

Carleton Place and District Youth Centre

Strategic Plan 2019

Executive Summary

The Carleton Place and District Youth Centre was established in 1995 as a community-based youth organization serving the young people of Carleton Place and surrounding communities. We are an incorporated charitable organization governed by a voluntary Board of Directors. The Board of Directors is comprised of professional members of the community and local business owners, with representation from the Carleton Place O.P.P. and Municipal Council.

The creation of the Centre was spearheaded by a community driven need to move youth from the downtown core and assist in reducing crime and substance abuse among the young people of Carleton Place and surrounding areas. The lack of adequate youth oriented facilities led to the solution of a Youth Centre to relieve tension attributed to youth issues and problems in the downtown area.

Adolescents face ongoing changes in their daily lives, including a considerable amount of stress regardless of their socio-economic background. While still in the process of physical and personality growth, they must develop acceptable social and work skills, deal with various external pressures, family expectations, academic requirements, peer pressures and jobs or joblessness. Unfortunately, many also have to deal with other challenges such as poverty, remoteness, homelessness, and exposure to family violence, victimization, sexual abuse, parental criminality and/or substance abuse among other issues. Any one or a combination of these risk factors may contribute to a young person's negative behavioural responses.

Within the framework of the "rural youth and small town youth" experience, there is relatively little for a young person to do outside of organized sports and arts programs traditionally excluding a large majority of our youth due to lack of financial resources and/or parental commitment. Our centre continues to develop and deliver programs and activities that reach out to those that may otherwise feel excluded or isolated.

History

Over the past 25 years, CPDYC has demonstrated the need for preventative youth services in the community, and the administrative ability to provide this service. Ultimately the benefit of our work extends to the community as a whole, sociologically and economically. It is known that correctional cost for teen infractions are significantly higher than prevention costs.

Since inception, CPDYC has seen well over 80,000 visits by community youth and provided a variety of recreational, educational and social activities, programs and services.

Approximately 6 years ago the Centre looked harshly at our statistics; threats, risks and issues. The Centre was financially strapped and focused mainly on youth with existing behavioral issues with a dwindling youth membership. We were not attracting new young people and the community's knowledge of the centre was extremely limited, with the impression it was a place for "troubled"

kids to hang out. It was clear we needed to rethink how we marketed ourselves and where we needed to focus our efforts and limited funding.

We determined it was necessary to develop a revised strategic plan. It was important to take a more proactive approach, striving to ensure our youth are active, responsible and contributing members of our community, boasting confident, healthy youth that are able to envision, plan and take control of their destiny. We began to focus some of our programming at a younger population as statistics now show that it is crucial to reach children by age 8 in order to alter behavioral outcomes.

We presently deliver many programs offered to younger youth (age 8-12) introducing them early to a safe and supportive environment where they develop friendships and relationships, and participate in diverse programs that keep them engaged as they grow and their needs change.

We continue to maintain services through partnerships in the community for our troubled youth who need assistance, working with them, supporting them and referring them to the right agencies for help. We work closely with our neighbouring communities in the Lanark County Youth Centre Coalition. The coalition works together on grant applications to provide joint projects to young people throughout the county.

Mission

To build a healthy community by providing young people a safe, all inclusive environment offering social, educational and recreational activities.

Vision

We will accomplish our mission through collaboration with the community and youth, developing partnerships to facilitate fun and diverse programs and opportunities that increase youth involvement, community attachment, healthy outlooks, and provide optimistic outcomes.

Psychology

Developing programs that positively affect all areas of youth development ensures a healthy outlook and promotes optimistic outcomes.

Psychological

*Awareness, feelings,
Attitudes, beliefs, trust,
Self esteem, motivation,
Creativity*

Physical and Behavioral

*Health and well being
Skills,
Participation,
Diet*

Cultural

*Ethics, attitude,
Customs, language,
Collective norms,
Perceptions*

Social Systems

*Community, law, policies
Programs,
Infrastructure, housing, transportation,
Government*

Barriers and Challenges

Strengths

History- established with long term sustainability and experienced ED
Existing programming that is well received (summer camp, kidz in kitchen, cook it up, drop in...)
Existing financial support
Existing facility – free; abundant outside space
Relationships with other organizations
Staff – desire to help, improve, cohesive
Committed Board members

Weaknesses

Location – out of the way, lack of visibility, size
Funding – less and less grants available each year; lack of fundraising events
Community knowledge/Visibility – not well known to all in community
Transportation – out of the way, getting here not always easy/getting home potentially dangerous
Policy review and amendments
Fragile Board – working together, effectiveness and efficiency, interest of new members, diversity of skill sets, processes for membership, relationship with ED
Staffing – contingent on grants/funding programs

Threats (what must be achieved to deal with them)

Public Perception – only for bad kids
Funding –potential to limit programming, staff
Staffing/Volunteers – need to keep running programs
Programs – need to meet needs/wants of youth we are serving
Social media – time consuming, negative comments
Transportation – out of the way, getting here, feeling safe getting to and from
Identify – trying to serve everyone; competing community needs (recreation vs services)
Overlap/duplication of services. Competition from other organizations.

Opportunities

Community unity and engagement
Support youth to take action, have a voice that is considered and respected
Arts and Culture exposure - Youth are engaged in activities that develop social, environmental, economic, physical, psychological and cultural wellness
Help youth acquire skills and knowledge they need to become healthy productive adults
Build bridge with other organizations – schools, law enforcement, senior's programs
Scholarships (town sponsored) for youth who serve the community
Centre hours – weekends, afterschool and evenings are high need times
Enhance positive perception of youth
Transportation – reduce isolation
Youth more involved in organizing events/programs – enhancing skills, providing experience
Job and or volunteer opportunities, mentoring opportunities for our youth
Expanded partnerships
Affordability - Low or no cost activities addressing poverty and access to resources
Addressing drug/alcohol use and homelessness among youth

Values

Sharing - Listen carefully to our youth and allow freedom for creative expression in all we do.

Cooperation - We work together to accomplish more.

Humour – laughter is good medicine.

Compassion – kindness, caring, mentoring

Positive – Act, speak, live positive.

Community - Parents and community members are meaningfully engaged. Offer affordable programs and accessible space for everyone.

Connection – All youth have opportunity to congregate in a safe and supportive environment where they can mingle, have fun, learn and thrive.

Analysis

Trends, economic, societal, technical, economic

- Growth in our community – size economy and diversity. Expanding need, funding opportunities and program diversity.
- Youth population is growing expanding our market to provide more programs and activities.
- There is increased public interest and awareness of youth and family concerns. More demand due to social stress and complexity of social issues (drugs, homelessness).
- Broader Government support for reduction of substance abuse, youth employment and skills training.
- Increased use of available and emerging technologies. Too often technology development is not strategic.
- Social isolation and loneliness. Often noted as “drivers” for use of health services.
- No new base funding for years but operating pressures continue to increase. Compensation increases – organizations must cut services and erode infrastructure to find funds to respond.
- Limited capacity to generate investment of time and talent (volunteers/supporters) and treasure (investment)
- Collaboration – Most funders require evidence of partnerships in grant proposals and as part of funding agreements.
- Complexity of needs – Situations often include combinations of needs/issues (mental health, addictions, disability, justice...)

Measuring Success

We will measure our success through:

- Centre attendance records, both increases in attendance, new members and longevity of membership.
- Documented evidence of volunteering and civic engagement.
- See increased number of partnerships which contribute to service delivery and outcomes.
- Financially – increased \$\$ from donations, fund raising, partnerships.
- Stable and active list of interested candidates to be Board members.

- Indications that community members know where the centre is and what we do. Requests for partnering, support, participation. Positive feedback from youth, families and community
- Improved community high school statistics regarding attendance, volunteerism, graduations, active participation.

<i>Board of Directors</i>	<i>Community</i>	<i>Communications/Marketing</i>	<i>Operations/Financial</i>
<i>Goal 1</i>	<i>Goal 1</i>	<i>Goal 1</i>	<i>Goal 1</i>
<i>Goal 2</i>	<i>Goal 2</i>	<i>Goal 2</i>	<i>Goal 2</i>
<i>Goal 3</i>	<i>Goal 3</i>	<i>Goal 3</i>	<i>Goal 3</i>
<i>Goal 4</i>			

Establish a clear strategic focus and manage/govern for impact

Ensure activities have a clear “design” and that all activities relate to achievement of outcomes/impacts identified in plan

Ensure evaluation, reporting, decision making and management are based on reliable data/evidence. Use evaluation data to support decision making, governance and promotion of Centre

Ensure there is an effective working relationship and clear accountability between ED and Board. Update ED job description to align with plan and current impending challenges in youth services field. Establish and implement policies – ED limitations, ED reporting requirements, ED support and appraisal. Establish ED goals

Strategies & Goals

1. Expanded, more diverse programs

Social enterprise/training ground for youth

More youth involvement

Diverse programs and services

Diversity of age groups

2. Communications Plan - Strong Positive Reputation

- Create and implement a cost-effective communications/promotion plan which results in positive brand and increased community engagement with the Youth Centre.
- Develop a case for support and build “network of support”. Key community asset in helping youth grow as contributing citizens – positive approach – emphasise gifts vs problems. A safe place for all youth – inclusive but not a hang out for troubled kids. Promote youth as contributing citizens. Positive stories about youth contributing to our community.
- Develop and maintain a practical communications plan. Emphasize outcomes of Centre’s work for youth and families. Encourage public to think and believe that investing in Centre will have a meaningful impact.
- Build a strong foundation before promoting fund raising. Accurate and up to date information on who we are, what we do and where we are located readily available to public. Effective use of social media. Identify key stakeholder groups and create messages which target each group.
- Collaborate with other organizations that share similar messages to make communications more cost efficient and reduce “message fatigue” that the public could experience.

3. More Sustainable Organization

Ensure activities are fully costed and that true costs are reflected in annual budget.

Increase annual fundraisers. Create and implement annual fund-raising/volunteer development plan. Be strategic about stakeholder communications and promotion.

Link fund raising/development to impact Centre intends to have through its activities. Ask volunteers and funders/community to invest in helping to achieve specific results for beneficiaries.

Create sustainable ways to increase funds regularly

4. Improved Facility

Utilize facility to optimize effectiveness

Improved kitchen

Increased access to gym

Actively offer space to promote youth directed projects

5. Build organizational capacity and sustainability

Utilize best applicable practices for staff management – reputation for being good employer

Establish formal system for program planning and evaluation

Effective Stewardship and financial sustainability. Effective governance and succession planning

Build capacity of Board. Recruit strategically to build capacity for marketing, financial, risk management. Develop & nurture leadership talent

Create clear understanding of Board, ensure basic governance policies are in place and they are followed

Provide orientation and basic governance training for all Board members – ensure all are on same page

Use strat plan to organize work of the board; measure/monitor key performance indicators and use data to guide decision making. Be clear on what outcomes/results are expected for all activities. Establish performance goals and indicators. Require regular reporting of results.

Spend as much time as possible on creating the future (generative activities) and real time strategic thinking activities. Utilize board time to provide support to those working to implement action plans.

6. Community Integration

Identify opportunities for partnerships and collaboration.

Synergy with community – partnerships for programming; volunteer opportunities

Partnership with recreation committee

Integral partner with Town

Tied to schools

Involved with business leaders