



The Needs of Youth in the District of West Vancouver

Findings from Community Consultations

Arbor Educational & Clinical Consulting Inc.

Commissioned by the Municipality of the District of West Vancouver



April 2011

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Executive Summary

Purpose of Community Consultations

In the fall of 2010, a review of Municipal Youth Services began with the following objectives.

1. Evaluate how the Municipality-run youth services are responding to key identified needs for youth and families.
2. Make recommendations for future operating strategies and planning objectives in order to: maximize access to high quality services and programs that respond to key community needs within the Municipal role; ensure the most efficient use of Municipal funds in delivering services and programs; and provide mechanisms for measuring and evaluating successes.

This current report aims to inform phase one of the review by gathering current perspectives of current successes and gaps in the area of youth needs in the District of West Vancouver.

Method

During March 2011, six focus groups were conducted in West Vancouver. These groups involved hearing community members' (youth, parents, partners, and District staff) voices through dialogue. Written surveys were completed by focus group members and additional community members within the target groups.¹

Participants

In total, 85 individuals participated in a focus group and 96 individuals completed a survey.

| Group | Location of Focus Group | Number of Participants in Focus Group | Number of surveys completed by focus group participants | Additional Surveys completed | Total Number of Unique Participants by Group |
|------------------|---|---------------------------------------|---|------------------------------|--|
| Youth Ages 11-13 | Glen Eagles Community Centre | 10 | 9 | 0 | 10 |
| Youth Ages 13-18 | Ambleside Youth Centre (AYC) | 12 | 12 | 21 | 46 |
| Youth Ages 13-19 | West Vancouver Community Centre (surveys: multi-site) | 13 | 13 | | |
| Parents | West Vancouver Community Centre | 8 | 8 | 6 | 14 |
| Partners | West Vancouver Community Centre | 19 | 19 | 0 | 19 |
| District Staff | West Vancouver Community Centre | 23 | 8 | 0 | 23 |
| TOTAL # | | 85 | 69 | 27 | |

¹ Note that focus group and survey questions were designed by another evaluator. Some revisions were made by Arbor Educational & Clinical Consulting.

Major Findings²

Major Findings that emerged from participants in the needs assessment include the following:

✓ **West Vancouver has outstanding facilities and natural playgrounds.**

West Vancouver has created facilities that are top-notch, from the equipment that they have to the amenities offered, and the designs of the buildings. In particular, the West Vancouver Community Centre was noted by many as an outstanding centre. The one facility that is in need of great attention is the Ambleside Youth Centre. This Centre would benefit from work to improve the overall appearance with the goal of making it more inviting to youth and families.

✓ **District youth workers are excellent at connecting with youth and families.**

Although a small team, much praise emerged throughout this needs assessment as to the work that the District youth workers do with youth and families. There was great appreciation for how flexible they are in youth programming, their focus on strengths-based work, their ease in connecting with youth and families, and their strong presence in the community. The current youth workers are integral to making youth services successful due to their strong relationships and deep understanding of youth needs.

✓ **Younger youth enjoy activities in semi-structured environments with their friends.**

In this needs assessment, younger youth indicated that they enjoyed the opportunities at Gleneagles Community Centre which has a balance of structured and unstructured activities for preteens. While they enjoy time to be with their friends, they appreciate having caring adults nearby. In addition to movies and more sedentary activities, younger youth indicated that they would like to have more play-based opportunities such as tag games and other fun, physical activities.

✓ **Older youth want more non-structured places to hang out and attend events with their friends.**

It was very clear from older youth that municipal spaces, such as Ambleside Youth Centre and the West Vancouver Youth Lounge, are positive spaces for them. Lacking in West Vancouver are public spaces where youth can hang out with their friends. Youth want to feel that there are more included in the community through having greater access to entertainment facilities, youth coffee houses, and spaces where youth can go hang out in the evening with friends. They indicated that they prefer one-time social community events as opposed weekly structured activities.

✓ **Older youth are seeking out volunteer and leadership opportunities in large numbers.**

Older youth are gaining skills and personal satisfaction through volunteering and other leadership training and experiences, such as youth committee work. This has been very positive from everyone's perspective.

² Key findings for each group included in the needs assessment can be found on the following pages: p21, p32, p54, p68, p92, and p116.

The challenge is that West Vancouver does not currently have enough meaningful opportunities for youth to engage in these pursuits.

✓ **Youth need a continuum of services.**

There is agreement that youth need *timely* access to a continuum of services from recreation to more formal positive youth development opportunities to social services. Ideally, the services would all be available in West Vancouver. This continuum is very important in order to support the range of needs among youth. Ensuring that high quality services are delivered by trained individuals must be at the forefront of planning.

✓ **Offering services in a Hub Model has many potential benefits and challenges.**

While there is agreement that youth need a continuum of services, less clear is the support for these services to be offered in a Hub Model. While a Hub Model is best practice for early childhood, several challenges were identified with having the range of services provided at one location for youth. Social and positive youth development activities were seen as more appropriate Hub activities as compared to clinical services, which command a level of anonymity that may be hard to guarantee at a Hub. In addition, it was clear that an outreach model is one of the best ways to engage youth at-risk who are less likely to come to a Hub.

✓ **Desperate need for mental health services**

Many youth are falling through cracks in terms of mental health services. There is not enough work in early intervention coupled with limited services for youth, particularly in West Vancouver but also across the North Shore. Complicating service delivery is the absence of clear policies, procedures and practices agreed upon across agencies in order to ensure that appropriate referrals are made and followed up upon so that youth who need services are provided with them.

✓ **Horseshoe Bay is an underserved neighbourhood**

While other areas of West Vancouver have varying levels of supports and services, the Horseshoe Bay area has no services for youth and families.

✓ **Community partnerships are highly valued from the perspectives of parents, partners and District staff**

Many wonderful opportunities and services are occurring for youth due to community partnerships. By working together, collaboration strengthens services. Most participants would like to see more strategic partnering occur in West Vancouver and across the North Shore. In order for partnerships to be as effective as possible, the implementation of formal partnership agreements appears to be a necessary step.

Project Background

West Vancouver has a population of approximately 44,000 (2010) 14% of West Vancouver's population is between the ages of 0-14. There are approximately 7,400 youth between the ages of 10-19.³ The District of West Vancouver directly provides programs and services for youth through the Community Services and Community Development Departments situated within the Parks and Community Service Division. This Division reports directly to the City Council. Direct services governed by the Municipality Departments include:

- ❖ Recreation programs
- ❖ Variety of recreation programs
- ❖ Youth lounges and youth drop-in
- ❖ Leadership and volunteer development
- ❖ Outreach programs and services

The Municipal Youth Services is staffed by a small group consisting of:

- ❖ Managing Supervisor of Youth Services
- ❖ Youth Outreach Services Supervisor
- ❖ Youth Services Program Coordinator
- ❖ Youth Outreach Workers (2.5 FTE)
- ❖ Casual Staff

West Vancouver has 2 community centres and 1 youth centre

1. Gleneagles Community Centre
2. West Vancouver Community Centre
3. Ambleside Youth Centre

In addition to operating Municipal programs and services for youth, partnerships with community agencies/organizations have created other avenues for the provision of youth services (e.g., West Vancouver Police Department, Vancouver Coastal Health, West Vancouver School Board).

Past Examination of Youth Needs

There have been 6 recent consultations, conducted by the District of West Vancouver and/or community partners, that have informed Youth Services in West Vancouver. These include:

| | |
|---------|--|
| 2006 | Civic Youth Strategy (Take a Walk in Our Shoes) |
| 2008/09 | Youth Initiative Roundtable |
| 2009 | Living and Learning in West Vancouver |
| 2009 | Youth Café and Strategic Planning |
| 2009 | West Vancouver Police and Youth Reaching Out |
| 2009 | Family Court and Youth Justice Committee – Youth and Family Subcommittee Reports |

³ From <http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca>

Key Themes identified in these consultations include the following:

- ❖ Caring relationships among youth and with adults are critical for positive youth development.
- ❖ There is a diversity of needs and interests among youth and this diversity must be recognized in planning.
- ❖ There have been great spin-off benefits from youth-driven events.
- ❖ Environmental and social causes are appealing to youth.
- ❖ Music and the arts provide youth an avenue for self-expression and a way to engage them in event planning.
- ❖ Youth seek more informal places (e.g., movie theatre, youth café) to hang out in West Vancouver.
- ❖ Certain locations in West Vancouver are better for youth to access.
- ❖ Places for youth need to create a sense of belonging and respect for all youth.

Youth Services Review

In the fall of 2010, a review of Municipal Youth Services began with the following objectives:

1. Evaluate how the Municipality-run youth services are responding to key identified needs for youth and families.
2. Make recommendations for future operating strategies and planning objectives in order to: maximize access to high quality services and programs that respond to key community needs within the Municipal role, ensure the most efficient use of Municipal funds in delivering services and programs, and provide mechanisms for measuring and evaluating successes.

This review is occurring over two phases. The first phase involves gathering information with regard to a current inventory of existing services that are Municipally run and those that are provided in partnership with community agencies/organizations; identifying services successes and gaps; and exploring operational strategies. The second phase involves examining options for implementing recommended operational strategies and evaluation tools.

This current report aims to inform phase one of the review by gathering current perspectives of current successes and gaps in the area of youth needs in the District of West Vancouver.

Report Overview

Method

During March 2011, six focus groups were conducted in West Vancouver. These groups involved hearing community members' (youth, parents, partners, and District staff) voices through dialogue. Written surveys were completed by focus group members and additional community members within the target groups.⁴

Participants

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| TOTAL # | | 85 | 69 | 27 | |

Group Representation

District staff and Partners were highly representative of their sectors and data contained in this report provides a breadth of feedback from these two groups. Parent participation was harder to achieve and therefore findings may or may not represent the general perspectives of parents in West Vancouver. With the younger youth, the feedback was limited to one community and therefore in order to be confident that it represents the general perspective of younger youth, a greater number of youth from varying neighbourhoods would need to be consulted. Older youth represented a range of youth but as always, the more youth voices we can hear, the more robust are the findings.

Report Outline

There are 6 sections to this report corresponding to the 6 groups identified in the table above. Key findings are presented at the end of each section. The final section (section 7) presents conclusions of the current gaps and successes in youth services in West Vancouver.

⁴ Note that focus group and survey questions were designed by another evaluator. Some revisions were made by Arbor Educational & Clinical Consulting.

Feedback from Youth Ages 11-13

Participant Background

Gender and Age: 10 youth (7 girls and 3 boys) ages 11-13 (mean age of 12)⁵ participated in a focus group and completed a survey.

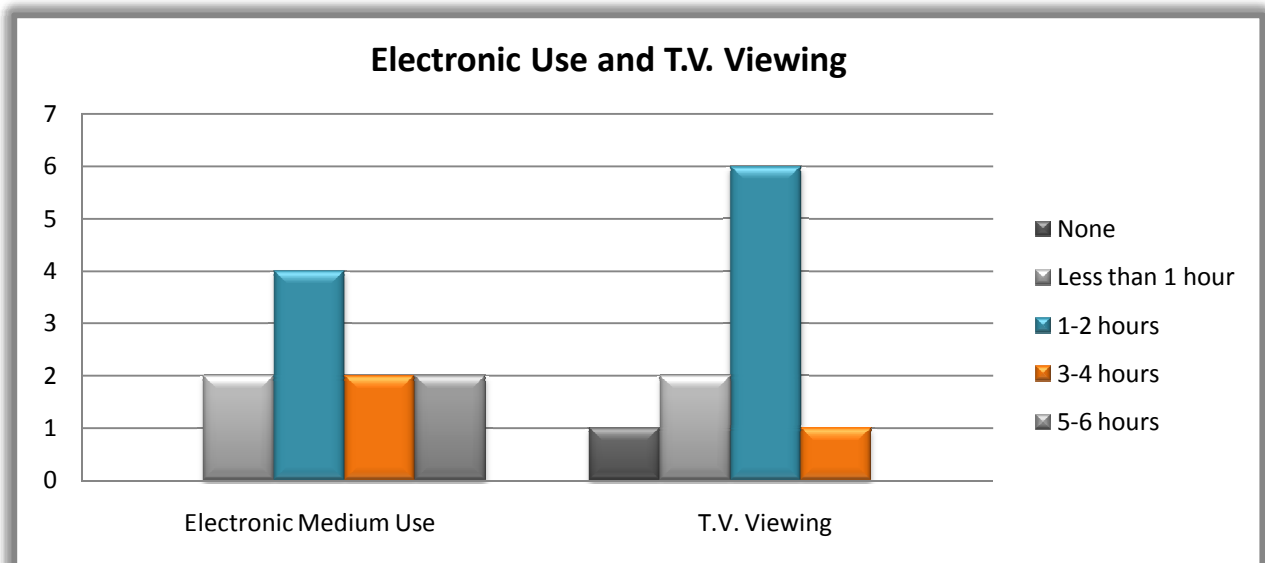
Living situation: 9 youth live with their parents; 1 youth lives in a group home.

Neighbourhood: All youth attend Gleneagles Elementary. They resided in one of five different neighbourhoods: Caufield; Gleneagles; Eagle Harbour Horseshoe Bay; Lions Bay.

Youths' First Language: 9 youth reported English as their first language. One youth also indicated that they spoke Hungarian.

Parental First Language: 7 youth reported that English was the first language of their parents. In addition 3 youth reported that a parent spoke Hungarian and Russian, Italian and Gaelic.

Youth were asked to report on the amount of time they engaged in the use of technology (e.g., Game Boys, Xboxes, Cell Phone Use) and television viewing. On average, this age group reported spending 1-2 hours using technology and 1-2 hours watching television a day.



⁵ One additional male attended for the first 25 minutes so no survey data is available; one female left after 45 minutes. Partial survey data is included.

Youth (Ages 11-13) Engagement: Important Activities and Key Elements

Youth were asked to think about activities that they have participated in during the past. In thinking about these activities, they were asked to describe the key elements that led to an activity being experienced as fun. Comments were analyzed for themes which are presented below.

| Activity | Key Elements | | Comments from Youth |
|--------------------|--|---------------------|---|
| Ice skating | Relationships | Friends | <i>Fun when you have a whole bunch of people in one area. No matter what you are doing, it is always very fun.</i> |
| School hike | | | <i>For school, our teacher took us up to White Lake. Friends were there.</i> |
| Laser tag | | | <i>You were on a team with your friends. (laser tag)</i> |
| Babysitting course | | Instructor | <i>Instructor was very nice. She goes to Rockridge. They [older youth] can relate.</i> |
| Pottery | <i>Last year, we did pottery together. It was really fun. We had a really nice instructor. She talked to us and related to us.</i> | | |
| Babysitting course | Types of Activities | Hands on Activities | <i>We could actually see the baby bottles which is better than learning it from speaking. It was exciting.</i> |
| Pottery | | | <i>We also got to work on the wheel.</i> |
| Camps | | Physical Activity | <i>The adventure playground – I had a lot of fun on that cause it was hands-on. Lots of fun games. We played manhunt, capture the flag, went to the beach.</i> |
| Laser tag | | | <i>I did a school field trip – Camp Summit. It was fun. You did a whole bunch of fun activities like mountain biking, rock climbing, games.</i> <i>I did a sailing course at Eagle Harbour Yacht club. What I liked about it is that if there was no wind that day, we played games there like capture the flag.</i> <i>We went to laser tag which was really fun. It was active and just really fun.</i> |
| Camp | Autonomy-related | Choice | <i>We had the choice of eating in our forts or under a covered area.</i> |
| General events | Food-related | Food | <i>Food is always good - nachos.</i> |
| Camp | | | <i>Food was really good. (at camp)</i> |

Looking Ahead: Important Activities for Youth Ages 11-13

Youth were asked to generate the types of out-of-school activities in which they participate and view as important. Important activities were in four domains: physical activity; music-related activity; relational activity; and passive activity.

Physical Activity

- Longboarding (type of skateboarding)
- Dance classes (jazz)
- Gymnastics/cheer
- Swimming
- Soccer and field hockey
- Rugby

Music-related Activity

- Play guitar
- Playing piano and sax
- Sing and act

Relational Activity

- Hanging out and talking at someone's house

Passive Activity

- Watch T.V.

Youth ideas for enhancing opportunities for physical activity in the District

"There could be rock climbing for different levels."

"They have The Edge in North Vancouver and maybe getting something like that in West Vancouver."

"If there was a camp where it was just games outside like capture the flag or something like that. Like once a week or something."

"Mountain-biking. Like at Whistler you take your bike on the chairlift. Maybe they can make Cypress or Grouse like that."

Activities Youth (Ages 11-13) Have Tried and Enjoyed

From a list of activities, youth were first asked to indicate activities they have tried and enjoyed. Then, they were asked to review the list and indicate those activities they have not tried but would like to try in the future.

| Activity | Number of Times Cited by Youth as Activities They Have Tried and Enjoyed | Number of Times Cited by Youth as Activities They Would Like to Try |
|---|--|---|
| Hang out with friends | 10 | 0 |
| Field trips | 8 | 0 |
| Attend youth drop-in | 8 | 0 |
| Outdoor activities (hike, bike) | 8 | 0 |
| Go to movies | 8 | 2 |
| Snow Sports (e.g. Skiing, Boarding) | 8 | 0 |
| Arts projects | 7 | 0 |
| Listen to music | 7 | 0 |
| Camping | 7 | 2 |
| Team Sports | 6 | 0 |
| Use the internet | 6 | 0 |
| Watch TV/videos | 6 | 0 |
| Run | 5 | 0 |
| Shopping | 5 | 0 |
| Water Sports | 4 | 1 |
| Yoga | 3 | 1 |
| Read | 3 | 0 |
| Dance | 2 | 3 |
| Go to live music events | 2 | 0 |
| Skateboarding | 2 | 1 |
| Gym / workout | 2 | 0 |
| Go to library | 1 | 0 |
| Writing | 1 | 0 |
| Build or fix things (e.g., woodworking, fixing bikes) | 0 | 1 |
| Fitness classes | 0 | 0 |
| Martial Arts | 0 | 4 |
| Film camp | 0 | 1 |

Important Elements to Activity Participation

Although many activities are available for youth, it is critical to understand under what circumstances they decide to attend activities. During the focus group, youth talked about three reasons for participating in an activity: friend participation (by far the most important), activity sounds fun and novel, and parent support. On the survey, youth noted an additional 6 elements.

| Element | Number of Times Cited by Youth as key elements |
|---|--|
| Other people said it was fun | 2 |
| Nice leaders | 2 |
| Food | 1 |
| Games | 1 |
| It may be similar to something that I have tried before | 1 |
| Some kind of challenge involved | 1 |

On Friend participation: *“Are my friends going? Cause that is what makes it the most fun. Some sports aren’t necessarily like that but something like a dance class I would ask someone [friend] if they would want to go.”*

“I think the whole point of trying camps – half the fun is meeting new people. Ya, it’s great if you have a friend there with you but I think that it is just as fun if there is no one else that you know there. You can meet new people.”

“Some of youth indicated that they may go to a new activity, like a camp, knowing that they would get a chance to meet new people.”

On Fun and Novel Activities: *“Like for swimming, I would go if it were at different pools all the time instead the same old stuff all the time.”*

On Parental Support: *“My mom asked me if I wanted to go to this place and I said ‘Oh, what is it?’ Are any of my friends going. My mom said ‘I don’t know.’ Then afterschool I asked my friend and she said that she can’t come and so then my mom came here with me and then once I was actually here, I found my friends. Then I decided to go because my friends are here.”*

6 youth indicated that if they really wanted to go to an activity but didn’t have a friend to go with them, they would go if a parent agreed to accompany them.

Past Experience in Trying Out New Activities/Events

Nine youth indicated that they had tried a new event or activity upon the suggestion of a friend or parent. Eight of the youth attended with a friend and one youth went alone. Five youth stated the event/activity was fun. The remaining four used the following descriptive words.

- Alright
- Interesting and new
- Scary
- Nerve-wracking

Instructor qualities that youth deem important

- Nice
- Laid back
- Patient
- Able to relate to youth
- Kid at heart
- Make learning fun

Reasons for Non-Participation in a Desired Activity/Event

Youth were asked to think about an activity in which they would like to participate and identify potential reasons why they might not participate.

| Reason for Non-Participation | Number of Times Cited by Youth as key elements |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| No friends or youth I know attending | 4 |
| Too busy | 2 |
| Instructors are boring/unkind | 2 |
| Sunny outside | 1 |
| Time of the event does not work | 1 |
| Anxiety | 1 |

Differences Between Public and District of West Vancouver Facility Spaces

Youth were asked to consider the difference between spending time in public spaces (e.g., malls, bowling alleys) versus District of West Vancouver Facility spaces (e.g., community centres, swimming pool etc.). Youth ages 11-13 noted two key differences between public spaces and District-run spaces.

1. Public spaces are **less supervised by adults** compared to District of West Vancouver Facilities

“At the mall, there is no one watching you.”

“In public spaces, you don’t have teachers hanging over you.”

2. Public spaces offer **more freedom** to choose activities compared to District of West Vancouver Facilities

“You have a lot more freedom. If you are at the mall, you can say ‘I want to go here’ and just go there. There is no ‘this could happen or that could happen.’”

“At the mall, me and my friends can make fools of ourselves. If you are on a field trip with your school, your teachers get mad at you.”

What appealed to most youth in this age group was a middle ground where there is not too much freedom and not too much supervision.

“At school for instance, some teachers, even if they planned something where we go out or something – it’s not even all that much fun because they are constantly trying to keep track of us and things. They don’t actually let us go anywhere by ourselves. That’s why I like the community centre cause even though we have structured plans we still are allowed freedom. When we go to the pool we don’t have to stay in one section of the pool or something.”

“If you have too much freedom then arguments break out. One person wants to go here and one person wants to go there. But with the community centre, it’s like ‘We’re going here, we’re going there – that’s it.’ You don’t have a choice. You have a say in where we go for the late night thing but it’s not like ‘I want to go here, I want to go here’ and that.”

“I like the community centre because it has a safer environment (in reference to adults in public spaces who may evoke fear).”

“I like the community centre better because if you are trying to talk to a friend and you just want to talk for a little while, it’s much quieter. In public spaces, it’s really loud. It’s also safer but freer as well. You can do what you want but there are rules as well.”

All youth, ages 11-13, indicated that they like to have a choice of where they hang out. Sometimes, that choice may be public spaces and other times, it may be District spaces like community centres. Most youth in this group indicated that they went to the mall or movies with friends. In addition, they mentioned they liked hanging out at home or in outdoor spaces, such as trails, in West Vancouver.

They are either driven or take to the bus to the mall. There was a suggestion that bus prices should be lowered for youth, particularly for short distances.

About the Community Centre

Younger youth participated in community centre activities on a regular basis. Each Friday evening they were welcome to attend an activity known as ‘The Garage.’ This activity was a blend of free choice play followed by an outing that was particularly appealing to youth in this age group.

“It’s noisy but quiet in the community centre. They have areas like the lounge where it’s quiet but if you want to be loud, there are places to do that. I hate that when you are trying to do something and people keep telling you to be quiet.”

“The good thing about youth garage is that you don’t have to plan it. You know that every Friday practically all of your friends will be there. It’s kind of like school.”

Youth On Community-based Access

“We should put things like this [community centre, the Garage] in more areas where kids don’t have things, like Horseshoe Bay.”

District Facilities and Programs

Youth, ages 11-13, were asked to report on their use of District Facilities and programs/activities.

Number of Youth who Report Using District of West Vancouver Facilities

| Facility | Number of Youth Reporting Using the Facility |
|--|--|
| The Garage Youth Drop-in | 10 |
| Community Center Program | 7 |
| Sports Field | 5 |
| Public Swimming Pool | 4 |
| Public Beach or Park | 4 |
| Public Skating Rink | 3 |
| Public Library | 2 |
| Community Centre Fitness Center | 1 |
| Public Arts Facility (e.g. Kay Meek, Silk Purse, Museum) | 1 |

On average, youth reported using District of West Vancouver Public Facilities two times per week (Range 1 to 4 times per week).

Youth were asked to indicate which District programs they have attended in the past. Eight youth indicated that the Youth Garage was the program they enjoyed the most. For the other two youth, one noted the babysitting course was the most enjoyable and for the other it was dance.

| Program | Number of Youth who have attended the program |
|--|---|
| Gleneagles Youth Garage | 10 |
| Training: Babysitting Class, First Aid | 9 |
| Ambleside Youth Center Drop-In (AYC) | 1 |
| Volunteering | 1 |
| Gymnastics | 1 |
| Dance | 1 |

Sources of Information about programs/activities for youth, ages 11-13, in West Vancouver

Youth were asked how they found out about programs and activities that are sponsored by the District. They were also asked to indicate how easy it was to find out about programs and activities and if they had suggestions as to ways information could be easier to access.

| Source | Number of Times Used by Youth in the Group |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Friends | 10 |
| Parent/Family | 9 |
| Gleneagles Community Center | 8 |
| Social Media (e.g., Facebook) | 7 |
| School | 6 |
| Information Pamphlets | 5 |
| TV/Radio/Magazines | 2 |
| West Vancouver Community Center | 2 |
| West Vancouver Public Library | 1 |
| District of West Vancouver website | 1 |

Ease of accessing information: Nine youth indicated that information was 'easy' to access while one youth indicated that information was 'sort of' easy to access.

Suggestions for improvement for access to information: Three youth suggested having schools distribute more information both in hardcopy and via the school website. Two youth suggested having more informational flyers available.

Supports For Youth, Ages 11-13

From a list of possible supports, youth were asked to identify where they found support when they had a problem for which they needed help. They were then asked to identify desired sources of support.

Places for Youth to Go for Help With a Problem

| Place | Number of Youth who would go to this place |
|---|--|
| Friend your age | 9 |
| Parent | 7 |
| A safe place to drop in and relax | 3 |
| Friend who is older (but still a teen) | 3 |
| Group for girls only | 2 |
| Peer counsellor | 2 |
| Older brother or sister | 2 |
| Groups that have youth who have the same cultural background as you | 1 |
| School counsellor | 1 |
| My dog | 1 |

Desired Support By Younger Youth in West Vancouver

| Desired Support | Number of Youth Indicating this as a need |
|---|---|
| Places to just hang out | 9 |
| Events and social activities | 8 |
| Learning about different careers | 4 |
| Homework club | 2 |
| Group for girls only | 2 |
| Group for boys only | 1 |
| Groups that have youth who have the same cultural background | 1 |
| Peer leadership training | 1 |
| One to one workers (to help you if you need extra support) | 1 |
| Parent/teen mediation counselling | 1 |
| Cultural workers (to help you feel more comfortable in Canada if you came from another country) | 1 |
| Community volunteer services | 1 |

Important Adults in the Lives of Youth, Ages 11-13

Youth were asked to identify an important adult in their life and the reason why this adult is important to them.

Seven youth identified their mother as being important to them. They gave the following reasons.

- *“She knows me really well.”*
- *“She sort of understands me.”*
- *“She is my mom.”*
- *‘She is really nice and I trust her.’*
- *“She listens to me when I need someone to speak to.”*

Two youth identified their parents. They gave the following reasons.

- *“Because they are family.”*
- *“Because I can tell them how my life has been.”*

After spending time with or talking to their parents youth indicated that they felt the following.

- *“Much better.” “Good.” “Great” (5 youth)*
- *“OK”*
- *“Annoyed because they always think they are right.”*
- *“Normally she helps but sometimes she give too much advice and jumps to conclusions.”*

Positive Aspects of Living in the District of West Vancouver

Youth, ages 11-13, were asked what they liked about living in West Vancouver. They stated:

“There is a lot to do; a lot of people and it is really beautiful.”

“It is nice and safe.”

“It is safe and lets the youth speak.”

“You can walk to places or ride a bike.”

“There are a lot of places to hang out.”

“It’s clean and fun to hang.”

“Everyone is nice and it is quiet.”

Key Findings from Youth Ages 11-13

Youth Activities

- ❖ On average, youth engage in technology use one to two hours a day and television viewing for one to hours a day.
- ❖ For younger youth, key elements that support activities being fun are: presence of supportive relationships (friends, instructors); hands-on or physical activities; having some choice within the activities; and the inclusion of food.
- ❖ When asked to generate a list of activities that they enjoyed and found important, youth reported engaging in physical activities, music-related activities, hanging out with friends and television viewing.
- ❖ When given a list of activities and asked to indicate those in which they have participated and enjoyed, youth indicated numerous activities as enjoyable. Typically, the top activities (i.e., hanging out with friends; field trips; youth drop-in; hiking or biking; going to the movies; and snow sports) have a social focus deemed critical to youth .
- ❖ Younger youth identify the presence of friends as the number one factor that leads them to participate in activities. Over half of the youth did indicate, however, that if a friend was not available to attend an activity, then having a parent take them to check out the activity would convince them to try it.
- ❖ Activities which are enjoyable need to have instructors with whom youth can relate and feel comfortable. According to those surveyed, a “good “instructor should possess some of the following characteristics: nice; patient; laid back; can relate to youth; and are able to make learning fun.
- ❖ Youth prefer having a balance between too much freedom and not too much supervision. Youth agreed that the community centre offered this balance.
- ❖ This particular group of youth are regular participants of the Garage Youth Drop-In and programs (e.g., First Aid course, Babysitting course) and other activities at the community centre. A number of them use other District facilities in The District of West Vancouver such as the sports fields, swimming pool, beaches and parks, skating rink and the library. On average, they use District facilities two times per week.
- ❖ In order to find out about programs and activities offered by the District, youth use a variety of sources. Most cited are friends, family, the Community Centre, social media outlets, schools and informational pamphlets. Nine out of 10 youth indicate that it is ‘easy’ to get the information.

Youth Support

- ❖ When faced with a problem, most youth turn to friends their age and then to a parent. When asked to identify an adult in their life whom they consider important to them, 9 out of 10 youth identify a parent.

Feedback from Youth Aged 13-18: Ambleside Youth Centre

Participant Background

Gender and Age: 12 youth (5 females and 7 males)⁶; ages 13-18 (mean age of 16)

Living situation: 9 youth live with their parents; 2 youth live in a foster home; 1 youth lives with other extended family members.

Neighbourhood: Youth attended one of five schools: West Vancouver Secondary School (8 youth); Rock Ridge School (1 youth); Mulgrave School (1 youth); Lucas Centre (1 youth); West Vancouver Access (1 youth). Two youth resided in North Vancouver. The remaining 10 youth resided in one of four neighbourhoods: Caulfield; British Properties; Ambleside; Hollyburn.

Youths' First Language:

- ❖ 7 youth reported English; 1 youth reported Korean ; 1 youth reported Farsi; and 3 youth reported English and one or more languages (i.e., French, Spanish, Russian, Farsi)

Parental First Language:

- ❖ 6 youth reported English; 1 youth reported Russian; 1 youth reported French, Romanian and Hungarian; 1 youth reported Farsi and Turkish; and 3 youth reported English and one additional language (Italian, Hungarian, Chinese)

Ambleside Youth Centre (AYC)

Five of the 12 youth had been to AYC in the past. They reported positive experiences both in activities and with staff who run the centre.

"There are more people here. Really open space. So many cool and popular people don't come here from our school. The people that work here really help you and they are so nice. If you have a problem they help you solve it."

"I come here because one of my good friends comes here a lot. I know the new person [staff] from before he worked here. Since I knew one of the workers it isn't weird. We just chill out and watch movies. Friends play board games."

"I was only here once before. When I came in I was happy and surprised and saw this movie going on and it happened to be my favourite movie. It is a very comfortable place to hang out."

⁶ Note that 2 youth joined the group after it had commenced.

Two among the group indicated that the AYC has a reputation for attracting youth who struggle with issues.

“My friends, the most popular ones, say that all the kids from [specific District program] go here. All the bad kids go here. They do drugs. They just say swear words. Sometimes it happens but not that much.”

“I used to come here a lot but then friends kind of told me.... They strongly suggested [that I not come here] and after that I became more self-aware. It seems that there are only children with issues. They meet here and do crystal meth.”

Youth Aged 13-18 Engagement: Important Activities and Key Elements

Youth were asked to think about activities that they have participated in during the past. In thinking about these activities, they were asked to describe the key elements that led to an activity being experienced as fun. Comments were analyzed for themes which are presented below.

| Activity | Theme | Comments from Youth |
|---|-------------------------------------|---|
| Ambleside Youth Centre | Nice teachers Activities | <i>When I was younger I used to come here every day. What I really liked was the acting program. I liked the teachers. They were really nice. Also ping pong. I came and barely knew how to play ping pong and I really liked it. I spent so much time here playing ping pong.</i> <i>The pool tables.</i> |
| Beach | Activity Natural gathering place | <i>In summer 2010, it was good weather and all I did was play beach volleyball on the beach. And all I did was go around and ask girls to play. No one needed to be called because everyone was there every day. We liked it so much.</i> |
| Large scale concerts (e.g., Alice in Chains; Metallica) | Activity | <i>Live environment.</i> <i>Listen to music – wherever I can.</i> |
| Former local businesses (movie theatre; bowling alley) | Natural gathering place | <i>It was just a place to hang out.</i> <i>You kind of want to go somewhere where your friends are going and people you like.</i> |

Older youth have a wide range of activities of interest (i.e., some youth prefer some activities over others). A common element regardless of the activity is a desire to be with other youth in a relatively non-structured environment, with or without adult supervision.

Activities Youth Have Tried and Enjoyed

From a list of activities, youth were asked to indicate the activities that they have tried and enjoyed.

| Activity | Number of Times Cited by Youth as Activities they have tried |
|---|--|
| Go to movies | 12 |
| Hang out with friends | 11 |
| Watch TV/videos | 11 |
| Team Sports | 10 |
| Use the internet | 10 |
| Listen to music | 10 |
| Shopping | 10 |
| Run | 9 |
| Outdoor activities (hike, bike) | 9 |
| Read | 9 |
| Go to live music events | 9 |
| Gym / workout | 9 |
| Go to library | 9 |
| Fitness classes | 9 |
| Camping | 8 |
| Water Sports | 8 |
| Field trips | 6 |
| Art projects | 6 |
| Yoga | 5 |
| Dance | 5 |
| Attend youth drop-in | 4 |
| Snow Sports (e.g. Skiing, Boarding) | 4 |
| Build or fix things (e.g., woodworking, fixing bikes) | 3 |
| Martial Arts | 3 |
| Skateboarding | 2 |
| Other: take dog to the beach | 1 |

District Facilities and Programs

Youth, aged 13-18, were asked to report on their use of District Facilities and programs/activities.

Number of Youth who Report Using District of West Vancouver Facilities

| Facility | Number of Youth Reporting Using the Facility |
|--|--|
| Public Library | 10 |
| Public Beach or Park | 10 |
| Sports Field | 6 |
| Community Centre Fitness Center | 5 |
| Public Arts Facility (e.g. Kay Meek, Silk Purse, Museum) | 5 |
| Ambleside Youth Centre | 5 |
| Community Center Program | 4 |
| Public Skating Rink | 4 |
| Public Swimming Pool | 3 |
| Health Clinic | 2 |

During the focus group, youth were asked how many times they visited the **West Vancouver Community Centre** during the past two months. Three youth indicated that they only go when it is required by the school for P.E.; two youth visited the centre 1 – 2 times per month (i.e., Clinic, volunteering); four youth used the centre facilities weekly (e.g., pool, gym, ping pong).

Youth were asked to indicate which District programs they have attended in the past.

| Program | Number of Youth who have attended the program |
|---|---|
| Ambleside Youth Centre (AYC) | 7 |
| Volunteering | 7 |
| Training: Babysitting Class, First Aid | 6 |
| West Vancouver Community Centre (WVCC) Youth Lounge | 5 |
| Youth Committees (e.g., Youth Advisory Committee; Recreation Advisory Team; Student Work and Advisory Team) | 3 |
| Ambleside Youth Centre (AYC) Outreach Activity | 2 |
| Youth Week Events | 1 |
| Youth Awards | 1 |

Among this group volunteering was the most enjoyable activity for three of the youth; AYC for two youth; Youth committee work for two youth; and the WVCC Youth Lounge for one youth.

Sources of Information about programs, activities, and services for youth in West Vancouver

Youth, aged 13-18, were asked how they found out about programs and activities sponsored by the District. They were also asked to indicate if they found it easy to find out about programs and services and which is the best source for information.

| Source | Number of Times Used by Youth in the Group |
|------------------------------------|--|
| School | 11 |
| Friends | 9 |
| Youth Workers | 7 |
| Social Media (e.g., Facebook) | 7 |
| Parent/Family | 5 |
| West Vancouver Community Center | 5 |
| Ambleside Youth Center | 4 |
| Information Pamphlets | 3 |
| West Vancouver Public Library | 3 |
| TV/Radio/Magazines | 1 |
| District of West Vancouver website | 1 |
| Social Service Agency | 1 |

Ease of Accessing information: Seven youth indicated that information was 'easy' to access while four youth indicated that information was not easy to access.

Best Source for information: The three top sources for information about programs, activities and services were Facebook, schools and friends.

Supports For Youth Aged 13-18

From a list of possible supports, youth were asked to identify where they found support when they had a problem for which they needed help. They were then asked to identify desired sources of support.

Places for Youth to Go for Help With a Problem

| Place | Number of Youth who would go to this place | |
|---|--|---|
| Friend your age | 10 | |
| Friend who is older (but still a teen) | 8 | |
| Parent | 6 | |
| School counsellor | 6 | |
| One-to-one youth worker | 6 | |
| A safe place to drop in and relax | AYC | 3 |
| | North Shore Neighbourhood House | 1 |
| | Friend's House | 1 |
| Peer counsellor | 5 | |
| Social Worker | 5 | |
| Older brother or sister | 5 | |
| Group for girls only | 3 | |
| A teacher | 3 | |
| Group for boys only | 2 | |
| Groups that have youth who have the same cultural background as you | 2 | |
| Counsellor outside of the school | 2 | |
| Doctor | 2 | |
| Probation officer | 1 | |

During the focus group, when discussing supports and services for youth in West Vancouver, a common theme was the **limited formal supports (e.g., probation, social workers) and services for more at-risk youth**

"Supports are in North Vancouver."

"I have to go to North Van to get support most of the time."

"There are no social workers or probation officers in West Van."

All youth knew about the available support that could be accessed in West Vancouver.

"Youth Centre – it's the only place in West Van to get support."

"There is a youth worker at our school in West Van."

“There is a health clinic where you can get advice.”

“There are counsellors at school.”

“Lots of youth workers and school counsellors. We are packed full of youth workers.”

“Most of my friends don’t go to people. They don’t want to be known. They go to the Kids Help Phone or go to their nice friends.”

A small number of youth voiced concerns that West Vancouver places **more emphasis on services for older adults rather than youth.**

“In West Van, they keep everything good for youth out of West Van.”

“We must bring out [eliminate] the stereotype of West Van as being only seniors living here because there are so many youth living here.”

“It kind of seems that people in West Van make everything about senior citizens or middle-aged people. They don’t really care where young people go and they complain about where young people go.”

“Sometimes the older generation assumes things about youth.”

“The mall seems to be a big issue with a lot of the youth. Getting into trouble because they are not supposed to just hang out. There are all sorts of things to do there but it’s not the place to just be loitering.”

Supports and Services Needed for Youth Aged 13-18

| Needed Supports and Services | Number of Youth Indicating this as a need |
|---|---|
| Places to just hang out | 9 |
| Community volunteer services | 8 |
| Employment support | 7 |
| Events and social activities | 7 |
| Support for sexual identity issues | 6 |
| Homework club | 6 |
| Life coach counselling | 5 |
| Parent/teen mediation counselling | 4 |
| Discussion groups | 4 |
| Probation services | 4 |
| Housing information | 4 |
| Counselling for disordered eating | 4 |
| Youth health clinic | 4 |
| Peer leadership training | 4 |
| Alcohol and drug counselling | 3 |
| One to one workers (to help you if you need extra support) | 3 |
| Referrals to Social Services | 3 |
| Group for girls only | 2 |
| Groups that have youth who have the same cultural background as you | 2 |
| Counsellors | 2 |
| Cultural workers (to help you feel more comfortable in Canada if you came from another country) | 2 |
| Programs to support parents | 2 |

During the focus group, youth provided several specific additional activities that they would like to see in West Vancouver. One youth noted that the bus system could be more user-friendly by running more frequent buses, particularly in the British Properties. Other additions were: sports-related; entertainment-related; social-service related; cultural-related; and casual places to hang out with friends.

Sports-Related Additions

- ❖ Outside pool

“They have it all over Burnaby.”

- ❖ Better beach volleyball courts that have more sand

- ❖ Increased access to sports fields

“Instead of building six soccer fields in a row....they only use two at a time. The soccer fields are only for teaching. I have had issues playing on them before. I have had a coach come up to me before – they really think they own the dirt they are walking on.”

- ❖ Increased Indoor gym time

“Open gym - I was going there for the whole summer. There weren't many people. But these days, there are so many people. Too many people. It is so annoying. Mostly on Friday but sometimes on Saturday.”

Entertainment-Related Additions

- ❖ Movie theatres
- ❖ Bowling alley
- ❖ Laser Tag
- ❖ Go-carting

Social Service Related Additions

- ❖ Safehouse

“I had to stay at the safehouse for awhile and I had to get up really early to get to school on time.” (in reference to how far the youth had to travel to get to school)

- ❖ Housing

“We don't have a lot of apartments. If someone needs a place to stay the closest place to stay is near the Phibbs Exchange.”

“I am trying to find a place to live but I know that if I move out of West Van, I will have to drop out of school.”

- ❖ Employment Support⁷

“I gave up having interests in certain jobs. I am just looking for any job. There is nothing.”

“I went there before [One Stop Career Stop] and the teacher helped my put together my resume. I have references and still nothing.”

⁷ One youth mentioned two places for youth employment support. One Stop Career Stop http://www.ywcavan.org/content/One_Stop_Career_Shop/190 and Wired 4 Success <http://www.bowmanemployment.com/wired.htm>

“If we look to more to youth, we will find out that they have a lot of talent. Give them some funds. If they have youth work from this age, they will make youth stronger for the future.”

Cultural-Related

- ❖ More events that highlight diverse cultures.

“At school you see lots of Iranian and Chinese people but it would be nice to see other celebrations of culture, like more Spanish and Italian cultural activities.”

Places to Hang out with friends

“Everything closes early and the only place that is open is McDonalds and everyone just sits there. If there was somewhere else where youth could go...”

“If there was somewhere open late where youth could go.”

“It is good to have a social place for youth to go. And it is supervised all the time so youth wouldn’t be running around getting into trouble.”

(on having an adult there) “It would be great thing. There has to be a middle ground. As long as youth can come and go. I would think it is a great idea.”

Important Adults in the Lives of Youth Aged 13-18

Youth were asked to identify important adults in their life and rate how helpful this person(s) is in providing support. A rating scale of 1 to 5 (1=not helpful to 5= very helpful) was used. N.B. Two youth noted which adults were important but they did not provide ratings.

| Person/People | Number of youth who turn to this person /people | Number of youth who rated the person/people with rating | | | | |
|-------------------|---|---|------------------|------------------|---------------|--------------|
| | | Not at all helpful | A little helpful | Somewhat helpful | Quite helpful | Very helpful |
| Friends | 9 | | 2 | | 2 | 5 |
| Youth workers | 8 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Parents/Family | 7 | | | 1 | 4 | 2 |
| Social worker | 3 | 1 | 2 | | | |
| Doctor | 1 | | | | | |
| School counsellor | 1 | | | | | 1 |
| Foster parent | 1 | | | | 1 | |
| ISP worker | 1 | | | | | 1 |

Positive Aspects of Living in the District of West Vancouver

Youth were asked what they liked about living in West Vancouver. They stated:

“Peaceful.”

“Snowboard in winter and tan in summer.”

“Safe and the people are usually pretty helpful and friendly.”

“People are friendly.”

“You know where everything is.”

“Clean, calm, relaxing city.”

“Beach, skate park, volleyball courts.”

“Even though there aren’t many places to hang out, the places that there are, are in walking distance.”

Key Findings from Youth Aged 13-18 at Ambleside Youth Centre

Youth Activities

- ❖ Actual preferred activities vary among youth. Despite this variation, a common element is the opportunity to be with other youth (friends or potential friends) in a non-structured environment, sometimes with and sometimes without adult supervision.
- ❖ Among those youth who have experiences accessing Ambleside Youth Centre in the past, their experiences are positive. AYC has a reputation among some youth as being a centre for those who have behavioural issues.
- ❖ Youth noted several activities that they have tried in the past and enjoyed. Top of the list includes going to movies, hanging out with friends and watching T.V./videos.
- ❖ The public library and public beaches and parks are the most popular municipal spaces. A smaller number of youth use sports fields, the community centre fitness centre, public arts facilities and Ambleside Youth Centre.
- ❖ Ambleside Youth Centre, Volunteering; Babysitting and First Aid Courses; and the West Vancouver Community Centre Youth Lounge are the most attended Municipal programs. Volunteering is the most enjoyable experience.
- ❖ Most youth find out about programs, activities, and services from school, friends, youth workers or social media. Seven of the 12 youth found information ‘easy to access’.

- ❖ Overall, youth appreciate many aspects of life in West Vancouver such as the abundance of outdoor activities, the people, the safety, and the peacefulness of the community.

Youth Support

- ❖ When youth need help solving a problem, the most frequent sources of support used are: a peer; an older adolescent; a parent; a school counsellor; or a youth worker.
- ❖ Youth indicate that West Vancouver is limited in their specialized services for youth at-risk, such as housing and social workers. In order to get specialized services they must travel to North Vancouver. Youth who may not be severely at-risk are aware that support is available. .
- ❖ Youth perceive that West Vancouver places more emphasis on the services for older adults.
- ❖ The biggest needs of older youth are: places to hang out (e.g., sports-related, entertainment-related), community volunteer service; employment services; and events and social activities.
- ❖ Friends and family provide the most support to this group of youth however they also have significant contact with youth workers throughout the school and community. This contact is experienced as helpful by most youth.

Feedback from Youth Aged 13-19: Multisite

Participant Background

Gender and Age

34 youth (19 females; 14 males; and 1 identified as both genders) aged 13-19 (mean age of 14.5 years) completed a survey at either a focus group or through one of the youth workers at Ambleside Youth Centre or West Vancouver Community Centre. Of these 34 youth, 13 (10 females; 3 males)⁸ participated in a focus group held at the West Vancouver Community Centre.

Living situation:

29 youth live with their parents; 2 youth live in a group home; 2 youth live in a home-stay; and 1 youth lives with an extended family member.

School and Neighbourhood

Youth attended one of seven schools: West Vancouver Secondary School (24 youth); Sentinel Secondary (3 youth); Collingwood (2 youth); Argyle Secondary (1 youth); Rock Ridge School (1 youth); Vancouver Learning Network (1 youth); Pauline Johnson Elementary School (1 youth); and 1 youth had already graduated. Thirteen youth resided Ambleside. The remaining 21 youth resided in one of the following neighbourhoods: Dunderave; Caufield; Sentinel Hill; Queens; Park Royal; Eagle Harbour; Marine Drive; and three of the youth reported living outside of West Vancouver.

Youths' First Language

24 youth reported English; 5 youth reported Chinese; 2 youth reported Farsi; 2 youth reported French; 2 youth reported Japanese; 1 youth reported Korean; 1 youth reported Cantonese; 1 youth reported Turkish; and 1 youth reported Russian.

Note: 4 youth reported English and one or more languages

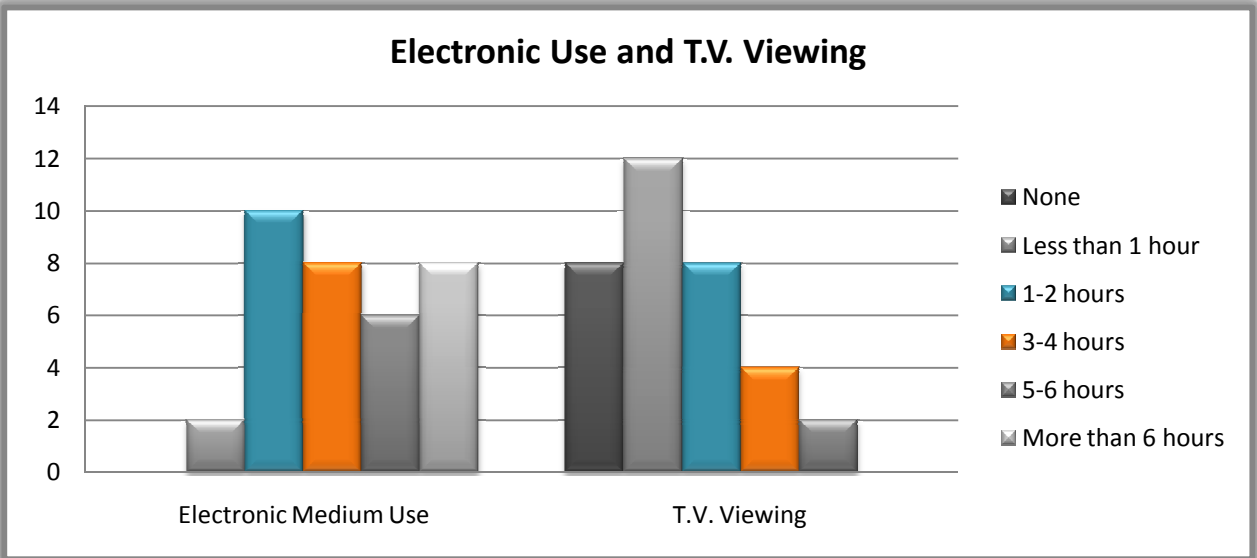
Parental First Language

14 youth reported English ; 6 youth reported Chinese; 3 youth reported Farsi; 2 youth reported Korean; 1 youth reported French ; 1 youth reported Romanian; 1 youth reported Kushi; 1 youth reported Russian; 1 youth reported Turkish; 1 youth reported Japanese; 1 youth reported English and Hebrew ; 1 youth reported English and a First Nations Language; 1 youth reported English, Farsi, Chinese, French, Arabic, Turkish and Swiss

⁸ Note that one participant left early due to other commitments and as such did not participate in the final focus group discussion question.

Electronic Devices and Television

Youth were asked to report on the amount of time they engaged in use of technology (e.g., Game Boys, Xboxes, Cell Phone Use) and television viewing. On average, this age group reported spending 3-4 hours using technology and less than 1 hour watching television a day.



Youth Engagement: Important Activities and Key Elements

Activities Youth (Aged 13-19) Have Tried and Enjoyed

From a list of activities, youth were first asked to indicate the activities that they have tried and enjoyed. They were then asked to review the list to indicate those activities that they have not tried but would like to try in the future.

| Activity | Number of Times Cited by Youth as Activities They Have Tried and Enjoyed | Number of Times Cited by Youth as Activities They Would Like to Try |
|---|--|---|
| Use the internet | 32 | 0 |
| Go to the movies | 31 | 0 |
| Hang out with friends | 31 | 0 |
| Listen to music | 30 | 0 |
| Go to live music events | 26 | 1 |
| Watch TV/videos | 25 | 0 |
| Outdoor activities (hike, bike) | 23 | 1 |
| Shopping | 23 | 1 |
| Gym / workout | 20 | 0 |
| Snow sports (e.g. Skiing, Boarding) | 20 | 1 |
| Camping | 20 | 4 |
| Team Sport | 19 | 2 |
| Read | 18 | 1 |
| Run | 18 | 2 |
| Attend youth drop-in | 15 | 3 |
| Arts projects | 14 | 4 |
| Field trips | 13 | 2 |
| Yoga | 12 | 6 |
| Dance | 11 | 6 |
| Martial Arts | 11 | 7 |
| Go to library | 11 | 1 |
| Water Sport | 10 | 4 |
| Skateboarding | 10 | 4 |
| Build or fix things (e.g., woodworking, fixing bikes) | 10 | 5 |
| Fitness classes | 8 | 5 |
| Other (poetry slams; going to the beach; badminton; swimming; travel) | 5 | 0 |

Important Elements to Activity Participation

Youth, aged 13-19, were asked to indicate what things about an event or activity make them decide to attend. Youth noted several elements that were related to the structure of the activity or the content of the activity. (NB. The 13 focus group participants were not asked to complete this question on the survey as it was discussed in the focus group.)

| Structural Element | Number of Youth indicating that Element is Important |
|--|--|
| Friends are going | 8 |
| Looks fun | 6 |
| There is music | 4 |
| Free or cheap | 3 |
| Depends on who is going to the event or activity | 2 |
| Must be beneficial in some way | 2 |
| Free food | 2 |
| No drugs or alcohol | 1 |
| Non-educational | 1 |
| Good weather | 1 |
| Camping | 1 |
| Nice decorations | 1 |
| Little supervision at event | 1 |
| Food and drinks | 1 |
| New and interesting | 1 |
| Good reputation | 1 |
| Content Element | Number of Youth indicating that Element is Important |
| Depends on the event or activity | 3 |
| Sports-related | 2 |
| Art- related | 2 |
| Cooking class | 1 |
| Language class | 1 |

Focus Group Reflection on Important Elements to Event/Activity Participation

Among the 13 focus group participants, five key elements lead youth, aged 13-19, to participate in an event/activity. These 5 elements are as follows.

1. Friends are attending the event/activity.
2. Good music is part of the event.
3. There is food at the event.
4. There are inexpensive things to buy or free give-a-ways.
5. The event is located in West Vancouver.

Youth noted recent fun events such as: Gig Nights at Ambleside Youth Centre; Chocolate Fondue Night at the West Vancouver Community Centre; Food Bank Fundraiser; Columba; Community Day, and the Youth Talent Show during the Olympics. Some of these events had youth input in terms of the planning of the event. School-based events that were seen as fun were: the International Food Fair at West Vancouver Secondary and the Asian New Year Performance, both of which were student driven.

Overall, youth preferred one-time events, particularly if they are new or novel, as opposed to weekly activities. The exception to this was the work on youth committees which some of the youth participated in at the Community Centre. They liked the idea of having an event that they could attend at their leisure and where they were free to stay as long or as short as they wanted. Due to transportation issues, having the event in West Vancouver was seen as important as many youth walked to various places or took the bus.

"I like Community Day. I like it because there are lots of different tables, crafts people have made. It is nice weather and you hang out with your friends, you can just walk around and see everything."

"There is good music, good live music. There were paintings around the whole room." (about Gig Night at Ambleside Youth Centre.)

"There was a talent show during the Olympics. It was really good because there were 10 youth bands from the Lower Mainland."

"It was a party. It was very easy to get in. Just \$5, you get hot dogs and you can chat to people from other high schools." (about the Food Bank Fundraiser)

"I liked when the Olympic torch came into West Van, there was a huge party in the Rec Centre. There was cheap food, music and free stuff."

"There was hot chocolate, lights - it was cool. Great music. There was a lot of people." (about Columba)

Reasons for Non-Participation in a Desired Activity/Event

Youth were asked to think about an activity in which they would like to participate and identify potential reasons for non-participation. (NB. The 13 focus group participants were not asked to complete this question on the survey as it was discussed in the focus group.)

| Reason for Non-Participation | Number of Youth Citing this Reason for Non-Participation |
|---|--|
| Friends are not going | 6 |
| No time | 4 |
| Youth not in my age range | 3 |
| Have other plans | 2 |
| Unsafe (e.g., the actual activity or presence of drugs) | 2 |
| Not feeling well | 2 |
| Too late at night | 1 |
| English language issues | 1 |

Focus Group Reflection on Elements that Lead to Non-Participation in an Event/Activity

Among the 13 focus group participants, they identified the following 8 reasons for not attending an event.

1. **Friends are not attending the event:** Youth noted this as the number one reason.
2. **Expensive:** Youth felt that more than \$15-\$20 was prohibitive unless it was a major event. However one youth did note that youth will pay more if you get more, e.g., going to a concert of a well-known artist.
3. **Inconvenient Location:** West Vancouver is more convenient.
"If it is downtown, it's kind of hard to get to."
4. **Inconvenient Time:** Weekends are best due to other school commitments during the school year. During the school year, weekdays are harder to make time due to homework.
5. **Boring and Tagged as Educational:** Events that are advertised in an unappealing way.
"If you advertise and it looks boring and then calling it educational....youth won't want to come. But if you highlight that there will be food or music, youth would be interested in coming. For example, that free concert, Columba, was really well advertised as a free concert and that seemed to draw a lot of attention."
6. **Don't know about an event:** One youth felt that there are many events/activities that go on that youth don't find out about in time.
7. **Poor weather at outdoor events**
8. **Age range too wide:** Youth prefer to attend events and activities with youth who are in the same age range. For example, events for high school only were more appealing than events that included young adults or preteens.
*"It's really awkward if there are 14 year olds and 21 year olds. I think 19 is the cut off."
"I think 16-21."*

Past Experience in Trying Out New Activities/Events

25 youth, aged 13-19, indicated that they had tried a new event or activity upon the suggestion of an adult or a friend. 20 of the 25 did go to one or more activities/events that were suggested. In 15 instances the went with a friend; 6 went alone; 1 with a parent; and 1 with a sibling.

Among those youth who attended a new event, they were asked to report on their experience.

| Experience | Number of Youth reporting this experience |
|---|---|
| Difficult at first but after a while was able to engage in the event/activity | 6 |
| It was fun | 5 |
| Awkward | 3 |
| Interesting | 3 |
| Liked the experiences and engaged easily | 2 |
| Good | 2 |
| Okay | 1 |

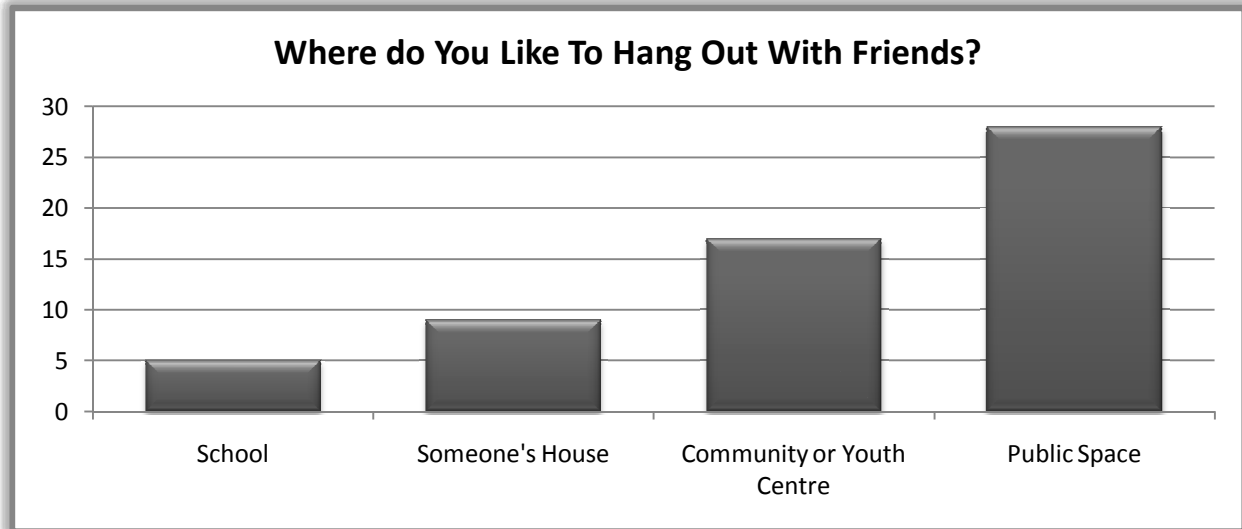
Differences Between Public and District of West Vancouver Facility Spaces

Youth were asked to consider the difference between spending time in public spaces (e.g., malls, bowling alleys) versus District of West Vancouver Facility spaces (e.g., community centres, swimming pool etc.). Note that 7 youth felt there was no difference between hanging out at public spaces versus District of West Vancouver Facility spaces.

| Differences | Number of Youth Noting this Difference | Example of comments |
|---|--|--|
| A public space can be more relaxing and fun as opposed to youth or community centres where activities are already established | 6 | <p><i>At public space is like relaxing and playing. At community centre and school is like more serious, but still have joys. Just knowing that we both have duties to do.</i></p> <p><i>If I'm hanging out at the youth centre, it's more like I'm volunteering to be here. The real fun happens outside youth centre because we don't know anyone particularly (ex downtown parties, streets, etc.) so we don't have to be self-conscious.</i></p> <p><i>Public space is more entertaining, relaxing, various interesting things (people, stores, food, music). Community centre people taking classes, swimming, doing positive things.</i></p> <p><i>Public space feels better and more relaxed. No one wants to go to school when they don't have to.</i></p> |
| More sense of freedom and less supervision in public places | 5 | <p><i>Hanging out with friends outside of the community centre or school is better because you have more freedom; the supervision is a big factor; it feels like someone's always watching you at school but at the café you feel like it's just you and your friends; I feel over-supervised at school and often at community centres. In public places we can let loose and be free; public space has the most freedom; community centre more freedom; school - less freedom.</i></p> |
| Public spaces are not that safe | 2 | <p><i>Safer at school; hanging out in a public space is much more dangerous.</i></p> |
| More support at youth center | 2 | <p><i>People hate teenagers and youth centres make places more accepting for youth.</i></p> |
| More accustomed to going to public spaces | 1 | <p><i>We're more familiar with going to a public place than going to the youth/community center. It's more our habit to go to a public place than to the community center.</i></p> |

Hanging Out with Friends

Youth were asked to indicate where they choose to hang out with friends. Youth chose one or more locations where they preferred to hang out with friends.



28 participants checked 'Public Space'. The examples of public spaces they gave are as follows:

| Public Space Example | Number of Youth Choosing This Public Space |
|----------------------|--|
| Mall | 15 |
| Downtown | 7 |
| Beach | 6 |
| Movies | 5 |
| Libraries | 2 |
| Park | 2 |
| Café | 2 |
| Paint ball/Laser Tag | 2 |
| Concert/Club | 2 |
| Restaurant | 1 |
| Karaoke | 1 |
| Gym | 1 |
| Somewhere crowded | 1 |

Youth were asked to explain the reasons for enjoying certain places.

| Reason | Number of Youth Indicating this Reason | Example of comments |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| Fun | 7 | <i>Cause that place is more fun to us; to have fun; cause its fun; fun; I like to go somewhere outside of West Vancouver area, like North Van or Vancouver. West Van is very serene and scholastic, it's a good community for school and other good stuff but FUN is more on the other areas. (5 comments)</i> <i>Very amusing; interesting, gaining some exciting experiences. (2 comments)</i> |
| Enjoy time with friends | 5 | <i>I just really enjoy being with friends no matter where we are; friends; with friends; better to communicate with friends; I like sharing opinions with others.</i> |
| Variety of things to do | 4 | <i>We can have a lot of things to do and enjoy at these places; more to do; stuff to do; we like going to public places because there's lots to stuff to do there.</i> |
| Nice environment | 3 | <i>Beach because of the view and ocean; it's a nice atmosphere at the beach it's in nature so it's not so artificial like in the mall; because I like how you can do outdoor activities there.</i> |
| More freedom | 3 | <i>Because at this certain places you're more free; more freedom; Too many rules/strictness at school and community centre. Feel more independent from parents and adults at malls, beaches etc.'</i> |
| Shopping | 3 | <i>Clothes; stuff to buy; attractive stores.</i> |
| A place to relax and chill out | 4 | <i>We like to hang out at our houses because it's somewhere we know and it's somewhere we can just chill out; I feel relaxed; relaxing.</i> |
| Events offered | 2 | <i>Youth centre because of its events; because of its events.</i> |
| Friendly people | 2 | <i>Ambleside Youth Centre because I get along with the workers and kids; friendly people.</i> |
| Geographical location | 1 | <i>It is close to home.</i> |
| Community centre as a 'meet up' place | 1 | <i>Well we could meet up there and then go somewhere else and then come back.</i> |
| Access to books | 1 | <i>I like reading</i> |
| Inexpensive | 1 | <i>In the Youth Lounge, things are really good and cheap, so we always want to go and have fun.</i> |
| Access to Fitness | 1 | <i>We also like to attend fitness classes or work out at the community center.</i> |
| Music | 1 | |
| Food | 1 | |

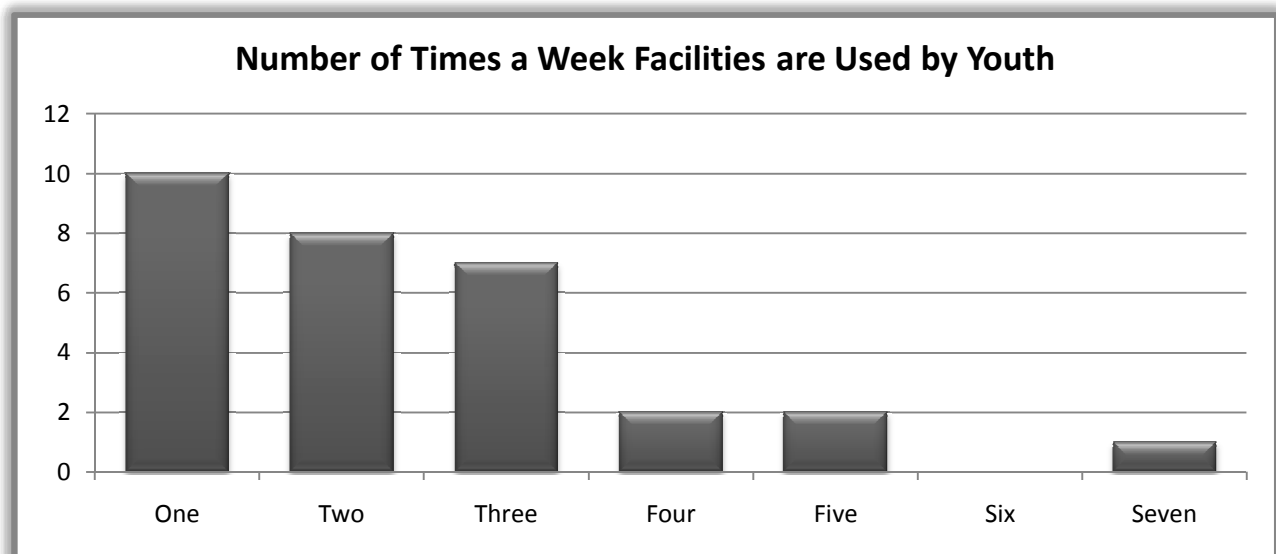
District Facilities and Programs

Use of District Facilities and Programs

Youth were asked to report on their use of District Facilities and programs/activities.

Number of Youth Aged 13-19 who Report Using District of West Vancouver Facilities

| Facility | Number of Youth Reporting Using the Facility |
|--|--|
| Public Beach or Park | 22 |
| Public Library | 19 |
| Community Center Program | 13 |
| Public Swimming Pool | 13 |
| Sports Field | 12 |
| Community Centre Fitness Center | 11 |
| Public Arts Facility (e.g. Kay Meek, Silk Purse, Museum) | 10 |
| Public Skating Rink | 10 |
| AYC | 9 |
| Rec Center | 5 |
| West Vancouver Youth Lounge | 4 |
| Community Center | 2 |



74% of youth report using District of West Vancouver Facilities one to three times per week.

Youth were asked to indicate which District programs/activities they have attended in the past. 13 youth indicated that the AYC and 9 youth indicated youth committees were the most enjoyable. 7 youth indicated that the youth lounge was the activity that they enjoyed the most. Other favoured activities were volunteering (4 youth); youth week events (3 youth); and youth conferences (3 youth).

| Program | Number of Youth who have attended the program |
|---|---|
| West Vancouver Community Centre (WVCC) Youth Lounge | 23 |
| Ambleside Youth Centre Drop-in (AYC) | 21 |
| Volunteering | 18 |
| Training: Babysitting Class, First Aid | 17 |
| Youth Committees (e.g., Youth Advisory Committee; Recreation Advisory Team; Student Work and Advisory Team) | 13 |
| Youth Week Events | 9 |
| Youth conferences | 6 |
| Ambleside Youth Centre (AYC) Outreach Activity | 4 |
| Youth Awards | 2 |
| Gleneagles Youth Garage | 1 |
| Other (West Vancouver Senior's Activity Centre) | 1 |

Sources of Information about programs, activities and services for youth in West Vancouver

Youth, aged 13-19, were asked how they found out about programs and activities that are sponsored by the District. They were also asked to indicate if they found it easy to find out about programs and services and which is the best source for information.

| Source | Number of Times Used by Youth in the Group |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Friends | 33 |
| Social Media (e.g., Facebook) | 18 |
| School | 16 |
| West Vancouver Community Center | 16 |
| Ambleside Youth Center | 14 |
| Parent/Family | 11 |
| Youth Workers | 9 |
| West Vancouver Public Library | 8 |
| TV/Radio/Magazines | 6 |
| District of West Vancouver website | 4 |
| Information Pamphlets | 2 |
| Gleneagles Community Center | 2 |
| E-mail | 2 |
| Google | 2 |
| Social Service Agency | 1 |
| Orientation | 1 |

Ease of Accessing information: 30 youth indicated that information was ‘easy’ to access while 4 youth indicated that information was not easy to access.

Best Source for information: The four top sources for information about programs, activities and services were: friends; social media; West Vancouver Community Center; and Ambleside Youth Center.

Youth were asked how the information would be easier for them to get.

| Theme | Number of comments | Example of comments |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|--|
| Facebook | 4 | <i>More on Facebook.</i> |
| At school | 3 | <i>Maybe if the school had announcements about events; more info into the schools but make sure the information is not made to look like its school-organized, people are less likely to go; in school teachers would talk about it.</i> |
| More printed materials | 3 | <i>More flyers; more posters, information.</i> |
| Friends | 2 | <i>Friends told me; just friends.</i> |
| More advertisement | 2 | <i>Leisure guide, North Shore News ; if people advertised better and made advertisements stand out.</i> |
| E-mail | 2 | |
| Translation of materials | 2 | <i>Need a person who is good at English; a translator to Farsi or much easier words.</i> |
| Internet | 1 | |
| Website with list of events | 1 | <i>If I knew a website with a list of upcoming events, that would be useful.</i> |
| Easy to navigate website | 1 | <i>Some websites are hard to navigate.</i> |

Supports For Youth

Supports For Youth

From a list of possible supports, youth were asked to identify where they found support when they had a problem with which they needed help. Then, youth were asked to identify desired sources of support.

Places for Youth to Go for Help With a Problem

| Place | Number of Youth who would go to this place | |
|---|--|---|
| Friend your age | 27 | |
| Parent | 20 | |
| Friend who is older (but still a teen) | 17 | |
| School counsellor | 12 | |
| A safe place to drop in and relax | AYC | 3 |
| | Youth Lounge | 2 |
| | Did not specify | 5 |
| A teacher | 9 | |
| Counsellor outside of the school | 9 | |
| One-to-one youth worker | 7 | |
| Social Worker | 7 | |
| Older brother or sister | 6 | |
| Peer counsellor | 5 | |
| Groups that have youth who have the same cultural background as you | 5 | |
| Doctor | 5 | |
| Group for girls only | 4 | |
| Group for boys only | 2 | |

Desired Supports and Services for Youth

| Needed Supports and Services | Number of Youth Indicating this as a need |
|---|---|
| Places to just hang out | 17 |
| Events and social activities | 14 |
| Employment support | 12 |
| Discussion groups | 12 |
| Youth health clinic | 12 |
| Support for sexual identity issues | 12 |
| Alcohol and drug counselling | 12 |
| Homework club | 11 |
| Life coach counselling | 10 |
| Cultural workers (to help you feel more comfortable in Canada if you came from another country) | 8 |
| Community volunteer services | 7 |
| Counselling for disordered eating | 7 |
| Peer leadership training | 7 |
| Groups that have youth who have the same cultural background as you | 7 |
| Housing information | 6 |
| Group for girls only | 6 |
| Counsellors | 6 |
| Referrals to Social Services | 5 |
| Programs to support parents | 5 |
| One to one workers (to help you if you need extra support) | 4 |
| Parent/teen mediation counselling | 4 |
| Group for boys only | 4 |
| Other (bowling alley, movie theatres; committees; different interests clubs; arcade; teen yoga place) | 6 |

Youth were asked to identify the top priorities for supports and services for youth in West Vancouver. The top 7 (indicated by 5 or more youth) are outlined below.

| Top Three Services and Supports | Number of Youth who Indicate this Should be a Priority |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Events and activities | 10 |
| Sexual identity support | 6 |
| Places to hang out | 8 |
| Employment support | 6 |
| Counselling | 5 |
| Homework club | 5 |
| Peer Leadership training | 5 |

Important Adults in the Lives of Youth

Youth, aged 13-19, were asked to identify an important adult in their life, the reason why this adult is important to them and how they felt after talking to this adult. (Note that 2 youth did not respond to this question). 24 participants specified the adult who was important to them (8 youth provided the reasons but did not identify the specific adult.).

| Important Adult | Number of Youth Noting this Adult as Important |
|-----------------|--|
| Both parents | 11 |
| Mother | 6 |
| Father | 3 |
| Grandparents | 2 |
| AYC worker | 2 |
| Sister | 1 |
| Psychologist | 1 |

Reason for Importance of Adult

| Reason for Importance | Number of comments | Example of comments |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|---|
| Reliable and trustworthy | 7 | <i>My mom, she is always there for me; she's really been there for me when people I've known my whole life weren't; he is reliable, I can share my personal story with him and he is very trustworthy; you can trust her; mom and my sister, tell them everything; my parents, they listen to me.</i> |
| Helpful and supportive | 7 | <i>My mom because she helps me with everything (almost); my parents, they will always help me solve problems and really patient; all the AYC youth workers, they have helped me in every way possible; they help me; my dad is supportive; my dad because he taught me how to ski.</i> |
| Fun to be around with | 4 | <i>My dad is fun; my grandfather makes my holidays too fun; they have fun with me; they are relaxed and outgoing and fun.</i> |
| They are my parents/family | 3 | <i>My parents because they are family; they're my parents; parents because they are important.</i> |
| Loves and cares | 3 | <i>My mom, because she loves me without reasons; my mom because she cares for me; they love me.</i> |
| A friend and not just an 'adult' | 3 | <i>They are very friendly to youth and they are very interested in what's going on in my life. I enjoy talking and spending time with this adult; they act like a youth, they are special because they are my friend, not just another adult; My mom, we are very good friends.</i> |
| Take care of basic needs | 2 | <i>Parents to live with; my parents, they feed me.</i> |
| Guidance | 2 | <i>He is older than me, so when I have troubles or problems in my life (study or anything else) I can talk to him and seek solutions; is able to provide me with advice.</i> |
| Other | 4 | <i>Treats me as an adult; buys me gifts; respects me; they are amazing.</i> |

Think of a time you went to this adult for help or support. How did you feel after talking to him/her or spending time with him/her?

| Experience | Number of Youth with this experience | Example of comments |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|
| Felt better or great | 14 | <i>It was great; feeling happy; awesome; I felt better; good; felt great; I felt much better; awkward at first but awesome.</i> |
| Released and relaxed | 5 | <i>Like a load is lifted off my shoulders; felt a little bit better, free; relaxed; released; the problem doesn't bother me anymore.</i> |
| Comfortable | 5 | <i>I felt comfortable; comfortable.</i> |
| Safe | 4 | <i>Secure, I can rely on him; safe; I felt cared and listened to!; It felt good to have someone to talk to who didn't judge me and I knew it was confidential.</i> |
| Did not help | 3 | <i>Not too much - I prefer a best friend's thoughts will help more; they don't help me; I don't really go to adults for advice, they react judgmentally or disappointed/mad.</i> |
| Guided | 2 | <i>Knowing what to do; they gave me good advice.</i> |
| Confident | 2 | <i>I felt more confident and I could solve my problems more easily; confident.</i> |
| Understood | 2 | <i>Good because she studied for a long time to find the root to problems; I feel good knowing that they have been through what I have been through and they know what they are talking about.</i> |
| Negative experience | 2 | <i>Bullied.</i> |
| Sometimes better, sometimes worse | 1 | |

One Change for Life in the District of West Vancouver

Youth, aged 13-19, were asked to indicate one thing that they would like changed for youth living in West Vancouver. (NB. The 13 focus group participants were not asked to complete this question on the survey as it was discussed in the focus group.)

| Change | Number of Youth Wanting this Change | Example of comments |
|--|-------------------------------------|--|
| More activities and places to hang out (general) | 9 | <i>We need more fun activities; more interesting things to do; more places to go; more sports activities; more stuff to do; Things to do to meet people who are like minded not necessarily the same age; It is so freaking boring here, no one with similar interests as me; just more Youth love options, and we're all different: concerts are a major + in my mind.</i> |
| More entertainment facilities | 7 | <i>Theatre; bowling; arcade; skatebowl.</i> |
| Multicultural environments and integration | 4 | <p><i>Someone say to me - you can stay here.</i></p> <p><i>Students from Asia and other countries can have more communication with each other.</i></p> <p><i>Give a speech or have a talk with the local students to remind them of not having racism with the international students. Please don't stay away from them cause the international students do want to make friends with them.</i></p> <p><i>Provide a multi-cultural environment for people from all over the world. Decrease racism in the community! Many international students are hoping to be accepted in this community and they want to participate in the community but they can't avoid racism..</i></p> |
| Reducing drug use/education of parents | 3 | <p><i>Helping their parents realize over 70% of kids spend their weekends drinking; less drug use.</i></p> <p><i>Add more safe and fun social events on Friday/Saturday nights. Events like Columba in the Park are great! They provide a fun time and deter people from drinking/drugs because they have something better to do.</i></p> |
| Improved transportation | 2 | <i>256 run twice an hour; better transit.</i> |
| Employment opportunities | 1 | <i>More jobs available.</i> |
| Travel opportunities | 1 | <i>To have more travelling groups, organized and held for youth.</i> |
| Later mall hours | 1 | <i>Mall should be open til 9 pm on Saturday.</i> |

Changes to Make West Vancouver Better for Youth

Among 12 focus group participants, they identified the following changes that they feel would make West Vancouver better for youth.

Entertainment/Hang-out Related

- Places for youth to go at night
- Return of a movie theatre
- Bowling alley with a small diner
- Youth café
- Arcade

International/immigrant Student Related Supports

- Assistance with orientation to Canada (e.g., how to get a bank account, SIN card)
- Events for international students to support them to make friends with Canadian students
- Classes for parents of immigrant students to help them adjust to Canada

Recreation-Related

- Lacrosse fields
- Skateboard Park

Transportation-Related

- More frequent service of buses 251, 252, 256
- Bike routes from Dundarave to Ambleside

Environment-Related

- Housing development should not continue to go up the mountainside
- Fewer cars on the road

Community Cohesiveness

- More encouragement for connections within neighbourhoods

Youth-Development-Related

- Provision of employment support (e.g., resume assistance, interviewing skills)

Appreciation for Aspects of Life in West Vancouver

Among the 12 focus group participants, they identified the following positive aspects that they feel make West Vancouver a good place to live.

Setting-Related

- The mountains and beaches
- Beauty of the landscape
- Calm and serene city

“Vancouver and North Van are loud but here it is quiet and calm.”

- Safety of the community
- Cleanliness of the community
- Good restaurants
- Size of the community (everything is close to youths’ residences)

“There are a lot of opportunities to do different activities. You can go running along the seawall or mountain biking or hiking or swimming. There is a lot of variety.”

Youth Service-Related

- Ambleside Youth Centre
- Youth Lounge
- West Vancouver Community Centre

“We have a great community centre. It’s very contemporary and it’s really beautiful.”

- Variety of courses and activities offered (e.g., CPR, martial arts, skating)
- Convenient location of services such as the West Vancouver Community Centre, Library

Other

- Adults want to hear what youth think.

Key Findings from Youth Aged 13-19: Multi-Site

Events/Activities Participation

- ❖ The top five activities preferred by older youth were: using the internet; going to the movies; hanging out with friends; listening to music; and going to live music events. By far the most important element that drives attendance is whether friends are going to the event/activity.
- ❖ One time, drop-in events are more favoured by older youth rather than regularly scheduled activities. The one exception to this are the regular meetings of youth committees on which some youth sit.
- ❖ Among survey respondents, the three most important elements that lead youth to attend events/activities are: going with friends to the activity/event; activity/event looks fun; and there is music at the activity/event. Among the youth who participated in the focus group, three additional elements were cited as being important: there is food; the activity/event is located in West Vancouver; and there are inexpensive things to buy or free give-a-ways.
- ❖ The issue of cost emerged on both the surveys and in the focus groups. Events/activities were more favoured if they were free or very low cost.

Events/Activities Non-Participation

- ❖ Youth noted several reasons for not attending an event/activity. Key reasons were friends were not going; they had no time; the event included too wide of an age range; located outside of West Vancouver; expensive ; and it looked boring.
- ❖ Most youth had tried a new event upon being encouraged by an adult or friend. Most went with a friend and a small number went alone. Overall, they had a positive experience.

Differences Between Public and District of West Vancouver Spaces

- ❖ 80% of youth saw differences between public and District of West Vancouver spaces. Key differences are: public spaces are more relaxed as there are no established activities, and there is more freedom and less supervision.
- ❖ Most youth prefer to hang out in public spaces compared to other spaces, particularly the mall followed by downtown Vancouver, the beach and the movies.
- ❖ Youth noted several reasons for liking certain spaces. The most cited reasons were: because they are fun; they can enjoy being with friends; there is a variety of things to do; and they like the environment.

Use of District Facilities and Programs

- ❖ The most utilized District Facilities in West Vancouver are: public beach and parks; public library; Community Centre programs; public swimming pool; sports fields; and the Community Centre Fitness Centre.

- ❖ 74% of youth in this sample reported using District of West Vancouver Facilities one to three times per week.
- ❖ In terms of programs, the top five programs/activities that older youth reported attending in the past are: WVCC Youth Lounge; AYC; Volunteering; Training classes; and Youth committees.

Sources of Information for Programs and Activities

- ❖ By far, the top way that youth find out about information about programs and activities is through friends, followed by Social Media, school, West Vancouver Community Centre and the Ambleside Youth Centre
- ❖ 88% of youth found it easy to access information.

Supports for Youth

- ❖ When youth need help with a problem, their first choice for support is a friend who is their age, followed by a parent, a friend who is older, and a school counsellor.
- ❖ Youth noted many needed supports and services for West Vancouver youth. The top identified needs are having more places to hang out; more events and social activities; employment support; discussion groups; youth health clinic; support for sexual identity issues; and drug and alcohol counselling.
- ❖ When asked to identify an important adult in their life, most youth indicated both parents or their mother.
- ❖ The key reasons youth feel an adult is important are: the adult is reliable, trustworthy, helpful, supportive, and fun to be around.
- ❖ When asked how they feel after talking to an adult they feel is important in their lives, most youth indicated they felt better, relaxed, comfortable, and safe. A small number of youth indicated that talking to the adult did not help or was a negative experience.

Changes for a More Youth-Friendly West Vancouver

- ❖ Youth identified more places to hang out and more activities as the top needs for West Vancouver. This includes more entertainment establishments such as a movie theatre and bowling alley.
- ❖ International students and immigrant youth noted that a reduction in racism and a more welcoming environment for international students and immigrant youth is needed in West Vancouver.

Appreciation for West Vancouver

- ❖ Youth appreciated the beautiful setting of West Vancouver with the beach and mountains that provide a lot of outdoor activity opportunities.
- ❖ The Community and Youth Centres were seen as very positive for youth.

Feedback from Parents

Participant Background

8 parents participated in a focus group⁹ and parent survey session; 6 additional parents completed the parent survey online.¹⁰ Parents had between one and three children between the ages of 10-18 (mean of 14 years). In total, these parents had 23 children among them. Just over half the children were female.

Neighbourhood

Parents and their children resided in the following neighbourhoods: Ambleside (7 families); Sandy Cove (2 families); Cedardale (2 families); Dundarave (2 families); and Upper Lonsdale (1 family).

First Language

13 of 14 parents reported English as their first language; 1 parent did not report their first language.

Positive Youth Program Experiences

Among parents in the focus groups, they identified 5 areas of positive experiences that their youth have had or continue to have in West Vancouver.

Excellent Structured Activities for Younger Youth

Parents did speak about the many activities that their children took part in when they were 12 and under but noted that as soon as they turned 13, youth were no longer able to participate in many of the activities due to age restrictions. This was challenging as youth were caught between programs for younger youth and slightly older youth activities, such as volunteering. Although programs for younger adolescents exist, the experience of parents is that it is much more limited.

“My daughter took gymnastics in the old rec centre. It was great. She was cut off – because of her age.”

One parent spoke of her daughter’s current situation now that she is no longer able to register for structured tennis lessons but rather, due to being 13, she only had the choice of a more unstructured setting.

⁹ Note that one parent came approximately at the mid-point of the focus group.

¹⁰ Note that three parents sent in email comments which are inserted where appropriate.

"I did register her for tennis but it's 20 kids in a gym, they split the gym and there's no instruction."

Positive Volunteer Experiences

For many of the older youth, the gap that arose from the decrease in formal programs was filled by engaging in volunteering which was experienced as highly positive by youth.

"I think that they did every camp and it's true when they reach that age of 12 you sort of think they run out of things to do but what they did was they volunteered and it has been an absolutely enriching and wonderful experience for them. She got the same wonderful experience in camp as being a leader. They are learning new activities as they do this and learning skills."

"Both my children have had very good experiences volunteering for North Shore Volunteering for seniors. The great thing is that it is intergenerational so you have the two generations coming together but the seniors are very non-judgmental. The seniors embrace them. It really boosts their self-esteem."

"My younger kids are enjoying the camps immensely but as they get older the camps are more limited but then the volunteering picks up and then the school work picks up and then they are a lot busier."

Leadership and Skill Development Training Opportunities

Parents also spoke of the positive experiences that their youth had in participating in opportunities for leadership and skill development training.

"Our daughter went through the work experience program through the youth centre last summer. It was fantastic. They spend a week or two teaching and then they place them. She had a great experience. She never had confidence before. After that she went in [local business] and she has been working."

"My daughter is getting leadership opportunities through the Municipality. They [youth] feel they were contributing."

"My son ran together with Police Dogs. He couldn't believe that he could run together with the Police and their dogs. I think it is wonderful that the Police spend time with youth so they can bond."

Positive Interactions at the Ambleside Youth Centre

The discussion around Ambleside Youth Centre focused on the positive interaction youth had at the centre; youth workers who they felt were outstanding; the shifts that parents made once they were able to see past the perceived negative reputation of the centre; and the need for such a youth-friendly centre to have some Municipal attention to improve the overall aesthetics of the building.

Parents whose children had experience spending time at the Ambleside Youth Centre had very positive regard for the facility. They found staff to be highly responsive to youth needs.

“The Youth Centre is phenomenal. There is no pass/fail. My son – one of the youth workers took him for Triathlon training every Thursday. So they went out some place – the pool, East Van. Because he needed something to do they, the people there, said “Oh, let’s do this. They have done so much for him [child]. There is a great resource there.”

“It’s cool in there – big screen TV, coaches, kids surfing the net. The guys playing pool.”

While what goes on in the Youth Centre is seen as outstanding, parents did indicate that the physical appearance of the outside of Ambleside Youth Centre is less than appealing. This led some youth to not consider going to the Centre.

“My children don’t like it because they don’t like the aesthetics of it. It’s dark, it’s run down. They say it’s a dump. It’s dark around it.”

“The first time I took my son there I was like ‘Is this it? The outside is frightening”[struck by darkness of the centre]

“It is the one place that West Vancouver could put some effort because it is a really cool place.”

Also, the Ambleside Youth Centre has a less than positive reputation, that although not merited, continues to persist in West Vancouver. One parent said that her children would never go there as they are intimidated by the Youth Centre due to the reputation it has for being a place that youth who use drugs hang out at. Another parent who was wary of the centre shifted his perceptions after his daughter attended an event there.

“You would think that trouble would start there but it doesn’t. My daughter would have never dreamed of going over there. They have a band there so they [friends who do go to the Centre] grabbed her and said ‘come on’ and it was fantastic. I went over to see what was going on and there were even a few parents there listening. So, she went a few times to listen to bands and that sort of thing. It wasn’t a scary place after getting in there and making a few friends.”

Interaction with West Vancouver Community Centre Youth Worker

Parents acknowledged the strong connections that the WVCC youth worker has with the youth with whom she works. Specifically, they were impressed by the way that she connects with youth with whom she has worked in the past even though significant time has passed. They find that youth are drawn toward her and enjoy participating in activities and events which she plans and this planning is often done with youth. Parents feel she is approachable and a great source of information.

“She sees the kids and she is amazing. She knows all the kids.”

“She encourages them.”

General Areas of Need for Programming and Service Increases

During the focus group, parents were asked what areas of youth programming and services need to be increased in West Vancouver. Parents noted 7 areas that they felt could benefit from increased attention.

Entry to Sports at Varying Levels Throughout Development

“These kids are very overdeveloped [in specific sports] so you are forced to play rep [sports] because if you don’t play rep there is nothing else for you. So then they just don’t play.”

“Not all of them want to practice three times a week. Some just want to play. We are so competitive. You push, push, push. You develop and develop them and they just shut down.”

“If they go into a House level, especially in hockey, everyone needs to be equal [level].” (seen as negative)

“Both my daughters wanted to learn hockey and they are at the beginner point because they are after 12. My older daughter got permission to play on the adult team. She wanted to do clinics. There is a gap for kids to stay involved in sports.”

“I can see a point in a kid’s age where there aren’t a lot of openings. Everyone is trying to get into the gymnastics club. It’s very booked. It becomes more streamlined as you get older. You have to be better and better as you get older.”

New Opportunities for Youth

“I would love it if the District would be open to new things. I have a contact, a national level Sensai in Kendo who is willing to coach for free. They could start a club and they wouldn’t charge the kids but if they had to pay for the room.....there are ways to adapt models.”

“There is give and take. We tried to get an art class running at Silk Purse and they were willing but they couldn’t get enough kids”

“It is good to have workshops for discussion groups. Mentorship workshops, negotiation workshops so kids will learn how to present their ideas.”

“The Municipality should be looking for opportunities for things that kids may not have in schools and will help them grow in a different kind of way. The less structured the better.”

Places for Kids to Hang Out

“The kids would all like to see a bowling alley come back and a movie theatre come back.”

“A kids nights for movies.”

Resume Builder Opportunities

“At 16 and 17 kids are looking for ways to build their resumes or have things to put on their university application so you know volunteering, being a part of some charity. They need that anyway.”

More Programming for Youth in Early Adolescence

“The younger kids, ages 14-16, who are too young to work, they need different things. It seems that they are too old for some courses and too young to work.”

Mental Health Services

“I would like to see kids’ emotional needs being addressed because that is not happening. That can happen at the District level. The mental illness rate has gone up, anxiety has gone up, depression is huge and we just push, push, push. I don’t think that their emotional needs are being addressed until it is too late. We don’t recognize it. There are no services available.”

“In this community, we strive to be the best; the schools strive to be the best; and those poor kids who have to be the best.”

Focus on Prevention

“We don’t do enough preventative [work]. We start from the top and say ‘don’t bully’ but we don’t start from the bottom and see why they are bullying. Everyone is so individual...the school is the school, the Police is the Police and we don’t function as a community.”

“I like the idea of partnerships for the social-emotional stuff that isn’t being met.”

“Programs like Ethics and Values that the Rotary does in partnership with school board.”

Parent Perceptions of Preferred Youth Activities

Parents were asked to indicate the activities that their youth liked to do in their free time.

| Activity | Number of Parents Indicating that Their Youth Liked this Activity |
|---|---|
| Listen to music | 13 |
| Go to movies | 13 |
| Hang out with friends | 12 |
| Shopping | 10 |
| Use the internet | 10 |
| Watch TV/videos | 10 |
| Gym/workout | 9 |
| Art projects | 9 |
| Go to live music events | 9 |
| Team Sports | 9 |
| Read | 8 |
| Run | 7 |
| Dance | 7 |
| Outdoor activities (hike, bike) | 7 |
| Water Sports | 7 |
| Snow Sports (e.g. Skiing, Boarding) | 6 |
| Yoga | 5 |
| Attend youth drop-in | 3 |
| Go to library | 3 |
| Field trips | 3 |
| Camping | 2 |
| Skateboarding | 2 |
| Build or fix things (e.g., woodworking, fixing bikes) | 2 |
| Fitness classes | 2 |
| Martial Arts | 1 |
| Climbing | 1 |
| Workshops and Personal Development | 1 |

Parents were asked if they would like to have more opportunities for their youth to participate in events and activities. 13 out of 14 participants replied that they would like more opportunities for their youth. Specifically, they indicated the following opportunities.

Sports-Related

- ❖ Gymnastics lessons
- ❖ Drop-in gymnastics, trampoline
- ❖ Tennis lessons
- ❖ Snowshoeing (and fondue)
- ❖ Snowboarding/skiing
- ❖ Hiking
- ❖ Midnight skate or swim
- ❖ Kendo
- ❖ Rollerblading and skating (with music and snacks)
- ❖ Afterschool swim times with access to the diving board

Social-Related

- ❖ Teen movie nights
- ❖ Dances
- ❖ Game nights
- ❖ Scavenger Hunts
- ❖ Coffee House
- ❖ Open mike nights
- ❖ Karaoke
- ❖ Field trips
- ❖ Band /concert nights

Personal Development

- ❖ Self esteem building workshops
- ❖ Peer counselling programs
- ❖ Volunteer opportunities
- ❖ Coaching opportunities
- ❖ Skill building workshops (e.g., negotiation skills)
- ❖ Mentorship programs (cross-generational)
- ❖ Internship opportunities

Arts-Related

- ❖ Film camp
- ❖ Drama classes

On Volunteering.....

“My daughter would like to coach hockey or little kids in skating programs. They need lots of options to give back to the community in grades eleven and twelve.”

On engaging youth....

“If they can come as a group and sign up as a group. They like to come as a group. They like to be together.”

Sources of Information for Youth Activities and Events

Parents were asked how they found out information about youth events and activities and the best sources of information.

| Source of Information | Number of Parents Who Indicated this was their Source of Information |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| West Vancouver Community Center | 10 |
| Ambleside Youth Center/website | 3 |
| School | 2 |
| Information Pamphlets | 4 |
| District of West Vancouver website | 3 |
| Work-related committee or task force | 1 |
| Co-worker or colleague | 2 |
| West Vancouver Public Library | 2 |
| Youth Workers/Youth service staff | 2 |
| Other parents; from their children | 2 |

Best Source of Information from the Perspective of Parents

| Source of Information | Number of Parents Who Indicated this was their Best Source of Information |
|--|---|
| CC Leisure Guide/Informational Pamphlets | 5 |
| West Vancouver Community Centre | 3 |
| Websites | 2 |
| Social Service Agencies | 2 |
| Friends (i.e. word of mouth), Facebook | 1 |
| Youth Workers/staff | 1 |
| Calendar | 1 |

12 parents indicated it was 'easy' to find information; 1 parents indicated that it was 'not easy'; and one parent was 'not sure'. Suggestions for improving access to information were: emailing information; publish activities by age group; put all important information on a website (e.g., holiday hours for the rink, yoga program information); and post calendar of events at Ambleside.

The Role of the District of West Vancouver in Youth Engagement

A 'Hub Model' is a youth center that has more than social and recreational programs available. It offers a centralized place for agencies and other community groups to partner in providing additional services to youth or their parents.. The centre could serve as an information 'hub' for youth or parents to access referrals to other programs and services in the community as needed.

Parents were asked to indicate what supports and services they feel should be offered in a Hub model if there were a Hub for Youth in the District of West Vancouver.

| Support or Service | Number of Parents who Indicated that this Support or Service Should be Part of a Hub |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Events and social activities | 12 |
| Peer leadership training | 12 |
| Places to just hang out | 11 |
| Employment support | 11 |
| Referrals to Social Services | 9 |
| Counselling | 8 |
| Life Coach counselling | 8 |
| Alcohol and drug counselling | 8 |
| Community volunteer services | 8 |
| Discussion groups | 7 |
| Programs to support parents | 6 |
| Support for sexual identity issues | 6 |
| Cultural workers | 6 |
| Parent/teen mediation counselling | 6 |
| Youth health clinic | 5 |
| One-to-one workers | 5 |
| Counselling for disordered eating | 5 |
| Probation services | 2 |
| Housing information | 2 |

Parents acknowledged that with the changing times, families are turning more to the Municipality to offer programs that keep youth engaged and safe.

“We are asking the District to pick up where things were 40 years ago. We had a group of kids and we went to play street hockey, basketball and we played soccer. That’s changed now. You don’t see kids out playing with the whole street hockey and stuff. We are asking the District to pick up that slack. So they come here and play hockey, basketball, and all those things that they do as a group of kids.”

During the focus group, parents were asked to indicate which services should be the top priority for the District of West Vancouver. The three top priorities for parent were events and social activities (7 parents); places for youth to hang out (5 parents); and employment support (3 parents). Life coaches and leadership programs were noted as priorities by two parents. Also noted were:

- ❖ Volunteer opportunities
- ❖ Ethics and values discussion groups (civic responsibility)
- ❖ Counselling and support for teens
- ❖ Support for family issues
- ❖ Recreation
- ❖ Drama workshops

Offering Non-Recreational Services Benefits and Challenges

Parents were asked what they perceived the benefits and challenges to be of the District of West Vancouver offering non-recreational supports and services (e.g., youth workers).

Benefits:

- ❖ *“Gives teens leadership opportunities they may not get through school (limited opportunities). A group of friends outside of school.”*
- ❖ *“Less vandalism, less crime, local-easy access.”*
- ❖ *“This is a world of ideas and ideologies for youth to succeed in – so non-recreational activities are equally important! The place for youth where they can exchange points of view, learn to communicate efficiently.”*
- ❖ *“Teenagers need the opportunity to develop in a non-structured environment.”*
- ❖ *“It would be great to have these services in-house.”*
- ❖ *“VCH/Community/School Board/Partnership.”*
- ❖ *“Many of the programs need a referral attached to them. There is often a wait list. Stigma is also often attached to these services. The recreation centre is a healthy environment with a large population draw. It would be easier for people to gain knowledge and information.”*

Challenges

- ❖ *“Funding, resources, space, qualified workers.”*
- ❖ *“Designing a broad range of programs.”*
- ❖ *“If we try to do it all, we may not be able to do any of it as well as we would like.”*

Support for Youth

Parents were asked to whom they would turn for support if they had a concern regarding their youth.

| Theme | Number of Parents who would turn to this Individual |
|---|---|
| Doctor or psychiatrist | 10 |
| Professional Counsellor outside of the school | 9 |
| Family member | 7 |
| Trained peer counsellor | 7 |
| Another parent | 6 |
| School counsellor | 6 |
| A teacher | 6 |
| Social Worker | 5 |
| Common interest group | 1 |
| Police officer | 1 |

Involvement of Parents in Municipal Decision-Making

Parents were asked as to whether they would like to be more involved in the decision-making and planning process for the District of West Vancouver. Eight parents indicated that they would like to be involved. They noted the following ways of involvement:

- ❖ Working group meeting
- ❖ Surveys (2 parents)
- ❖ Focus groups (3 parents)
- ❖ Email
- ❖ Community advisory team
- ❖ Every week have a consistent hour for parents to meet youth staff (e.g. youth Lounge one hour on Saturdays.)

Final Comments

“Thanks very much for the opportunity to participate in this process. I’ll be happy to be more involved if that would be helpful.”

“Teens need unstructured drop-in activities. I feel that special interest groups dominate the pool and regular kids just give up on going because they don't want to always be in the "young kids" area all the time. Teenage boys in particular love diving and jumping in the deep end of the pool and they rarely seem to get access so they give up on going because it is no fun and they feel they have been unfairly charged. Another idea would be gaming nights - where kids could have Xbox or Game Cube tournaments etc. This would appeal to a lot of the teenage boys.”

“The summer camp volunteer positions have been a great way for them [youth] to gain valuable work experience.”

“The support of youth rock bands has been wonderful. The venue provided for the kids to perform has been great, both at the youth centre and the WVRC.”

“Teenagers in our District are often looking for something safe to do which is fun and allows them the opportunity to relate to each other in a non-judgemental atmosphere. “

“I think that if the Municipality can provide a series of events that attract young people, be it at the community centre or down at Ambleside or on the beach, the door will open and more youth will become involved. Once they are happy to be here, they will come up with ideas and suggestions for moving forward.”

Key Findings from Parents

- ❖ Parents identified 5 areas of positive youth program experiences in West Vancouver for their youth: excellent structured activities for younger youth; positive volunteer experiences; good opportunities for leadership and skill development training; positive interactions at the Ambleside Youth Centre; and positive interactions with the West Vancouver Community Centre Youth Worker.
- ❖ There was a suggestion to increase partnerships in order to increase services and cohesion of the services.
- ❖ 7 programming and service areas in need of augmentation were identified by parents: entry to sports at varying levels throughout development so that youth have a chance to learn a new sport; creating new opportunities for youth; creating more places for kids to hang out; more opportunities for youth to do activities/events/training that contributes to their resumé; more programming for youth in early adolescence; more mental health services; and a great focus on prevention.
- ❖ Parents reported that the activities most favoured by their youth are social or more sedentary activities (e.g., listening to music; going to movies; hanging out with friends; shopping; using the internet; and watching tv/videos). A second group of favoured activities were working out at the gym; art projects; going to live music events; and team sports.
- ❖ Parents would like to see more options for youth to engage in sports-related activities that are non-competitive; social-related activities (e.g., teen movie nights, coffee house, dances etc.); personal-development related (e.g., workshops, mentoring, volunteering etc.); and arts-related (e.g., drama, film).
- ❖ Most parents found out about programs from the West Vancouver Community Centre followed by the Ambleside Youth Centre. For parents, their preferred sources of information were written information (e.g., Leisure Guide); West Vancouver Community Centre; websites; and/or social service agencies.
- ❖ The majority of parents found it 'easy' to get information about programs.
- ❖ In considering a Hub Model of Services, parents' top choices of services that they felt should be part of a Hub included: events and social activities; peer leadership training; places just to hang out; and employment support. After these top choices, the next more cited services were related to counselling for youth. This ranking of choices for service represented parents' priority areas to be addressed by the Municipality.
- ❖ Parents say there are many benefits as well as challenges to the District of West Vancouver offering non-recreational services. Among the benefits were promoting positive youth development and having easier access to services. Among the challenges identified were creating services that were adequately funded, of high quality and which met the various needs of youth.
- ❖ When parents had a concern about their youth, their first two avenues for support were: medical professionals (doctor, psychiatrist) and professional counsellors outside of the school. Next were family members or a trained peer counsellor.
- ❖ A small number of parents indicated a desire to be involved in municipal decision-making as it concerns youth services. The predominantly preferred modality of involvement is via focus groups or surveys.

Feedback from Community Partners

Participants

19 community partners participated in a focus group and completed a survey. Community partners represented 10 organizations. Unless otherwise noted, one individual represented the organization.

- ❖ West Vancouver School District (7 individuals)
- ❖ West Vancouver Police Department (4 individuals)
- ❖ West Vancouver Memorial Library
- ❖ District of North Vancouver
- ❖ City of North Vancouver
- ❖ Hollyburn Family Services
- ❖ Capilano Community Service Society
- ❖ West Vancouver Transit
- ❖ Vancouver Coastal Health
- ❖ North Shore Neighbourhood House

Organization Background

Partners were asked to outline the service mandate of their organization.

| Organization | Service Mandate |
|----------------------------------|--|
| West Vancouver School District | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • K -12 public education in West Vancouver, including high risk youth (counselling, youth worker support, mental health, social skills, behaviour support) with the goal of graduation. • Early learning (0 – 8 yrs old programming for children & families). |
| West Vancouver Police Department | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outreach to SD #45. • Public safety. • Maintain law and order. • Participation in community events . |
| West Vancouver Memorial Library | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect youth with ideas, cultures of the world. Enrich lives. • Provide free materials, literature, information, programs to engage youth and provide them with the means to become literate, well-informed, culturally-nourished citizens. |

| Organization | Service Mandate |
|------------------------------------|---|
| District of North Vancouver | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning/social policy. |
| City of North Vancouver | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fund youth services – outreach/centre-based in city of North Vancouver. • Provide various grants to agencies for youth projects. |
| Hollyburn Family Services | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality counselling and support services to children, youth and families on the North Shore. |
| Capilano Community Service Society | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connecting seniors and youth to community through one-on-one supports and outreach services. |
| West Vancouver Transit | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide public transportation services. |
| Vancouver Coastal Health | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide mental health and addictions support to children and youth. |
| North Shore Neighbourhood House | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on building strong families (pregnancy to seniors) through provision of social/recreation services. |

Program Types

Organizations were asked to identify the type of programs and services they offer along a continuum from general to tertiary prevention programs/services. Definitions of these program types are included below. Note that West Vancouver Transit does not offer the types of programs and services noted below. Two organizations noted that they do not offer any direct programs/services but rather fund these services along the continuum. A number of organizations offer more than one type of programming.

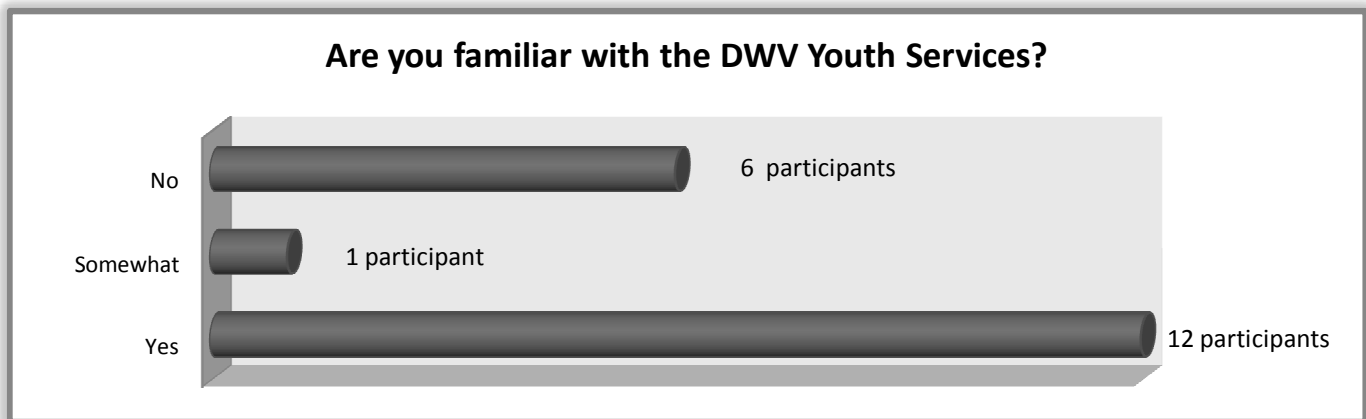
| Type of Programming/Services | Number of Organizations Offering Programming/Services |
|--|---|
| General programming with a recreation/leisure focus (e.g., music, team sports) | 4 |
| Primary prevention programs/services: programs that focus on building skills with youth who are not currently experiencing any significant difficulties with the particular program focus (e.g., a program for all youth to teach assertiveness skills). These programs take place with youth BEFORE a risk behaviour starts. | 5 |
| Secondary prevention programs/services: programs that focus on preventing a specific difficulty/problem from increasing over time (e.g., working with youth who have higher levels of anxiety but are not yet in the clinical range). These programs/services take place when youth are at the beginning stages of experiencing distress. | 5 |
| Tertiary prevention programs/services: programs that focus on reducing the amount of difficulties caused by a given problem (e.g., working with youth who have substance use issues; working with youth who have attempted suicide). These programs/services are for youth who are already engaged in risk behaviours and require significant intervention. | 6 |

Tracking Youth Participation in Programs and Services

| Tracking Method | Number of Partners noting Tracking method | Examples |
|---|---|---|
| Number of people attending or using the service | 7 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ridership on transit. • Attendance. • Community services unit - school liaison officer. |
| Outcome Data | 6 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in crime. • Number of graduates. • Service outcomes. • School and District-based tracking of student progress. |
| Statistics, reports and plans | 5 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electronic health records compile stats. • District based tracking of student needs. • Through agency work plans: statistics/final report. • Monthly ; weekly reports; year-end reports to funders. • Daily event sheet. Weekly youth staff meetings with Ed. Monthly reports, stats and written report. • Annual municipal work plan; final reports; new work-plan for next year. |
| Youth events/activities | 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth forums. • West Van police have a student work advisory team consisting of 15 youth who work with the police. |
| Front line work | 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work in schools. |
| Team meetings | 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrated case management. |
| Surveys | 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow-up surveys, person-served satisfaction surveys, stakeholder surveys. |
| Circulation of materials | 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Circulation of materials translates into youth usage. |
| Referrals | 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referral services. |

Familiarity with District of West Vancouver Youth Services

Partners were asked to indicate whether they were familiar with the youth services offered by the District of West Vancouver (DWV) through the Community and Youth Centres.



Sources of Information

Partners were asked how they find out about programs and activities for youth in West Vancouver.

| Source | Number Partners Using Source |
|--|------------------------------|
| Youth Workers/Youth service staff | 15 |
| Co-worker or colleague | 13 |
| Ambleside Youth Center/website | 10 |
| West Vancouver Community Center | 10 |
| Work-related committee or task force | 9 |
| Schools | 9 |
| West Vancouver youth | 8 |
| Information Pamphlets | 6 |
| Social Services Agency | 6 |
| District of West Vancouver website | 5 |
| Other government agency (VCH, Community Services Unit) | 3 |
| TV/Radio/Magazines | 3 |
| West Vancouver Public Library | 2 |
| Social media (e.g., Facebook) | 1 |

Strengths in Service Delivery

During the focus group, partners were asked what strengths they currently see in the way youth services are delivered in the District of West Vancouver. Four themes emerged.

Theme One: Good Selection of Summer Programs

For younger youth who may not be able to participate in some of the programs designed for older youth such as employment training and specific volunteer activities, there is a good selection of summer programs in West Vancouver.

“There were some very good programs with gaming and animation and that kind of stuff in the summer time.”

Theme Two: Evidence of Examples of Strong Cross Municipal and Organizational Partnerships

There exists some examples of strong partnerships on the North Shore with respect to youth program delivery. Two such partnerships were highlighted: Let’s Talk Shop and Living With Loss.

Let’s Talk Shop: “Our youth workers help coordinate with VCH. Everyone is very respectful. We work well together, regardless of having 3 municipalities and 3 models.”

Living With Loss: “The City of North Vancouver funded the Youth Living with Loss. VCH ran the program at Ambleside. The facility [AYC] is so easy in terms of comfort level with youth.”

Theme Three: Solid Police Presence in the Schools and with Ambleside Youth Centre

Partners engaged in a longer conversation about the strengths of having a strong police presence among schools and the Ambleside Youth Centre in West Vancouver. Specifically, police engage a great deal with the alternative schools and with youth-at-risk throughout the community. Having a police liaison officer attached to the schools allows youth and the officer to develop positive relationships. Although each school has a liaison officer, more time is spent at the alternative schools where at-risk youth benefit from extra support. This support occurs through regular visits to the alternative school and through working on projects together such as an anti-violence video. Schools clearly see the benefits of these relationships.

“West Van police department comes into our schools and it is such a positive influence. Our youth usually end up with a sour taste [from previous Police contact when in trouble with the law]. Now, the police work with them. I see [police officer] sitting with the kids and getting them to create a video about violence prevention. They are working with [the police officer], not being dragged into it.”

“The police have been invited and they have come to be part of our threat assessment training in the schools. In working with the individual kids who are at risk for violence, we work in little teams. It works really well because the police are in the schools and we have relationships with

them. It wouldn't work as well if we had to just call and have someone [with no established relationship] come in."

From the Police perspective, they see the opportunity to engage with youth on a regular basis as beneficial. For youth who are involved with the Police, it allows Police to monitor youth school attendance and other conditions that may be required of youth. Also, the Police note that they have become more aware of the realm of youth needs.

"It has brought youth needs to our awareness...like youth detox. We work closely with the school and if there is a need we all work together."

"It's a nice connection."

Theme Four: Strong Network of Community-based Youth Workers¹¹

There exists a strong network of youth workers in West Vancouver and across the North Shore. Workers from Ambleside Youth Centre work with higher risk youth while the community centre youth workers focus their efforts on the general population of youth (this may include some higher risk youth). Partners noted that there have been a small number of youth workers who have worked in West Vancouver for years which has been critical for the development of trusting relationships both with youth and other youth-serving organizations.

"There have been staffing changes but their reputation is really good. I hear about them all the time. I am very happy to refer to outreach staff. They are well respected in the community. They are well connected to all those other service providers."

"There is a lot of efforts to ensure that the services are coordinated. They have been there for such a long time."

"As a youth worker I spoke to the counsellor about it [a youth in immediate need]. I also spoke to AYC to make sure that the youth had support during [the] break. Then [another youth worker] ran out to make sure that the youth is safe. We had some great coordination."

Partners felt that youth respond well to the youth workers.

"There are youth workers who know about kids, know about risk factors and do know how to manage kids and have policies versus if that's not there they go to the beach or the bush."

"They are very accommodating. I think that's what draws youth in is the youth workers."

"Our purpose for offering services in the evenings, weekends, and out trips is to build relationships."

¹¹ Note that West Vancouver Board of Education employs youth workers in each of their high schools and alternative schools. In this way, there is wrap around services for at-risk youth in that they have youth workers at school and on weekends and holidays, the District of West Vancouver youth workers are available for youth.

Ambleside Youth Centre, a key location for some of the youth workers was seen as a unique setting. Not without its' challenges, such as the reputation it has among some youth and adults as being a centre for youth who have more struggles, it has many positive features.

"AYC is a large facility compared to the other centres. It is old fashioned. The location close to Park Royal is so great. It needs some upgrades for sure but it certainly has some nice features."

"AYC is unique – youth have their own space and their own building."

Gaps in Service Delivery

During the focus group, seven gaps in service delivery to youth were noted among partners.

Gap One: Need for Services for Youth in the Horseshoe Bay Area

"Our neediest families are in Horseshoe Bay. There are no services for youth in Horseshoe Bay."

Gap Two: Need for Mental Health Services in West Vancouver

Partners agreed that West Vancouver is in great need of mental health services for youth. At present they have services for the treatment of concurrent disorders¹² but no other forms of mental health (e.g., counseling, drug and alcohol counseling or therapy) that is publicly funded. Youth must travel to North Vancouver for service, which can be a significant barrier.¹³

"A corresponding gap is mental health services which are in North Vancouver. For pure mental health services, it is two buses or it is just North Van, another city. If a kid has a major depressive disorder and he needs service but won't go to North Van, what do we do?"

Gap Three: Need for Housing for Youth

"I am assuming housing is an issue for young people. Like transition housing."

Gap Four: Need to Increase Engagement of Immigrant Families

"With our new immigrants, there are a couple years before they truly try to access services."

"Recreation is a good way to capture people. I think you need to go younger, grade 6 or 7 or even younger than that. Location is important."

¹² At the time of this report, concurrent disorders treatment is not available due to staff on leave.

¹³ Youth workers do sometimes drive youth to appointments, particularly their first time. However, youth do need to eventually go on their own which continues to be a barrier.

Gap Five: Need for Supports for International Students

As of February 2010, West Vancouver School District had 535 international students.¹⁴ Concerns about international students were clear among partners. These students live with host families or friends of their families. With limited support these students struggle with loneliness in a new culture. At present, there appear to be no formal structures in place to offer support to these students. One partner noted that often these students have no one with whom they can celebrate their birthdays and as such some limited funding was secured for that purpose for a small number of youth. Beyond birthdays, other pressing issues regarding international students require attention.

“It is mind boggling how many international students have no representation for them. We need them to have representation.”

‘I think that the North Vancouver School District and the West Vancouver School District should put more thought into how to support international students.’

Gap Six: Need for District of West Vancouver Representation on North Shore Committees

At one time, the District of West Vancouver had representation at meetings. It was noted that this is no longer the case.

“I see less and less of West Van’s presence at meetings.”

“Since [former Youth Services staff member] has left, we [District of West Vancouver] have not had representation. So the District is missing out on that discussion and sharing of the workload. From what I see in West Vancouver, there isn’t a point person for the larger youth services. There is a need to have someone. West Van will get left out of stuff.”

Gap Seven: Need for Articulation of Policies, Procedures, and Practices in Working with High Risk Youth

Much discussion occurred around issues related to policies, procedures and practices in working with high risk youth in West Vancouver. In the absence of a clearly defined operations manual, ensuring that youth receive the support they need appears to be problematic in some cases. One of the biggest areas of concern is how referrals are handled. There is no consistent method for handling referrals for youth-at-risk and workers are sometimes unaware whether a youth in need actually receives services.

“The referral gets referred and just stops there. You don’t get a word back. You’re never quite sure. Once we refer it, we are hoping the person gets picked up. Depending on the staff person, some will call back and say we got your kid and some don’t. If it is a kid that decides not to go, we don’t get the follow-up.”

¹⁴ Statistics from School District #45 Achievement Contract (June 2010 Update)

“They may or may not hear back. To support this kid in a truly wrap-around fashion, it would mean that the counsellor is in phone contact at a minimum with the school counsellor or youth worker to say what they are working on. There is no collaboration.”

There is the challenge of staff turnover which is another challenge in the absence of a clearly defined operations manual. It appears that not everyone receives the same information; thus, there is no consistency in how youth referrals are handled among organizations.

“It’s the bureaucracy. You’re never done. You think you have sorted it out and one person leaves and then you have to start over again.”

“There is a need to constantly coordinate and educate frontline staff.”

Another issue that emerged was the case in which youth workers may not be referring high risk youth on to more specialized services that they need or the youth refuses to accept services. It was felt that more training for youth workers as to when and how to refer on may be needed in order to make sure that youth get service.

“We are still seeing very few or any referrals from youth workers themselves for intervention. My sense is that youth workers are carrying the kids themselves.”

It was noted that engagement in more specialized services does not need to be the end of the relationship between the youth worker and the youth but rather additional service can occur at the same time or a break in service with the youth worker could occur while more specialized services take place.¹⁵

Duplication of Services

Partners were asked to comment on whether they felt there was a duplication in services on the North Shore. The integrated case management meetings were seen as somewhat of a duplication of services a necessary one in planning for high risk youth.

¹⁵ Writer’s note: From all that we know about youth-at-risk and the importance of relationships, if a youth has a trusting relationship with a youth worker and requires specialized services, it is in the best interest of the youth to continue to have the relationship with the youth worker while beginning engagement of specialized services. Conversations with the youth should occur as to what is in their best interest as to the supports that they need.

Improving Service Delivery in West Vancouver

During the focus group, partners were asked for ways in which service delivery could be improved in the District of West Vancouver. Five areas for improvements emerged.

Improvement One: Provide Free Passes to the Community Centre and other Community Events

Partners liked the idea of police, school staff and youth workers having the ability to give youth passes to the community centre or other community events. One suggestion was for organizations to be able to get a number of passes to hand out every month. Only those passes that were actually used would be paid for at the end of each month. The one issue that would require discussion is who would pay for those passes being used as some organizations may not have money in their budgets to cover such costs.

“Give passes to the police and the police would catch a youth doing something good and give the passes to the youth. Catch them doing something great.”

Although partners acknowledge that there is may be a belief that cost is not a factor in West Vancouver, the reality is that there are youth who are in need of support.

In our school, our students...we say “Let’s go to the gym [public facility]” and they say “we can’t” – they don’t have access to money.”

Given youth workers relationships with youth, they are natural sources of information in regards to who could benefit from complimentary passes to events and activities in West Vancouver. At Ambleside Youth Centre, costs are often covered for youth but elsewhere there exist youth who would benefit from engagement.

“You could have the opportunity for a bursary or a fund that would be accessed through youth workers who could best represent youth.”

“It would be an interesting idea if [school youth worker] could hand out passes to her students. It could be a pride issue [letting staff know they can’t pay].”

Improvement Two: Delineate Roles, Responsibilities, Programs and Services

Partners voiced that they would like to see a document that clearly outlines the roles and responsibilities within West Vancouver Youth Services. In addition, it was suggested that a spreadsheet of services be created as a quick reference. This would assist school personnel in knowing all the possible services and supports for youth.

Improvement Three: Increase Meaningful Volunteer Opportunities for Youth

Although West Vancouver has opportunities for volunteerism, there are not enough opportunities for youth. Partners indicated a need for the development of meaningful volunteer opportunities to not only

engage youth but to assist them in completing their mandatory community service hours as required by the Ministry of Education.

“All youth have to do community service hours. I don’t think we are serving them as well as we could. Offering them meaningful volunteer opportunities will engage them.”

“There is a youth directory for volunteer opportunities but I bet over 90% get turned away.”

“There is a whole segment of kids not at risk who are looking for volunteer opportunities and activities and we need to serve them as well.”

Improvement Four: Improve Access to Public Transit

Two key issues arose during the discussion about transportation. The first is the cost of transportation. Although many youth may have a bus pass that they use for school, there are some youth who do not have a monthly pass. Not having access to transportation becomes a barrier to youth engagement. Partners indicated that they would like to see bus passes being made available to youth in need.¹⁶

“Making bus passes available to youth. There are kids that are out there who don’t have that cash in hand.”

The second issue was the limited transportation in the British Properties. Buses run infrequently which impacts a wide range of youth and family engagement.

“We can’t reach a lot of the families and bring them to our programming. It is a huge problem. They don’t have access.”

Improvement Five: Increase Programs and Services for Pre-Teens

Although much of the discussion in the focus group targeted the needs of older youth, partners did see the gap in supports and services for younger youth. For example, there are no youth workers who support pre-teens in the way that older teens are supported. By not offering support earlier, preteens who may have been able to avoid later difficulties end up needing increased support as they go through adolescence. One partner felt that having a free drop-in program led by competent staff could address the needs of some of the preteens who are hanging out on school grounds with nothing to do afterschool. The afterschool program personnel could liaise with schools to identify preteens in need of extra support.

“They [preteens] are too young to have a job or start lifeguarding. They are just hanging. They are not at-risk at the beginning but they can slide into that zone. This year things have shifted to a user fee service and we have seen a huge drop in use. Not sure if this is due to the user fee or not.”

¹⁶ There was some discussion as to whether *some* youth choose to use their spending money in other ways as opposed to paying for a bus pass. There was also the question as to who would cover the costs of the bus passes should they be given to youth for free.

Partnerships

Partnerships with the District of West Vancouver Youth Services

Partners were asked to report whether, in their role, they ever work in partnership with the District of West Vancouver youth services.

Do you ever work in partnership with the DWV Youth Services?



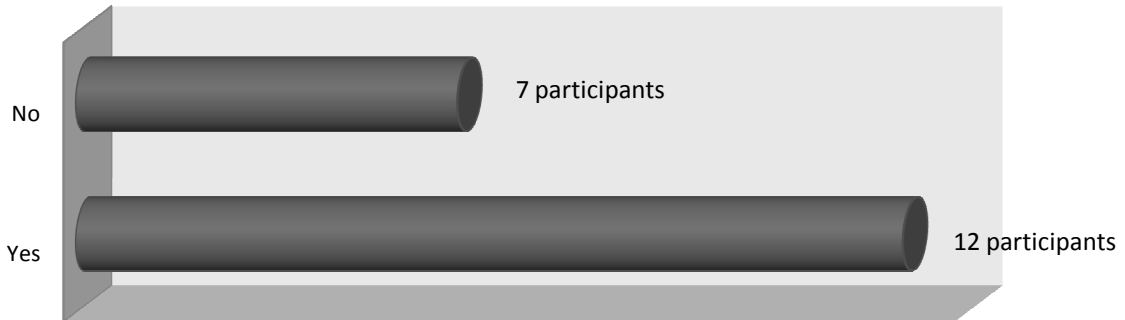
Further to this, partners were asked to comment on aspects of this partnership that were most effective. Responses were analyzed for themes which are presented below.

| Theme | Number of partners | Reasons for Effectiveness |
|---|--------------------|--|
| Positive communication and collaboration among partners regarding youth | 10 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Communication of issues or concerns regarding youth.</i> • <i>Communicating and developing different perspectives.</i> • <i>Discussion surrounding the issues and education.</i> • <i>Increased communication between police and youth services.</i> • <i>Referral/discussion with youth workers about individual youth works both ways. We partner to support youth this rarely happens in the library but definitely does happen.</i> • <i>Having a good working relationship with West Vancouver staff.</i> • <i>Community engagement, relationship building (consistent staffing helps) and willingness to work together and trust expertise.</i> • <i>Collaboration of ideas.</i> • <i>Commitment to the workload of the initiative.</i> |

| Theme | Number of partners | Reasons for Effectiveness |
|--|--------------------|--|
| Strong support from the Ambleside Youth Centre | 5 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Ambleside Youth Centre: amazing support, support, support!</i> • <i>AYC youth workers work with students on weekends.</i> • <i>Collaborate on program (AYC work experience program) youth placed in library for work experience during summer. Program structure and advisor run by AYC. Youth supervised and placed in library.</i> • <i>Recreation activities and educational activities (e.g. AYC staff bringing a speaker or film in to ACCESS for discussion groups) especially those aimed at ACCESS. These work well because the youth workers have a more casual style, are outdoors oriented, and are able to come into the school. The Bowron Lakes canoeing trip is an example of AYC and SD45 collaboration that can almost be said to work miracles with our at-risk youth.</i> |
| West Vancouver Police presence | 4 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>West Van Police– positive role models.</i> • <i>Police – education.</i> • <i>Direct liaison</i> |
| Check-ins and follow-ups | 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Good follow-through and follow-up!</i> • <i>Good opportunities for check-in; support; follow-up.</i> |
| Prevention consultant role | 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Prevention consultant role and related initiatives (i.e. Let’s Talk Shop, anti-boot-legging). ‘Let’s Talk Shop’ – facilitated by youth worker event at Hollyburn Club before school starts.</i> |
| Reaching out report | 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>West Vancouver Police Department report</i> |
| Recognition of needs | 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Recognition that youth across the North shore need assistance and services.</i> |

Partnerships with Other Municipal Youth Services

Do you ever work in partnership with other municipal youth services?



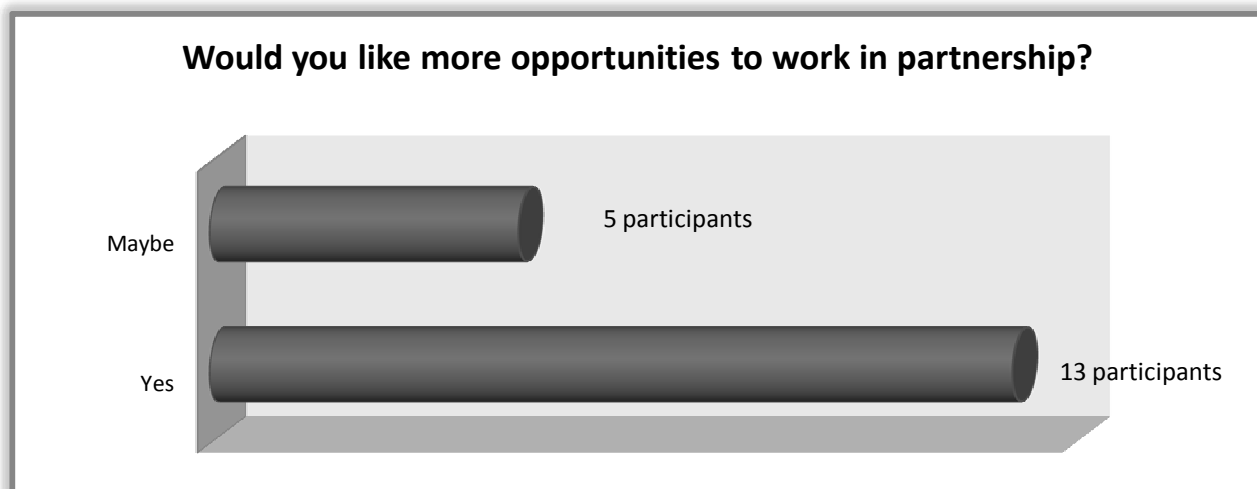
Organizations identified one or more other municipal youth services sectors with which they worked in partnership. In addition, VCH youth services was identified as a partner.

- Partnerships with The District of North Vancouver (10 partners)
- Partnerships with The City of North Vancouver (7 partners)

| Theme | Number of partners | Reasons for Effectiveness |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------|--|
| Sharing information and resources | 4 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Sharing of program information across the North Shore.</i> • <i>Support of programs – staff/utilizing skills and expertise of different staff.</i> • <i>Youth libraries cooperate on programs, brochures, learn from each other.</i> |
| Shared Goals | 3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Cooperative, collaborative spirit. ‘Team’ mentality.</i> • <i>It works best when there is agreement on the goal and purpose of the project and commitment for everyone to do their part to make it happen.</i> • <i>Shared vision, commitment to collaboration.</i> |
| Support for Roles of Others | 3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I usually play a supportive role to youth workers.</i> • <i>I usually play a supportive role to counsellors at school.</i> |
| Effective Communication | 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Direct communication with social planners.</i> • <i>Great partnerships communications.</i> |
| Quality Services | 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Youth libraries meet quality.</i> • <i>Quality services.</i> |
| Regular meetings | 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Direct relationships; committees.</i> • <i>Regular meetings; networking.</i> |

| Theme | Number of partners | Reasons for Effectiveness |
|------------------------------|--------------------|--|
| Recognition of youth's needs | 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We used to attend a youth council once per year to listen to youth concerns about transit. • Recognition that youth throughout Lower Mainland share many similar needs. |
| Partnering for workshops | 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Let's talk shop. West Vancouver students dialogue with North Vancouver parents and visa versa. • Co-facilitating groups. |
| Youth counselling services | 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VCH – Terry Bulych Rocks! • Drug and alcohol counselling. |

Increased Opportunities for Partnerships



Among those who responded 'YES', comments included:

General Comments

- ❖ Absolutely – encourage the opportunity to further partnerships.
- ❖ The need to make resources stretch further – maximizing current resources to meet need – more effective service delivery.
- ❖ More than just North and West Vancouver.
- ❖ Makes good sense to always partner because youth often don't know which municipality they're in.
- ❖ More tools in the toolbox
- ❖ If a program or project is developed by West Vancouver it would be great to share those successes with North Vancouver and possibly assist North Vancouver in providing similar services and vice versa.

Specific Partnership Directions

- ❖ *Service delivery at the Native – Nation; MCAS; Hollyburn Family services.*
- ❖ *Plate is pretty full, but would like to cooperate with others in business and community to create better opportunities for youth ‘community services’ – volunteer hours, leadership training.*
- ❖ *Case conferencing to provide support for youth.*
- ❖ *Joint training for Ambleside Youth Centre and School District youth workers and regular meetings between Ambleside Youth Centre and School District youth workers to discuss kids they have in common.*
- ❖ *Regular or more discussions between school counsellors and Ambleside Youth Centre youth workers.*
- ❖ *Ambleside summer programming.*
- ❖ *Band events.*

Among those who responded ‘Maybe’, comments included:

- ❖ *They would have to be effective. Youth don’t seem to like to travel.*
- ❖ *Would depend on the project.*
- ❖ *Not sure what we can offer.*
- ❖ *I think it’s already working very well overall.*

Other Agency Collaborations

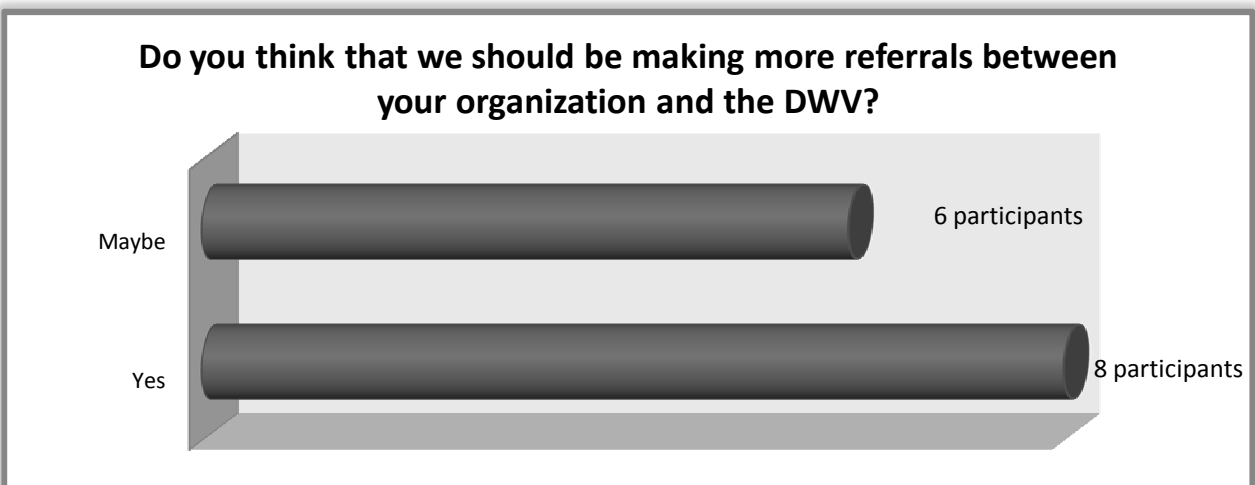
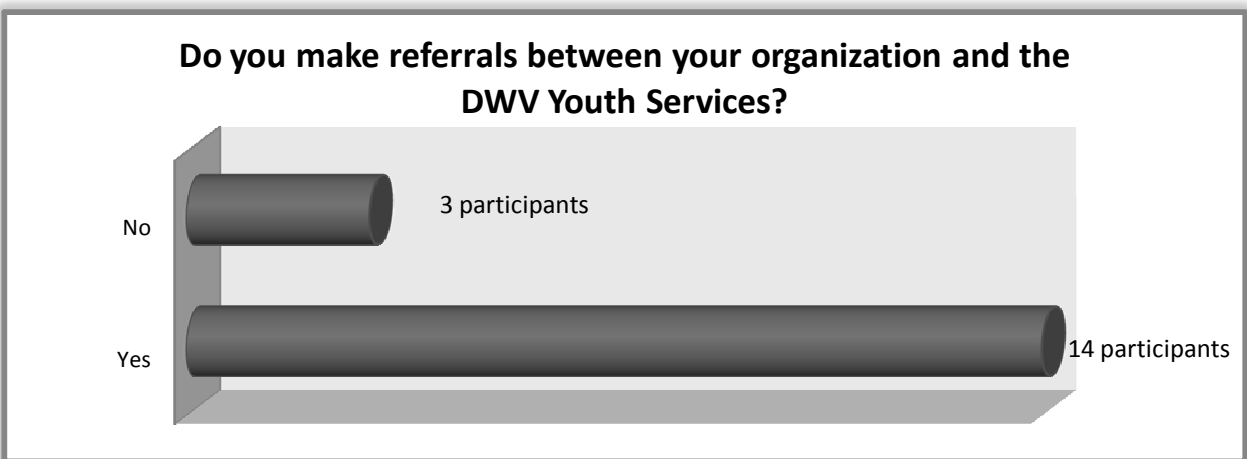
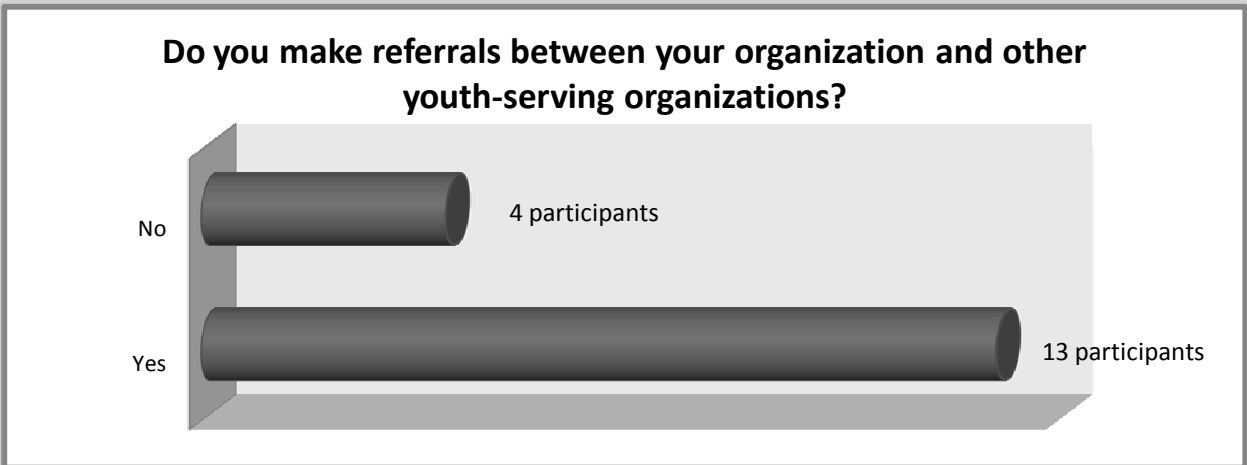
Partners were asked to list other agencies with which they collaborate in order to provide services to youth. The following agencies were noted.

| Agency | Number partners indicating collaboration |
|---|--|
| Ministry of Children and Family Development | 10 |
| Vancouver Coastal Health | 8 |
| Hollyburn Family Services | 6 |
| North Shore Multicultural Society | 5 |
| Parkgate Recreation Centre | 5 |
| North Vancouver School District | 5 |
| North Shore Neighbourhood House | 5 |
| Schools (Mainstream and alternative) | 5 |
| Capilano Community Services Society | 5 |

| Agency | Number partners indicating collaboration |
|--|--|
| West Vancouver School District | 4 |
| Ambleside Youth Centre | 4 |
| Employment Services (e.g., Wired 4 Success; On Stop Career Shop) | 4 |
| Police (North and West Vancouver) | 3 |
| Libraries | 3 |
| Churches (North Shore Alliance Church; Highlands United Church) | 2 |
| Mental Health and Counsellors (mental health; drug and alcohol) | 2 |
| Family Services of the North Shore | 2 |
| North Shore Crisis Services | 2 |
| Youth and Community Centres | 2 |
| Service Clubs (e.g., Kiwanis) | 2 |
| Lions Gate Hospital | 1 |
| Squamish Nation | 1 |
| BC Suicide Prevention Society | 1 |
| Salvation Army | 1 |
| Lookout Emergency Aid | 1 |
| North Shore Women's Centre | 1 |
| North Vancouver Recreation Commission | 1 |
| North Shore Task Force | 1 |
| Restorative Justice | 1 |
| Kids Help Phone Line | 1 |
| WECAN | 1 |
| Federal Government | 1 |
| District of North Vancouver | 1 |
| City of North Vancouver | 1 |
| Probation Services | 1 |
| Middle Childhood Matters Table | 1 |

Referrals to Other Organizations

Partners were asked to indicate if they make referrals to other organizations and how they track referrals. Note that the 2 funders are not included in the first two graphs.



Comments from partners who indicated that more referrals *should be made* between their organization and the District of West Vancouver Youth Services include:

- *“Access to other support services – Hockey heroes, Parent/teen mediation, safe house, youth transition housing.”*
- *“Youth that transition from West Vancouver to North Vancouver or vice versa – linking them with services that are close for youth in their new community.”*
- *“Referrals for more intensive MH/Addiction services are few and far between. Support youth workers are holding/carrying clients beyond their skill set or youth refuse to be referred to a more appropriate service. Refusal should not be a barrier to youth workers getting kids to services as ‘referrals and service acceptance’ is a skill youth workers need to use to help more clients to appropriate level of service.”*
- *“We probably underutilize existing services.”*

Comments among those who indicated that *‘maybe’* more referrals should be made between their organization and the District of West Vancouver Youth Services include:

- *“I would appreciate more information about services available to all youth. One-Stop, easy place to go to find out.”*
- *“Would depend on the situation.”*
- *“Depends on what youth service is recommended.”*

Tracking Referrals

| Tracking Method | Number of Partners who use this method | Examples of Comments |
|-------------------------------------|--|--|
| Documented and keeping records | 6 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>On weekly/monthly and year-end reports.</i> • <i>Referral source is recorded on weekly intake meeting.</i> • <i>Referrals tallied monthly.</i> • <i>School District has policy and procedures for tracking.</i> |
| Follow-up | 3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Follow-up calls to service</i> • <i>Follow-up – ask the agency to let us know what has happened to the youth once referred.</i> |
| Do not track referrals (in general) | 4 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Generally do not track. (not necessary due to type of service).</i> • <i>I can’t once referred as they don’t share.</i> • <i>On an individual basis only. But the default is that once the referral is made, no follow-up contact or collaboration planning occurs.</i> |
| Contact with client | 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Direct contact with client.</i> |

The Hub Model of Service

A 'Hub Model' is a youth center that has more than social and recreational programs available. It offers a centralized place for agencies and other community groups to partner in providing additional services to youth or their parents. For example, an alcohol and drug worker may come and run a prevention program every week. If a youth or parent felt they needed a counsellor, they could talk directly to the counsellor at the centre. The centre could also serve as an information 'hub' for youth or parents to access referrals to other programs and services in the community as needed.

Partners were asked to comment on the benefits and/or challenges with the HUB Model of Service.

Benefits of the HUB Model of Service

| Benefit | Number of Comments | Examples of Comments |
|--|--------------------|---|
| Services offered in one location provides easier and more convenient access for user | 10 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collation of similar services in one place. • All service providers are available at a one-stop-shop instead of scattered throughout. • Centralized service – easier access. • One-stop 'shopping' for persons – served. • One service – less barriers to jump through. Streamlines services. Access for a multiple of services. • Convenience. • Our youth will be more likely to participate in services (esp. mental health and drug abuse) if provided in West Vancouver. |
| Easier to collaborate resulting in a higher quality of service. | 8 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced collaboration. • Sharing integrated service model obvious benefits to collaboration prevent duplication of services. • Better coordination and communication between agencies possible because they're all on site. • Ease of referral. Possibly better case management. • Networking. Information sharing, communication. Relationship building. Targeted programs based on 'emerging' needs. • All positive! Communication and partnership are key! • Potential for wrap-around services. Value-added-services that result from co-location. • Education; information; consistency. |
| Better use of budget and resources | 3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Streamline money or make a better use with collaboration. Use of specific space i.e. gym/multipurpose room. • Collaboration is cheaper. • Cheaper rent. |
| Better meets the needs of parents | 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents need support. • As a parent, it would be one place for youth to get information. |

Other comments regarding the HUB model:

- *Ambleside Youth Centre would make a good youth HUB but it has a reputation as being a place where troubled youth hang out.*
- *The Hub model is good idea but needs to be in specific geographic areas, not just one area. Suggest 3 areas: Ambleside Youth Centre; West Van Community Centre; Horseshoe Bay.*

Challenges of the HUB Model of Service

| Challenge | Number of Comments | Examples of Comments/Questions |
|---|--------------------|--|
| Coordination, management and administration | 6 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Challenge to get people together regularly. Difficult to make meetings with large groups of people representing different organizations; Difficult to do more than information share.</i> • <i>Managing the hours available.</i> • <i>Human resources/union issues for workers in same location.</i> • <i>Policy differences of providers.</i> • <i>Sustainable funding when different services are accessed.</i> • <i>Need for a 'HUB' coordinator.</i> |
| Getting youth to use the services | 4 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Getting youth to use the services.</i> • <i>Getting youth to attend/use the services.</i> • <i>If youth have a bad experience there, they have no other options.</i> |
| Loss of existing services and roles | 3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>We already supply education and services at their fingertips.</i> • <i>Will the role of youth workers get lost amongst the other services?</i> • <i>Precludes geographically-based services which are very important.</i> |
| Youth concerns about confidentiality | 3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Confidentiality.</i> • <i>Exposure.</i> • <i>Possible concern for anonymity in that youth may not want other youth to see you visiting a psychologist or clinician in the same center. Possible concern that a youth service practitioner may see the youth going into, say the youth lounge, and the youth may be uncomfortable.</i> |
| Geographic distances | 3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Geographic distance to the 'hub'.</i> • <i>Youth have transportation issues. Youth are at schools - better to connect there.</i> • <i>Geographic boundaries for youth not living in the area.</i> |
| Physical space | 3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Space.</i> • <i>Hard to find capital dollars to make the space happen.</i> |
| Perception of the HUB | 3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Stigma attached to going to multi-service center.</i> • <i>Will it be a big scary building?</i> • <i>Will it be convenient and youth-friendly?</i> |

Partners were then asked to indicate what services should be delivered in a HUB model should that be a future possibility.

| Service | Number Partners indicating this service should be part of the HUB |
|--|---|
| Employment support | 17 |
| Referrals to Social Services | 17 |
| Counselling | 17 |
| Alcohol and drug counselling | 17 |
| Life coach counselling | 16 |
| Discussion groups | 16 |
| Parent/teen mediation counselling | 16 |
| Peer leadership training | 15 |
| Support for sexual identity issues | 15 |
| Programs to support and educate parents | 14 |
| Counselling for disordered eating | 14 |
| Cultural workers | 14 |
| Housing information | 13 |
| Events and social activities | 13 |
| Youth health clinic | 12 |
| One to one workers | 12 |
| Places to just hang out | 12 |
| Probation services* | 10 |
| Community volunteer services | 8 |
| Centralized information about all the HUB services offered | 1 |

*One partner noted that the youth may be embarrassed about accessing this service at a HUB.

Finally, partners were asked to indicate the top three youth service areas that should be a priority for the District of West Vancouver.

| Service | Number Partners indicating this service should be a priority |
|---|--|
| Counselling/Mental Health | 9 |
| Places to hang out; More activities for youth (e.g., bowling, theatres) | 8 |
| Parent/teen mediation | 7 |
| Drug and alcohol counselling | 5 |
| Volunteer opportunities/civic engagement | 3 |
| Youth outreach | 2 |
| One-to-one workers | 2 |
| Discussion groups | 2 |
| Services for the Horseshoe Bay area | 2 |
| Youth Health Clinic | 1 |
| Referrals to Social services | 1 |
| Employment support | 1 |
| Cultural workers | 1 |
| Life coaching | 1 |

Two service providers noted ‘West Vancouver Community Centre’ and Ambleside Youth Centre’ however specific services/needs were not indicated.

Final Comments

Partners were invited to make any final comments. Comment not reflected elsewhere are presented below.

- *What about the students/youth who are not at risk? Programs to support their needs in an after-school context?*
- *At least 3 times a year I receive calls from West Vancouver youth wanting to access small grants – I re-direct the youth to West Vancouver but often receive a call back with the youth stating that there was nothing available. So not sure what the status of youth grants is in West Vancouver but in place may need to be more lined for youth to access.*
- *The youth consistently tell us there is nowhere for them to go; ‘It’s boring, nothing to do.’*

Key Findings from Partners

Partner Background

- ❖ Partners offered a range of programs and services that reflected a range of programming from general to tertiary prevention.
- ❖ Tracking of youth participation in programs varied but overall most organizations kept some form of records, whether it was attendance or a more formal tracking database system.

Knowledge of the District of West Vancouver's Youth Services

- ❖ 63% of partners indicated that they were familiar with the District of West Vancouver Youth Services.
- ❖ The top four ways in which partners found out about the District of West Vancouver services were: through youth workers; co-workers or colleagues; the Ambleside Youth Centre; and the West Vancouver Community Centre.

Strengths, Gaps, and Areas for Improvement

- ❖ Four strengths in youth service delivery in West Vancouver were noted by partners during the focus group: good selection of summer programs; evidence of examples of strong cross municipal and organizational partnerships; solid West Vancouver Police presence in the schools and with Ambleside Youth Centre; and there is a strong network of community-based youth workers.
- ❖ Seven gaps in West Vancouver were noted by partners during the focus group: no services for youth in the Horseshoe Bay area; limited mental health services; limited youth housing; a need to increase a engagement of immigrant families; a need to increase supports for international students; need for District representation on North Shore committees; and a need for articulation of policies, procedures, and practices in working with high risk youth.
- ❖ Five ways to improve service were identified during the focus groups: providing free passes for youth to the community centre and other community events; create a document that clearly delineates the roles, responsibilities, programs and services with respect to youth services in the District of West Vancouver; increase meaningful volunteer opportunities for youth; improve access to public transit; and increase programs and services for pre-teens.

Partnerships

- ❖ 84% of partners indicated that they sometimes work in partnership with the District of West Vancouver Youth Services. The most effective aspects of these partnerships were: positive communication and collaboration; strong support from the Ambleside Youth Centre; and a strong police presence.
- ❖ 63% indicated that they work with other municipal youth services, either the District of North Vancouver or the City of North Vancouver. The most effective aspects of these partnerships

were: sharing of resources and information; shared goals; and the support that the various organizations offer one another.

- ❖ 68% would like more opportunities to work in partnership while 26% indicated that they may like opportunities to work more in partnership if it is well-planned and merited depending on the project (6% did not respond).
- ❖ Among these partners, collaborations with other agencies were numerous, including offices funded by one of three levels of government, non-profit and Charity organizations. The top three organizations with whom partners collaborate are: MCFD; Vancouver Coastal Health; and Hollyburn Family Services.
- ❖ 68% make referrals between their agency and other youth serving agencies; 74% make referrals between their agency and the District of West Vancouver Youth Services.
- ❖ 42% indicated that they think that their agency should be making more referrals between their organization and the District of West Vancouver while 32% think that maybe they should make more referrals between their organization and the District of West Vancouver (26% did not respond).
- ❖ Agencies varied as to whether they track referrals. There appeared to be wide variation as to the level of tracking of referrals from close tracking to no tracking.

Hub Model of Service

- ❖ Partners saw the main benefits of moving toward a Hub Model as being: one location provides easier access for users of services; easier to collaborate which can result in a higher quality of service; better use of resources and budget; parents may find it easier to get support.
- ❖ Challenges noted by partners when thinking about the Hub Model include: finding an effective way to manage the Hub; getting youth to use services; possibility of losing existing services; youth concerns over confidentiality; geographical distance to the Hub for some users; finding a space that would accommodate a Hub; and perception that users may have toward the Hub.
- ❖ Partners noted numerous services that would be beneficial to have in the Hub. For the most part, these services included primary to tertiary prevention services.

Top Priority Needs in the District of West Vancouver

- ❖ The three top needs that partners felt needed attention in the District of West Vancouver are: counselling and mental health services; creation of places for youth to hang out and engage in youth-friendly activities; and parent-teen mediation services.

Feedback from District of West Vancouver Staff

Participants

22 District staff members participated in a 1.5 hour focus group. 9 of the 22 staff members completed a written survey. Results of the focus group¹⁷ and survey are presented on the following pages. Findings that are derived from the focus groups are noted as such throughout this section.

Completed surveys represented the Library (2 staff) or Parks and Community Services (5 staff from youth services; 2 staff from Health and Fitness; 1 coordinator from the WVCC; 1 staff did not identify department or role).

Staff described their roles in the following ways:

Library:

- ❖ Librarian serving children, teens and parents.
- ❖ Head of Youth Department

Youth Services

- ❖ Youth Outreach Worker (2 staff)
- ❖ Youth Services Team

Health and Fitness

- ❖ Personal Training Coordinator
- ❖ Aquatic Recreation supervisor

West Vancouver Community Centre

- Program Coordinator

One youth staff described the various roles of a youth worker:

- ❖ Recreation programming;
- ❖ Advocacy;
- ❖ Engagement of youth in recreation, civic life, community development, etc.;
- ❖ Staff support of youth committees;
- ❖ Management of youth volunteer force
- ❖ Management of drop-in spaces for youth;
- ❖ Support and training of DWV staff;
- ❖ Liaison between youth, the DWV, and other community partners, agencies, businesses; etc.

¹⁷ Due to limited time in the focus group, participants were asked to hand in their notes that they made on the questions discussed during the group. Excerpts from these are included with focus group findings.

Key Elements for Success in Youth Programs/Activities

During the focus group session, staff were asked to describe a time when they were involved in a youth program or event in which the youth had a good time and what elements they believed led to a successful event. Comments were analyzed for themes resulting in 6 critical elements for successful youth programming from the perspective of District staff.

Critical Element One: Social Aspect

Spending time with friends is highly important during adolescence. For most of the events and activities, having friends participate was very important. Even going to the library was a social outing as well as some academic pursuit.

“They come to the library to study but they socialize at the same time.”

Friday nights at the community centres, youth can get together to hang out or participate in specific activities. This standing time provides youth chances to connect with their friends, particularly in the case of younger youth, who are not yet able to travel about to meet up with friends.

“The ongoing success at community centres. Every Friday night. The kids feel safe, socially and physically. WVCC and Garage.”

Through new activities, youth make new friends - a highly positive experience.

Critical Element Two: Adult-Youth Relationship Which Promotes Security

Providing opportunities for youth to form relationships with caring adults was seen as a critical element for activities, whether they are ongoing activities like hanging out at a community centre or participating in a youth committee or special events and activities, like the Bowron Lake Trip.

The Bowron Lake ten day canoeing trip is an example of the power of relationships. At-risk youth spend ten days in the outdoors facing challenges with the natural environment, challenges with their inner experience, and interpersonal challenges. Having caring adults help them manage emotions and their experiences appears to be essential in order for youth to achieve growth through the experience.

“Taking them out of their community and out of their routine for 10 days – going through a route that requires physical exertion. They are pushed in every way possible. They meet that goal and a lot of interpersonal development happens. There are young adults who when they see me, that is the first thing that they will bring up.

“A lot of young people may be able to honeymoon with you for a day or two but by day 5, the honeymoon is over. You start to get into patterns of behaviour that challenge them at home and other places and you can start to really work with that.

For youth who are involved in social activities at the community centres, having reliable and trustworthy adults is equally important.

“They can trust that it is going to be there. It is not just trust in the facility or event. It is trust in the staff. The success I am having here is less to do with the building and room but with the people. They trust that the staff will follow through and do what they say they are going to do. They want them there.”

As youth venture into new opportunities to create projects and take risks, having a trusted adult create a safe environment leads to success.

“We took the time to build team and connect; the youth were working on projects together; it was a shared, safe, welcoming environment at the Ambleside Youth Centre.”

Critical Element Three: A Youth-Driven Opportunity to Give Back

As youth mature, they crave the opportunity to take on leadership roles in order to develop their skills and feelings of competence. Within the opportunities for youth committee work in the District of West Vancouver, youth have been given the chance to lead and gain required volunteer hours which allow them to graduate from high school.

At the library, a teen advisory group worked to create teen movie nights. In the end, it was the pre-teens who showed more interest in attending than the teens but the events continue to be youth-driven.

“The teens may not think it is great to come to the library for a movie but if they are part of the planning process and getting their volunteer hours then it gives it validity in their minds.”

“There is honor in planning activities for younger students. A sense of being important.”

Critical Element Four: An Opportunity to Develop and Use Skills

Perhaps it is a reflection of the times, but more than ever youth are wanting to develop skills early on in order to add to their toolbox and resume. Volunteering or participating in planning committees have been a positive avenue to meet these goals.

Through an extensive volunteer program in the District of West Vancouver, youth have had opportunities to learn and access new opportunities.

“Youth come to me, take some training and I will send them to different facilities and they will make relationships with other staff then work at after-school children’s programs, summer camps, committees, special events, at the pool with lessons, at the arena with lessons or public

skates and swims -being able to create those opportunities for them to continue to contribute, make relationships, build skills.”

This learning can also take place in intergenerational ways as was the case during the Olympics.

“You had youth working alongside adults so it was an intergenerational connection in which the youth were bringing a whole set of skills in their own right, at the same time they were paired up with someone with a different set of skills.”

Gig Nights at Ambleside Youth Centre, in which local bands are featured, are well attended by youth. These events are youth-driven and allow youth to use their creativity.

“They feel useful, valued. Their input is crucial.”

Critical Element Five: Personal Development Opportunities

Having a chance to personally grow in areas of interest is important for positive youth development. For example, working on a talent or working on their physical fitness.

For aspiring musicians, having a chance to further refine their skills and talents at Community Day in June 2010 was seen as positive by those involved.

“The students had an opportunity to showcase their abilities and the music they wrote to family, friends, and the community-at-large.”

At the gym, spin classes were seen as fun and engaging. Youth were enthusiastic and motivated to participate.

Through a partnership with schools, West Vancouver Community Centre taught health and fitness programs to students.

“Youth gained confidence and knowledge to use the facility regularly outside the school environment.”

Critical Element Six: Novel and Fun Programming

Most youth seek out new and novel experiences that they feel will be fun. One such event held in early 2011 in West Vancouver was an outdoor concert ‘Columba’ which drew in approximately 3,500 youth, from ages 12-24. This free, high-quality event which featured two local bands that were well-liked by youth created a ‘buzz’ throughout the District. Although youth were not involved in the planning of the event, the coordinator of the event was someone who was an individual who had their pulse on youth culture and clearly understood youth desires.

“It was outdoors. It was the spirit of the Olympics. Show up if you want.”

“A lot of time and effort went into it -the lighting and stages.”

"I think that having kids across the North Shore was a draw factor. Kids like to meet new kids. Not do the same old same old."

"It was remarkable. There was such a buzz that built through the whole day. Right around noon it started to build and you could just feel it."

Maximizing Success in Youth Programming

District staff participants were asked what are the elements to consider in order to maximize success in youth programs. They indicated the following key elements.

Setting the Stage

- ❖ Allowing time for relationship building which includes paying attention to the physical environment (having good, warm and inviting space, positive activities for youth)
- ❖ Adequate funding and infrastructure
- ❖ Youth-driven: Ensure program or activity is relevant for youth. Listen to what youth want and need all the way from the content and format of a program/activity to the manner in which it is advertised.

Engagement

- ❖ Choose staff who are able to easily connect with youth, who are inspiring and have passion for their role as a youth facilitator/mentor
- ❖ Ensure youth feel safe in the environment
- ❖ Opportunities for youth to engage in decision-making and leadership roles
- ❖ Continued effort of staff to connect with youth/meet their needs.
- ❖ Listen to youth and families.

Current Trends in Youth Programming

Nine Trends in youth programming that were identified by District staff during the focus group include:

- ❖ Flexibility: drop in hours; freedom in creating their own program (e.g., gym)

"With gymnastics they want freedom."

"Being able to drop into a program rather than having to be for 10-12 weeks."

"People think that youth don't want to play but they do. They want to play in the traditional sense but they also want to be able to manipulate a program or cater it to their needs.....ispin - the kids bring in their own music. It is run by a District staff person"

but the kids [have input]. All the way up to the volunteer program where they can choose their own adventure sort of speak.”

“A trend I see is around skateboarding. They aren’t looking for lessons. You can facilitate something for them – at least for 13 or 14 year old kids. You can take them to different skate parks. We’re lucky we have two here. Parents like the fact that their young person goes with a youth worker. They feel comfortable with that.”

- ❖ Personal benefit: volunteer hours; school credits; resume builder; certifications (e.g., First Aid)

“Increasingly there is an expectation that they will gain hours for school credit.”

“Youth want programs that offer skills to get a job or that they can put on their college application.”

- ❖ Global awareness opportunities

“The WeCan thing that was held at GM - In your package that you got to bring home was a catalogue of trips and opportunities that organizations are offering to globally help. You can sign up as a 15 year old and go to Nicaragua. They are doing these bigger trips for global education. There is the adventure part and the helping part. It is guided, safe.”

- ❖ Access to novel experiences

“We live in a wealthy community and my sense is that we could probably offer things like, I don’t know....scuba diving and that \$5000.00 Outward Bound experience that you’re willing to pay because it’s quite unique and it provides really amazing life skills, Bowron Lakes....”

“They want stuff that they can’t access at school.”

- ❖ Desire for leadership opportunities and skill development

“Leadership opportunities where they learn life skills –lifeguarding, coaching.”

- ❖ A return to fitness programs

“I see a return a fitness programs. They want to be buff. Our spin classes, kickboxing and we have an Olympic weight lifting program too.”

- ❖ The need for programs for older youth who have graduated from high school and who are transitioning to the workplace or post-secondary.

“I have recently got quite a few phone calls from older youth or parents of older youth who....they have used these kind of traditional services when they were younger and now they are not in high school anymore. They aren’t seeing their friends everyday and they just can’t go to the gym with their friends or their friends are away at school or everyone is working different shifts. They still too want to go to the gym or a dance class with a friend and they’re not getting out there to do it by themselves so they want to know where that programming is that focuses on older youth. They are stuck in the middle [between youth and adult programming].”

Other trends noted by District staff include

- ❖ Popularity of low-cost options
- ❖ Opportunities for youth to showcase their talents

Positive Aspects of Youth Program Delivery in West Vancouver

District staff outlined several areas in which they felt the District of West Vancouver was doing well in terms of delivery of youth services. Most noted was the vast diversity of programming available for youth that spanned recreation programs (health and fitness) to skill building through workshop and civic engagement through volunteering. Also noted was the Districts’ efforts to create larger one-time events that are youth focused such as Columba, the large outdoor concert held earlier this year.

- Employment of long-term staff that care about youth and their needs
- Strong management of youth programs
- The maximizing of resources for youth programming
- The existence of wonderful facilities (including the youth lounge, AYC)
- The attention to hearing youth feedback about programs
- Presence of a strong youth team

Partnerships

All 9 District staff indicated that they worked in partnerships with other community organizations and agencies. Thinking about these partnerships, District staff were asked to describe what has worked well in these partnerships.

| Area of Strength | Number of Comments | Comments/Examples |
|---|--------------------|---|
| Collaboration on targeted goals | 5 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Our combined effort makes program or service that we offer more enriching, enjoyable for participants.</i> • <i>Working together with the groups and really finding out what they want, what the kids want and providing them with the best possible experience when they are here.</i> • <i>Collaboration on planning.</i> • <i>Having a common goal.</i> |
| Having a clear understanding of partnership roles and responsibilities. | 4 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Clear understanding of the partnership, roles and responsibilities.</i> • <i>When the partnership is clearly acknowledged by all groups and goals, responsibilities are outlined, cooperation and coordination of services/programs works well. These agreements need to happen at the earliest stages of discussion – it has to be clear who is taking on liability, consent, contributing budget money etc.</i> • <i>Understanding of each organization’s mandate.</i> |
| Sharing resources | 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Shared resources, both human and capital.</i> |
| Having strong leadership | 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Flourished under leadership of youth advocate. She could link people (youth) to appropriate service and support program development.</i> |
| Communication and trust | 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Built in opportunities to develop relationships, have fun and build trust</i> • <i>Make sure each partner feels heard and included.</i> |
| Referrals | 1 | |
| Experience | 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Other organizations sometimes have more expertise on a subject.</i> |

Effective Partnerships for the District of West Vancouver

District staff were asked to identify the gaps in municipal youth services that that could be addressed through partnerships.

| Gaps | Number of Staff who indicated this gap | Comments/Examples |
|--------------------------------------|--|---|
| Volunteer opportunities | 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Volunteer opportunities through local businesses.</i> • <i>Not enough opportunities for meaningful volunteer experiences. Library could partner with community Centre to integrate our volunteer program.</i> |
| Concurrent disorders prevention | 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>We need to address the gap left by the removal of Concurrent Disorders prevention workers from schools.</i> |
| ESL programs | 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>ESL programs with North Shore Multicultural Services.</i> |
| Leadership training | 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Leadership training.</i> |
| Mentorship programs | 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Mentorship programs.</i> |
| Events and social activities | 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>'Bigger' events, like band nights could happen at various venues with more partnership.</i> |
| Other financial resources and prizes | 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Businesses', community clubs, providing financial support, prizes, etc – maybe this is already happening.</i> |
| Inexpensive wellness services | 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Massage, nutritional counselling, life coaching.</i> |
| Mental health support | 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Narrative therapy</i> |

District staff were asked which organizations would be effective partners in delivering services.¹⁸

| Partner | Number of Staff who indicated this partner | Comments/Examples |
|---|--|--|
| Vancouver Coastal Health | 4 | |
| School District | 3 | |
| North Shore Multi-Cultural Society | 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Shore Multicultural Society (2) • District-Cultural Affairs. |
| West Vancouver Police | 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • West Vancouver Police. |
| Community clubs | 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community clubs – Rotary, Kinsmen. • Great support through organizations: Rotary has expressed interest to support youth initiatives. |
| Libraries | 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • West Vancouver Memorial Library. • UBC – library school. |
| Mental Health and Addictions | 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NS Child and Youth Mental Health and Addictions. |
| North Shore Family Services | 1 | |
| Students and youth | 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student council groups or youth groups in the community. |
| Ministry of Children and Family Development | 1 | |
| Local Sports Associations | 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Sport Association. |
| Music School | 1 | |
| Capilano University | 1 | |
| One Stop Career Stop | 1 | |
| Therapeutic day program | 1 | |
| Park Royal | 1 | |

¹⁸ Note that a number of District-run services were noted as effective partnerships: West Vancouver Library; District community services; District parks. In addition, one staff member felt that it was important to first clarify relationships with existing community partners prior to expanding partnerships. This would involve a written document (Memorandum of Understanding) with each partner.

Youth Network and Planning Committees

Five of the nine District staff reported that they participated on youth networks and/or planning committees. Specifically, they were involved in the following:

Provincial Committees

- ❖ Youth Library Committee – Young Adult and Children’s Services section of the BC Library Association.
- ❖ Regional Youth Week Committee

North Shore Committees

- ❖ North Shore Action on Prevention,
- ❖ North Shore Youth Coalition (3 staff)
- ❖ “Let’s Talk Shop” Planning Committee

District Committees

- ❖ Local Youth Advisory Committee
- ❖ Student Work and Advisory Team
- ❖ Recreation Advisory Team
- ❖ Internal Library Committee

4 staff provided specific reasons as to which committees they participated in and why they found specific committees particularly valuable.

- **Youth Library Committee:** *I learn what other libraries are doing for youth. What has been successful, learn about potential partnerships.*
- **North Shore Action on Prevention:** *It is focused on taking action on preventing, delaying and reducing substance misuse among youth.*
- **“Let’s Talk Shop’ and “Youth Coalition Committee:** *They are both very valuable, and I wish our outreach team had greater contact with other North Shore services providers/agencies.*
- **“Regional Youth Week Committee; North Shore Youth Services Coalition; Youth Advisory Committee; Student Work & Advisory Team; Recreation Advisory Team:** *All are valuable as they directly support the work and role with the DWV by: 1) help youth realize their opportunities to be engaged in recreation, civic life, community engagement, event planning, and more; 2) connect in meaningful and productive ways with other youth services agencies (or at least with other adult allies of youth) around the province (which ultimately benefits our service delivery here based on what’s regularly learned and shared); 3) stay connected to youth to better understand trends and needs; and 4) always be striving for excellence and remain in a position of learning regarding new ways of working, building, connecting, etc.*

The Hub Model of Service

A 'Hub Model' is a youth center that has more than social and recreational programs available. It offers a centralized place for agencies and other community groups to partner in providing additional services to youth or their parents. For example, an alcohol and drug worker may come and run a prevention program every week. If a youth or parent felt they needed a counsellor, they could talk directly to the counsellor at the centre. The centre could also serve as an information 'hub' for youth or parents to access referrals to other programs and services in the community as needed.

District staff were asked to comment on the benefits and/or challenges with the HUB Model of Service.

Benefits of the HUB Model of Service

| Benefit | Number of Comments | Examples of Comments |
|--|--------------------|--|
| Integrated services can maximize efficiency, collaboration and offer a higher quality of services. | 6 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Interaction of services can benefit all.</i> • <i>Easy for service providers to connect/make referrals to other supports.</i> • <i>Partnerships easier to create/maintain.</i> • <i>Integrated services can maximize efficiencies, and prevent oversight of service delivery to at-risk individuals.</i> • <i>Share ideas</i> |
| Services offered in one location provides easier and more convenient access for user | 5 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>One-stop shopping experience for parents of youth.</i> • <i>We can bring community partners into the hub and make their services more accessible to West Vancouver youth and families.</i> • <i>Centralized service – one-stop shop for youth.</i> • <i>One place for youth to go to get help.</i> • <i>Single, centralized location may make it easier for youth to find services.</i> |
| Cost effective | 5 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Cost effective – more support in one place i.e. multicultural support, health services, outreach.</i> • <i>Share resources (e.g., bringing in experts)</i> • <i>Shared physical resources and potential to share staff.</i> • <i>Share marketing costs (e.g., website, online presence).</i> |
| Create awareness and knowledge about services provided | 3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Youth and their parents may find out about programs or services they wouldn't normally seek out.</i> • <i>Opportunity to profile services and partners and raise awareness of service providers at various other venues.</i> • <i>People can know where to access services.</i> |
| Prevent duplication of services | 3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Less of a chance of duplication of services, programs.</i> • <i>Prevent duplication.</i> |

| Benefit | Number of Comments | Examples of Comments |
|---|--------------------|---|
| Offer a safe and non-judgmental environment for youth | 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>One place for youth to feel safe and be in a comfortable environment. A place where there is no judgment made against them. Somewhere the youth and or parents can go for advice on everyday challenges they may face.</i> |
| Draw different youth together | 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Able to draw different youth together for specific programs/activities.</i> |
| Offer more holistic support for youth | 1 | |
| Easier to understand where the gaps exist | 1 | |

Challenges of the HUB Model of Service

| Challenge | Number of Comments | Examples of Comments/Questions |
|--|--------------------|---|
| A one stop location may not work for all youth | 4 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Youth like their own space. Noise – Ambleside Youth Centre isolated but huge appeal for teens to own that space and ability to have noisy programs.</i> • <i>Not clear to youth about services provided at the Hub-trying to be everything to everyone doesn't always work. Different youth seek out different spaces.</i> • <i>May feel non-inclusive to some populations.</i> • <i>One location does not also make services accessible or "youth friendly" automatically (e.g., the location of the Hub may work for some but not all due to transportation).</i> |
| Exposure and confidentiality | 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>How is this different from a holistic community centre model? Youth and their parents may not want to be identified accessing the same office at the same time (e.g. youth clinic offered by VCH is at a very specific time dedicated to youth).</i> • <i>Confidentiality/ privacy may be harder to create/ maintain.</i> |
| Youth in need may not go to a HUB | 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>People most in need of social services will not seek out services and need an outreach-style support approach.</i> • <i>Some youth are marginalized enough that they will never attend a service location... they need to be sought out and approached on their 'own territory'.</i> |
| Stigma | 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Stigma attached to 'Youth Centres'. Sometimes parents and youth view youth centres as places for 'troubled teens.' They may avoid using its services. – I think it might be a challenge to advertise the HUB so that it is obvious it is a centre for all youth for a variety of purposes.</i> |
| Involvement of district partners and space | 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>How to involve district partners that cannot physically be in that space. Where would it be located?</i> |
| Age range of youth | 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Age- Pre-teen – early twenties at the same time?</i> |

| | | |
|-----------------------|---|---|
| Geographical location | 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Where it should be?</i> |
| Hours of work | 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Hours it should be open?</i> |
| Management | 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Who the people to run it would be?</i> |

District staff were asked about services that should be available to youth at the community centres and youth centres.

| Service | Number of District Staff Indicating this should be an available service |
|---|--|
| Peer leadership training | 9 |
| Places to just hang out | 9 |
| Employment services | 8 |
| Referrals to social services | 8 |
| Life skills training | 8 |
| Discussion groups | 8 |
| Counsellors | 8 |
| Events & social activities | 8 |
| Alcohol & drug counselling | 7 |
| One-to-one workers | 7 |
| Disordered eating counselling | 6 |
| Cultural workers | 6 |
| Parent/teen mediation counselling | 5 |
| Programs to support parents | 4 |
| Housing information | 4 |
| Youth health clinic | 4 |
| Probation | 4 |
| Wellness programs (e.g., healthy lifestyle training; mental health) | 2 |
| Volunteer opportunities | 1 |
| Information about all services available to youth in the community | 1 |

Emerging Social Service Needs for Youth

During the focus group, staff were asked to identify the emerging needs for youth in the area of social services. 7 emerging needs were identified:

- ❖ Social media awareness

“Nothing is very new as it comes in peaks and valleys but one need that I have really seen in the last four or five years is internet safety awareness and all that goes into that from sexual exploitation online to bullying – protecting yourself and your future by not putting up the wrong types of pictures and things, learning to take care of yourself up front.”

- ❖ Increased access to mental health services for concurrent disorders

“Something that is relatively new is that VCH withdrew their prevention workers from the schools a year or two ago and we are starting to feel the impact of that. They were there to address youth who were having mental health issues or issues with addiction. They were called concurrent disorders workers. So they are no longer there within the schools so that presents more barriers for families trying to access resources. What we are trying to do is connect with counsellors but we face capacity issues too.”

- ❖ Supports for newly arrived immigrant youth and international students

“I don’t know how much support they get. Some of them are alone or with an older sibling.”

“We also see a lot of international students that are here in homestays.”

- ❖ Increasing ease for family access to subsidies for youth recreation

“When youth workers are out working with families who may not have the financial means to afford some of our programs, we can help walk through getting support from the District. Sometimes that’s a difficult thing to do in West Vancouver, you know, it’s such a wealthy place but we can make that a little bit easier for them. We have such wonderful facilities and they can benefit from that and physical activity is so good for you.”

- ❖ Counselling for youth regarding body image issues (e.g., disordered eating; steroid use)
- ❖ Increase access to general counselling (both individual and group) services for youth
- ❖ Drug and alcohol safety education

Municipal Role in Delivering Youth Services

District staff were asked to consider youth programs and services as it relates to five domains. They were asked to indicate the appropriate role of the Municipality of the District of West Vancouver (Note that numbers in the tables indicate the number of District staff who endorse the specific option). Additional comments are noted in *italics*. For 'No municipal role', a small number of staff offered suggestions as to who should offer the service. Unless noted, comments were indicated by 1 staff member only. Many staff felt that programs and services could be offered by more than just one organization. Programs and services that 7 or more staff felt should be municipally run are shaded.

| Program or service area/need | Municipality direct role | Municipality supportive role (e.g., in-kind support) | No Municipal Role: Agency Role | No Agency Role: Private or Family Matter |
|--|--------------------------------|--|--------------------------------|--|
| RECREATION, ARTS AND LEISURE | | | | |
| Sports | 9 | 4 | -- | 1 |
| Outdoor Activities (Hike/Bike/Climbing) | 5 | 7 <i>Maintenance of parks</i> | -- | 2 |
| Yoga | 8 | 4 | 1 <i>Instructors</i> | -- |
| Fitness Classes | 8 | 4 | -- | 1 |
| Martial Arts | 6 | 6 | -- | 1 |
| Weight Room and Physical Training | 9 | 2 | -- | 1 |
| Snow Sports (skiing, boarding, snowshoeing) | 1 | 4 <i>Subsidies</i> | 2 <i>ski hills</i> | 4 |
| Skating | 8 | 1 | | 2 |
| Running | 4 | 1 | 1 | 4 |
| Gymnastics | 9 | 3 | -- | 1 |
| Swimming | 9 | 2 | -- | 1 |
| Dance, Musical Theatre, Theatre | 8 <i>in partnership</i> | 5 <i>in partnership</i> | 3 <i>Dance companies</i> | 1 |
| Singing, Performing arts | 7 | 5 | 3 | 1 |
| Entertainment: Movies; Live music events; video games; computers | 7 <i>gigs, movie nights</i> | 3 | 1 | 3 |

| Program or service area/need | Municipality direct role | Municipality supportive role (e.g., in-kind support) | No Municipal Role: Agency Role | No Agency Role: Private or Family Matter |
|--|--------------------------|--|--------------------------------|--|
| Movie/video production | 1 | 4 <i>summer visions</i> | 2 <i>School District</i> | 2 |
| Build or Fix Things (e.g. woodwork, bike repair) | 3 | 6 | 2 | 1 |
| Arts Projects | 8 | 5 | 2 <i>Schools</i> | -- |
| Cultural Projects | 8 | 5 | 1 <i>Schools</i> | -- |
| Reading/Library | 8 | 2 | | -- |

YOUTH CENTRE BASED ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAMS

| | | | | |
|---|---|-----|---|-----|
| Ambleside Youth Center Drop-In (AYC) | 9 | 1 | --- | --- |
| AYC Youth Outreach Activities | 8 | | 1 | --- |
| West Vancouver Community Centers Youth lounges | 9 | --- | --- | --- |
| One to one support for youth | 9 | 5 | 4 <i>Family Services, VCH (2staff) Private counsellors Schools</i> | 1 |
| Community Outreach Work | 8 | 3 | 3 VCH <i>Private counsellors Schools</i> | --- |
| Youth Group Activities (e.g. homework club, girls/boys groups, cooking, pocket bikes) | 7 | 5 | --- | 1 |
| Camping and field trips | 8 | 7 | 2 <i>Schools</i> | 1 |

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT AND LIFE SKILLS

| | | | | |
|--------------------------|--|----------------------|--|---|
| Employment Training | 9 <i>short term & with agencies</i> | 6 with government | | 1 |
| Leadership Opportunities | 9 with agencies | 4 | | 1 |

| Program or service area/need | Municipality direct role | Municipality supportive role (e.g., in-kind support) | No Municipal Role: Agency Role | No Agency Role: Private or Family Matter |
|---|--|--|---|--|
| Life Skills Training | 7 <i>with agencies</i> | 5 | 1 <i>schools</i> | 1 |
| Personal Growth (assertiveness, self esteem) | 6 <i>with agencies</i> | 5 | 1 <i>schools</i> | 1 |
| LEADERSHIP /YOUTH ENGAGEMENT / CONNECTION TO COMMUNITY | | | | |
| Youth Week Events | 8 <i>with agencies</i> | 3 | | |
| Youth Conferences | 6 <i>with agencies</i> | 7 | 1 <i>school, churches</i> | |
| Training: Babysitting Class, First Aid | 8 <i>with agencies</i> | 2 | 1 <i>St. John Ambulance</i> | |
| Volunteer Opportunities | 9 <i>coordinator and trainer for all and other groups, & agencies</i> | 2 | 1 <i>churches</i> | 1 |
| Youth Awards and Recognition | 8 | 3 | 1 | 1 |
| Youth Committees: Youth Advisory Committee Recreation Advisory Team Student Work and Advisory Team | 8 | 2 | | |
| SOCIAL EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT / MEDICAL/MENTAL HEALTH | | | | |
| Health Education | 3 <i>with private counsellors</i> | 5 | 5 <i>VCH (4 staff) Schools (2 staff)</i> | 1 |
| Sex Education | 2 | 5 | 6 <i>VCH (5 staff) Schools (2 staff) Private counsellors</i> | 1 |
| Anger Management | 4 | 5 | 5 <i>VCH (4 staff) Schools (3 staff) Private counsellors</i> | 1 |
| Stress Management | 4 | 5 | 5 <i>VCH (4 staff) schools (3 staff) private counsellors</i> | 1 |

| Program or service area/need | Municipality direct role | Municipality supportive role (e.g., in-kind support) | No Municipal Role: Agency Role | No Agency Role: Private or Family Matter |
|--------------------------------|--|--|--|--|
| A&D Education | 1 | 4 | 4 VCH (2 staff) schools private counsellors | |
| Violence Prevention | 3 | 4 | 5 VCH (2 staff) schools (2 staff) police (2 staff) private counsellors | 1 |
| Disordered eating services | 1 | 3 | 5 VCH (3 staff) schools (2 staff) private counsellors | 1 |
| ADHD | 1 | 5 | 5 VCH (2 staff) schools (2 staff) private counsellors | 2 |
| Anxiety | 2 | 5 | 5 VCH (3 staff) schools (2 staff) private counsellors | 1 |
| Grief and Loss Counselling | 1 | 4 | 5 VCH (3 staff) schools (2 staff) private counsellors | 1 |
| Crisis Interventions | 4 with WV Police VCH schools private counsellors | 3 | 4 Crisis line Kids Help Phone, WV Police VCH schools private counsellors | |
| General Mental Health Services | 1 | 4 | 5 VCH (2 staff) schools (2 staff) private counsellors | 1 |
| Parent-teen Mediation | 4 with WV Police VCH schools private counsellors | 3 | 4 VCH (2 staff) schools (2 staff) Hollyburn F.S. Child/Youth Advocate private counsellors | 2 |

| Program or service area/need | Municipality direct role | Municipality supportive role (e.g., in-kind support) | No Municipal Role: Agency Role | No Agency Role: Private or Family Matter |
|--|--------------------------|--|--|--|
| Parenting Support | 4 | 4 | 4 VCH (2 staff) schools (2 staff) private counsellors | 3 |
| Medical Issues | 1 | 3 | 7 VCH (4 staff) schools (2 staff) | 1 |
| One-to-one wrap-around support to compliment other clinical/specific support | 1 | | | |
| Wellness programs | 1 | 1 | | |
| OTHER | | | | |
| Transitional services/programs for preteens/19-24 yr. olds | 1 | 1 | | |
| Literacy | 1 <i>Library</i> | | | |
| Information | 1 <i>Library</i> | | | |
| Research | 1 <i>Library</i> | | | |
| Homework help/support | 1 <i>Library</i> | | | |
| Referral to other agencies | 1 <i>Library</i> | | | |

Current Areas for Improvement in Youth Services

Staff were asked for suggestions for improvements that would lead to better meeting the needs of youth in West Vancouver. These improvement highlighted one of three areas: structural; understanding perspectives of youth to increase engagement; and increased youth opportunities.

Structural

- ❖ Increased funding for staffing, advertising
- ❖ Staff training opportunities
- ❖ Better communication among departments and agencies
- ❖ Better integration of programs and services
- ❖ Focus on building youth and community assets

Increased Understanding of Perspectives of Youth to Increase Engagement

- ❖ Formal mechanism for soliciting feedback about programming (e.g., online survey)
- ❖ Increase knowledge and understanding regarding the youth who are not participating in community activities
- ❖ Increased attention to fringe youth

Increased Opportunities for Youth

- ❖ Streamline access to programs for youth
- ❖ Development of a teen mentor program (e.g., teens can mentor younger youth in the weight room)
- ❖ Increase leadership opportunities (e.g., global development trips)
- ❖ More streamlined volunteer program (e.g., all youth go through a training program)
- ❖ Increased number of big events

Priority Needs for Youth Services in West Vancouver

Nine general needs and two program specific needs were noted by District staff during the focus group session as priority areas.

- ❖ Reinstatement of youth advocate position

“Love to see a reinstatement of the youth advocate position. We have the family and child hub meetings. It’s wonderful. We are integrating and doing things that we could not have ever done before....and it’s not dramatically changing what we do individually. To be able to easily communicate.... to have someone out there say “someone is doing this, you may want tosort of thing. That happened when we had that position.”

- ❖ Enhance and develop partnerships

“With the school district and other youth-serving agencies so everybody knows how to make referrals, how each agency can support or deliver programs to youth. Sometimes I feel there is a bit of a disconnect out there. There’s all these great ideas and people doing wonderful work and it’s hard to bring people together unless you develop a relationship with people doing the work. If it was so systemic and developed, it would be easier to make those connections.”

- ❖ Increase funding for programs, staffing and resources

“It’s about funding too. Youth programs, for the most part, are not revenue generating unless we run a bunch of high-end trips. So even more funding for drop-in hours. We have these amazing facilities...”

- ❖ Address cultural diversity needs in West Vancouver to ensure inclusion of all
- ❖ Increase strength of the continuum of programs (ages 10 through young adulthood) so that youth do not fall through the cracks
- ❖ Increase opportunities for youth to connect with non-related caring adults
- ❖ Enhance youth outreach services in order to better meet the needs of youth
- ❖ Increase availability of drop-in and low cost programs for youth
- ❖ Increase the number of special events that are youth-driven

Program Specific Needs

“At the youth garage, the program this year has grown and positively developed. The participants trust the staff, have fun and are engaged. In the next three years I’d like to see the program grow more into the community to facilitate personal growth for the participants.”

“Streamline access to the weight room services.”

Key Findings from District Staff

Youth Programming

- ❖ Six critical elements for successful youth programming were identified by District staff: having a social aspect to programs; strong adult-youth relationships; youth-driven program; opportunities to develop and use skills; inclusion of personal development opportunities; and programming that is novel and fun.
- ❖ In order to maximize success of programs careful attention must first be paid to creating a solid foundation for the program (e.g., appropriate length of time to develop relationships; adequate funding for infrastructure; and ensuring the program is relevant for youth). Within this solid foundation, appropriate youth-friendly staff, emotional safety, opportunities for youth leadership, and hearing youth voices were deemed as important to increase likelihood of success.
- ❖ Nine trends in youth programming were noted by staff: demand for flexibility in program structure; program is of personal benefit to youth (e.g., resume builder, volunteer hours); focus on global awareness opportunities; novel programming; opportunities for leadership and skill development; increased popularity of fitness programming; desire for older youth to engage in age-appropriate programming; wish for low-cost programming; and opportunities for programming that allows youth to showcase their talents.
- ❖ District staff felt that the District of West Vancouver was demonstrating strength in youth programming as witnessed by the vast range of available programs; the quality staff; strong management; the way in which the District maximizes resources; the outstanding facilities; the willingness to hear youth feedback; and the presence of a strong youth team.

Partnerships

- ❖ The two key strengths identified by District staff in their partnerships were: the collaboration in order to meet targeted goals and ensuring a clear understanding of the partnership roles and responsibilities.
- ❖ Staff noted a variety of gaps that could be addressed through partnerships. The two most pressing gaps identified were: volunteer opportunities and concurrent disorder prevention.
- ❖ Several key partners were identified as being potentially effective in assisting the District of West Vancouver in meeting the needs of youth. The six top partnerships identified were: Vancouver Coastal Health; School District; North Shore Multi-cultural Society; West Vancouver Police; Community Service Clubs; and Libraries.

Youth Network and Planning Committee Involvement

- ❖ Approximately half of the District staff who completed a survey indicated that they participated on youth network and planning committees.
- ❖ Overall, these committees provide staff with an opportunity to learn from others; learn about services; and learn ways to better connect with youth.

Hub Model of Service

- ❖ Key benefits of the Hub Model of services include: creating a more integrated service model that is more efficient, of higher quality, and collaborative; increasing user-friendliness of services that are located together; increasing youth and family awareness of available services; improving cost-effectiveness due to one location; and better prevention of duplication of services.
- ❖ Key challenges of the Hub model include: selection of a location that is central for all youth; challenges with confidentiality for youth accessing services; and missing youth due to youth not feeling comfortable accessing services at a Hub.
- ❖ Staff felt numerous services and supports should be offered at the Hub. Among the most cited were: peer leadership training; places for youth to hang out; employment services; referrals to social services; discussion groups; counselling; events and social activities; alcohol and drug counselling; one-to-one workers; disordered eating counselling; and cultural workers.

Emerging Needs for Youth Social Services

- ❖ Seven emerging needs for youth in the area of social services were identified by District staff: social media awareness; mental health services for concurrent disorders; supports for newly arrived immigrant youth and international students; increased need for ease of access to subsidies for youth recreation; counselling for youth for body image issues/disorders; need for increased availability for general youth counselling; and drug and alcohol safety education.

Municipal Role in the Delivery of Youth Services

- ❖ District staff felt that the municipality should take on a leadership role in the delivery of all youth centre-based activities and programs; most recreational services, youth development and leadership programs.
- ❖ In the area of social-emotional programming, there was more support for the municipality to have a supportive role or no role.
- ❖ For the delivery of most programs and services, many staff felt that there are opportunities for the same programs and services to be solely run by municipalities and in partnerships.

Areas for Improvement

- ❖ District staff noted areas for improvement in the delivery of youth services. Areas of improvement included enhancing structures (e.g., funding, staff training, communication); increasing understanding of the perspectives of youth through increased youth engagement (e.g., feedback surveys; reaching out to fringe youth; increasing understanding as to the reasons some youth do not participate in programs and services); and increasing opportunities for youth engagement (e.g., create more leadership opportunities; streamline the volunteer program; streamline access to programs in general).

Priority Needs for Youth in West Vancouver

- ❖ Nine general priority areas were identified by District staff: reinstatement of youth advocate position; enhance and develop partnerships; increase funding for programs, staffing and resources; address cultural diversity needs; increase the strength of continuum of programs for youth ages 10 through early adulthood; increase opportunities for youth to connect with non-related caring adults; enhance youth outreach services; increase availability of drop-in and low-cost programs for youth; and increase the number of special events that are youth-driven.

Conclusions

Gaps and Successes in Youth Services

Based on the feedback from 5 groups (younger youth; older youth, parents, partners, and District staff) key successes and gaps were identified. These include the most predominant issues that arose during the groups and from the surveys.

Legend

- + Successful
- ++ Successful but greater capacity needed to meet the demand from youth
- +/- Mixed findings indicating success and some gaps (see notes below each table)
- Gap
- n/a Issue not discussed in this group or minimal discussion; unclear whether there exists a gap

Areas in need of the most attention are shaded are **bolded**.

Organizational Structure

| | Younger Youth | Older Youth | Parents | Partners | District Staff |
|--|---------------|-------------|---------|----------|----------------|
| Articulation of Policies, Procedures and Practices for working with at-risk youth | n/a | n/a | - | - | - |
| Program (e.g., rec programs) advertising | + | + | + | + | + |
| Knowledge of available service (e.g., social services) | n/a | | +/- | +/- | n/a |
| Partnerships | n/a | n/a | -/+ | -/+ | -/+ |

Partnerships: These were seen as a vital way to increase services to youth and many are working well through strong communication and collaboration; however there appears to be a need to have more formal agreements in place (i.e., Memorandum of Understanding) to increase effectiveness of some partnerships. After a clear understanding of existing partnerships between the District of West Vancouver and community agencies/organizations is achieved, there is support for enhancing partnerships to increase services to youth and families.

Knowledge of available services: The West Vancouver School District indicated it would be helpful to have a document that clearly outlines available services along with key contact people. This issue emerged in the parent group as one parent had a difficult time finding support for a youth.

Programs

| | Younger Youth | Older Youth | Parents | Partners | District Staff |
|--|---------------|-------------|---------|----------|----------------|
| Programs for Early Adolescence (ages 13-15) | n/a | n/a | - | - | - |
| Drop-in sports/physical activity | n/a | - | - | n/a | n/a |
| Organized sports | + | -/+ | +/- | n/a | n/a |
| Volunteering | n/a | + | ++ | ++ | ++ |
| Peer leadership training | n/a | ++ | ++ | ++ | ++ |
| The Garage Youth Drop-In | + | n/a | n/a | n/a | + |
| Recreational programs for Younger Youth (ages 10-12) | + | n/a | + | + | + |
| Fitness programs (weights, classes) | n/a | + | n/a | n/a | + |
| Arts programs | n/a | n/a | +/- | n/a | n/a |
| Ambleside Youth Centre (See note) | n/a | + | + | + | + |
| Youth Lounge | n/a | + | + | n/a | + |
| Youth Events weeks | n/a | + | + | n/a | + |
| Training programs (first aid; babysitting) | + | + | n/a | n/a | + |
| Youth Committees | n/a | + | + | + | + |

Ambleside Youth Centre: Those who have participated in the activities at the Ambleside Youth Centre have had positive experiences. The appearance and the reputation of the youth centre are issues.

Arts programs: Parents would like to see more variety in arts programs with a focus on experiences that youth would not have access to in school.

Drop-in sports/physical activity: Youth felt that there needed to be more opportunity for open gym in less crowded conditions. Fields were seen as exclusively for organized sports so youth have difficulty accessing them for their use. Parents indicated that there is limited access to certain features (e.g., pool diving board) as it is used for clubs a great deal of the time.

Organized sports: Both youth and parents would like to see more opportunities for youth to be involved in organized sports without the requirement to play at an advanced level but rather put on teams with other youth at a similar skill level (rather than mixed skill levels)

The Horseshoe Bay is a West Vancouver neighbourhood identified as having no services for youth and families.

Youth Services (Current or Potential)

| | Younger Youth | Older Youth | Parents | Partners | District Staff |
|---|---------------|-------------|---------|----------|----------------|
| Places to hang out | - | - | - | - | - |
| Events and social activities | - | - | - | - | - |
| Employment or career development supports | - | - | + | n/a | n/a |
| Supports for preteens | n/a | n/a | - | - | - |
| Multicultural/Immigrant supports | n/a | - | n/a | - | - |
| International student support | n/a | - | n/a | - | - |
| Access to Public transportation | n/a | - | n/a | - | n/a |
| Prevention (e.g., wellness, drug and alcohol education) | n/a | n/a | - | n/a | - |
| Library | + | + | n/a | + | + |
| District youth workers | n/a | + | + | + | + |
| Youth Health Clinic | n/a | + | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| Housing supports | n/a | - | n/a | - | n/a |
| Social media awareness | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a | - |

Non-Municipal Youth Services

| | Younger Youth | Older Youth | Parents | Partners | District Staff |
|--------------------------|---------------|-------------|---------|----------|----------------|
| Entertainment facilities | n/a | - | - | - | - |
| Mental health support | n/a | -/+ | - | - | |

Multicultural/immigrant supports: A small number of visible minority youth identified racism and exclusion by other youth as part of their experience in West Vancouver

Mental health support: A small number of older youth indicated having access to mental health support while other older youth saw a need for more support.

What Youth Want¹⁹

Based on the feedback from youth who contributed to this needs assessment, the key elements in youth programming that they said that they want are....

- ❖ Places to hang out with their friends
- ❖ Flexible one-time activities
- ❖ Novel activities and events
- ❖ Large scale community events
- ❖ Skill-building workshops

And what they want as part of the community...

- ❖ Access to caring adults who will help them meet life's challenges²⁰
- ❖ To feel that they are welcome in the community of West Vancouver
- ❖ A chance to give back to the community through volunteering
- ❖ An opportunity to demonstrate their areas of competencies
- ❖ Involvement in decision-making

What Adults Want

Adults agreed with all of the above. They also focused on the social-emotional needs of youth by indicated the following needs:

- ❖ Greater provision of youth services that reflect 10-18 (with some transition to adulthood services and programs)
- ❖ Mental health support
- ❖ More monitoring of services for youth at-risk to ensure youth do not fall through the cracks
- ❖ More cohesive and articulated partnerships
- ❖ Greater attention given to youth who may need subsidy support to access programs

¹⁹ Note that youth wishes from this needs assessment align closely with the 2006 'Take a Walk in Our Shoes' Document.

²⁰ Note that almost all youth surveyed were able to identify an important adult in their life. With a few exceptions, these adults were family members, primarily parents.

Final Thoughts

This needs assessment captured the perspectives of five different groups. It is clear, based on the previous consultations, that some of the same issues exist for youth. Although the Municipality of the District of West Vancouver cannot reasonably provide all services along the continuum, feedback through this needs assessment provides directions as to the recreational and non-recreational areas currently lacking for youth. There is clearly an opportunity for changes and additions to Youth Services that will improve the recreational experience for youth. As well, the area of positive youth development via leadership programs, volunteering, and skill development has a strong foundation in West Vancouver. Augmenting the opportunities for more youth to become involved in such activities will be a positive and welcome feature.

An increase in prevention programs would be a powerful addition to Youth Services in order to decrease later onset of mental health issues, violence, addiction etc. Ideally, this is an area for increased partnerships. Intervention services appear to be better situated within specialized organizations such as Vancouver Coastal Health and other agencies that have skilled clinicians who can work with youth in a more intense manner. This does not address the issue of the limited availability of services, a situation which is problematic through Canada as rates of mental illness among children and youth rise.

Having a range of services available to youth was favored by groups in this needs assessment. The idea of a Hub Model where a continuum of services (e.g., places for youth to hang out, events and social activities, positive youth development workshop, clinical services) would be offered elicited many beneficial and challenging issues for consideration. Key benefits were convenience of access for service recipients and cost-effectiveness of resource sharing. The main challenges were related to three key issues: overseeing the coordination and administration of a Hub; youth not wanting to access clinical services in a location that may be quite open to others seeing them access such services; and thoughts that at-risk youth would not attend centre-based services.

Programs and activities can offer youth excellent experiences and many youth are motivated to attend, learn and grow. Critical to program and service success are the connections with caring adults who work to draw in all youth. West Vancouver is highly rich in their Youth Services staff who work directly with youth. As they continue to nurture their relationships with youth, so will youth be supported in order that they can grow and develop into caring and competent citizens.