REPORT FOR ACTION

Engagement of Non-profit Organizations to Provide Mentoring Programs for Children Ages 7-11

Date: August 20, 2019
To: Economic and Community Development Committee
From: Acting Executive Director, Social Development, Finance & Administration
Wards: Wards 20, 21, 22, 23, 24 and 25

SUMMARY

This report responds to directives from Economic and Community Development Committee to report on opportunities to engage non-profit organizations to provide youth mentoring programs for children ages 7 to 11 living in Scarborough's Neighbourhood Improvement Areas. This report provides a summary of City of Toronto Divisions and external organizations providing youth mentoring programs in the area and offers information on ways non-profit organizations can implement the 40 Developmental Assets model.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration recommends that:

1. Economic and Community Development Committee receive this report for information.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There is no financial impact resulting from the adoption of the recommendations in this report.

The Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact information.

DECISION HISTORY

On April 29, 2019, Economic and Community Development Committee adopted [EC4.5 Engagement of Non-profit Organizations to Provide Youth Mentoring Programs](http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2019.EC4.5) (http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2019.EC4.5) , directing the Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration to:

1. Report on opportunities to engage non-profit organizations to provide youth mentoring programs with a target intake age of 7 to 11 living in the Neighbourhood Improvement Areas in Scarborough as a pilot project.

2. Provide a summary of City of Toronto departments and organizations already providing youth mentoring programs in the Neighbourhood Improvement Areas in Scarborough.

3. Report on how organizations can implement the 40 Developmental Assets which young people need to thrive.

COMMENTS

Opportunities to engage non-profit organizations to provide youth mentoring programs

In this report, mentorship is defined as an interactive and mutually beneficial relationship whereby individuals engage with the purpose of cultivating learning and development. Furthermore, mentorship falls into two categories: informal, where the mentorship relationship forms naturally (for example, between a teacher and student), and formal mentorship, where mentors and mentees are matched through a program.

On July 8, 2019, staff from Social Development, Finance and Administration in collaboration with staff in Children's Services convened a meeting of organizations serving Scarborough's Neighbourhood Improvement Areas. The Neighbourhood Improvement Areas in Scarborough include:

- Oakridge
- Kennedy Park
- Ionview
- Woburn
- Eglinton East
- Scarborough Village
- Morningside
- Kingston Road/Galloway Road/Orton Park

A total of 19 non-profit organizations from across the Neighbourhood Improvement Areas in Scarborough were invited to take part in the discussion.

Representatives from 7 organizations providing mentorship specific programming attended. The purpose of the meeting was to learn about the work of organizations in order to better assess opportunities and next steps in mentorship programming.

During the meeting, organizations discussed definitions of mentorship and the differences between informal and formal mentorship programs. Based on information gathered at the meeting, each organization has its own way of defining mentorship.

Key learnings from the engagement of organizations at the meeting are listed below.

1. Opportunities for increased collaboration between organizations offering mentorship programs

Participants at the meeting discussed potentially working together to develop shared outcomes, performance measures and definitions. They also formulated ideas related to the development of a coordinated outreach strategy to strengthen communication and coordination across the sector.

2. Challenges around the delivery of effective mentorship programs

Organizations emphasized challenges in defining mentorship, particularly when differentiating between informal and formal mentorship as both forms of mentorship produce different outcomes for children and youth**.** Participants communicated difficulties around monitoring and evaluating the long-term impact of mentorship and challenges securing sustainable funding to support effective programming. They were also concerned about the long waitlists for participants trying to access programs and services. In addition, some organizations could not find volunteers to be mentors in programs where mentees and mentors have similar lived experiences.

Summary of youth mentoring programs available to children in Scarborough's Neighbourhood Improvement Areas

City of Toronto's mentorship programs

The City of Toronto offers mentoring programs for youth. However, many programs do not focus on children between the ages of 7 to 11. Furthermore, the programs highlighted below include aspects of informal mentorship and directly serve children between the ages of 7 to 11 living in Scarborough's Neighbourhood Improvement Areas.

Toronto Public Library

Leading To Reading:
Leading To Reading is a free program for children who are reading below their grade level or need help with their homework. Children are encouraged to learn and practice their skills in a fun environment. It is open to children in Grades 1 to 6 who can communicate in English. Students meet volunteers at the library once a week for one-

to-one help with their reading, writing or homework. They read together and play learning-related games and activities. The program builds the children’s confidence and motivation. Leading to Reading is offered in the Cedarbrae (Woburn) area.

Non-profit organizations providing mentorship programs

Social Development Finance & Administration conducted a survey to solicit information on mentorship programs for children ages 7 to 11 in Scarborough's Neighbourhood Improvement Areas. A total of 5 organizations responded to the survey, a brief summary about their programs is outlined below.

- **RISE Edutainment**

Reaching Intelligent Souls Everywhere is a youth-led movement that has been providing opportunities and spaces for children and youth aged 3-29 to develop artistically/professionally, personally, socially, and spiritually. Mentoring at RISE Edutainment includes one-on-one mentoring and focuses mentorship on a transfer of knowledge and support with careers and training opportunities.

- **Big Brothers and Big Sisters of Toronto**

Big Brothers and Big Sisters of Toronto delivers community-based, one-on-one programming, in school mentoring, and group programs such as 'Pumped up for Post Sec' which is a postsecondary readiness program. In its one-on-one programming, a mentee and a mentor meet independently for 8 hours a month anywhere in the city to share interests and to empower each other. Mentees are between the ages of 7 to 15 years old and mentors are over the age of 18. All of the mentoring programs at Big Brothers and Big Sisters of Toronto utilize the 40 Developmental Assets Model.

- **Youth Assisting Youth**

Youth Assisting Youth is dedicated to investing in the leaders of tomorrow and transforming the lives of vulnerable and newcomer youth through the power of mentorship. For over 40 years, Youth Assisting Youth has paired volunteer young adult mentors ages 16-29 with youth ages 6-15 to engage in activities aimed to develop mind, body, character, and leadership skills.

- **Toronto Foundation for Student Success: Beyond 3:30**

Beyond 3:30 supports children between the ages of 11 and 14 and operates in schools, making it safe and easy for students to attend. The program focuses on mentorship, nutrition, as well as sports and physical fitness. Beyond 3:30 has programs such as a Financial Literacy Course, and Homework Support. The program seeks to support students in becoming more prepared to succeed in school and in life.

Implementation of the 40 Developmental Assets Model®

The Search Institute® developed the 40 Developmental Assets® Framework, a framework of positive child and youth development which includes a set of 40 qualities, experiences and characteristics young people need to grow into healthy, caring adults. The Framework defines developmental assets for four age groups: 3-5, 5-9, 8-12 and 12-18 years old. The 40 assets are grouped into two categories made up of 20 assets each, external and internal. The external assets focus on the relationships and opportunities young people need in their families, school and community environments. The internal assets focus on fostering social-emotional strengths.

Research from The Search Institute® and communities and agencies who have adopted the model has shown that the more assets young people have, the less likely they are to engage in a wide range of high-risk behaviours and are more likely to thrive in all aspects of their lives. The underlying assumption of the model is that the more external assets youth experience, the more internal assets they will develop.

Organizations can implement the Developmental Assets Framework by utilizing a community capacity building approach developed by The Search Institute®. This program trains an asset champion under a "train-the-trainer" approach. This form of training prepares the trainees to become knowledge translators. Organizations and agencies designate an asset champion to attend the training-of-trainer's session. The asset champion then supports the knowledge transfer process and implementation of the model by delivering workshops and training to all types of audiences. This helps to embed programs and services with the asset building lens and approach in their work. Implementation requires building capacity through training and financial resources must be set aside to gain in-depth, access to the 40 Developmental Assets® Model.

Many organizations may not have access to formal training on the 40 Developmental Assets due to resource limitations and are therefore not able to formally implement this model into programming. However, many mentoring organizations are already using the 40 Developmental Assets in an informal manner. A key learning from the meeting with non-profit organizations is that mentoring programs should meet youth where they are by utilizing different models that are available to suit the needs of different and diverse youth.

Costing for full implementation can range depending on a range of tools and products being accessed from the Search Institute®. Implementation depends on the level of capacity building required for organizations.

More information is available on the Search Institutes website: https://www.search-institute.org/where-to-start/youth-programs/.

For information on the 40 Developmental Assets Model for the intake age of 7 to 11, see Attachments 1 to 3.

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SIGNATURE

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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Search Institute Relationships Framework
Attachment 2: 40 Developmental Assets for Children Graces K-3 (ages 5 to 9)
Attachment 3: 40 Developmental Assets for Middle Childhood (ages 8 to 12)