

## **Youth Summit Wrap-Up**

<b>Date:</b>	February 18, 2010
<b>To:</b>	Advisory Committee on Long-Term Care Homes and Services
<b>From:</b>	General Manager, Long-Term Care Homes and Services
<b>Ward:</b>	All
<b>Reference Number:</b>	

### **SUMMARY**

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The third annual Volunteer Youth Summit was held on Friday, February 12, 2010 at Toronto City Hall. Thirty-four youth volunteers attended the half-day session designed around peer discussion, improved communication and program development.

The Volunteer Youth Summit supports the direct divisional work underway and complements the Mayor's initiatives to expand opportunities for Toronto's youth.

### **Financial Impact**

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

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### **DECISION HISTORY**

In January, the Advisory Committee on Long-Term Care Homes and Services endorsed a request for up to \$500.00 expenditure from the General Donation Account to provide refreshments to the participants. The actual expenditure was \$383.95 net.

### **ISSUE/BACKGROUND**

Community involvement is a high school requirement and volunteering with Toronto Long-Term Care Homes and Services is a rewarding way for students to earn community service hours. Youth are an important part of the volunteer team and by encouraging young people to give their time and talents, we are able to enrich the lives of residents in student-led intergenerational programs and activities.

The Volunteer Youth Summit brings volunteers from across the division together to network, share and learn through leadership-building exercises.

## COMMENTS

The morning began as participants were welcomed and thanked for their gift of time and talent to the City, to the homes and most especially to the residents in long-term care. Four Coordinators attended and they each shared their high school volunteering experience followed by a PowerPoint presentation showing the coordinators in their teens and the current face of youth volunteers across the division.

A discussion entitled “Accessing Resources within the Homes” gave volunteers an update on the ways we have addressed the identified obstacles from the 2009 Volunteer Youth Summit. Volunteers are encouraged to “ask” if you cannot find something as there is always a manager on site that has access to keys and can provide general direction. To help with program planning and development, a form was provided that can be used as a process guide to help organize resources, identify needs and establish leadership for any youth-led volunteer programs.

The Volunteer Youth Summit participants then broke into four smaller groups and focused their discussion on enhancing youth involvement by discussing: (a) recruitment; (b) retention; (c) recognition; and (d) building commitment. The discussions in all groups were lively, on topic and provided good insight as summarized by the following:

### Recruitment: *best ways to get more youth volunteers*

- have high school students speak to their middle schools so they can start early
- generate awareness by posting flyers on school bulletin boards
- have groups on Facebook to share ideas and recruit from friends
- have youth volunteers speak to their school guidance office, start a club

### Retention: *best ways/ideas to keep youth volunteering*

- commitment comes from engagement, friendly and enjoyable activities
- ice-breaker activity – helps make first day a positive experience
- provide more tips for communicating with residents
- involve younger volunteers in leading activity

### Recognition: *best ways to acknowledge my volunteer service*

- volunteer of month – photo and name on board
- reward hours of service and certificates for special accomplishments
- youth volunteer awards
- less formal – “party” vs. annual recognition dinner

### Commitment *means:*

- to be engaged – to give of yourself – to bring your best effort to table
- responsibility – try your best, put your best foot forward, bring enthusiasm
- want the autonomy to make decisions within the given structure
- consistent, responsible and showing up on time

All feedback from the Volunteer Youth Summit will be shared by the Coordinators, Volunteer Services at their next meeting as well as communicated to the Home Management, Volunteer Executives and Toronto Inter-Home Volunteers so that all can continue to learn and make improvements to the volunteer program and the experiences of youth volunteers.

Fundraising opportunities (car wash, baby photo guessing contest) were discussed along with plans for more youth involvement in the Toronto Challenge on June 13, 2010.

Summit representatives were asked to complete an evaluation form. Overall, the Summit was rated Very Good by 43 percent and Excellent by 57 percent of the participants; 78 percent felt they had an Excellent opportunity to provide important input; 96 percent report being definitely committed to getting more youth involved with residents and 87 percent will recommend Long-Term Care Homes & Services as a place to volunteer.

Lapel pins from the City of Toronto and the Respect~Support~Enable pin from Long-Term Care Homes and Services were handed out, there were some group photos taken and then a shared pizza lunch.

## **CONTACT**

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## **SIGNATURE**

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