



Hamilton

CITIZEN COMMITTEE REPORT

To: Chair and Members Emergency and Community Services Committee	
From:	Fabian Ahmed (Co-chair) Hamilton Youth Advisory Committee _____ (to be signed by the Co-Chair) Alex Fiorello (Co-chair) Hamilton Youth Advisory Committee
Date:	December 7, 2011
Re:	2011 Hamilton Youth Advisory Committee Summary (HYAC11-001)

Recommendation:

That Report HYAC11-001, Hamilton Youth Advisory Committee - 2011 Committee Summary, be received.

Background:

The purpose of the following report to the Emergency and Community Services Committee is to:

- Provide a summary of the City of Hamilton Youth Advisory Committee's (HYAC) achievements since the last report (Report HYAC10-001) June 16th, 2010 to December 7th, 2011.
- Outline upcoming HYAC initiatives, activities and/or events

The Hamilton Youth Advisory Committee (HYAC) is comprised of a diverse group of young leaders age 14-24 years who are passionate about making a difference in their community. HYAC's mandate is to ensure that youth are involved in the decisions made within the City of Hamilton and in the community that affect them, their families and friends. HYAC provides a youth perspective and advises Council, through reports to the Emergency & Community Services Committee, on municipal issues to be considered by the Mayor, Council and City staff. Addressing issues facing youth, enhancing opportunities for youth and providing a youth voice are the goals of the committee. In addition to fostering positive collaborative relationships between youth and adults and by supporting youth oriented events and programs, HYAC aims to lead by example with integrity, respect and innovation.

Summary of Activities and Achievements of HYAC 2010-2011 in reverse chronological order:

Since its inception in 2007 by Council, HYAC continues to make significant strides, not only as an advisory committee, but also as a conduit between other youth and youth organizations in the community.

Much of HYAC's work in late 2010 and 2011 has consisted of networking with youth city-wide and raising the committee's public profile. Recruitment of new members took place late in 2010 and early 2011, however the City of Hamilton Advisory Committees were not able to reconvene until late April of 2011.

HYAC members supported and continued to participate in community initiatives such as:

- ***Unfiltered Facts Summit:*** HYAC members attended ACTION – “Spark the movement, Ignite the change” that featured experiential action-oriented sessions, youth facilitators, school sharing/networking, and tons of fun! The Summit armed participants with the information and tools they need to tackle youth health issues in their school community.
- ***Youth-In-Motion Bus Tour of Hamilton:*** HYAC hosted a free guided bus tour open to all youth to highlight some of Hamilton's best features, unusual places and hidden treasures. The objective of this event was to inspire a stronger sense of civic pride and a greater awareness of Hamilton's many gems while also providing an opportunity to network with other youth.
- ***Wesley Urban Ministries' Raising the Roof Campaign:*** HYAC members helped to 'put a lid' on youth poverty and homelessness, by joining Wesley Urban Ministries and the Hamilton Bulldogs to sell toques during a hockey game.
- ***HYAC's first Cup 'n Run:*** Committee members promoted HYAC's new website, '*hamiltonyouth.ca*' by using eco-friendly drinking cups in the chain link fence overlooking Highway 401 below, Longwood Rd. to the west and Main Street to the North behind the Hamilton Spectator.
- ***It's Alive!*** The Hamilton Youth Advisory Committee's unique and youth friendly website, *hamiltonyouth.ca* went live July 28th 2010.

The newly formed committee will continue to familiarize itself with the City of Hamilton and local government, as well as identify priorities and initiatives they wish to focus on during the next term. One initiative HYAC has started planning and aims to host is Youth Week in May 2012. Hamilton, is the home of an estimated 70,000 youth! Youth Week, is an internationally celebrated event that aims to recognize the positive contributions youth make in communities and to celebrate the valuable work youth and youth organizations do year round. Since its inception in 1995, Youth Week is now celebrated in several countries. HYAC has undertaken some initial planning and would like to host Youth Week in May 2012.

Recruitment and Membership

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As of October 2011, there are sixteen HYAC members and approximately 8 members who attend monthly meetings and various events/activities on a consistent basis. Four youth declined their appointed membership, sighting other responsibilities. HYAC will likely need to engage in a new City wide recruitment strategy in the future. Noteworthy is the continued success HYAC is experiencing with inviting friends of current members to attend meetings and events. As committee meetings are open to the public, welcoming youth who are non-members continues to infused meetings with new energy and fresh perspectives while building interest in joining HYAC.

- The age range of HYAC members is from 14 to 24 years.
- Membership reflects a broad socio-economic and culturally diverse group of young people from East, Central and West Hamilton, Hamilton Mountain, Dundas, Ancaster, Waterdown and Stoney Creek.
- Members include students in secondary and post-secondary school.

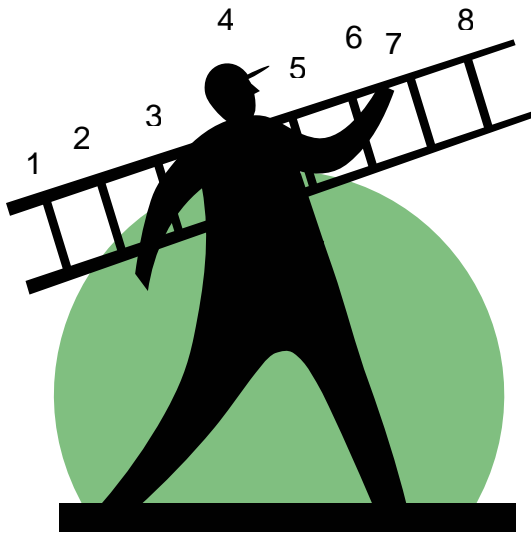
City of Hamilton Support to HYAC

HYAC continues to be supported by one part-time Youth Advisor in consultation with a Senior Policy Analyst, both from Social Development and Early Childhood Services Division. Other support is provided through Councillor Jackson's office and the Mayor's Office.

Up-coming HYAC Projects/Events:

Building on the learnings and accomplishments of HYAC members and staff to date, a list of the possible new initiatives has been developed for future consideration.

1. Continue to utilize best practices and Hart's Ladder of Young People's Participation¹, specifically rungs 6-8, as a guide to gauge and continue to ensure meaningful opportunities for young people to participate, lead and succeed.



Roger Hart's Ladder of Young People's Participation

- Rung 8:** Young people and adults share decision-making
- Rung 7:** Young people lead & initiate action
- Rung 6:** Adult-initiated, shared decisions with young people
- Rung 5:** Young people consulted and informed
- Rung 4:** Young people assigned and informed
- Rung 3:** Young people *tokenized*
- Rung 2:** Young people are *decoration*
- Rung 1:** Young people are *manipulated*

¹ Hart, R. (1992). *Children's participation: From tokenism to citizenship*. Florence, Italy: UNICEF.

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2. Cultivate more of a 'grass roots' approach to advocacy and an increased physical presence in the community. Youth have identified HYAC's profile in the community and with their peers is very low. Youth have identified the public is unaware of HYAC and their mandate. Currently in discussion is a HYAC initiated & hosted city wide Youth-Week collaboration and celebration May 1-7, 2012
3. Revise HYAC's current Terms of Reference and implement more volunteer management practices and procedures i.e. job descriptions and checkpoints/evaluations.
4. Revise HYAC application form.
5. Develop a better strategy to attract and retain a broader cultural and socio-economically diverse membership while targeting specific communities.
6. Maintain an up-to-date and informative youth-friendly website that acts as the 'hub' of everything 'youth' in the City of Hamilton. Create 'buzz' by designing an innovative promotional strategy by youth for youth.
7. Submit reports to ECS at least two times during the coming year.
8. Pursue linkages with other City wide initiatives such as the Neighbourhood Strategy and the Pan Am Games Initiative.
9. Develop a Youth Consultation Policy (internal) that would ensure timely, meaningful and accessible consultations with youth.
9. Develop a series of comprehensive pre/post evaluations and surveys to assist youth in identifying the needs and opinions of their peers and to help supporting adults with planning future initiatives and addressing committee challenges. This information would then enable more reports and recommendations to be brought forward to council.
10. Identify and develop a series of training and skill development opportunities for HYAC members. Some examples of trainings that would be of value to the youth include; message development, how to work with the media, advocacy and various leadership building activities/initiatives.
11. Continue to look for ways to network, collaborate and partner with other adult allies and youth groups.
12. Develop a scale of recognition and celebration of achievement.