



St. Stephen's
COMMUNITY
HOUSE

Creating Opportunities
Strengthening Communities

THE ST. STEPHEN'S COMMUNITY HOUSE YOUTH ARCADE YEAR AT A GLANCE

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It is hard to believe that this school year is quickly coming to an end. What a year it has been! Our youth leaders made great strides and were involved with amazing Arcade initiatives. They were actively involved in the Amazing Race (activities for youth including healthy cooking and physical activities) and played the lead in the success of the young women's Hip Hop Group. Our youth leaders also participated in a four-day winter camping trip for youth in which they co-facilitated and assisted the Youth Arcade staff.

Every Wednesday there were social recreational activities including Basketball with Scadding Court Community Centre and biking.

Every Thursday has now become movie night. This is not just a time to see a free flick but a chance to look at world issues that affect us all. Thursdays are also the day that our fabulous young women come together for Venus. This year the zine will look a little different. It is a photo novella—a collection of photos and stories featuring strong young women of 2007. Look out for the issue that will be released in June.

Additionally, the boys worked diligently to produce the *Little Black Book for Boyz* a sexual health book for boys by boys



to compliment the *Little Black Book for Girlz*. It is being published by Annick Press and will be launched sometime in the Fall. If you have a young man you might wanna get a copy. *The Little Black Book For Girlz*, a girl's sexual health book for girls by girls was revised this year and is featured in book stores throughout Canada in places such as Indigo and Chapters.

Finally, we continue to offer impromptu workshops with youth about issues that influence their lives. Puberty and relationships can be overwhelming and confusing so together youth and staff talk about these issues.

On a cool vibe, Fridays featured Freestyle Fridays. Turn tables, scratching and learning how to DJ were just a few things that happen on Fridays. We featured our first Freestyle Battle in which mostly young men used lyrics to win

the battling belt. Next time we do it we hope to have more young women representing.

On a personal note, I had the privilege of working with a number of parents like you. I may not always have had all the answers to your concerns or questions but was always willing to listen. In total we connected with more than 60 parents in our suspension program and were pleased to know that we could connect with the schools to assure the needs of you and your child were met. It was a pleasure to provide you with support.

The Youth Arcade staff wish you and your family a safe and fun-filled summer and look forward to providing you, your child and our community with services in September.

*Karen Arthurton, on behalf
of all the Youth Arcade Staff*

**unless indicated otherwise,
articles were written by Karen*

IN LOVING MEMORY: THE ARCADE SAYS GOODBYE

It is with great sadness that the youth, staff and community received news that Jonathan Musse passed away on Thursday May 24th. Jonathan had frequented the Arcade over the last several years and was attending West End Alternative school, and doing very well. Although we had not seen him as often in the last several months, we believed that he was doing fine. Our fondest memories of Jonathan include his visits to the Arcade, his attendance at the camping trip last summer, his respectful ways, his commitment to his friends and for all of us his illuminating smile. Just a month ago, he was in the Arcade talking with staff about working with us in the summer. I also saw him last month at his school as always he showed me the outmost respect.

The Youth Arcade and other community agencies will be celebrating his life in the coming weeks. We hope this will be an opportunity for youth to share your stories and remember Jonathan and the ways in which he touched our lives. At this time our deepest sympathies go out to Jonathan's family and friends. As a staff team our hope is that the community is able to come together and work towards change. The ultimate goal being that no lives are lost in any of our communities. One life lost is too many. Jonathan will remain alive in our hearts and memories along with a memorial in his name at the Youth Arcade. Jonathan will continue to live on in all of us.



Jonathan Musse June 23, 1987 - May 24, 2007

VENUS – IMAGES OF STRONG YOUNG WOMEN

My name is Cassandra Borg and I am a third-year social work student at the University of Guelph-Humber. This year I had the honour of facilitating Venus, a creative media project for young women who wish to have their voices heard!

The Venus girls group focuses around a yearly publication in which the girls contribute creative writing pieces, visual art and other

creative forms of expression. The publication is written by young women for young women and distributed around the city.

The theme of this year's issue is *Inspiring Identities* and the girls did a wonderful job of creating beautiful self-portraits that reflected a bit about themselves as well as other forms of creative expression. The following is an example of an excerpt that

will be featured in the next issue:



"This is life as we live it/ we have no choice but to forgive it/in the end we'll stop the street wars and violence /and live in sweet blissful silence"
-Kalale Dalton Lutale

You'll have to get the next issue to read the end — it's amazing.

I have had a truly wonderful experience facilitating this group of young women, hearing their ideas and sharing in some of their experiences.

Cassandra Borg,
3rd year student
University of
Guelph-Humber

REPLAY – SUSPENSION PROGRAM: WHAT A YEAR IT HAS BEEN!



“It (the program) was good. I haven’t been suspended since. I got a lot of studying done for my exams and hung out with people. Talking with staff helped me focus and smarten up”.

Students continue to get suspended or expelled for a variety of reasons including assault, defying authority, trafficking and robbery. During their time away from school, The Replay Alternative Suspension Program is an option for students who have been suspended, expelled or are presently not in school. This program provides both educational and emotional support to students who may otherwise lose credits or drop out of school.

The staff work closely with students, parents/guardians and school administrators to ensure that students complete their work and look at the root causes of

what brought them to suspension in the first place.

As one student states: “It (the program) was good. I haven’t been suspended since. I got a lot of studying done for my exams and hung out with people. Talking with staff helped me focus and smarten up.” This is only one example of what Replay does for youth.

To date, 89 youth and 50 parents have benefited from the program. Replay will continue to operate next year.

For further information contact Karen at 416-964-8747 ext 241.

HELPING KIDS STAY OUT OF TROUBLE: REPLAY ALTERNATIVE SUSPENSION PROGRAM

St. Stephen's is a nice place for students who are out of school and students who are suspended. It is a really nice place for teenagers because the staff help them to do positive things instead of negative and they help them to go the community' centers and stay out of trouble.

Karen, one of the staff, is a really good staff because she is really helpful. Veronica, another staff, is really helpful because she would always tell students to stay out of trouble.

I learned that I should stay out of trouble and when I got suspended my parent was

really upset. I learned that when I see trouble coming I should just walk away and do positive instead of negative. I would tell other students not to get into trouble because if you do then you are probably going to get charged and it will not look good on your school record.

If you do get suspended then I would suggest you go to St. Stephen's Community House because you can get help there and instead of going outside and getting into trouble you can go there and get a few credits.

Anonymous

“I learned that I should stay out of trouble and when I got suspended my parent was really upset.”

THANK YOU TO OUR STUDENT PLACEMENTS!

This year the Youth Arcade had three placement students from Guelph–Humber University, George Brown College and Ryerson University.

Our student from Guelph-Humber, Cassandra, worked in the Youth Arcade and was predominantly responsible for working with Venus the young women's group. Over time Cassandra built strong relationships that work towards the creation of the strong young women's zine that will be released in June.

Daniel, from George Brown College, single-handedly came in and ran an

amazing music program. Youth learned the fundamentals of guitar, drumming and learned about the music business.

Finally Karen (that's me) conducted an evaluation of the Replay Suspension Program. Initial Results showed that parents, youth and school administrators are pleased with the service. They also had amazing recommendations that would make the program more effective. Like every year, we welcome new students and are happy to be part of the learning of future social service providers.

“We welcome new students and are happy to be a part of the learning for future social service providers.”

OUR ADVOCACY POSITION – BILL SINCLAIR – ASSISTANT E.D.



Make Some Noise!

Youth Centres shouldn't be a luxury, they are a necessity.

My name is Bill Sinclair and I am the Assistant Executive Director of St. Stephen's Community House. In this job, I work with all of the programs and different locations of St. Stephen's. For the past two years, I have spent part of my time working to build partnerships with other youth centres across the city and the province to make sure every neighbourhood has a centre like our Youth Arcade.

The volunteers and staff at St. Stephen's cannot imagine the House without the Youth Arcade and we are worried. We are worried that many other neighbourhoods do not have a youth centre, particularly neighbourhoods that don't have any community services at all. We are also worried that one day our own youth centre may be closed due to lack of funds. The Arcade is mainly open thanks to the generous donors who help St. Stephen's and wonderful help from the City of Toronto, although they may not be able to help as much in the future.

In finding partners, we have started meeting with other youth centres in Toronto – Scarborough, Etobicoke, Davenport, Parkdale, Regent Park – and in small towns across Ontario. Together, we want to get people to recognize that a youth centre is as important as a neighbourhood library, or a local senior citizen centre. We also formed a partnership with the Boys & Girls Clubs of Ontario because they feel the same way.

With our partners we have talked to people at the City, people at the Province of Ontario, people at United Way of Greater Toronto, and people in businesses and foundations in the community. Three things resulted from these meetings.

One - we received some help to run some cool recreation activities in our current youth centres from the Ontario Ministry of Health Promotion. This includes boxing, camping, dancing, basketball and bicycling.

Two – we participated in the creation of the Youth Challenge Fund, which is one way the province is helping to start new youth centres in neighbourhoods that don't have any community services.

Three – we got some good advice. The advice was: "Make some noise!" and "Get your message out in the community!"

So, this year, we are doing advertising and telling people why youth centres are important. You can have a sneak preview of our first advertisement (below). I hope you will read it, check out some of the web pages and make some good noise about youth centres.

Investing in Families and Building Better Futures for Youth

Many families in Ontario struggle to maintain all of their family commitments and are faced with the challenges of balancing many responsibilities such as work, their children, and making time for aging grandparents. In all this, teens need time and space for themselves and for making life-long friendships.

Afternoons are especially important for teens who are often on their own until a parent gets home. This is the time of day when most trouble happens and when parents want peace of mind about their children's activities.

Youth centres support families by providing safe supervised places for teens. These centres respond to youth when they need help and are focused on making positive friendships and helping teens grow up healthy. Being a teen is also a time to become more independent, getting their first jobs and doing community service volunteering. Youth centres teach these skills to build better futures.

Across Ontario, youth centres are building better futures for youth by providing: healthy, active recreational activities; positive friendships and role models; employment skills; social skills; homework supports; volunteer opportunities. For the two million youth in Ontario, there are only about 170 youth centres and they are found all across the Province from Kenora to Cornwall to Windsor to Toronto to Niagara, in towns and cities large and small.

You can learn about your closest youth centre and the challenges of investing in Ontario families by visiting these websites:

Town Youth Participation Strategies
www.typts.com

Boys & Girls Clubs of Ontario
www.boysandgirlsontario.ca

PlayWorks Partnership
www.playworkspartnership.ca



MUSIC PROGRAM: *PASION POR LA MUSICA*

My name is Daniel Barrientos I'm a first year social service student at George Brown College and I had the great opportunity to start *Pasion por la Musica* at St. Stephen's Community House.

If you're wondering the name is in Spanish which is my first language and it means "Passion for Music." I am very passionate about music and eager to learn new ways of playing or how to play different instruments. I am most comfort-

able with the guitar as I have been teaching youth at the center how to play. In the music program we looked at different musical instruments, different genres and how music affects people.

We had lessons on how to play guitar, drums, piano as well as how to use turn tables. Music is a form of expression which can improve one's health as well as uplift the spirit. As such we should encourage our youth to get involved in the creative arts.

This was a great learning experience for both me and the youth had a chance to play different instruments and learn from different people. This program was possible thanks to the support of St. Stephen's Youth Arcade staff as well as from people in the community that provided volunteers to help give lessons or to just come in to have a talk with the youth.



MY EXPERIENCE AT THE KENSINGTON YOUTH ARCADE

For those who do not know me, I am Rebecca, one of the kids who is doing volunteer work at the Kensington Arcade. I guess I will start off by telling you exactly what landed me here.

The predicament that had forced me to look for a place to do community service hours was my assault charge against two older women while being under the influence. The conditions that I had to follow in order to get my charges dropped was for me to do 20 hours of community service. So that day I got set

up by the court with Karen Arthurton, the Community Service Youth Worker at St. Stephen's.

My time here at the Arcade has been a new fun eye-opening experience for me. By coming here, I have learned so much more about myself and my interests. I have also learned that I love working with other people which has made me think about job careers for the future. I never would have imagined community service to be so much fun. The image I had in my head when I thought of doing

community service for a criminal charge was wearing an orange jump suit and picking up garbage on the side of a highway with my newly manicured nails. By being here I have met so many fun and caring people in the Arcade. The best thing about this community centre is that everyone here loves what they do. And in my opinion that is the best way to be able to help others.



VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION

"It is better to give than to receive."

This is what eight youth from the Arcade did through their volunteer experience. Their experiences were celebrated on April 18th, 2007. The ceremony included food and music along with a certificate of appreciation and a gift.

The eight youth contributed with the Arcade in a variety of ways. Their efforts included assisting and operating the Snack Program, teaching the Hip Hop Dance class, working with staff at the winter camping trip and

overall being amazing role models to younger youth participants who frequent the Arcade Drop-in.

On behalf on the Youth Arcade staff we would like to thank you for your efforts and hope that you will continue to work with us in the coming years.



GORDON, AU REVOIR!

We wanted to take the opportunity to recognize the efforts of Gordon McLean.

Gordon has worked with the Youth Arcade for the last two years as a Community Youth Worker. During this time, he was the key drop-in worker and was best known for his event-planning.

In the last year, Gordon was responsible for the *P.S. Kensington* events (Car Free Sundays) and put together an amazing venue of youth singers, freestylers and dancers.

Gordon also organized our First Battle in which a number of young men came out using freestyle lyrics to beat each other out. In the end, only one young man went home with the championship belt. The event was a great success.

Gordon had decided to take some time off and will not be returning to the Arcade. We wish Gordon the best of luck in his future and we hope that he will stop by and keep in touch. He will be missed.

WHO'S SKIPPING CLASS? THE ARCADE SKIPPING RESOURCE

Last year, The Youth Arcade was part of a committee that looked at issues important to parents. One of the issues that arose for parents was why youth skip and what can be done about it. After successfully receiving funding from the Toronto District School Board, the Youth Arcade will be producing a video for parents to assist them in understanding why youth skip class. The video will include the voices and faces of youth, school administrators and community members. It will also include a list of reasons why youth skip, what to do if you suspect your child is skipping and community resources available for parents. The video will be completed in June and will be debuted at Parent Council meetings in September. We hope that this will provide the necessary information that will assist parents.

For further information please contact Karen Arthurton at 416-964-8747 ext 241.



Summer activities...

*Summer revitalization project at the Youth Arcade
PS Kensington Events—last Sunday of every month
Full list of summer events on www.toronto.ca or
www.harbourfrontcentre.com*

Have a safe summer. Til next year

**SPRING/SUMMER
EDITION**

St. Stephen's Community House Youth Arcade

260 Augusta Avenue, Toronto, ON M5T 2L9

St. Stephen's Community House is a unique, community-based social service agency that has been serving the needs of Kensington Market and surrounding neighbourhoods in downtown West Toronto since 1962.

The Youth Arcade Staff Members Contact Numbers 416-964-8747

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Veronica Salvaterra X 236

Jacob Blomme X 251

**ST. STEPHEN'S COMMUNITY HOUSE
YOUTH ARCADE THANKS THE FOLLOWING
SUPPORTERS FOR HELPING US KEEP OUR
YOUTH ENGAGED!**

The Caring Foundation

City of Toronto — Parks & Recreation

The Counselling Foundation of Canada

Jays Care Foundation

A & A King Family Foundation

The Catherine & Maxwell Meighen Foundation

Leanne Palylyk Children's Foundation

Province of Ontario — Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services

Raptors Foundation

Tippet Foundation

United Way of Greater Toronto



**United Way
of Greater Toronto**