

## Youth Engagement Strategies & Recommendations



Created in Partnership with the City of Hamilton's

*Neighbourhood Action Strategy*

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## **Introduction**

Engaging youth in community initiatives can be a complex undertaking. The Neighbourhood Action Strategy (NAS) requires an in-depth understanding of youth, and how to best engage them in planning, recruit them for participation in programming, and maintain their participation. With this in mind, the *Youth Engagement Strategies & Recommendations* report has been created to assist NAS staff in planning and executing programs and services by outlining: current youth trends, challenges and considerations for engaging youth, best practices and tools for effectively using social media, community partnerships and youth appropriate activities. **Due to the unique demographics and needs of the neighbourhoods collaborating with NAS the research conducted to produce this document was focused on methods that best support at-risk youth who face barriers such as low-literacy, poverty, language barriers, high unemployment, and low educational attainment.**

Communication directly with Hamilton youth will be essential to planning effective programs. Research can be optimized by including youth while using several methods and stages for data collection with community partners<sup>5</sup>. Successful needs assessment projects utilize methods such as written and verbal questionnaires, surveys, youth focus group consultations, observations of youth programs in action, etc<sup>8</sup>. A broad range of community research efforts will help NAS overcome some of the barriers youth face as well as the challenges that sometimes occur when attempting to reach out to youth.

There are numerous, intersectional, ways identities and cultures can impact the lives of youth. Within any community there will be youth from a number of backgrounds, which often overlap. These include (but are not limited to): newcomers, visible minorities, LGBTQ, individuals with disabilities, Indigenous persons and various peer groups, which will be discussed in greater detail in the *Population Information* section. It is important that youth are viewed by their strengths first<sup>5</sup>, and that everyone is given a safe space to actively participate and become engaged<sup>485</sup>.

### **Please note:**

- In some cases, data specific to Canada or certain demographic groups was not available. In addition, wherever possible Hamilton examples and models have been included, but were not always available.
- Quick Reference Charts are included in the Appendices (Appendix 1.1, 3.1) to identify when partnerships or activities are best for targeting various sub-groups. The sub-groups we have identified are: **younger youth, 14-17 (Y), middle youth, 18-21 (M), and older youth, 22-25 (O), at-risk, language barriers, and Indigenous youth**. Strong evidence was not available to continue this identification for all youth populations.

## **Population Information: Youth Today**

When engaging youth, there are several factors which stakeholders need to be aware of in order to be successful and follow best practices. Canadians between the age of 14 and 25 are unique in a number of ways. These youth are a part of the first generations to grow up with easy or constant access to Internet, cell phones and social media from birth, or a very young age. They are constantly connected to their friends, current events, and popular culture through smart phones, laptops, tablets and home computers.

Some research has identified a number of teen peer groups, which may be helpful to consider when planning a variety of engaging youth activities or initiatives. Where relevant, throughout the report, these sub-cultures or peer-groups are identified, as supported by evidence. In an effort to maintain consistency with the support and empowerment of youth, the staff of the City of Hamilton and the Neighbourhood Action Strategy should be wary of using peer groups to target youth, especially when these peer groups may be considered stigmatizing, or risk not recognizing the intersectional natures of identity/identification<sup>1</sup>. It is also worth noting that these sub-cultures or peer-groups are very fluid and constantly changing, therefore some of these groups may be defunct or vastly different from when the research referenced was conducted. It is also worth noting, a number of these subgroups may be insignificantly or minimally represented within the target audience. The source of much of this information is heavily informed by interviews with teens, both inside and outside of these 'peer groups', which may prove susceptible to stereotyping<sup>2</sup>.

### **Youth Sub-cultures & Peer Groups**

#### **Preppy** (including Popular & Jock)<sup>2</sup>

- ✓ Largest peer group in Ontario.

**Popular:** These teens are perceived by others as 'stuck up' but also are typically characterized by being outgoing, attractive, and higher income. They listen to a variety of music, though mostly accessible, popular, music. They tend to like partying and socializing within their own peer group.

**Jocks:** These teens are representative of a very popular sub-group. They like to party with other youth in the 'popular' or 'preppy' group. They tend to prioritize athletics over school. Those outside of their peer group identify them as having a "better than" or "arrogant" attitude.

#### **Mainstream**<sup>2</sup>

- ✓ Second largest peer group in Ontario

This group is considered 'average' or representative of the 'norm'. Their style is not particularly stand-out and they are said to blend into their surroundings. Their music taste is typically in line with Top 40 popular music. They tend to be relatively focused on school and family and are perceived by their peers as having a 'successful' future. They are described as easy going/able to get along with everybody. They are perceived as being responsible.

### **Hip Hop** (including Swag & Thug)2

- ✓ Third largest peer group in Ontario

**Swag:** This group takes their cues from mainstream Hip Hop music and culture (fashion, slang, general cultural capital). The style involves fitted clothing which is heavily accessorized. YOLO (You Only Live Once) was referred to as a prevailing attitude among this group.

**Hard** (also sketch or skids): This group is associated with drug selling and street/gang activities. They are described as being lower socioeconomic status and participating in illegal behaviour. There is some cross over between this group and Alternative teens as well, distinguishing them from the 'thug' hip hop group.

**Thug:** This group of 'hip hop' youth is described as more rowdy and tough. These youth are said to be a bit less genuine or successful in presenting themselves as 'hard' or 'tough'. They generally do not participate in gang activity though some describe them as aggressive. These teens listen to both rap and hip hop music. They occasionally engage in various illegal activities which mimic gang like behaviours.

### **Country**

These youth are identified as common in more rural communities. They enjoy 'functional' clothing and outdoor type activities. They enjoy country music and are described as "happy people, who [are] 'fun to be around'". They are also identified as using Facebook to organize events.

### **Alternative** (including Emo, Scene, Burnout)2

- ✓ Identified as the smallest peer group in Ontario

**Emo:** This sub-culture is identified as embracing the "darker, heavier side of Alternative style". They like louder more aggressive music (metal, screamo etc.). These youth prefer dark clothing and often accessorize with chains. This group tends to isolate themselves from others and there is less blending or cross over with other peer groups. They are said to 'hang-out' rather than partying.

**Scene** (sometimes Emo): This sub-group is described as having colourful hair, makeup and piercings. They like alternative bands and some light techno. One teen from this sub-group was quoted as saying “we are happier than we look”.

**Burnouts** (also skater or stoner): This subgroup, as identified by research, is seen as being approachable and a more ‘average’ or less ‘extreme’ than the previously mentioned “Scene” group. Their taste in music is wide and varied and they take clothing cues from skateboard culture.

### **Additional Groups to Consider**

There are other ‘sub-groups’ to consider when planning youth programming and engagement, some of which are represented in higher than average numbers within the priority neighbourhoods in Hamilton<sup>3</sup>. **Canadians** and **Aboriginal/Indigenous** youth make up a large part of the youth demographic in the city neighbourhoods targeted in this report<sup>3</sup>. In addition, LGBTQ2S youth often face unique challenges in forming their identities and engaging with their communities<sup>5</sup>. When working with, or engaging these particular groups, it is important to note that they may not always be affected by or grouped within ‘standard’ sub-groups as identified above. As such, it is important for workers to be culturally sensitive and work to understand the identities and cultures of minorities<sup>32</sup> but also spend time communicating with youth in these groups to identify interests and characteristics which may affect and improve programming and other recruitment/retention strategies.

**Aboriginal/Indigenous**<sup>532</sup>: It is important for anyone engaging with this population to consult with Indigenous community members and develop an understanding of the historical context of this population. The identities of Indigenous youth can be complex, with some internalizing negative perceptions of Indigenous people, while others embrace and celebrate their heritage. Utilizing a holistic, culturally relevant and sensitive approach to engaging these youth is vital to ensuring their voices are included.

**LGBTQ2S**<sup>\*4</sup>: Youth who identify as sexual or gender minorities, or are questioning their identities, often face additional challenges in many areas of their lives and are more likely to experience serious mental health issues as well as be rejected from their family homes. As such, it is incredibly important that this population is provided with a safe space<sup>17</sup> and feel included in NAS conversations. This can be accomplished by having educated Allies as staff, remaining non-judgmental, and not making assumptions about the orientation of any youth<sup>5</sup>. If possible, create posters and messaging that is inclusive of a range of genders, sexualities and ethnicities; as well as provide a gender neutral washroom so Trans or gender queer youth do not need to face the issue of choosing the “right” bathroom<sup>5</sup>.

***\*LGBTQ2S:** Lesbian, gay, transgender/transsexual, questioning/queer, 2 spirited*

**Newcomer<sup>5</sup>:** This population brings a valuable and powerful global perspective to the youth engagement process. How, and when, these youth arrives in Canada is an important and complex part of their identities. Newcomer youth often hold strong values regarding their family, history and first language(s), thus making programming that acknowledges diversity and inclusive will be an important part of NAS' projects.

In Hamilton, the NAS priority neighbourhoods include additional factors, which influence how youth engagement should be approached. Although attitudes, habits and activities vary by different subgroups there are some commonalities to understanding youth that are worth highlighting:

- **Attitudes<sup>5</sup>:** Youth desire information instantly and jump between mediums and platforms quickly and easily. Attempts to reach this population must be equally quick and authentic as this generation thinks critically about information they receive. Trust and respect have to be earned, whereas previous generations have been more inclined to defer to existing authority figures.
- **Communication:** Youth are frequent users of Internet and social media, with some reports showing 51% log on to social media sites at least once a day<sup>6</sup>. There is a strong preference for communicating via cell phone texting, and email is proving to be almost useless when trying to connect with youth. Language used by youth via text message, email and in person can often come across as very casual to adults, with slang, emoticons or swearing occurring regularly. It may help to become familiar with the language and tone before attempting to join the conversation<sup>7</sup>.



## **Strategies & Best Practices: Recruitment & Retention**

**Why do youth get involved in their communities?** There are a number of reasons youth are interested in becoming involved in their communities. The social aspect is important, with many youth citing their gaining status among peers, meeting other teens and joining friends in their activities as motivation to join community initiatives<sup>8</sup>. A desire to build skills, improve their communities, and use free time productively is also a consideration of many youth<sup>8</sup>. Mandatory community service hours are often a starting point for community engagement in youth over 14<sup>8</sup>. This could provide NAS staff with an access point to youth 14-18 years old through recruiting volunteers for planning processes.

**Why don't youth get involved?** Most common reasons for not getting involved include a lack of time (due to work or family obligations) or lack of awareness of how to get involved<sup>8</sup>. Middle and older youth (18-25) spend a significant amount of time working – either in the summer, on school breaks, part-time or full-time<sup>9</sup>.

**What are the challenges?** Difficulties that may arise while attempting to engage youth should be considered in order to prepare ways to manage or avoid these obstacles. Youth living below the poverty line are least likely to participate in their communities. If they do become involved, retention may be low due to lack of quality, fun, structure, or competing obligations<sup>10</sup>.

It may be difficult to quantify or gauge level of participation when using social media to engage youth. Half of teens on social sites mostly observe others with only 39% actively contributing<sup>6</sup>. Measuring results of how many youth are accessing and absorbing information placed on social media can be challenging for this reason, but it is good to keep in mind. Just because they aren't responding to posts, doesn't mean posts are going unnoticed<sup>6</sup>.

Changes in schedules impact recruitment effectiveness and retention rates among youth more than adults<sup>36</sup>. Retention is more difficult after holidays, school breaks, and in the spring when there are a number of school events going on. Semester changes at school – changes in requirements, timetables, etc. need to be considered when planning. Communication and co-ordination with schools can be valuable in managing this challenge but the key is to remain flexible<sup>5</sup>.

### **General Recruitment & Retention Strategies**

- ✓ **Location:** The venue should be a space that is welcoming and convenient. Go to places where young people gather<sup>79</sup>. Although school is an obvious site for consideration, some young people may not see school as a welcoming place, and others may want a change of scene. Recruitment should happen where youth already are; this may be at a school, skate park, café<sup>79</sup>, or virtual space

such as Facebook or Twitter (more on this later). Activities and planned events should happen in easily accessible locations; parks or sports fields, community centers and other places in the community of the target group.

- ✓ **Transportation:** Holding activities in places where young people can walk or bike also helps to make participation easy. When this is not possible, providing access to public transportation can facilitate youth involvement<sup>5</sup>.
- ✓ **Timing:** Evening or weekend activities may avoid conflicts with school and other obligations. Some studies suggest negotiating with schools when scheduling large, community wide meetings. Holding events or activities at two different times may allow for maximum attendance as well. When there is some debate as to the best time, consider: experts suggest keeping younger and older age groups to separate events when possible, this may allow for earlier meetings for younger youth and later for older<sup>5</sup>. Overall however, our recommendation would be to poll the area in order to find which times best meet their needs.
- ✓ **Culture and Identity:** Although much of the research consulted suggests that peer group identification may not be a vital aspect of decision-making or actions, it is important to recognize that different sub-cultures and demographic groups may have different needs<sup>25</sup>. For example, Indigenous youth may benefit from programs and services that include references to Indigenous traditions and culture, such as working with elders, an increased emphasis on oral tradition or utilizing the medicine wheel<sup>532</sup>.
- ✓ **Format for meeting and events:** It is not surprising that long, tedious meetings with long, tedious speeches do not interest young people (or other participants). Research suggests that all presentations and comments be limited to ten minutes per person, that all sessions include hands-on activities, and that every activity includes humour<sup>5</sup>.
- ✓ **Roles & Role sharing:** Often young people are interested in rotating or sharing roles and responsibilities, such as planning agendas, chairing meetings, recording proceedings, or other functions they identify<sup>5</sup>.
- ✓ **Accessible language:** Terms and jargon that only adults or professionals understand are a sure way to turn off young people. In addition, all communication needs to be accessible and friendly to individuals of all cultural backgrounds and languages within the community. Observing youth interactions is a great way to learn about their unique communication styles.
- ✓ **Refreshments:** Many young people report that snacks, food, and drinks help people relax, break boundaries, and avoid the distraction of hunger<sup>5</sup>.

- ✓ **Personal expression:** Freedom of expression, especially in a fun, participatory, creative environment, is a sure-fire strategy for engaging young people. Music is a great convener<sup>1</sup>.
- ✓ **Parents:** Invite parents and family of youth to help in the planning process, doing so reassures parents that programming will be beneficial to their children<sup>82</sup>.
- ✓ **Incentives:** These may be used as a way to retain youth. By offering incentives that increase over time (like a swag bag, with additional items being included each week they attend) youth can be encourage to attend events or meetings regularly<sup>15</sup>.
- ✓ **Compulsory volunteer hours:** These have been identified as a frequent starting point for community engagement for youth over 14. This could provide NAS with an access point with youth 14-18: recruiting volunteers for planning process<sup>11</sup>.



or affordable, on-site childcare is key<sup>5</sup>. A co-op system would allow NAS to partner with students looking for volunteer experience to provide childcare, parents able to contribute time to the program and adults in the community seeking opportunities to help others.

**Benefits:** Supports parents who are unable to remain in school or find employment due to childcare responsibilities<sup>5</sup>. Engages youth, parents and other adults in mutually beneficial collaboration and builds community relationships.

- **Housing: Youth Shelter & Transitional Housing, Eva's Initiatives<sup>13</sup>:** A Toronto youth shelter, affordable housing and employment training program in Toronto. Provides a range of services and supports to bring in youth from all backgrounds – assistance getting or replacing ID's, making resume's, finding housing, getting medical attention, access income supports, etc. This program operates using a harm reduction model, which is especially useful for youth as they often struggle with being judged by adults for risky behaviour.

**Benefits:** This agency gets youth into programming space for essential services, which can be built into long-term participation in programming. They further facilitate long-term relationships by offering incentives for youth who have achieved stability and are pursuing post-secondary education (and OSAP funding). They have a series of scholarships and bursaries, which range from \$600 - \$1000 for current or past participants<sup>14</sup>. Addressing basic needs and common barriers to education and employment is essential to the long-term success of youth<sup>32</sup>.

- **Housing: Wesley Youth Housing Program<sup>15</sup> (Hamilton, ON):** A local youth housing initiative (for individuals 16-21), which would be a useful contact to reach out to youth at-risk of street-involvement or homelessness.

**Benefits:** This program is a location for extensive life skills training for young people, and could provide access to a place where youth are already engaged in thinking about their skills, goals and place in the community.

- **Housing: Affordable Youth Housing, SPRC (Hamilton, ON):** SPRC is engaged with several youth agencies and a council of street-involved, or formerly street-involved, Hamilton youth. They are working to develop a youth housing first initiative in the near future. They have existing contacts with youth from NAS target demographics, which is also an area NAS staff can explore.

**Benefits:** Partnering with this branch of the SPRC will potentially provide NAS contact with an existing group of youth from harder to reach populations who are willing to be engaged in their communities.

- **Food & Nutrition: Farm Crawl<sup>16</sup> (Hamilton, ON):** A local initiative to get urban citizens out to learn about farming and agriculture by exploring several farms. Tours are seasonal and run from 10am to 4pm, making them ideal for weekend or summer break youth engagement.

**Benefits:** Increase understanding of food production, and build interest in farming. Offers an opportunity to encourage youth to be physically active and learn about nutrition. NAS could utilize this program to begin getting ideas and input from youth for the urban farm project.

- **LGBTQ2S Support: RADAR Youth Social Group<sup>17</sup>- The Well (Hamilton, ON):** This organization offers weekly support groups and opportunities for sexual and gender minorities to express themselves freely in a safe space. There is programming specific to youth (14-20 years old), as well as adults. **Benefits:** Partnering with this agency will help NAS create safe, inclusive spaces as well as be a potential location for Ally training for NAS staff. This will assist staff in being prepared to work with LGBTQ2S individuals. In addition, this drop-in program works to develop leadership and advocacy skills in community youth.
- **Food & Nutrition: Community Gardens (Hamilton, ON):** Hamilton has a large number of community gardens for NAS to consider partnering with, including several within the target areas. Partnering with the gardens could include a walking tour and taste test of produce or offer volunteer hours for assistance with weeding/garden maintenance. **Benefits:** Potential to build youth interest and awareness of food or nutrition issues. Youth who gain volunteer experience can use these skills for future employment. Additionally, would improve physical activity levels and time spent outdoors, which impact health outcomes.

**Healthy Living:** Physical activity and sports are valuable for building interest and trust with low-income, urban youth. Many lack space or funds to participate in sports, but it remains a central interest and hobby for a wide variety of youth. Sports and athletics are common activity, hobby and interest of low-income youth<sup>79</sup>. Access to sports teams or events can be limited due to financial barriers<sup>18</sup>, therefore community partnership opportunities related to physical activity have a great deal of potential in a) recruiting youth to give their opinions and b) maintain their ongoing involvement in NAS community programming. Additional benefits of an athletics based programming include: better health outcomes, inclusivity and stress management, community pride, teambuilding skills<sup>1819</sup>.

- **Empowerment Squad<sup>18</sup> (Hamilton, ON):** This youth non-profit ties athletics to education. They provide opportunities to play sports regularly in small settings, and in a large, annual event: The Annual Community Cup Tournament, which is a free multicultural community celebration of soccer, culture and the arts. **Benefits:** Connects education to an interest youth already have and celebrates their skills in athletics – building confidence of participants. In addition, this program develops accountability and teamwork skills in youth.

- **Go-Girl program<sup>19</sup> (Hamilton, ON):** A seven-week long physical activity based program aimed at improving confidence, activity levels and self-esteem of girls aged 12-14. It covers a range of topics and activities including sports/athletics, healthy eating, and communication skills. This is a critical time period to support girls as many experience a drastic decrease in self-confidence and activity levels once they start puberty.  
**Benefits:** Provides a gender separated physical activity program, which may appeal to youth and families within cultures that traditionally keep genders separate. Addresses girls at an age where their confidence and physical activity levels tend to decrease.
- **Start the Cycle<sup>20</sup> (Hamilton, ON):** A new initiative to develop bike libraries for children and youth, as traditional bike sharing models (such as Sobi) require the user be over 16 and generally have a credit card. This program will give individuals access to a bike for 24-48 hours at a time and will be accessed through existing libraries.  
**Benefits:** This program will develop physical fitness and literacy of youth who may not otherwise have access to bicycles due to financial barriers. Youth must own a helmet and complete a simple sign up to participate which makes this program accessible and safe for youth. Bringing youth into libraries to sign out bikes has the added benefit of promoting children/youth accessing library services and potentially increasing reading habits or other program participation. Additionally, this program is an option for overcoming transportation barriers keeping them from participating in planning meetings, communities programming or attending employment related events.

**Education & Life Skills:** Youth often struggle to find supports for staying in, and excelling at school. One key area of need is for access to technological resources. Partnering with schools and non-profits helping students can be capitalized on by offering summer programs as many supports end during school breaks. Within education resources consulted, digital literacy was noted to be a particularly important skill to foster in youth for employability and education achievements<sup>2627</sup>.

- **Hamilton Region Indian Centre<sup>21</sup> (Hamilton, ON):** A holistic center providing a number of educational, life skills and wellness programs for Indigenous Hamilton residents. Programs range from an alternative secondary school program, designed to be culturally relevant and sensitive to the needs of Indigenous students, to at-risk teen support programs related to life skills development, to nutritional education.  
**Benefits:** Connecting with this organization will help NAS develop relationships and learn from Indigenous community members in order to create programs and services that incorporate culturally relevant, as well as meaningful teachings and concepts. This will help youth programming designed by NAS be inclusive to a wider range of community members.

- **Raising the Grade program - Boys and Girls Club<sup>22</sup>:** A space with computers, office supplies, high speed Internet access, and tutoring for youth (age 12-18). The program enables youth to connect with mentors and tutors, receive homework support, interact with peers, increase their digital literacy, plan for postsecondary education and prepare for future work opportunities. It helps youth overcome barriers they face in getting the most out of their education, particularly those who are at risk due to poverty, isolation, being new to Canada, or who face challenges at home.  
**Benefits:** Improved grades and help with planning post-secondary goals, and increased digital literacy, which is an asset in the labour market. It can be a hub to connect youth to employment programs and creates leadership opportunities for older youth helping younger peers.
- **Innovative Learning Centre<sup>23</sup>:** This Winnipeg learning annex has been commended across Canada as a model for other programs. It provides supports for several key populations to increase high school graduation rates and post-secondary attendance, including: Indigenous youth, newcomers, refugees and inner-city youth.  
**Benefits:** Addresses the unique needs of different populations and brings diverse populations into contact with university resources, while building familiarity with a post-secondary setting.
- **Pathways to Education – Regent Park, Toronto Model<sup>24</sup> (Also operates in Hamilton, ON<sup>25</sup>):** Create partnerships between schools, students, families, social services, etc. Utilize Student-Parent Support Worker who is coach, referee and mentor to youth at high risk of dropping out of high school. Pathways provides targeted academic, social, financial and advocacy supports for the educational attainment of youth, which is fundamental to health, well-being and prosperity. Long-term group mentoring for two years to students as they complete high school enhances quality of supports.  
**Benefits:** The wraparound method addresses different sources of support and barriers for youth. The connection between support worker, youth, parents and school build better communication, which impacts education outcomes. Pathways also has a Hamilton program, meaning the resources and opportunity to expand on this successful model already exist.
- **Springboard Community HUB<sup>26</sup>:** An interactive, building-block style life skills program in Toronto, this agency provides life skills education, ranging from anger management to financial literacy. It could be combined with pre-employment and employment training programs at a learning annex. A good model for enhancing digital literacy and access to technology that is needed in targeted neighbourhoods<sup>27</sup>.  
**Benefits:** Springboard targets and engages youth and adults who may not respond well to traditional teaching methods. Adaptive to most pressing community needs. Additionally, this program is fast-paced, which appeals to youth.



**Leadership & Mentorships:** Research indicates that youth from similar backgrounds to those in Hamilton priority areas are interested in gaining employment skills and upgrading their education but often lack information on where to get started or what supports are available – or feel uncomfortable approaching large education institution on their own<sup>24</sup>. As a result, leadership and mentoring partnerships will allow youth to guide each other in developing desired skills and help keep them on track for their goals.

- **Youth Insight – Youth Opportunities Unlimited<sup>28</sup>:** A leadership and community relationship-building program that raises awareness about youth issues in the community in London, ON. In the program, Youth Insight team members are young people (age 18-30) who share their stories of obstacles and resiliency and how they took steps to build better lives with supports. YI members connect their successes to Youth Opportunities Unlimited (youth agency with drop-in center/basic needs, affordable housing, and employment and education resources). YI shares stories with schools, businesses, organizations, other non-profits and youth to help break down stigmas associated with addiction, homelessness, mental illness, poverty, and unemployment.

**Benefits:** The incentives for the youth leaders increase financial stability and literacy. YI members are paid a stipend for every presentation they give, and team meeting they attend. The stipend is approximately \$15.00 per presentation – given in cheque form bi-weekly. Additionally, references and professional experience to help with gaining employment and networking are beneficial to the participants.

- **In-School Mentoring program - Big Brothers & Big Sisters<sup>29</sup>:** Provides weekly in-school mentorship and support to at-risk students. Mentors do not meet over summer or school breaks – a gap in service that the Learning Annex could fill by offering a space year round for this program.
- Benefits:** Outcomes of this program include improved literacy and life skills development. Additionally, students have a source of information and support that is not tied to family life or academic performance.

**Creative Expression:** Having a voice and valued opinion is key to increasing community engagement.<sup>30</sup> Creating multiple venues for sharing opinions, and expressing oneself through creative means will draw in youth to agencies they are already familiar with and ensure they are comfortable expressing their ideas to assist in planning. A story telling community collaboration would be especially helpful and inclusive of Indigenous knowledges and ways of learning<sup>32</sup>. It may also provide opportunities for participation to those with low-literacy levels.

- **Story Centre<sup>31</sup>:** a digital story-telling initiative, which works with communities to collect the stories of all members by recording audio and/or





If used correctly, social media can be an excellent way for an organization to engage and communicate with youth. Due to its more casual nature, authentic interactions may take place between youth and adults/mentors who have established a foundation of trust, which appeals to youth as they respond well to genuine efforts<sup>3643</sup>. Listening in on what is already happening in social media, will give the organization a better idea of which platforms will best suit their audiences. Where available, pertinent information has been provided below in the social media platform profiles to assist staff and organizers in making use of the platform which best targets the populations they are trying to reach.

Social media should be used once community partnerships have been established. Consulting youth as to their preferred platforms is essential in ensuring success. Once use patterns and preferences are identified each platform may be used at part of an ongoing recruitment and retention strategy. *For examples of successful social media campaigns see Appendix 2.1.*

### **Tips for Using Social Media Successfully**<sup>43737</sup>

- Spend time 'listening' (sometimes called "lurking") before becoming active in any social media platform.
- Keep interactions authentic by using tone and language appropriate for the audience and medium. Tone is *very* important with adult-youth communication<sup>5</sup>.
- Re-Tweet or re-post items which are relevant to your cause or things posted by partner organizations.
- Monitor all accounts regularly. If youth are on these sites multiple times each day, you should be too.
- Content should not be perceived as an advertisement, but more as an organization's contribution to the ongoing dialogue about a topic.
- Remain flexible in the platforms/media you are using.
- Ask youth which platform they use most and meet them there.
- Try Action Gating: asking users to do something (vote, share etc.) to get something (prize/incentive).
- Cross post: if something is posted on your Twitter account, post it to Facebook (and other platforms too). This lessens workload and develops consistency.
- Address positive and negative feedback in a timely manner. This ensures youth know their voices are being heard.
- Be patient. Developing a strong presence in any community, especially on social media, takes time.
- Texting, while not technically social media, can be an excellent way of communicating with youth, especially if they are already on their phones using social media.
- Transparency, knowledge of the social media space and proper etiquette within it are key ("listening" is vital here). Posting irrelevant notes on message

boards or in discussion forums may lead to an organizations exclusion from a social networking community.

- Become part of a community before promoting a particular message, program or product. Community members will appreciate an organization that took the time to establish itself and communicate its intentions.
- When entering the social media space, organizations should offer something for users to react to<sup>7</sup>, such as experiences, information, and incentives<sup>43</sup>.

### **Considerations**

- Keep demographics in mind when choosing which platform to engage with. For example, do not choose female dominated platforms (ex: Pinterst) if you are trying to recruit or reach a male audience. Similarly, knowing most Pinterest users are young adult women may make it a great place to reach young women or mothers as a way of recruiting themselves or their children to programs.
- Engagement over social media takes a lot of time. Do not use platforms which will not be regularly updated and monitored.
- Be aware of privacy issues that come along with on-line social media activity. Some sites are more adaptable to privacy/private groups and postings than others.
- If using SMS (short message service) or texting, be aware of costs, which may be associated for the youth.
- If not already in place, consider developing a social media policy for the organization.
- 75% of success in online campaigns is based on promotion.
- Posts that include visual (illustrations, photos, videos, etc.) have a higher rate of success than posts which are strictly text (53% on Facebook, 35% on Twitter).
- It's good to be repetitive, but the amount of repetition is important. It is okay to repeat something once or twice over a week or two, but on the same day is not.
- No nagging. When contacting youth try "we missed you yesterday; the next class is Tuesday at 6:00. Let me know if you need help with getting there" rather than "why didn't you show up yesterday?"<sup>437</sup>

## **Social Media Platform Profiles**

### **Twitter**



- 53% of users are female, 47% are male<sup>43</sup>.
- 29% of Millennials (age 15-34) using Twitter<sup>38</sup>
- 26% of teens say Twitter is their favorite social network<sup>38</sup>

Twitter is a network of information. Each post or tweet is limited to 140 characters. Twitter can be used to post interesting or valuable information, but it can also be used to learn, connect and discover. By following users (people or organizations) you can stay up to date on current information that the user post or find interesting. 40% of users are just “listening” or observing others<sup>43</sup>. This makes it a good place for the organization to familiarize itself with the language and tone of what is being done or said. This will give account users a good sense of how they want to portray themselves or their organization as well as developing an understanding of how best to communicate through this medium.

Hashtags (#) can be used to categorize posts (tweets) allowing content to be pulled up using a simple search. This can be used across multiple platforms and may be used to develop themes, or conversations in which multiple people can participate.

*<https://about.twitter.com/>*

### **Facebook**



- Average user spent 20 minutes on site per visit<sup>43</sup>
- Over 26% of users are 18-24 year olds<sup>44</sup>
- 25% decline in users 13-17 over the last 3 years<sup>39</sup>

Facebook is a free social networking website which allows registered individuals or organizations to create profiles, upload photos and videos, send messages and keep in touch with other users. The site allows users to create open or closed groups, host or invite to events and create topic or organization specific topics.

Most Facebook posts are image based. Images are very strong when used in social media. Other popular posts are relevant articles, encouraging quotes and videos. Posts generally vary, but their messaging is targeted towards teens<sup>43</sup>.

[https://www.facebook.com/facebook/info?tab=page\\_info](https://www.facebook.com/facebook/info?tab=page_info)

## Instagram



- 1 new user every second<sup>35</sup>
- 41% of Instagram users are between 16-24<sup>40</sup>
- 3,600 photos shared every minute<sup>35</sup>

Instagram is an online mobile photo-sharing, video-sharing and social networking service that enables its users to take pictures and videos, and share them on a variety of social networking platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter and Tumblr.

Instagram is mostly used by higher income youth, but boasts a fairly even gender split, with 49% of users being female and 51% male<sup>40</sup>. It is an excellent avenue for sharing activities and events, creating a visual scrapbook of work done, and building interest in your organization<sup>43</sup>.

<https://instagram.com/>

## Foursquare



- 45 million total users<sup>41</sup>
- 6% of US users are between 18-29<sup>41</sup>
- 41% of US charities and non-profits using Foursquare<sup>41</sup>

Foursquare is a social networking mobile application that allows users to “check in” at locations, connect with friends, find attractions and/or leave reviews. There is a competitive nature to the application that offers badges and titles to individuals that visit a spot the most times.

These rewards may be part of your incentive strategy set as the incentives, associated with becoming the mayor for checking in ten times (or any other

milestone you want to establish). Foursquare may also be used to augment your program records as it keeps excellent track of the time people “check in”, who checks in the most frequently, etc.

Though this platform is not widely popular, it may be a useful way to aid in retention strategies, by monitoring and developing incentive for attendance. It can help workers to establish attendance trends as well. Program staff could suggest or encourage youth use this program (assuming there is interest)<sup>43</sup>.

*<https://foursquare.com/about>*

## **Pinterest**



- Average user spent 16 minutes on site per visit<sup>42</sup>
- 21.4% of users are between 12-24 & 27.4% are 25-34<sup>42</sup>
- 68% of Pinterest users are women<sup>42</sup>
- 50% of users have kids<sup>42</sup>

Pinterest is a web and mobile app company, which operates as a photo sharing website. It is a free website that requires registration to use. Users can upload, save, sort, and manage images—known as pins—and other media content (e.g., videos and images) through collections known as “pin boards”.

Pinterest acts as a personalized media platform for individual users and/or organizations. Users can personalize their experience with Pinterest by pinning items, creating boards, and interacting with other members. By doing so, the users “pin feed” displays unique, personalized results. The majority of Pinterest users are adult women. Though, the youth user rate is increasing<sup>4243</sup>.

*<https://about.pinterest.com/en-gb>*

## **Tumblr**



- 45% of users are under 35 years old<sup>44</sup>



- 251% mobile engagement growth from 2012-2013<sup>45</sup>
- Average users spend 28 minutes on site per visit<sup>45</sup>

Tumblr is a micro-blogging platform and social networking website. The service allows users to post multimedia and other content to a short-form blog. Users can follow other users' blogs, as well as make their blogs public or private. This is a great medium for sharing diverse content and allows many voices to speak in one place.

Consider asking youth to submit writings, photos, quotes, other things that may be posted on Tumblr which wouldn't fit on a primary website. It allows a number of different voices shine through, and it's a more relaxed environment.

Tumblr is especially popular among LGBTQ youth, and those seeking a forum for expressing alternative thoughts<sup>43</sup>.

*<https://www.tumblr.com/about>*

### QR Codes



QR codes (or Quick Response codes) are easy to make and can be read by smart phones which have downloaded a QR reader app. They are used to take information from a piece of media (e.g.: poster, website, sticker, magazine etc.) and put it in to your smart phone. Once the app is installed, scanning a QR code may give you details about a business or organization (allowing users to search for nearby locations), or show you a URL which you can click to see a schedule/list of events, or it may give you a coupon which you can use in a local outlet<sup>46</sup>.

*<http://qrcode.kaywa.com/>*

### YouTube







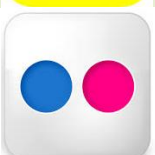
YouTube is not a recommended avenue for engaging and recruiting youth (14-25) as the average age of a video up-loader on YouTube is 26 years<sup>47</sup>. However, it may be a useful way of engaging youth during activities by providing them a platform to display their work (short films, music etc.) and the potential to compete for views,

which could be worked into the incentive/reward structure of the activity. See activities section for recommended applications.

<https://www.youtube.com/>

The preceding profiled platforms are representative of evidence-based popularity, though this is not a complete list of all social media platforms being used by youth. We would like to recommend the consideration of additional media platforms, which may come up in discussions with youth in the target communities<sup>48</sup>. For other social media platforms see Table 2.

**Table 2.**

	<b>Vine</b>	<a href="https://vine.co/">https://vine.co/</a>
	<b>LinkedIn</b>	<a href="https://ca.linkedin.com/">https://ca.linkedin.com/</a>
	<b>Google+</b>	<a href="https://plus.google.com">https://plus.google.com</a>
	<b>Snap Chat</b>	<a href="https://www.snapchat.com/">https://www.snapchat.com/</a>
	<b>Flickr</b>	<a href="https://www.flickr.com/">https://www.flickr.com/</a>



forward to each year. Movies can also be posted on YouTube and may provide an excellent opportunity for mentorships with experts in these fields.

Example: Teen Theater Project in National Harbor, MD (more theater based-live/play). Also, there are several books available that can teach teens to make a movie.

Consider: Accommodating those with disabilities, or those with financial hardships.

Exploring diversity through and in theatre.

Evidence: <https://scenariosusa.org/about/what-we-do/><sup>51</sup>  
<http://www.iyfn.net.org/system/files/FieldNotes08AtRiskYouth.pdf><sup>52</sup>  
<http://www.amazon.ca/Filmmaking-Teens-Pulling-Your-Shorts/dp/1932907688><sup>53</sup>

### Outdoor Movie Night

Description: Put a tarp up on, or use the side of a vacant building where there is a parking lot, or set up a screen on the beach, or construct an outdoor movie theatre that can be used every year.

Example: Tim Horton's: Movies Under the Stars (Hamilton, Brant, Halton)

Consider: Check for legal rights to show movies in public, offering free admission, a youth initiated/driven concessions both can also be used to teach basic money management skills. Also, consider exploring opportunities to partner with Tim Horton's.

Evidence: <http://www.freshaircinema.ca/rentals-outdoor-movies.php><sup>54</sup>  
<https://www.pinterest.com/waltongirl/outdoor-movie-night/><sup>55</sup>  
[http://www.blogto.com/film/2014/06/free outdoor movies in toronto summer 2014/](http://www.blogto.com/film/2014/06/free_outdoor_movies_in_toronto_summer_2014/)<sup>56</sup>  
<http://theheartofontario.com/calendar/events/view/tim-hortons-present-movies-under-the-stars2#.VQr-ikK4ljs><sup>57</sup>

### Unusual Job Fair

Description: More of a 'how to' job fair. Invite members of the community employed in non-conventional fields to participate in a job fair, encouraging youth to network and learn what is required to get jobs in these fields. Small business owners and other entrepreneurs can be invited to participate. Youth can spend time observing these people and their craft, and make connections.

Example: Tattoo artist, machine operator (landscapers – Genie lift), music production/musicians, bicycle repair, custom motorcycles (based on TV show 'American Chopper').

Consider: Anything that people may not have normal access to – put in one location. Consider offering incentives like winning a chance to visit one of the workplaces to see the job in action.

Evidence: <http://www.vancouverconventioncentre.com/vancouver-tattoo-and-culture-show/><sup>58</sup>

### **Graffiti Wall**

Description: A graffiti wall can be created, either on paper, in a community center, on an empty wall in the community. On a graffiti wall the ideas and thoughts of the youth can be captured in one organized place. This can also be a time/space for youth to engage with each other. A graffiti wall can display what people know, and it can be explained as to how they have come to know this.

Example: Talking Walls: Graffiti in Hamilton

Consider: Picking the same wall every year or taking a picture each year to track the thematic changes over time may create a historical trail of the youth in Hamilton.

Evidence: [http://www.surrey.ca/Youth\\_Planner\\_Toolkit.pdf](http://www.surrey.ca/Youth_Planner_Toolkit.pdf)<sup>59</sup>  
[https://raisethehammer.org/blog/2313/talking walls: graffiti in hamilton](https://raisethehammer.org/blog/2313/talking-walls-graffiti-in-hamilton)<sup>60</sup>

### **Youth Flea Market**

Description: Buy/Sell/Trade products and services. This can be a great way to pull a community together. Youth can also display and sell the arts or crafts youth make. This activity gives youth from all backgrounds the opportunity to share their culture. Encourage youth (marketing/social media) to participate in locally run flea markets. Give out youth 'awards' at these events (see evidence).

Example: Community Flea Market and Youth Award Show, Etobicoke, ON

Consider: Hosting an 'on-line' flea market (e.g.: Etsy.com).

Evidence: <http://www.eventbrite.ca/e/community-flea-market-youth-award-show-tickets-11861372685><sup>61</sup>

### **Photovoice**

Description: Using a camera to spend a day taking pictures that identify what is important to youth – from their perspective. Where are your favourite places in your community to hang out and feel welcomed? What places are easy to access or hard to access? What needs to be changed? Where would be a great location for \_\_\_\_\_?

Example: Surrey, BC, Photovoice Hamilton

Consider: Revisiting the Hamilton Photovoice project to see what can be learned.

Evidence: [http://www.surrey.ca/Youth\\_Planner\\_Toolkit.pdf](http://www.surrey.ca/Youth_Planner_Toolkit.pdf)<sup>59</sup>  
<http://www.youth.society.uvic.ca/node/286><sup>62</sup>  
<http://www.naccho.org/topics/infrastructure/mapp/framework/clearinghouse/upload/Photovoice-Manual.pdf><sup>63</sup>

## National & International Sports

- Description: Team, drop-in, or tournament style sports can be organized depending on the interest within a particular community. This can be an after school, school-holiday or weekend event lasting from a couple hours to a couple of days.
- Example: 3-on-3 basketball or soccer, ball hockey, cricket, other? Use social media to discover what sports will work. Basketball = host your own or join Canada NBA3X Tour. Soccer = design your own based on world Futbol Tour. Align with the Ontario Cricket Academy to bring youth cricket to Hamilton.
- Consider: City run, or joining/partnering with other 'tours' or other cities which are doing the same thing. Sports with less equipment (soccer, basketball) are more cost-effective and can reduce barriers to participation.
- Evidence: <http://www.nba3xcanada.com/en/Cities><sup>64</sup>  
<http://www.worldfutboltour.com><sup>65</sup>  
<http://www.voiceonline.com/summer-youth-cricket-2015/><sup>66</sup>

## **DISCOVERY: What youth are thinking, doing, or are interested in**

### The Hamilton Youth Journal

- Description: A regularly scheduled newspaper release that features articles, notes, monologues from youth. The theme can be based from local/neighbourhood events. What is happening, and how it is affecting their lives?
- Example: The Hamilton Spectator, the Sherman Hub.
- Consider: Using various languages. This can be a paper or online publication. Consider exploring online blogging sites like WordPress.
- Evidence: [http://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/oah-initiatives/teen\\_pregnancy/training/Assests/creative arts engagement tool.pdf](http://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/oah-initiatives/teen_pregnancy/training/Assests/creative_arts_engagement_tool.pdf)<sup>67</sup>

### Exploration Day

- Description: Spend a day or afternoon touring Learning Annexes and/or Post-Secondary institutions. Use the morning to visit these institutions to get feedback about what they liked/disliked about these places. Spend the afternoon doing a fun activity such as a visit to the Eaton's Centre, a sporting event or other activities youth are interested in.
- Example: A tour advertised for a Social Innovation Annex in Toronto, ON. (See evidence)

Consider: Using transportation time to engage youth. Forming small groups to create bonds and build trust.  
Evidence: <http://socialinnovation.ca/space/csiannex><sup>68</sup>

### Digital Storytelling

Description: At McMaster University there has been an emphasis on using Digital Storytelling as evidence in research projects. The principle is based on having people or communities produce, participate, and edit a video share their story. This activity could be applied to a neighbourhood or community context allowing members to learn about, with and from one another, while sharing their stories.  
Example: McMaster University and Rigolet Labrador Canada (see evidence)  
Consider: Contacting faculty in social work at McMaster University to gather details on how this can be an effective tool  
Evidence: <https://library.mcmaster.ca/news/26621><sup>69</sup>  
[http://www.townofrigolet.com/home/my\\_word.htm](http://www.townofrigolet.com/home/my_word.htm)<sup>70</sup>

### Journey Map

Description: Why do young people spend more time in some places than others? Are there any key features of the environment that support young people? (e.g.: recreation areas, skate parks, green spaces, 'secret' spaces). Does the group feel there are some shared responses to these places? (e.g.: places they like to gather, places they feel they have an influence in their community). Why do they feel they can make a difference in these places? What are the characteristics of these places?  
Example: Surrey, BC  
Consider: The questions you are going to ask can be revised depending on the age group of your audience. Use age appropriate art supplies (e.g.: no permanent markers for young children). Know what you wish to generate and capture. The exercise does require energy and enthusiasm on the part of the facilitator.  
Evidence: [http://www.surrey.ca/Youth\\_Planner\\_Toolkit.pdf](http://www.surrey.ca/Youth_Planner_Toolkit.pdf)<sup>59</sup>

### Consciousness Raising

Description: Advertising and organizing group meetings where youth can have open dialogue with each other. They can get to know each other, share experiences, gain trust, and raise common areas of concern with their environment. Alternatively, it can also be used as a time and place to relax and feel safe, or organize for fun.  
Example: One Circle Foundation  
Consider: Mixing various cultures within the same group – inclusion & diversity.  
Evidence: [http://mcs.bc.ca/pdf/its\\_a\\_girl\\_thang.pdf](http://mcs.bc.ca/pdf/its_a_girl_thang.pdf)<sup>71</sup>

<http://onecirclefoundation.org><sup>72</sup>

### **SKILLS: Building skills through engagement**

#### **Chef School / Youth Culinary Arts**

- Description: A great way to explore cultural diversity through food. This activity can build cooking skills, develop relationships, and promote good health. Youth can use this experience as preparation in becoming a chef.
- Example: Wood's Homes partnered with the Calgary John Howard Society to provide an at-risk youth program that prepares them to work in the culinary field.
- Consider: Using an Urban Garden as a food source.
- Evidence: [http://www.woodshomes.ca/site/PageNavigator/programs/street\\_services/programs\\_culinary.html](http://www.woodshomes.ca/site/PageNavigator/programs/street_services/programs_culinary.html)<sup>73</sup>

#### **Literacy, Language, and Communication Group**

- Description: Have youth design develop and use puzzles, crosswords, and games using their native language. Have youth bring home finished products to show parents who may not speak English.
- Example: Language Adventure Youth Programs
- Consider: Multiculturalism. Inviting parents, elders, or peers.
- Evidence: <http://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/oah-initiatives/ta/tpp-training2-energizers-icebreakers.pdf><sup>74</sup>  
<http://www.ilsc.ca/youth-programs.aspx><sup>75</sup>

#### **Music and Dance Club**

- Description: Bring in community artists and dancers in order to host dance/music workshops and activities for youth in the community. This will assist youth in developing skills but also provide mentorship opportunities and create relationships within the community. Dance includes: any traditional/cultural dance style requested + jazz, hip-hop, break, animation, contemporary, tap, or ballet.
- Example: The City of Edmonton
- Consider: Not making it competitive, just fun! Engaging instructors.
- Evidence: <http://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/oah-initiatives/ta/tpp-training2-energizers-icebreakers.pdf><sup>74</sup>  
[http://www.edmonton.ca/activities\\_parks\\_recreation/city\\_arts\\_centre/child-youth-programs.aspx](http://www.edmonton.ca/activities_parks_recreation/city_arts_centre/child-youth-programs.aspx)<sup>76</sup>



## **Resume and Job Search Day**

- Description: For the first portion of this activity a professional/experienced individual will guide youth in building a resume and with general resume skills. The second part of the activity will have the expert assist and teach good job searching skills.
- Example: YMCA – explore possibilities of expanding existing programs targeting youth and their unique requirements.
- Consider: Providing resources (computers - printers) to those without.
- Evidence: <http://www.ymcagta.org/en/get-a-job/help-you-find-job/employment-centres/index.html><sup>77</sup>

## **CITY: Activities and opportunities for civic participation**

### **Blocks and Blocks**

- Description: Youth use blocks to identify various elements of their community on a large aerial map. This activity is used to stimulate conversation about complex issues in physical planning. Ask youth to place various blocks on the map in answer to questions.
- Example: Surrey, BC
- Consider: Make sure the activity is simple enough to grasp for the age group, provide more structure for younger groups.  
Encourage creativity, while keeping activity realistic  
It is best when youth are from, or familiar with, the map area
- Evidence: [http://www.surrey.ca/Youth\\_Planner\\_Toolkit.pdf](http://www.surrey.ca/Youth_Planner_Toolkit.pdf)<sup>59</sup>

### **The Rating Game**

- Description: The Rating Game is designed to stimulate conversation. The purpose is to rank various factors in a young person's neighbourhood in order of importance. Ask participants to put cards in a selected order to answer the question, and ask 'why' some things were more important than others.
- Example: Surrey, BC
- Consider: Make sure to record the order of cards on after each participants turn. The game itself is NOT where the relevant information comes from; it acts as a lead for more discussion about the topic.
- Evidence: [http://www.surrey.ca/Youth\\_Planner\\_Toolkit.pdf](http://www.surrey.ca/Youth_Planner_Toolkit.pdf)<sup>59</sup>

### **Great Place Lousy Place**

- Description: This activity is a chance for younger youth to identify (through photos or words) places and spaces in their community that make them feel comfortable or uncomfortable, or safe or unsafe. This gives youth an

- opportunity to share their perspective but also contribute to community betterment projects.
- Example: Surrey, BC
- Consider: Make sure to allow space for participants to chat, while watching the time to ensure discussions don't drag on. Doing a walking tour of the community where youth are encouraged to take pictures of places to bring visuals into the conversation.
- Evidence: [http://www.surrey.ca/Youth Planner Toolkit.pdf](http://www.surrey.ca/Youth_Planner_Toolkit.pdf)<sup>59</sup>

### **Youth Forums**

- Description: Forums "to engage youth in local government issues that impact them directly" (p.1). Youth forums are more geared toward an annual or semi-annual event. They offer a great place to start to build long-term and trusting relationships. Each forum would have a topic that is an area of concern for the City (transportation). Events of the day would be targeted at understanding youth perspectives on the area(s) of concern.
- Example: Kelowna, BC
- Consider: Holding different types/themes at each forum.
- Evidence: [https://www.civicinfo.bc.ca/practices innovations/kelowna youth 2007.pdf](https://www.civicinfo.bc.ca/practices_innovations/kelowna_youth_2007.pdf)<sup>78</sup>

### **Advisory Boards**

- Description: Create Advisory Boards. The construction of multiple youth advisory boards has proven to be valuable in many cities across Canada. Encouraging youth to participate in civic life by providing opportunity is valuable for youth engagement. There are multiple types of advisory boards with several different ways to practically engage youth into the conversation. The literature suggests that youth boards are difficult at first but mature and evolve over time into strategic alliances.
- Example: Calgary, AB
- Consider: Diversity in culture representing youth advisory boards. Reaching out to 'hard to reach' populations through partnerships with organizations.
- Evidence: <http://youthcore.ca/download.php?id=96>

## **Key recommendations & Best Practices**

### **Guiding Principles**

- Used mixed methodology to gather information & opinions on youth interests and needs: questionnaires, ongoing and diverse focus groups, social media polls, etc.<sup>8</sup>
- Go to where youth are to engage them in the planning process, community activities, etc.<sup>79</sup>
- Use a strengths-based approach; all stakeholders must see and value the skills and perspective youth bring to their communities<sup>879</sup>.
- Empower youth leaders and mentors from the neighbourhoods to promote and organize events – will ensure they know what their peers want & use word of mouth to encourage attendance<sup>82</sup>. This creates a culture of participation<sup>79</sup>.
- Provide mentorship and leadership roles to motivate youth and put power about developing NAS programs into their hands. This builds ownership, accountability, motivation and confidence in youth<sup>82</sup>.
- When developing partnerships with youth from the community (either hiring, or recruiting for information sessions) remember that disadvantaged youth often are most under-served in these initiatives<sup>80</sup>. Instead of experience/education of youth, need to look at willingness and potential to learn, passion, authenticity<sup>82</sup>.

### **Financial Considerations**

- Recognize there are immediate financial barriers to education, employment and community participation, as well as long-term financial barriers or challenges<sup>5</sup>. Addressing the survival financial needs is as important as education supports such as scholarships.
- Provide transportation supports to youth for events and programming. This could be in the form of bus tickets<sup>5</sup> or access to a bike-sharing program<sup>20</sup>.
- Financial incentives should be made quickly and must be considerate of the needs of youth<sup>81</sup>. Rapid response scholarships/bursaries if possible because many low-income students do not attend PSE due to financial concerns. The earlier they know they have support, the more likely they are to follow through with education plans<sup>5</sup>.



## **Appendices**

**Appendix 1.1: Table 3: Quick Reference Chart - Community Partnerships**

<b>Community Partnerships</b>	<b>Younger Youth: 14 - 17</b>	<b>Middle Youth: 18 - 21</b>	<b>Older Youth: 22 - 25</b>	<b>At-Risk Youth</b>	<b>Language Barriers</b>	<b>Indigenous Youth</b>
Childcare (Basic Needs)		X	X	X		
Housing (Basic Needs)				X		
Farm Crawl (Basic Needs)	X	X	X	X	X	X
Community Gardens (Basic Needs)	X	X	X	X	X	X
Empowerment Squad (Health Living)	X	X		X	X	
Go-Girl (Health Living)	X			X		
Start the Cycle (Health Living)	X			X	X	X
Hamilton Region Indian Centre (Education & Life Skills)				X		X
Raising the Grade (Education & Life Skills)	X	X		X	X	
Innovative Learning Centre (Education & Life Skills)		X	X	X	X	X
Pathways to Education (Education & Life Skills)	X	X		X		
Springboard Community HUB (Education & Life Skills)		X	X	X		
Youth Insight (Leadership & Mentorship)	X	X	X	X		
In School Mentoring (Leadership & Mentorship)	X			X	X	X
Art Forms (Creative Expression)	X	X	X	X	X	X
Story Centre (Creative Expression)	X	X	X	X	X	X

### **Appendix 2.1: Examples of Successful Social Media Campaigns**

There are a number of resources out-lining some very successful social media campaigns. Many of the examples are marketing or business campaigns/accounts. These principles may still be useful in developing and launching a successful media campaign in other realms. Below is listed a few sources to go and examine what has been successful in the past in order to begin considering or planning social media integration into NAS strategies for youth engagement.

- The 30 Most Brilliant Social Media Campaigns of 2014, Marketing Cloud:  
<http://www.exacttarget.com/blog/the-30-most-brilliant-social-media-campaigns-of-2014-so-far/>
- 30 Business that Are Rocking Social Media, Small Business Trends:  
<http://smallbiztrends.com/2014/07/best-social-media-marketing-examples.html>
- 13 Best Social Media Campaigns of 2013, Postano:  
<http://www.postano.com/blog/13-best-social-media-campaigns-of-2013>
- 5 Brands Using Action-Gating Effectively in their Marketing, Socially Stacked:  
<http://www.sociallystacked.com/2014/05/5-brands-using-action-gating-effectively-in-their-marketing/>

**Appendix 3.1: Table 4: Quick Reference Chart: Activities**

Activity	Younger Youth: 14 - 17	Middle Youth: 18 - 21	Older Youth: 22 - 25	At-Risk	Language Barriers
Mimicking Popular TV Shows		X	X		
Hamilton Hollywood	X	X	X	X	
Outdoor Movie Night	X	X	X		
Unusual Job Fair			X	X	
Graffiti Wall	X	X	X	X	X
Youth Flea Market	X	X	X	X	
Photovoice	X	X		X	X
National & International Sports	X	X	X	X	X
Hamilton Youth Journal	X	X	X	X	
Exploration Day	X	X	X	X	X
Digital Storytelling	X	X	X	X	X
Journey Map	X			X	X
Consciousness Raising		X	X	X	
Chef School / Culinary Arts	X	X	X	X	X
Literacy, Language, and Communication Group	X	X	X		X
Music and Dance Club	X	X	X	X	X
Resume and Job Search Day		X	X	X	
Blocks and Blocks	X				
The Rating Game	X			X	
Great Place Lousy Place	X			X	
Youth Forums	X	X	X	X	X
Advisory Boards	X	X	X	X	X

#### **Appendix 4.1: List of Toolkits**

We have included a list of and links to a number of Toolkits that may be useful in future planning and deeper exploration into youth engagement strategies.

Change the World (by having fun) – Youth Civic Engagement Toolkit, YWCA Canada:  
<http://ywcacanada.ca/data/documents/00000334.pdf>

Engaging and Empowering Aboriginal Youth – A Toolkit for Service Providers, First Nations in British Columbia:  
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Youth Engagement Toolkit, Pan-Canadian Joint Consortium for School Health:  
<http://www.jcsh-cces.ca/ye-book/>

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## **APPENDIX 4.2: Other Useful Social Media Sites**

### **Office of Adolescent Health – TPP Resource Centre:**

Strategic Communications and Dissemination: [http://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/oah-initiatives/teen\\_pregnancy/training/strategic-communications.html](http://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/oah-initiatives/teen_pregnancy/training/strategic-communications.html)

Engaging Select Populations: [http://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/oah-initiatives/teen\\_pregnancy/training/engaging-select-populations.html](http://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/oah-initiatives/teen_pregnancy/training/engaging-select-populations.html)

Cultural Competence: [http://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/oah-initiatives/teen\\_pregnancy/training/cultural-competence.html](http://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/oah-initiatives/teen_pregnancy/training/cultural-competence.html)

Lights, Camera, Social Action: Using Video to Engage Youth and Stakeholders: [http://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/oah-initiatives/ta/experience\\_expertise\\_fleitman.pdf](http://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/oah-initiatives/ta/experience_expertise_fleitman.pdf)

Managing the Digital Media Monster: The Benefits and Challenges of New Technology: <http://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/oah-initiatives/ta/tpp-training1-new-media.pdf>

### **National Resource Center for Youth Development:**

Youth Engagement: <http://www.nrcyd.ou.edu/publication-db/documents/youth-leadership-toolkit-youth-engagement.pdf>

Member Outreach: <http://www.nrcyd.ou.edu/publication-db/documents/youth-leadership-toolkit-member-outreach.pdf>

### **At Risk Youth Programs:**

5 Characteristics of Best Youth At Risk Programs: <http://www.atriskyouthprograms.com/youth-programs/5-characteristics-of-best-youth-at-risk-programs.html>

### **SOCS Connecting Communities:**

Non-Profits: Engage Youth with New Social Media Platforms: <http://socs.fes.org/vnews/display.v/ART/519fbd42b2d3e>

### **Convince & Convert – Digital Marketing Advisors:**

7 Ways to Use Social Media to Create Buzz-Worthy Events: <http://www.convinceandconvert.com/social-media-strategy/7-ways-to-use-social-media-to-create-buzzworthy-events/>

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