

Update on Focus on Youth Sites

Date:	September 24, 2008
To:	Community Development and Recreation Committee
From:	Brenda Patterson, General Manager, Parks Forestry and Recreation
Wards:	All
Reference Number:	

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to update the Community Development and Recreation Committee on the school sites the Toronto District School Board made available to Parks, Forestry and Recreation, free of charge, in the summer of 2008 for the Focus on Youth initiative.

The Ministry of Education allocated a total of \$4 million for the 2008 Focus on Youth initiative, of which \$3 million was allocated to the Toronto District School Board, and \$1 million to the Toronto Catholic District School Board.

The Toronto District School Board partnered with Parks Forestry and Recreation by making available nine schools across the City, at no cost in permit fees. Through this arrangement, Parks Forestry and Recreation was able to offer an additional 9 summer programs and hire and train 26 youth as area coordinators, program coordinators and program leaders.

In addition, the Toronto District School Board hired 24 Youth leaders, who were placed in Parks Forestry and Recreation Focus on Youth summer programs.

Parks Forestry and Recreation did not use Toronto Catholic District School Board sites for these programs.

Financial Impact

This report will have no financial impact beyond what has already been approved in the current year's budget.

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting of July 3, 2007 Community Development and Recreation Committee requested that the General Manager report back on additional Toronto District School Board/ Toronto Catholic District School Board sites available for summer programming through the continuation of the 2007 Special summer Program in 2008.

<https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2007/cd/decisions/2007-07-03-cd07-dd.pdf>

ISSUE BACKGROUND

In 2008 Parks, Forestry and Recreation had several meetings with the Toronto District School Board to discuss the Focus on Youth proposal for the summer of 2008. Parks, Forestry and Recreation requested an increase in the number of school sites allocated to the City. The Toronto District School Board was unable to accommodate the request due to a commitment to allow more non-profit community based organizations to participate in the initiative.

On June 16th, 2008, the Toronto District School Board informed Parks, Forestry and Recreation that the number of school sites allocated to the City would be reduced from 15 to 9. The table below shows the Focus on Youth program sites operated by Parks, Forestry and Recreation.

District	Program Location
Toronto and East York	West Toronto Collegiate Institute Perth Avenue Public School Kent Senior Public School
North York	Flemington Public School Chester Le Junior Public School AY Jackson Secondary School Milne Valley Middle School
Etobicoke and York	North Kipling Junior Middle School Lakeshore Collegiate Institute

In addition, Parks, Forestry and Recreation were asked to operate 4 summer camps under the Toronto District School Board model school initiative that was not part of Focus on Youth. The table below shows the model school initiative program sites operated by Parks, Forestry and Recreation in Scarborough District.

District	Program Location
Scarborough	Willow Park Public School Pringdale Public School Military Trail Public School Cedar Drive Public School

COMMENTS

SUMMER 2007

On May 30, 2007 the Ontario Ministry of Education considered a joint proposal submitted by the Toronto District School Board and the Toronto Catholic District School Board to support recreational and learning opportunities for children and youth in several of the inner city neighbourhoods of Toronto, during July and August 2007. This program was titled the “Focus on Youth Toronto” program. The Ministry of Education allocated a total of \$4 million to support this program, of which \$3 million was allocated to the Toronto District School Board, and \$1 million to the Toronto Catholic District School Board.

The overall objective of Focus on Youth was to enhance high quality summer program opportunities for children and youth in these neighbourhoods by offering free use of school space for organized community-based programs, and by providing employment opportunities and leadership activities for the youth of these communities. The Toronto District School Board and Toronto Catholic District School Board determined that this program would also promote learning through play, healthy lifestyle and positive self-image for these children and youth, and that this will have a positive impact on student achievement and well-being during the school year.

The Toronto District School Board used the 13 priority neighbourhoods identified by the City of Toronto as the basis for determining the communities to be served by Focus on Youth, but also included other neighbourhoods that met their program criteria.

The Focus on Youth initiative had three components:

- increasing community access to schools,
- increasing youth employment and
- providing leadership programming.

The Toronto District School Board provided Parks Forestry and Recreation with the use of school facilities in 15 locations at no charge in order to allow Parks Forestry and Recreation to expand recreational programming.

Youth employment became a key objective of the program. Toronto District School Board hired 225 youth for community programs and 60 were hired to work as school custodians. Parks, Forestry and Recreation also hired 60 youth to operate 15 summer programs. In addition, 50 Toronto District School Board youth were placed in Parks Forestry and Recreation summer programs. Parks Forestry and Recreation organized three days of training for the youth hired by the Toronto District School Board and Parks, Forestry and Recreation for the Focus on Youth Program.

SUMMER 2008

The Ontario Ministry of Education provided \$3 million to the Toronto District School Board to fund Focus on Youth in 2008. The Toronto Catholic District School Board and the school boards in Ottawa and Hamilton also participated in this year's program.

Additionally, the Toronto District School Board offered expanded placement options to non-profit community agencies resulting in fewer school sites available for Parks Forestry and Recreation. Nine school sites were allocated to Parks, Forestry and Recreation, free of charge, to operate summer programs. Twenty-six youth were hired and trained as area coordinators, program coordinators and program leaders.

Parks, Forestry and Recreation staff will be meeting with staff from the Toronto District School Board to evaluate the 2008 Focus on Youth initiative and discuss future plans for this successful partnership initiative.

CONTACT

Malcolm Bromley, Director, Community Recreation Branch, Tel: 416-392-7252
Fax 416-395-0105 Email: MJBROMLE@toronto.ca

SIGNATURE

Brenda Patterson, General Manager,
Parks Forestry and Recreation