Peter and Jim; Ben and others to pursue other options
7. Floyd Honey Walk: Sunday, October 22
8. EYS Youth gathering: Tuesday, Nov. 14 -- if interested, please email!
9. **Next planning session:** Wednesday, October 18, 7pm at Cosburn United Church (1108 Greenwood at Cosburn; on-street parking)