

**Community Youth Initiative**  
**MEETING NOTES**

*Tuesday June 9, 2020, 1:00-3:00*

*Location: Cyberspace (Zoom)*

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**In attendance:** Sue Poldervaart (RNJ; Chair), Greg Francis (BPS; co-chair), Trish Buote (United Way), Jeremy Zeran (Youth Advisory Council), Jane Fullarton (BBBS), Marg Fancy (EKIOC), Sonya Jodoin (VSLG), Victoria Robertson (Connect Youth), Don Lewis (UCDSB), Mary Lynn Villeneuve (Volunteer Centre), Louise Mulder (UCDSB), Lorena Crosbie (CMHLG), Rob Adams (YMCA), Cameron Wales (City of Brockville/Youth Advisory Council), Michelle Neville (CDSBEO), Tom Fournier (BPS), Emily Farrell (Brockville Library).

1.0 Review and additions to agenda – no changes

2.0 Review of May 1<sup>st</sup> meeting minutes – no changes, nothing for discussion

3.0 Minutes

Information Poster - Jeremy has drafted the poster, there have been a couple of changes. Has done a great job in creating clear posters. The poster should be ready to go. There have been a couple posters created that are geared towards different groups. We will need to talk about circulation of the poster that we will discuss moving forward. There has been discussion about where to distribute them, and this will need to be finalized.

COVID-19 discussion. Need to have more discussions about planning and collaboration. These discussions have been brought up at EKIOC and need to continue.

YMCA - in terms of reopening from a Y perspective, our facility is going to have more availability for space that could be used other than normally what it would be used for. This is an opportunity for other agencies who might require space. Right now it is an open-ended commentary. Prescreening and sanitation standards are already in place for the Y. The Y can support those needs for groups that might find use in the facilities. Several areas are not in use, i.e. tennis courts and can be “repurposed” for other programming uses. We still need details from public health about what to expect and what we can use and not use.

Volunteer Centre - it was disappointing to hear that the high school students are not required to get their volunteer hours. We need to push the message that volunteerism is still vital within the community. We don't want our students to lose interest and forget the importance of volunteering.

UCDSB – What September might look like. After-school groups will not be restarting the way they were. Community use of schools is not likely going to be an option. Still lots of discussions about what schooling will look like...many unknowns. We are almost certain it will not be 100% capacity. **“There are students that cannot engage, and also kids that won't engage.”** The ministry is supposed to make an announcement by end of June, but no idea what it will look like. Sports, extracurricular groups might

not be starting up again. This is happening across the board. Everything is on pause. Good news – people will finally be able to get access to their belongings within the schools.

Transportation in the fall will be problematic, taking into consideration physical distancing. They are tracking student by student levels of engagement. We will be evaluating trauma, etc. with students. Every child will be returning with varying levels of trauma and we will be monitoring that stress.

Cameron – one approach might be messaging on what is currently available to keep kids engaged. Keeping kids updated on what can occur and what cannot (with regards to pandemic restrictions).

CDSBEO – the school boards were given funds to help kids with mental health, special needs over the summer. We are in the process of figuring out how to do that, and how best to support them over the summer.

Jeremy – The Youth Advisory Council hasn't had a chance to return to the table due to current restrictions. Not much to report on the youth side of things until we are able to meet again. Cameron will be speaking with the city manager to see when restrictions will be easing to allow committees to meet again.

Michelle – hearing a lot of how much parents are struggling. There are many support groups in place. It would be helpful if everyone shared their support groups that are coming up that parents can access. We are trying to ramp this up over the summer months.

Mary Lynn – speaking as a parent. Is it common that kids don't want to do those online interactions despite the fact they are craving social interaction. Some kids are adverse to online chats, etc.

Jane F. – There are different categories of kids. Browsers – crave attention, come in come out, don't want anything formal. Another observation is that there is a lack of connection with FCS (example of one child she interacted with recently where there are concerns that his necessities are not being looked after). The schools have always acted as the eyes on these children. We are anxious to get back with the kids!

Lorena – there are a range of needs out there. We need to look at multiple solutions to reach the kids that have different interests (i.e. some kids like FaceTime, some don't). We need to engage the kids on their terms. We need to bring our youth engagement groups together. We should tap into a couple of the people in each group and bring them to the table.

ACTION - Tawnya B. already has a substantial list of groups started. That would be a good starting point. We did have a good conversation with VSLG where Teen Triple P will be ramped up. Facebook has been a good way of reaching out and promoting.

Sonya – online predators are still a huge issue. Youth can fall victim very easily, given the right conditions. We know statistically there has been a lot more activity lately in terms of entering unhealthy relationships, H.T. recruitment, etc. We will be ramping up again for education of adults around these concerns.

Sue – with the groups at the table now, where do we all stand in terms of youth engagement?

CMHLG - Youth Engagement meets virtually. UW has a youth board as well but hasn't met since the school closures. YAC is an ad hoc city group but Cam is working on getting them back together. Sue – had reached out to some of the kids from Stingers. It takes nurturing for some of these kids to engage online. The kids are craving those personal face to face human connections. As more and more restrictions are being lifted, what can we do to connect with these youth? We need to get feedback from youth about what they are looking for.

Lorena – Youth engagement is all about having youth at the table talking about these issues. ACTION – get a couple youth interested in talking at this table about what they want. Youth will be dealing with fear, and parental fear about re-entering the volunteer/work force. These concerns should be acknowledged and addressed.

Activity Project – UPDATE – From Jane's perspective, the draft is almost done for the grant. BBBS has had caseworkers designing an activity and working on trying to make a recording to submit a link to demonstrate what they are doing. Sue – looking to build the larger project – approx. 17 agencies have reached out to help out with this. It will be a lot of work. Need to reach out to all the orgs about planning the next steps.

Michelle – There is a lot of talk about coping strategies and substance abuse....it is not always substance use but also eating disorders. HopeWell doing a new program – evidence based and prevention oriented program. [www.cacccf.ca](http://www.cacccf.ca) is also a good resource offering free virtual substance use.

Tom – MDS. COVID has put a lot on hold. Public health has had to redeploy staff and resources to deal with the demands. As things return to normal we should be able to get back to it. There have been 6 O..D deaths so far. Meth is big. Fentanyl is also a huge problem on the street. Trying to target the high level drug dealers is our goal, however this is where we look to our community partners to help by treating the addictions and reducing the demand. We are seeing more and more people becoming addicted, even those who used to have high-paying jobs. The shelter was effective in allowing many of these people access to resources like counselling and health services. The county deals with housing, but the problem ends up in the city so we need to have everyone on board to deal with it.

Cameron – concerning that we have seen an uptick in the deaths. Would it be related to COVID, hard to say. The city needs to get on some of these issues.

Sue – some kids are fine to reach out and chat virtually, some kids need those connections that they used to access, and how they used to access them.

Mary Lynn – a lot of our volunteer fairs and public access events serve many purposes – they are sometimes that face to face contact where someone needs to make that connection (ex of female waiting to reach out to someone at Interval House).

Lorena – it’s difficult because we can only do so much. We need to provide service, plus attend these community events, it’s not feasible. We need to find an effective and efficient way to communicate these things.

Mary Lynn – we need to think outside the box about how we can reach these kids and give them a platform that they are comfortable with to reach out and get help or access services.

Trish – we need to turn the “I can’t’s” to “how can we do it better.”

THINK - “How can we get the info to you, and make you more comfortable reaching out with problems?”

Emily – program coordinator is currently on unpaid leave. She must be brought back to start with a plan moving forward now that the gov’t has authorized the opening of libraries. Currently have plenty of supplies but no staff right now to do much. There are many relationships that are already in place, hoping some staff can come back soon to maintain and reconnect with those relationships.

**NEXT Meeting Date – Tuesday June 23, 2020.**