

Youth Settlement Program Report

July 2011

July's highlight include hiring of 2 high school students as summer program youth team leaders followed by successful running of the summer program activities.

CaR (Communication and Recreation) Summer Program for Newcomer Youth

Tuesdays: Essay Writing Exercise with Dance and Martial Arts

Four sessions were held in July with an average of 12 youth attending each session. The youth learnt the basics of essay writing starting with understanding the structure to writing introductory and body paragraphs. They first read a few model essays to help identify the structures and arguments to support the thesis of an essay. Each lesson also involved activities and discussions that focused on building their confidence and team work skills. The participants made their personal choice of an essay topic from the summer program activities. During each 3 hour session, they participated in learning basic defensive martial arts from a black belt instructor. They also learnt modern dance from a youth mentor who has a passion for dance and has performed for various projects and talent shows. The sessions developed their confidence and creativity in communication through interaction with each other and presentation of what they have learnt at the end of each session.

Thursdays: Outdoor Activities

The first two activities were trips downtown to see two theater shows (So I married a Muslim and The Fifth Element) courtesy of the Toronto Fringe Theatre Festival's youth outreach program. Of the 20 youth who participated, 90% said it was their first theatre experience and everyone loved the performance and the cultural experience of appreciating theatre. The other two activities were held at Lakeshore and High park by walking/trekking to the destinations exploring the small neighbourhood streets of Parkdale. Many of them as newcomers have never walked those routes and said they greatly enjoyed learning a bit more about their residential community areas. The youth had a lot of fun playing various outdoor sports (Frisbee, badminton, tennis, soccer and basketball) in a safe manner. They also enjoyed snacks, drinks and ice-cream (to ward off the heat!). All outdoor sessions also focused on the youth to develop further communication skills where they are encouraged to discuss as a team and also to participate with their unique comments for all debrief sessions. The two leaders along with the youth staff made sure to announce and remind on the health and safety concerns (such as walking safely in a group on pedestrian sides, making sure there is enough water and snacks, playing safely with others) during all the activities. The youth emergency contacts were also carried along for safety reasons.

Parkdale Newcomer Youth Committee (PNYC) – a youth leadership group initiated by the Youth Program of PIA and PCIC

PNYC July Meeting:

On Monday July 25th, PNYC members attended the monthly meeting to discuss about the overall activities in the program since the last meeting. Members reviewed a few articles on smoking and movies published in New York Times and CBC. They then discussed on the new project proposal for the Toronto Public Health Youth grant due end of August. The new project proposal activity details were shared with the team in order for all to participate in discussions around the importance and feasibility of such a project for youth.

Interview on the last project, STOM that ended in June was published in the Inside Toronto's local newspaper, The Villager's July 18th issue titled, "Youth take aim at Smoking on the Silver Screen -

(<http://www.insidetoronto.com/community/health/article/1044395--youth-take-aim-at-smoking-on-the-silver-screen>)

PNYC members were delighted to see a glimpse of the success of their last two projects and how they were contributing to the community through their active roles in advocating for the health of everyone young and old.

Meetings/Training/Outreach

Trainings:

Youth worker trained and supervised the two high school summer student employees in order for them to do a wonderful job of helping with the summer program as youth team leaders. The first day of their work, they received an orientation to review their job responsibilities, a tour of their workspace and the importance of health and safety at all times during work.

The two team leaders developed their technical skills further by using the wiki space created for real time updates on daily tasks and reports related to work. As an important part of their job and community leadership activity, they participated in "work a day at a community organization" weekly to understand the various services offered by some of the other organizations in the community. They also received further trainings regularly on planning/organizing, time management, report preparation, meeting note takings, team instructions and effective mentoring.