Playing With Youth Their Way!

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Identifying Youth Needs & Interests

Executive Summary
The purpose of this study was to provide a comprehensive understanding of the youth population within the City of Welland through the implementation of a needs' assessment survey.
Objectives

• Specific objectives related to the analysis of grade, gender and constraint differences, participation frequencies and patterns. The research involved a sample of 721 students in grades 9 through 12, from 4 high schools within the City of Welland. Males represented 50.3% of the sample, while females represented 49.7%.
The main findings of the study are as follows:

• Youths in grades 9 & 10 indicated a lower percentage of employment as compared to youths in grades 11 & 12.

• Youth in grades 11 & 12 indicated a lower percentage who received an allowance as opposed to youths in grades 9 & 10.

• 99% of youth indicated that they are yet not parents.
Main Findings—Continued

• Preferred time for youth to participate in recreation and leisure activities reported as weeknights followed by weekends.

• The current activity of females was hanging out with friends; the current activity of males was also hanging out with friends. Both sexes second choice was participating in sports.
More Findings

• Majority of youth enjoy spending their free time with their friends, followed by family and self.

• The activity that both male and female youths in Welland found enjoyable was sports.

• 73% of youth feel that there are not enough activities and events available in Welland.
Yet More Findings

• Results indicated “time” as the predominant constraint for females; and for males was “not having any place to go.”

• Both males and females recommended activities that would include both males and females participating.

• Females indicated that they would like a teen centre whereas Males wanted a sports complex.

• Drugs, alcohol and sex were the three issues most frequently of a concern to youth.
Recommendations

Trial & Error
Consult Leisure guides
Develop Sample “Test” Programs
Host/Initiate Activities
Follow-Up “Word-of-Mouth”
Rise and Fall of Programs
Funding ($$$?)
Community Acceptance/Approval
Results

- Youth Innovations
- YouthInk
- Recreation Council
- Skateboard Park
- International Celebration of Youth
- Battle of the Bands
- Volunteer Hours Recognition
Along with a comfy atmosphere and a place for youth to go, Youth Innovations offers access to resources and a place to socialize with friends. Innovations enables youth to be constructive with free time and create an environment for youth to connect with the community.

Computers with internet, T.V. & VCR, Sony Play station, Areas to “chill out” with friends, read or play games including Welland’s first and only Zine Library, Volunteer opportunities posted.

All resources and activities are FREE of charge!
It isn’t about labels and stereotypes. It isn’t about whether or not you “fit in” or whether or not you are “cool”. Youth Ink is about being yourself and expressing your thoughts and opinions. What do you want to say? What makes you think? What ticks you off? We want to know!

Do you like to draw comic strips? Are you a poet ready to be discovered? Do you have a passion for skateboarding? Would you like to speak out against racism, sexism or homophobia? Do you want to know how to get involved? Are you struggling with the new curriculum? Do you have anything to say about the events of September 11th or the legalization of marijuana? Are you into music or movies? Are you intrigued by the world of sports? Are you a webmaster? Do you write creative stories?

Youth Ink is about who you are, not who someone thinks you should be.
City Wide Student Recreation Council

• All local schools invited to attend (Public & Catholic)
• Request one male and one female student per school.
• Bi-weekly meetings to create awareness about local and department programs.
“Mrs. Horton, could you stop by school today?”

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Type Z behavior
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Skateboard Park

- Developed a SK8 committee who helped design, promote and fundraise for the park.
- Provided feedback after each summer of usage.
- Offered skateboarding clinics and board building courses.
International Youth Week 2002
Schedule of Events

Tribune Essay Writing Contest
Winner receives $100

Kick-Off Event - May 3 - Rock ‘N’ Roller Rink
Fridays from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at the Youth Arena.  Free for ages 11 to 18.

May 6 to May 10 - Welland Street Ball Hockey Clinic
9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m....Prizes...FREE - Book with your school...Call 905-734-1040 for details

May 10 - Job Gym Hackey Sack Tourney & BBQ
3 - 6 p.m. at 440 Niagara Street - Hackey Sack Competition at 4:30 pm.  ...Prizes

May 10 - Welland Downtown BIA & City of Welland presents...
Battle of the Bands
Starts 5:30 p.m. at the Market Square - Competition for Best Bands! Tickets $5.00 at door.

May 10 - School Participation
St. Augustine School Lip Sync Contest & Dance 1:00 p.m.  ...Prizes
St. Mary School Dance-A-Thon starts 6:00 p.m. - $1.00 per person...Prizes

Bonus Day - May 11 - Cyberzone Video Dance
Eastdale Highschool - 7:30 until 10:30 p.m.- Fee: $8.00  - 15 years & under ... Prizes
Battle of the Bands

- Sponsored by the downtown BIA.
- 8-10 bands in competition.
- Average of 250-300 spectators.
- $5 cover charge, all proceeds to Youth Innovations.
Student Curriculum Volunteer Hours Program

- Special Events Assistant
- Aquatics Volunteer
- Program Assistant
- Computer Training for Older Adults
- International Youth Week
- Youth Innovations
- City Wide Student Recreation Council
- Youth Ink (Tribune Writing)
What works — A 10-point CHECKLIST

1 - YOUTH-LED SERVICES ✓
   A given!

2 - UNSTRUCTURED PROGRAMS ✓
   Many youth prefer non-traditional, non-competitive activities
   with fewer rules and regulations.

3 - FUN, SOCIAL OPPORTUNITIES ✓
   Youth want to be part of a group, to share, lead and follow,
   feel like they belong.

4 - PLACE TO HANG OUT/ DROP-IN CENTRE ✓
   The importance of a place to hang out, better yet a drop-in centre,
   cannot be over-emphasized.

5 - TRAINED YOUTH LEADERS ✓
   As well as being trained in youth issues, it is important that
   youth leaders come from the community they are serving and
   have a positive attitude toward youth.

6 - LOW COST/ NO COST ✓
   The cost of registration fees, equipment or travel expenses can
   limit youth participation.

7 - EASY ACCESS and WELL PROMOTED ✓
   Make it easy for youth to get to you — avoid locations requiring
   complicated transit or long distances, and make sure youth and
   their families know about your programs and services!

8 - A SAFE, NON-THREATENING ENVIRONMENT ✓
   Steps should be taken to ensure youth feel safe coming to your
   location (e.g. lighted pathways and entrance) and comfortable in
   the surroundings, especially for females and minority groups.

9 - A MIXTURE OF YOUTH ✓
   Services should attract males and females from diverse backgrounds,
   including under-served youth.

10 - REGULAR EVALUATION ✓
    Use both informal feedback and more organized surveys and focus
    groups to check out how your program is being received.