

Carleton Place and District Youth Centre Strategic Plan

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 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 strategically at our statistics; challenges, risks and external environmental changes. 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 that focused on offering available, accessible and affordable programs for all youth, taking a more proactive and preventative approach that ensures 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 offer some of our programming to a younger population as statistics now show that it is critical to reach children by age 8 in order to alter behavioral outcomes.

Now, in addition to core programming for our 12 to 18 year old youth, we offer many new programs for younger youth (age 8-12), introducing them early to a safe and supportive environment where they develop friendships and relationships, and participate in diverse activities that keep them engaged as they grow and their needs change.

Mission

To inspire, engage and celebrate youth through social, educational recreational activities and community participation encouraging a youth base invested in their local community.

Vision

We visualize a town in which all youth participate in shaping a vibrant community. 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*

Values

Humour – laughter is good medicine.

Compassion – kindness, caring, mentoring.

Respect – All youth are respected and encouraged to participate in community.

Positivity – Act, speak, live positive.

Community - Parents and community members are meaningfully engaged establishing opportunities for partnerships and increased volunteer base.

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

Barriers and Challenges

Strengths

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

Weaknesses

- Location – not central, lack of visibility, size.
- Funding – less and less grants available each year; lack of fundraising events.
- Transportation – facility out of the way, getting here/home not always easy.
- Retained staff – Not for Profits rely on grants/funding for staff/programs.

Risks

- Public Perception – making positive impact in community
- Funding –potential to limit programming, staff.
- Staffing/Volunteers – needed to keep running programs.
- Programs – need to meet needs/wants of youth we are serving.
- Social media – necessary but time consuming, potential for negativity
- Transportation – costly, centre out of the way, no public transport, feeling safe getting to and from.
- Identity – 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 engage in activities that develop social, environmental, economic, physical, psychological and cultural wellness.
- Youth acquire skills and knowledge they need to become healthy productive adults.
- Building bridges with other organizations – schools, law enforcement, Seniors 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 involved in organizing events/programs – enhancing skills, providing experience.
- Job and or volunteer opportunities, mentoring opportunities for our youth.
- Affordability - Low or no cost activities addressing poverty and access to resources.

External Environment Analysis

Trends, economic, societal, technical, economic

There is tremendous growth happening in our community, increasing in size, economy and diversity. With a large catchment area social isolation and loneliness will continue to be a challenge, often noted as “drivers” for use of health services. Growth will expand the need for youth activities and offer additional opportunity for funding and program diversity.

There is increased public interest and awareness of youth and family concerns with more demand due to social stress and complexity of social issues with situations often including combinations of mental health, addictions, disability, justice. Opportunities exist for activities aimed to reduce some of these issues. These situations create limited capacity to generate investment of time and talent (volunteers/supporters) and treasure (investment).

Funding continues to become more strategic with collaboration necessary as most funders are requiring evidence of partnerships in grant proposals and as part of funding agreements. There is broader support from Government for deduction of substance abuse, youth employment and skills training but no new base funding for years although operating pressures continue to rise.

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.
- Functionality and respect of our Environment. Safe, usable, clean. Having pride.

Strategic Goals

<i>Board of Directors</i>	
<i>Establish clear strategic focus and manage/govern for impact</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure 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. • Foster effective working relationships and clear accountability between ED and Board. Set goals that align with plan and current impending challenges in youth services field. • Establish and implement policies – ED limitations, ED reporting requirements, ED support and appraisal.
<i>Build organizational capacity and sustainability</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure activities are fully costed and reflected in annual budget.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create sustainable ways to increase funds regularly through creation/implementation of annual fund-raising/volunteer development plan. • Create events that bring higher level donors. • Ask volunteers and funders/community to invest in helping to achieve specific results.
<i>Effective Stewardship</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure governance policies are in place, up to date and followed. • Provide orientation and basic governance training for members. Develop database for access to appropriate documents. • Use strat plan to organize work of the board; measure/monitor key performance indicators and use data to guide decision making. • Create active interest in Board membership and recruit strategically to build Board capacity. • Develop & nurture leadership talent. Board succession planning – identify needs and required skills. • Spend time creating the future (generative activities) and real time strategic thinking activities. Utilize board time to provide support to those working to implement action plans.
Community	
<i>Community Integration</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Become integral partner with Town- integrate with town communications; youth involvement in town events. • Find ways to synergize with local business. • Tied to schools. • Partner with town committees (eg. Recreation, library).
<i>Develop partnerships that strengthen centre and community ties</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify opportunities for partnerships and collaboration for programming, volunteer opportunities. • Identify and nurture relationships for joint grant applications. • Find avenues for involvement with business leaders.
<i>Foster opportunities for youth to engage in community</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a case for support and build “network of support”. Key community asset in helping youth grow as contributing citizens. • Create positive stories about youth contributing to our community.
Communications and Marketing	
<i>Increase visibility of centre and programs</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase PR opportunities that enhance visibility of centre. • Collaborate with other organizations that share similar messages to make communications more cost efficient. • Review and establish effective brand and image (logo, signage, tagline...).
<i>Develop and maintain practical communications plan</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create and implement a cost-effective communications/promotion plan which results in positive brand and increased community engagement with the Youth Centre.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine our audience in marketing plans.
<i>Build a strong foundation of who we are</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accurate and up to date information on who we are, what we do and where we are located readily available to public. • 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.
<i>Increase on line traffic</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective use of social media and other online platforms. Identify key stakeholder groups and create messages which target each group.
Financial/Operations	
<i>Sustainable funding</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine grant applications by aligning with business plans.
<i>Maintain relevant and up to date policies & procedures</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish formal system for program planning and evaluation. • Develop annual budget and business plan. • Ensure policies and procedures are reviewed and accessible by staff and volunteers.
<i>Retain superior staff and volunteers</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure we have right people in right jobs to meet goals. • Utilize best applicable practices for staff management – reputation for being good employer. • Create optimal orientation and evaluation for staff and volunteers. • Increase number of fulltime (paid staff).
<i>Diversity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expanded, more diverse programs and services. • Utilize voice of youth in determining changing needs. • Ensure varied programming for range of age groups.
<i>Improved facility</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilize facility to optimize effectiveness. • Increased access to gym. • Optimize use of outdoor space. • Take pride in facility, cleanliness, appeal, functional. • Actively offer space to promote youth directed projects. • Search and apply for grants that fund facility improvements that are effective in enhancing programs offered.