



9 Front Street Unit #1
Orillia ON L3V 4S1
Telephone: (705) 325-8082 Fax: (705) 325-7407

Presented by Kevin Gangloff to the Orillia Police Services Board, September 29th, 2009.

Orillia Youth Opportunities Committee Programs and Activities Update For Period January-June 2009

Orillia Youth Centre Goals and Objectives for 2009

- Advocate on behalf of youth in accordance with our mandate
- Explore linkages with other youth groups with a goal to integrate youth with their peers
- Continue to explore and build community partnerships and connect with other youth serving agencies
- Identify funding and programming opportunities
- Create new programming opportunities within the Youth Centre; but not to be limited to Youth Centre “run” programs

Orillia Youth Opportunities Committee

The Youth Opportunities Committee has been incredibly active the first half of 2009. The Committee has formed several sub-committees that are actively engaging the community at-large. While a top priority is to provide oversight at the Orillia Youth Centre, with the Executive and Hiring Sub-Committees responsible for the day to day reviews, the OYOC is actively working towards Youth Week 2010, has a Sub-Committee devoted to marketing initiatives, and has a sub-committee that is currently conducting focus groups with youth in Orillia. Please see **Appendix A** for a report prepared by the VOICES Focus Group Sub-Committee following two focus groups held at local high schools.

Orillia Youth Centre Program Summary

During the first 6 months of 2009, The Orillia Youth Resource and Drop-in Centre offered quality programs and activities to youth ages 11-16, free of cost. During the first half of this year we offered several culinary arts and healthy eating workshops, all of which were full, we hosted the Sexual Assault Program from Soldiers Memorial Hospital, music workshops, drug and alcohol workshops, had visits from OPP Cadets, and completed several self esteem workshops. We are offering various therapeutic recreational programs; including arts and crafts, soccer, street hockey, baseball, pool, basketball, board games, and air hockey. We have continued our partnership with Simcoe Community Services and their youth group. We have hosted karaoke and Guitar Hero parties, dinner party groups, table talk, and had a March Break program.



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Orillia Youth Centre Program Summary cont.

The Youth Centre Staff continue to do an excellent job. We are continually assisting youth with homework, resumes and job searching, providing positive role modeling and a non-judgmental approach when dealing with youth and their families. The Youth Centre continues to work closely with youth who have been suspended from school, with guidance and Student Success teachers. The Director also continues to meet at schools during youth reinstatement meetings.

We have received many phone calls from community members, as well as, community partners looking for assistance with youth. From issues of homelessness, runaways, self-harming, lack of clothing, court appointed community-service hours, volunteer hours, schooling issues, general healthcare, or a lack of food; we continue to deal with many issues.

The Youth Centre has been involved in several community initiatives including the MS Walk, Relay For Life, and we also painted two banners for the Festival of Banners.

Statistics

During the first six months of 2009 we have had 4,012 visits. (For your consideration, we had 5,411 visits total in 2008) Please see the **Appendix B** at the end of this report for gender and age breakdowns as well as monthly totals.

Fundraising

We have received tremendous support during the first six months of 2009.

The Rotary Club of Orillia Lake Country donated \$600, which is earmarked towards our youth cooking program.

In partnership with Orillia Community Kitchen Resource Group, we received a grant of \$500 from Good For Life for a culinary arts program.

In partnership with Velocity Bike and MultiSport, we raised \$2100 for youth programming at the first annual Sunshine Community Trails Race.

We received a grant from the Community Foundation for \$2500.



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We received \$300 in donations (spread out over 2 separate donations) from a community member, who in total over the last few years has donated approximately \$1,000.

Fundraising cont.

The community continues to support the Youth Centre with donations that range from monetary and gift certificates, ping pong table, computers, folding tables, a new air hockey table and video games.

The Youth Centre will be holding its annual Tag Day fundraiser in September. The OYOC will continue to apply for any government or community grants that might provide funds for youth programming.

Community Partnerships

The OYOC continues to partner with several organizations on various projects and initiatives pertaining to youth, while also creating several new partnership opportunities for the youth and the Youth Centre.

We continue to partner with local sports leagues to place young people at no cost to the youth/parent or the Centre.

Canadian Mental Health Association has provided a Youth Counsellor to the Youth Centre; she is at the Centre Mondays and Wednesdays and is available to meet with youth individually and in a group setting.

Our community service hour's project with the Ministry of Children and Youth Services is continuing to run on Wednesdays and we have expanded it on an as needed basis. We offer youth an opportunity to complete their court appointed and community service hours at the Youth Centre. We have also worked together with Youth Justice Services to coordinate youth probation volunteer hours at Canada Day Celebrations and the Mariposa Folk Festival.

Elizabeth Fry is currently using the Youth Centre on a weekly basis as a place to meet with their youth.

Brain Injury Services of Simcoe County is using our facility on Tuesdays and Thursdays for programming and is providing a donation to the Centre.

We have partnered with Stellula Music in Schools to host various music workshops at the Youth Centre.



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The Youth Centre continues to partner with the Health Unit, who has in turn provided numerous resource materials to the Centre. The Youth Centre sits on the Child and Youth Worker Committee at Georgian College.

Community Partnerships cont.

The Youth Centre was again involved with the Choose Your Ride Program, which set up an exhibit at the four local high schools. This initiative included several community partners; including the Orillia Substance Abuse Action Network, OPP, Soldiers Memorial Hospital nursing staff, and the Simcoe-Muskoka District Health Unit.

The Youth Centre continues to work closely with the OPP, OPP CSO, and OPP Adult Volunteer Program.

The OYOC is currently sitting on the Youth Social Enterprise Project Committee with the CDC.

The OYOC is represented on the Orillia Substance Abuse Action Committee; a group committed to distributing information about substance abuse to several other social service groups in the community.

The OYOC is represented on and chairs the Orillia Community Policing Committee.

The Youth Centre sits on the Orillia Youth Circle and Orillia Housing Symposium.

The Youth Centre is hosting Blacklight Theater again this fall.

We continue to be involved in the Simcoe County Alliance to End Homelessness, Good for Life, and the Coffee Time Network.

Kevin Gangloff
Director of Youth Opportunities



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Appendix A

O.A.S.I.S Focus Group Grade 11 Mixed Class

The class of approximately 20 students was split into three groups. Each group was asked to compose a list of youth needs that they felt were not being addressed. All three groups focused on activities and events that they felt would address gaps in service provision. Results of the discussion differed from previous focus groups in that the responses touched on many different areas making it more difficult to group into general themes. One theme that did run throughout the groups was the theme of recreation. Each group was given the chance to present their 'list' of wishes to the larger group. A class discussion was then facilitated to obtain more information and details from the list.

The issue of cost and the barriers that cost place on youth was highlighted throughout the discussion. Many of the youth cited cost as a barrier to joining extra-curricular activities. Though they had a strong desire to join clubs (sports, music, dance, fishing, hunting etc.) cost prohibited them from doing so. Several other recreation ideas were cited across the groups: water sports (skiing, wakeboarding etc), paint ball courses, lazer tag facilities, public pools, basketball courts, and rock climbing facilities. Several other novel ideas for recreation included beach parties (to be supervised by police, parents) and block BBQ parties. All three groups also highlighted clean venues for all ages concerts, all ages dance club, free concerts in the park, more appealing stores in the mall, coffee shops, and internet cafes as important.

All groups universally agreed that transportation was an issue for youth. They cited both cost and availability as an issue. Many felt that buses should run until 12:00am so youth could access buses after work, or go and see a movie etc.

Several other categories, while not universally cited, generated a great deal of discussion among the larger group. The issue of safety was discussed among the students. Nearly half the class reported that they had been followed at night by a stranger. This included both male and female students. Students noted that they would feel safer if police officers were patrolling the streets on foot rather than in cars. Several students also expressed a perception of bias among police



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officers toward youth. It was identified that police discretion when laying charges can be problematic leading the youth to question the fairness and consistency of police officers and the law.

Appendix A

The need for an emergency youth shelter also was discussed among the class as a whole. Nearly one third of students admitted that they had had to resort to alternate living arrangements at one time or another. They advised that a youth shelter would be useful in assisting youth who find themselves unable to go home.

The need for services to address alcohol and drug rehabilitation for youth was also discussed. When asked who felt that drugs and alcohol are a problem among youth 100% of students responded that they felt it was a problem. It is interesting to note that youth were not identifying that youth in general use drugs and alcohol but that the use is problematic. An exploration of the reasons they felt it was problematic were outside of the scope of the discussion. However, when debriefing with the class teacher after he advised that he was not surprised by the response. He suggested that each of the students had been negatively affected by drug use for a variety of reasons including: physical altercations, having goods and money stolen from them, general conflict, and bullying.

Twin Lakes Secondary School Focus Group Grade 11 Psychology Class

The class of approximately 30 students was split into six groups. Each group was asked to compose a list of youth needs that they felt were not being addressed. Several themes were noted across the groups. All six groups focused on activities and events that they felt would address gaps in service provision. Among these activities the responses can be generally grouped into three categories: music/cultural, recreation, and retail. The findings were presented by each group to the class as a whole.

The most commonly cited needs in the recreation category were: water sport rentals (sea-dos, canoes, kayaks etc.), paint ball courses, and lazer tag facilities. All six groups universally named the MURF as their number one recreation priority. The most commonly cited needs in the music/cultural were: clean venues for all age's concerts, all ages dance club, free concerts in the park, and outdoor movie nights. The most commonly cited needs in the retail category were: more appealing stores in the mall, coffee shops, and several requests for Costco.



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Appendix A

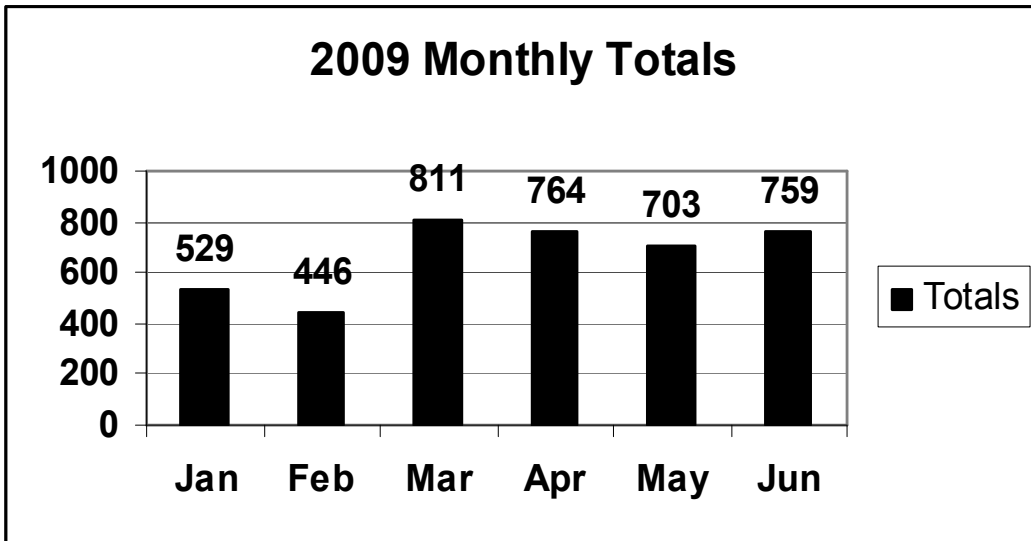
Several other categories, while not universally cited, generated a great deal of discussion among the larger group. Issues around diversity and multi-cultural living were discussed at length. Students discussed the fact that being from another culture (First Nations, East Indian etc) can be problematic at times. They do not see their culture represented in a positive way that makes them feel safe. It was not a requirement of the discussion for students to name their background/culture due to the discomfort this may have caused. As such issues around sexuality and other 'minority' cultures were not discussed openly. As such it is difficult to ascertain the needs these youth may wish to have addressed. The students also voiced a concern around their personal safety. There were six students in the class (20%) who advised that they had been followed at night by a stranger. This included both male and female students. Several cited the lack of adequate lighting in public areas and the lack of 'safe phones' in areas frequented by students. Several groups also voiced concern over environmental issues; most notably concern about the cleanliness of the waterfront and public waterways. Many during discussion advised that they would like to see the water quality in Lake Couchiching improved. Many did not feel it was safe to swim in the lake and cited poor water quality as their decision for not swimming.

It is also important to note that students were quite clear that they were willing to pay a fee (if even nominal) for services/events.



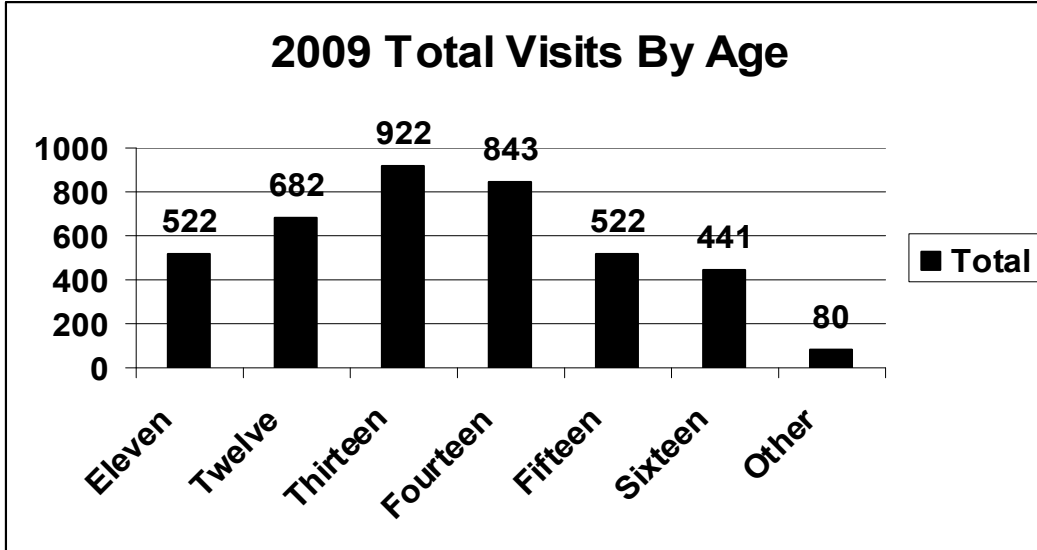
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Appendix B Statistical Breakdown

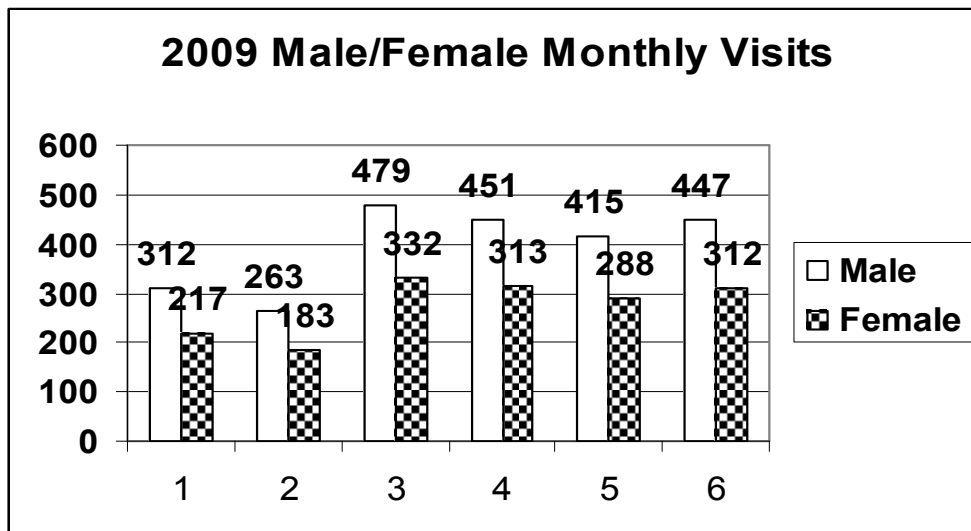




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Appendix B Statistical Breakdown





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