



COMMUNITY MATTERS TORONTO

COMMUNITY COUNCIL July 10, 2008

Priority Community Issues

Priority Areas

Invite people to meetings and discussions about these issues. They won't understand if they are not part of it. For example how difficult it is to stretch the dollar at the end of the month. Being on ODSP and social assistance separates people. A cycle of poverty is created. You cannot make money as there is a clawback from your earnings.

In spite of the numerous Town Halls and consultations things are slow to change. It is people's task to also learn to change themselves.

CMT should **focus more on Youth** and expand the Youth Job Club to include coaching, tutoring, mentors. A Job club component should be expanded so youth have broader opportunities to learn skills other than just to work with small a child which is frequently the case in this area. At Jarvis Collegiate 85% of the students are from St JT. and Regent Park. It remains a school with a 'Rosedale' mentality and has not changed its focus to adapt its programs to the needs of youth in the area. It does not have the programs that the TDSB offers in other schools. CMT needs to include info about other skills trainings and courses e.g. swimming

Deal with the basic fact that **many children and youth are hungry**

'Hunger includes and affects everyone. We have to build inclusive communities and teach people to make change for themselves. This will make them stronger and ready to advocate for themselves'

Shantelle Tee

Use the youth and hunger issues to define CMT's self help approach

There is a big difference between a service" and a self help mentality. CMT promotes self help: 'Neighbours Helping Neighbours. The service mentality often talks about numbers and more budget to bring in professionals. There will never be enough services if we continue to think this way. We have to learn how to have more control and use creative ways to settle issues.



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An adversarial approach to advocacy is not always needed. We need to show that we are working on our solutions and develop linkages with those who are part of the problem and may be interested in working together on solutions
When CMT begins a program initiative it should first:

1. **Expand relationships with target services and groups** so lines of communication and trust are established and CMT is called upon when issues arise, for example with Jarvis Collegiate and the local trustee
2. **Gather Information** about the issues. What is already being done? Is anyone else working on this? What has happened in the past? Does anyone have the mandate to do this but is not doing so in this area?
3. **Adopt a Circle approach and invite those who have a stake** in these solutions. For example instead of saying we need a new 'Breakfast Program' (service mentality) we should invite parents, students, school representatives, businesses such as Shoppers, Food Basics, and others with expertise about the issue to discuss this and see how we can pool resources and adopt collective strategies
4. **Develop an Individual and Collective Voice:** The approach is one of Active Participation. People do not speak out for fear that they will lose the benefit they have, fear of authority, and lack of confidence. Training sessions are not the answer: it is better to have people participate in active groups, watch others and learn from their example and have the chance to have 'n the job training' Once people experience change for themselves they are stronger and more experienced-ready to advocate for others. Always include those who experience the issue directly to meetings, preparation and follow up
5. When **community programs may be dropped** (e.g. tenant reps) we need to ask why they are being dropped (too many complaints, too many problems?) to look at why they are to estimate the net loss of resources to the community and start working to ensure that some investment remains and that working groups are established to address this.
6. **Celebrate**-thank those who have participated in joint solutions. For example. Thank Manulife and YES program for initiating the summer employment initiative and make recommendations for future programs.