



**REGENT PARK FOCUS  
YOUTH MEDIA  
ARTS CENTRE**



**FALL 2009**

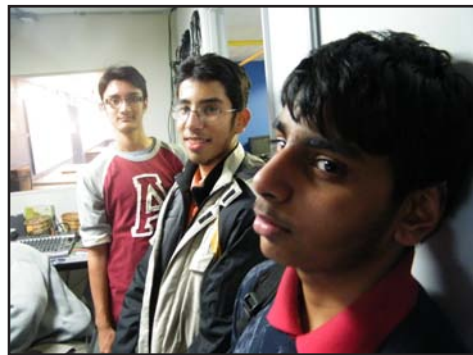
**QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER**

**RADIO & MAGAZINE ACTIVITIES**

## Catch da Flava Radio and Magazine Collective

Having taken a summer break, the youth members of Catch da Flava Radio and Magazine Collective resumed their regular Tuesday night meetings in the fall. The meetings began just in time to resume hosting the radio show on CKLN 88.1. CKLN, which had been closed since June 2009, began broadcasting again at the beginning of October.

During the fall period Catch da Flava Collective produced radio shows on: Social Media, H1N1, Healthy Eating, Banning the Niqab or Burqua, Teenage Depression, Bicycle repair programs and Stereotypes.



Towards the end of November, the Collective celebrated the release of their Food issue of Catch da Flava magazine. The magazine profiled articles on food security, healthy eating, the cultural cuisines of communities residing in Regent Park and concerns about the future of Regent Park's community garden. The magazine will be distributed to community groups across the downtown core and will be accessible for public viewing on the Regent Park Focus website. The Collective is now starting the process of planning the winter issue of the magazine which will focus on the theme of gender.

## Be Scene Magazine

It's been an exciting few months at Be Scene Magazine, a youth publication project operating in the neighbourhoods of O'Connor-Parkview, Thorncliffe Park, and Flemingdon Park. Facilitated by Regent Park Focus staff, Be Scene provides a forum for youth to creatively express themselves, learn media literacy skills, and engage critically in community life.

As a youth-governed publication, the Be Scene editorial committee meets weekly to make all decisions relating to the magazine. The committee has released three Be Scene issues to date with articles, poems, photographs, artwork and designs submitted by youth residing in the catchment neighbourhoods. The magazine has been distributed to over 50 locations.



Recently, the editorial committee was fortunate enough to have the opportunity to meet with NOW Magazine staff who gave us a tour of their offices and spoke with us about the publishing process....talk about an inspiration for Be Scene! We are excited about continuing to grow and learn more about publishing, writing, and of course, the incredible talent that exists within our communities.

# FOCUS films at the Canadian Black Film Festival

Regent Park Focus was invited to showcase several of our films at the Canadian Black Film Festival. The screening was held at the National Film Board on September 27th before an audience of thirty people. The featured films, which were part of a youth program, included Stall directed by James Gardner (Directors Group 2009 alumni), Demon Buddy directed by Raymond Wilson (Director's Group 2009 alumni) and The Smoker directed by Kayla McCalla (RPTV 2008). Stall is about the rude awakening a boss faces when he finds himself locked in a washroom stall, Demon Buddy features a talkative guy who gets a surprise when he meets an old friend in a bar washroom and The Smoker details the dangers of second hand smoke. The videos were all well received by the audience.

## Regent Park TV tackles Meaningful Youth Employment

The Regent Park TV (RPTV) program empowers young people to create videos on issues that are important to them. Once produced, the videos are hosted online at [www.regentpark.tv](http://www.regentpark.tv). Members of RPTV meet weekly to plan their productions, with filming taking place in the evenings and on weekends.

For the fall session of RPTV a dozen youth participated in 10 weeks of workshops that led them through the process of making a video. The group decided to explore meaningful youth employment as their topic. They met on Tuesdays to work on role playing, script development and story boarding. Filming took place during the last three weeks of the program. In the new year, members of the group will be invited to participate in editing the video.



## Detective Jones Screening

On October 28th, as part of a panel on the Regent Park Revitalization, Focus screened Detective Jones, an engaging video that uses humour to educate about the redevelopment process in Regent Park. The screening took place at the Regent Park Community Centre and was sponsored by the York University Faculty of Education. The audience of 85 was made up mostly of students and professors and they very much enjoyed the film.

## Serving Our Communities

In November, Regent Park Focus partnered with the City of Toronto to produce an informative video about the various facilities, services and programs that the Parks, Forestry and Recreation departments offer Torontonians. The video, entitled Working Together to Serve Our Communities, was produced by Focus staff member's Omar Wright and Emmanuel Kedini and will be hosted on both the City of Toronto's website and RPTV's website.



# Expanding the Divas Young Women's Group

The long running Divas Girls Group at Regent Park Focus has been very successful. The Friday evening program has given girls living in the community a place to socialize and explore their identities as racialized young women soon to be entering the world of teenagehood.

This fall, in an effort to meet the needs of more young women in the community, the after-school program was expanded to include two local schools. On Wednesdays the program was held at Regent Park Duke of York school and on Thursdays the program took place at Lord Dufferin school. The programs at these two schools were coordinated by Emmie Carr, a local Toronto artist, with the help of two York University teacher candidates, Kavita Persand and Sara Cluer.

Many wonderful, meaningful and creative exchanges took place between the young women in the program and the facilitators. Some of the issues that were tackled include: self-esteem, body image, communication and positive role models. One activity, led by Kavita,



involved asking the girls who their personal role models were and sharing why by talking, drawing and writing poems about that person. In another project the girls were asked to write their hopes and aspirations on a butterfly and then to abstractly paint them. The Divas enjoyed watching DVDs like Degrassi Junior High which explored youth issues and sparked interesting group discussions. On lighter days, the Divas played get-to-know-each other games and relaxed. In the New Year, Focus intends to continue this process of using the arts to facilitate creative expression and sharing, while tackling some of the challenging issues facing youth today.



# The Underground Music Studio

The Focus Underground Music studio resumed programming in mid-October. The program was offered two evenings a week (Tuesdays and Thursdays) during the fall. Currently, youth registered in the program are hard at work on their tracks which will be featured on an upcoming CD. The program is taught by professional musicians and we were pleased to once again have Jamie Todd and Mathew Poularkis as instructors.

## November's Last Friday

Last Fridays' is an evening of socializing and song organized by Regent Park Focus and held on the last Friday of each month. The event is an opportunity for the Focus house band, Da Youngstas, to hone their musical skills by jamming with professional artists and performing in front of a live audience.

November's Last Friday event was held at the Daniel's Presentation Centre on November 27th. The evening began with the lyrical rhymes of Toronto Hip Hop artist Mind Bender who was backed up by Da Youngstas, who followed with a set of



their own. Next a local singer songwriter performed and especially delighted the children in the audience who were encouraged to sing along. The featured

artist of the night was Marnie Levitt who has been writing and performing songs for over two decades. Marnie, no stranger to Last Fridays, entertained the audience of 30 with soulful folk music. All in all November's Last Friday was a great evening.



## December's Last Friday

On December 18th, Regent Park Focus celebrated the holiday season by hosting a Last Friday event. The evening started off with a spirited drumming performance by the Samba Kidz, a children's drumming program based in the St. Jamestown neighbourhood. As part of the performance, children in the audience were invited to participate in a short drumming workshop. The audience was next entertained by Focus house band, Da Youngstas and their lead singer August Kiew. Since their last performance in November Da Youngstas had added several new songs to their growing repertoire. Singer songwriter Marnie Levitt once again blessed the crowd with a set of original music. As the night drew to a close, Toronto artist David Phinn aka Uncledropsi rapped and sang over music that he had composed on a CD. He was also accompanied by Da Youngsta's drummer extraordinaire, Oshane Duncan. A terrific time was had by all.



## Focus: Regent Park Through the Lens of the Youth

Regent Park Through the Lens of Our Youth was launched on October 8th at the Hotshot Gallery in Kensington Market. The event celebrated the end of the summer camp program and featured a video screening and week long exhibition of 50 mounted photographs taken by youth. After its tenure at Hotshot Gallery, the exhibit moved to the Regent Park Focus Gallery where it will be available for viewing for the duration of the fall and winter season.



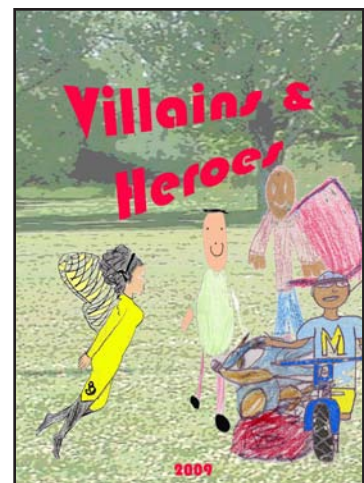
## Photography

In the fall, Regent Park Focus offered a photography workshop series for young girls in the Regent Park area. The two-hour sessions were held between October 21st and December 9th and facilitated by photographer Nick Kozak. The workshops focused on documentary photography and covered photo analysis, shooting, and editing. After viewing and discussing photographs for several weeks, the youth participants were given an introduction to Fuji cameras and then encouraged to photograph their neighbourhood. The students were very enthusiastic and came back with some good material. The youth used their photos to learn editing, in particular, how to select and adjust their images using Adobe Lightroom software. By the end of the session, all the participants had completed short photographic stories which are now posted on our website



## Comic Book Program

In mid-October, Regent Park Focus initiated a comic book drawing program for children aged 8 to 12. The weekly after-school program took place on Tuesdays at Lord Dufferin, a local school in the area. The program was facilitated by Daryna Yarova, a student at the Ontario College of Art with the assistance of two volunteers, Nakesha and Tiffany. The group is currently comprised of five children and they are working on a super hero comic.



# Drug Awareness Week

National Addictions Week is held annually in the third week of November. In recognition of this week, each year Regent Park Focus organizes a Drug Awareness Program in partnership with one or more local schools. The goal of the program is to engage students in activities that increase their awareness about the harm of drugs.



This year Regent Park Focus partnered with Sprucecourt Jr. Public school to put on three weeks of

activities where students could explore the implications of drug use and then share what they learned via art, music, drama and the creation of radio public service announcements. On November 17th, an assembly for Grades 4, 5, and 6 was held to kick –off the program. The assembly began with a break dancing routine in which students were reminded about the importance of being physically active. After the dancing, three guest speakers gave inspiring and informative talks about substance abuse.

As part of the Drug Awareness Program several classes were invited to take part in creating audio public services announcements (PSAs). To support this effort, on November 19th Regent Park Focus staff held a workshop at the school on the making of PSAs. At the workshop, students watched short videos and listened to previously produced drug awareness PSAs. After a short discussion about these works students went back to their classrooms to begin the process of researching and writing their own PSA scripts. On December 1st, Focus staff returned with equipment to record the student’s work. The PSAs were then broadcasts over the school PA system during the week of December 11th –18th.

Each of the participating classes also had the task of decorating their classroom doors on the theme of healthy living and drug awareness. The judging of the Classroom Door and Poster contest took place on December 10th. Our panel of esteemed judges for the day was; Barb Macpherson, representing Toronto Public Health; Lorna Blake, a member of the Regent Park Focus Advisory Committee; Brenda and Rainbow Bear from Rainbow Cinema; and two officers from 51 Division of the Metropolitan Toronto Police. The judges visited each of the participating classes and heard from the students about the different activities they did as a class to create their work. The two winning classes were awarded a pizza party, however, thanks to movie passes donated by the Rainbow cinema everyone went home a winner. The drug awareness posters will remain on display at the school until mid January.

**Want to preview our work, get in touch or drop by? You can find us at:**

**Regent Park Focus Youth Media Arts Centre  
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