

THE REGENT PARK FOCUS

SPRING REPORT 2004

Tough Guise



Regent Park Focus staff assembling the new and improved Tough Guise installation

Tough Guise is an on-going project of Regent Park Focus that explores machismo and its relationship to violence. In addition to community workshops, the project consists of a youth-generated slideshow presentation accompanied by an original rap. Both of these resources can be accessed on the Regent Park Focus website (www.Catch da Flava.com). This spring, Regent Park Focus continued work on the Tough Guise project by developing large interactive installation pieces that will allow members of the public to record their own experiences of machismo and violence. Our end goal is to use the resources that have been developed through the Tough Guise project to tour schools, festivals and community groups across the city as a way of promoting awareness of issues related to violence and safety. The Tough Guise project was funded by the Laidlaw Foundation's Youth Engagement Program.

In May 4, 2004 Regent Park Focus presented a Tough Guise workshop to 80 grade five and six students attending an equity conference sponsored by the Toronto School Board at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education.

Catch da Flava Radio



Catch da Flava youth host Justin interviewing Michael Shapcott

This spring, Catch da Flava Radio aired shows that discussed violence, alternative schools, the federal budget and the election. On one of the shows City Councillor Pam McConnell was on hand to discuss the gun violence that is plaguing many Toronto neighbourhoods. Special guests for the election show included Philip Fernandes and Nick Linh from the Marxist-Leninist Party and Michael Shapcott from the NDP. You can catch Catch da Flava Radio every first and third Tuesday of the month at 7:30pm-8:00pm on CKLN 88.1FM. This show is hosted and produced by youth and addresses the current issues that affect young people and the community.



Catch da Flava Newspaper



The spring 2004 issue of Catch da Flava newspaper

The spring 2004 issue of Catch da Flava Newspaper arrived in June. The theme of the newspaper was on the Federal Elections that took place on June 28th. Our aim was to promote youth voting, since young people between the ages of 18-24 have the poorest turnout rate at the polls. Other articles included a Global Struggles section on Coca-Cola's deadly global expansion and Haiti's struggle for liberation, a Sexpert column on talking kids about sex, a Face Off on music downloading, a Choice Is Yours section criticising on a proposed law that will allow people to bring their own wine to restaurants.

Catch da Flava Newspaper is a quarterly produced and distributed by youth throughout the GTA to households, schools and community centres. We are currently hoping to expand the publication of Catch da Flava to a bimonthly paper. The online version of Catch da Flava can be viewed on our website.

Regent Park Votes



As part of a strategy to get more young people out to vote in the past federal elections, Regent Park Focus developed an educational poster campaign. The campaign consisted of the creation and mass dissemination of a simple yet colourful poster reminding residents to vote in the upcoming election.

Guerrilla Computing 101



Focus youth watch Rob assemble a working system

This spring Rob Stauffert of Jumpnetworks led a series of weekly workshops on Guerrilla computing. The workshops taught youth participants how to assemble computer hardware parts into a functional computer and provided students with hands-on experience in installing Open Source software. Six members attended the workshop.

The DJing Workshop



DJ Nana

Nana Gyamfi-Kumaninni (a.k.a. DJ Nana), is a professional Toronto DJ. During the months of April and May, DJ Nana held weekly DJing workshops at the Regent Park Focus for interested youth. Nana taught beat-matching and familiarise youth with the many elements of a track. Nana is passionate and knowledgeable when it comes to music. This passion was reflected in the workshops where students discussed the roots of Hip Hop and debated issues related to the music industry. The attendance for this workshop grew dramatically throughout the month, and many students stayed behind after the workshop to practice their newly learned skills.

Divas



This spring Regent Park Focus created a new program for young girls (ages 12 – 15 years) in the area. The 12 week program began in April and provided an opportunity for young girls to meet in a safe environment and engage in fun learning activities.

ART OF COOL



The youth from Dixon Hall

Art of Cool is a program of Regent Park Focus that is designed to engage students in important social issues through video production and photography. The program is funded by the City of Toronto's Drug Prevention Program. Usually the Art of Cool is run in partnership with local schools. During the months of April and May, however, Regent Park Focus partnered with Dixon Hall's after-school kids program to run a six week Art of Cool video project. The kids developed an original script and produced an entertaining educational video called the Lunch Time Bully. The video follows the story of a young boy who is forced to give up his lunch money to a school bully. The video will be used to help students deal with issues of school bullying.

In addition to the Dixon Hall project, Regent Park Focus staff worked with Alpha Alternative School on a six week media project. The aim of the video project was to help students to feel safer about their community through the production of a community news show. Students involved in the project interviewed and filmed various people and places in the community. The Alpha Community show was screened to parents and students at an end of the year event.



Duke of York Art of Cool Students editing their video.

Are you a school that is looking to engage students in a community health project that educates students about peer pressure, drugs and alcohol or bullying and safety? Perhaps you should consider calling Regent Park Focus and finding out how you can have an Art of Cool project at your school.