



Special Council Agenda

The agenda for the **Special Meeting of Council of the District of Mission** to be held in the **Conference Room** of the Municipal Hall, 8645 Stave Lake Street, Mission, British Columbia on September 7, 2010 commencing at 3:30 p.m.

1. **TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION**

- (a) Challenge Day (Manager of Social Development will be in attendance)

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2. **OTHER BUSINESS**

3. **ADJOURNMENT**

File Category: ADM.COM.COM
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To: Chief Administrative Officer
From: Manager of Social Development
Date: June 21, 2010
Subject: Challenge Day

Background

Challenge Day was held in Mission on April 27, 2010 at the Mission Leisure Centre. Challenge Day is a 6.5 hour full day program designed for 100 students. This program focuses on building connection and empathy between students. Challenge Day is more than a one-day program. It offers communities the spark that is igniting an entire movement of compassion and positive change known as the "Be the Change movement".

Youth in Mission are faced with many peer related pressures. Challenge Day successfully addresses many of these pressures including; cliques, gossip, rumors, negative judgments, teasing, harassment, isolation, stereotypes, intolerance, racism, sexism, bullying, violence, homophobia, hopelessness, apathy, and other hidden pressures. At the end of every Challenge Day, all participants will:

1. Never again be able to say they didn't know that negative judgments, thoughtless jokes, rumors, or oppressive behaviors, comments or violence hurts people.
2. Be challenged to adopt a formula for creating positive change:
 - a) NOTICE – Wake up! Notice what's happening
 - b) CHOOSE – Dream It! Create a vision for what you DO want your life to look like
 - c) ACT – Do Something! Have the courage and commitment it takes to be the change.
3. Be challenged to celebrate the diversity of ALL people.
4. Be encouraged to "drop the waterline" and to share and express their true selves (instead of hiding who they are to fit in at school or in their community)
5. Be provided with tools and alternatives for healthy self expression while also being challenged to let go of self limiting thoughts, beliefs, and/or emotions.
6. Be challenged to live a life of service to others.

Positive outcomes of Challenge Day in Mission included heartfelt public apologies between students for bullying and hurting each other. One activity requests youth to line up on one side of the room and cross the middle line if they have ever experienced one or more of the following: been teased for the size and/or shape of their body, been hurt by a teacher or parent, been made to feel worthless e.t.c. As the students participate in this activity they become aware that they are not alone and that each and every individual around them has and is experiencing the same challenges. This is an incredibly powerful activity.

Program Sustainability

Challenge Day programs are a catalyst for creating positive change in both school and community environments. Both schools and their communities are tasked to help sustain the changes made during the Challenge Day program. This is accomplished through the formation of "Be the Change Teams". At the conclusion of Challenge Day, interested students sign up to form one of these teams at their local school. The Challenge Day organization provides resources to interested parties forming these teams so that they have supports to carry out their vision.

Evidence based research has shown that Challenge Day helps develop leadership in high school students through its day-long Challenge Day programs. It also increases specific life skills such as: Intellectual flexibility, task leadership, emotional control, self confidence and social competence. Challenge Day has served hundreds of thousands of youth around the world, helping schools create positive and permanent changes in how relationships and communities are built and sustained.

The Social Development 40 Developmental Assets working group in partnership with Fraser House Society and School District #75 supports this initiative for youth in Mission. We are working together to "Be the change" for youth in Mission. Engaging youth in social stewardship is proving challenging for modern day organizations. However, Challenge Day is a highly effective method of engaging 100 youth in a short time span with a large impact.

Learnings from the April 27, 2010 Challenge Day in Mission

Challenge Day is an incredibly powerful and emotional day for all individuals involved. Although the day provides inspiration and skillfully leads the group through emotional highs and lows, participants left the Mission event in a state of reflection.

The May 2010 40 Developmental Assets meeting provided a space for de-briefing with some of the adult participants. The major concern within this working group was the high level of traumatic experiences that the youth had either experienced or were currently involved / living in. Naturally, this led to a variety of emotions for adult volunteers that lasted days to weeks after the event. Many adult volunteers were shocked at the severity of events youth in our community have experienced.

School Counselors and youth workers attended this event. Youth disclosing concerning information were flagged to counselors and followed up with confidentially. The Mission youth in attendance were not a purely random sample. School youth workers were asked to refer youth who were leaders of diverse cliques within each of the high schools as well as youth that may need the Challenge Day experience more than others for a variety of reasons.

Additionally, it has been discussed at 40 developmental assets meetings, that this would be an opportune time to parallel a youth resource fair with Challenge Day. This would bring community partners and

agencies on board with the intention of placing services at an event where students may be redirected to these services in the future.

Required Budget

Challenge Day requires 6.5 hours. Two highly - trained facilitators from the San Francisco Bay Area are sent to the selected Mission high-school to lead a workshop for 100 students (grades 8-12) and 25 or more adult volunteers from the community, including teachers, staff and family members.

In the initial Challenge Day planning meetings, we discussed the possibility of utilizing local talent from within Mission to facilitate these events, thus saving on travel costs. Initially it was felt that this was feasible for future offerings of Challenge Day, however, after experiencing the event, the 40 Developmental Assets group became convinced of the level of professionalism needed for these events. There is always a level of risk involved when bringing people's emotional states to extreme highs and lows as well as a level of trauma that can surface both for the youth participant as well as for the adult volunteers. Thus, it became very apparent that facilitators trained through this organization who perform this role in a full time capacity are necessary for these events.

The cost of Challenge Day is \$3,500 plus airfare and travel expenses. For the April 27, 2010 event funding was obtained in the following ways:

Fraser House Society \$700
Mission Foundation \$1000
Envision Financial Grant \$2500
Best Western Hotel – offered free accommodation for Facilitators

Community partnerships and support for this event include:

1. Social Development - 40 Developmental Assets working group
2. Parks Recreation and Culture
3. Fraser house Society (dedicated many hours in fundraising, grant writing, promotion, hosting etc)
4. School District 75 (successful school participation and School District youth care workers organized student transportation)
5. Youth Unlimited
6. RCMP
7. Mission Restorative Resolutions

Due to the overwhelming success and positive feedback from the April 27, 2010 Challenge Day, the 40 Developmental Assets working group in partnership with Fraser House Society is working towards bringing a second Challenge Day to Mission. We hope to support Mission youth by finding sustainable funds to make Challenge Day an annual event in the community. It has been encouraging to all involved in Challenge Day to have found a method of engagement so effective towards positive and lasting change. As part of the next steps, there will be a funding request coming forward as a part of the budget process in 2011.

Kirsten Hargreaves
MANAGER OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT