

City of Victoria Youth Council: Year in Review

Prepared by: Sarah Amyot, CVYC Coordinator on behalf of the City of Victoria Youth Council

Reviewed by:

Dates considered: June 2010- June 2011

Report Submitted: July 7, 2011

Last report received: December 17th, 2010

CVYC Activities Overview

Summary: This year saw many milestones achieved and an exciting administrative transition for the City of Victoria Youth Council. While implementing our work plan for the term, we have successfully navigated a transition of organizational host, Council Liaison, and Coordinator. This year, the CVYC has demonstrated integrity, flexibility, and passion. We have learnt that it is paramount for the Youth Council to have a solid and stable foundation from which to grow, and this has been our priority over the last year. Below you will find a summary of our activities over the last year:

VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT

Last year's executive had their final meeting in June 2010. All executive members received a reference letter on City of Victoria letterhead acknowledging their individual contributions to the group. Five executive members elected to continue to serve on the CVYC for the 2010-2011 term and they collectively screened, interviewed, and selected 4 new Executive members. The 2010-2011 executive established a six month bi-weekly meeting schedule; identified personal, collective, and community success indicators; and identified a set of extended leadership portfolios which include working closely with the City of Victoria and the surrounding community – and as always, a specific emphasis on youth engagement within the civic sphere.

Recently, the CVYC engaged in a renewed recruitment initiative in May 2011, and approximately 6 youth have expressed interest in joining the Council for the coming term. We will again be recruiting participation during fall welcome weeks and back to school activities.

Transition of convening organization from LifeCycles Project Society to BC Healthy Communities.

In November of 2010, the Board of the LifeCycles Project Society decided to assess their program plan and shed all their programs that were not urban agriculture or food security-centered programs.

The CVYC quickly identified a partnership opportunity with BC Healthy Communities and the Union of BC Municipalities. The new partnership provides sustainability and a broad health promotion lens for the CVYC, and maintains the initiatives close connection to the YouthCore program, Victoria's primary youth engagement initiative, also housed within BCHC. This

relationship allows for the CVYC to also access the provincial youth engagement work of BCHC's Youth Division and has provided additional stability for the CVYC.

MAJOR EVENTS AND INVOLVEMENT

Official Community Plan

The CVYC members and coordinator participated in several consultation opportunities as made available by the City's Planning Department including workshops, public forums, and open houses.

In May 2010, the CVYC co-hosted a community café for youth at Koffi coffee house on Haultain. The event was attended by approximately 40 youth and co-facilitated by CVYC members. On Thursday, May 20 2011 the CVYC met with Victoria Mayor Dean Fortin, UBCM 1st VP Barbara Steele and Bill Bennett, Minister of Community and Rural Development to discuss Victoria's new Official Community Plan. Most recently the CVYC helped plan, advertise and co-host another Community Café for Youth to generate feedback on the draft OCP. The event was attended by approximately 30 youth who provided a wealth of feedback on the report.

The model employed throughout our involvement with the Official Community Planning process is a good one that should be replicated in future partnership activities between the CVYC and the City. The opportunity to participate in all aspects of the partnership events- from planning to promotion, facilitation and participation was appreciated by CVYC members.

CVYC All Candidates Forum

On November 18th, the CVYC, in partnership with the University of Victoria Students' Society, and the UVic Students of Colour Collective, hosted an All Candidates Forum for the by-election to replace Councilor Sonya Chandler. 10 of 11 candidates were in attendance, and 20 participants arrived. Although this is a somewhat disappointing participation turnout, the CVYC is grateful for the experience and the light it will shed on the process for the 2011 General Election. We will be planning our involvement in the 2011 General Election over the summer months.

Victoria Youth Survey

Last year the CVYC Executive indicated that they were interested in conducting a survey of the youth population in Victoria to inform the allocation of their time, energy, and resources. A Survey committee was formalized and developed a data collection and analysis schedule.

We distributed the surveys throughout April and May both electronically via our web and facebook sites and mailing lists as well as paper copies that were distributed through presentations at a local high schools and alternative programs (e.g. the Girls Alternative Program) and through local teen health clinics (e.g. Island Sexual Health Clinic, the James Bay Teen Clinic and downtown youth outreach clinic), supported housing sites (e.g. Pandora Youth Apartments and Threshold Housing Society), leadership groups (e.g. the Greater Victoria Public Library Youth Council, City of Victoria GROOVY leadership group) and at public events hosted by

the City of Victoria Youth Council. One workshop was also conducted with the Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Centre's Youth Group. In total over 350 youth responded to the survey, providing meaningful commentary on a wide range of youth issues including: housing, education, employment, transportation, arts and culture and opportunities for youth in Victoria, violence, mental health issues and resources and the environment.

The data collected is rich and still being sifted through; it provides a unique perspective on what youth think and say about their lives in Victoria. We believe that survey will be an important source of information that will inform our own work and be of great use to other community partners. We will be spending the summer months prioritising areas for action. Lastly, we are interested in formalizing the survey as an annual undertaking and will be discussing this as a group in the near future.

BC Youth Week: Youth Arts Festival

This year the CVYC decided to acknowledge BC Youth Week, May 1-8, with a Youth Arts Festival. The festival consisted of a visual arts show that ran at the Cornerstone café throughout the week and a week end performance in Market Square on Sunday, May 8th. Six artists were displayed in the art show, including a group submission from the Restorative Justice Society's girls' group and 10 performers- ranging from tap dancers to the Reynolds Slam Poetry team to bands- participated in the Market Square show. The CVYC received support for this activity from the DVBA and by entering the Wolf's Den leadership contest, co-organised by the City of Victoria, the District of Saanich and the Boys and Girls Club of Greater Victoria.

Special Project Grants

The CVYC reviewed and drafted feedback on seven Special Project Grant applications.

Advisory Committees

The CVYC has had representation on two Public Advisory committees: Playful Art, and Pioneer Park.

Presentations

CVYC members delivered presentations to five leadership classes at local high schools Vic High and Mount Doug.