



REGENT PARK FOCUS YOUTH MEDIA ARTS CENTRE WINTER NEWSLETTER - 2011

The Buzz is a quarterly newsletter devoted to informing the broader community about the activities of the Regent Park Focus Youth Media Arts Centre. This issue covers the period of December 1, 2010 to February 28, 2011. Previous issues of the Buzz are available for download at www.regentparkfocus.com

Making A Difference - Global TV Profiles Regent Park Focus

In December, reporter Susan Hay visited Regent Park Focus to interview youth members and staff for Global Television's weekly news segment [Making A Difference](#). The resulting 3-minute documentary about Regent Park TV was aired on Global TV news on December 1, 2010.

Say YES To Creativity and NO to Drugs!

For the past three years Regent Park Focus has partnered with Sprucecourt Junior Public School to run an annual Drug Awareness Program with the aim of engaging students in learning about the harms associated with drugs. With a theme of "Say No to Drugs and Yes to Creativity," this year's program was launched at a school assembly on January 6, 2011. The assembly began with a electric performance by Bucc N Flvr, the first place winners of the City of Toronto Stomp Dance Competition. The dance group not only performed, but also gave an inspirational



Bangladesh Community Honors Adonis Huggins

In December, Adonis Huggins had the pleasure of joining Toronto Centre M.P.P. Glen Murray, and City Councilor for Ward 28 Pam McConnell, in receiving a certificate of recognition from the Regent Park Bangladesh Community Association in honour of their work in the neighbourhood. Over 200 community members were on hand for the event.

message about the value of getting involved in the things you are passionate about. The students were then treated to an appearance by two teen celebrities, Sam and Jahmil, from the hit Canadian TV show Degrassi. The show regularly focuses on issues related to peer pressure and healthy living and the actors had a lot to say on drug use, acting and the importance of following your dreams. After the Degrassi presentation, students were moved by the stories of Andrew Galloway, Tom Regher, Caroline Swinson and Esther Linare, each of whom shared how drugs and alcohol abuse had significantly impacted their lives. The assembly also featured a representative from the RCMP who answered questions about drugs and the law, and a representative from the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health who was on hand to talk about treatment services for youth.

Following the launch, students spent the next month embarking on a wide array of student led projects exploring the issue of substance abuse, including: skit making; poster making; dance; raps; song writing; poetry and creative writing; and [the production of radio public service announcements](#). Students worked in groups or as individuals and were assisted in preparing their art pieces and performances by

Regent Park Focus staff and their in-class teachers.

The program concluded on February 15, 2011 with a community Drug Awareness assembly at which students presented and displayed their projects to peers, family members, dignitaries and members of the neighbourhood. Highlights included an informational game show version of Jeopardy, with audience members as contestants answering questions related to drugs and healthy living; a class performance of the song "Lean on Me," inspiring students to reach out for help when they have problems; a tableau portraying student's experiences with drugs; and a skit performed about two parents who object to having their children participate in classroom discussions on drugs. The message of the

program - "Say No to Drugs and Yes to Creativity" -rang through loud and clear!

Without a doubt, the 2011 Drug Awareness Program accomplished its aim of increasing awareness about the negative harms associated with drug use, among students in the Regent Park community. Congratulations to Drug Awareness Coordinator Michele Peter and all of the students and teachers who joined Regent Park Focus in helping to make their community a safer and healthier place! Many thanks are also due to the our sponsors who made the program possible: the City of Toronto's Drug Prevention Community Investment Program and the Ontario Ministry of Health Promotion's Healthy Communities Program.

Regent Park Focus Youth Media Arts Centre Moves to 38 Regent Street

On January 7, after two years of dialogue and planning, the Regent Park Focus Youth Media Arts Centre finally moved into its new home at 38 Regent Street (east of Parliament, just south of Dundas). The new 3,500 square feet facility, in the lower level of a newly constructed City of Toronto building, is completely wheel chair accessible and has a radio studio and sound booth, a television studio and control room, a library, a multi-purpose room, a media and internet lab and a photography gallery. While everyone was sorry to say goodbye to our

long time home in the old basement of 600 Dundas St. East, staff are pleased to be moving. "It'll be a relief not to deal with pipe leaks and flooding any longer," commented staff member Tyrone Maclean-Wilson, who has had more than his share of bailing out water from the old radio room. (The facility at 600 Dundas is scheduled for demolition as part of the redevelopment of Regent Park). Currently, we are busy unpacking boxes and preparing the new facility - we look forward to beginning programming out of the new centre in February.

Regent Park Focus teams up with U of T to Build the Mobile Media Lab

On January 13, Regent Park Focus Youth members began working weekly with 8 students from University of Toronto School of Architecture to design and build a mobile media lab. A mobile media lab is envisioned as a vehicle that enables Regent Park Focus to transport its media production activities outside the confines of its centre on 38 Regent Street into the wider community. The design stage of the project began weekly on Thursday evenings at the Regent Park Focus Youth Media Arts Centre. During this stage of the project, participants met weekly to explore designs of existing projects and talk about its proposed functions. Next the group began brainstorming ideas of what the Regent Park Focus Mobile Media Lab would be used for. In the following weeks youth and students broke up into small groups and began designing and constructing



their own cardboard versions of a mobile media lab. Some of the common themes that emerged was that the mobile media lab would have an integrated bike at the front; that it would be light weight; contain

storage space; have visual presence; and have the capacity to engage audiences in a number of different media including radio, video and internet. The design stage of the project was completed in late February.

In the next stage of the project students will visit the construction lab at U of T and commence building the mobile media lab.

Catch da Flava Radio & Magazine Collective

Established in 1998 Regent Park's Catch da Flava Radio Collective continues to broadcast on CKLN 88.1 FM every Tuesday night at 7:30 pm. The show is hosted by various youth living in Regent Park and provides a forum for young people promote health and to discuss issues and current events that affect them. In addition to the radio show the collective also produces Catch da Flava Magazine magazine that has been serving the youth community since 1995.

Catch da Flava Radio continues to be a positive forum for youth to voice their concerns and perspectives on issues of interest to them. Over the winter season, the Radio Collective featured shows on: teen unemployment; making new years resolutions; teen pregnancy; sex and sex education; and media effects on youth. During this period, Catch da Flava was broadcast from the CKLN studio located on the Ryerson University campus. Currently, the Collective is in discussion with CKLN about resuming broadcasting onsite at our new Regent Park Focus radio studio facilities at 38 Regent Street.



About Regent Park Focus

Established in 1991, Regent Park Focus Youth Media Arts Centre (Regent Park Focus) is a not-for-profit organization located in Regent Park, Toronto. Regent Park Focus is motivated by the belief that community arts and participatory media practices play a vital role in building and sustaining healthy communities. Regent Park Focus seeks to increase civic engagement and inspire positive change by giving youth the tools and support to create artistic works and media productions.

Youth are encouraged to work collectively to develop resources that explore issues of relevance to them and their communities. These resources, along with the process of creating them, increase personal well-being, contribute to community health and address systemic barriers to equitable social participation.

Regent Park Focus is funded by:

The Toronto Arts Council and Ontario Arts Council and receives in-kind support from the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health.

Did You Know?



Did you know that 2,652 people took part in program activities offered by Regent Park Focus Youth Media Arts Centre during the Fall 2010 quarter?

Or that Regent Park Focus conducted presentations to 1,553 people and received 1,940 website visitors during this same period?

We're still busy!