

Applied Major Project

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Executive Summary

Purpose

The purpose of this research paper is to determine what transferable skills youth ages 13-18 develop through participating in municipal recreation and how can the City of Richmond's Youth Staff create opportunities that enable youth to develop these skills.

Methods Used

Research for this paper was conducted using four different methods: secondary research (review of literature), interviews with staff and those who are involved in youth development within the City of Richmond, public observations of youth programs and services, and analysis of content on this topic.

Findings and Conclusion

Through participation in drop-in sports, registered programs, social clubs, youth councils and volunteer opportunities, youth gain a multitude of new skills, and abilities. The transferable skills that youth gain from participating in recreation range from social-emotional skills such as communication, conflict resolution and building healthy relationships to professional development skills such as leadership, organization, and time management. In addition, youth also develop a sense of positive self-esteem and view of their community. Youth can become a vital part of the shaping of their community through this participation in recreational activities and can create their own impacts on their community by learning more about how the city works and how decisions are made. The key components for a successful youth services foundation are involved and engaged staff, developmentally appropriate and engaging programs, the involvement of youth in the planning process of these programs and services, and the continued support of youth serving programs. These components are essential to the health and success of a youth serving organization and must be constantly re-assessed to determine where certain challenges, issues or opportunities exist.

Recommendations

1. Redesign the Focus and Intention of Programs and Services
2. Create more Youth Focused Events and Outings.
3. Enhance Staff Training
4. Create Methods to Retain and Maintain Relationships with Youth Volunteers.
5. Explore More Opportunities to Connect with Youth Who Are Experiencing Social Challenges.
6. Create a Developmental Framework or Guidelines for Programs and Services

Key Terms

Transferable skills, Youth, Municipal Recreation, Enable

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Introduction

There are particularly useful and transferable skills that youth ages 13-18 can develop from participating in recreation programs and services (Benson, 2000; Ellis et al., 2001; Hamilton & Hamilton, 2004). These recreation programs and services for youth may include instructor led recreation programs, volunteer opportunities, outdoor recreation opportunities, and arts and cultural services. Youth who participate in recreation have also seen improvements in their mental and socioemotional health, enhanced academic performance, and enhanced life satisfaction (Agans, et al., 2014). In addition, youth can develop useful and transferable skills that will enable them to experience success in other areas of their life (Agans, et al., 2014). Therefore, it is important to research the most common transferable skills that youth can develop through participation in municipal recreation. Furthermore, it is important to also determine how recreation services providers can deliver the necessary guidance, support, environment, and resources to youth to help them to achieve success in developing these skills.

This report will aim to answer the question: what transferable skills do youth ages 13-18 develop through participating in municipal recreation and how can the City of Richmond's Youth Staff create opportunities that enable youth to develop these skills? The following key areas will be discussed within this report:

- Background and context
- About the City of Richmond
- Statistics on youth participation in recreation
- Youth Services in Richmond
- City of Richmond's Youth Strategy and Framework
- Review of literature on this topic
- Overview of the different skills that youth develop from participation in municipal youth recreation (social recreation, volunteerism, sports, and arts and culture)
- Overview of the role that youth staff play in the development of youth.
- Overview of how the success of these services is being measured
- Gaps or challenges that exist within the delivery of youth recreation services
- Areas of controversy
- Gaps in literature

- Best Practices
- Summary of literature review
- Methodology for primary research
- Research findings and analysis
- Recommendations

The key terms used in this research report are operationalized as follows:

- *Transferable Skills* - This term refers to the different attributes and abilities that youth will develop from participating in municipal recreation. These transferable skills can range from professional and personal such as time management, critical thinking, leadership, building healthy relationships and collaboration and can be used in a variety of different opportunities or roles.
- *Youth* - Youth refers to the 13–18-year-old age bracket. The City of Richmond recognizes youth within different age brackets ranging from 13-24, 15-20 and 13-18 depending on certain programs, grants, and opportunities (City of Richmond, n.d).
- *Municipal recreation* - This term refers to services such as community center programming and municipal events. These services can look like structured recreation programs for youth, youth volunteer opportunities, youth outdoor recreation opportunities, and cultural services.
- *Enable* - This term means the ability to offer the necessary means (resources, support, guidance) to youth to allow them to achieve or attain something. In the case of this research, the youth will be attaining or developing transferable skills.

Background and Context

Community-based youth organizations such as municipal recreation play a substantial role in the development of youth (Benson, 2000; Ellis et al., 2001; Hamilton & Hamilton, 2004; Mannes, 2005). Youth development approaches can look different across municipalities and other levels of government. For the purposes of this research, the City of Richmond will be explored to determine their approach to youth development and to determine how this research topic is situated within the realm of municipal recreation.

About City of Richmond

The City of Richmond is a “culturally diverse and geographically unique” island city located in Metro Vancouver (City of Richmond, n.d). Their mission is “to protect and enhance the City’s livability and economic well-being for current and future generations through:

- Visionary leadership and responsible decision making
- Accountable and sustainable fiscal practice
- The development of a unique and beautiful city
- Product and service excellence and efficiency
- Community consultation (City of Richmond, n.d).

Furthermore, their vision is “for the City of Richmond to be the most appealing, livable, and well-managed community in Canada” (City of Richmond, n.d).

The City of Richmond is home to 9 community centers or spaces, 5 libraries, 20 parks and outdoor spaces, 3 arenas, and 4 aquatic centers. In terms of their demographics, there are approximately 29,000 youth living in Richmond (City of Richmond, 2019).

Statistics on Youth Participation in Recreation

Within Canada, more than half of the youth are currently participating in sports or recreational activities and 53% of these youth are participating in these services through a recreation organization such as municipally operated recreation (Statistics Canada, 2022). In a self-reported survey in the City of Richmond’s draft Youth Strategy, approximately 92% of respondents reported belonging to a club, or organized group, with the majority (approximately 40%) meeting in those organization’s a few times per week (City of Richmond, 2019). According to Wing Ho, Volunteer Coordinator for the City of Richmond, in 2022 there were 736 youth volunteers out of 1174 volunteers total and these youth contributed 20,092 hours which is almost half of the total volunteer hours for that year (Ho W., personal communication, 2023). Among these youths that participated in these activities’ opportunities, 64% reported “engaging in activities that were meaningful to them,” and 45% reported “feeling as though their ideas were listened to when participating in those activities” (City of Richmond, 2020, p. 75). Statistics indicate that youth in Richmond are engaged in after-school programs and activities and receive some degree of satisfaction and enjoyment from doing so.

Youth Services in Richmond

The City of Richmond offers a wide range of municipal recreation programs and services for youth ages 13-18. These programs and services are offered at their various community centers, parks, their Media Lab, and other various community spaces. The main types of programs offered are:

- Arts based programs
- Drop-in fitness center hours
- Youth councils and social clubs
- Registered programs such as sports or general interest
- Volunteer opportunities such as community special events, environmental volunteer clubs, and children's day camps
- Intergenerational programs
- Media Lab drop-in hours

Each program is created and overseen by Youth Development Coordinators or Youth Outreach Workers and are instructed by Youth Development Leaders and volunteers.

City of Richmond's Youth Strategy and Framework

The City of Richmond has two different documents that help guide their work with youth. The first document being the Youth Strategy and the second being the Youth Services Plan. The Youth Strategy outlines the strategic directions and actions taken by the City of Richmond to help guide them in serving and supporting youth and was created with input from youth, families, staff, youth serving organizations, and members of the public (City of Richmond, 2022). The strategy provides information on best practice research, engagement with youth, their families and key stakeholders, and the demographic profile of youth in Richmond (City of Richmond, 2022). This document builds on the progress made by the Youth Service Plan (City of Richmond, 2022).

The City of Richmond's Youth Service plan is a living document that outlines the City's plans to develop youth and youth related services. The document was created with consultations from Richmond youth and other key stakeholders and offers a snapshot of the current youth strategy and goals for these services (City of Richmond, 2020). The document is available to the public on the City of Richmond's website and is currently in the process of being updated for the 2021-2031 issue. This document is the most instrumental in this research as it provides the city's goals, action plan, associated outcomes and the City's roles and timeline as it pertains to youth recreation and development (City of Richmond, 2020).

As expressed in both documents, the City of Richmond stresses the importance of youth engagement and involvement in their community. This vision is reflected in the multitude of different youth councils and clubs for youth that are offered. These councils and clubs offer youth the opportunity to become involved in their community through conversation, philanthropy, and volunteerism. Currently there are over 14 youth councils and clubs and each one focuses on a different theme of community development or social issues. For example, at City Centre Community Centre alone, they offer six different youth councils and leadership teams. The themes that are discussed and promoted in these councils and teams range from promoting social justice and mental health to learning how to turn business ideas into real-life ventures and connecting with older generations (City of Richmond, n.d).

The Youth Civic Engagement Program is another example of an opportunity for civic participation that is offered to youth. The Youth Civic Engagement program is a free, eight-week program offered to youth ages 15-20 years where participants learn about their municipality and the decision-making process of local government (City of Richmond, n.d). Youth who register have the chance to design and present a project of their interest to a mock City council at the end of the program (City of Richmond, n.d).

Literature Review

Overview of the Different Skills that Youth Develop from Participation in Municipal Recreation

Peter L. Benson introduces the concept of the “40 Developmental Assets” which is a framework for understanding what youth need to be successful (Benson, 2000). With the proper staffing, implementation framework, and ongoing maintenance, these assets can be achieved through participation in municipal recreation services (Benson, 2000). Among these developmental assets are support, empowerment, boundaries and expectations, constructive use of time, commitment to learning, positive values, social competencies, and positive identity (Benson, 2000). These 40 Developmental Assets are touched on in many of the different resources on this topic and many of the transferable skills that are developed through participation in recreation fall under one of the eight assets listed above. These assets are featured in the City of Richmond’s Youth Service Plan where they have implemented these assets into their framework to help guide their programs and services (City of Richmond, 2020).

An example of a transferable skill that youth who regularly participate in municipal recreation develop is self-efficacy and resilience (Hamilton & Hamilton, 2004; Ellis et al., 2001). Self-efficacy refers to a person's confidence and belief in their own capacity and abilities (American Psychological Association, n.d.). Those who have self-efficacy have a higher tendency to exert control over their motivations and behaviors and are more likely to maintain positive values (American Psychological Association, n.d). Responsibility and independence are also two main skills that youth develop through participation in recreation (Sibthorp et al., 2013). Both responsibility and independence enable youth to feel empowerment and enhance their social competencies.

Volunteerism is another form of youth recreation and plays a large role in helping youth develop new skills. Through volunteerism as a form of recreation, youth can find confidence in their abilities and strengths and feel empowered to develop themselves (Liu, et al., 2009). From a sociological approach, volunteering offers youth the opportunity to build or enhance social relationships, and interactions with individuals, groups, organizations, and their communities (Cosmin-Nicolae, & Georgiana-Mihaela, 2020). This helps youth improve their interpersonal relationships and stimulates their compassion for other people and their challenges or barriers in life (Cosmin-Nicolae, & Georgiana-Mihaela, 2020). From a psychological perspective, youth can improve their self-esteem, enhanced appreciation for their community, and a sense of utility in society (Cosmin-Nicolae, & Georgiana-Mihaela, 2020). Furthermore, through engagement in one's community, youth can experience self-actualization where they realize their own potential to achieve their highest capability (Liu, et al., 2009). Furthermore, youth can gain a sense of importance in their community and feel as though they are contributing to a brighter future for themselves and others (Young & McChesney, 2013). The challenge then lies in focusing on the individual rewards of the volunteer, rather than focusing on using these volunteers as a tool to achieve organizational goals (Young & McChesney, 2013).

The significance of recreation for youth overall is discussed and four major hypotheses concerning the significance of youth recreation are presented (Canadian Council of Social Development, n.d):

1. The Human Development Hypothesis: A lack or absence of recreational activities for youth will have a negative impact on their overall socio-emotional human development which will impact them as adults.

2. The Civic Competence Hypothesis: A lack or absence of recreational activities for youth and a lack of engagement in these activities will impact youth's civic competence and will impact the quality of democracy.
3. The Insufficiency Hypothesis: A consequential number of youths are "not participating in recreation activities at levels sufficient to support their human development and future civic competence (Canadian Council of Social Development, 2001, p. 2).
4. The Inadequacy Hypothesis: Low or no participation in recreation activities can be attributed to insufficient provisions for youth by public systems.

These hypotheses highlight the cause and effects of recreation services on the wellbeing of youth as well as the wellbeing of a community (Canadian Council of Social Development, n.d). When looking at the topic of youth participation in recreation, it is important to consider how youth engagement impacts the larger system that is municipal recreation and what roles each person plays in the support of this demographic.

Through research of this topic, it was discovered that youth engagement is a major theme that goes hand in hand with youth development and gaining transferable skills. The United Nations shares four degrees of youth engagement (United Nations, 2021):

1. Youth Consulted - Youth are consulted for their input on services, programs or processes relating to them.
2. Youth Contributing - Youth play a role in planning, implementing, and facilitating programs or projects.
3. Youth as Partners - Youth are engaged with the agency or organization and create open dialogue during all decision-making processes.
4. Youth as Leaders - Youth are responsible for all elements of a project or program through all stages of development.

This structure provides context for each level of youth involvement in their community and can be used to measure how programs can engage youth at each level. Projects and programs for youth can use this framework to determine the level of youth engagement that is possible and how best to create opportunities for youth to reach that level.

Overview of the Role that Youth Staff Play in the Development of Youth

One common theme among the literature on this topic is that municipal recreation staff play a key role in the development of these skills and assets in youth (Agans, et al., 2014; Barcelona et al., 2011; Witt, Caldwell, 2010). Staff who implement youth services have a consequential influence on whether youth experience positive outcomes from participation (Barcelona et al., 2011). As well, these staff can help youth build healthier perceptions of adults and impact their experiences interacting with adults (Witt & Caldwell, 2010).

Therefore, it is crucial, when hiring these staff, to stress the difference between *youth work* and *youth development* so that staff understand the necessary competencies required of them to serve this population within certain capacities (Barcelona et al, 2011). These differences in youth work and youth development can look like knowing how to design, lead and evaluate programs as opposed to occupying time or supervising the youth (Barcelona et al, 2011).

The National Collaboration for Youth declares the following ten competencies be required for entry level staff who work face-to-face with youth (Barcelona et al, 2011, p. 127-128):

1. Understands and applies basic child and adolescent development principles.
2. Communicates and develops positive relationships with youth.
3. Adapts, facilitates, and evaluates age-appropriate activities with and for the group.
4. Respects and honors cultural and human diversity.
5. Involves and empowers youth.
6. Identifies potential risk factors and takes measures to reduce those risks.
7. Cares for, involves, and works with families and communities.
8. Works as part of a team and shows professionalism.
9. Demonstrates the attributes and qualities of a positive role-model.
10. Interacts with and relates to youth in ways that support asset building.

These competencies can be used to develop staff who work with youth and can be used to identify any gaps in the staff's abilities (Barcelona et al., 2011).

The United Nations created a document that promotes purposeful engagement practices and relationships with youth (United Nations, 2021). Purposeful engagement practices look like investing in youth-friendly resources, spaces and processes, respecting

youth as knowledge keeps and contributors to society, and allowing youth to choose their areas of engagement and participation (United Nations, 2021). Furthermore, adults who work with youth play not only a vital role in the leadership of youth but also in the shaping of youth services and the advocacy of their rights and importance in the community (United Nations, 2021).

Overview of How the Success of these Services is Being Measured

There are multiple different ways to measure program outcomes and success and different municipalities measure their programs using different tools. The Youth Outcome Battery (YOB) is one tool that is mentioned for youth staff to measure their youth programs' outcomes (Sibthorpe et al., 2013). The YOB is a tool that can help youth serving organizations evaluate their program goals and determine how their youth are developing skills and assets (American Camp Association, 2019). This tool was created with the idea of providing youth service providers with the necessary tool to determine their impacts on their participants and to create more robust and better-serving programs where their efforts can be validated (Sibthorpe et al., 2013).

The YOB works by measuring eleven common youth outcomes that can be developed or achieved during youth programs or camps (American Camp Association, 2013). These eleven outcomes are as follows (American Camp Association, 2013):

1. Friendship Skills
2. Independence
3. Teamwork (i.e., become more effective when working in groups of their peers)
4. Family Citizenship
5. Perceived Competence
6. Interest in Exploration
7. Responsibility
8. Affinity for Nature
9. Problem-Solving Confidence
10. Camp Connectedness
11. Spiritual Well Being

The YOB was created in a survey type format where youth are expected to rate their experience developing the above eleven outcomes (American Camp Association, 2013). The data that is collected from the YOB can be entered into a spreadsheet or other form of data

entry template and can then be compiled to create statistics and measurements of the youth's experience in programs and camps and their levels of development per outcome (American Camp Association, 2013).

Gaps or Challenges that Exist within the Delivery of Youth Recreation Services

Within recreation, there exist challenges and gaps in services that can impede the overall success of positively impacting the community. In the matter of youth services, certain research suggests that there is an absence of capable staff to create opportunities for youth to develop these transferable skills and experience success in youth recreation programs due to insufficient training or knowledge of youth development (Barcelona, et al., 2011). Furthermore, staff development efforts must adapt to “move beyond activity-centered approaches that focus on a narrow range of outcomes toward a more youth-centered approach” (Barcelona, et al., 2011, p. 123). Moreover, these approaches must look at recreation as a mode to delivering positive developmental outcomes where youth are involved in the process (Barcelona, et al., 2011). It is also propounded that “poorly structured activities (attract) youth with both social and academic problems” and that regular participation in these programs were associated with higher rates of juvenile delinquency (Witt & Caldwell, 2010, p. 17). Furthermore, there exists challenges in leveraging a community's social capital, human capital, and organizational resources to collectively solve the problems that exist within this infrastructure (Mannes, 2005).

The PEAK (Promoting Esteem Among Kids) Mentorship Program, in partnership with the National Parks and Recreation Association (NRPA) and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention is one example of how staff who serve youth are working towards creating better connections with them (Reece, 2023). The PEAK Mentorship Program strives to connect youth with staff to create opportunities for youth to build healthy relationships with adult mentors (Reece, 2023). Although this program specifically targets youth impacted by substance use, it was developed with the idea in mind that the practices and initiatives can be implemented in a multitude of different recreation environments (Reece, 2023).

The Vancouver Parks Board also talks about the challenge of creating impactful programming for youth and including them in the conversation. The VPB wants to move away from simply programming and marketing their services and anticipating that youth show up and instead pivot their efforts towards approaching youth where they are (BCRPA,

2017). This article highlights the ongoing issue of creating appropriate and engaging programs for youth that have an impact on their lives.

Areas of Controversy

Measuring the intended outcomes of youth programs can be challenging to do. There are different approaches that can be taken to do so, and these approaches can rely on statistical data or anecdotal data such as testimonials. The controversy then lies in which type of measurement or output is more beneficial to look at to measure program success and improve on services. Many youth-centered organizations and municipalities will focus and rely on data such as program registration numbers or the number of programs offered for youth to measure success as opposed to documenting what happened to youth because of the programs (Witt & Caldwell, 2010). This topic of controversy remains unanswered across different literature.

Gaps in Literature

Many of the resources on the topic of youth participation in recreation differ in their definition of what age is considered a youth and some research does not state an age at all. There exists research that considers youth to start from the age of 10 and end at the age of 30. This can make it challenging to determine where the youth ages 13-18 fit in and what transferable skills are being developed by this specific age range.

In addition, some research spoke about employing partnerships with other youth serving organizations or services to help serve the youth population.

Best Practices

Using an approach where youth play a facilitative role is common recommendation across much of the literature on this topic (Agans, et al., 2014; Barcelona et al., 2011; Bonnell & Zizys, 2005; Government of British Columbia, n.d; Hamilton & Hamilton, 2004). Youth who are involved in the program planning process can identify their interests, learn leadership skills, and can even act as outreach staff to recruit more youth (Bonnell & Zizys, 2005). The Government of British Columbia has a *Youth Engagement Toolkit Resource Guide* that was created with consultation from the Ministry of Children and Family Development, The University of Victoria and youth themselves. Within this guide, they outline the best ways of serving youth and highlight youth engagement in planning as a crucial step to serving them (Government of British Columbia, n.d). The toolkit applies a

community-based research and evaluation approach wherein youth and adults work collaboratively to create and share information pertaining to this topic (Government of British Columbia, 2013). The toolkit lays out the benefits of youth engagement for youth, adults, and organizations, offers guidance on how to use the toolkit, shares frameworks and foundations for approaching youth engagement, and highlights the “dos” and don’ts” on how to build meaningful relationships with youth.

The British Columbia Recreation and Parks Association is another example of an organization who operates as a leading standard in the field of recreation and provides current best practices and information on the topic of community service. BCRPA’s Empower YOUTH conference is one example of a professional development opportunity for staff who work in the field of youth services. Empower YOUTH is a biennial conference offered for professionals who work with youth and youth programming and attendees learn about “promising practices, leading edge programs, new tools, resources and approaches to youth programming, and critical services that can support their daily work” (BCRPA, n.d). Municipalities who send their staff to this conference can help them build on their core competencies and learn about the best practices in the industry to report back to their communities and implement into their programs. Empower YOUTH is a great tool to use to align recreation organizations with the current strategies that are consistent with the ideals of high-quality recreation experiences. Not only do recreation professionals get to network with one another, they also get to see how other youth-centered organizations or services are serving their patrons and increasing their likelihood of benefiting from recreation.

Lastly, many different municipalities develop youth strategies or frameworks which help to guide them when making decisions for this demographic. These strategies often feature data and statistics on the youth in their community and offer suggestions and recommendations for improvements or developments based on feedback from community members. This offers municipalities a more comprehensive and accurate snapshot of their youth demographic. The City of Richmond’s Youth Services Plan is one example of a guiding document that helps staff in this municipality shape their youth services and measure their progress. Within the strategy, they outline their goals, action plan and their implementation process and provide data on the current participation of youth and the opportunities that exist for this demographic (City of Richmond, 2020). The City of Richmond first created the Youth Strategy in 1995 and then developed this strategy into their Youth Service Plan in 2005 and was adopted by City Council (City of Richmond, 2020). This document has provided staff with the direction and information on how to enhance youth

experiences in their community for 18 years and continues to be developed and utilized in the City of Richmond.

Summary

Research indicates that there are various transferable life-skills that youth develop through regular participation in municipal recreation. These skills range from self-efficacy, responsibility, teamwork, and independence and they are mostly rooted in social and emotional development. The transferability of these skills then lies in the suggestion that youth who develop them are more capable of interacting with their communities and can create a more positive outlook on their lives, thus experiencing higher rates of success in their endeavors. However, for recreation professionals to deliver the necessary resources and environment for youth to develop these skills, the programs must be youth focused, intentional, and the staff delivering them must be capable and competent. Moreover, youth recreation services must give youth a key role in the shaping of these opportunities.

Methodology

Three different methods of primary research were employed to help determine what transferable skills youth develop through participation in municipal recreation and how the City of Richmond is creating opportunities for youth to do so. Please refer to Appendix 2A and 2B for observation details and 3A, 3B and 3C content analysis findings.

Interviews

Interviews provide relevant and in-depth information on the topic of youth development in recreation within Richmond. Speaking directly with staff who work with youth provides information on the current climate of youth culture and trends and provides insight into the challenges and opportunities that exist within this scope of recreation.

Interviews were conducted via Zoom or in person with two Youth Development Coordinators, one Youth Outreach Worker, one Volunteer Development Coordinator, one Program Lead and one Program Manager, Child Care and Youth. Each staff member was chosen to be interviewed for this research due to their level of experience in the field and the diversity of their roles. The staff were contacted via email to inform them of this research project and to request interviews. Once staff were interested and confirmed to participate, meeting invites were sent out. Each interviewee was introduced to the research topic and

question and the importance of this topic to the researcher. Ten different open ended and unbiased questions were asked, and answers were recorded via voice notes as well as written.

Various Youth Staff were chosen based on the diversity of their roles and their experience working with youth. Each position differed from the last in their interactions with youth and their roles in developing youth services. For example, Youth Development Coordinators are responsible for working directly with youth in a community center setting, creating programs and facilitating services for youth as well as overseeing staff who lead their programs. These staff were able to bring the perspective from a front-line staff who works and interacts directly with youth. The Youth Outreach Worker also works closely with youth in the Media Lab. This staff oversees the Richmond Youth Media Program as well as facilitating and supporting multiple youth councils and advisory committees. This staff was able to share their experience and perspective on working in such a unique position within the city and how their work with the Media Lab impacts youth. The Volunteer Coordinator creates and markets volunteer opportunities for youth as well as supports staff across Richmond in managing their volunteers. This staff was able to share their experience with working with youth in a volunteer-based environment where youth are working in a more professional scope. The Program Lead for Youth works out of City Hall and works on bigger picture projects such as the creation of the Youth Strategy as well as other city-wide initiatives. Lastly, the Program Manager, Child Care and Youth works with the Community Social Development Team, and primarily works on creating strategies and frameworks, and determining what kinds of policies or development practices the city should adopt or create to ensure the safety, and health of youth. These two staff were able to provide their perspectives on the youth strategies and initiatives in place as well as what it is like to support youth from a behind the scenes scope.

Interview Details

Interview 1 - Wing Ho (Volunteer Coordinator) via Zoom

Date: Thursday, February 9th at 4:30pm.

Interview 2 - Omar Rajan (Youth Development Coordinator) in-person

Date: February 17th at 6:00pm.

Interview 3 - Michael Patrick (Youth Development Coordinator) via Zoom

Date: February 21st at 5:00pm

Interview 4 - Mia Mascarina (Youth Outreach Worker) via Zoom

Date: February 27th at 5:30pm.

Interview 5 - Joyce Dieudonne (Program Lead, Youth) via Zoom.

Date: February 28th at 4:30pm.

Interview 6 - Chris Duggen (Program Manager, Child Care and Youth) via Zoom.

Date: February 28th at 4:30pm.

General Public Observations

Three different programs and one volunteer event were observed throughout the duration of this research. Each youth program differs from the last with two being unstructured (drop-in), one being instructor-led and one being a volunteer opportunity where the youth were interacting with their community in a different capacity. This method of research offered insight into the inner workings of the programs and services and how youth interact with staff and their programs. Youth participation was also observed to determine what skills they are developing, how the staff were interacting with the youth and how successful these programs are in achieving organizational goals of developmental outcomes. The one challenge that was anticipated for this method of research was a lack of participants present to provide accurate and substantial information on how youth interact in programs. However, participant numbers cannot be controlled by the researcher and the abundance or lack of participants can provide information on how these programs are impacting youth.

The Youth Development Coordinators from two different centers were contacted to request a General Public Observation of their youth programs and volunteer opportunities. Once these observation requests were approved, the instructors of these programs were informed by the Youth Development Coordinator that a General Public Observation would be taking place. The programs that were observed were: Family Day event at Steveston Community Centre, the PAINT program at Cambie Community Centre (People for Acceptance Not just Tolerance), registered Youth Volleyball program at Cambie Community Centre, and the Youth Hangout drop-in program at Cambie Community Centre.

Secondly, an observation checklist was created prior to observing these programs and volunteer opportunities. The checklist was created using the 40 Developmental Assets as a guiding framework for assets and skills that can be developed through participation in recreation. The secondary research for this project revealed that this framework was often used to guide the work of many different youth serving organizations and therefore, was included as in the observations. The programs were also observed for their structure (i.e., duration of program, youth led, or instructor led, attendance and record keeping, measurement of outcomes), and the ways in which youth and staff engage with one another.

Again, secondary research touched on the importance of structure in youth programming and the importance of giving youth a role in the planning and facilitation of programs and services. Therefore, structure and observation of how youth are involved in the program from a facilitator role were added to the observation checklist. Field notes were recorded to report on the interactions of youth in the program and observations of skills being developed.

The programs that were observed were chosen based on their variance in structure and theme (i.e., drop-in, instructor-led sports, social/creative and volunteerism). Field notes were taken during the program and youth were observed but not interacted with.

Please refer to Appendix 1A for interview details, and 1B for interview questions.

Content Analysis

This method of research gave more insight into the statistics of youth engagement within the City of Richmond as well as the current youth strategies and frameworks that exist to help guide recreation professionals in serving this demographic. Analysis of youth strategies and frameworks provides information on the municipality's current approach to youth development and provides insight on the themes, patterns, challenges, opportunities, and best practices that are present. Comparisons, contrasts, and recommendations were highlighted within each piece of content to provide a more robust understanding of youth development.

A content analysis tracking sheet was created to determine which areas of the documents were going to be analyzed and against which measurements. The documents were analyzed to identify the intentions, focus or communication trends of the organization, reveal similarities and/or differences in the communication method or approach of content, and determine how municipal recreation is serving youth and to what capacity it is doing so.

The City of Richmond's Youth Strategy was analyzed first to determine how the municipality structure their youth programs and services and what their approach to youth development looks like. This then led to their program guides being analyzed to determine how the municipality was reaching out to their youth demographic and what sorts of programs and services were being offered because of their approach. The Government of British Columbia's Youth Engagement Toolkit Resource Guide was analyzed to determine what best practices currently exist within the province and which of these best practices are being used in the City of Richmond. This comparative analysis provided more information on how the topic of youth development is being approached throughout the province and how aligned each municipality is. Lastly, the City of Richmond's Sport and Recreation Strategy

was analyzed to determine its content on youth specific services and data. Please refer to Appendix 3A for content analysis details and 3B for checklist.

Research Findings and Analysis

Youth Learn About Their Influence in Their Community

Recreation services in all capacities offer youth an opportunity to learn life-skills such as how to build healthy relationships with adults, how to build confidence, how to access resources, and how to navigate their community. There are also development skills that youth achieve from participating in recreation that solely revolve around navigating complex problems in their society. For example, Joyce Dieudonne spoke about how the Youth Civic Engagement program allows youth to determine an issue or challenge that is being presented in their community and create a case to present to a mock council to bring that issue to attention (Dieudonne J., personal communication, 2023). These issues or challenges can range from bike theft to environmental conservation. Through these interactions and building of skills, the youth also learn about their influence in the community. This key finding created a new perspective on the capacity at which youth develop in programs and expands the opportunities that exist in the realm of recreation. The City of Richmond's Youth staff expressed their determination and passion towards developing youth through all different channels and services and stressed the importance that participation in recreation has on a youth that moves beyond learning how to shoot a basketball or communicate respectfully. The staff appear to be very engaged in their youth and present new perspectives on the challenges and trends that exist in this area of recreation.

For example, Chris Duggen, the City of Richmond's Program Manager for Children and Youth brought up the topic of the COVID-19 pandemic and how it created many challenges in recruiting and retaining youth. She discussed how the pandemic significantly impacted the development of youth and she said that youth are at the time in their development where they are expanding their horizons and exploring who they are and what impacts they want to have on the world (Duggen C., personal communication, 2023). The pandemic created barriers to youth accessing the necessary programs and resources to explore their world and learn these crucial skills (Duggen C., personal communication, 2023). Now that in-person programming is regenerating, youth are looking for opportunities to experience the development they missed out on during the pandemic (Duggen C., personal communication, 2023). Therefore, the City of Richmond's Youth staff are looking for new

ways to engage youth and provide them with the tools, resources, and support to develop new skills, exercise their influence on the community and create impacts in their society (Duggen C., personal communication, 2023). This reflects the level of engagement that staff have in the development of youth and their dedication to ensuring youth have a healthy and happy life.

Environment and Staff are Key Components to Successful Programming

In terms of program environment and staffing, youth seem to gravitate towards programs where the staff are engaging with them in a healthy and equal way. The City of Richmond refers to their staff who lead the youth programs as Youth Development Leaders. These Youth Development Leaders in each program were engaged with the youth and the youth appeared to be quite comfortable with talking to the staff about their issues at school or home. The PAINT program and the Volleyball program were two observations that solidified this key finding. The PAINT program is a drop-in program that runs every Thursday from 4-6pm. The program was created four years ago by the youth and Youth Development Coordinator. The program is open to youth who wish to socialize and take part in weekly activities in a safe and accepting environment. The program does not have a very strict or comprehensive structure and acts as more of a social space for youth to use.

The staff in both programs were welcoming to the youth and conducted a check-in with the youth as they arrived to assess their needs and to allow them to set their intentions for the program. This observation in conjunction with interviews with staff revealed that staff play a vital role in the recruitment, retention, and development of youth. This key finding from the observations connected to a key finding in the literature review where multiple different authors spoke about the importance of a strong staff team when serving youth. The staff that were observed in programs were devoted to helping their participants develop in all areas of their skills. The youth and the staff shared a co-leadership relationship where both parties were equally engaged in programs and responsible for certain aspects of elements of the program design and facilitation. This connects to a point made in the literature on this topic which is that staff who implement youth services have a consequential influence on whether youth experience positive outcomes from participation (Barcelona et al., 2011). These staff can also help youth build healthier perceptions of adults and impact their experiences interacting with adults (Witt & Caldwell, 2010).

Youth Serving Organizations Often Follow the Same Frameworks or Foundations

After analysis of the content on this topic, it was discovered that there exists lots of overlap in content or information included in these documents. For example, the 40 Developmental Assets are referenced in two of the City of Richmond's youth-centered documents and are used in a way that helps inform the directions and actions of the organization. Another example is that many of the resources use the words development, opportunity, support, and engagement and operationalize them in similar ways. There exist many similarities between documents on this topic as well as a clear objective for supporting this demographic. Similarly, another common theme was the inclusion of input from community stakeholders, partners, parents, and youth themselves. All the documents analyzed included input and suggestions from those directly impacted by these programs and services and this created a sense of inclusion and voice to the documents.

Overall, each document on youth within a municipal setting and context follows similar themes and best practices and takes similar approaches to creating positive changes in this area of recreation and sharing information on the importance of continuing to build on youth services.

Recommendations

Redesign the Focus and Intention of Programs and Services

As the City of Richmond's youth community changes and evolves, it is important to redefine what their focus and intentions are for serving this population. The City of Richmond should focus on redefining what a healthy and happy youth demographic looks like and how the changing needs of the youth are being heard and taken into consideration. The existing Youth Strategy and Youth Services Plan aims to determine the status of their youth and how their initiatives and strategies are being received. However, it would be beneficial for the Youth staff who work directly with this group to become more involved with the creation of the framework and provide pertinent and relevant information on the youth demographic from a municipal recreation standpoint.

Although the strategy is widely used and commended, there are always going to be new trends, challenges and opportunities that arise where youth staff and decision makers alike must consider and incorporate into their frameworks. For example, the Youth Strategy is updated every 10 years or so. The City of Richmond should instead create a framework that is updated every 2-4 years to ensure that the information they are providing is up to date and relevant to the field.

Create more Youth Focused Events and Outings

The City of Richmond offers a few youth events and programs that include things such as the U-ROC Awards (Richmond Outstanding Community), an awards ceremony for youth who have demonstrated dedication to the community through volunteerism or other acts, and certain youth councils and clubs that participate in outings to arenas or rock-climbing facilities (City of Richmond, n.d). However, the City of Richmond should explore opportunities for more social and networking forward events and outings for youth where they can interact and connect with youth from across the city in social or professional ways, explore new areas of Richmond or other municipalities, and try new activities that may not be offered through municipal recreation settings. For example, the Canadian Mental Health Association has a program called UROK (Urban Resilience Opportunities for Kids). This program offers youth ages 13-18 struggling with mental health challenges a safe and social setting to participate in community recreation activities (Canadian Mental Health Association, n.d). The program also provides opportunities for youth to connect with one another and promotes a peer support network (Canadian Mental Health Association, n.d). Programs like UROK enable youth to explore recreation and different communities in a healthy and positive setting and try new activities that they otherwise may never have known about. The City of Richmond should create a similar program for youth where youth from all over the community can meet once or twice a month and go on outings around Richmond as well as outside the municipality. This will enable youth to explore their world, network and socialize with other youth, and learn more about the benefits of being active and engaged.

Enhance Staff Training

Currently, the City of Richmond does not require any formal education or prior training to work with youth in any capacity. Although certain degrees in the field of youth development or social work are encouraged, they are not mandatory. The training/workshops that are required of staff once they receive the position are first aid and HIGH Five Principles of Healthy Child Development. Instead, many of the staff who work closely with youth within the City of Richmond either possess lived or gained experiences from working directly with youth. Although those staff do portray a fair amount of knowledge and expertise when it comes to working with youth and facilitating youth development, it would be beneficial for existing staff and new hires to participate in professional development courses that pertain specifically to youth development. This would also enable the City of Richmond to keep their

staff accountable for keeping up to date with best practices and ensure that all staff are trained equally and can serve youth appropriately and impactfully.

One suggestion is to provide mandatory training for staff that work with youth that focuses on teaching them the basic foundations of healthy youth development as well as how to create and facilitate the necessary opportunities for youth to experience this development. For example, BCRPA's Empower YOUth conference offers those who work with youth an opportunity to network with other youth staff, learn about best practices, and take workshops on specific themes and topics pertaining to youth development and health (British Columbia Recreation and Parks Association, n.d). This conference should be mandatory for staff to attend so that they are kept up to date with the field of youth recreation and development and can network with one another and bond as a team. Another example of a beneficial workshop would be the Positive Youth Development 101 Training course offered by ACT for Youth (Assets Coming Together). This course is an orientation to positive youth development for those who work with and for youth (ACT, n.d). The curriculum includes five different sections:

- Theoretical Foundation of PYD and Adolescent Development
- Positive Youth Development Outcomes
- Youth Voice and Engagement
- Youth Development Programming
- Youth Worker Competencies

These mandatory courses would enable the City of Richmond to better gauge the education and experience of their staff who work with this ever-changing demographic and will help to enhance the staff's understanding of youth development.

Create Methods to Retain and Maintain Relationships with Youth Volunteers

The benefits of volunteerism are vast and impact any age group, especially youth. These benefits range from finding confidence in one's abilities and strengths, to feeling empowered to develop oneself (Liu, et al., 2009). Volunteering also offers youth the opportunity to build or enhance social relationships, and interactions with individuals, groups, organizations, and their communities (Cosmin-Nicolae, & Georgiana-Mihaela, 2020).

The City of Richmond includes in their vision statement that they strive to "enhance the City's livability and economic well-being for current and future generations through "visionary leadership and community consultation (City of Richmond, n.d). Therefore, the

city would benefit from exploring strategies to help enhance relationships with volunteers where youth staff or Volunteer Coordinators can stay in contact with volunteers and continue to monitor the positive impacts that volunteerism has had on the youth. This initiative or strategy can create a more comprehensive objective and framework within the Youth Strategy that focuses on encouraging youth to become long term volunteers. This framework or foundation can be created with consultation with Youth staff, Volunteer Coordinators, and volunteers. The framework or foundation would also include statistics on youth volunteerism, the current youth volunteer opportunities and their intended outcomes for youth's development and would include strategies for engaging these opportunities and relationships and retaining these volunteers to build competent and strong leaders in the community and life-long dedicators to the community.

Explore More Opportunities to Connect with Youth Who Are Experiencing Social Challenges

The City of Richmond offers external services for youth who are experiencing certain social challenges such as homelessness, abuse, mental health challenges, etc. Examples of these services are Foundry, an organization that offers youth ages 12-24 sexual health consultations and tests, mental health care, substance use services, physical healthcare, youth and family peer support, and social services (Foundry, n.d). There is also the Touchstone Family Association's RESET Youth Team. This service, in partnership with the Richmond School District, offers youth ages 13-19 with programs and services that aim to support them in their education, development and relationships (Touchstone Family Association, n.d.). The services they offer range from family counseling, group work, school support, and advocacy (Family Touchstone Association, n.d.). Lastly, there is the Richmond Addictions Services Society which offers support for youth ages 12-24 who are dealing with substance abuse and mental health challenges (Richmond Addiction Services Society, n.d).

However, when it comes to serving these populations in a municipal recreation setting, there are few strategies or initiatives in place. Municipal recreation mainly offers programs that are focused on sports, art, socializing and professional development. The City of Richmond should investigate expanding their partnerships with these existing organizations and offer more of these sexual health talks or mental health talks or programs in community centers. In addition, the community centers and youth staff can investigate redesigning their approach to accessibility and support and determine how they are serving these at-risk populations and how best to approach those dealing with these challenges who

may not be aware of the services available to them or how to access them. This initiative would help bridge the gap between the City of Richmond's youth services and those in need and would enable the City of Richmond to create a more comprehensive and impactful youth services network.

Create a Developmental Framework or Guidelines for Programs and Services

The City of Richmond's youth services sector should create a framework that outlines the most crucial skills that can be developed in each area of community recreation and volunteerism and use this to measure the youth service's success as well as the successful development and satisfaction of their youth. This framework can look different depending on the type of program or service (i.e., volunteer opportunity vs. youth council vs. drop-in programs) but will ultimately determine and measure the most developed skills in that program or service. Staff can use this framework to help guide their efforts to enrich their programs and help provide more direction on how to structure their program to maximize the potential for youth development and satisfaction. This framework can be developed in collaboration with other staff who work with youth and can be modified where needed as new programs are created.

This framework can provide staff with a clear foundation for how to structure each type of program and will enable staff to measure the success of these programs more accurately in developing certain skills in youth.

Conclusion

Through the review of scholarly research on this topic as well as through primary research such as interviews, observations, and content analysis, it has been determined that municipal recreation plays a vital role in the healthy development of youth. Through participation in drop-in sports, registered programs, social clubs, youth councils and volunteer opportunities, youth gain a multitude of new skills, and abilities. The transferable skills that youth gain from participating in recreation range from social-emotional skills such as communication, conflict resolution and building healthy relationships to professional development skills such as leadership, organization, and time management. In addition, youth also develop a sense of positive self-esteem and view of their community. Youth can become a vital part of the shaping of their community through this participation in recreational activities and can create their own impacts on their community by learning more about how the city works and how decisions are made.

The key components for a successful youth services foundation are involved and engaged staff, developmentally appropriate and engaging programs, the involvement of youth in the planning process of these programs and services, and the continued support of youth serving programs. These components are essential to the health and success of a youth serving organization and must be constantly re-assessed to determine where certain challenges, issues or opportunities exist.

It is evident that youth are a vital component of every community and that, given the proper resources and support from their community, possess the potential for influencing their environment and creating a more equitable and healthy community. Therefore, it is important to consider how municipal recreation continues to serve them and in what capacity they can grow to significantly impact their lives and wellbeing.

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Appendix

1A. Interview Details

Interview 1 - Wing Ho (Volunteer Coordinator) via Zoom

Date: Thursday, February 9th at 4:30pm.

Interview 2 - Omar Rajan (Youth Development Coordinator) in-person

Date: February 17th at 6:00pm.

Interview 3 - Michael Patrick (Youth Development Coordinator) via Zoom

Date: February 21st at 5:00pm

Interview 4 - Mia Mascarina (Youth Outreach Worker) via Zoom

Date: February 27th at 5:30pm.

Interview 5 - Joyce Dieudonne (Program Lead, Youth) via Zoom.

Date: February 28th at 4:30pm.

Interview 6 - Chris Duggen (Program Manager, Child Care and Youth) via Zoom.

Date: February 28th at 4:30pm.

1B. Question Guides

1. What is your position? In what capacity do you work with youth?
2. What is your experience in this topic area?
3. Do you think youth benefit from participating in recreation? In what ways?
4. What sorts of things do youth learn or gain from participating in recreation?
5. What has been your role so far in developing programs or services for youth?
6. What are some of the tools you use to measure the success of these programs in developing youth?
7. What are some of the current challenges you face when programming for youth? How do you deal with these challenges?
8. What are some of the opportunities that you believe exist in this area of recreation?
9. What sort of training or workshops are offered or required of staff who work with you?
10. How do you keep up to date with youth culture?

(For Volunteer Coordinator)

1. What is your position? In what capacity do you work with youth?
2. What is your experience in this topic area?
3. Do you think youth benefit from volunteering in their community? In what ways?
4. What sorts of things do youth learn or gain from volunteering?
5. What has been your role so far in developing volunteer opportunities for youth?
6. How many youth typically volunteer per month? Per year?
7. What types of volunteer opportunities are the most popular amongst youth?

8. What are some of the tools you use to measure the success of these opportunities in developing skills in youth?
9. What are some of the current challenges you face when recruiting youth volunteers? How do you deal with these challenges?
10. What are some of the opportunities that you believe exist in this area of volunteerism for youth?

1C. Interview Transcripts

All interview notes were edited for clarity and are not verbatim. However, the transcript accurately reflects the interviewees answers.

Interview #1

Date and time of Interview

Thursday, February 9th, 2023 at 4:30pm.

Person Interviewed

Wing Ho - Volunteer Coordinator

Location interviewed

Via Zoom.

Transcript

1. Wing is the Volunteer Development Coordinator for the City of Richmond. He is responsible for supporting staff in recruiting and managing volunteers and teaching them how to use the volunteer management system canhelp. In addition, lot's of parents reach out to Wing to help them set up volunteer opportunities for their children.
2. Wing says that youth are among the most prevalent volunteers in the City of Richmond. He says that he saw the growth that youth volunteers do through regular volunteering.
3. From a city wide event perspective, usually youth who volunteer get to deal with people (customer service, communication skills, learn how to interact with people outside of their inner circle). He says that the more exposure youth get from taking on volunteer opportunities, the more they develop their skills.
4. Wing says that youth gain organisational skills from volunteering. He says that due to the nature of certain volunteer opportunities (i.e. Salmon Festival, Culture Days, Remembrance Day), youth get to use their talents and problem solving skills to solve issues on sight. They are also supported by staff which also helps them learn leadership. Wing says that the library program also helps youth volunteers interact with children which teaches them how to interact

with other age groups. The intergenerational programs for youth and seniors is also a great opportunity for youth to learn how to teach seniors how to do a certain task or learn a new skill (i.e. teaching them how to use a smartphone). He says that municipal recreation offers youth the most exposure to their community and learning new skills.

5. His role is more rooted in assisting centres in developing their volunteer opportunities for youth. He offers guidance to centres and staff on how to support youth and cater to the volunteers needs and development. Helps also helps staff develop new ways of communicating with youth in volunteer environments.
6. In 2022 there were 736 youth volunteers out of 1174 volunteers total. Youth contributed 20,092 hours which is almost half of the total volunteer hours for that year.
7. Summer Camps are the most popular because youth get the most volunteer hours (30+), and special events are second most popular and lastly are seasonal programs.
8. Usually Wing reports on youth volunteer engagement in summer camps as this is the most common and popular volunteer opportunity for youth and they spend the most time volunteering in these positions.
9. One challenge is dealing with parents who volunteer their child for events or opportunities. Wing says that a youth's Personal development can be diminished if the youth is working with their siblings or in a position or environment that might not be the best fit for their abilities or interests. He says that often parents will request to have their children volunteer together in opportunities that do not match their abilities.
10. Wing says that the City of Richmond should explore a volunteer policing program where youth can volunteer with the RCMP or Richmond Fire. He says that it would be beneficial for youth to be exposed to social justice, safety protocols and systems as well as the justice system. He believes that these types of volunteer opportunities can help deter youth from delinquency.

Interview #2

Date and time of Interview

Friday, February 17th, 2023 at 6:00pm.

Person Interviewed

Omar Rajan

Location interviewed

In-person at Cambie Community Centre.

Transcript

1. Omar is the Youth Development Coordinator for the East Richmond Community Association working out of the Cambie Community Centre. He programs and oversees Youth and Preteen programs and oversees youth volunteers and special events for youth. He offers a wide range of programs ranging from the arts, dance, social clubs and their most popular programs, sports. He developed the Youth Taking Charge youth council. One of his main goals is to help develop youth into leaders and give them the necessary resources and support to learn new skills and try new things. He also has staff on his team that used to volunteer and participate in youth programs. One important aspect of working with youth that Omar wants to make clear is that Youth Development Coordinators and other staff who work with youth are not social workers, they are just there to support youth.
2. His experience was mostly gained on the job. He also holds a degree in political science which has helped shape his philosophy around youth. He has also worked as a one on one support worker with youth who have cognitive impairments or mental health challenges.
3. Omar says that he most definitely believes that youth benefit from regular participation in recreation. He believes they learn healthy socialization through programs, and have access to positive mentors. This can help youth build a sense of belonging in their community, and a sense of ownership of their community. When it comes to specific programs such as sports, Omar wants youth to see sports as not something that is competitive but as something that is fun and where they can create new relationships and improve their health. He wants to emphasize the importance of developing youth in healthy ways and not making them into perfect people. Has experienced first hand the impacts of recreation as a youth and gives credit to his municipal recreation outlets and programs for a multitude of his skills and abilities.
4. He believes youth learn how to communicate, and build on their instructional skills, and healthy youth development skills. Youth also get to learn how to work with different age groups, and develop administrative skills (budgeting for programs, keeping attendance, risk management), and people skills.
5. Omar has established Youth Taking Charge which is Steveston Community Centre's youth council. The council mainly focuses on social justice issues like fundraising and creating healthier and happier communities. Omar ultimately wanted to give youth the power to create their own programs and services and create a difference in their community. In terms of other programs such as art, sports and other social clubs, Omar took a youth facilitated approach where participants planned and budgeted for their own programs in order to see what steps go behind the program planning process etc. Omar also finds grant funding for programs to add more to his services.
6. Omar wants his youth to feel comfortable in programs and wants to eliminate any expectation for youth to always be super engaged or developing new skills. Omar says that he "just wants

them to be happy and healthy”. Sometimes Omar will use surveys to ask youth about the impacts of these programs or services at the end of a set of sessions or a season. He says that it is challenging to measure statistics of youth engagement and development and that testimonials and stories are the most tangible and meaningful feedback he gets.

7. Omar says that there is an unwillingness for youth to commit to registered multi-week programs due to financial barriers, a lack of commitment, or lack of time. In addition, Omar says that the majority of his programs rely on grant funding to run and that he sometimes struggles to find funding to run all of the programs that the youth are interested in. Marketing for youth is another challenge, but social media has been the best way to market to this age group.
8. He says there are endless opportunities when it comes to youth programming. Youth are “the testing ground for recreation in a lot of ways and they kind of forced us to really think about things in different ways”. Many of Omar’s programs were requested by youth and the youth had the opportunity to help develop them. However, the challenge with taking the requests of youth is keeping it low cost or no cost and trying to keep programs and requests realistic.
9. Required = First Aid CPR level C and AED, HighFive. Staff are responsible for finding the workshops or training they believe will develop them professionally. Once a staff has a workshop or training in mind, they must get approval from their supervisor. Many of these workshops and training are usually paid for by the East Richmond Association. However, planning for and offering these workshops and training for staff requires a lot of budgetary planning to work around and fit into a budget. Omar says the Internet Safety training workshop was a really helpful one that was offered at the Empower YOUTH conference.
10. Social media and being in programs with youth and creating those connections really allows for Omar to keep his finger on the pulse. Youth Coordinators have the biggest opportunities to engage with their participants in relation to other Coordinators. Often Omar will facilitate programs instead of hiring a youth development leader to help cut back on costs and to engage with the youth. Many times, during programs the youth will discuss current issues or challenges they face which allows Omar to create those open conversations and program with those challenges or trends in mind.

Interview #3

Date and time of Interview

Tuesday, February 21st, 2023 at 5:00pm

Person Interviewed

Michael Patrick - Youth Coordinator.

Location interviewed

Via Webex.

Transcript

*All interview notes were edited for clarity and are not verbatim. However, the transcript accurately reflects the interviewees answers.

1. Michael is a Youth Development Coordinator for the Steveston Community Association and works out of the Steveston Community Centre. He creates safe spaces for recreation opportunities and develops programs for Youth and Preteens. He is also a part of the Richmond Youth Council.
2. Michael has a degree in Criminology with focus on prevention of youth in the criminal justice system. He has also worked as a Student Behavioural Support Worker, and a Support Worker for those with mental health issues. He ultimately wants to give youth positive outlets in the form of traditional recreation.
3. Michael says that youth benefit from participation in recreation and he has experienced first hand what recreation can do for youth. Through municipal recreation, Michael has gained resilience and coping mechanisms. He says that recreation is a “safe place to fail”. He adds that female youth specifically benefit from participating in recreation which helps them gain self esteem and reduce their anxiety and depression.
4. Communication, mixes classes and enables youth to engage with different demographics, time management, planning, learning to fail and understanding criticism.
5. Michael applies the Experiential Learning Model into all programs where youth are encouraged to participate, learn, and apply their skills to the real world. Michael also ensures that his staff are properly trained by providing them with opportunities to learn how to effectively work with youth through certain training modules and opportunities.
6. Michael measures the success of his programs by asking the following questions: how much do the youth talk about the program outside of the program and what do they say? Do the same youth keep coming back? Are the youth learning skills? He says that the easiest way to gauge the success of a program from a statistical viewpoint is by looking at the registration numbers.
7. The biggest challenge is space allocation for Steveston and not being directly connected to a school which makes it challenging for youth to walk or get to the centre. He says that it is also challenging to find space for youth programs to take place. The Youth budget is also at a loss for across the city. Despite these challenges, Steveston has supervisors who value youth engagement and want them to have the space to participate in and feel valued and right at home.

8. A big opportunity that exists with youth is innovation. Youth spearhead the changes that everyone follows (i.e. using social media to market). Youth are progressive and have good ideas to improve the community and are beginning to have a bigger role in planning.
9. Required = High 5 is the bare minimum, PIC and First Aid Level C with AED.. Optional = Free BCRPA courses, Sport Canada, and any other related and relevant modules (preferably free). Michael wants to offer mentorship workshops or training to help staff work with youth.
10. Michael remains curious and engaged with youth and asks questions. He says that not a lot has changed since we were teenagers (wanting to fit in, making friends).

Interview #4

Date and time of Interview

Monday, February 27th, 2023 at 5:30pm.

Person Interviewed

Mia Mascarina - Youth Outreach Worker

Location interviewed

Via Zoom.

Transcript

1. Mia is a Youth Outreach Worker and she primarily works out of the Media Lab. Mia says that this position is unique in that there are only two people in this role. Her signature program is the Richmond Youth Media Program. RYMP is a free drop-in program that runs three times a week. Two of these days are focused on building on youth's media arts skills and exposing them to different media art forms. The other day of the week is unstructured and youth can work on independent projects (i.e. try out new skills, do homework, work on creative projects with others). She facilitates this program and also works as a hybrid Recreation Leader and helps out in different departments.
2. Mia started as a Youth Development Leader 3 at City Centre Community Centre. She also has prior experience in the social service sector mostly dealing with children and youth with developmental disabilities. She also works as an Education Assistant and works with ages 13-24.
3. Mia believes that youth benefit from participating in municipal recreation in so many ways. The main one is social development. She says that youth have the opportunity to create "valuable connections in the community" and that recreation is a "great doorway for them to

explore different opportunities and try new things that they might not have had access to or even known about”. Mia says that it is “hard to put a number or value on the impact they make”. She also highlights the impact that recreation such as RYMP has building careers for youth. One example she shares is the paid opportunities that youth can experience from joining RYMP. She says that some youth who pick up certain skills at the media lab while in the program may be hired to help work a community event. The youth also get to keep 100% of the profits. She says that youth who have come out of the RYMP are fully taking on careers in fields that they were exposed to in the media lab.

4. Media lab specific = youth learn skills that are media arts based (coding, filming, instruments), broader = how to create a resume, job hunting, making connections in community, being knowledgeable in the different resources that are offered in Richmond.
5. Mia helps facilitate the Youth Civic Engagement Program. This program is designed for youth who are interested in civic engagement and learning about how municipalities operate. Mia also sits in on the Youth Development Coordinator table where they discuss youth perspectives and topics and bring that to upper management.
6. Mia creates and distributes annual, semi-annual surveys that help keep staff on track in measuring if they are accomplishing what they set out to do and if youth are participating. She also is required to report program attendance and stats to her program funders. The Youth Advisory Board is another channel to connect with youth and provide them with a voice to make their points heard. This board also helps guide their programming (the youth can voice their concerns or challenges or desires).
7. One challenge is that they can never predict attendance. Sometimes youth won’t show up for programs or they will have tons of youth show up. One of the nice things about drop-in programs is that they are low barriers and low commitment. However, this does make it difficult to program certain activities or workshops. One way they combat that is to “shift their mentality to focus on the fact that even one youth came and that is meaningful and they will provide the best they can for that one person as they would the same for 20 youth”. Staffing is also a challenge at the media lab. There are only two staff who run the RYMP and this can make it difficult when a staff member is sick or cannot make their shift. She says that they are open to youth volunteers helping out in programs and they have created a partnership with School District 38 where youth who are looking for volunteer hours can connect with them and help out with programs. Another challenge they face is that they have youth with some developmental delays or disabilities and it's difficult because they don't have the proper support to help that youth.
8. One opportunity for youth is that they are provided with employment opportunities and can become involved in different areas of their community.

9. Required = HIGH FIVE, First Aid CPR Level C, cleared Police Information Check. It is suggested that the Youth Outreach Workers have a degree that is related to youth or social work.
10. Talking to youth and keeping up to date on social media are the best ways to know what youth are into. Their Youth Development Coordinator meetings also are very impactful.

Interview #5

Date and time of Interview

Friday, February 28th, 2023 at 5:00pm.

Person Interviewed

Chris Duggen - Program Manager, Child Care and Youth

Location interviewed

Zoom.

Transcript

1. Chris is the Program Manager for Children and Youth and she works with the Community Social Development Team. She primarily works on creating strategies and frameworks and is currently working on determining what kinds of policies or development practices the City should adopt or create to ensure the safety, and health of youth.
2. Her experience is rooted in child care and her work with youth came into her portfolio through her current position.
3. Chris says that recreation helps youth build life-long healthy habits, and supports their mental health and well-being. Recreation also helps youth develop their relationships with positive adults and these adults act as mentors and model positive development.
4. Chris says that youth learn life-skills such as learning how to talk to others, asking for help, building confidence, learning how to access resources, interacting with others and building healthy relationships. There's a development piece that just revolves around learning how to talk to adults and navigating a complex problem in their society. She says that youth also learn job-related skills such as carrying on a conversation with an adult or those they do not know.
5. She is currently working on the final stages of developing the Youth Strategy. She says that this strategy sets a foundation for the City and all of their partners (library, school district, Foundry, Vancouver Coastal Health) and gives them a guiding focus to ensure they are meeting the diversity of needs that youth have.

6. Chris says that they do not have a standard tool or measurement but the Youth Development Instrument and the Adolescent Health Surveys are two tools that are used to determine how youth are doing in the community health wise.
7. She says that COVID-19 has had a significant impact on the lives of youth. “They are at a time in their development where they are expanding their horizons and the pandemic has impacted this stage”. She says that staff need to pay close attention to youth who have been impacted by the pandemic and the developmental resources and needs they will require as they grow up.
8. “COVID-19 is also an opportunity. Youth are hungry and enthusiastic for anything that is offered in person, in-public, with new people. Youth are finally given the opportunity to try new things and put new programs out to bring youth together in new and different ways”.
9. She was involved with a project with nation-wide service providers on the topic of how to improve mental health and wellbeing in youth. Chris says the benefit of being in this project was hearing about the experiences of different organizations and communities. This enabled Chris to learn about the lived experience of other people and the impacts they have had on youth. “Learning from youth is also a critical component to making informed decisions”.
10. She uses social media as it is a “huge indicator of youth trends and culture”.

Interview #6

Date and time of Interview

Friday, February 28th, 2023 at 5:00pm.

Person Interviewed

Joyce Dieudonne - Program Lead, Youth.

Location interviewed

Zoom.

Transcript

1. Joyce is the Program Lead, Youth. She delivers some programming to youth directly but her work is more planning based.
2. She has an educational background in Social Work specifically in child protection and has experience in working with youth through her position.
3. She says that recreation “keeps youth busy”. Youth get to work with one another and other youth to build relationships and learn about their community.
4. She says that youth learn how to work with others, and learn about themselves. She used to volunteer as a youth and through her experience, she learned about different opportunities in the community.

5. She is deeply involved with the Youth Civic Engagement program which is an 8 week program for youth ages 15-20. Youth get to meet different departments in the city and learn about how the city works. She received an email from a parent expressing her gratitude for the program and the impact it had on her child. Introduces youth to how they can influence their community. Through this program, youth can learn about their influence in the community in all different capacities (i.e. meet staff, connect with like-minded youth, learning admin skills).
6. Same answer as Chris.
7. “Transitioning programs back to in-person and enabling youth to feel comfortable with being in-person again”.
8. She says there is an opportunity to build relationships with youth who are already very engaged in the community and to connect with other serving organizations to learn about their strategies and approaches to youth development. .
9. She is always seeking opportunities to learn and stay up to date with youth information. She signs up for newsletters and talks to colleagues at MCFD to stay informed of best practices, trends, and opportunities and challenges.
10. “Digging into what's out there and talking to youth”. The Youth Civic Engagement Program allows her to do this.

2A. Observation Details

Observation 1 - Family Day Event

Date: February 20th

Location: Steveston Community Centre

Observation 2 - PAINT (People for Acceptance and Inclusion Not just Tolerance)

Date: March 2nd at 5:00pm

Location: Cambie Community Centre

Observation 3 - Youth Volleyball

Date: March 3rd at 5:00pm

Location: Cambie Community Centre

Observation 4 - Youth Hangout

Date: March 3rd at 6:30pm

Location: Cambie Community Centre

2B. Observation Checklist and Field Notes

Looking for ...	Observation	Notes
Are the 40 Developmental Assets being offered or built on		

<p>in programs?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support (Other Adult Relationships). • Empowerment (Community values youth, youth as resources, safety) • Boundaries & Expectations (Adult role models, positive peer experiences) • Constructive Use of Time (Creative activities) • Commitment to Learning (Achievement, motivation) • Positive Values (Caring, equality, integrity, honesty, responsibility, restraint) • Social Competencies (planning and decision making, interpersonal competence, cultural competence, resistance skills, peaceful conflict resolution) • Positive Identity (personal power, self-esteem, sense of purpose, positive view of personal future) (Benson, 2011). 		
<p>Staff Engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How often are the staff interacting with youth? • What role do staff play in the delivery of these services? 		
<p>Youth Engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are they engaging? • What role do youth play in creating the structure of this service or program? 		
<p>Structure of Program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the service or 		

<p>program youth focused?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth led? • Is there a clear goal in mind for the outcomes of this service or program (i.e. learning new skills, socializing, etc.). • How long is the program (per session, per month, per year). • How are staff keeping attendance? • How are staff measuring the success of this program in developing youth? 		
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References - Benson, P. L. (2000) Our Greatest Resource. Parks and Recreation, 35(10), 56.

Observation #1

Date and time of Observation

February 20th, 2023 at 9:30am-11:00am.

Who/what was observed

The Family Day event at Steveston Community Centre featured multiple different activities such as a pancake breakfast, arts and crafts, fun zone and a dance workshop. Each activity was free and families could drop-in as they pleased. Each activity was participant led with some support from the volunteers and staff in that particular zone. The event ran from 9:30am-5pm but was observed only until 11am as the remaining activities and workshops were instructor-led and did not require volunteers.

Location observed

Steveston Community Centre.

Observation Checklist

Looking for ...	Observation
<p>Are the 40 Developmental Assets being offered or built on in programs?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support (Other Adult Relationships). • Empowerment (Community values youth, youth as resources, safety) • Boundaries & Expectations (Adult role models, positive peer experiences) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building positive relationships with adults and making connections with staff who can potentially employ them. • Giving back to their community through dedication of their time and support of activities. • Interacting with community members in

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Constructive Use of Time (Creative activities) ● Commitment to Learning (Achievement, motivation) ● Positive Values (Caring, equality, integrity, honesty, responsibility, restraint) ● Social Competencies (planning and decision making, interpersonal competence, cultural competence, resistance skills, peaceful conflict resolution) ● Positive Identity (personal power, self-esteem, sense of purpose, positive view of personal future) (Benson, 2011). 	<p>a positive and healthy way and going outside their comfort zone.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Exercising responsibility by supervising each activity station and ensuring the safety of their participants. ● The youth are upholding Steveston Community Centre's reputation by being respectful and responsible in their roles. ● Gaining personal power and self esteem by exercising their responsibility and taking on roles where they get to be leaders. ● Learning teamwork and how to collaborate effectively with one another.
<p>Staff Engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How often are the staff interacting with youth? ● What role do staff play in the delivery of these services? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● There were two staff overseeing the volunteers and ensuring they were properly supported. ● One Community Facilities Coordinator was the lead on the kitchen for the breakfast component of the event and the Special Events and Volunteer Coordinator was overseeing the two other programs mainly while also checking in on the breakfast crew.
<p>Youth Engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How are they engaging? ● What role do youth play in creating the structure of this service or program? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Volunteers in the craft zone area seemed to be the least interactive with participants. ● Seems as though the activities that are more active or offer opportunities for the volunteers to play with the children and families are more appealing to the volunteers. ● Volunteers also seem to be partnering up with other youth and working in groups of 2-3. ● Volunteers we're getting participants to sign photo waivers and this builds admin skills and organizational skills.
<p>Structure of Program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Is the service or program youth focused? ● Youth led? ● Is there a clear goal in mind for the outcomes of this service or program (i.e. learning new skills, socializing, etc.). ● How long is the program (per session, per month, per year). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The volunteer opportunity was posted on the City of Richmond's icanhelpp website which is the main website for all volunteer opportunities across Richmond. ● There were 40 volunteers present at this event. ● Each one was assigned a certain area

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are staff keeping attendance? • How are staff measuring the success of this program in developing youth? 	<p>and activity to oversee (Fun Zone, Pancake Breakfast and Arts and Crafts).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Madhav (Special Events and Volunteer Coordinator and the Community Facilities Coordinator were the two main staff overseeing the volunteers. • Youth are taking a lead on many of the activities. • The goal for this volunteer opportunity appears to be building on the youths' leadership skills and exposing them to their community. • Madhav was keeping attendance by signing volunteers in as they arrived.
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References - Benson, P. L. (2000) Our Greatest Resource. Parks and Recreation, 35(10), 56.

Observation #2

Date and time of Observation

March 2nd, 2023 at 5:00pm.

Who/what was observed

The PAINT program is a drop-in program that runs every Thursday from 4-6pm. PAINT stands for People for Acceptance and Inclusion Not just Tolerance. The program was created four years ago by the youth and Youth Development Coordinator. The program is open to youth who wish to socialize and take part in weekly activities in a safe and accepting environment. The program does not have a very strict or comprehensive structure and acts as more of a social space for youth to use.

Location observed

Cambie Community Centre.

Observation Checklist

Looking for ...	Observation
<p>Are the 40 Developmental Assets being offered or built on in programs?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support (Other Adult Relationships). • Empowerment (Community values youth, youth as resources, safety) • Boundaries & Expectations (Adult role models, positive peer experiences) • Constructive Use of Time (Creative activities) • Commitment to Learning (Achievement motivation) • Positive Values (Caring, equality, integrity, honesty, responsibility, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth have the opportunity to build healthy relationships with adult staff. • Youth get to form their own environment where they feel safe and accepted and where they can create and enhance their own community values. • Youth develop social skills by interacting with one another and the staff. • They develop public speaking skills from doing daily check-ins. • They learn how to become caring individuals and build safe spaces for

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> restraint) • Social Competencies (planning and decision making, interpersonal competence, cultural competence, resistance skills, peaceful conflict resolution) • Positive Identity (personal power, self-esteem, sense of purpose, positive view of personal future) (Benson, 2011). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> others in their community. • They become more tolerant of differences in others and become more accepting of themselves. • The youth get to choose and create their own activities for each session and this helps build planning and decision making skills.
<p>Staff Engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How often are the staff interacting with youth? • What role do staff play in the delivery of these services? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The two instructors were checking in with youth as they came into programs and were asking them about their day. • The staff did a round table with the youth (questions included what are your pronouns that you would like to be used in the program, highs and lows of their day, access needs which are what the youth need to feel comfortable, if you could be a cookie what type of cookie would you be). • The instructors consulted the youth on what activities they wished to do today or what kind of environment they wanted to create for today. • The instructors were providing snacks for the youth and starting/facilitating conversations with youth.
<p>Youth Engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are they engaging? • What role do youth play in creating the structure of this service or program? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7 youth attended. • Youth were super engaged with the instructors. • They were mainly having conversations with the staff. • Most of their conversations surrounded school and challenges with teachers.
<p>Structure of Program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the service or program youth focused? • Youth led? • Is there a clear goal in mind for the outcomes of this service or program (i.e. learning new skills, socializing, etc.). • How long is the program (per session, per month, per year). • How are staff keeping attendance? • How are staff measuring the success of this program in developing youth? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The youth chose to focus on homework that day and socializing with one another. • The main goal for this program appears to be offering youth a space to interact with one another and staff in a safe and inclusive space. • Each session of the program starts at 4pm but the youth did not arrive till about 5:15pm as they were busy with other extra curricular activities. • Staff are keeping attendance in a binder with their name, when they arrive and when they leave. This is for safety purposes so that staff can keep track of the youth and if they leave the program.

Observation #3

Date and time of Observation

March 3rd, 2023 at 5:00pm.

Who/what was observed

Youth Volleyball is registered depending on season and usually runs a 5-6 week program offered to youth ages 13-18. This program runs every Friday from 4:45-5:45 pm and is led by two Sport Instructors 2/YDL 1. It is intended that youth will develop skills and socialize with peers. The program is offered in the gymnasium of Cambie Community Centre and is programmed and supervised by the Youth Development Coordinator, Omar Rajan.

Location observed

Cambie Community Centre.

Observation Checklist

Looking for ...	Observation
<p>Are the 40 Developmental Assets being offered or built on in programs?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support (Other Adult Relationships). • Empowerment (Community values youth, youth as resources, safety) • Boundaries & Expectations (Adult role models, positive peer experiences) • Constructive Use of Time (Creative activities) • Commitment to Learning (Achievement motivation) • Positive Values (Caring, equality, integrity, honesty, responsibility, restraint) • Social Competencies (planning and decision making, interpersonal competence, cultural competence, resistance skills, peaceful conflict resolution) • Positive Identity (personal power, self-esteem, sense of purpose, positive view of personal future) (Benson, 2011). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to positive role models. • The staff are interacting with the youth in a positive and uplifting way. • Youth get to play with one another in friendly games. • Staff are checking in with the youth during the program and are using encouraging language which helps build a network of supportive adults and build their self esteem.. • Due to the nature of the games, there is friendly competitiveness and banter which can build on social skills and a positive view of personal future and self. • Many of the youth are encouraging one another as well by using positive language and affirmations. • The youth get to set their own intentions at the beginning of the program and this builds on their decision making skills, interpersonal skills and personal power.
<p>Staff Engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How often are the staff interacting with youth? • What role do staff play in the delivery of these services? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff have their own lesson plans in a binder that they have referred to during the program. • The instructors are in charge of Set up and take down of equipment. • Supervising volunteer.

<p>Youth Engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are they engaging? • What role do youth play in creating the structure of this service or program? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is one youth volunteer present who helps with running drills and other leadership tasks. • The youth have set their own intentions for the program by checking in with the instructors and going over what they wish to improve on or suggesting new drills. • The youth are playing their own music off of their own speakers during the program.
<p>Structure of Program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the service or program youth focused? • Youth led? • Is there a clear goal in mind for the outcomes of this service or program (i.e. learning new skills, socializing, etc.). • How long is the program (per session, per month, per year). • How are staff keeping attendance? • How are staff measuring the success of this program in developing youth? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Led by two Sport Instructors 2/YDL 1. • One youth volunteer who helps set up nets and helps with drills and observations of leadership skills from the instructors. • First half of the program is building skills and the youth are learning new techniques (i.e. bumping, setting).. • Second half of the program is aimed at casual games. There is an emphasis on encouraging the youth to challenge themselves. • Intended that youth will develop skills and socialize with peers and gain confidence. • Program runs every Friday for \$48 for 8 sessions. • Staff have checked in with the Youth Development Coordinator before the program starts and then again at the end. • They report all incidents or risks to the Youth Development Coordinator. However, there were no incidents today. • Youth keep a class list and keep attendance. • As youth are leaving the instructors are saying goodbye and using positive words of affirmations.

References - Benson, P. L. (2000) Our Greatest Resource. Parks and Recreation, 35(10), 56.

Observation #4

Date and time of Observation

March 3rd, 2023 at 6:30pm.

Who/what was observed

Youth Hangout is an unstructured drop-in program offered every Thursday from 6:00-8:00pm.

Location observed

Cambie Community Centre

Observation Checklist

Looking for ...	Observation
<p>Are the 40 Developmental Assets being offered or built on in programs?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support (Other Adult Relationships). • Empowerment (Community values youth, youth as resources, safety) • Boundaries & Expectations (Adult role models, positive peer experiences) • Constructive Use of Time (Creative activities) • Commitment to Learning (Achievement, motivation) • Positive Values (Caring, equality, integrity, honesty, responsibility, restraint) • Social Competencies (planning and decision making, interpersonal competence, cultural competence, resistance skills, peaceful conflict resolution) • Positive Identity (personal power, self-esteem, sense of purpose, positive view of personal future) (Benson, 2011). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff are engaging with youth by keeping casual conversation and checking in with youth as they enter. • There appears to be relationships between staff and youth that are already built. • The youth get to create their own experience in the program which helps build on their ability to connect with their community and see themselves as a leader and a resource. • At the end of the program the youth cleaned up after themselves and threw all of their garbage out and made sure the room was put back together.
<p>Staff Engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How often are the staff interacting with youth? • What role do staff play in the delivery of these services? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff are present in the space. • The Youth Development Coordinator is checking in on the staff every 30-45 minutes. • They are trying to facilitate games by interacting with youth or asking them to play a round of pool. • The staff are ensuring the environment is safe for everyone by supervising and ensuring there is safe and inclusive language being used.
<p>Youth Engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are they engaging? • What role do youth play in creating the structure of this service or program? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is one grade 11 volunteer in this program. They are assisting the instructor. • Youth are mostly on their phones or playing on the pool table/foosball table. • Youth are playing their own music on their own speakers. • Youth are allowed to come and go from the program space freely and will leave

	to get snacks from the vending machine outside the room.
<p>Structure of Program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the service or program youth focused? • Youth led? • Is there a clear goal in mind for the outcomes of this service or program (i.e. learning new skills, socializing, etc.). • How long is the program (per session, per month, per year). • How are staff keeping attendance? • How are staff measuring the success of this program in developing youth? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No activity planned. • Giving youth safe space to socialize appears to be the main outcome and goal. • Program runs every Friday from 6-9pm. • Youth use their Youth Facility Pass 1 to get into this program. • Staff keep attendance in this program and are greeting youth as they arrive. • Staff have stepped out of the program a few times to gather supplies or check in with the Youth Development Coordinator. • There does not appear to be any form of measurement for the success of this program other than the number of youth who are attending.

References - Benson, P. L. (2000) Our Greatest Resource. Parks and Recreation, 35(10), 56

3A. Content Analysis Details

1. *City of Richmond's Youth Strategy 2022-2032* - This is a draft and will be finalized in 2023 after public consultation. The strategy outlines the strategic directions and actions taken by the City of Richmond to help guide them in serving and supporting youth and was created with input from youth, families, staff, youth serving organizations, and members of the public (City of Richmond, 2022). The strategy provides information on best practice research, engagement with youth, their families and key stakeholders, and the demographic profile of youth in Richmond (City of Richmond, 2022). This document builds on the progress made by the Youth Service Plan (City of Richmond, 2022).
2. *City of Richmond's Youth Services Plan 2015-2020* - The City of Richmond's Youth Service plan is a living document that outlines the city's plans to develop youth and youth related services. The document was created with consultations from Richmond youth and other key stakeholders and offers a snapshot of the current youth strategy and goals for these services (City of Richmond, 2020). The document is available to the public on the City of Richmond's website and is currently in the process of being updated for the 2021-2031 issue. This document is the most instrumental in this research as it provides the city's goals, action plan, associated outcomes and the City's roles and timeline as it pertains to youth recreation and development (City of Richmond, 2020). In addition, this document is widely used across all centres and staff who work with youth use this document on a regular basis.

3. *Government of British Columbia Youth Engagement Toolkit Resource Guide* - This document was created with consultation from the Ministry of Children and Family Development, The University of Victoria and youth themselves. This document provides information and guidance on how to engage youth in a community setting (Government of British Columbia, n.d). The document outlines youth frameworks and foundations, practical strategies for youth engagement, and engaging youth from diverse backgrounds (Government of British Columbia, n.d). Comparisons were made against the City of Richmond's current strategies and approaches to youth development through recreational programming. This document was chosen to determine how the City of Richmond aligns with the larger governing provincial body and see if there are congruences surrounding the topic of youth development at all levels of government owned recreation. This document was accessed on the Government of British Columbia website.
4. *City of Richmond 2019-2024 Recreation and Sport Strategy* - The City of Richmond's Recreation and Sport Strategy "guides the work of the Community Services Division, especially the Recreation Services Department, with the aim to increase reach and impact of recreation and sport benefits to all residents in Richmond" (City of Richmond, 2019). This document provides a larger scope of what the City of Richmond's approach is to recreation and community services for all ages. The strategy was analyzed for its content on youth specific services and data. This strategy was accessed on the City of Richmond's website.
5. *City of Richmond Youth Program Guides* - This document was analyzed to determine the current youth programs and services offered in the City of Richmond. These program guides are offered online and in community centres and City owned community spaces and they provide patrons information on the current youth services and programs running that season. This data was collected by accessing the program guides on the City of Richmond website.

How the documents were accessed (include date and time they were accessed)

1. The City of Richmond's Youth Services Plan was accessed on February 5th via the City of Richmond's website.
2. The Government of British Columbia's Youth Engagement Toolkit Resource Guide was accessed on February 14th via the Government of British Columbia's website.
3. The City of Richmond's Youth program guides were accessed on February 17th via the City of Richmond's website.

4. The City of Richmond's Sport and Recreation Strategy was accessed on February 17th via the City of Richmond's website.

3B. Checklist

The following documents will be analyzed to:

- Determine who created the document and why.
- Determine when it was created and/or last updated.
- Identify the intentions, focus or communication trends of the organization.
- Reveal similarities and/or differences in the communication method of or approach to content across each document.
- Determine how municipal recreation is serving youth and to what capacity it is doing so (what kinds of programs, services, strategies, etc. are being created to serve youth)? Recurring themes?
- Type of verbiage, visuals and other communication tactics or strategies being used to present this information to those who work with youth and/or target youth directly.
- Existence of keywords and how the document operationalizes these terms.

Keywords to look out for (and the operationalization of words):

- Develop or development
- (Transferable) skills
- Opportunities
- Support
- Staff
- Engagement

3C. Content Analysis Field Notes

Youth Strategy 2022-2032

<p>Who created the document? When was it created and when was it last updated?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The City of Richmond's Youth Strategy Stakeholder Advisory Committee and Project Leads. ● Was adopted by council in 2022 and is still in its draft phase, awaiting public consultation and finalization in 2023.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This document lays out the City of Richmond's strategic plans for the next 10 years. • 22 municipal and regional youth-oriented strategies and plans and six national and international strategies were analyzed to inform the structure, framework and the priorities within this document (City of Richmond, 2022).
What is the purpose of the document?	To "guide the City and those working with youth and further the vision that all youth in Richmond are safe, valued, respected and have the support, opportunities, and resources to live rich and fulfilling lives" (City of Richmond, 2022, p. 2).
Intentions, focus or communication trends of the document.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing opportunities for youth to thrive. • Focusing on the wellness of youth in all facets of their wellbeing. • Provides six guiding principles that help the developers of the strategy. • Communicates important information on the current youth demographic in Richmond and provides context on certain issues, challenges or opportunities that exist. • Encourages the reader to support youth services.
How is this document serving youth and to what capacity it is doing so (what kinds of programs, services, strategies, etc. are being created or shared to serve youth)? Recurring themes?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shares five strategic goals and actions to enhance youth services and experiences. These goals and actions are (City of Richmond, 2022): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Foundation - access to resources and services that enhance wellness. - Voice - youth are valued, heard, supported and engaged as members in the community. - Collaboration - youth are supported by and integrated into a collaborative network. - Opportunity - youth have access to accessible and equitable services and programs. - Awareness - youth and their families have access to information and resources that support them.
Type of verbiage, visuals and other communication tactics or strategies being	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information is reader/user friendly and displays information in a visually

used to present this information or target youth.	<p>appealing way.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses photos of youth and visuals such as graphs to show statistics or highlight important information.
Key Words (How does the document operationalize these terms?)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development - “Positive Youth Development encompasses an intentional, prosocial and strengths-based approach that engages youth within their communities, schools, organizations, peer groups and families” (City of Richmond, 2022, p.35). • Opportunity - youth have access to accessible and equitable services and programs (City of Richmond, 2022). • Staff - “Examples of strengths included the network of Youth Development Coordinators at community centres and dedicated City of Richmond Youth Service staff (City of Richmond, 2022, p. 38). • Skills - “Ensure a range of programs and services that prioritize learning and skill development are available for youth” (City of Richmond, 2022, p. 46). • Support - “Youth are supported by an integrated and collaborative network of youth serving agencies, non-profit organizations, public partners and local governments that work together to promote positive youth development” (City of Richmond, 2022, p.3). • Engagement - “Youth are heard, valued and engaged as members of the community and their opinions and perspectives inform plans, programs and services that are important to them and impact their lives” (City of Richmond, 2022, p.41).

Youth Services Plan

Who created the document? When was it created and when was it last updated?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The City of Richmond’s youth and key stakeholders, community partners, the Project Implementation Team, which is composed of City staff, and the Project Reference Group which is composed of City and Community Association staff and youth stakeholders. • The document is currently being updated for the 2021-2031 issue.
What is the purpose of the document?	To “identify priority program and service areas

	for Richmond youth and to provide the City with a strategic approach to making decisions about youth-related matters over the next six years. The 2015-2020 Youth Service Plan is intended to be a guiding framework to support the development and implementation of youth programs and services” (City of Richmond, 2015, p.1).
Intentions, focus or communication trends of the document.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Outlining key themes and challenges in the youth services in Richmond. ● Keeping the document updated with information on evolving topics and themes. ● Presents statistics and feedback from youth consultants, stakeholders and city staff in a user-friendly way so that the reader can understand youth trends.
How is this document serving youth and to what capacity it is doing so (what kinds of programs, services, strategies, etc. are being created or shared to serve youth)? Recurring themes?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Shares three different goals to enhance youth services and experiences. These goals are (City of Richmond, 2015): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Building youth assets through engagement and partnerships. - Expanding opportunities for youth. - Improving quality of youth services.
Type of verbiage, visuals and other communication tactics or strategies being used to present this information or target youth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Groups information by goals, then sub topics which include themes and then by implementation steps and processes. ● Uses photos of youth and visuals such as graphs to show statistics or highlight important information. ● Photos included are taken of youth in various different programs and settings across the city.
Key Words (frequency and in what capacity). How does the document operationalize these terms?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Development - “The 40 Developmental Asset framework provides a shared vision and language to guide practice and decision-making. Community Services, in collaboration with various community partners, will ensure common understanding of the 40 Developmental Asset framework in youth programming. Youth will be aware of how their participation influences their asset development” (City of Richmond, 2015, p. 25). ● Opportunity - “Youth are aware and have equitable access to a number of diverse recreational, social, volunteer

	<p>and cultural opportunities that are responsive to their specific needs and interests, and build on their Developmental Assets” (City of Richmond, 2015, p. 32).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff - “Develop and implement training opportunities for City staff, Community Associations and Community Organizations to enhance common understanding of Developmental Asset principles” (City of Richmond, 2015, p. 26). • Skills - “Provide leadership skills development programs that are specifically designed for youth” (City of Richmond, 2015, p. 29). • Engagement - “Develop a systematic approach to engage youth in planning programs, services and facilities that are of interest and benefit to them (City of Richmond, 2015, p.29).
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Youth Engagement Toolkit Resource Guide

Who created the document? When was it created and when was it last updated?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Government of British Columbia in partnership with the Ministry of Children and Family Development, the University of Victoria and youth consultants. • This document was created in 2013 and has not been updated since.
What is the purpose of the document?	To “provide in-depth information about youth engagement, as well as practical strategies for engaging youth” (Government of British Columbia, 2013, p.4).
Intentions, focus or communication trends of the document.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The presentation of the content is meant to inform the reader and provide them information on specific topics on youth engagement.
How is this document serving youth and to what capacity it is doing so (what kinds of programs, services, strategies, etc. are being created or shared to serve youth)? Recurring themes?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides an extensive list of practical strategies for engaging youth. • Provides a list of best practices and various toolkits to enhance youth development and engagement. • The document was created with engagement and contributions from various youth-centred organizations and groups dedicated to supporting this demographic. • Includes information on engaging and serving youth from diverse backgrounds

	<p>and with specific needs (i.e. Indigenous communities, youth with developmental or physical challenges, youth experiencing homelessness, youth with children, at risk or those dealing with mental health challenges, etc.).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes seven principles to follow to ensure actions made to engage youth are ethical. These include viewing youth engagement as a “natural way” of working in an organization, ensuring staff that are working with youth are recruited for their knowledge, expertise and passion for supporting youth, considering all perspectives, using debates as a healthy way of raising new ideas and opinions, ensuring youth feel safe and respected, setting realistic expectations for youth, and ensuring there is a balance and accessibility within these youth-serving organizations (Government of British Columbia, 2013, p.19).
<p>Type of verbiage, visuals and other communication tactics or strategies being used to present this information or target youth.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information is targeted towards youth-centered organizations. • Provides plenty of images and pictures from youth events or conferences. • Organizes information under type or theme of content.
<p>Key Words (frequency and in what capacity). How does the document operationalize these terms?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development - “Youth engagement provides many opportunities for youth to learn new skills and abilities. These can include the development of academic, intellectual, civic, emotional, physical, employment, social, and cultural competence (Government of British Columbia, 2013, p.9). • Engagement - “Meaningful participation and sustainable involvement of young people in shared decisions in matters which affect their lives and those of their community, including planning, decision-making and program delivery” (Government of British Columbia, 2013, p.8). • Opportunity - “Young people are given opportunities to lead and assume some decision-making power. Youth help make decisions about the design and direction of programs and services geared towards them (Government of British Columbia, 2013, p.9).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skills - academic, intellectual, civic, emotional, physical, employment, social, cultural (Government of British Columbia, 2013, p.9).
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Youth Program Guides

Who created the document? When was it created and when was it last updated?	The City of Richmond's youth serving staff across each centre.
What is the purpose of the document?	To provide the community with information on the current youth services and programs at each community centre.
Intentions, focus or communication trends of the document.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inform the reader of current youth programs and services. Share information on community events or volunteer opportunities.
How is this document serving youth and to what capacity it is doing so (what kinds of programs, services, strategies, etc. are being created or shared to serve youth)? Recurring themes?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth programs are marketed on 1 page or less in most program guides. The youth programs are also commonly grouped together on one page with preteen programs (ages 9-12). Many of the programs and services offered are non-registered, drop-in (i.e. drop in sports, youth fitness center hours, social clubs and youth councils).
Type of verbiage, visuals and other communication tactics or strategies being used to present this information or target youth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each community centre uses different marketing styles (i.e. font, color schemes, photos).
Key Words (frequency and in what capacity). How does the document operationalize these terms?	N/A

Sport and Recreation Strategy

Who created the document? When was it created and when was it last updated?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The City of Richmond's community stakeholders which include recreation and sport organizations, the general public and City of Richmond staff (City of Richmond, 2019). The process of creating this strategy was guided by a
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	<p>strategic advisory committee and staff operational team (City of Richmond, 2019).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is the latest version of the strategy.
What is the purpose of the document?	<p>To “build on the strong and successful foundation already present in the City to address the new and diverse interests of stakeholders and to encourage all citizens of every age to enjoy the benefits of an active and involved lifestyle” (City of Richmond, 2019, p. 3).</p>
Intentions, focus or communication trends of the document.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To inform the reader of the current recreation and sport trends, issues, challenges and opportunities in the City of Richmond.
How is this document serving youth and to what capacity it is doing so (what kinds of programs, services, strategies, etc. are being created or shared to serve youth)? Recurring themes?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information and statistics on youth is limited in this document. • The information that is included in the strategy matches information in the Youth Strategy and Youth Services Plan. • The overarching strategies and goals of this document appear to encompass all ages and demographics.
Type of verbiage, visuals and other communication tactics or strategies being used to present this information or target youth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses a wide range of images and pictures of the municipality’s facilities, parks and outdoor spaces, community art, staff, and community members. • Presents their seven main focus areas and highlights achievements for those focus areas.
Key Words. How does the document operationalize these terms?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity - “Providing opportunities to build confidence and basic skills, to become familiar with the range of activities that might appeal to different preferences, to have fun and build social connections through recreation and sport are keys to engaging a broader range of community members to ‘move more, sit less’ – however they envision doing so for themselves” (City of Richmond, 2019, p.23). • Staff - “In Richmond, recreation and sport services and programs are delivered collaboratively with the City and Community Associations and Societies, and through over 50 community sport clubs” (City of Richmond, 2019, p.51). • Skills - physical literacy, confidence,

	<p>social and emotional literacy, etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Support - “To keep pace with the increasing diversity in recreation and sport participation levels and preferences, providing a range of opportunities that support community members to choose how, when and where they participate, and ensuring the availability of activities that residents are familiar with or are inspired to try, is vitally important in promoting lifelong physical activity” (City of Richmond, 2019, p.33).
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Similarities and Common Themes Documents

Similarities	Common Themes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Each document was created with input from stakeholders, community groups and the public. ● Each document discusses strategies for engaging youth or similar participants in the decision or planning process of their programs. ● Each document has some form of strategic goals or actions that help guide its’ efforts. ● Two of the documents make references to the 40 Developmental Assets framework. ● The 40 Developmental Assets Framework is used as a guiding document to help staff create opportunities and services that help build on these skills. ● The majority of the documents are living and are being continually updated. ● Includes pictures of youth from the community as well as photos of current community facilities and parks that are being utilized for youth services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Grouping information and actions by objectives or goals. ● Setting timelines for certain projects or initiatives. ● Involving youth in the creation of the document through surveys or working groups. ● Highlighting the importance of collaboration with community partners (i.e. stakeholders, not-for-profit organizations, youth services and programs, etc). ● Identifying gaps and challenges in this topic area. ● Each strategy touches on the importance of building and maintaining a strong network of stakeholders.