

Making Hamilton the Best Place to Raise a Child

Building a Resilient Community by Engaging Youth



YMCA

We build strong kids,
strong families, strong communities.

Early Successes

- In response to a call for proposals from the McConnell Foundation, for Canadian communities to develop programming which builds on effective and innovative youth engagement, a group of youth serving agency leaders, youth, government leaders and others in Hamilton came around a planning table. A letter of intent was developed and submitted and out of 27 communities Hamilton was one of seven chosen to further develop a community plan for youth engagement.
- The collaborative approach taken by the Steering Committee has resulted in strong partnerships & benefits.
- Hamilton is working on building a resilient community because it has the potential and is in a position to demonstrate, through this initiative, that we are able to come together to solve our problems and leverage our assets. There are a number of cross-sector initiatives in Hamilton that have built capacity and grown leadership. We are beginning to identify the gaps that exist in the implementation of these existing initiatives and are identifying the strategies with which we can bridge these gaps.
- In addition, we have recognized the potential to share what we learn. Hamilton's youth-serving organizations are connected to strong national and international networks where we share learning and this initiative offers us the opportunity to develop a strong learning community focused on youth engagement in Hamilton and with other communities across Canada.
- To develop the specific issues that Hamilton plans to address, the Steering Committee oversaw an ambitious consultation plan that connected with a broad cross section of Hamilton stakeholders. In total, we have heard from 296 youth and 72 multi-sector partners and community leaders to develop our plan of action for the Building Resilient Community by Engaging Youth initiative in Hamilton.

Poverty Reduction Strategy

- Three of the most notable gaps we have encountered in speaking with young people and multi-sector stakeholders in Hamilton are: lack of space for connection and communication, the under-representation of youth voice in the decision-making process, and issue-based work that is operating out of silos.
- To address these gaps and develop strategies around filling them, we are proposing a three legged stool approach to the Building Resilient Communities by Engaging Youth initiative in Hamilton that would focus on improving systemic engagement practices, creating a communication hub with physical and virtual space, and building a strong collaborative working community around dealing with larger city-wide issues (Issues, Voice, Impact).
- These are strategic decisions as they address the social concerns we heard from our consultations. We need to reshape the systemic barriers that prevent youth from meaningful participation in our community, and to foster a sense of shared responsibility in creating solutions that address our social issues.
- We decided to start with poverty since it is a growing concern in Hamilton, and addressing this issue immediately is likely to excite and mobilize collaborative action within our community. Youth have expressed sincere interest in tackling this issue, which will foster leadership opportunities for youth.
- We will work closely with the Hamilton Roundtable in order to maximize the results.
- The Building Resilient Communities by Engaging Youth initiative in Hamilton is using a combination of the asset-based approach for the involvement of young people in our community & the Ladder of Young People's Participation to conceptually frame our understanding of youth engagement with particular attention on issues directly related to our community, which includes poverty, discrimination, and youth friendliness.

Community Partners

Current Executive Steering Committee - As of December 22, 2006 (*)

- Nicki Glowacki, Vice President YMCA of Hamilton/Burlington (Chair)
- Liz Weaver, Director, Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction
- Jeff Wingard, Social Planning and Research Council, Hamilton
- Jennifer Harper, Youth, McMaster University
- Mike Desjardins, Social Planning and Research Council

Lita Barrie, Hamilton Public Library
Corey Beadoin, City of Hamilton
Sharon Charters, Manager of Grants, Hamilton Community Foundation
Christopher Cutler, Executive Director, Volunteer Hamilton
Duane Dahl, Assistant Executive Director, Kiwanis Boys and Girls Club, Hamilton
Mike Desjardins, Social Planning and Research Council
Liz Duval, Ministry of Citizenship, Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Culture & Recreation
Paul Evans, Hamilton Police, Youth Division
Lillian Elliott, Catholic Children's Aid Society
Brenda Ferguson, Today's Family
Brandon Hill, NYA:WEH, Aboriginal Stay in School Initiative
Loretta Hill-Finamore, Street Involved Youth
Linda Hughes, Youth Advisory Council, Hamilton Community Foundation
Lloyd Kibaara, Youth Worker, Settlement and Immigration Services Organization
Lloyd MacKenzie, Community Centre for Media Arts
Sheree Meredith, Vice President, Hamilton Community Foundation
Monica Quinlan, United Way of Burlington, Greater Hamilton
Jennie Vengris, Social Planning and Research Council, Hamilton
Mark Weingartner, Social Development and Early Childhood Services, City of Hamilton
Susan Wier, Manager, Children and Youth Services, YWCA Hamilton
Jahan Zeb, Immigrant Culture and Arts Association



TACKLING POVERTY in HAMILTON *We can do it!*

