

c/o North York Women's Centre

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BY 20.1.7

**Deputation to City of Toronto Budget Committee****Dec 7, 2011**

*I have been assured by a very knowing politician from Arizona of my acquaintance in Toronto, that a young healthy child well nursed is at a year old a most delicious, nourishing, and wholesome food, whether stewed, roasted, baked, or boiled ...*

*This is merely A Modest Proposal -- For Preventing The Children of Poor People in Toronto/Ireland From Being A burden to Their Parents or Country, and For Making Them Beneficial to The Public*

I may well have horrified some of you and amused those who recognized that I am quoting Jonathan Swift from 1729.

I have watched in person and on webcast and been among that endless stream of deputants who have presented careful data and analysis, professional judgments and stories of positive and negative experiences in the city and with services - people with deep caring for the work they do and the city in which they live.

In the hope of a larger rethink or reframe, I have elected first satire and then some chiding as my small part of persuading you.

I've reminded City committees before that the men and women, girls and boys are **residents** not customers and now, startled by your use of citizen (even more divisive than tax payers) in the budget documents, I need to remind you again that we are residents and have been for decades in City documents. Who among you will explain this change in language?

Budget Chief Del Grande's comments last week highlighted this "us and them" drift and thrust it farther when he questioned the value of non-english books, of popular movies in public libraries.

Perhaps then, we all drive in english, men or women who drive downtown and park in a city lots are subsidized. Why are they not facing fare increases? That's a rhetorical question -- I know because you cut the vehicle registration tax.

But girls and boys who might access swimming pools or wading pools in their local park, youth who would access community centre programs, like their poor parents, will be barred from pools.

Then we can add other men and women with mental health challenges who need shelter, women and men who need day care, who use libraries, girls and boys in community arts. And we can add seniors, mostly women, who need wheelchairs and dentures. The list goes on.

—You are strategically converting need to fear of the needy "Be careful, they all want something for free" is the message I hear from you.

You are disproportionately cutting in low income neighbourhoods; that will have consequences that are even more terrible than giving us something for free!!

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On behalf of the TWCA...

I am not comforted by the numbers of men in suits who are the decision-makers here. I reiterate. When did you last take TTC late at night, or pick up your children at daycare, take them to a wading pool? When did you last use a community recreation programme? Or look for housing? Try to find shelter for your friend in the streets who has mental health challenges?

Imagine yourself rushing to the daycare to pick up your children on transit that is running less frequently, feeding them dinner and arranging for a sitter because your partner is working a split shift, and rushing back onto transit than is running even more infrequently to get to a city meeting to discuss impacts on the city residents. How often could you do that?

Sonja Greckol, PhD

TWCA Steering Committee