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For Information

DATE: May 18, 2011

REPORT TITLE: **YOUTH VIOLENCE PREVENTION UPDATE**

FROM: Janette Smith, Commissioner of Health Services
Janet Menard, Commissioner of Human Services

OBJECTIVE

To update Regional Council regarding initiatives related to youth violence prevention, their alignment to Peel Children and Youth Initiative (PCYI) and other organizations dealing with the root causes of youth violence.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- In 2005, Peel Youth Violence Prevention Committee (later called Network) was formed.
- The Peel Youth Violence Prevention Network Steering Committee disbanded in 2010.
- Former Network Steering Committee members will continue to meet quarterly under the new name "Youth Violence Prevention Advisory Committee".
- In 2010, a Continuum of Youth Violence Prevention was created as a tool to determine where Regional staff, PCYI and agencies align relative to youth violence prevention.
- Youth violence prevention work aligns with PCYI in addition to community and safe city organizations, Peel Regional Police and Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) in Caledon.
- Priorities within the PCYI strategic plan provide a framework for integration of services, where appropriate, to ensure youth violence prevention remains a priority in Peel.
- Staff will continue to play a leadership role for a collaborative and evidence-based youth violence prevention strategy which includes comprehensive measurement of outcomes.

DISCUSSION

1. Background

In December 2005, the Peel Youth Violence Prevention Committee (later called Network) was formed and included leadership for the Steering Committee from Peel Regional Councillors, Human and Health Services departments, Peel Regional Police, Caledon OPP, Peel District School Board, Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board, Brampton Safe City and Safe City Mississauga.

a) Peel Youth Violence Prevention Network (PYVPN)

The vision of the PYVPN was to make youth violence prevention a priority issue in the community by increasing awareness, engaging the community and strengthening networks of involved partners. The issue of youth violence is complex and includes

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many influences such as poverty, housing, employment, social isolation and recreational opportunities.

In 2006, to address the many influences mentioned above, four working groups were developed to address identified priority areas. Each working group holds membership from a variety of sectors. The numerous collaborative efforts have served to increase community capacity by building on existing programs and services delivered in the Region of Peel and also to give youth a voice. Using the "VOICE" logo helped to create a strong media presence in the community and heightens community awareness of the importance of prevention efforts addressing youth violence.

b) Peel Children and Youth Initiative (PCYI)

In 2010, in line with building community capacity to tackle tough issues affecting all children and youth from 0-24 years of age, a new organization called Peel Children and Youth Initiative was formed. The creation of PCYI was also driven by the need to reduce duplication of effort and find ways to, where appropriate, integrate and support the activities of three initiatives: PYVPN, Success By Six Peel, and Student Support Leadership Initiative.

PCYI has formalized its strategic plan and structure. The strategic plan identifies the following key priorities over the next two years:

- i) Strengthening the Early Years: A strategy to help integrate the organizations and activities that support parents and children 0 to 6.
- ii) Peel's Kids Participate: A strategy to increase the numbers of children and youth engaged in healthy recreational, skill building and after-school opportunities. This was also a priority for the PYVPN Steering Committee when providing input to the Roots of Youth Violence provincial report.
- iii) Thriving Children-Stronger Future: A report of the current status of children and youth in Peel with highlighted opportunities to improve outcomes.

2. Update on Youth Violence Prevention in Peel

In 2010, to build on the work of youth violence prevention, a Continuum of Youth Violence Prevention (the "Continuum") was created as a tool to determine where Regional staff, PCYI and agencies align (See Appendix I). The Continuum is based on a review of effective interventions for youth violence prevention and highlights that a comprehensive approach to violence prevention requires a wide range of strategies. It also allows for identification of current gaps and opportunities in Peel to ensure that a well-informed strategy can evolve moving forward with no duplication of effort.

a) Youth Violence Prevention Working Groups

The interventions of the youth violence prevention working groups continue with youth engagement and community outreach activities on the go in conjunction with many community partners. These initiatives address many elements within the Continuum. Appendix II provides a detailed update including the upcoming "Express mySELF" Initiative.

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b) Alignment with Peel Children and Youth Initiative (PCYI)

Many initiatives currently undertaken by the youth violence prevention working groups align with two of the strategic priorities of PCYI, namely "Peel's Kids Participate" and "Thriving Children-Stronger Future". These priorities address many facets of the Continuum, including social skills, youth opportunities, public education, and fostering a multi-agency approach to name a few. Members of Regional staff support PCYI to date by providing leadership at the Steering Committee, Youth Engagement Committee and Communications Committee. Continued emphasis will be on youth engagement, especially in relation to violence prevention. The "VOICE" identifier will still be used.

c) Regional Programs and Strategies Dealing with the Roots of Youth Violence

In addition, there are a number of other things that Regional staff are involved in that address the roots of youth violence along the Continuum. These efforts focus on advocacy and building community capacity. Examples include but are not limited to:

- Mental health advocacy;
- Anti-poverty efforts;
- Anti-racism;
- Bullying prevention;
- Affordable housing; and
- Neighbourhood development.

Yet another example are the 2010 and 2011 "Summer Job Challenge" which is geared to giving youth the opportunity to obtain eight weeks of employment during the summer.

3. Next Steps

Staff will continue collaborative work to address gaps and opportunities relative to the Continuum. As PCYI is still gearing up, the Peel Youth Violence Prevention former Steering Committee members will continue to meet quarterly under the new name "Youth Violence Prevention Advisory Committee". The members will ensure that youth violence prevention continues to be a priority in Peel. To that end, they will be inviting the Executive Director of the PCYI to participate on the Advisory Committee.

As part of priority setting, staff is looking into relevant sources to track the prevalence of youth violence as well as the associated risk and protective factors. Indicators will be selected based upon available data sources including Peel Public Health, Police, the Peel Student Health Survey and Census data. In addition to this, there may be an opportunity to partner with an academic institution to develop a mapping system that could help in the identification of areas where more intensive youth violence prevention intervention initiatives are required.

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CONCLUSION

Regional staff supporting youth violence prevention work will continue their efforts to collaborate with community and safe city organizations, Peel Regional Police and Caledon OPP, on the issue of youth violence, including working with and supporting PCYI. Staff members are well poised to continue to play a leadership role for a collaborative and evidence-based youth violence prevention strategy which includes comprehensive measurement of outcomes.

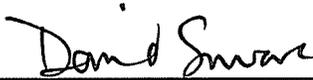


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APPENDIX I

Youth Violence Prevention Continuum

In the autumn of 2010, to build on the work of PYVN, a Youth Violence Prevention Continuum was developed based on a review of effective interventions for youth violence prevention. This was done in order to have the most current evidence on effective approaches for preventing youth violence. This Continuum highlights that a comprehensive approach to youth violence prevention requires a wide range of strategies, including focusing on early prevention, intervention, and reducing the reoccurrence of violence.

In the winter of 2011, staff consulted key agencies and community partners that provide services and supports related to youth violence prevention. The purpose was to assess current community involvement in youth violence initiatives along the continuum of prevention. It also focused on understanding current gaps and opportunities in Peel to ensure that a well-informed strategy can evolve moving forward with no duplication of effort. This information, along with other key pieces of information, including the literature review and the "Review of the Roots of Youth Violence" provincial report, has helped to inform next steps for youth violence prevention efforts in Peel.

The Youth Violence Prevention Continuum is shown on page two of this appendix (Appendix I).

Youth Violence Prevention Continuum

Advocacy and Public Policy ~ Community Mobilization and Capacity Building ~ Knowledge Transfer ~ Social Marketing

Community Foundations	Early Prevention	Intervention	Treatment and Support
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preventing violence before it occurs. Targeted at the general (whole) population as everyone benefits from these strategies. Addressing many of the societal level determinants (i.e. roots) of youth violence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preventing violence before it occurs. Targeted at the general (whole) population as everyone benefits from these strategies. Addressing violence through community, family, and personal risk and protective factors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Targeted at children and youth at increased risk for violence and/or those who exhibit early signs of violent behaviour. Increased risk could be due to neighbourhood characteristics, relationships and family situation, or personal factors such as mental health or socioeconomic status. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support and treatment for youth already engaged in violent behaviour. Aims to deal with violence and prevent its consequences. Aims to prevent the reoccurrence or escalation of violence.
Community Design Strategies	Early Years/ Preschool Enrichment	Mentoring Programs	Diversion from Adult Justice System
Managing Drinking Environments	Parenting Programs/Skills Training		Wraparound/Multi-Agency Approach
Promoting Diversity and Anti-Racism	Social Skills Development Programs		Therapeutic Foster Care
Child and Youth Mental Health System and Services			
Youth Opportunities (e.g. jobs, extracurricular and recreational activities, leadership)		Gang Prevention and Intervention Programs	
School Based Violence Prevention Programs			Community Policing
Cultural Norms that Reject Violence			Diversion/Restitution Programs
Reducing Inequality and Poverty			Victim Services
Social Marketing/ Public Education			
Education Policies			

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APPENDIX II

Youth Violence Prevention, Update on Initiatives

Much work is being done through initiatives in the Region's Health and Human Services departments to address the root causes of violence and to support youth violence prevention in Peel. Staff continue their efforts to address identified priorities.

1. Youth Violence Prevention

Regional staff members frequently engage with community agencies, including Brampton Safe City and Safe City Mississauga, to support youth violence prevention. Staff have also been busy continuing work on the website, as well as assisting with implementing working group initiatives. Below is an update of recent work.

1.1 Working Groups Updates

a) Services and Supports for Youth

The IMPACT Youth Advisory Group has been keeping busy in our community.

- **Alliance Against Violence:** an outdoor youth concert hosted by the Brampton Mayor's Youth Advisory Council (MYAC), was held in October, 2010. IMPACT youth volunteered behind the scenes and addressed the over 1000 kids about the importance of self-respect and giving back to the community.
- **Educational Seminars for IMPACT Youth Advisory Group**
December 2010 - Peel Regional Police Gangs Unit visits with IMPACT youth
December 2010 - seminar on Healthy and Unhealthy Relationships
- **Building Positive Relationships between Peel Regional Police and Youth**
IMPACT has been informally asking youth for their input on ways they would like to interact with police officers. The Youth Crime Coordinator and Community Development Worker have reviewed this preliminary information and are in the process of developing a unique approach to reaching out to youth. Once a strategy has been established, IMPACT will be actively seeking more youth involvement to brainstorm ideas.
- The **Express mySELF** Initiative is in early planning stages and will involve a long-term strategy to educate and build awareness of the community's impact on the development of a youth's healthy self-esteem.
 - Phase 1: Express mySELF Contest-Fall 2011: Youth ranging from 13-24 years of age will be invited to submit visual artwork and written expressions regarding how their community impacts how they see themselves. There will be prizes awarded to youth; and
 - Phase 2: Outreach tools and advocacy-Winter 2011-2012.
- Impact youth participated with Connect2ENDviolence in one of their online interviews. The kids were not rehearsed and the exercise proved very insightful as new perspectives were realized with this group.
- **Black History Month** – On February 25, 2011 members of the IMPACT group supported and participated in an event that was hosted by United Way's Black Community Advisory Council (BCAC) and Nexus Youth. IMPACT members

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provided a brief presentation about themselves, the various activities of the youth advisory group, and the importance of community involvement.

- **Music** – IMPACT has decided to use music with the goal of reaching out to large numbers of youth. IMPACT will create an inspirational message to encourage youth engagement across Peel.

b) Families and Education

In October 2010, two 8-week sessions of the Middle Years Program were facilitated at St. Ursula Elementary School in Brampton and Holy Cross Separate School in Malton. Evaluation results included:

- 100 per cent of the parent participants reported that it was “very likely” or “likely” they would recommend this program to a friend.
- 93 per cent of the parent participants “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that the program met their needs.
- The youth felt that the session taught them how to be good role models and are planning on sharing what they learned with their peers.

In January 2011, staff from Human and Health Services departments partnered with the Boys and Girls Club to run a ‘pilot program’ in a community based environment at the McHardy Court/Fair Oaks area to engage more parents.

In March 2011, the Middle Years Program was launched in the Caledon/Bolton area at Ellwood Memorial Public School.

c) Community Development

The goal of the Community Development Working Group is to build partnerships with existing agencies to support and build upon programs for youth in neighbourhoods across Peel.

The Community Development Working Group wrote a letter of support for the “Parents Reaching Out” group which successfully received an Ontario Ministry of Education grant for \$18,000. The “Parents Reaching Out” program is designed to target newcomer parents and parents of low socio-economic status to assist them in getting more involved with their child’s school and educational development. In addition, children are provided with tutoring to help them improve their Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) scores.

2. Additional Initiatives

Along with all the work highlighted above, much work is being done through initiatives in the Region’s Health and Human Services departments. For example, the Region is now formally part of the Canadian Coalition of Municipalities Against Racism and Discrimination. Racism and discrimination are identified as roots of youth violence. Beside working on issues related to poverty, housing, school and family health, all addressing root causes of youth violence, Regional staff are also working with community partners on Community Outreach initiatives to address the diverse issues within the identified priority neighbourhoods.