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DATE: May 11, 2009

SUBJECT: **UPDATE ON PEEL YOUTH VIOLENCE PREVENTION NETWORK**

FROM: Janette Smith, Commissioner of Health Services  
Keith Ward, Commissioner of Human Services

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**OBJECTIVE**

The purpose of this report is to update Regional Council on the Peel Youth Violence Prevention Network's 2008 accomplishments.

**REPORT HIGHLIGHTS**

- The Steering Committee and four Working Groups have been active in addressing the three year strategic direction and goals identified in March 2008. A number of key activities are highlighted in this report.
- Building on the successes of the Peel Youth Violence Forum in 2006, the Peel Youth Violence Prevention Network Steering Committee hosted a symposium in June 2008 to strengthen network ties; to encourage participation from community agencies; to endorse the three year vision; and to foster an integrated approach to programs at the neighbourhood and agency level.
- The Steering Committee has revised and confirmed its goals for the next two years.

**DISCUSSION****1. Background**

Through conversations with youth, the police and community organizations, the members of the Peel Youth Violence Prevention Network (PYVPN) have learned a great deal about the factors that contribute to youth violence and the challenges faced by those who are trying to make a difference. Meaningful change takes time, but there is a great deal of work being done by many individuals and groups who are dedicated to improving the lives of young people.

The issue of youth violence is complex and includes many influences such as poverty, housing, employment, social isolation and recreational opportunities. Addressing the issue of youth violence therefore requires a multi-faceted and collaborative approach from many sectors including government, police, schools, youth, faith groups and community groups. The PYVPN strategy is a collaborative approach to increase community capacity by building on the existing programs and services delivered in the Region of Peel and to give youth a voice.

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### 2. Activities in 2008

#### a) Peel Youth Violence Prevention Network Steering Committee

The Steering Committee was expanded and now includes representation from The United Way, Peel Regional Council, Peel Health and Human Services Departments, Peel Regional Police, Ontario Provincial Police – Caledon, Peel District School Board, Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board, Brampton Safe City Association and Mississauga Safe City Association.

The Steering Committee hosted two major meetings in 2008: a symposium in the spring where the Working Groups endorsed the Network's three year vision and developed their working plans for the next three years; and supported a series of meetings of 200 young people who brainstormed the creation of a new network brand and image reflective of youth and their spirit. This collaboration produced the new VOICE logo and upcoming VOICE website.

Other accomplishments of the Steering Committee are highlighted below:

- Launching a quarterly newsletter;
- Participated in the provincial Roots of Youth Violence consultation and PYVPN recommendations were reflected in The Review of the Roots of Youth Violence report;
- Ongoing efforts to obtain sustainable funding for the Peel Youth Violence Prevention Network, including collaborating with the City of Mississauga to access grant funding;
- Collaborating with the Peel Region Police on the creation of a website, [www.connect2ENDviolence.ca](http://www.connect2ENDviolence.ca), that will serve as a hub for community discussion on violence and violence prevention;
- Building connections with community organizations such as Success by 6 Peel; Peel Committee Against Women Abuse and Peel Committee on Sexual Assault; Peel Region's neighbourhood capacity building initiative and the United Way's Neighbourhood Strategy.

#### b) Youth Violence Prevention Working Groups

In 2006, four working groups were developed to address the priority areas identified in the Peel Youth Violence Prevention Network Steering Committee Report. Chaired by a community leader with expertise in the respective area of interest, each Working Group holds memberships from a variety of sectors. The diversity of members and multidisciplinary perspectives has been invaluable in gaining a greater understanding of the complexity of youth violence in the Region of Peel. Over 44 agencies currently serve as active participants.

Each working group faced challenges in working with limited time and resources to effect positive change. They have worked diligently to find ways of meaningfully engaging youth – and youth-at-risk in particular – in their schools, communities and within the family.

A number of key successes for each of the four Working Groups are highlighted below:

## UPDATE ON PEEL YOUTH VIOLENCE PREVENTION NETWORK

### Education, Policy and Programs Working Group

- Collaborated with the other Working Groups and a number of community agencies to draft a concept for a funding proposal to reach under-served and at-risk youth;
- Supported the Working with Families Working Group on the creation of the Middle Years Parent and Youth Program, designed to improve relationships between parents/caregivers and youth
- Designed and actively planned for a youth symposium to be held in 2009.

### Working with Families Working Group

- Collaborated with Education, Policy and Programs Working Group to create the Middle Years Parent and Youth Program. The focus of the 6-week program is to help parents and youth between the ages of 7-12 develop positive communications skills, proper discipline methods, and anger management;
- The three-month post-session evaluation is currently underway to determine family support needs and assess retention of skills acquired during the program;
- Initiated work on the creation of a 'family toolkit' that will be community-specific and provide information on parenting skills, community supports and tools for enhanced communication.

### Services and Support for Youth Working Group

- Held youth focus groups in Brampton, Mississauga and Caledon. Youth expressed a desire for more community activities, improved safety in schools, and better relations with police;
- Created a new Youth Advisory Group to guide and direct youth focused activities and programs. IMPACT is the name chosen by the youth members for the group;
- Actively participated in the creation of a new network brand and image – VOICE;
- Successful in receiving a grant from Mayor McCallion's 2008 Annual Golf Tournament to support youth activities.

### Community Development Working Group

- Networking with community development leaders in Peel;
- Facilitated the program design for a Youth Gang Violence Prevention proposal;
- Working with neighbourhood groups to maximize the use of existing resources.

A community report summarizing the Network's 2008 accomplishments will be distributed widely in the community.

### 3. Proposed Direction

In February 2009, the Network Steering Committee met to review, revise and confirm the vision and objectives for the next two years:

#### Vision

To make youth violence prevention a priority issue in the community by increasing awareness, engaging the community and strengthening networks of involved partners.

**UPDATE ON PEEL YOUTH VIOLENCE PREVENTION NETWORK**

Goals

1. Increase overall awareness of the issues of youth violence and the work of the Network through expanded community outreach, social marketing campaign and a dedicated media relations program.
2. Advocate for safe and supportive environments throughout Peel by doing outreach to neighbouring communities and connecting with all levels of government.
3. Engage youth and families by keeping our schools, our community centres, and our churches open after hours and developing new programs and initiatives.
4. Strengthen Networks to ensure an integrated approach through planning an annual conference, encouraging diversity in programming and building in avenues for improved communication.

Using the new VOICE logo to create a strong media presence in the community will support the activities of the Network and heighten community awareness of the importance of prevention efforts addressing youth violence.

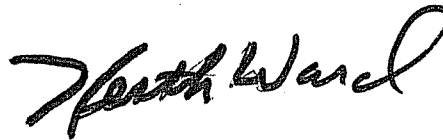
In addition, an evaluation strategy will inform future violence prevention work, improve the partners' ability to identify groups at high risk for violence, measure the impact and reach of violence prevention initiatives, and understand community attitudes and perceptions of violence in the Region of Peel. The evaluation strategy will also include the development of local surveillance and monitoring tools related to youth violence. Such efforts will allow the ascertainment of patterns and long-term trends related to this important issue.

**CONCLUSION**

There is no one approach to ending youth violence. Multi-pronged strategies must have youth involvement in their design and delivery. The Steering Committee and Working Groups are committed to building on the accomplishments in 2009.

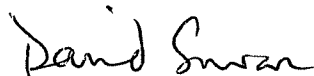


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**Approved for Submission:**



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