



# Community Youth Strategy Speak Out Report 2009

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The United Way of Thunder Bay hosted a *Roots of Youth Violence Forum* which was held on March 5<sup>th</sup> 2009. Sixty participants from various service organizations, the city, government and school boards were in attendance. The outcome of this forum acknowledged four main themes and six priority areas that could be used as broad categories to start the process of developing and implementing a community youth strategy.

### **The four themes that were identified were:**

1. Community working together to make and carry out a community youth strategy
2. Community awareness of youth priorities and strategies
3. Making sure the cultural context is a working part of the strategies and priorities
4. Youth in leadership roles to create and carry out a local youth strategy



### **The six priorities identified were:**

1. Anti Racism and Discrimination
2. Education
3. Employment
4. Housing
5. Recreation and Youth Hubs
6. Support to Families and Youth



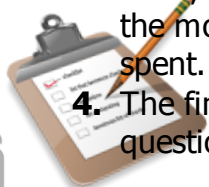
As part of the next steps to the *Roots of Youth Violence Forum*, a plan to hold a **SPEAK OUT** was formulated.

- We held two **SPEAK OUTS** at Hillcrest High School and Intercity Mall on May 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> respectively. Together, a group of young people from Confederation College (Child and Youth Workers) and Lakehead University (Social Work) took this information and presented it to the public.
- Participants of the **SPEAK OUT** were asked to voice their opinion on a local youth strategy. In order to encourage participation from the public, we offered a prize for the general public as well as a prize aimed specifically for youth.
- The six priority areas were divided into booths and each participant was asked to go through and answer the questions in a variety of ways.



### Participants were asked to:

1. Fill out a demographic participant form
2. Go through booths 1-6 and talk to the presenters by making comments and asking questions.
3. After, participants were given "**SPEAK OUT DOLLARS**" and were asked to put the money into the "priority" boxes where they thought the money should be spent.
4. The final step in the **SPEAK OUT** was for participants to fill out a short questionnaire pertaining to a youth strategy.



**We asked 170 members of the community to provide feedback on 6 Questions related to our priority areas. Here's what they had to say.**



Q1: Should Thunder Bay have a strategy in place that will work towards addressing the needs for youth?

A: 168 say **Yes**

2 say **No**

Q2: Should youth be in a leadership role in the planning, developing and carrying out of a community youth strategy?

A: 161 say **Yes**

8 say **No**

Q3: Does the cultural diversity of our community need to be considered when planning a youth strategy?

A: 139 say **Yes**

30 say **No**

1 person did not respond

Q4: Do you believe the City of Thunder Bay should provide resources towards the planning, development and implementation of a "new" community youth strategy?

A: 155 **Yes**

12 **No**

3 No Response

Q5: What kind of resources should they provide? (select all that apply)

A:

Funding	151
Staffing	116
Space	113
Research	96

Q6: Do you believe the media needs to portray more youth related stories to build awareness around youth positive activities as well as issues?

A: 148 **Yes**

16 **No**

**The results are in.** Here is what 183 members of our community had to say. Each participant was asked to rank, in order of importance, a list of strategies that could help address issues within these 6 priority areas.

### Anti-Racism and Discrimination

- Face to Face Meetings between victims and perpetrators –a disciplinary committee 41
- Peer education and mentoring 38
- Community campaign “Different Colour, One People” 24
- More aboriginal and non-aboriginal role models and peers 23
- Youth to employer training 14

### Housing

- Opening a Youth focused only shelter house to better serve at risk/homeless youth 62
- Additional youth section within Shelter House to hold more beds for the homeless/at risk youth 62
- To have youth strategies in place with the housing and homeless organizations 40
- More support and accessibility when youth apply for Ontario Works 17

### Support to Families

- Neighbourhood hubs are needed where at risk children and youth can go do activities and receive any support they may need 63
- An awareness of all programs that are available within the community to let the families and youth know that there is a lot of help and support out there. 57
- Survival skills camp, available for youth and family taught traditionally and non-traditionally by Elders 35

### Employment

- More youth employment opportunities 53
- A youth facility that is for YOUTH only 35
- Employment agencies need to work flexible hours 21
- Providing free or low cost training 16
- Ensuring youth are taught health and safety and have awareness to work place hazards 15
- Onsite training for youth i.e. use of a computer or till 12
- Providing free or low cost equipment and uniform related to employment 6

### Education

- Presentations in schools dealing with youth issues 49
- A coordinated response to youth issues and violence led by youth 37
- Cultural teachings intergraded into the curriculum 33
- Continual inter-ministry funded projects 26
- Openness to further cooperative initiatives within the community 13

### Recreation and Youth Hubs

- More low cost or free recreational activities 83
- Youth hubs in neighborhoods with many activities taking place 32
- After hours/weekend activities 29
- Cultural sensitivity training for leaders 18
- Community calendar of youth activities 8

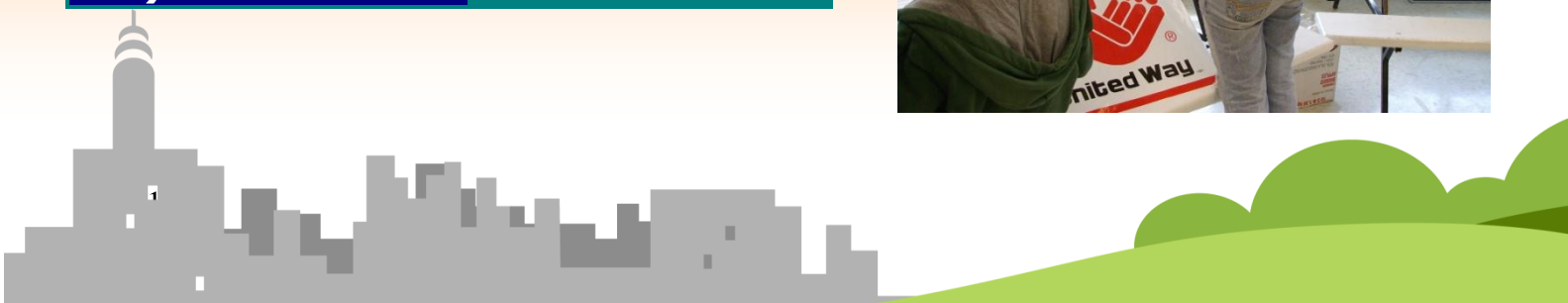
## *Participants of the Community Speak Out*

<i>Participants</i>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>
<i>Aged under 13</i>	1	8
<i>Aged 13-15</i>	12	16
<i>Aged 16-20</i>	27	55
<i>Aged 21-29</i>	12	17
<i>Aged 30-55</i>	5	29
<i>Older than 55</i>	2	4
<i>Youth (up to the 29 years old)</i>	49	92
<i>A community resident older than a youth</i>	4	20
<i>Work for an organization that provides services to youth</i>	9	16
<i>Work for a not-for-profit organization</i>	5	12
<i>Work in the for profit/business sector</i>	5	11
<i>Hold a professional designation (doctor / lawyer etc)</i>	2	13

**Number of Participants at Hillcrest High School: 45**

**Number of Participants at Intercity Mall: 138**

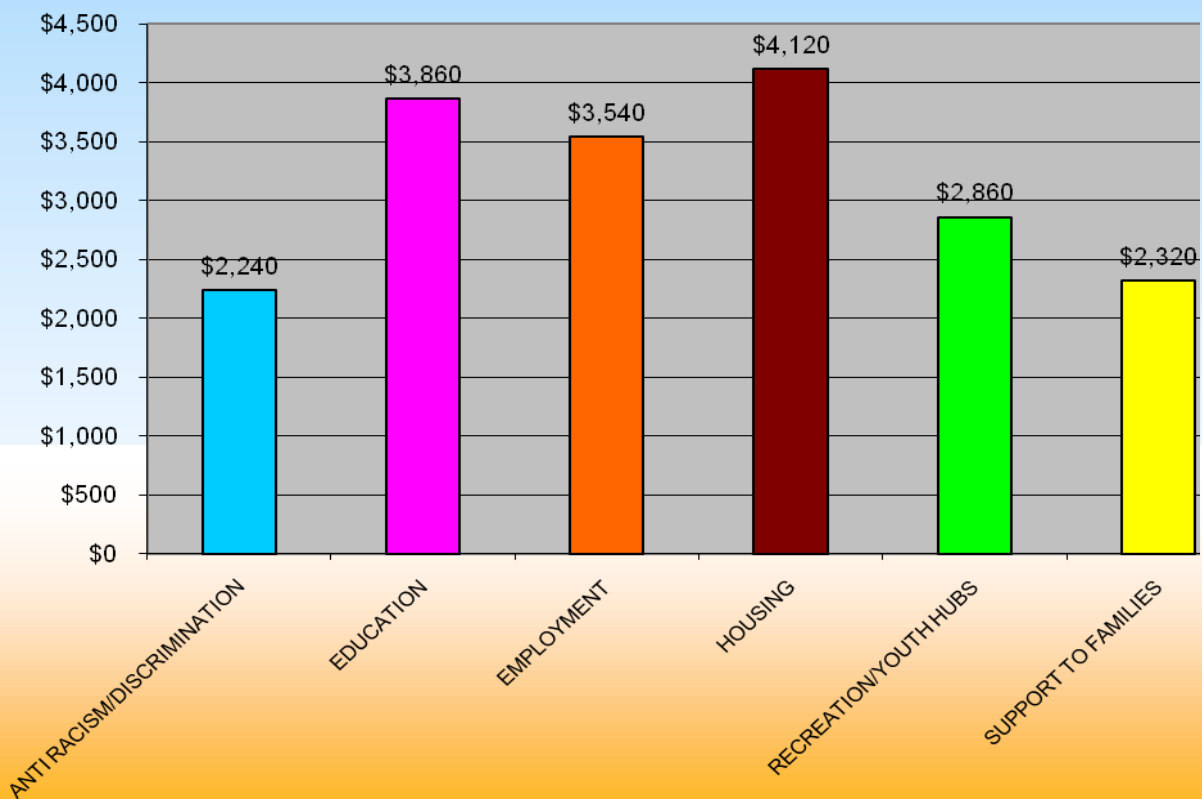
**Total Participants: 183**



## What would you invest your \$120 in?

Each participant was given \$120 **SPEAK OUT** dollars and asked them to determine how to divide it up and deposit their **SPEAK OUT** dollars into the boxes labeled with the priority areas: Housing, Education, Anti-Racism and Discrimination, Recreation & Youth Hubs, Employment and Support to Families.

Total Sum of Money Prioritized



# Additional Comments from Speak Out and Survey



## Additional comments on each of the 6 priority areas from Speak Out participants.

### Housing

- Supply opportunity for jobs
- More housing options for youth leaving child residential programs and entering adult- specifically mental health
- Stronger incentive to get off Ontario Works
- Most important would be to have work (chores) within shelters -discipline
- Ensure options and services are accessible to all
- To solve the problem for now more beds... however a shelter house specific for youth is an amazing long term goal
- One house for children and one house for adults
- Involvement from city council
- Stand alone youth shelter
- More intensive trained staffing within supportive shelter houses
- Focus on secondary student homes
- Street theatre programs for homeless youth
- Focus on gap age
- Services that are accessible to all exceptionalities
- Having a "kids help line" in Thunder Bay only more intensive support for youth.



### Anti-Racism and Discrimination

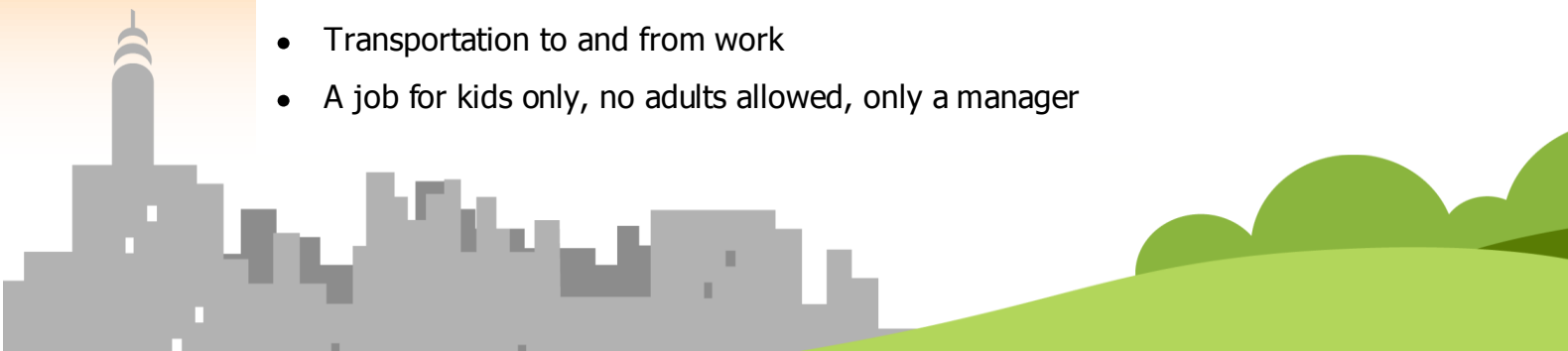
- Cultural programming
- Cultural events in schools and community
- Youth drop in (occupying youth)
- Organizations like AIDS Thunder Bay can be a resource especially when dealing with stigma, discrimination...
- More subliminal positive campaigns (ex: Coke in the 80's)
- "Walk in my Shoes" seeing what it is like to have a disability, youth disabilities are often left out
- Multicultural displays and fashion shows
- Cultural programming that highlights how many cultures are quite similar once you take a closer look

## Support to Families

- To find a way to help the fortunate help the less fortunate
- Places where families can gather for support and a feeling of community
- Ensure services are accessible to all
- 212 miles street Native Women's Association-lots of family support
- Métis Nation of Ontario –lots of family support
- Agencies need to work together more and end silo-ing of agencies – more partnership efforts are needed
- Training for parents on how to get involved in child's activities
- Traditional teachings
- Have a fun day and cultural activities combined
- Traditional teaching by Elders
- Make sure needs are accessible to individuals in wheelchairs
- Informing other places e.g. Ignace, Red Rock because income is disappearing
- Better Beginning Better Futures (Sudbury) a program like that can go in Thunder Bay
- Need more groups i.e. girl groups

## Employment

- Transportation to and from employment agencies
- Not just aboriginal achievement awards but awards for everyone
- Youth friendly staff at employment centre desks
- Better busing access i.e. FWFN has no regular busing
- Stress importance of education to youth
- Youth auxiliary options with city police, parks and rec, city of Thunder Bay etc.
- Employer training/education re: hiring and retaining youth
- Find a way to let the youth know that work doesn't need to be boring
- Transportation to and from work
- A job for kids only, no adults allowed, only a manager

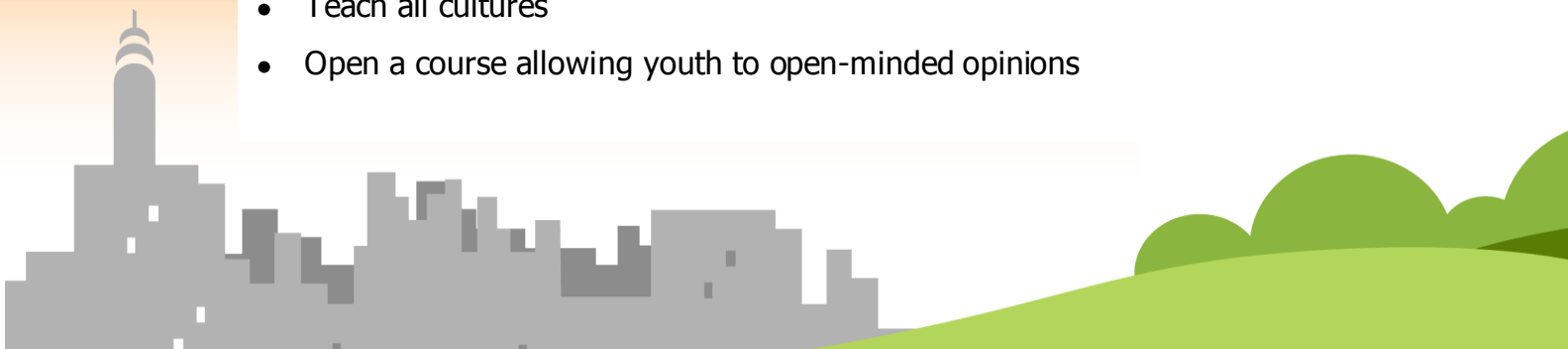


## Recreation and Youth Hubs

- See youth recreation as positive rather than youth gatherings as negative
- More park activities after hours
- New Hope represent
- Skilled counselors and recreation leaders at youth hubs
- Often feel like a minority/ out of place bringing "white kids"
- More hubs like Thunder Bay Boys and Girls clubs in many neighbourhood locations and schools. Forest Park is good, but transportation is hard for east-enders and other "at risk" neighbourhoods throughout town
- Fundraising events that would raise money for those who cannot afford user fees
- Have a place for us teens
- Have volunteers (youth) to help fundraise ex. Beading, jump-a-thon
- A pet activity park
- Activities that include more than sports i.e.) music, art, theatre etc.
- Ensure that hubs are completely accessible to all and that deaf youth can be involved. Right now, they aren't.
- Recreation should be free for all kids
- Have a youth section in newspaper or monthly calendar delivered or given to them at school
- More activities and free sporting events

## Education

- Respect-zero tolerance does not work
- Put more money into alternative education for youth
- Natural helpers should be in every school
- Anti-bullying programs in every grade
- More contact between high school and post secondary students
- Include a wide variety of various cultural teachings
- Better participation in (CWECT) schools need to take this on not CAS
- Media literacy and self-esteem building activities
- Teach all cultures
- Open a course allowing youth to open-minded opinions



More Great Ideas  
from  
Members of  
Our Community



## Additional comments made during the Survey

### Question 1

**Should Thunder Bay have a strategy in place that will work towards addressing the needs of our youth?**

#### Comments

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth are seldom listened to about what they view as important.</li> </ul>           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• have as well as people to help them.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes, because while the region is suffering economically, children and those approaching adulthood are most at risk.</li> </ul> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth doesn't have as much organization</li> </ul>                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nothing for the youth to do after school.</li> </ul>                                   |   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They already have what they need.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We should have more youth centre's.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why would you leave out 1/2 the population?</li> </ul>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I think doing this is a great idea!</li> </ul>                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (no) No Brainer!</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have more youth programs/things available to be aware of where the needs are so they can be addressed.</li> </ul>              |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It would be good</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There should be more job opportunities.</li> </ul>                                     |   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth need to stand up.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• more job opportunities, more recreational activities</li> </ul>                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth is where it starts</li> </ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They should provide more information on youth issues</li> </ul>                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is very important that young people are supported and well educated</li> </ul>      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes, youth are our future!</li> </ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes but our community is aging, too - can we look at coordinated efforts?</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meetings once a week</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This is important as today's youth are our future - prevention measures would be beneficial</li> </ul>                         |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It's boiling over in this town. It's needed on a political scale.</li> </ul>         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth are our hope</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nothing in place for kids to do after school hours</li> </ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There should be more activities for youth to</li> </ul>                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will keep more youth out of trouble if there are more things for them to do</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More awareness. More attention grabbing.</li> </ul>  |

- It would help knowing there's something to help - and if there is - letting us know.
- Yes, would be good.
- Youth need to get their words & ideas out there
- Because our youth are the next generation and you need to start at the bottom to make Thunder Bay a better place
- I think that the youth of today are going in the wrong direction
- Files from families should be followed up with facilitator and action plans should be developed
- The youth are our future
- Counselors available for youth in the educational system
- Families should have a strategy also!
- Youth-driven approach with support of community and partners collective planning
- Charter of Children's Rights & Advocate role need to receive more attention - half time - funding
- Producing a calendar and making it easily accessible (key) for the public.
- It is important for them to have a place to "hang-out" in.

## Question 2

**Should youth be in a leadership role in the planning and developing and carrying out of a community youth strategy?**

## Comments

- Leading should be left to leaders with a lot of experience
- They should be informed; know what's going on.
- Perhaps an official youth council
- They won't take their place seriously
- This will allow other youths to see the opportunities that a community has to offer
- Some of the youth here have been engaging and positive about needs in community
- They have to know the issues of all youth regardless of age, race, income or orientation.
- Who better to give ideas on a youth council than youth.
- Perspectives of youth are important if it is about them.
- Won't work unless their perspectives are incorporated

- Diversity is the solution
- Youth needs to be involved more
- They know what they want
- Youth are going to be ruling the world one day so they should be a major concern
- Give them the responsibility they want
- Youth are the focus
- What better than to have a youth leading where something needs to be developed

- Youth Committee comprise of different races (non-native/native/other cultural races)
- Kids know what their needs are and help in brainstorming for solutions
- Youth is the future
- Get information/suggestions by youth but let a responsible adult be leader.
- Youth have as much to say as anyone else and who knows what youth want better than actual youth.

input to wants and the like.

- It should be collaborative with an adult that can provide the structure and reliability.
- Yes, choices are all that they have and ability to control their outcomes is important
- Yes, we are up front with what's going on because we are YOUTH...we see it best.
- With some monitoring or directing of leaders. Recruit youth who have this potential

- Peer empowerment
- Who knows better what they want & need and how to engage their peers.
- Youth are most aware of 'youth issues' - it is paramount to consider their thoughts.
- They know what works best for them. Ask them!
- Because we are the ones who also have apart in the city.

- Of course this is very important to them to put in their input.
- New fresh ideas
- You need a youth to tell you the needs of the youth
- If this takes place, then people that are working and striving to make the community more youth-friendly would have youth

- Of course with some supervision and guidance!
- Youth can combine ideas and invent the project from inception to evaluation.
- Essential if the group is to be developed.
- All voices needed

### Question 3

Does the cultural diversity of our community need to be considered when planning a youth strategy?

#### Comments

- Negligent not to consider cultural diversity
  - We are all equal
  - Need more awareness of the two worlds. Most youth are scared of each other.
  - It's their problem if they act the way they do then be judged by others
  - (No) Because cultural diversity shouldn't be an issue
  - Racial slurs prevent youth to want to co-operate.
  - There is allot of discrimination
  - (yes) A wide range of community/cultural backgrounds
  - Sometimes we seem to go so far in anti-racism/cultural that it can cause a negative effect.
- Diversity divides unless viewed as an asset. Racism needs to be addressed.
  - (yes) so places hire youth for who they are and not pick the white people over brown people.
  - It's a part of life experience
  - We are all equal
  - Canada is multicultural in every way
  - Lack of awareness of different cultures by community.
  - We should be conscious of all beliefs
  - I find there is allot of discrimination in youths today and it needs to be taken into consideration
  - All cultural backgrounds should be considered
- since we are a multicultural society.
  - Especially aboriginal
  - But, it shouldn't be the main focus. Kids are kids no matter their culture.
  - Yes, Thunder Bay is very multi-cultural & everyone deserves a voice.
  - Some could offend
  - Growing diverse population in Tbay
  - Anyone of any race or background should be included
  - (yes) so no one feels left out. Multiculturalism is what Canada is about.
  - It is good to get everyone involved.
  - Yes, maybe to inform youth of different cultures.

- |  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Making sure to include all others</li> </ul>  | <p>treated as equal individuals.</p>  | <p>education system and mental health awareness trained.</p>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Everything does.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In today's society, we need to be multi-cultural.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This should include many of the various cultures in our community, not just these cultures which are more noticeable.</li> </ul> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We are very much a multicultural town with variations in beliefs and values.</li> </ul>     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There needs to be activities all ethnicities can do and enjoy individually &amp; in groups.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth who have special interests should be encouraged to participate in those things.</li> </ul>                                 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All cultures! Aboriginal is important, but certainly not the only important one!</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• T-Bay is a very racist community.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Priority issue!</li> </ul>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are many different cultures here - they are all very interesting.</li> </ul>          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultural backgrounds are important for the individuals involved.</li> </ul>                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We can't cater to just the mainstream. We need variety (interesting to explore)/</li> </ul>                                      |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To an extent. You don't want to segregate people. Everyone should be</li> </ul>             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Obviously...no 2 people are the same</li> </ul>  |   |
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More diversity awareness training for staff in the</li> </ul>  |   |

#### Question 4

**Do you believe the City of Thunder Bay should provide resources towards the planning, development and implementation of a "new" community youth strategy?**

#### Comments

- |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being a youth, I didn't know there was an old strategy, so it must not have worked well.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes. Many of these booths were geared to violence (housing) homelessness, gangs. I'd like to see more positive youth strategies. Good to be in a mall where many youth gather. Has this display travelled thru</li> </ul> | <p>schools, college, university?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funding towards our staff</li> </ul> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They already have what they need</li> </ul>   |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "New"? Is there one now?</li> </ul>                                       |

- Yes because we need resources to learn easier
- Why not, could be very beneficial.
- Change is good
- The only way to get our youth in a better/healthier place is to provide programs and other things that will benefit them.
- Start at home, plan at home. The city is our home - it needs to step up.
- Who else is there?
- Absolutely!
- Youth - invest in our/the future
- We need help from someone
- The city should remove unused buildings for space and provide funding to help youth with their ideas.
- Certainly - their current one sucks - who even knows it exists?
- They should fund projects for youth.
- Yes, in consultation and cooperation with volunteer groups.

### Question 5

What kind of resources should they provide? (Place an X beside all that apply)

Comments:

- At least a liaison
- Saved for youth and independent organizations
- Youth Hubs!
- **Other (Describe)**
- Nourishing food
- Should have someone involved
- Volunteers
- Housing/food service
- Feed back
- Facilitate all the community partners
- Ideas
- Advertising
- Volunteers
- Treat animals good
- Qualified volunteers & paid staff
- Summer students
- Better access to education system
- Plans of action

- Counseling for youth from youth mentors that are trained.

## Question 6

**Do you believe the media needs to portray more youth-related stories to build awareness around youth-positive activities as well as issues?**

### Comments

- More won't hurt.
- It must be done with limited bias.
- youth related issues, programs, etc.
- Yes. I've noticed lots of positive youth stories in TBay media lately.
- (no) The media has been good about covering

### Other Comments

- Should have more activities for younger troubled youth and have a shelter strictly for them.
- No more bullying cops!
- Good.
- They don't NEED anymore... things like this are making youth unable to deal with their own problems.
- Give youth houses.
- Well done on presentation supplied allot of issues.
- More funding, staffing, research. Good start for youth at the beginning of their journey of life. More opportunities, better results.
- Good work with the forum!
- Could build on some GREAT youth programs already in place i.e.) library. How about PRO kids for youth?
- This was a very good presentation largely because the youth voice was prevalent. Well Done!
- The more knowledge the better the youth understand for a better future.
- Keep up the good work.
- Community board in the mall. Communication and positive advertising at youth events.
- The community of Thunder Bay should be building awareness around youth activities
- most of the time, not the media.
- Lots of community partners would like to be part of the solution: teachers, schools, Aids Th.Bay, Superior Points, Thunder Bay District Health, etc.
- Bring out the issues
- Good idea!
- I like what you're doing
- Youth are our leaders of today, they know what is needed for them to have happy productive lives. No city development should happen without their say in the matter. They have to live with the decisions made now - the elders will be gone.

- Knowledge is power...also start in the community. Get youth to go to city council/give deputation. Education is important to get others involved.

- These need to be accessible to all youth (wheelchair accessible facilities & ASL interpretation for deaf youth. Many of them are left out because ASL interpreters are expensive & there are only 2 in Thunder Bay.

- Our community and provides needs to be behind our youth.
- Racial discrimination among youth is widely evident in high school.

- I think what you're doing is good and we need more activities.
- More recreational youth stories (?)
- We could train youth with leadership potential and work with them to enhance the image and impact of youth
- Excellent presentation of the "Youth Issues"!
- There should be a community board set up in the Mall, etc. so youth can find out what is going on in the city!
- There are a lot of good ideas happening because of youth. I think if they were addressed more often, youth would be less generalized as lazy teenagers.
- With more youth-related stories in the media, kids will have a more

meaningful understanding because it is around their age, and they could be going through the same ordeal at home or at school.

- Schools are the hubs! We need to transform the culture of the education system to be more engaged with their community.
- H&S rights, community living skills and awareness of drugs, alcohol, sex, etc.
- Thank you for helping to give youth a voice. It's not done enough! Let us be heard!

The United Way of Thunder Bay  
would like to thank everyone who participated in the  
SPEAK OUT

