

# CATCH DA FLAVA

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March/April 2006

Volume 12 Issue 1

## REGENT PARK IS FALLING DOWN!

THOUGHTS ABOUT THE PAST AND FUTURE OF CANADA'S  
LARGEST PUBLIC HOUSING PROJECT



ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

- WHAT'S CAUSING GUN VIOLENCE IN TORONTO?
- WHY TTC FARES ARE GOING UP...YET AGAIN
- SHOULD DROPOUTS GET DRIVER'S LICENSES?
- PROMINENT AFRICAN CANADIANS
- HOW TO THROW THE ULTIMATE PARTY

A Youth Health and Culture Magazine Serving the Greater Toronto Area



## LET CATCH DA FLAVA BE YOUR VOICE

*Catch da Flava* youth magazine is published by the Regent Park Focus Media Arts Centre. The magazine is distributed free to libraries, community groups, and selected schools across downtown Toronto.

Subscriptions are available outside our delivery area.

*Catch da Flava* welcomes letters and articles from young people (up to 24 years of age). Submissions should be no longer than 1000 words in length.

If you would like more information about how you can contribute to *Catch da Flava*, call us at (416) 863-1074 or submit directly to [catchmail@catchdaflava.com](mailto:catchmail@catchdaflava.com)

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**THE REGENT PARK FOCUS MEDIA ARTS CENTRE** IS COMMITTED TO THE USE OF COMMUNITY-BASED MEDIA TO PROMOTE HEALTH AND ENGAGE YOUTH. REGENT PARK FOCUS IS HOME TO: **CATCH DA FLAVA** YOUTH HEALTH AND CULTURE MAGAZINE, **CATCH DA FLAVA ONLINE**, **CATCH DA FLAVA YOUTH RADIO** ON CKLN 88.1 FM, **EYE VIDEO YOUTH PRODUCTIONS**, **THE ZAPPAROLI STUDIO FOR PHOTOGRAPHY**, & **THE UNDERGROUND MUSIC RECORDING STUDIO**

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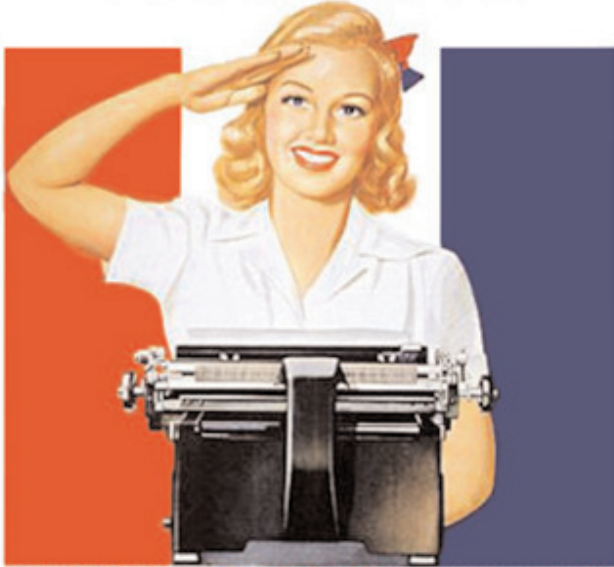
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# Editorial

**YOU WRITE WHAT  
YOU'RE TOLD!**



**THANKS, CORPORATE NEWS!**  
**We Couldn't Control The People Without You**

Illustration by Micah Ian Wright

Lying outright to the public is considered immoral, even by the media. But big businesses and governments have done this many times throughout history, swaying millions of people's opinions away from the truth.

One of biggest examples lying happened in the United States. Between 1932 and 1972, the U.S. Public Health Service conducted an experiment on

399 black men in the late stages of a disease called syphilis. These 399 people were very poor and lived in Alabama. During the experiment they weren't told what disease they had or how serious it was. They were informed that they had "bad blood" and that they were being treated for it, but the doctors had no intention of curing their illness. The object of the experiment was to see if there was a difference in the way blacks responded to syphilis compared to whites. By the end of the experiment, 28 of the men had died directly of syphilis, 100 died of related complications, 40 of their wives had been

infected, and 19 of their children had been born with congenital syphilis. And all this happened just to find out that there was no difference in the way blacks and whites responded to syphilis. Not only is this an example of lying but it is also a case of medical racism.

Around the time that this was happening--as early as the 1960's--scientists from tobacco companies were discov-

ering the dangers associated with tobacco use. But the tobacco companies lied to the public by saying that there weren't any known negative effects of tobacco use and continued to sell their products.

A more recent example of lying by the U.S. government was when official Donald Rumsfeld stated to the press on March 30, 2003, "We know where [Iraq's WMD] are. They're in the area around Tikrit and Baghdad and east, west, south, and north somewhat." The truth is that no such weapons were found, not to the east, west, south or north. Vice President Cheney said on March 16, 2003 "We believe [Saddam] has, in fact, reconstituted nuclear weapons." The truth is that there was absolutely zero basis for this statement. CIA reports up through 2002 showed no evidence of an Iraqi nuclear weapons program.

How is it that the governments and large corporations were able to fool so many people? Because we didn't realize the difference between news and propaganda. So the next time you hear or see something too unbelievable to be true, it probably is.

*by Ikoro Sekai Huggins Warner, 12  
City View Alternative School*

## Catch da Flava's Special Magazine Issue

Did you know that Catch da Flava is Toronto's oldest running youth publication? It's been around for over a decade, and has expanded from a stapled 6-page quarterly booklet to a 12-page bi-monthly newspaper delivered to schools, libraries and community groups all across Toronto. This issue,

Catch da Flava has evolved again into a full-blown 24-page mini-magazine.

The focus of this issue is on the Revitalization of Regent Park, which is Canada's largest public housing project. Other features include articles on gun violence, TTC fares, prominent African Canadians and much

more. Also check out our new comic section featuring drama from River High.

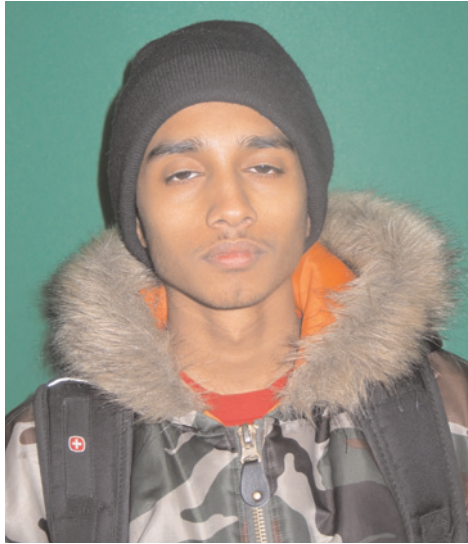
We'd love to hear what you think about our content and new format. Email us your questions and comments at: [catchmail@catchdaflava.com](mailto:catchmail@catchdaflava.com).



# What's Your Beef?



## TTC Fare Hikes



*I think it's unfortunate for students in general to pay that extra and for it to go up. Because there are a lot of students out there trying to get their Metropasses and tickets and doing all they can to work part-time and do well at school. So it's not right.*

*-Nayan Kabir*



*Well I think the TTC price hike is going to cause a lot of problems for people who are not rich. I'm in a program [Pathways] that gives me tickets to go to school. For others it's going to be hard for them because they are going to waste a lot of money each month and each year for people to go to school.*

*-Thaseepan Mariyanayagam*



*I think it's rotten. I think that the TTC should be more accessible and affordable, especially to students. Having a viable transportation is really key to a city's growth economically and if they hike it more people are going to take cars and bog down the way the city moves, which is not going to be good for Toronto.*

*-Benji Degraaf*

## Government Responses to Gun Violence

Dear Primiere,

I am very concerned about rising incidents of youth gun crime in my city, but I am even more concerned about the simplistic responses of many of my political representatives to this issue.

Regent Park Focus organized an important panel discussion at the Toronto Reference Library last night, Jan 26th. During the course of the evening, panelists and audience members spoke of how mandatory mini-

mum sentencing and a harsher justice system approach overall will not work to address issues of gun crime by youth. It also became painfully obvious that our public schools in Toronto are really failing youth of colour, particularly black youth.

I urge politicians and leaders of all political persuasions to work towards comprehensive, in-depth, real solutions to the issues of youth gun crime in our cities. These solutions must include:

- no more pretence that tougher sen-

tences and more police on the streets will be effective at reducing youth gun crime

- repeal of the Safe Schools Act  
- public awareness campaigns of how interrelated a) availability of racially-conscious schooling and community programs, b) creation of meaningful employment opportunities, and c) youth crime really are  
- involvement of the youth themselves who are at risk and who are involved with local organizations and initiatives such as Regent Park Focus.

*by Lisa Valencia-Svensson*

**Got A Beef? Don't Just Sit There, Write About It!**

**Submit to [catchmail@catchdaflava.com](mailto:catchmail@catchdaflava.com)**

# Before Rosa Parks Was Viola Desmond



**V**iola Desmond was an African Canadian born in Nova Scotia. When she was 32 years old, she owned a beauty salon.

The event below happened nine years before Rosa Parks' famous incident.

One day in 1946 as Viola was driving to a meeting, her car broke down. As she waited for her car to be fixed she decided to go to a movie. When Viola bought her ticket she was not aware

that blacks were not allowed to sit in the downstairs section; blacks were only allowed to sit in the balcony. Because the lower section had a better view of the movie, she decided to sit downstairs.

Soon afterwards, the ticket agent and manager approached Viola and said, "You are not allowed to sit there; you have to sit in the balcony; you bought a balcony ticket." Viola said, "I'll be glad to pay for a downstairs ticket." The manager and the ticket agent insisted, "You blacks are not allowed to sit here."

Viola got angry. She did not move because she did not think that black

people should have to sit somewhere else. Then the manager and the ticket agent called the police. When the policeman came, he dragged Viola out of the movie theater. Then he put her in jail overnight.

Later when Viola went to court, the judge let her go. It took another eight long years before black people could finally sit anywhere they wanted in Nova Scotian theatres.

Viola Desmond inspired a lot of black and white people to fight against segregation, and helped make our world a little better.

*by Adaku Huggins Warner, 11,  
Alpha Alternative School*

## Have a Complaint?

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# Prominent African Canadians From Toronto

**B**efore public transit appeared in Toronto, brave African Americans risked their lives to migrate along the Underground Railroad to Toronto. Roots can be traced as far back as the 1790s but most of the migration occurred in the 1850s to escape slavery and then again in the 1960s as Canadian immigration laws relaxed. Today, Toronto is home to more than half the black population in Canada. -By da Flava's Jennn Fusion.

## PAST

### POLITICIAN WILLIAM P. HUBBARD

**W**illiam P Hubbard was born in Toronto in 1842 after his parents were freed from Virginia slaveholders. In his earlier years, he went to the Toronto model school and became well-known as a master baker and cake-maker, inventing and patenting his own oven. He once saved George Brown, editor of the *Globe*, from drowning, creating a long-lasting friendship. At age 51, Hubbard tried his hand at politics. He became the first African-Canadian councilor and served as "Acting Mayor" in 1904 and 1907. He was a relentless fighter for cheap, public electric power and pushed for the creation of the Toronto Hydro Electric System. Hubbard was also responsible for encouraging the



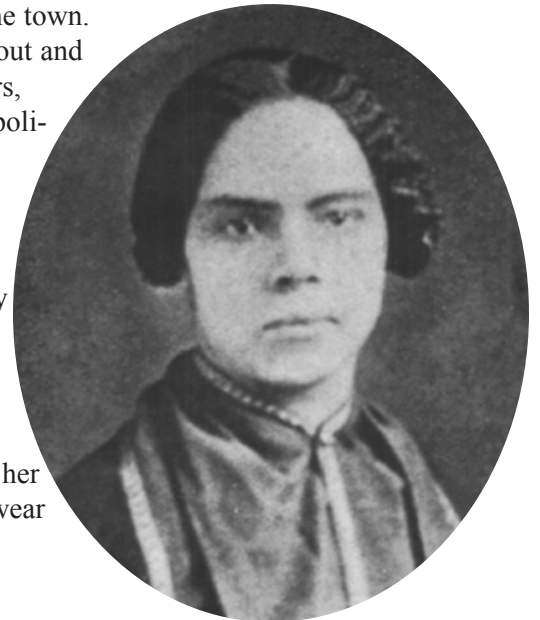
acquisition of the Toronto Islands. George Brown of the *Globe* acknowledged Hubbard for his "splendid defense of the public interest."

### NEWSPAPER WRITER & EDITOR MARY ANN SHADD

**T**he oldest of thirteen children born to an abolitionist-dedicated family, Mary Ann Shadd was the first black newspaperwoman in North America, the first female publisher of a Canadian newspaper, and the publisher of Canada's first Anti-Slavery newspaper (*The Provincial Freeman*) in 1853. She was educated at a Quaker boarding school in Pennsylvania and taught children before coming to Toronto, where she honed her sharp tongue and punchy editorials.

One day she saw a shoeless, coatless slave boy being pursued by slave hunters. She grabbed the boy and ran to the nearest courthouse where she rang the bell to alert the town. Angry townspeople came out and chased off the slave hunters, once again upholding the policy of freedom that Canada promised.

Later in life, Mary Ann Shadd became increasingly interested in the Women's Suffrage Movement and earned a degree from Howard University Law School. She truly lived by her own motto, "It's better to wear out than to rust."



### BAPTIST MINISTER ELDER WASHINGTON CHRISTIAN

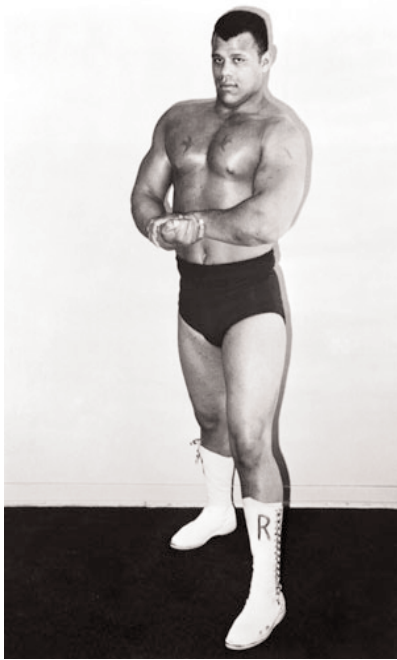
**I**n 1826, this fiery African-born minister erected not only the first black church in Toronto but also the first black institution. He was noted as the first Baptist pastor in North America and was equally famous for his extensive missionary work in Connecticut and Boston. Father Christian continued loyal servitude to both black and white Baptists until his death in 1850. Located at 101 Huron Street (at D'arcy) in Toronto, the First Baptist Church not only became a communal structure in the city, but it was also a meeting place for Underground Railroad activities. To this day, it stands as a reminder of community and spirit.



## WRESTLER ROCKY JOHNSON

Originally born in Nova Scotia, this heavy-weight champion and father of actor/wrestler "The Rock" found a happy home in Toronto. He has a lot to be proud of as a one-time winner of the WWF Tag Team Championship with Tony Atlas. In addition, he's held over 25 champion titles with the NWA, including four-time NWA World Tag Team Champion, Brass Knuckles Champion, Heavyweight

Champion. Pro Wrestling Illustrated ranked him number 211 out of the 500 best single wrestlers in 2003.



## SCIENCE FICTION WRITER NALO HOPKINSON

This Jamaican-born daughter of famous Guyanese playwright and actor Slade Hopkinson moved to Toronto, where she has won several awards for blending Caribbean folklore with science fiction and fantasy. Her vivid details, regional dialect and characterization set her apart from other writers. *Publishers Weekly* said of her work, "The musical rhythms of Caribbean voices and the earthy spirit-magic of obeah; Hopkinson's writing is smooth and assured, and her characters lively and believable." Her book "Brown Girl in the Ring," won the prestigious Warner Aspect First Novel Award in 1998. In addition to winning several writing contests, Nalo is the recipient of the John W. Campbell Award for Best New Writer; the Local Award for Best New Novel; and also the Ontario Arts Council Award for Emerging Writers. (Visit [www.sff.net/people/nalo](http://www.sff.net/people/nalo))



## SPRINTER DONOVAN BAILEY

After winning such esteemed titles as "World's Fastest Man," "World Champion Sprinter," "Sprinter of the Decade," a rank among "Top 10 Sprinters," and five Olympic gold medals, Donovan Bailey has since retired from running to focus on other endeavors. He's currently a spokesperson for Toronto's Big Brothers and Sisters, runs The Donovan Bailey Fund to help finance amateur athletes to go for the gold, and owns DBX Sports

Management to help young athletes promote themselves. "I want to give as many Canadians the opportunity to be successful," Bailey once said. "And if we can use their athletic gifts to get them a free degree or a free diploma across the border then I guess I'm doing my job." (See [www.donovanbailey.com](http://www.donovanbailey.com))



## MUSICIAN K-OS

The Trinidadian K-OS (an acronym for Knowledge Of Self) has captured the world's attention with his socially conscious rhymes, use of live performers, pianos, guitars and his unique blends of hip-hop, jazz, reggae and pop sounds. He has won at the Source Awards for 2003 International Album of the Year, the 2004 Canadian

Urban Music Awards for Hip Hop Recording of the Year and Music Video of the Year (for B-boy Stance), the 2005 Juno Awards for Video of the Year (B-boy Stance), Rap Recording of the Year (Joyful Rebellion) and Single of the Year (Crabuckit); as well as the 2005 Much Music Best Pop Video award (Crabuckit) and Muchvibe Best Rap Video (Man I Used To Be). In his song "Rise Like The Sun," K-OS speaks words of inspiration to the youth of today, singing, "Now, I'm not a teacher / Just trying to reach ya / I'll make you recognize / The sun will always rise." (Visit [www.k-osmusic.com](http://www.k-osmusic.com))





# Shop Till You Drop Dead



*Jane Creba lost her life to gang violence on December 26, 2005*

I think it's a day that Toronto finally lost its innocence," Detective Sergeant Savas Kyriacou said after Jane Creba lost her life. "It was a tragic loss and a tragic day."

After Boxing Day passed, researchers grieved as they tallied up the number of homicides in 2005: 78 murders, including a record 52 gun-related deaths--almost twice as many as last year. The latest life lost by gunshot was a fifteen-year-old girl who was a star student and athlete. Her very photogenic picture was on every front page in Toronto's newsstands. You could tell she was going to have a bright future.

Last Boxing Day while she was shopping on Yonge Street with her family, Jane wandered into a gang-related crossfire that suddenly erupted. Although seven other people were injured, only Jane was mortally wounded. It only took one bullet in the upper torso for her to make the long list of gun-related deaths. That

one bullet would change that young girl's family forever and scare Torontonians into wondering, who's next?

The reason why our concerns about gunfire should be elevated is because the nature of Toronto's violence has changed. There has been an increase in the number of shots fired in public places, and the perpetrators are getting younger. The Boxing Day shooting was blamed on ten to fifteen members of a gang, and the two men who were later detained were seventeen and twenty years old. This isn't surprising, since you can't be all that wise if you execute a gun battle in the middle of the day, on the busiest shopping day of the year, in the busiest shopping district of downtown Toronto. Because Jane and Allison Creba (Jane's older sister) had many connections who were my own friends, I'm starting to worry that we'll know the next gunshot victim, too.

Public health models treat gun violence like a disease, spreading from teen-to-teen, manifesting itself in sick but succulent images of a pistol named after one tough letter and number, held by a sex symbol with pouty red lips or a powerful and unforgiving gangster. It's entertaining to visualize ourselves holding a handheld cannon and the one-touch power to BANG! our problems away. But often, gun-users aren't the television prototypes; the reason why more and more people on our streets are armed is because of social, economic, community and psychological issues. The disease on the streets of Toronto spreads quicker through peer pressure and irrational anger. Some cases are uncontrollable, which is scary, but in other situations, friends and families can respond to

violent tendencies. They can address the concern of gun violence by giving internal help and access to social services in order to stop a known or suspected gun user. Like any disease, to prevent further deaths, we must familiarize ourselves with the root causes. We can't afford to let this disease spread--we need to find a cure. Strategies need to be put in place so that crime is not only punished but prevented. I should add that the Canadian Criminal Code has not found the right treatment; many first-time-offences involving firearms only get one year imprisonments.

The other day, my friend said, "Oh man, I wish I had a gun." Then like dominos, the group around us admitted the same wish. "Why?" I asked, not even expecting a good answer. "It's cool," they all agreed. "We can rob kids we don't like."

All the while I'm thinking, grow up. There's nothing cool about ending up with a gun in one hand, and your bullet in the body lying in front of you. There's nothing fun about watching wailing mothers at a funeral or the makeshift memorials at the scene of the crime. But I, like everyone else, keep mum until the next person dies.



*By da Flava's Bo San Chan, 19, SOLE School*



# 50 Cent Lyrics Promote Gun Violence in Toronto



Rapper 50 Cent has caused controversy over a nationwide billboard promoting his debut movie *Get Rich or Die Tryin'*. Apparently the billboard, which shows 50 with his back to the camera and a gun in his hands, promotes gun violence. The film was attacked by community and religious groups for the violent message it sends to viewers. In fact, the operator of the billboard was eventually forced to remove it in many places in the States. There was also intense criticism about the message that the 50 Cent album *Get Rich or Die Tryin'* sends to young people; some worried that teens would think that the only important thing in life is to make money through any possible avenue, even if it means losing your life or winding up in prison. These concerns have become increasingly important in light of the rise in gun violence in Toronto. Last year, there were 78 homicides in Toronto, 52 of them gun-related. This was the most recorded number of shootings in one year in the city.

The violence has escalated to the point where people are starting to arm themselves because they're worried that other people are armed and dangerous. With the rising gun violence in Toronto promoting more violence, the last thing we need are rappers glo-

rifying their gangsta lifestyle.

His lyrics are offensive, this style is sexist, his message is dangerous. To tell you the truth, I don't even listen to 50 Cent anymore. His songs are filled with self-indulgent stupidity, yet young people are all for it and want to do the same thing he does. Vast amounts of money have been spent putting up billboards with 50 Cent holding a gun to advertise his new movie. Thousands of dollars have been spent to market his album, to make sexist videos, and propagate 50 Cent clone artists. When record companies hit a successful investment, they go all out no matter what the cost. They're not selling 50 Cent because they care about his message or because they think he's a talented musician. They're selling 50 Cent because he moves albums like Celine Dion. For now, he's a safe investment. But when he stops selling albums, he'll climb to the bottom of a long and growing list of has-beens.

Some people have talked about banning 50 Cent, but this is an unrealistic solution. If you ban 50 Cent, you have to ban every artist who talks about pimping or drugs or women; essentially you will have to obliterate most of the rap industry. Furthermore, just talking about banning 50 Cent will

increase his music sales dramatically. He probably loves the buzz about being banned. One point that has been generally overlooked is that 50 has a CRIMINAL record, which limits cross-border travel. The real question here is not "Should he be banned from the country because of his lyrics?" but "Should he be allowed in the country just because he is famous?"

No one can say for sure why gun violence has become an epidemic in this city. One thing that is certain is that our role models should be there to inspire us, not to instill violent thoughts in our minds. How many more people have to die before we understand that death isn't cool?



Omar Hassan, 17, Eastern Commerce Collegiate Institute

## Quick Facts About Guns

Of the 2 million currently valid firearms licences issued under the Firearms Act, there are:  
-5,570 Minors Licences  
-16,554 firearms licences were refused or revoked for public safety reasons between 1998

and 2005.  
-Reasons why firearms licence applications have been refused or licences revoked include: a history of violence, mental illness, the applicant is a potential risk to himself, herself or others,

unsafe firearm use and storage, drug offences and providing false information.

Source: [http://www.cfc-ccaf.gc.ca/media/program\\_statistics/default\\_e.asp](http://www.cfc-ccaf.gc.ca/media/program_statistics/default_e.asp)

# NO!!

A recently proposed legislation for Ontario high school students recommends that high school dropouts should be denied their driver's licenses until they are eighteen years of age. Currently, 30% of Ontario high school students are dropping out before grade 12. Along with this legislation, the government plans to add more co-op and apprenticeship programs to help keep "at-risk" students in school.

I strongly disagree with this legislation. First, it's a violation of our freedom of choice. Many students who drop out of school do not do so because they want to quit school, but because of their living situations or other obligations (like economic issues or becoming a teen parent) that force them take time out of their education.

Revoking a youth's license not only handicaps their ability to attain future goals, but places an even greater burden on our province's resources. It gives those who drop out of school even fewer employment opportunities, and forces teen parents to become more dependent on government support. Denying a troubled youth their driver's license may even limit their access to community resources or counselling that they need in order to function on a day-to-day basis within a school environment.

Coercing youths to stay in school by threatening to take away unrelated privileges like driving is not the way to actually keep them there. It is up to administrators and teachers to help students deal with their personal difficulties while striving to attain their academic goals, rather than punish those who are genuinely distressed.

*By da Flava's Angela Musceo, 20*

## FACE OFF

**Should high school dropouts be prohibited from getting their driver's license?**



**Where do you stand on this issue?  
E-mail your thoughts  
and comments to:  
[catchmail@catchdaflava.com](mailto:catchmail@catchdaflava.com)**

Education is important, and graduating from high school gives you more opportunities. Most of the kids who drop out of school get a car and drive to their jobs. Some people might say, "This is good...they might be supporting their families." I say no it's not; you can help your family and yourself much better with a high school diploma. When you drop out of school and get a job, you are most likely working at a job that you are going to hate, and in the end you sell yourself short. The jobs that dropouts get usually have no room for advancement.

So, to conclude, this is a great proposal and it should pass with flying colours. Dropouts shouldn't be given driving privileges; they should think about their careers--not a job at Taco Bell or McDonald's (you want fries with that!?).

*By da Flava's Emmanuel Kedini, 24*

# YES!!

Driving is a privilege and not a right. This is one of the few proposals that I applaud the government for thinking of. If you drop out of school, it shows that you are immature and incapable of being responsible. You shouldn't be allowed to pick up the keys and jump into the driver's seat.

You are an adult when you are eighteen. You can open your own bank account when you are eighteen, you can rent an apartment by yourself when you are eighteen, you can vote at the age of eighteen. Why should you be able to drive before you are eighteen? It just makes no sense! It *does* make sense to stay in school, and worry about your marks--not the car keys or getting a job.



# Young Moms Drop In

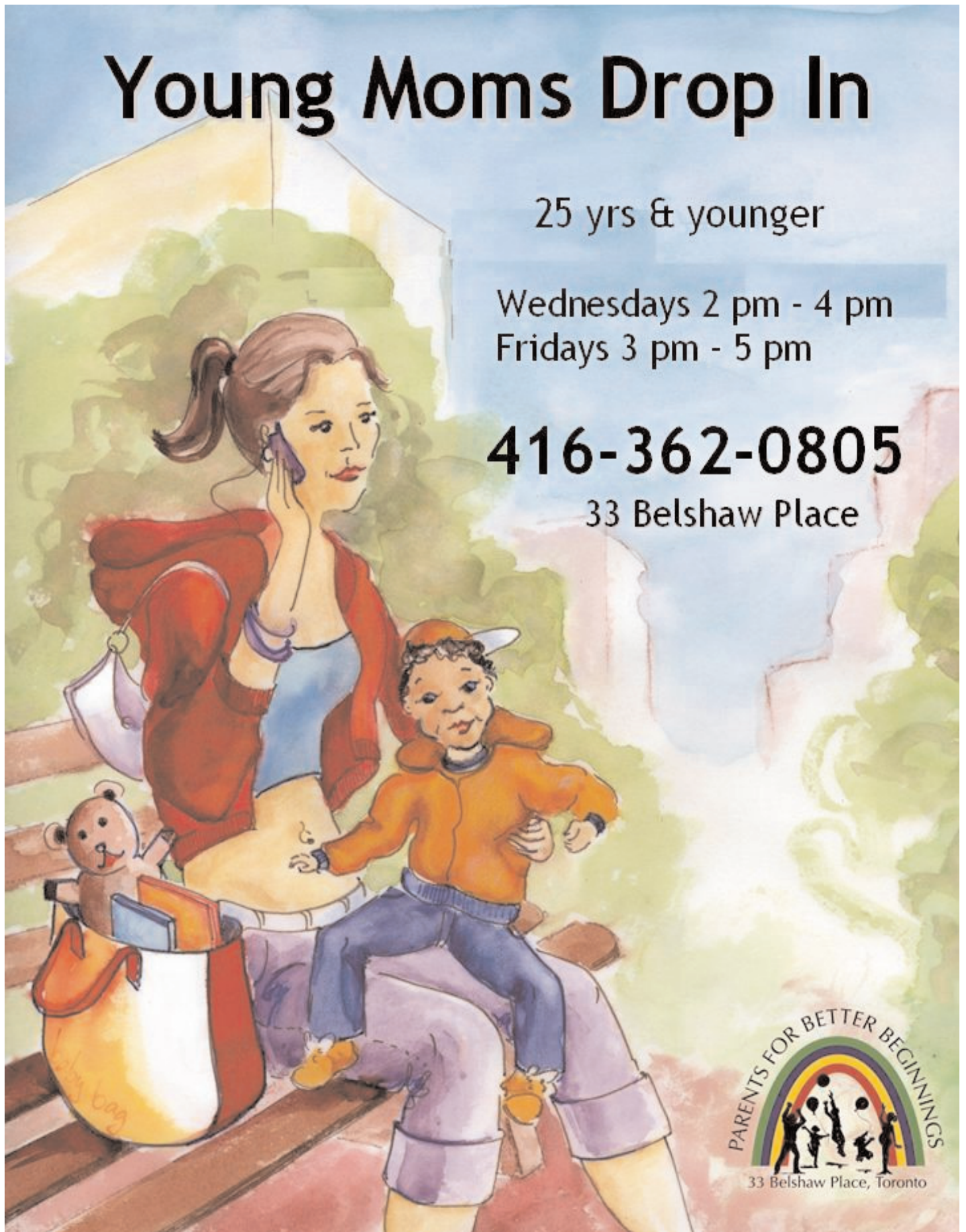
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# Regent Park

## Community of the Future



*Regent Park now*

**F**ifty years ago, Regent Park was considered the community of the future. Over time, however, people's views about social housing, architecture and design have changed. On February 13, 2006 residents joined Mayor David Miller and officials from all levels of government to celebrate the start of the reconstruction of Regent Park. Over the next ten to fifteen years, Regent Park will be rebuilt brick by brick.

With the start of this redevelopment, Regent Park will once again strive to be the community of the future. The question is, what kind of community will Regent Park become?

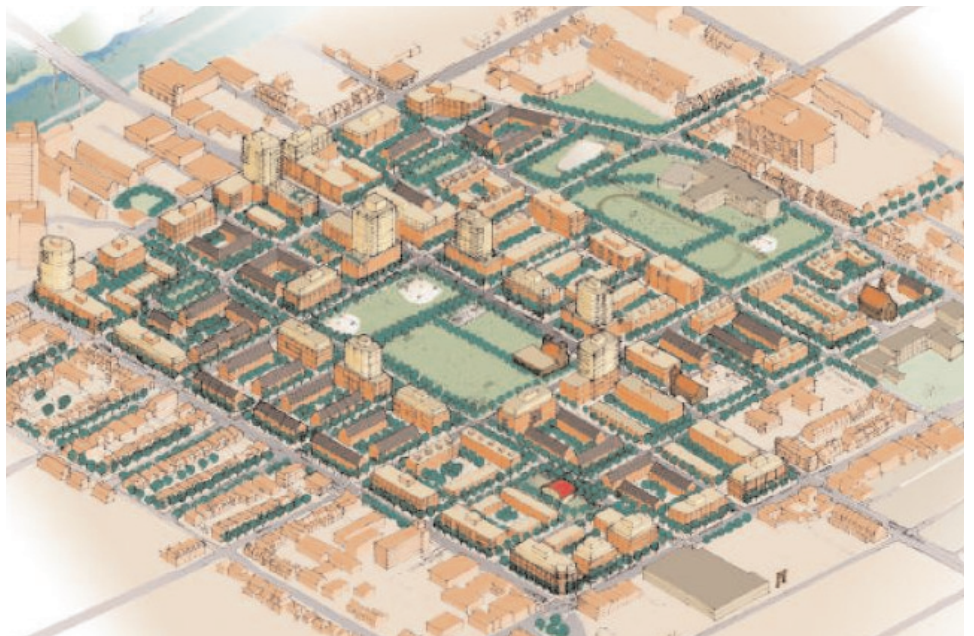
From a personal prospective, it is my desire to see Regent Park evolve into an organic urban post-modern community. What do I mean by this? To me a post-modern community is a community that is multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi-lingual, yet operates using the international language of

tant family occasions to the beat of ethnic rhythms, socialize to urban rap, relax to Mozart's classics and dance to global fusion.

A post-modern community with its variety of family-owned restaurants will provide ample opportunities for residents to cultivate an appreciation for foods from all around the world. Residents will be cheerful when the Canadian hockey team beats the Americans, and share in the celebrations and heartbreaks whoever wins the soccer World Cup.

A post-modern community will recognize the vital importance of our environment in shaping our quality of life. Residents will strive for "zero waste" and separate organics (green bin), recyclables (blue bin), repair and reuse, and reduce garbage wherever possible. They will be thrilled to have their community gardens, and buy from local farmers and garden shops.

*Continued on next page...*



*Regent Park of the future?*





Going...



Going...



Gone!

### *...continued from last page*

They should be excited to live near Riverdale farm and the park. One day, I hope the Don River will be restored to its former condition so that people can plunge in for a swim.

Everyone will share their knowledge in Wikipedia, and create media using free and open source software, and expertise offered through a local multi-media center. They will regularly visit the neighbourhood performing arts centre to see independent films or participate in a community theatre performance or modern and traditional dance. They will also learn arts and crafts from a multitude of traditions and masters, many of whom are resi-

dents themselves.

In the old Regent Park, most people would not chose to live here and moving out of Regent Park is a success story that gets told in Toronto Star. Those who remain are perceived as the unfortunate underclass in need of sympathy. But in a post-modern Regent Park that will no longer be the case. In a future Regent Park, families of all income levels will aspire to live, play and work there.

A future Regent Park will not be a utopia or a commune created by a resident group of middle-class intellectuals. Rather, I hope it will be a community with the sensibilities of the

"creative class" without losing respect for its working-class origins. Although many residents will aspire to higher educational institutions and strive for occupations that offer high-income salaries, we recognize that many will continue to work in factories, restaurants, and retail stores earning relatively modest wages. Regardless of our income status, in a post-modern community we will meet together in homes, our lobbies, cafes, parks and neighbourhood centres to discuss issues, learn and support each other and to build a voluntary, participatory, and a democratic Regent Park. A Regent Park that will be a community of the future.

*by Natkeeran L.K.*



*Scenes before and after the phase 1 demolition of Regent Park. All photos of the redevelopment in progress were provided by da Flava's Tyrone MacLean-Wilson, Christian Muabi and Raymond Wilson.*



# In Conversation With...

## Former Regent Park Residents Cathy Brennan and John Swindell

**A**lmost everyone knows that Regent Park will look radically different fifteen years from now. But how many of us know what Regent Park was like fifteen or even twenty-five years ago?

Well, John Swindell and Cathy Brennan do. John and Cathy are two former residents of Regent Park, and *Catch da Flava's* Tyronne MacLean-Wilson had the opportunity to find out what this neighbourhood used to be like.

**da Flava:** When did you live in Regent Park and what school did you attend?

**Cathy:** I moved to Regent Park on February 1st, 1957, I was five years old. I was Catholic so I went to St. Paul's on Queen Street.

**John:** I lived in Regent Park from 1960 till about 1972. I went to Spruce Court and then I went to Winchester.

**da Flava:** How has Regent changed?

**John:** The ethnic mix is different. It was mostly white back then. Now it's all different cultures. The buildings look run down. It didn't used to look that way.

**Cathy:** Yes, the old Regent Park seemed pretty clean...we had nice flowers and a garden in the front. It

didn't start looking bad till about the seventies.

**da Flava:** What kind of things did you used to do?

free. There weren't any community centers in Regent Park; there was just the K Club and the boxing club.

**Cathy:** We used to have dances in North Regent Park.

Where the swimming pool is. Back in the sixties there also used to be dances downstairs at the church on 40 Oak street.

**John:** Phil and the Mighty Expressions were like one of the first soul bands from Regent Park. It was a very fun place, Regent Park. There used to be a movie theatre on Parliament and Dundas where the health center is now, called the "Gay Show." It was quite a different word back then.

**Cathy:** It was about a quarter to get in. They used to turn the movie off if people were making too much noise. There was another movie theater that was located north on Parliament closer to Gerrard. [To John] Do you remember the Sip and Bite restaurant? It used to be on Gerrard

not far from Parliament. That's where we used to sit around listening to the jukebox pretty much like the Happy Days. There were no skating rinks but in the winter they'd ice where all the grass was in the North Regent field and we'd all go skating.

*Continued on next page...*



*Cathy Brennan and John Swindell reminisce about Regent Park.*

**John:** Right here at 600 Dundas there used to be a boxing club and we used to box. We didn't have anything like Regent Park Focus. Back then the K Club was our hero. They took us off the streets. They used to take us to picnics and to camps and it was all



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**da Flava:** Did you feel safe living here?

**John:** Many people who didn't live here felt it was unsafe but we didn't leave the boundaries of Regent Park very often so we felt safe here. We knew hundreds of people, unlike other neighborhoods where you know like twenty or thirty. If we ever had trouble we could get help very, very fast.

**da Flava:** There were no problems?

**John:** There was racism. When we were young there weren't many people from other races--it was all white and Irish. So the racism back then was towards Italians. Italians to us were anyone from Europe with an accent. The things people said about Italians were terrible. It was because they were different from us.

**da Flava:** What do you think about the redevelopment?

**John:** I hope that the middle-class people are welcome here. Middle-class people come from a broader perspective. It is important to learn from these people that there are other ways of doing things. I exploded because I did mix with other people outside of Regent Park. Just because you're from Regent Park and you think you're all big and tough and don't need to listen to them--that's a form of "ism" like racism. All "isms" are closing doors.

**Cathy:** I'm not as optimistic about the revitalization of Regent Park. I moved into a co-op and had a lawyer next door to me. Guess he wasn't doing too well. He wasn't too happy if somebody was paying less rent. People didn't mix. You stuck to people with your own interests. If you were a single mother you'd stick with the other single mothers--it didn't work. To me putting the poor with the rich didn't work.

**John:** I disagree. In poor places where everyone is poor you don't feel shame. But when you go outside Regent Park and you start to compare yourself to other people, like those in Cabbagetown, you feel inadequate. We need to bridge this gap so that young Regent Parkers can see that people can do very well coming out of here. You can be a doctor! Just because your parents aren't doctors doesn't mean you cannot become one yourself.

**Cathy:** I didn't really ever feel bad about living in Regent Park. I didn't really leave the boundaries of Regent Park till I turned sixteen. There was no envy of the rich because we never saw it. Back then all the surrounding houses in Cabbagetown were run down but in Regent Park we had it pretty good; we had the newer houses. Today they [Cabbagetown] have five-hundred-thousand-dollar houses so it might be different, but back then we never envied anyone.

**da Flava:** I understand that every year all the former residents of Regent Park and Cabbagetown come together.

**Cathy:** Yes it's great to see everyone. I can't think of anybody that didn't come out of Regent Park doing well.

**John:** Yes everyone did well.



*da Flava's Tyrone MacLean-Wilson*

## NEWS FROM THE NEIGHBOURHOOD



### TCHC ANNOUNCES DEVELOPER

Eleven companies responded to Toronto Community Housing RPF for a developer to oversee design and to build the first phase of the Regent Park. TCHC recently announced that the Daniel's Corporation has been selected. Construction is scheduled to start in the fall.

### RP TENANT ELECTIONS

On April 11, 2006 from 12pm-7pm Regent Park residents will head off to vote in the TCHC Tenant Rep Elections. For more information contact Karima at 416-981-4079.

### THE REGENT PARK NEIGHBOURHOOD INITIATIVE YOUTH COUNCIL IS RECRUITING NEW MEMBERS!

To learn more about the Youth Council, please contact Saida Mohamed at 416-981-6738 or email [saidamohamed@rpni.org](mailto:saidamohamed@rpni.org).

# Global Struggles

## You Say You Want a Revolution

An Insider's Look at the 2006 World Social Forum

**Y**ou can stand almost anywhere in downtown Caracas, Venezuela and be surrounded by graffiti. This graffiti reflects the political history of a country undergoing a revolution.

As in most Latin American countries, the legacy of European colonization in Venezuela has created a society where the divide between rich and poor is severely lopsided (almost 80% of Venezuelans live in poverty).

Venezuela is a country undergoing a massive social transformation, and it is because of this that Venezuela's capital, Caracas, was one of the cities chosen to host the 2006 World Social Forum (WSF). The World Social Forum is a large-scale meeting of people involved in social movements from around the world who come together to discuss how they can build alternatives to the current world we live in.

In Caracas, over 100,000 delegates met to hold workshops, participate in each other's events and to discuss how they can work together to further social change. During the WSF, I had the opportunity to share spaces and conversations with revolutionaries from Haiti, Zapatista guerillas from Mexico, landless workers from Brazil and hip-hop crews from Colombia. Many of the discussions flowed onto the streets and into parks and clubs, where folks would dance until daylight while talking about political organizing in their local communities.

One particularly memorable event was hosted by the Canada Haiti Action Network (CHAN), which put on an



excellent series of workshops featuring revolutionary activists from the poorest areas in Haiti, including a woman involved in poor people's struggles in Cité Soleil. These workshops allowed for an emotional and passionate discussion where Canadians and Latin Americans agreed to challenge their governments and to advocate among their own people for solidarity with Jean Bertrand Aristide (the ousted democratically elected leader of Haiti) and the Haitian struggle for freedom. Canada has played a key role in the occupation of Haiti, and during these meetings Canadians and Haitians discussed strategies for building strong solidarity among poor people's movements in Canada and poor people's movements in Haiti.

The World Social Forum gave me an opportunity to meet exciting and determined people (many of them

young people like myself) who are actually changing the world around them. They are challenging large water companies who have tried to sell them their own water, they are challenging brutal governments, and they are opposing Canadian and American military occupation in their countries. What they all ask of us young Canadians is a daunting task: to confront our own government and stand up for ourselves in the belly of the beast. Revolutions cannot survive in countries like Venezuela without activists in Canada and the United States doing their part to build revolutions in our countries as well. And then...quite possibly...another world will be possible.

by \*Craig Fortier, 24

*\*Craig Fortier went to Venezuela from January 19th to January 30th 2006 as part of a research project at Ryerson University which set out to study the World Social Forum.*



# **George Smitherman, MPP**



Toronto Centre-Rosedale



**For information and assistance with Ontario  
Government programs,  
please contact my Community Action Centre at:**

**120 Carlton St., Suite 413**

**Toronto M5A 4K2**

**Phone: 416 972 7683**

**Fax: 416 972 7686 TTY: 416 972 9674**

**E-mail: [gsmitherman.mpp.co@liberal.ola.org](mailto:gsmitherman.mpp.co@liberal.ola.org)**

**Web: [www.georgesmitherman.com](http://www.georgesmitherman.com)**



**Listen to Catch da Flava Radio  
Live on CKLN 88.1 FM  
every Tuesday at 7:30 pm**

# Why TTC Fares Are Going Up...Yet Again



**A**s of April 1st TTC passengers will be asked to pay more to ride the rocket. Due to the Toronto City Council refusing to meet the TTC's proposed budget, the commission has had to find some other way of healing the \$16.5 million shortfall. The increased fare will provide the same level of service, but better service on key routes.

TTC fares will increase from \$2.50 to \$2.75, while tokens and tickets will increase from \$2.00 to \$2.10 each. Metropasses will increase from \$98.75

to \$99.75. Unless Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty chooses to intervene to cover the commission's shortfall, these changes will remain in place.

"I feel frustrated and it's going to be worse for my parents," says an anonymous student from Jarvis Collegiate Institute. "It's going to be frustrating, because they're raising the fare and my parents have enough bills to worry about. This just adds on to the stress!"

Departments are all asked by the City of Toronto to limit their subsidy

increase by 2%. Due to the high price of oil, the increase will not cover the \$2.7 million increase in diesel fuel. Fares are also being raised due to negotiated salaries. The TTC might be able boost ridership by providing more frequent transit service, but for this to happen, costs will increase much more.

Hopefully the commission will be able to meet the shortfall before April and the changes won't be put into place. For future reference, the city needs to make a real, long term-commitment to improve the quality of service and increase transit funding. You can't have a transit system without proper service.



*By da Flava's Gillian "Jubes" Johnson, 16, Jarvis C.I.*

## Wanna Produce Your Own Tracks For FREE?



**Come check out the brand new underground music studio at the Regent Park Focus. Work with industry professionals and learn to mix, record and produce your own beats for FREE.**

**Where we're at: 600 Dundas St. E (rear basement)  
How to reach us: Call 416-863-1074  
Our website: [www.catchdaflava.com](http://www.catchdaflava.com)**



# My Home, My Igloo



I pay eighty dollars a month in heating bills to live in an igloo. Each morning, under my two down comforters, I cherish my last few moments of warmth. But even as I lie in bed I am not at ease, for I know that soon I will have to leave the warmth of my fortress and venture throughout my room and, beyond this, my house.

Before leaving the heat of my sheets, I frantically survey my room for my winter jacket and boots.

AH-HAH! I see them! Both within stretching distance, no less. This is a good day.

My housemates enjoy keeping our house at a CRISP ten degrees.

Unfortunately when we were choosing rooms in July, I was the first to jump on the biggest room with the biggest windows. This, it seems, was a big mistake.

I figure that the temperature of my room, factoring in wind-chill, rests around five degrees Celsius. When I mention this fact to my housemates, who must have genetic makeups similar to that of a polar bear, they casually respond: "Just put on another jacket!"

And I do.

I have thereby devised this handy list

of tips on how to cope if you, too, live in an igloo:

1. Make friends with people who have all-inclusive heating. I have found that these individuals like to take full advantage of this privilege.
2. Spend a lot of time in public buildings. I like this one. I credit my improvement in grades this year to the 100% increase in time spent at my HEATED university library.
3. On the chance that all your housemates are gone, spike the heating while you have the opportunity, but make sure you adjust it back before they find out.
4. Finally, I cannot stress enough the need for a good winter jacket and boots.

*by Ellen Mihailovich, 21,  
Trent University*



## POET'S CORNER

*-By Micheal Alperstein*

White knuckles grasp a key  
Is joy found?  
Hurting, sinking, feeling

Slowly, the grip loosens  
not a key at all  
But a Temporary thought. Merely illusion.  
cold, merciless

The cause of suffering is in the hand,  
The tight grip

Freedom and joy are  
the loosened hand,  
outside the claw,  
yet within the body, the being

they are within reach of an open hand,  
the moral?  
Centered and peaceful is but a letting go

# The Choice Is Yours

## Throwing the Ultimate Party

(Without Getting In Trouble)



*Throwing a party? Don't let this happen to you!*

**Y**our parents have gone out of town for the weekend and left you in charge of the house. The first thing your friends ask when they find out is, "Are you going to throw a party?" And while you would love to host the biggest, baddest bash to ever enter school history, you're hesitant to respond when you remember the debacles from the last few parties you've thrown, not to mention that broken window you're still paying for from your allowance (who knew glass cost so much?).

If you still insist on throwing a party, here are some helpful tips on how to minimize or prevent property damage

and other unpleasant side-effects of an otherwise great celebration. These tips are not only for when your parents are out and you want to throw an illegal soiree, but for any occasion you choose to share with a lot of people.

**1. Know who's coming.** Open invitations are begging for disaster. When you allow everyone including your cousin's sister-in-law's nephew's best friend to come to your house, you're asking for trouble. As fun as it may be to have the place packed from basement to attic full of interesting people, anyone who doesn't know you very well will not respect your rules or property as much as your closer

friends will. Because there is a good chance that new acquaintances will never see you again after your get-together, they can get away with pretty much anything, since it can be very hard to track down unfamiliar guests. RSVP may sound stuck-up and old-fashioned, but at least it makes your guests more accountable for the people they bring, and lets you know how many people to expect.

**2. Booze patrol.** One of the best ways to prevent mishaps is to eliminate alcohol altogether. It increases aggression, makes people impulsive, puts them at risk for engaging in unsafe sex, and generally turns people stupid. Regardless, a lot of people believe that a party just ain't a party without booze. If you are

going to have alcohol, have a designated sober person serve the drinks, and always offer non-alcoholic alternatives. This allows you to control how much people are drinking and prevents people from getting access to more alcohol when they're already smashed. (In fact, if anyone is really drunk, your "bartender" can lie and offer that person something non-alcoholic to sober them up.)

If you are going to do BYOB, you can't really monitor how much alcohol your guests consume without being perceived as a drink-Nazi.

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One thing you can do is provide small cups; this makes people think that they've had more drinks than they actually have, and may slow them down. You can also bar anyone who is obviously already intoxicated from entering your home (after all, they may not remember the offence the next morning). Finally, always have food available in different areas of the house where partygoers may be lounging. People tend to get hungry when they drink, and eating sobers them up. (Try not to have ultra salty snacks, though, because they will dehydrate people even more.)

**3. Contingency plans.** No matter how careful you and your friends are, it is possible that a few of your guests will get totally inebriated. This is why it's important to invite designated drivers, get a list of cab numbers, and gather some TTC tickets before the party to offer guests later on if they need them. After all, car accidents caused by drunk driving is the number one cause of death among people 16 to 24. As the host of the party you can be held legally responsible for any alcohol-related fatalities if you let your guests drink. It's also a good idea to desig-

nate one or two rooms for guests to sleep in if they need to wait till morning to go home.

**4. Party-proof your property.**

Accidents happen, but they're less devastating when they don't involve a priceless figurine or your family's cherished photo album. Remove breakables and valuables from your party zone and lock them somewhere safe. It seems obvious, but a lot of people don't even think about doing this until it's too late. You can also section off rooms or floors that contain important items, and limit your gathering to one or two rooms (this also contains the mess, making cleanup a lot easier). Finally, put a lot of garbage bags out; people will use them if they see them. The minute one or two napkins end up on the floor, you can be sure that more will follow (this has been scientifically proven).

**5. Put your foot down.** This is your house. Don't get peer pressured into allowing something to happen that will get you into trouble with your parents when they come home. If your friends respect you, they will respect your rules. Don't be afraid to tell people not to touch the Royal Doulton or

turn away guests that you don't know. Be honest with your friends. If you don't want more than twenty guests at your party, let them know that they are limited to two guests each. Ask friends to help set up and clean up. Even though you want everyone to mingle and have a good time, it shouldn't be at the expense of your own enjoyment.

Preparation is the key to a successful party. These are just a few pointers to get you started. Every party and every group of people are different, and it's up to you as a good host to think ahead and keep everybody (and your parents' china collection) safe.



*By da Flava's Bo Wen Chan, 22,  
University of Toronto*

# One Ugly House Party

In North Vancouver, BC a Saturday night house party hosted by a 13-year-old girl on February 25th ended with a stolen car, a hospital visit and nearly \$70,000 in damage.

Responding to complaints, police found about 200 teens--most aged 13 to 14--partying and fighting. The hostess, meanwhile, was unconscious. The girl was rushed to hospital with alcohol poisoning, along with another young man who had minor injuries from a fight.

Among the damages police found the

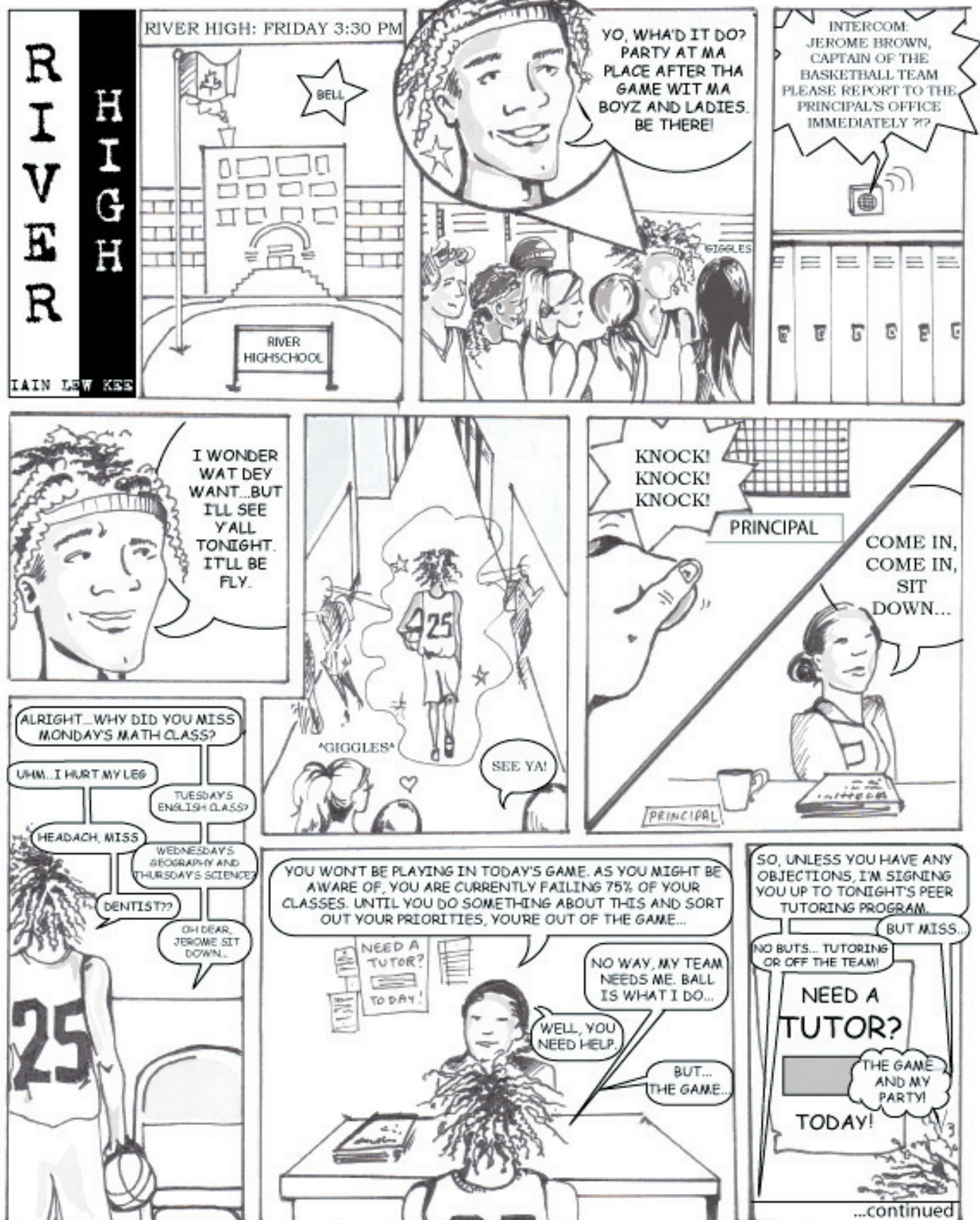
front door smashed in by a computer monitor, almost all the windows around the home shattered, and walls kicked in. Some of the home's furniture and electronics were also destroyed. The family's car, a 2005 SUV, was also stolen.

The girl who hosted the party was supposed to be staying at her mom's house that night while her dad was out of town on business. The girl told her mother she was going to a sleepover at a friend's house but instead went to her dad's vacant house.

According to police the girl had planned a small party with a few friends, but the word just got out there and people kept coming.

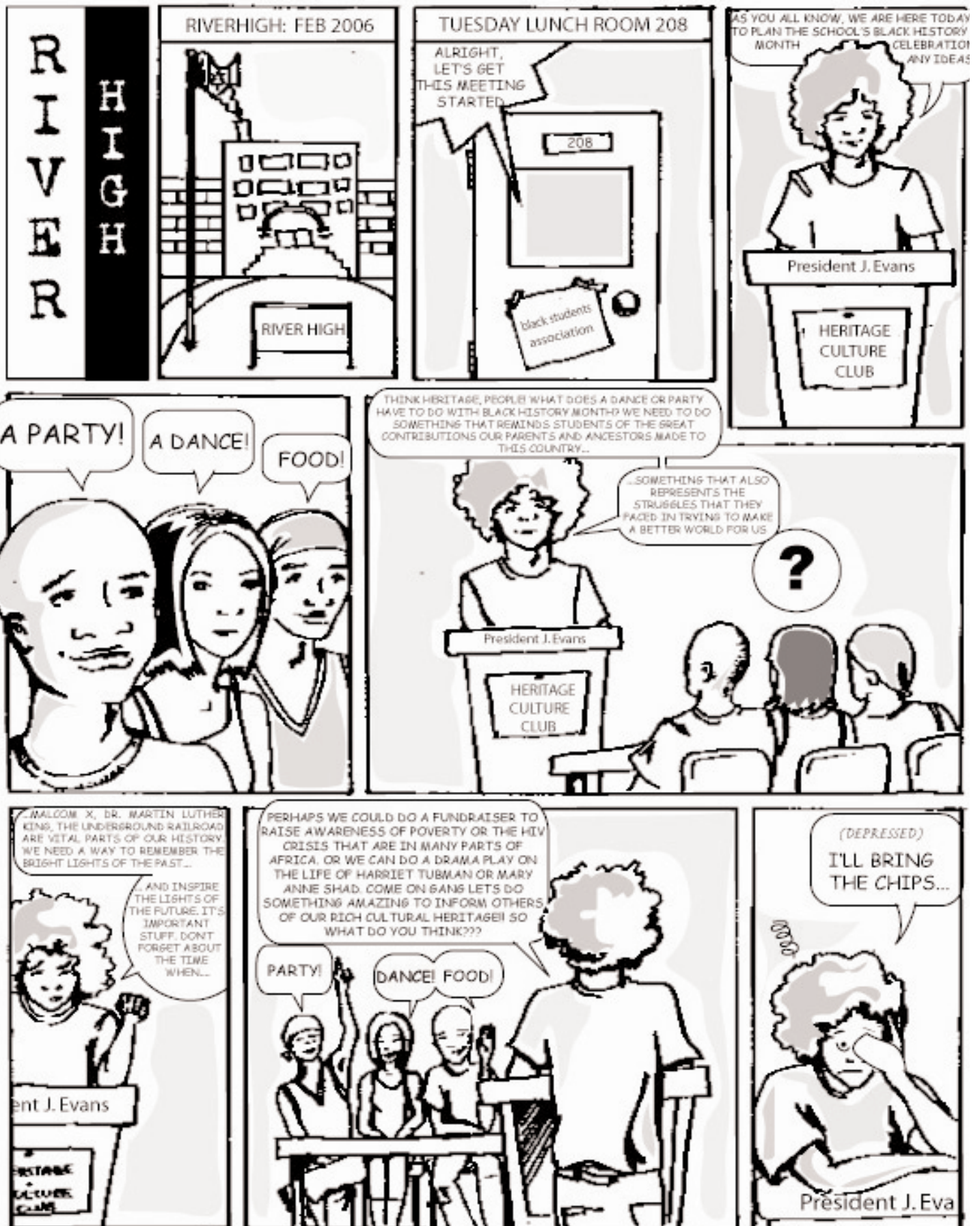
Source: <http://www.canada.com/vancouver/index.html>





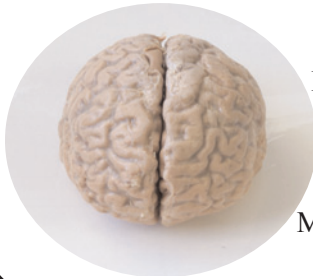
by IAIN LEW KEE





by IAIN LEW KEE

# WHAT'S UP AT REGENT PARK FOCUS



## YOUTH WEEK/ MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS WEEK

Look out for our next issue exploring youth mental health and mental illness with cool events happening over YOUTH WEEK/MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS WEEK May 1 - 5. Stay tuned to Catch da Flava, 88.1 on Tuesday nights throughout April to hear about events happening for YOUTH WEEK/MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS WEEK week in May!

### STORYTELLING WORKSHOP/FESTIVAL

The Arts and Culture Committee of the Regent Park Neighbourhood Initiative (RPNI) is sponsoring a Storytelling Workshop Project in Regent Park this spring/summer. The title of the project is *Where We're From and Where We're Going: Stories from Regent Park*.

We all have tales to tell and this workshop will provide you with the opportunity to tell those stories. Artists Gabriella Caruso and Andy Moro from Red Pepper Spectable Arts will be

working with Regent Park Focus to help help people develop and express their stories in a variety of creative ways. This could include visual arts, dance, song, drama, media arts or a combination of any of these mediums. At the beginning of July, we will be celebrating and sharing our stories in a festival.

If you would like to find out more about telling your story or about this project, contact Bethany Osborne, Community Engagement Worker, RPNI at 416-981-4771 or by email at [bethanyosborne@rpni.org](mailto:bethanyosborne@rpni.org).

### DIVA'S GIRLS GROUP

Enjoy movies, trips, discussions and crafts.  
Girls 11-14, Sundays from 2pm-4pm.

### PHOTOGRAPHY CLASSES!

Learn the basics of digital and darkroom photography FREE! Sundays from 2pm-4pm, open to youth ages 13-18. After School Photography Program for youth under 13 years old on Thursdays from 3:30pm-5:00pm.

### CATCH DA FLAVA RADIO

Tune in to Catch da Flava Radio every Tuesday at 7:30pm on CKLN 88.1FM to hear interviews with special guests and participate in heated debates about issues YOU care about. Want to be a radio host or learn how to tech? Come to the Regent Park Focus on Tuesdays at 6:00pm.

### CATCH DA FLAVA MAGAZINE

Want to write for Toronto's oldest youth news publication? Come out to our weekly magazine meetings Tuesdays at 6:00pm at the Regent Park Focus to get assignments and share your ideas.

### BREAKDANCING

FREE classes for youth 14-18 Mondays 6pm-7:30pm. Beginners welcome.

### THE UNDERGROUND MUSIC STUDIO

Work with industry professionals and learn how to mix, record and produce your own beats for free. Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays from 5:00pm-8:00pm. FREE to youth 13-18.

### REGENT PARK FOCUS

600 DUNDAS ST. E (REAR BASEMENT)  
(416) 863-1074